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POLITICS IN LEEDS 1830 - 1852

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## A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

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F R O N T I S P I E C E

'Political party feeling prevails to a mischievous extent at Leeds - the parties are nearly balanced and it is scarcely possible to take any step in Leeds Township without exciting strong party feeling.'

Report of Poor Law Inspector, 24 Aug. 1841  
(P.R.O. M.H 12/15225)

'The house is divided between the Ins and the Outs, the Ins were in possession of the good things and were anxious to retain them, the Outs expected to possess them at some future period.'

George Wailes, 1835  
(Leeds Mercury, 3 Jan 1835)

' . . . and hear poor rogues

Talk of court news; and we'll talk with them too, -

Who loses and who wins; who's in, who's out;'

Shakespeare, King Lear, Act V, Scene III.



I N T R O D U C T I O N

Urban historians have viewed the city as a subject of historical enquiry mainly from two distinct though not mutually exclusive angles. Some approach the city as a physical entity and are concerned with the geographic and economic growth of the city as a human settlement. Others look at the city as a community and trace the evolution of urban society. Each sort of urban historian can learn a lot from the other and a true understanding comes from the merging of the two. As far as Leeds is concerned much more is known of the physical growth of the town than of its evolution as an urban community and this study seeks to remedy the deficiency somewhat. An enquiry into the political history of an urban community in fact casts a light on issues and factors seemingly distant from politics, if it conceives of politics in a broad context.

It is contended here that a full understanding of urban or regional politics must depend on a study of the full range of political activity so that there should be more than merely Parliamentary elections examined.<sup>1</sup> This study aims at a comprehensive examination of political activity in a period of great change in four main areas: (1) Township and Parochial administration; (2) Municipal government; (3) Parliamentary elections;

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1. Two recent studies of regional politics start from a different point of view, D.G.Wright Elections and Public Opinion in Bradford, Leeds Ph.D. Thesis 1966 and T.J.Nossiter Elections . . . in Durham and Newcastle, Oxford D.Phil. Thesis 1963.

(4) political agitation. Politics is basically about the pursuit of power and the exercise of it and in many respects areas 1 and 2 involved far more real power than areas 3 and 4, which are those normally associated with political studies. In fighting for control of Township institutions and the Municipal Council (after 1835) men were contesting the right to exercise obvious and meaningful local power over affairs directly affecting all Leeds citizens. In pursuing a process of political identification by casting a vote or supporting a political movement men were less directly affecting the course of affairs. Of course helping to put the "right" party in power nationally and making sure that party pursued the desired policies did affect the common weal and could materially alter local conditions. Thus a Leeds citizen could write in 1832:

'our trade for this last three years has been in a very bad state but we have now got a reform in Parliament and we hope in the course of a year or two we shall have better times if we can have the taxes reduced and the Corn Laws done away with and all placemen and pinciners then we might look for better times.'<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless there is a case for arguing that areas 1 and 2 primarily concerned the exercise of power and areas 3 and four an expression of political belief.

In practice Leeds politics were such that the two sorts of political activity, power struggle locally and a political identification nationally, overlapped considerably. Thus we shall find time and again that particular offices without much intrinsic power were

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1. R. Ayrey, Letter Book (1832), p.1, Leeds Ref.Lib. M S 826 79AY 7AL.

made the subject of political controversy merely as an expression of a trial of strength between rival parties. Election results clearly help to assess the state of play in that trial of strength. Unless otherwise stated all election material will be discussed in terms of the 12 wards established for Municipal purposes in 1835. These are shown in Maps VII and VIII, VII of the whole borough and VIII of the central area of Leeds. In rendering election results in meaningful terms a particular mode of statistical calculation has been adopted. The problem is that Leeds was a two-member borough and very often the parties put up a different number of candidates. Hence to quote merely a share of poll (which is what is done with contemporary psephology) would be misleading since Party A might receive 35% of the votes cast and Party B 65%, but A had one candidate and B two and of course all voters had two votes to cast. The problem might be solved by aggregating a party's votes and dividing by the number of candidates but again this would not work where, as in Leeds in 1841, there was a significant discrepancy between two candidates of the same party. Here it is argued that the main purpose is to render the results in such a way as to give the most accurate picture of relative party strength at a particular time. Hence the mode of calculation adopted (apparently never tried before) has been to compare leading Liberal against leading Tory. This means that for statistical purposes of overall comparisons the result is reduced to the position which would have applied if Leeds had been a one-member borough. The actual results and seats won etc. are given in any case but for comparison and general trends this method has been used and found workable.

In these calculations and all other work derived from the poll books, indeed in all searches needing positive identification of individuals, the greatest care has been taken to verify the position. However, where one has to deal with two John Jacksons who were both corn millers living in the same area or two Joseph Batesons both wool merchants with business addresses in the same street the possibility of confusion has to be admitted. In order to make identification easier for the reader brief biographical details of important Leeds citizens are given in the Appendix. Confusion may also enter the work later in the study on social categories. These cannot be precise, especially in Leeds where the economic structure was such that many varieties of enterprise were practised and where these enterprises varied so much in size. Inevitably the craftsman merges into the manufacturer and the shopkeeper into the merchant and the categories given provide only a broad definition. The problem is especially acute with regard to the man who called himself a "gentleman", as two recent workers in this field have emphasised.<sup>1</sup> Is he best understood by viewing him as a member of his original occupation or as a man of independent means worthy to be ranked with other "gentry" in the highest social category?

One would be in a better position to say if more personal papers had survived and more work done on a strangely neglected city. The sources available and the state of historical research have been impor-

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1. Cf. J. Vincent Poll Books (1967) n. 54; R. Newton "Society and Politics in Exeter 1837-1914" in Dyos (ed.), The Study of Urban History (1968), p. 305.

tant factors in determining the character of the study here produced. Leeds sadly lacks a large and useful collection which would really take us behind the scenes of history. Some Baines papers have survived but they are disappointing. They do not cast that eye "behind the curtain" which is so much a feature of the Wentworth Woodhouse or the Ridley papers. Some Hall papers do exist but newspaper and local radio appeals have failed to smoke them out.<sup>1</sup>

Denied such sources this study is heavily based on newspapers which are of course quarries of information for the urban historian. Three, sometimes four, newspapers have been closely consulted throughout, on the principle that news media always provide a distinctive selection of news and a varying depth of coverage. In a city like Leeds where newspaper rivalry was both an essential part of the political battle and the channel through which political feeling was expressed the hostile paper has often been as useful a source of a party's activities as its own protagonist. Previous research on the Press led to the mode of proceedings which accepted as likely a statement made by a rival which was not immediately challenged. This was the natural journalistic practice of the nineteenth century for, as one editor remarked after a false claim by its rival, 'silence would by some be construed into an admission of its truth.'<sup>2</sup>

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1. S. Brooke "The Hall Family . . ." Thoresby Society Publications XLI (1953) pp.309-354 and refers to some Hall papers which apparently cast a great light on Leeds politics in the 1830's. The author, now dead, failed to indicate the whereabouts of these papers. Clearly copious footnotes, though tedious, do have some advantages.
  2. Leeds Intelligencer, 29 Aug.1840

The main manuscript sources have been the Parochial and Municipal records which survive in greater bulk for the latter than the former. Corporation, Council, Vestry and Guardians Minute books have been fully used, together with such centrally located sources as could be found. The papers of the Poor Law Commission and the Home Office have been found useful. For the rest it has been a case of picking Leeds off another carcass with the papers of Cobden, Smith, Wilson, Sturge, Brougham and Fitzwilliam. Poll books and directories have compensated for private letters.

The historian is limited by his sources and his final account will also reflect the state of prior knowledge of his subject. Where a scholar working in Birmingham or Leicester can rely on a corpus of recent historical research the historian of Leeds is invading much more virgin territory. What Redford did for Manchester, or Gill and Briggs for Birmingham or White for Liverpool nobody has yet done for Leeds. The last Municipal history of Leeds was written in 1846 and not only has the Leeds City Council failed to emulate its fellow large towns which have commissioned histories, it has also failed to follow in the wake of nearby smaller towns which have embarked on such ventures.<sup>1</sup> The relatively light coverage previous historians have given to Leeds has meant that little of the basic story could be assumed as common knowledge. Thus the structure of this study has been conditioned by the state of historiography. In the six main chapters the chrono-

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1. Cf. R. Brooks The Story of Huddersfield (1968); W. Lillie The History of Middlesbrough (1963); R. Wood West Hartlepool (1967)

logical evolution of Leeds politics has been examined exhaustively. This was the essential prerequisite for the analytical conclusions of the final chapter.



CHAPTER I

LEEDS AND ITS POLITICS

The exact origins of Leeds are uncertain. Its name may suggest a Celtic origin and there may have been a Roman road which crossed the Aire at a convenient point around which the town eventually grew.<sup>1</sup> There is more evidence for suggesting that by the time Bede made the first reference to Leeds with the term "regio Loidis" there existed a church on the site of the present Parish Church as a central focus for growth. By the time of the Norman Conquest Leeds was a village of some 35 families which became part of the Honour of Pontefract. The manor of Leeds was to be the inheritance of the de Lacy family whose subtenants were the Paynels. It was the last of these Paynels, sometimes known as Maurice de Gaunt, who may be said to be the founder of Leeds for in 1207 Leeds was granted a borough charter.

Midway between the ecclesiastical centre (the church) and the administrative centre (the manor house) a new borough was established. Thirty burgage plots were laid out on either side of a street later to be known as Briggate and the potential occupiers of these plots were to be lured there by limited economic privileges which would free them from the more restrictive feudal limitations. It has been pointed out that Maurice Paynel was creating the environment in which a borough could grow rather than creating a borough itself and it may well have taken two centuries for the new venture to flourish. However, the

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1. H. Schroeder Annals of Yorkshire p.224 records the unearthing of Roman remains on the banks of the Aire.

continuous history of Leeds dates from 1207 and the original half-acre burgage plots have been identified with the yards and alleys of Brigade on eighteenth century maps.<sup>1</sup>

If the growth of the town from 1207 was slow it was also steady and there are documentary references which indicate a developing community, a dyer in 1201, a tailor in 1258 and a fuller in 1275, or a market in 1258, a fair in 1322 and a bridge in 1384. Early fourteenth century reeve's accounts confirm the existence of a fulling mill, a coal mine and a forge, thus establishing the industrial foundations of Leeds built on wool, coal and iron. As the mills, dye vats and tenter yards multiplied, so too did population: about 1,000 by 1377, 3,000 by 1550 and possibly 5,000 by the early seventeenth century. The phenomenal growth in the half-century or so from 1550 followed the fifteenth century decline of cloth production in traditional centres such as York and Beverley.

By the early seventeenth century an elite of wealthy merchants, many of them new to the town, had established a firm control over the woollen trade and by the early eighteenth century the classic pattern of domestic wool manufacture had reached its height.<sup>2</sup> The 34 processes through which wool must go from the sheep's back to the tailor's bench can be broadly classified into five main groups: (1) the preliminary

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1. G.Woledge "The Medieval Borough of Leeds", Thoresby Society Publications XXXVII (1945) pp.288-309. This section on medieval Leeds is also based on J.Le Patourel, "Documents Relating to the Manor and Borough of Leeds 1066-1400", ibid XLV (1957), and his "Medieval Leeds . . .", ibid XLVI (1963) pp.1-21.

2. For the pre-industrial situation see H.Heaton The Yorkshire Woollen and Worsted Industries (1965), R.G.Wilson Leeds Woollen Merchants, Ph.D.thesis, Leeds (1964) and G.Rimmer "The evolution of Leeds to 1700", Thoresby Society Publications L (1967) pp.91-129.

processes; (2) spinning; (3) weaving; (4) fulling; (5) finishing. Though Leeds grew with the wool trade it was not really the centre of wool manufacture and despite some domestic production in the western part of the borough (especially Bramley) it specialised mainly in group 5, the finishing trades. The raw wool was in fact taken by clothiers dotted around the area between the Aire and Calder to the south-west of Leeds and produced via cottage industry. Sometimes a clothier might put out his work to other domestic workers, themselves supplementing an agricultural income, but more often in the West Riding it was a small family enterprise. When the raw wool had been prepared, spun into yarn and woven into cloth the clothier took it to be felted or milled at a fulling mill driven by water power. It was between process 4, fulling, and process 5, finishing, that the Leeds woollen merchants intervened to establish a stranglehold over the trade. All woollen cloth was brought "undressed", i.e. unfinished, to Leeds for sale and the clothiers with their limited capital and low production were in a relatively poor position compared to the wealthy merchants purchasing large quantities of cloth. Once purchased, the merchant put the cloth out for finishing to the cloth dressers in Leeds. The "Leeds cropper" was thus the distinctive and typical Leeds worker.

The West Riding wool trade was channelled through Leeds first in the open-air market in Briggate immortalised by Defoe and later in Cloth Halls, for white cloth in Meadow Lane and Kirkgate, for coloured cloth in City Square. Leeds was the commercial rather than the manufacturing centre of the West Riding, ideally placed between contrasting regions:

'with a vast manufacturing district on one side and a rich agricultural district on the other Leeds is calculated to form the most advantageous depot for the commodities which they respectively produce.'<sup>1</sup>

Good communications, particularly by water, enhanced the commercial potential of Leeds as a marketing centre. The Aire and Calder Navigation dating from 1699 and the Leeds and Liverpool canal from the 1770's combined with turnpike roads to create a regional network well suited to the area's economic needs.

This was essential to Leeds for the cloth bought in the town was primarily for export. It was estimated in 1770 that 73% of all cloth passing through Leeds was exported and it has been further estimated that Leeds was handling 30% of the nation's wool exports in the eighteenth century. A changing pattern in the direction of trade can be identified. In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries the Low Countries and Germany were the main markets for Leeds cloth. From the 1720's to about 1760 this traditional European market was replaced by Spain, Portugal and Italy so that diarists in 1760 recorded the sort of exile community of English merchants in Oporto or Lisbon which in 1690 could have been found in Rotterdam or Amsterdam. For the rest of the century the axis turned westward and the growing dependence of Leeds on the American market was illustrated by the local depression caused by the disruption of Atlantic trade resulting from the American War.

This newer American market was a great challenge which many of the traditional merchants failed to accept. Many new men came into the

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1. Leeds Mercury, 29 Dec. 1849.

trade willing to take greater risks, give longer credit and quote keener prices. Just at the time when the newer elements of Leeds mercantile society were challenging the old-established firms the whole pattern of wool production was changing which entirely undermined the economic position of the Leeds merchants. The Industrial Revolution in wool may have been a generation behind that in cotton yet its impact was already clear by the end of the eighteenth century.<sup>1</sup>

Domestic wool manufacture was destroyed by a double-edged process which injected capital and mechanisation into a cottage industry. The traditional system was stormed by the intervention of the merchant at one end and the clothier at the other. Many merchants during the second half of the eighteenth century had taken over process 5 by employing finishers full time. The motive had been both greater efficiency, in close surveillance of a delicate and important stage of production, and greater profit, in the absorption of the master dresser's profits. Once the merchanting and finishing stages were in the same hands this same drive for efficiency and profit made processes 1 to 4 equally vulnerable. Benjamin Gott was the Leeds pioneer here, assembling at Bean Ing what has been termed a 'half way house to the Industrial Revolution' by bringing together all processes, 1 and 4 (preparing and fulling) mechanised by steam power, 2, 3 and 5 persisting as skilled hand trades. Gott was not typical and many wool merchants were reluctant to enter manufacturing. John Hebblethwaite told the Wool En-

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1 For the Industrial Revolution period see Heaton op.cit. and "Benjamin Gott and the Industrial Revolution in Yorkshire", Econ.Hist.Rev, III (1931), pp.45-66; W.B.Crump (ed.), The Leeds Woollen Industry 1730-1820, Thoresby Society,XXXII (1931); R.M.Hartwell The Yorkshire Worsted and Woollen Industry 1800-1850, Oxford D.Phil.thesis (1955).

quiry in 1806:

'If there is no alternative I would give up business wholly before I would be a factory manufacturer. In the first place because I should not like to have the trouble of it and it is not beneficial. I have trouble enough with the cloth after it is made, I do not wish to have more trouble with it.'<sup>1</sup>

While merchants believed they could buy cloth cheaper than they could make it clearly Gott would not be widely imitated. The lesson was learned in the early nineteenth century and the specialist woollen merchant who was not a manufacturer went to the wall.

What destroyed the function of the merchant was that clothiers ceased to need his intermediary skills. At the same time as forward-looking merchants such as Gott were going into factory production, clothiers were accumulating enough capital to utilise the technical innovations which transformed process 1, the preliminary stages. Quaintly named machines like the willy, the scribbler, the carding engine and the slubbing billy were driven first by water and then by steam and a "scribbling mill" could combine the functions of the preliminary processes and process 4, the fulling. Often the spinning and weaving still went on in the domestic situation but gradually more production became factory based. The crucial point was that increased production enabled the clothier, now capitalist, to dispense with the merchant and sell direct.

During the early nineteenth century growing specialisation of functions characterised the region. Leeds still produced its traditional broadcloth; Bradford became a worsted town; Halifax too, later to move on to carpets; Huddersfield specialised in the newer mixtures of

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1. Quoted by Wilson op.cit.p.177.



fibres and so dominated the "fancy" trade; the rag trade centred on Batley and blankets on Dewsbury. The essential point was that each developed its own commercial institutions and so ceased to depend on Leeds as a mercantile centre. The Cloth Halls still survived for some domestic production continued till the late nineteenth century, but they were a declining force.

Leeds was in any case becoming less dependent on wool and was itself branching out into new fibres, particularly flax. It was flax rather than wool which was the leading factory industry in early industrial Leeds. John Marshall took the flax industry into the factory age whereas Benjamin Gott left wool at the threshold. In Water Lane, Holbeck, Marshall created an advanced industrial complex which culminated in the famous Marshall's Mill, one of the wonders of the industrial age.<sup>1</sup> In Marshall's wake came lesser producers to swell the importance of the flax industry in the Leeds economy: Hives and Atkinson, John Wilkinson, Thomas Briggs, W.B.Holdsworth and others. Wool production was thus a declining proportion of the textile industry of Leeds and textiles themselves had by the mid-nineteenth century declined in importance as a Leeds industry. There can be no gainsaying the key position textiles had in the growth of the town and in the early Victorian period it employed more capital and labour than any other industry. However, it is significant that whereas the proportion of firms engaged in textile production was 58% in the mid-eighteenth century, it was only

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1. For Marshalls and the flax industry in general see W.G.Rimmer, Marshalls of Leeds Flaxspinners (1966).



14% in 1834 and that whereas textiles accounted for 80% of the labour force in the 1740's it was less than half that a century later. These figures mean that "whereas the cloth trade eclipsed every other activity at the beginning of the eighteenth century it was simply primus inter pares by the second quarter of the nineteenth century."<sup>1</sup>

Textiles needed machinery, particularly for flax spinning, and Leeds developed a flourishing engineering industry, first dependent on textiles, later blossoming out on its own right. Peter Fairbairn and Samuel Lawson, the founders of the great engineering firm of Fairbairn, Lawson, both evolved their businesses from flaxspinning origins, as did John and Martin Cawood. Heavier branches of engineering developed with the firm of Maclea and March, Fenton Murray and Wood, Laird and Kitson~~s~~ which all joined the traditional Leeds iron centre of Kirkstall Forge run by Beecroft and Butler.<sup>2</sup> By 1841 engineering employed 8.3% of the adult male labour force and by 1851 12.9%. Although this was still some way behind the 29.6% employed by textiles, nevertheless engineering was second only to textiles as an employer of male labour. It was growing rapidly (it doubled its labour force 1841 - 51) and by 1871 it had overtaken textiles as the leading employer of male labour in Leeds.<sup>3</sup>

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1. W.G.Rimmer "The Industrial Profile of Leeds", Thoresby Society Publications L (1967), p.153.
  2. There is no general history of the industry but see E.Kitson Clark Kitsons of Leeds (1956) and R.Butler The History of Kirkstall Forge (1954).
  3. Figures derived from analysis of centres in Rimmer "Industrial Profile", loc.cit. Table 2.

Iron depended on coal and Middleton colliery was on hand to provide this locally. The proximity of a rural hinterland and the position of Leeds as a marketing centre, both already mentioned, help to explain the existence in Leeds of a thriving leather industry. Using the hides of animals slaughtered in Leeds to feed the West Riding, early Victorian Leeds was the second largest tanning centre in the country.<sup>1</sup> The factory production of clothing did not begin until the second half of the nineteenth century but in 1851 the making of garments accounted for 11% of the total occupied population.<sup>2</sup>

The number of people working in the making of clothing nearly doubled between 1841 and 1851 and this was partly a reflection of the growing population of the town. The same is true of many other industries, growing because of the town's growth rather than causing the town to grow. Here one might cite building which employed over 7% of the male labour force in 1851 or transport which employed 6% or food, drink and lodging which employed 6.5%. As Leeds grew so all sorts of small industries developed in response to a growing demand. Specialist retailing outlets or a growth in publishing were the result of a larger market which could support a diversified economy. The diversity of Leeds industry was illustrated in the medals won during the Great Exhibition of 1851, 16 for woollens, eight for machinery, three for flax and one each for silk, leather, carpets, musical instruments and wire works.

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1. For coal and leather see W.G.Rimmer "Middleton Colliery near Leeds 1770-1830", Yorkshire Bulletin VII (1955), pp.41-57; and his "Leeds Leather Industry in the Nineteenth Century", Thoresby Society Publications XLVI (1960), pp.118-164.
  2. See Joan Thomas A History of the Leeds Clothing Industry, Yorks.Bulletin Occasional Papers I (1955).

What has emerged from Professor Rimmer's enquiries into early industrial Leeds<sup>1</sup> is that many of the rapidly growing industries of Leeds were small workshop based industries. Large numbers of the people facing the tensions of the early Victorian age in Leeds were thus craft-workers, tradesmen, small shopkeepers, etc. The Leeds smoke billowing from the 300 or so chimneys confirmed Leeds as an industrial city but in 1839 Robert Baker estimated that only one in six of the towns occupied population worked in a factory. This meant that the economic structure of Leeds was not primarily based on the capital - labour dichotomy brought into much sharper relief in Manchester with its separation between masters and men. In Leeds middle-class and working-class identification is much harder to establish. When these terms are used in this thesis it must be borne in mind that while the middle classes included the usual groups such as manufacturers, merchants and professional men the working classes of Leeds comprised much more than an industrial proletariat. Such an entity did exist in Leeds but was not a majority of the occupied population. Contemporaries preferred the term working-classes to working class and we shall use it to include men who earned a living by labour but who were not proletarian. When the Leeds Political Union evolved a committee system based on shared responsibility it defined the working class members as those who maintained themselves by the labour of their own hands.<sup>2</sup> This is the category intended by the term working class, for in Leeds it must include craftsmen, tradesmen and even small

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1. "Industrial Profile", loc.cit. Cf. also the series of articles by Rimmer and others in Leeds Journal 1953-4.

2. Leeds Mercury, 17.Dec. 1831.

shopkeepers.

It is necessary to examine how the economic development outlined so far was manifested in the physical growth of the town. The borough established in 1207 was only the centre of a large area whose boundaries were the parish of Leeds which was co-existent with the nineteenth century borough. What to-day are the suburbs of Leeds were in previous ages known as the out-townships of Leeds. Leeds Parish or Leeds borough in fact comprised the central township of Leeds and 10 out-townships. These are shown on Map I and working in clockwise direction they were Chapel Allerton, Potter Newton, Hunslet, Holbeck, Beeston, Wortley, Farnley, Armley, Bramley and Headingley. On all sides except the south-east Leeds township was cushioned from the West Riding by the out-townships which surrounded it.

The growth of Leeds has always been as much a filling in of the out-townships as an overspilling into the surrounding area and by the mid-nineteenth century the borough as a whole was nothing like filled to overflowing. However, the central township had developed considerably.<sup>1</sup> By the early seventeenth century the tripartite division of medieval Leeds, manor, borough, church was no longer really apparent and John Harrison's church at the top of <sup>t</sup>Bridge, St. John's, was a sign that expansion was taking place into "Newtown" to the north of the river. By the time of Cossins Map of 1725 (Map II) the compact central development was clear and expansion was beginning south of the river. The pattern was similar half a century later, although in Jefferys' map of 1770

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1. For the physical growth of Leeds see D.Ward, The Urban Plan of Leeds, M.A.Thesis Leeds (1960) and M.W.Beresford "Prosperity Street and others" in M.W.Beresford and G.R.J.Jones (eds.) Leeds and Its Region (1967), pp.186-197. For maps see Printed Maps and Plans of Leeds, Thoresby Society Publications XLVI(1960).

(Map III) there were less open spaces in the central area.

Maps II and III are obviously similar, in complete contrast to Map IV which half a century on in 1821 depicts the residential explosion which had already taken place. The working-class housing previously restricted to Call Lane and Kirkgate near the Parish Church was now spreading east and north. The tributary of the Aire which higher up as Adel and Meanwood Beck passed through green fields became as Sheepscar Beck 'the Ganges of Lady Lane' and watered crowded and cramped streets. As time passed the mean streets swallowed up the fields along North Street into the Leylands in Quarry Hill, along York Street and into Richmond Hill. The east end of the town had always been less desirable than the west and the Wilson estate had offered the possibility of planned residential development west of Boar Lane. The smoke from Gott's Mill and the erection of other factories along Wellington Street and Kirkstall Road ruined this scheme and so workers' cottages and back-to-backs abounded where fine mansions might have stood.

The residential segregation characteristic of nineteenth century Leeds had begun, as the east/west axis turned to a north/south one. Whereas Meadow Lane had been a desirable recourse for merchants in the eighteenth century the area south of the river along Meadow Lane, Water Lane and Hunslet Lane and into Holbeck and Hunslet became in the nineteenth century the abodes of the humble:

'the large and densely populated district south of the river is in many respects unfavourably situated. It is the district in which a large proportion of the wealth of the town is created and where the hands which create it live: but

where none of the employers, the more educated and refined reside who can avoid it.'<sup>1</sup>

The nineteenth century equivalent of the Leeds merchants whose fine houses Cossins depicts in the central streets of Leeds now quit the crowded centre and moved up Woodhouse Ridge and beyond Woodhouse Moor to Headingley, Chapel Allerton and Potter Newton. This migration out of the township was a search for a physical as well as a social elevation:

'almost all the great Leeds merchants and manufacturers have their residences beyond reach of the Leeds smoke - many of them residing on their own estates at a distance. But the operatives who labour in their mills, warehouses and workshops are compelled by necessity to reside in the midst of the smoke.'<sup>2</sup>

One needed to be above the smoke as well as above the hoi polloi.

A glance at Maps V and VI of the whole borough soon reveals the desirability of the out-townships overall. Both were prepared for Parliamentary purposes, V to indicate the limits of the new constituency of 1832 and VI to show the wards for Municipal elections from 1835. Both illustrate the wide open spaces that still existed within the borough. Indeed so much room existed for expansion that the Boundary Commission which produced Map V argued that 'there seems no reason to suppose that the mass of the town will ever reach the limits of the Borough.'<sup>3</sup> Even in the humbler townships of Armley, Wortley and Bramley there was air to breathe and it was no exaggeration to say that the exclusive townships to the north, Headingley, Chapel Allerton and Potter Newton, contained

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1. Quoted by J.F.C.Harrison Learning and Living (1961), pp. 8-9.

2. Leeds Times, 14 Sept. 1844.

3. Report of the Boundary Commission (1832) XL Part V Vol III p.195.



the country houses of the leading citizens of Leeds. Sir John Beckett was doing no more than reflecting the true state of Leeds when he promised as an M.P. to protect 'its agricultural, commercial and manufacturing interest' and in 1833 it was remarked of Leeds 'there is a large rural district as well as a town district.'<sup>1</sup> Indeed agriculture employed 3.6% of the male labour force in 1851, well ahead for instance of the 2.2% engaged in professions.

The comforts of space and air in the out-townships merely serve to bring into sharper focus the congestion of central Leeds. The bursting out of the eighteenth century town plan was a reflection of the enormous population growth which occurred.<sup>2</sup> Figures from the late eighteenth century up to 1851 are given in Table I and in Table II the decennial percentage growth has been computed for the first five decades of the century. It was not simply growth but the pace of growth which caused such problems in Leeds and to a lesser extent in Holbeck and Hunslet. The social problems of cramped and insanitary housing and their effects

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1. Leeds Mercury, 10 Jan. 1835, 26 Oct. 1839. It was noticeable that the highest death rate in Leeds was 1 in 23 in North East ward, whereas the highest in the out-townships was 1 in 32 in Hunslet. The lowest in the borough was in Chapel Allerton at 1 in 64. Even Holbeck had a lower rate (1 in 42) than Mill Hill (1 in 36). Figures given by Robert Baker in Leeds Mercury, 1 May 1847.
  2. For a careful analysis of the position see F. Beckwith "The Population of Leeds During the Industrial Revolution", Thoresby Society Publications XLI (1948), pp. 118-196.

Table 1

Population of the Borough of Leeds, 1771 - 1851

	1771 <sup>1</sup>	1775 <sup>2</sup>	1801 <sup>3</sup>	1811	1821	1831	1841	1851
Leeds (township)	16,380	17,121	30,669	35,951	48,603	71,602	88,741	101,590
Armley		1,715	2,695	2,941	4,273	5,159	5,676	6,190
Beeston		862	1,427	1,538	1,670	2,128	2,175	1,973
Bramley		1,378	2,562	3,484	4,921	7,039	8,875	8,949
Chapel Allerton		(1,352)	1,054	1,362	1,678	1,934	2,580	2,842
Farnley		540	943	1,164	1,332	1,591	1,530	1,722
Headingley		667	1,313	1,670	2,154	3,849	4,760	6,105
Holbeck	2,045	(2,055)	4,196	5,124	7,151	11,210	13,346	14,152
Hunslet	3,367	(3,825)	3,799	6,393	8,171	12,074	15,852	19,466
Potter Newton		-	509	571	644	863	1,241	1,385
Wortley		594	1,995	2,336	3,179	5,944	7,090	7,896
Out-town Ships		12,820 (13,288)	22,493	26,583	35,193	51,791	63,313	70,680
Leeds Borough		29,941 30,609	53,162	62,534	83,796	123,393	152,054	172,270

NOTES: 1. Priestley's estimate.

2. Abstracted by Beckwith from R. Price: An Essay on the Population of England, London, 1780; W. Wales. An Inquiry into the Present state of population in England and Wales, London, 1781, and J. Lucas. An Impartial Inquiry into the present state of parochial registers, Leeds, 1791.

3. From the Census returns.

SOURCE: F. Beckwith. Leeds Population, T.S. XLI. 1946-51, p.177 and Census Tables.



Decennial Increase in Population in Percentages.

	1801- 1811	1811- 1821	1821- 1831	1831- 1841	1841- 1851
Leeds Township	17.22	35.19	47.32	23.94	14.48
Armley	9.13	45.29	20.73	10.02	9.06
Beeston	7.78	8.58	27.43	2.21	-9.29
Bramley	35.99	41.25	43.04	26.08	0.83
Chapel Allerton	29.22	23.20	15.26	33.40	10.16
Farnley	23.44	14.43	19.44	-3.84	12.55
Headingley	27.19	28.98	78.69	23.67	28.26
Holbeck	22.12	39.56	56.76	19.05	6.04
Hunslet	68.28	27.81	47.77	31.29	22.80
Potter Newton	12.18	16.29	29.99	43.80	11.60
Wortley	17.09	36.09	86.98	19.28	11.37
Out Townships	18.18	32.39	47.16	22.25	11.64
Leeds Borough	17.62	34.00	47.25	23.22	13.30

on health were revealed through the writings of the Leeds doctor Robert Baker who in 1833, 1839, 1842 and 1858 produced reports on health in Leeds.<sup>1</sup>

As Baker's Sanitary Map indicates the newer cheap working-class housing was often just as much a problem as the older cottages and this stemmed directly from the lack of planning.<sup>2</sup> It was not much of an exaggeration to say that 'the whole town might have had an earthquake for its architect' and some were prepared to support the compulsory regulation of building via local government.<sup>3</sup> This sort of thing touched others on the raw who feared the infringement of liberty and typical of this attitude were the following remarks on suggested bye laws for slaughter houses:

'The legislature has not yet given them the authority to dictate to tradesmen in what way they shall carry out their business, as how often they shall whitewash their buildings and if they are once permitted to usurp such an authority others besides the occupiers of slaughter houses will soon discover it to their cost for such is the spirit of busy officious intermeddling displayed throughout these bye laws that no man's place of business or even private house would be safe.'<sup>4</sup>

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1. See Report of the Leeds Board of Health (1833); Journal of the Statistical Society, Vol.II,1893; "Report on the condition of the residences of the labouring classes in the town of Leeds" in Reports on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population of England (1842), pp.348-409; Journal of the Statistical Society, XXI (1858), pp.427-443.
  2. For working-class housing see W.G.Rimmer "Working Men's Cottages in Leeds 1770-1840", Thoresby Society Publications XLVI (1961)pp.165-199.
  3. Leeds Mercury, 4 June, 1836, 25 Sept. 1852.
  4. Leeds Intelligencer, 7 July 1838.

All could agree on the value of preserving Woodhouse Moor from the 'advancing tide of brick and mortar' as a haven from domestic squalor but not on preventing the squalor in the first place.<sup>1</sup>

Two key factors had to be dealt with if Leeds was to solve its public health problem and those were the related subjects of water supply and sewerage.<sup>2</sup> The original water works erected by Sorocold at the end\* of the seventeenth century were hopelessly inadequate by the early nineteenth century and many Leeds citizens resorted to the Aire for their own needs. Yet in the 1830's the river water was totally unfit for human consumption as can be seen from this description of the Aire by Charles Fowler, himself a civil engineer:

'it is charged with the contents of about 200 water closets and similar places, a great number of common drains, the drainings from dunghills, the Infirmary (dead leeches, poultices for patients, etc.), slaughter houses, chemical soap, gas, dung, dye houses and manufactures, spent blue and black dye, pig manure, old urine wash, with all sorts of decomposed animal and vegetable substances from an extent of drainage between Armley Mills to the Kings Mill amounting to about 30,000,000 gallons per annum of the mass of filth with which the river is loaded.'<sup>3</sup>

The revulsion at this description relating to water supply can only be matched by similar revulsion at comments on sewage disposal or lack of it. Baker reported in 1833:

'From the privies in the Boot and Shoe Yard (where there are but 32 houses) which did not appear to have been thoroughly cleansed for the last thirty years, 70 cart loads of manure were removed by order of the commissioners . . . In Fleece Lane and Lee's yard Meadow Lane there are privies of enormous

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1. Ibid. 14 Sept. 1850, Leeds Times 13 March 1841.
  2. For a recent discussion of these problems see J. Toft Public Health in Leeds, M.A.Thesis Manchester (1966).
  3. Leeds Intelligencer, 21 Aug. 1841.

size. In the former in addition to the Holbeck-beck running by the lower end, there exists between two piles of buildings a surface of privy soil as near as the eye can judge of 10 yards by 4.<sup>1</sup>

Mended proper sanitary facilities would follow nature's call where they could and so, again quoting Baker in 1839,

'soil and refuse water stand in every hole where a lodgement can be made there to remain until absorbed by wind or sun - a perpetual nuisance to the eye and a perpetual fever to the whole body.'<sup>2</sup>

The very fact of Baker's prolific pen indicates an awareness of the problems, yet as we shall see in the course of this study much more was needed and both water supply and sewerage were continuing issues of conflict throughout the period under review.

The solution to such problems as sewerage would involve regulations, compulsory expense and in general some control by the community over its environment. This meant basically local power and of course in the early nineteenth century no institution of local government had such powers as were necessary to face up to the challenge of industrialisation and urban growth. Leeds, unlike Manchester and Birmingham with which it is often compared, did have a Corporation prior to 1835. It dates in fact from 1626 and both the Charters of 1626 and 1661 make clear that the motive for its establishment was the desire of the wealthy Leeds woollen merchants, mentioned earlier, to restrict competition and control the town's staple trade.<sup>3</sup>

Like all Corporations it was oligarchic in conception and the close

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1. Report of the Leeds Board of Health (1833), p.13.
  2. Journal of the Statistical Society II (1839), p.13.
  3. J.Wardell Municipal History of the Borough of Leeds (1846), pp.xxxi-xliiii, lxii-lxxxii.

constitution was preserved by coöption as the mode of filling up vacancies. As elsewhere certain families dominated the Corporation and 28 families provided all the Mayors over a period of 80 years. The Leeds Corporation was in fact the political arm of the merchant oligarchy which controlled the West Riding wool trade in the eighteenth century. On the whole the record of the unreformed Corporation is a good one. Its administration of justice and preservation of order was efficient and impartial and it had no great political influence since there were no Parliamentary elections in Leeds. It certainly exhibited little of the private speculation which characterised Leicester and to some extent Newcastle; though without the political influence, in integrity it resembled Lincoln Corporation.<sup>1</sup>

All political systems to be stable and acceptable have to be a fair reflection of the social structure of a community and of course what characterised England in the first half of the nineteenth century was that the social changes consequent on the Industrial Revolution highlighted the need in both local and national affairs to adjust the political system. Just as in 1760 the national political power structure was an adequate reflection of the elitist social structure, so too in the Leeds community the political oligarchy of the Leeds Corporation was an echo of the economic and social position of the elite of wealthy merchants. During the next two generations the evolution of local society made the Corporation an anachronism. It was not so much that it did

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1. For these cities see R.W.Greaves The Corporation of Leicester (1939); A.T.Patterson Radical Leicester (1954); M.Cook "The Last Days of the Unreformed Corporation" in Archaeologica Aeliana XXXIX (1961), pp.207-28; S.Middlebrook Newcastle-upon-Tyne (1950); J.F.W.Hill Georgian Lincoln (1966).

not reflect the changing economic pattern for as Dr. Hennock has shown in its latter years it was coopting representatives of the newer industries.<sup>1</sup> Rather it was its political and religious exclusiveness which reduced it to the position of reflecting only a part of the local social structure.

As we shall see religion and politics were closely aligned in nineteenth century Leeds and it was because the up and coming men belonged to proscribed religions that they were excluded from corporation honours. That this was merely a specious excuse to cloak the jealous protection of privilege may be illustrated by the Acts of Conformity and the existence of a Corporation in Nottingham dominated by Unitarians. As Leeds grew so Dissent outstripped the Church in numerical proportions. This is not to say that Anglicanism was static in this age of urban growth and the building of new churches went on steadily.<sup>2</sup>

To the original Parish Church and St. John's already mentioned were added Holy Trinity in Boar Lane (1727), founded by John Harrison's nephew Henry Robinson, St. Paul's in Park Square (1793), the proprietary foundation of the Rev. Miles Atkinson, and St. James' in York Street (1794) opened as a chapel of Lady Huntingdon's Connexion and purchased shortly after for the Anglican Church. Parliament's concern for the uninitiated of populous parishes produced the famous "Million Act" of 1818 and three "Parliamentary" churches were built in Leeds township out of public funds. These were Christ Church, Meadow Lane (1826) whose tower over-

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1. E.P.Hennock "The Social Compositions of Borough Councils" in H. Dyos (ed.) The Study of Urban History (1966), p.328.
  2. For religion in Leeds see C.M.Elliott The Social and Economic History of the Principal Protestant Denominations in Leeds 1760-1844, Oxford D.Phil.Thesis 1962.



looked the coal wagons on Middleton Railway<sup>1</sup>, St. Mary's Quarry Hill (1827) in the heart of a crowded area of humble residences and St. Mark's Woodhouse (1826) where overspill from the central streets was fast approaching. In the out-townships the second Parliamentary grant of 1825 produced St. Matthew's Holbeck and St. Stephen's Kirkstall (both 1831). St. George's in Mount Pleasant (1837) reflected the residential movement north of Park Lane and to the east for very different purposes St. Luke's (1841) catered for the soldiers of the barracks.

Dr. Elliott has argued that the Church in Leeds was not as deficient in supplying accommodation as some contemporaries suggested and he has calculated that in 1841 the Church could provide 77% of those who might wish to attend with a seat; in the out-townships the figure was 51%.<sup>2</sup> Yet of course the Church was not in a strong position for many incumbents preached to empty congregations and the most famous of all Leeds vicars, W.F.Hook, found that while he had a parish of 150,000 he preached to 50. His rebuilding of the Parish Church (1839-40) was an attempt to provide Anglicans with an inspirational centre of gravity and his scheme of 1844 for dividing Leeds into small manageable parishes was an admission that the Church had not really kept pace with urban growth.

On the grounds of accommodation alone Dissenters and Methodists provided roughly double the seats to be found in Anglican Churches. By far the most numerous group were the various branches of Methodist for there were in early Victorian Leeds six chapels of the Wesleyan Methodists,

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1. See the well-known picture of the two in stark contrast in Beresford and Jones op.cit., plate VII.  
 2. Elliott, op.cit., pp.33-37.

four of the Methodist Association, three of the New Connexion and two of the Primitive Methodists. Although in general chapels tended to be smaller than churches the Wesleyans did go in for "cathedral chapels" and Brunswick and Oxford Place, among the biggest in the land, could seat 3,500 each while St. Peter's could accommodate 1,000 less.

The Independents, later known as Congregationalists, were also numerous in Leeds. During the eighteenth century they built White Chapel in 1756 and Salem in 1791, both south of the river, to add to Call Lane which dates from 1691. As the sect became more numerous and influential so its chapels moved to more favourable sites, Albion Street (1807), Queen Street (1825) and East Parade (1841). In contrast Belgrave Chapel was a deliberate missionary attempt to plant the seed of truth in a poorer location. Three men of first rank led the Independents in our period, Thomas Scales at Queen Street, John Ely at East Parade and R.W. Hamilton at Belgrave.

The Baptists were less numerous but too had a forceful pastor in the Rev. J.E.Giles. Their earliest venture was the Stone Chapel of 1779 in the unfashionable Mabgate but once more social and numerical progress led to a removal to the more select South Parade in 1826. Even less numerous than the Baptists were the Unitarians whose Chapel at Mill Hill was the oldest Dissenting chapel in Leeds, dating from 1672. As elsewhere Mill Hill Chapel, led by the Rev. Charles Wicksteed, made up in social prestige what it lacked in numbers and its congregants included Marshalls and Benyons from flax, Stansfelds, Luptons and Carbutt from wool and such influential lawyers as Thomas William Tottie. All



these names were to be found among the political leaders who dominate this study. Quakers, Catholics, Inghamites, Swedenborgians and a handful of Jews complete the list of religious congregations outside the Church of England. The relative strength of the Church may be gauged from the fact that by 1851 it provided only about 30% of Sunday school places in Leeds.<sup>1</sup>

In early nineteenth century Leeds these Dissenters, excluded from the Corporation, found that avenue to social prestige and political power blocked. Hence they made a political battleground in the only place they could which was the arena of Township and Parochial administration. The ratepayers of Leeds were entitled to assemble in the Vestry as an electorate for all sorts of humble offices concerned with the petty administration of the town. Such offices included the Highway Surveyors who maintained some of the roads. This institution did not become the object of much political ambition until the 1840's. More important were the 19 Improvement Commissioners elected under the Improvement Act of 1824. This Act consolidated and superseded the powers and functions under earlier Improvement Acts of 1755, 1790, 1809 and 1815. It also empowered the Commissioners to pull down the famous Moot Hall and associated buildings which so congested Briggate. Since magistrates sat ex officio as Improvement Commissioners, Dissenting Liberals would need virtually to dominate the elected seats to control this institution. This is what happened. Without becoming until the later 1830's a matter of contested elections the Improvement Commissioners were captured by men excluded from the Corporation in order

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1. Census 1851, Education p.clxxxix.

to creat a Liberal counterweight to a Tory Corporation. This political equilibrium was clear to the Municipal Corporations Commissioners:

'The ill effects of the present exclusive system are rendered strikingly apparent from one circumstance in this borough. In cases where the election is popular as in the choice of the Commissioners under the Local Acts the persons selected are all of one political party, professing the opposite opinions to those entertained by the majority of the corporation: which is accounted for by the necessity of balancing the influence of the corporation at the same time it is said to show the inclination of the majority of the town. This choice of Commissioners exclusively from one party is admitted to be undesirable but is justified as being resorted to in self defence.'<sup>1</sup>

In Manchester the Police Commissioners and in Birmingham the Street Commissioners were themselves, in the absence of a Corporation, the vehicle for a traditional Anglican oligarchy<sup>2</sup> but in Leeds the Improvements Commissioners could act as an avenue for political power for proscribed interests.

Even more important were the Churchwardens whose duty it was to provide for the running costs of the Church. In a community increasingly peopled by Dissenters the levy of Church rates by the Churchwardens was a matter of some controversy. Here Dissenters were led by Edward <sup>7</sup> Davies of the Leeds Mercury who had in his exposure of Oliver the Spy and support for reform in the years after the Napoleonic Wars established a reputation for leading Liberal Dissenting opinion in the town. From 1819 to 1822 he fought to get the Churchwardens' accounts published in order to reduce extravagance and waste and in 1822 the Vestry refused to vote a further £100 until accounts were published.<sup>3</sup> This was the begin-

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1. Report of the Municipal Corporations Commission, Leeds. p.6, para.23.
  2. Cf. Redford and I.Russell History of Local Government in Manchester, I (1939) and C.Gill "Birmingham Under the Street Commissioners", Univ. of B'ham Hist.Jnl., I (1947-8), pp.255-287.
  3. Leeds Mercury, 19 Jan 1822.

ning of a process which was eventually to destroy Church rates entirely in Leeds during the 1830's. The commutation of tithes in Leeds in 1823 removed one source of objection but the three new Parliamentary churches put a greater burden on Church rates. Dissenters could appeal to Anglicans also on the grounds of economy and from the later 1820's Liberal Anglicans were elected as Churchwardens with the specific purpose of reducing Parish expenditure. In 1828 John Armitage Buttrey, a wool stapler, became senior Churchwarden and the Liberals had effectively captured this important local office.<sup>1</sup>

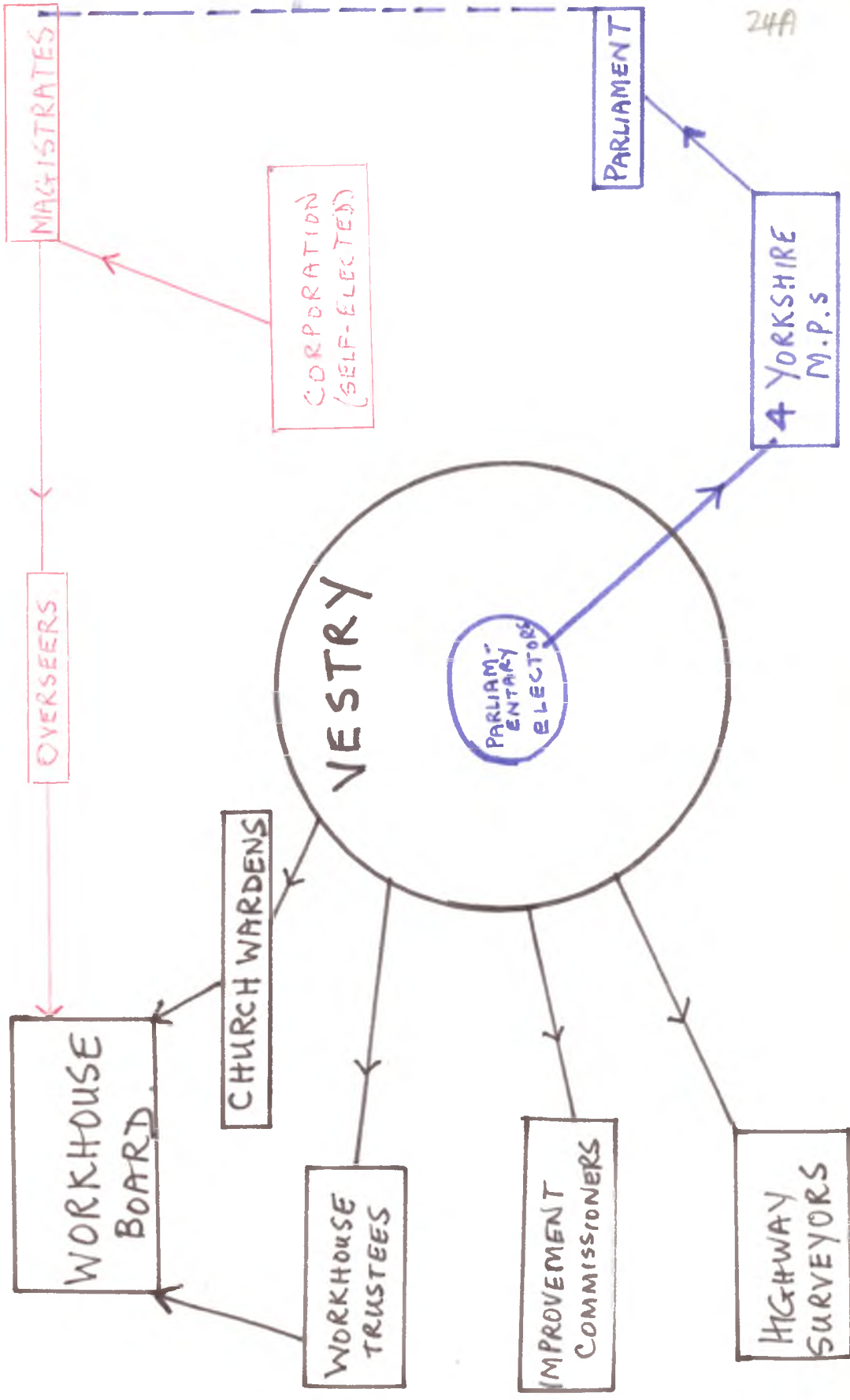
There was more to this than just Church rates for the Churchwardens held the balance on a body known as the Workhouse Board which controlled the Poor Law. From the eighteenth century there evolved in Leeds as a means of calling on all available aid a tri-partite institution for managing the Poor Law. The overseers appointed by the magistrates were joined by Trustees of the Workhouse elected by the Vestry and the Churchwardens on the Workhouse Board. While the Churchwardens were of the same religious and political complexion as the Corporation there was no fear that the popularly elected Trustees would influence the overall political control. The events of the 1820's in the Vestry confirmed the political position of the Liberals and Dissenters in both Church affairs and the Poor Law and, as we shall see, the Tories made a determined effort in the 1830's to regain that power.

Township and Parochial affairs were thus an important aspect of political activity, especially when other avenues were not open. This is made clear by Diagram I on the Political Institution of Leeds c 1830.

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1. Elliott op.cit. pp.174-200; E.Parsons The Civil . . . History of Leeds . . . (1834), I. pp.153-55.

POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS OF LEEDS I c.1830



The normal political activity associated with Parliamentary elections (blue power flow) was virtually non-existent at Leeds. While Leeds played some part in the 1807 and 1826 county elections, which are discussed in the next Chapter, there were no Parliamentary elections in Leeds itself. Municipal government (red power flow), which will form an important part of this study, was insulated from popular control. The self-elected Corporation nominated magistrates who in turn nominated overseers. It was in the area of Township and Parochial institutions (black power flow) that popular control could operate and political power could be contested. The Highway surveyors and the Improvement Commissioners were less controversial in the 1820's than the absolutely crucial office of churchwarden whose key position is indicated in the diagram. The diagram illustrates that the institutional pattern utilised in this study (namely (i) Parochial and Township administration, (2) Municipal Government, (3) Parliamentary elections, (4) Political agitation) does reflect the political system in Leeds as it existed in this period.

To begin a study of Leeds politics round about 1830 is to acknowledge that until it had Parliamentary elections its local political system was incomplete. The disputes in the 1820's over church rates were merely dress rehearsals for the greater struggles which were to follow the passing of the Reform Act. Once the Corporation was opened up the full range of political activities was possible. The first 20 years of this post reform era form an entity worthy of study not simply because in national terms it is, in Gash's phrase, a period of reaction and reconstruc-

tion but because locally it makes sense. Leeds went through a period of intense conflict both social and political in the early Victorian period and by the early 1850's the age of improvement was becoming apparent. In the local political context 1852 was a turning point, as will be explained in Chapter VII.

By then an age of mass prosperity was a possibility:

'it seems by no means impossible that the whole of the working classes should be raised above the dread of poverty - that all should be comfortable, all educated, all well fed, well clothed, well lodged.'<sup>1</sup>

Social pastimes were changing as men were becoming better fitted to exercise political rights rationally:

'contrast the brutality which distinguished the amusements of the working classes in England 50 years ago - the bull baitings, plough mondayings, and such like sports . . . with the intellectual meetings, the soirees, the Mechanics' Institutes, the Oddfellows' entertainments, etc. of the present day'<sup>2</sup>

In Leeds politics itself was a pastime and one taken very seriously. It injected excitement and great issues into what otherwise might have been dull lives, for as one Leeds citizen commented 'we are not much of holiday folk here but busy, sober, plain cautious merchants and tradesmen.'<sup>3</sup> During Easter Week of 1837 there were no less than seven major political events in four days. On the Monday the two Liberal candidates for the forthcoming election made a public entry into the town and on the same day the Operative Conservatives held a public dinner. On the Tuesday

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1. Leeds Mercury, 14 Sept.1850.
  2. Leeds Times, 4 Jan.1845.
  3. Leeds Mercury, 16 June 1838.

a public meeting was held against Church Rates and a "sectional" political meeting with the candidates at the Music Hall. A further sectional meeting was held on the following day and on the Thursday a crowded Vestry meeting refused to levy church rates and a Tory meeting petitioned in favour of them. Here was indeed a local activity of some significance and this study attempts to document fully the avenues through which politics ran. If Frank Beckwith is right that the real dark age of British history is the nineteenth century then this thesis attempts to cast light where before there was gloom.



CHAPTER II

THE BIRTH OF PARLIAMENTARY POLITICS

IN LEEDS 1830 - 1832

The fourfold institutional pattern outlined in the previous chapter will be illustrated in the study of Leeds politics through one generation but in this chapter on the years 1830 to 1832 attention will be concentrated on the Parliamentary and agitational fields. So great was the interest and activity concerning the Reform Bill, its passage and its consequences for Leeds that the political activity associated with it merits special consideration. The best way of introducing this activity<sup>1</sup> is to examine the growing part played by Leeds in county elections.

Although Leeds did not have its first Parliamentary election until 1832<sup>2</sup> its citizens before that date had opportunities for electoral activity in the contests for the county of Yorkshire. It has been suggested that in some ways the election of Brougham for the county in 1830 marked the first Parliamentary election in Leeds, since Leeds played so great a part in Brougham's success.<sup>3</sup> The Whig-Liberals in Leeds dated their activities much earlier and it was felt that there was a direct link going right back to 1307.

In September 1832 Samuel Clapham, introducing John Marshall Junior

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1. It might also be added that there were no really important developments in the Parochial and Municipal fields in these years.
  2. Leeds was represented by Adam Baynes during the Commonwealth but this was an isolated occasion.
  3. N.Gash "Brougham and the Yorkshire Election of 1830" in Proc.Leeds Phil.and Lit.Soc., viii, Pt.1 (1956), p.33.

to a meeting at Hunslet, reminded the audience how often they had fought together. In 1807 they had secured the election of Lord Milton and 'broke the iron bondage of Toryism in Yorkshire'. In 1826 one of their leading citizens, John Marshall, had been elected and they 'planted in the high places of the earth a man sprung from the people'. Finally in 1830 they had armed Brougham with 'the greatest moral power which any constituency could confer'. 1832 was the next step in the developing strength of Liberal politics in the West Riding.

'The gentlemen who had taken the most active part in bringing forward those patriotic members for the county now asked the Electors of Leeds to repose the same confidence in them that they had on former occasions',<sup>1</sup>

Originally Leeds had been forced to work through the county; now they could concentrate on the borough itself.

It was a common assumption in the early nineteenth century that county members had a duty to look after the interests of the nearby growing manufacturing towns which were without representatives. It was, for instance, because the sitting member had not looked after the interests of the town that Birmingham in 1812 intervened for the first time in a Warwickshire election.<sup>2</sup> In 1826 and 1830 Leeds had gone two important steps beyond this idea of implicit representation.

In 1826 the return of John Marshall, based primarily on his willingness to foot the enormous bill<sup>3</sup>, signified that Leeds as the commercial

1. Preliminary Proceedings Relative to the First Election . . . (Leeds Ref.Lib.L 324P915) pp.26-27; Leeds Mercury, 8 Sept.1832. Cf. Leeds Mercury, 8 Dec.1832. "Convince the enemies of reform that you are the same men who carried the election of Milton, Marshall and Brougham".
2. Midland Chronicle, 26 Sept., 3,10,17 Oct.1812.
3. Although not a contested election it cost Marshall £27,000: see Gash op.cit., p.34.

centre of the county was entitled to a share in county representation. In 1830 the union and activity of the Leeds reformers combined with the dilatoriness and disunity of the county Whigs to allow Leeds to dominate the election.<sup>1</sup> 1830 represented much more of a challenge to the existing pattern of county politics than 1826 had done.

Lord Milton expressed the view that Yorkshire ought to be able to find 'proper persons' as M.P.s no matter what the talents of a stranger might be and Lord Dundas claimed that Yorkshire would definitely prefer 'a regular game-preserving Yorkshire squire to Brougham'.<sup>2</sup> Though Milton and his correspondents laid great stress on Brougham being a stranger to the county one detects in his letters Milton's resentment at what seemed like dictation from the Leeds party under Baines. Milton's correspondents pointed out that the county squires, and by implication Milton himself, ought to consult more with the trading interests and if they did not then they would suffer 'continued mortification' and 'get into such a scrape' as Brougham put it.<sup>3</sup>

That the steps taken by the "Broughamites" of Leeds, as Charles Wood called them,<sup>4</sup> represented a departure from existing practice was not lost on contemporaries. Both Wood and Dundas reported to Milton

1. The story has been fully told in Gash, op.cit., pp.19-35.
2. Wentworth Woodhouse MSS. G.2, Milton to Nussey (n.d.), Dundas to Milton 27 July, 1830. Though Marshall must have known the hostility towards strangers he advised Brougham not to let it prevent him from standing. Brougham MSS No.9391, Marshall to Brougham 24 July, 1830.
3. Ibid., Nussey to Milton (n.d.). Brougham to Milton (n.d.)
4. Ibid., Wood to Milton (n.d.).

that at the meeting of 23 July, 1830 for the adoption of Liberal candidates the Leeds people were clearly determined to put up Brougham even if the meeting was against it.<sup>1</sup> They were issuing a direct challenge to the Fitzwilliam interest; Brougham was to stand, with the support of the county squires if possible, without it if necessary.

The Leeds Intelligencer believed that the situation which allowed Baines and his supporters this opportunity was a purely temporary one but Tottie, Milton's agent in Leeds, warned that 'other important results may be anticipated' from the great activity going on in Leeds.<sup>2</sup> Tottie did not spell out what all these 'important results' might be but Milton cannot have failed to notice that Leeds was making all the running in this election. John Foster, the editor of the radical Leeds Patriot, must have known that his words fell on willing ears when he wrote to Milton of Baines and his party

'I also despise the busy trickery of certain parties in this town manoeuvring into a consequence quite foreign to their stations or abilities.'<sup>3</sup>

It is true that, as has been pointed out, the trading interest of the West Riding failed after 1830 'to assert the power to select one of its own kind' as a county member and equally true that 'there could not be another Brougham in Yorkshire for many years to come',<sup>4</sup> that, in other words, the two important gains of 1826 and 1830 were not repeated. Yet it would be wrong to assume that all electoral activity in Leeds be-

1. Ibid., Dundas to Milton, 23 July, 1830, Wood to Milton (n.d.)
2. Leeds Intelligencer, 30 Sept. 1830; Wentworth Woodhouse MSS G.2. Tottie to Milton 24 July, 1830.
3. Ibid., Foster to Milton (postmark 1 Aug. 1830).
4. F.M.L.Thompson "Whigs and Liberals in the West Riding, 1830-1860" in Eng.Hist.Rev. Vol.LXXIV (1959), p.220; Gash op.cit., p.33.

tween 1830 and 1832 was directed merely towards the expected enfranchisement of the town.

Although the appointment of Brougham as Lord Chancellor in November 1830 rather shattered Baines and his party and left the West Riding in what John Marshall Junior called 'a forlorn condition'<sup>1</sup>, nevertheless Leeds stirred somewhat in attempting to find a replacement for Brougham. Samuel Clapham and others spoke of inviting Lord John Russell to stand and Marshall warned Brougham ominously 'The Claphams, as you know, are resolute, determined men and are rather disposed to have their own way.'<sup>2</sup> In the event Sir John Johnstone was returned unopposed in November 1830 but Leeds played a significant part in the general election in the following May.

Before the dissolution of Parliament, caused by the defeat of the Grey ministry on the Gascoyne motion, the Leeds Association for Promoting Within The County of York The Free Return Of Fit Representatives (which had originated from the Brougham election) pledged itself to do all in its power to secure the election of four supporters of the Reform Bill for the county of York.<sup>3</sup> The Intelligencer criticised the willingness of the Leeds Association to use 'every means'<sup>4</sup> but what was really significant was the suggestion, originating in Leeds, that the Liberals should dominate the whole county representation, thus breaking

1. Brougham MSS No.9390. Marshall to Brougham 23 Nov.1830.

2. Ibid.

3. Leeds Mercury, 26 March 1831. For Leeds Association see below, p.37-42.

4. Leeds Intelligencer, 31 March 1831.

the understanding since 1807 that Whig-Liberals and Tories should share the seats.

The Leeds Association in April 1831 invited reformers from other towns to a meeting in Leeds to discuss the means of implementing the plan of getting four Liberals elected.<sup>1</sup> If the Intelligencer is to be believed the Leeds Association, possibly dreaming of another Brougham, suggested Lord John Russell as one of the candidates.<sup>2</sup> Certainly the Leeds Association had a particular candidate in mind for subsequently Edward Baines Junior reported that 'in deference to the views of a numerous meeting of gentlemen from other places the Association gave its hearty support to the four Liberal candidates who had offered their services to the freeholders.'<sup>3</sup> Presumably the county squires were not to be caught unprepared a second time and the names of Morpeth, Johnstone, Ramsden and Strickland were ready before the meeting in Leeds took place. The presentation of a silver cup to Tottie by the four successful candidates suggests that his efforts may have been instrumental in persuading the Leeds Association to fall into line.<sup>4</sup>

Once the names had been agreed upon the Leeds Association took charge of the canvassing and when the candidates visited Leeds the Intelligencer referred to them as 'the four coalition candidates brought

1. Leeds Mercury, 16, 23 April, 1831.
2. Leeds Intelligencer, 21 April 1831 printed a letter signed by John Peele Clapham and Edward Baines Junior, the joint secretaries of the Leeds Association, in which the invitation to the meeting was issued and the preference for Lord John Russell expressed. The authenticity of the letter was not challenged in the Mercury, and it fits in with the suggestion mentioned above (p.33) of Russell being suggested in the previous November.
3. Leeds Mercury, 21 Jan.1832, Report of the Committee of the Leeds Association . . . Read at the Annual Meeting (1832), p.5. (Brotherton Library).
4. Leeds Intelligencer, 6 Oct.1831, J. Mayhall, Annals of Yorkshire (1875?) I, p373



forward by the Leeds Association'.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, so great was the reliance of the candidates on the Leeds Association that it was claimed that its members 'think for them, act for them, shout for them, trumpet for them.'<sup>2</sup>

In suggesting that all four seats should be fought by the Liberals, in arranging a delegate meeting and in taking the most active part in securing the election the Leeds Association justified its claim to have had 'no small share' in the success.<sup>3</sup> The Intelligencer went even further and believed the 'Leeds Junto' to be in full control of the county representation.

'The most active part of the game was played by some half dozen<sup>4</sup> of the Leeds dictators. They are the Lords and Masters of the county; they "wield at will the fierce democracy"; and the Whig aristocracy and landed gentry, however galling to their hearts however severe the pangs of submission, voluntarily wear the chain and join in applauding that which they cannot help.'<sup>5</sup>

When the Leeds Association turned its attention to the new West Riding constituency later in 1831 it was warned that the West Riding would not be 'led by the nose at the next election as the county submitted to be led at the last.'<sup>6</sup>

It was not only on the Whig-Liberal side that Leeds played a part

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1. Leeds Intelligencer, 28 April 1831.
  2. Ibid.
  3. Report of the Committee . . . etc., p.4.
  4. Leeds Intelligencer, 21 April 1831 had listed Baines, Wailes, Marshall, Rawson, Clapham and Heaps as the leaders of the Leeds party.
  5. Ibid., 5 May 1831.
  6. Ibid., 15 Sept.1831.

in the 1831 county election. In 1830 it had been at the Leeds Coloured Cloth Hall that the Gott family had begun the move to invite Richard Bethell, the Tory candidate, to stand.<sup>1</sup> In 1831 Tory efforts again centred on Leeds and a meeting to try to find suitable Tory candidates was held at the office of the Leeds Intelligencer in April.<sup>2</sup> The speed with which the four Liberal candidates were in the field frightened off the prospective Tory candidates like Duncombe, Lascelles and Wortley because a contested election, with the enormous costs involved, was thereby unavoidable.

It was boasted that the Tories had between £20,000 and £30,000 for election expenses but this was not enough, since a Yorkshire election stood 'under the imposing shadow of a 100 thousand pounds' as George Cayley had put it in 1830.<sup>3</sup> Even on the question of finance Leeds had led the way by raising a sizable subscription but as William Beckett explained at a York meeting 'the gentlemen of Leeds and neighbourhood expected a corresponding energy from the country gentlemen of the party'. This was strange indeed for the Tories of the towns to be active whereas the county squires sat back and let the four Liberals 'walk over the course'.<sup>4</sup>

In many ways it was through a degree of political organisation that Leeds had been able to play a part in the county politics of 1830 and

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1. Wentworth Woodhouse MSS, G.2. Strickland to Milton, 14 July 1830, G.83. Tottie to Milton, 14 July 1830.
  2. Leeds Intelligencer, 28 April 1831.
  3. Ibid., 5 May 1831; Wentworth Woodhouse MSS, G.2. Cayley to Milton, 16 June 1830
  4. Leeds Intelligencer, 5 May 1831.

1831 for as Baines Junior said later

'Combination afforded the means, and the only means, of enabling the freeholders to break the monopoly which a few great and wealthy families had heretofore possessed of the County Representation'.<sup>1</sup>

By the time of the 1831 election the Liberals of Leeds had their Leeds Association and the Tories their "Friends of Constitutional Principles". Thus when attention switched in the summer of 1831 from the county to the borough both sides knew the value of political organisation.

There were in fact no less than five political organisations which participated in the Leeds election of 1832. They were the Leeds Association, the Leeds Political Union, sometimes referred to as the Holbeck Union, the Leeds Radical Political Union or Mann's Union, the Leeds True Blue Constitutional Association and the Leeds Operatives Committee. Their respective activities need to be analysed for they cast a great deal of light on the party divisions in Leeds.

The Leeds Association has become the most well known of the political organisations of Leeds, although its origins have never been fully explored.<sup>2</sup> In fact the Leeds Association was a direct result of the ac-

1. Report of the Committee . . . etc., p.3.
2. The date of the foundation of the Leeds Association has not previously been identified. R.W.Ram, The Political Activity of Dissenters in the East and West Ridings of Yorkshire 1815-1850 (Hull M.A.Thesis 1964), p.123, states that the Association was formed in September 1831, which is the date of the first reference to the Association in J.R.Lowerson Sir Edward Baines (Leeds M.A. Thesis 1965), pp.56-57, and in A.S. Turberville and F.Beckwith "Leeds and Parliamentary Reform" in Thoresby Society Miscellany, XII (1954), pp.42-43. No date of foundation is given in A.Briggs "The Background of the Parliamentary Reform Movement in Three English Cities 1830-1832" in Cambridge Historical Journal, X (1952), p.312 or in C. Driver Tory Radical (1946), p.178. D.Read, Press and People (1961), p.121, gives the dates as 'early in 1831'.

tivity and organisation which had taken place at the Brougham election in 1830. On the day after Brougham and Morpeth had been chosen as candidates Tottie reported to Lord Milton that a numerous committee had been formed in Leeds which was sub-dividing for the canvassing of signatures, the collections of subscriptions and the arranging of deputations.<sup>1</sup> It was from this committee that the Leeds Association grew:

'Those individuals, therefore, in this town, who had formed the temporary Committee to promote the return of Lord Morpeth and Mr. Brougham, resolved to constitute an Association, which should in some degree organise the dispersed elements of popular strength, and perpetuate by system, and by prudent counsels, the advantage gained by enthusiasm.'

The Association was formed in December 1830 and after several preliminary meetings the first general meeting was held on 13th January 1831.<sup>3</sup> The committee comprised John Marshall as Chairman, George Rawson and John Clapham as Vice-Chairmen, John Marshall Junior as Treasurer, Edward Baines Junior and John Peele Clapham as Secretaries and fifteen others, including the elder Baines. The rules of the Association stated that the heavy expense involved in a Yorkshire election limited the possible candidates and therefore the aim was to return members for the county free from all except legal expenses.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to this local aim the Association was pledged to support

'such a Reform of the Representative System, (including the Vote by Ballot) as shall rescue the Elector from corrupt influence and identify the House of Commons with the interests of the people - Reduction of Taxation, with rigorous economy in the Public Expenditure, - the extinction

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1. Wentworth Woodhouse MSS, G.2. Tottie to Milton, 24 July 1830
  2. Report of the Committee . . . etc., p.3.
  3. Leeds Mercury 18 Dec. 1830, 22 Jan. 1831; Leeds Intelligencer, 20 Jan. 1831
  4. Leeds Mercury, 22 Jan. 1831, Report of the Committee . . . etc., p.7.

of all Monopolies, - the total Abolition of Colonial Slavery, - and Non-Interference with the internal affairs of Foreign States.'<sup>1</sup>

Such aims would appear to indicate that the Leeds Association was, despite its title, not simply an electioneering body but was concerned, like for instance the Birmingham Political Union, with a whole programme of reform. When after a year's activity the Secretary reported that all the meetings and petitions on reform in both town and county had been 'promoted by the Association'<sup>2</sup> the similarity with the Birmingham Political Union seems to be reinforced.

Yet the Leeds Association though supporting many reforms was in one important respect completely different from the Birmingham Political Union and the difference may be measured by their respective attitudes towards the Press. The Council of the Birmingham Political Union saw the Press as a great ally and hoped to organise 'a system of operations, whereby the Public Press may be influenced to act generally in support of the Public Interests'.<sup>3</sup> T.C.Salt, the Secretary, once remarked 'It is right that our meetings should be open to the Press, and if we admit our friends we must admit our enemies'.<sup>4</sup>

The Leeds Association however refused to admit their enemies, in the persons of the reporters of the radical Patriot and the Tory Intelligencer<sup>5</sup>, but at the same time did not utilise the Mercury for pub-

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1. Ibid.

2. Leeds Mercury, 21 Jan.1832, Report of the Committee . . . etc., p.7.

3. Birmingham Journal, 30 Jan.1830.

4. Ibid., 27 March 1830.

5. Leeds Patriot, 21 Jan.1832, Leeds Intelligencer, 21 April, 1 Sept.1831.

licity despite the key positions held by the two Baineses. Only once, and that very early on, was any appeal for membership made by the Mercury,<sup>1</sup> meetings were never advertised beforehand and only rarely reported afterwards. The rules of the Association stated that the committee had to meet at least once every three months and yet in the first two years of its existence there were only three reports of any length in the Mercury,<sup>2</sup> although the younger Baines, as Secretary, must have been privy to all the transactions.

If August and September 1831 are taken as an example it will be seen how much of the Association's activities went on behind closed doors. On 6 September 1831 the Association met and resolved to oppose any undue influence in the forthcoming Leeds election. This meeting was reported in the Mercury<sup>3</sup> but no further meetings were mentioned although other evidence suggests that several meetings were held. It was the Leeds Association which in August contacted Macaulay to ascertain his opinions and a meeting to consider his reply must certainly have been held.<sup>4</sup> The Leeds Association invited a delegate meeting to the town of county Whig-Liberals to discuss the choice of two candidates for the forthcoming West Riding election, yet when the meeting occurred no mention was made in the Mercury of the Associations' part here.<sup>5</sup> Finally if, as was

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1. Leeds Mercury, 23 April 1831.
  2. Ibid., 10 Sept.1831, 21 Jan., 12 May 1832.
  3. Ibid., 10 Sept.1831.
  4. Report of the Committee . . . etc., p.5; E.Baines The Life of Edward Baines (1859),p.136 reports that the actual contact was made by the elder Baines. This was probably the meeting referred to by Leeds Intelligencer, 1 Sept.1831.
  5. Leeds Intelligencer, 15 Sept.1831; Leeds Mercury, 17 Sept.1831.



claimed later, it was the Association which had in fact promoted all the town meetings. on reform then there must have been a meeting to arrange the requisition to the Mayor for a town meeting to petition the House of Lords.<sup>1</sup>

There is thus circumstantial evidence that four meetings may have been held of which only one was reported and this gives a clue to the true function of the Leeds Association. It was not, like the Political Unions, a political organisation which sought to lead the town's liberals by amassing a huge membership, holding great open meetings and continually publicising its activities. It was very much a behind the scenes organisation which set the wheels of activity in motion through its influential and exclusive membership. Even within the Association there was, according to the Intelligencer, 'a committee of the committee - that is to say the select few who previously settle in private all that shall be done in public'.<sup>2</sup> In the inner group the key figures were usually assumed to be the two Baineses, George Rawson and John Clapham and if there was anyone "in charge" of the whole organisation it was felt to be the elder Baines.<sup>3</sup>

The emergence of Macaulay as a candidate in 1831 and the meetings arranged when Grey resigned in May 1832 provide good examples of the function of the Leeds Association. Just as in 1830 Brougham's name had emerged as a result of a combination of a Mercury editorial with the

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1. This meeting was eventually held at the end of September after the Mayor had refused to summon it. Leeds Mercury, 24 Sept., 1 Oct. 1831.
  2. Leeds Intelligencer, 26 Jan. 1832.
  3. Ibid., 31 May, 6 Sept. 1832; Leeds Patriot, 21 Jan. 1832.



activity of a group of Liberals in Leeds so too Macaulay's name emerged in this way. The suggestion was first made publicly in a Mercury editorial of 3 September 1831 after having been suggested to the Association by Baines. Thereafter the Association pledged itself to support Macaulay and organised a canvass for signatures.<sup>1</sup> It was not always easy to find suitable candidates and the Leeds Liberals had to look beyond the town on several subsequent occasions. Baines worked through his paper and the Association to get Macaulay's name accepted and it had been anticipated that Baines's suggestion would be welcome:

'all those timid birds who can only flutter and crow on his dunghill will prick up their ears, as if some new light had just broken in upon them; and everyone will coquet and find some fresh recommendation in favour of the Honourable Intended'<sup>2</sup>

The town's Liberals needed a lead; Baines and the Association provided it.

When Grey resigned in May 1832 and it appeared that Wellington might form a ministry the workings of the Leeds Association were more fully reported. As soon as the news of Grey's resignation came through the Leeds Association resolved to arrange two meetings, one in Leeds for the town and one in Wakefield for the county. The Leeds Political Union also met but rather than arrange anything itself it sent a deputation to the Leeds Association and fell into line with the Association's plans.<sup>3</sup> When the two great meetings were held, the one at Leeds attended

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1. Leeds Mercury, 3,10,17 Sept. 1831; Report of the Committee . . . etc., p.5-6.
  2. Principles and Not Men, A dialogue Between Tom and Jerry (dated 27 Aug. 1831) Leeds Ref.Lib.
  3. Leeds Mercury, 12 May 1832, Leeds Intelligencer, 24 May 1832.

by 50,000 people and the one at Wakefield by 170,000,<sup>1</sup> they were not meetings of the Leeds Association but meetings originating with and organised by the Association. Once the process of initiating action had taken place the Leeds Association merged once more into the background.

This was the pattern of activity which the Association had used with regard to the county delegate meetings in April and September 1831, mentioned above. In both cases it was the Association that organised the meetings but once they occurred the meetings became ordinary gatherings of Liberal county electors. In all these cases the Leeds Association was providing the initial stimulus to action and when petitions had to be organised and meetings arranged some body of townsmen had to formulate policy and begin the process of political activity. This was precisely what the Leeds Association set out to do for whereas in extreme cases of political excitement public enthusiasm could be relied upon to initiate action the Association took upon itself this task of stimulating activity whether the public excitement existed or not.<sup>2</sup> In all cases the Association recognised that its success depended on 'the mighty force of public opinion' and therefore its influence on being 'in unison with the intelligence and public spirit of the community'.<sup>3</sup>

It has been truly pointed out that the reform agitation in Leeds did not resolve itself into an all-embracing political union and that the fragmentation of political organisation reflected deep social and poli-

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1. These figures were given in Leeds Mercury 15, 26 May 1832. Mayhall, op.cit., I, pp.386-7 gives the figures as 70,000 and 100,000.
  2. Cf. the aim of the Association as quoted above, p.38-9.
  3. Report of the Committee . . . etc., p.4.

tical cleavage.<sup>1</sup> While it is clear why each separate party in the town should have wished to have a political organisation of its own, it is less clear why the middle-class Whig-Liberals should have two, the Leeds Association and the Leeds Political Union. Why when Baines was preaching the need for unity among all reformers<sup>2</sup> did the middle-class reformers work through two organisations? After the great triumphs of 1832 the younger Baines rejoiced that 'a harmonious cooperation of all classes of Reformers took place' and that the 'Leeds Association and the Leeds Political Union joined heartily' together.<sup>3</sup> Yet why did two organisations exist at all when they were pursuing the same ends?

The answer lies in the characteristics of the Leeds Association as they have just been outlined. It was the small, exclusive, almost private, organisation which pulled strings and issued plans of campaign. The Leeds Political Union, on the other hand, was a larger association, socially less restricted in its appeal, which worked in a more public manner. Joseph Lees, the schoolteacher who became the secretary of the Leeds Political Union, once admitted that as an ordinary member of the Leeds Association he had spoken up against the Association's activities behind the scenes, preferring them to be in public.<sup>4</sup> The difference between the two bodies was symbolised by the Leeds reform meeting of May 1832. Although the Leeds Association was responsible for cal-

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1. Lowerson, op.cit., p.47, Briggs, op.cit., pp.309-315.
  2. It was a major editorial theme of Baines going right back to 1819 (see D.Read, Press and People (1961), p.114) and he had pursued it at the Annual General Meeting of the Leeds Association in January 1832 (see Leeds Mercury, 21 Jan.1832).
  3. Second Report of the Committee of the Leeds Reform Association (1833), p.4. Brotherton Library .
  4. Leeds Intelligencer, 9 Aug.1832.

ling the meeting nobody urged members of the audience to join the Association and swell its ranks whereas Henry Heald<sup>1</sup> gave just that invitation with regard to the Leeds Political Union.<sup>2</sup> The former did not need additional membership to continue its work, the success of the latter was more dependent on its numbers.

The Leeds Political Union originated in a meeting held on 3 November 1831 which appointed a committee to draw up rules, which in turn were presented to a further meeting on 17 November, the same night on which the Leeds Radical Political Union was formed.<sup>3</sup> This coincidence in time has led to the suggestion that the main motive of the Leeds Political Union was to prevent the success of the more radical union.<sup>4</sup> The Leeds Political Union based itself firmly on the class cooperation recommended by the Birmingham Political Union and the Council of the new society was to be composed of middle- and working-class members. The aim was to unite the middle- and working-classes in a peaceful agitation and the theme was to be "Peace Order and Unanimity"<sup>5</sup>.

The Royal Proclamation of November 1831 against the proposed changes in the structure and organisation of the Birmingham Political Union<sup>6</sup> gave William Hey, the Mayor of Leeds, the excuse he needed to deny the Leeds Political Union the use of the Court House because, he claimed, the

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1. Heald was a woollorter and one of the operatives who was a member of the Council of the Leeds Political Union (see Leeds Mercury, 24 Dec. 1831).
  2. Leeds Mercury Extraordinary, 15 May 1832.
  3. Leeds Mercury, 19, 26 Nov. 1831.
  4. This suggestion was made by Turberville and Beckwith, op.cit., p.47, and was repeated by Read, op.cit., pp.121-2.
  5. Leeds Mercury, 19 Nov. 1831.
  6. Grey had been extremely suspicious of the political unions even before Attwood suggested the alterations (see A. Briggs The Age of Improvement, (1959), pp.253-4)

Proclamation cast doubts on the legality of all political unions.

Though the Mercury challenged this interpretation the Leeds Political Union was sufficiently cautious to postpone the election of the Council and to suspend the enrolment of new members until the legal point was clarified.<sup>1</sup>

During December 1831 the enrolment of new members recommenced, the election of the 18 middle-class and 18 working-class members of the Council took place and the first public meeting was held, attended by over 1,000 people.<sup>2</sup> The dividing line between middle- and working-class members caused some debate and it was finally decided on the recommendation of William Nichols, a machine maker and Vice-Chairman of the Council, that a man who had to maintain himself by the labour of his own hands was working-class and all other middle-class.<sup>3</sup>

From the beginning the activities and function of the Leeds Political Union contrasted with those of the Leeds Association. In place of the 'secret councils'<sup>4</sup> of the Leeds Association there were regular open meetings fully reported in all three Leeds papers.<sup>5</sup> It has already been pointed out that the Leeds Association addressed enquiries to Ma-caulay and considered his reply but the exact date and details of all this are in doubt. When the Leeds Political Union addressed a series of questions to the three candidates in the Leeds election the questions were agreed upon and the replies were considered at open meetings and

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1. Leeds Mercury, 26 Nov.1831.

2. Ibid., 3,17,24,31 Dec.1831, Leeds Intelligencer, 22 Dec.1831.

3. Ibid., 17 Dec.1831.

4. The term used by the Leeds Intelligencer, 6 Sept.1832.

5. Leeds Intelligencer, 16 Aug.1832 devoted three and a half columns of verbatim reports to a meeting of the Leeds Political Union, although in general its reports were not normally as full as this.

lively debates held, which were particularly critical of Macaulay's unwillingness to give pledges as to his future actions.<sup>1</sup> It was the Leeds Political Union which organised the great procession from Leeds to Wakefield for the reform meeting of May 1832 and the street demonstrations in Leeds when the Reform Bill became law.<sup>2</sup> The Leeds Association discussed matters in private, the Leeds Political Union performed in public.

It has been assumed, probably because of the editorial support the Mercury gave to this Political Union and to the idea of unity among reformers, that the creation of the Leeds Political Union was the work of Edward Baines.<sup>3</sup> It is true that there were several occasions when the Leeds Political Union showed deference to the wishes of the Leeds Association, one of which, the decision to send a deputation to the Leeds Association when Grey resigned in May 1832, has already been mentioned. At a meeting to discuss the condition of the Irish poor Baines was supported by the leaders of the Leeds Political Union and was able to carry the meeting because of this support.<sup>4</sup> The Leeds Political Union agreed

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1. Leeds Mercury, 11, 18 Aug. 1832, Leeds Intelligencer, 2, 16 Aug. 1832. For an example of Macaulay's views on pledges see his letter dated 3 Aug. 1832 in C.O. Trevelyan The Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay (1903 ed.), p. 285.
  2. Leeds Mercury, 19, 26 May, 7 June 1832.
  3. Cf. A. Briggs "The Background of the Parliamentary . . . etc." loc.cit., p. 312, 'Baines was building up his Whig Political Union'; also D. Read Press and People (1961), pp. 121-2, 'Baines organised the Holbeck Political Union . . . Baines formed his union'; and D. Read The English Provinces (1964), p. 89, 'the other (inspired by Edward Baines)'.
  4. Leeds Mercury, 14 Jan. 1832, Leeds Intelligencer, 19 Jan. 1832.



in August 1833 to form an election committee in support of Marshall and Macaulay but in the event the Leeds Association decided that 'no particular association should constitute an election committee' and so a committee was formed from the two bodies, with the two Vice-Chairmen of the Leeds Association, George Rawson and John Clapham, as Chairmen of the election committee.<sup>1</sup>

The Intelligencer claimed that the Leeds Association wished to 'make a tool' of the Leeds Political Union, which the Patriot believed to be 'the sole property of Mr. Edward Baines'.<sup>2</sup> However, these comments were made in the very early days of the Leeds Political Union's existence and as 1832 wore on the name of Baines became less and less connected with it, for it must be remembered that neither of the Baineses were on the Council of the Union. In fact if the Leeds Association was Baines's and the Radical Political Union was Mann's then the Leeds Political Union was quite definitely Bower's.

Joshua Bower was the Chairman of the Leeds Political Union and he was its acclaimed leader throughout its existence. He owed his popularity not to his wealth, derived from his glass works, his tolls and his coal mines<sup>3</sup> but to his style of oratory and political views. Among

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1. Leeds Mercury, 18 Aug. 1832, Second Report of the Committee of the Leeds Reform Association (1833), p. 5, Men of Leeds, handbill in The Cracker and Other Explosions Which Have Gone Off During the Election Leeds Ref. Lib. 324.4275084L .
  2. Leeds Intelligencer, 26 Jan. 1832, Leeds Patriot, 10 Dec. 1821.
  3. R.V. Taylor Biographia Leodiensis (1865), pp. 455-6, estimated his wealth when he died at £100,000. His collieries were listed as Allerton Main and Astley in T. Baines Yorkshire Past and Present (1871?), I, p. 102.



any large crowd he was an ideal speaker because of his choice of language and wit. He delighted his audience with his 'racy Saxon language'<sup>1</sup> and anyone who was verbally attacked by Bower could expect no quarter. Thus John Foster, editor of the radical Patriot, found himself described by Bower as 'a muck headed fellow - a puppy - a booby' to the great amusement of an audience who had come to the Music Hall to hear Marshall and Mac<sup>a</sup>ulay.<sup>2</sup>

If his popular oratory made him an ideal figure to lead the Leeds Political Union his political views enabled him to appeal to all ranks of reformers. He was really quite radical on the question of Parliamentary reform but took the pragmatic view that although more than the Reform Bill was required it was better to accept what was possible for the time being.<sup>3</sup> Though his wealth made him a middle-class reformer he nevertheless had the personal popularity to appeal to the operatives in his Political Union. He, rather than Baines, provided the link between the two organisations for he was Chairman of the Political Union and a committee member of the Leeds Association.<sup>4</sup> The only other person with a foot in both camps was John Whitehead, treasurer of the Leeds Political Union and committee member of the Leeds Association, but he

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1. Leeds Mercury, 8 Sept.1832. Cf.Taylor, op.cit., p.456, 'uttering sound truths in Saxon-English'.
  2. Leeds Patriot, 1 Dec.1832, Leeds Intelligencer 6 Dec.1832, Leeds Mercury, 1 Dec.1832.
  3. See for example his speech to the Leeds Political Union in Leeds Mercury, 24 Dec.1831 or to the Leeds Association ibid., 21 Jan.1832. This continued to be his policy in the 1830's and '40's.
  4. Report of the Committee . . . etc., p.2, Leeds Mercury, 17 Dec.1831.

was not a frequent speaker at public meetings.<sup>1</sup> Thus it was natural that Joshua Bower at seven on a May morning in 1832 should have set out on horseback at the head of the great procession to Wakefield. When the Leeds reformers held their dinner to celebrate the passing of the Reform Bill it was George Rawson, Vice-Chairman of the Leeds Association, who presided over the 200 diners inside the Coloured Cloth Hall but Joshua Bower, 'the voice of the Political Union',<sup>2</sup> who presided over the 2,000 outside.<sup>3</sup>

There was one other leader of the Leeds Political Union who gained a sizeable though somewhat undesirable reputation during 1832 and this was Joseph Lees, a schoolmaster who became the Secretary of the Union. Predictably nicknamed "Professor Lees", he was responsible for writing to the candidates on two occasions to ascertain their opinions and was a regular, second-string, speaker at public meetings.<sup>4</sup> His reputation was derived from the responsibility he had for the recruitment of what may be politely termed marshals to keep order at meetings.

In May 1832, when excitement over the resignation of the Grey ministry was at its height, it was natural for there to be hostility towards those who opposed the Reform Bill. At the Leeds meeting to oppose Wellington Robert Hall spoke against the Reform Bill because it went too far and was forced to take shelter in the Coloured Cloth Hall,

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1. Ibid. John Wilkinson who was on the Committee of the Leeds Association was also elected to the Council but he resigned the following week, saying that he had been elected against his wishes.
  2. Leeds Mercury, 8 Sept.1832.
  3. Ibid., 16 June 1832.
  4. See for example his speeches in January, April and May 1832 in ibid., 14 Jan., 21 April, 15 May 1832.

And John Foster tried to speak on behalf of the Radicals who believed the Bill did not go far enough and was chased from the meeting. This may have been the spontaneous reaction of the crowd but Foster was determined to make it appear a well-organised piece of intimidation and he clearly wallowed in his own near-martyrdom to the radical cause.

In the next edition of his paper Foster wrote 'I was set upon by a gang of at least 100 ruffians and narrowly escaped with my life' and referred to

'the men who planned our assassination last Monday, the cowardly brutes who calmly looked on and witnessed one man having to defend his life assisted by some half-dozen brave young men, to whom our heart is ready to burst with gratitude, against about a hundred drunken hired bludgeon ruffians.'<sup>1</sup>

From that time until the paper wound up in February 1833 the Patriot made 'bludgeon ruffianism' one of its major themes.<sup>2</sup> Gradually the name of Joseph Lees became specifically associated with this means of proscribing opponents and Lees himself admitted in October that he had hired men to keep the hustings clear of all parties, denying the rival claims that their job was to prevent the 'Blues' from supporting their candidate.<sup>3</sup>

By the end of 1832 practically every reference to Lees was in the

1. Leeds Patriot, 19 May 1832.
2. Like Falstaff's men in Lincoln green Foster's attackers grew in number and ferocity for in *ibid.*, 15 Dec.1832, he referred to 200 and in the last edition of the paper, 16 Feb.1833, he wrote that the attack on him would have been a disgrace 'to the Red Indians of North America.'
3. Leeds Mercury, 6 Oct.1832, Leeds Intelligencer, 4, 11 Oct. 1832, Leeds Patriot, 6, 13 Oct.1832. In May Lees was charged only with being one of the conspirators, by October he was regarded as being in charge of the whole operation.

vein of 'Lees and his Water-Men'<sup>1</sup> or 'Lees and his hired ruffians' and he was painted like some mercenary captain with a private army. Thus on nomination day it was claimed that 'Lees had a very strong gang of Bludgeon Men armed to the teeth at his command' and earlier that he represented 'The dictation of hired bravos! The dictation of personal violence! The dictation of the club and the dagger!'<sup>2</sup> The picture is certainly overdrawn but it fits in with the essence of the appeal of Leeds Political Union. With Bower, the popular orator, and Lees, the stage manager of the crowds, the Leeds Political Union was always concerned with public displays of party strength and though it showed deference to the Leeds Association it was important in its own right.

Similar in name though not in aim was the Leeds Radical Political Union which held its first meeting on the same night, 17 November, 1831, as Bower's Political Union.<sup>3</sup> The move to form the Radical Political Union antedated that which led to the Leeds Political Union by about a week, for at the end of October Foster reported 'the operatives of Leeds are at last bestirring themselves to start a real Radical Union'.<sup>4</sup> About 100 working-class radicals met at the beginning of November to discuss the formation of a union based on universal suffrage, the ballot and annual parliaments and further interest was aroused by Henry Hunt's

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1. Most of the bludgeon men were said to have been bargemen on the canal.
  2. Falsehoods Of The Oranges in The Cracker and Other Explosions . .etc.; The Cracker, 6 Dec.1832 Leeds Ref.Lib. . Cf. Leeds Patriot, 15 Dec. 1832 'a set of the lowest and vilest miscreants on earth were hired by the Orange Party to bully and bludgeon every man who differed from them.'
  3. Leeds Mercury, 19 Nov.1831, Leeds Intelligencer, 24 Nov.1831, Leeds Patriot, 19 Nov.1831.
  4. Leeds Patriot, 29 Oct.1831. The first signs of activity from Bower and his friends was on 3 November, see above, p.45.

visit to Leeds, during which Baines made a spirited attempt to detach working-class support from the radical cause.<sup>1</sup> Baines had failed at Hunt's meeting and the formation of the Leeds Radical Political Union confirmed that the Mercury line was not universally popular.<sup>2</sup>

During the first few weeks of its existence this Radical Union devoted much of its attention to emphasising its independence of and lack of connection with the Leeds Political Union. It was at pains to point out that the similarity of name between the two was the fault of Bower's Union. In December 1831 John Watts moved a resolution disavowing 'any connexion with the association formed in a neighbouring village and misnamed the Leeds Political Union' and Robert Howard, the Treasurer of the Radical Union, was sent to a meeting of the rival body and spoke for half an hour challenging its right to call itself the Leeds Political Union.<sup>3</sup> The persistent use of the term Holbeck Political Union to refer to the Leeds Political Union was inspired more by a desire to belittle the influence of a rival than to avoid confusion.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Ibid., 5, 12 Nov. 1831, Leeds Intelligencer, 10 Nov. 1831, Leeds Mercury, 5, 12 Nov. 1831. For an account of the visit based on the newspaper reports see Turbeville and Beckwith, op.cit., pp.45-6.
  2. At the first meeting thanks were given to the Patriot and Intelligencer for their objective reporting, while the Mercury's reports were condemned.
  3. Leeds Patriot, 10 Dec. 1831, Leeds Mercury, 17 Dec. 1831.
  4. As was suggested by Turbeville and Beckwith, op.cit., p.47, 'In order to avoid confusion . . . it will be well to describe this new body as the Holbeck Union, which contemporaries often did, no doubt for the same reason.' It certainly annoyed the Leeds Political Union to be referred to as the Holbeck Union. Cf. speech of James Morgan in Leeds Mercury, 31 Dec. 1831 and Joseph Lees in Leeds Intelligencer, 12 April 1832.

The Leeds Radical Political Union made its central theme the adequate representation of working-class interests in Parliament. It wanted representation coexistent with taxation and pledged itself 'never to be satisfied with any mode of representation which excludes that class from the right of voting whose industry alone produces wealth'.<sup>1</sup> When Baines taunted them with being supporters of Mann's school of reform the reply was that it was 'man's school, the poor man's school of reform in which they were taught the wrongs of the poor and the rights they ought to enjoy'.<sup>2</sup> To the Leeds Radical Political Union the Reform Bill was merely a device to unite the aristocracy together with the middle-class in order thereby to deprive the working-classes of their rights.<sup>3</sup>

The Leeds Radical Political Union was the successor to the Radical Reform Association which Foster and Mann had organised in 1829.<sup>4</sup> In the Leeds Radical Political Union there were five important figures, John Ayrey as President, William Rider as Secretary<sup>5</sup>, Robert Howard as Treasurer, together with Mann and Foster, who although not occupying official positions were key figures in the wider appeal for support.

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1. Leeds Intelligencer, 24 Nov. 1831; Leeds Patriot, 19 Nov. 1831.
  2. Speech of William Rider in Leeds Intelligencer, 8 Dec. 1831.
  3. Speech of John Newton in ibid., 24 Nov. 1831.
  4. For an account of the activities of this earlier association see Turbeville and Beckwith op.cit., pp.26-30.
  5. When the organisation began J.B.Walker was Secretary but was replaced by Rider after six months.



James Mann, because of his long connexion with Radical organisations going back to 1819, was able to appeal to working men who were not already committed in the political struggle<sup>1</sup> and John Foster, because of his newspaper, the Patriot, and his willingness to speak on behalf of Radicals at public meetings, was able to put the Radical case to a middle-class audience.<sup>2</sup>

The very existence of the Leeds Radical Political Union, aiming for working-class representation and appealing to a socially limited membership,<sup>3</sup> was evidence that the latent hostility and incompatibility of aims between middle and working-class reformers, which in some cities remained hidden, was in Leeds clear for all to see. One thing which pointedly symbolised this split was the bitter personal rivalry between Edward Baines and the leading Radicals. Between Baines and Foster there was the expected rivalry of competing journalists<sup>4</sup> and Baines and Mann had long been at each others' throats. But the main attack on Baines came from Rider and Ayrey who during 1832 came to be regarded as the leaders of the "sans-culottes", as the Radicals were on one occasion called.<sup>5</sup> Both Rider and Ayrey persistently challenged the most cher-

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1. See for example Mann's clever handling of a meeting of unemployed workmen, Leeds Patriot, 4 Aug. 1832.
  2. The meeting at which Foster was chased off (above p.51) was one example.
  3. Yet it is interesting to note that its subscription of 2s0d. per quarter was double that of the Leeds Political Union, and only slightly less than the 5s0d. per year paid by members of the Leeds Association and the Leeds True Blue Constitutional Association.
  4. In Wentworth Woodhouse MSS, G.2 there is a letter from Foster to Lord Milton (postmark 1 Aug. 1830) in which Foster claimed he had been shamefully treated by Baines despite having written for the Mercury for 14 years without reward.
  5. In a verse Rymes for the Blue Nursery in Representation of Leeds 1831-1841 Thoresby Society Library S A 2 .



ished virtue in a journalist, his veracity, and Ayrey went so far as to write to Baines

'As an elector and a radical I tell you that I view with suspicion and distrust every man that is eulogised by you while on the other hand I consider every man as honest, sincere and patriotic who is maligned and misrepresented by you.'<sup>1</sup>

The hostility between the Radicals and middle-class Liberals grew as did the friendship between the Radicals and the Tories. Losing faith in the Parliamentary reform of the Whig ministers the Leeds Radical Political Union turned more towards the 10 hours movement and in October 1832 discussed a motion from a society for the protection of labour.<sup>2</sup> Though not deserting the ultimate aim of adequate working-class representation in Parliament the Leeds Radicals in 1832 vigorously supported Sadler in the Leeds election and fought for justice for the factory children;

'And ye hapless children who toil in the Mill  
Shall all reap the fruits of the rest giving Bill  
The straps and the roller shall be used no more  
Your backs to incarnadine with your own gore'<sup>3</sup>

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1. To Mr. Edward Baines of the Leeds Mercury in Representation of Leeds 1831-1841. The same point was made by another letter, this time to the Electors of Leeds, which appeared as an advert in Leeds Intelligencer, 20 Sept. 1832 and Leeds Patriot, 22 Sept. 1832. See also verses A Word From William Rider to Edward Baines in Representation of Leeds 1831-1841.
  2. Leeds Patriot, 13 Oct. 1832.
  3. A Rambling Reverie By A Radical Reformer YClep'd William Rider in The Cracker and Other Explosions . . . etc. The very fact of Radical support for Sadler indicated a shift away from straight political reform since his election would not bring universal suffrage any nearer but it was believed it would benefit the interests of working men generally. This whole aspect is discussed more fully below.

This alliance of Radical and Tory which seemed late in 1832 to have been the natural result of the social and political structure of Leeds was very far from the minds of the Tories when they began to organise their forces in 1831. At that time the aim was to resuscitate the dwindling fortunes of a party which had been denied any share in the county representation and which was being outmanoevred by the superior organisation of its rival.

Just as the Leeds Association had grown out of the temporary committee which had been formed for a county election so too did the Leeds True Blue Constitutional Association. It has already been explained that in the abortive attempts to bring forward Tory candidates in April 1831 Leeds had played a significant part.<sup>1</sup> The group who were active in the search for candidates called themselves the Friends of Constitutional Principles and they had already met earlier in the month to petition against the Reform Bill.<sup>2</sup> When the four Whig-Liberal candidates were elected unopposed the Intelligencer complained that while the urban Tories had played their part the county Tories 'have not acted like men who feel strongly or have much to lose'.<sup>3</sup> It was the recognition that the Tories did have a lot to lose that prompted them to attempt to organise their forces more effectively.

On 8 June 1831 a meeting invited by circular was held at the Intelligencer office in order to place on a firmer and more permanent footing

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1. See above, pp. 35-36.

2. Leeds Intelligencer, 14 April 1831.

3. Ibid., 5 May 1831.

the organisation which had formed temporarily during April and May.<sup>1</sup> The two main speakers were Alderman Henry Hall and Michael Sadler. Both then and afterwards great emphasis was placed on the need to act because of action already taken by their rivals. Hall pointed out that their political opponents 'were vigilant and had formed associations for the purposes of forwarding their views and why should not the Tories?' Sadler saw the main danger in the political unions and claimed that they must 'take that lesson from their opponents and unite together in support of sound principles'.<sup>2</sup> Later the *Intelligencer* claimed 'everybody knows that the True Blue Constitutional Association is a consequence of the Orange Association and is conservative and defensive only'.<sup>3</sup>

In view of the subsequent merging of Tory and Radical supporters behind Sadler his speech proposing the formation of the Association makes interesting reading. His theme was the need to defend venerated institutions against the attacks made upon them. Leeds, he argued, ought to give a lead to the rest of the country, as it had always done in the days of Pitt, and the succession of Tory organisations in Leeds<sup>4</sup> now led naturally to this new society. Its aim would be

'The Defence of the true dignity of the Crown and the best interests of the people and for maintaining in their spirit and integrity the existing Institutions of the country in Church and State'.<sup>5</sup>

This was hardly language to appeal to working-class Radicals. The

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1. *Ibid.*, 9 June 1831.

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Ibid.*, 15 Sept. 1831

4. The Blue Club, the Pitt Club, the Brunswick Club.

5. *Leeds Intelligencer*, 9 June 1831.

Mercury mocked the new society but plans were laid for the election of officers in July and the holding of an annual general meeting in November. The advice of Henry Hall to be continually on the alert appeared to be heeded.<sup>1</sup>

However deeds did not match good intentions, consistency did not match temporary enthusiasm. It was later claimed that 'upper class voters move with less celerity than the lower'<sup>2</sup> and it was a feature of the period that Tories were slow to learn the lessons of political agitation.<sup>3</sup> The Leeds True Blue Constitutional Association went into periods of hibernation punctuated by activity at times of great enthusiasm. Thus in September 1831 it launched the requisition to invite Sadler to stand for the Tories<sup>4</sup> which provided the Mercury with an answer to the charge that the Leeds Association were dictating members for the borough. If the Leeds Association were guilty of dictating in suggesting Marshall and Macaulay the Leeds True Blue Constitutional Association were equally guilty in suggesting Sadler.<sup>5</sup>

Nothing more was heard of this Tory Association until May 1832<sup>6</sup> and the excitement over the resignation of Grey at which time it was revealed that Alderman Henry Hall was President and Robert Hall and John

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1. Ibid., 16, 30 June, 14 July 1831, Beeds Mercury, 11 June 1831.

2. Leeds Intelligencer, 13 Dec.1831.

3. Cf. C.L.Mosse "The Anti-League" in Econ.Hist.Rev.,XVII (1947),p.139

4. Leeds Intelligencer, 15 Sept.1831.

5. Leeds Mercury, 10 Sept. 1831.

6. I have been able to find no trace of the election of officers in July or the A.G.M. in November mentioned above and the likelihood is that they were in fact not held. As with the Leeds Association there has been confusion over the date of origin of the Leeds True Blue Constitutional Association and F.Beckwith "Leeds Intelligencer 1754-1866" in Publications of the Thoresby Society,XL(1955),p.xxxi, implied that the activities of May 1832 marked the beginning of this Association.

ley Secretaries. While the Whig-Liberals were having their borough and county reform meetings the True Blues met on two occasions. At the first meeting they voted an address to the King expressing their loyal attachment to him and their condemnation of the attempts to coerce the King through inflaming public opinion. At this meeting Benjamin Sadler, brother of the Tory candidate, strongly supported the anticipated Wellington government.<sup>1</sup> A week later they met again to reaffirm their views in general and in particular to thank Robert Hall for his 'almost unattended and unsupported action' in speaking at the Leeds reform meeting, undoubtedly an act of great courage.<sup>2</sup>

Thereafter the Leeds True Blue Constitutional Association merged for the duration of the election campaign into Sadler's election committee which was launched at the end of August with Robert Hall, one of the Secretaries of the Association, as Chairman of the election committee.<sup>3</sup> Thus when Alderman Henry Hall spoke in December 1832 of an association of Tories which had been in existence about two years<sup>4</sup> he was exaggerating a little; the time was about eighteen months and activity had been intermittent.

In view of the common charge that the influence of the Leeds Corporation was used in support of Sadler<sup>5</sup> it is worth noting that on the

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1. Leeds Intelligencer, 17 May 1832.
  2. Ibid., 24 May 1832.
  3. Ibid., 30 Aug. 1832, Leeds Patriot, 1 Sept. 1832; there is a fuller list of the committee than appears in the newspapers in a handbill advertising Sadler's committee in Representation of Leeds 1831-1841.
  4. Leeds Intelligencer, 27 Dec. 1832, Leeds Patriot, 29 Dec. 1832.
  5. See for example the speech of James Richardson at Bramley in Preliminary Proceedings . . . etc., p.42 and the editorial in Leeds Mercury, 15 Sept. 1832.

two occasions in the period when the Leeds Tories organised themselves to issue some kind of public address they were echoed by the Corporation. In April 1831 the so-called Friends of Constitutional Principles drew up a petition against the Reform Bill and the following day the Leeds Corporation did likewise.<sup>1</sup> Again, in May 1832 both the Leeds True Blue Constitutional Association and the Leeds Corporation sent loyal addresses to the king.<sup>2</sup> In both cases the Chairmen of the Blues, Alderman Henry Hall, provided an essential link between the Association and the Corporation for it was he who composed both addresses for the Corporation.<sup>3</sup>

It was Henry Hall, with his son Robert, who also provided the link between the Tories and the operatives in support of the ten hours movement. Thus for instance the two Halls spoke, if somewhat briefly, at the five-hour meeting at York in April 1832<sup>4</sup> and Robert Hall was a member of the Leeds Committee in support of Sadler's Bill.<sup>5</sup> This link brought the Tories into contact with the fifth organisation which participated in the Leeds election, the Leeds Committee of Operatives, sometimes referred to as the Leeds Short Time Committee.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Leeds Intelligencer, 14, 21 April, 1831. Both petitions are mentioned in Mayhall, op.cit., p.373.
  2. Leeds Intelligencer, 17, 24 May 1832.
  3. Leeds Corporation Court Book 1773-1835, pp.360,372.
  4. Leeds Intelligencer, 26 April 1832, Leeds Patriot, 28 April 1832.
  5. Report of The Leeds General Committee for Promoting The Bill . . . etc. in Oastler and the Factory Movement 1830-1833, No.6 Goldsmiths Collection, University of London .
  6. The Leeds Committee of Operatives was the term used in all public notices at the time but the Leeds Short Time Committee is the term most commonly used by historians.



The main activity of the Leeds Committee of Operatives was clearly to agitate for factory reform and they were in fact criticised by one of their number for participating in the political arguments of the Leeds election.<sup>1</sup> The part played by this Committee in the "Ten Hours Movement" has been fully described<sup>2</sup> and the purpose here is to highlight the functions of the Committee in the Leeds election of 1832.

The Leeds Committee of Operatives was allied with, but distinct from, the Leeds Radical Political Union which between them publicised the social, economic and political grievances of the working classes of Leeds. By the end of 1832 the two bodies were very close, as has already been indicated<sup>3</sup>, but until then they pursued different paths. Leeds was, if not the first, at least one of the first, places to have a Committee of Operatives when it was formed in March 1831.<sup>4</sup> Though generally without votes the Committee of Operatives was able to perform two important functions in the election campaign, one general and one specific.

The biggest achievement of the Operatives was to help in that process which made the factory question the biggest issue in the Leeds election. It has been claimed that it was Ralph Taylor, the Secretary of the Committee of Operatives, who 'had been largely responsible for the Tory-Radical fusion on behalf of Sadler'.<sup>5</sup> As early as September

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1. Leeds Mercury, 21 July 1832.

2. By C. Driver Tory Radical and by J.T.Ward The Factory Movement.

3. See for example the meeting on distress which Ralph Taylor attended along with Rider, Ayrey, etc. Leeds Patriot, 27 Oct 1832.

4. Driver, op.cit., p.82; Ward, op.cit., p.41.

5. Driver, op.cit., p.121.



1831 the Committee made sure that the factory question would loom large by making the 10-hour day the test of support for a candidate.<sup>1</sup> It was as their representative that Oastler was continually participating in Leeds meetings and when Oastler addressed questions to the Leeds candidates he did so on behalf of the Committee of Operatives.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to this general development of bringing the factory question into the Leeds election the Committee of Operatives provided something much more specific, namely public displays of support for Sadler. Just as Joseph Lees of the Leeds Political Union was accused of hiring bludgeon men for Marshall and Macaulay so it was Ralph Taylor who was accused of hiring them for Sadler.<sup>3</sup> It was the Committee of Operatives which made Sadler's entry into Leeds in September 1832 to begin the campaign such a big occasion.<sup>4</sup> Oastler had no doubt as to the part the operatives as a body had to play and warned them that he expected that 'every Leeds lad will do his duty', by gaining possession of the area near the hustings to enable their representatives to speak unmolested.<sup>5</sup> It was in other words the Committee of Operatives who

1. Leeds Intelligencer, 22 Sept. 1831.
2. See for example reports of the meeting after the dinner to celebrate the passing of the Reform Bill in *ibid.*, 21 June 1832, Leeds Mercury 16 June 1832, Leeds Patriot, 23 June 1832. The choice of Oastler as their public delegate indicates a distinction between the Operatives and the Radical Political Union, for the latter always used John Foster or James Mann.
3. Leeds Mercury, 15 Dec. 1832
4. Leeds Intelligencer, 6 Sept. 1832
5. Operatives of Leeds (dated 29 Aug. 1832) in Oastler and the Factory Movement 1830-1835 Univ. of London Collection of BroadSides, also in The Cracker and Other Explosions . . . etc. The operatives had already done this admirably at the White Cloth Hall Yard in June 1832.

gave to Sadler's campaign its popular appeal; they became the storm troops of the Tory-Radical alliance.

The study of the five<sup>1</sup> political organisations which played some part in the politics of Leeds in 1831 and 1832 will indicate the fragmentation of opinion in the town. It was in this already divisive atmosphere that the Leeds election campaign was born and against which it must be studied. The contested election did not create the party divisions, although it affected their character, and the party divisions themselves went beyond the issues of the election. Thus apart from the division of opinion on reform and the factory question there were three meetings in Leeds, on the Irish poor, on the situation between the Dutch and the Belgians, and on Poland<sup>2</sup>, when the party divisions which had already been caused, Whig-Liberals versus Tory Radicals, were identically repeated. On these widely divergent issues the Tories and Radicals were able, with an uncanny facility, to adapt their views to produce a common front.

Although the Leeds election of 1832 may be seen in terms of issues, Whig political reform versus Tory-Radical factory reform, it was fought also on the conflict of personalities. Though the party divisions existed, though the issues were interwoven into Leeds politics the actual election campaign was profoundly affected by the choice of candidates. This election campaign was not simply fought by A + B against C, it was

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1. In a sense there was a sixth, the Leeds Corporation, which actively supported Sadler but this has not been considered as a body of men specifically organised for a political purpose.

2. Leeds Mercury, 14 Jan., 18 Aug., 24 Nov. 1832.

fought by Marshall and Macaulay against Sadler. The choice of these three was of great importance and therefore it is necessary to examine the candidates and their reception by the Leeds electors.

The first candidate in the field was John Marshall Junior<sup>1</sup>, the second son of John Marshall who had sat for the county from 1826 to 1830.

The Marshall family were the largest flaxspinners in Europe and certainly one of the wealthiest families in Leeds.<sup>2</sup> Marshall got the nomination almost by virtue of a kind of dynastic right 'old Marshall's son' as he was described<sup>\*</sup>, the most important commercial family having the right to nominate a member. It was recorded later that he did not push himself forward but that he 'deserved' to be M.P. for Leeds<sup>3</sup> and it was a common claim by the Mercury that he was an obvious choice as a candidate.

It was generally admitted that he was not an astounding speaker<sup>4</sup> but he was concise, straightforward and to the point.<sup>5</sup> He based his appeal firmly on political reform as a solution to all ills. When the requisition inviting him to stand, signed by 1434 people<sup>6</sup>, was officially

1. Hewas announced as a candidate in Leeds Mercury, 27 Aug.1831.

2. For an account of the family business see W.G.Rimmer Marshalls of Leeds Flaxspinners (1961).

3. Taylor, op.cit., p.365.

4. Ibid., Baines, op.cit., p.136, Leeds Mercury, 8 Dec.1832.

\* The Factory System (1831), p.10 in Oastler White Slavery Collection Goldsmiths Collection Vol.4, No.5. (In Oastler's own index the author of this pamphlet is given as Caviè Richardson).

5. Richard Oastler, though differing from him on the factory question, always gave Marshall credit for a straight unambiguous reply, especially as compared with the verbal contortions of Macaulay.

6. The original requisition has been preserved and can be seen in a display case at the Thoresby Society Library.

presented to him in October 1831 he pledged his support for the Reform Bill, the ballot, the repeal of the corn laws and the abolition of slavery.<sup>1</sup> He never wavered from this programme and was adamantly opposed to the 10-hour day; a 65-hour week was the lowest he would contemplate. Through this political reform Marshall believed the political system could be improved and thereby preserved.<sup>2</sup> His election was always regarded as certain, only his partner being in doubt.<sup>3</sup>

If Marshall was regarded as a natural choice by the Whig-Liberals he was regarded also as an ideal opponent by the factory reformers. Instead of having to cite abuses and then hope to link them with Whig candidates who had no real connection with the factory system, here was a master with a huge mill who was himself exploiting factory labour. Most of the mud hurled at Marshall was closely linked with the family's business enterprise.

First there were a whole series of accusations about conditions and wages in Marshall's mill at Water Lane, which was described as a 'pest and prison house' and a 'bastille'.<sup>4</sup> He was inextricably mixed up with the whole issue of 'infant slavery' and his opponents argued that his election in 1832 would condone, confirm and continue this evil.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Leeds Mercury, 8 Oct. 1831

2. Ibid., 8 Sept. 1832.

3. Thus for instance the most important exchange in the pamphlet war A Letter to an Elector of Leeds by Common Sense, The Tables Turned and A Second Letter to an Elector of Leeds ignored Marshall completely and concentrated on the rival claims of Sadler and Macaulay.

4. Leeds Patriot, 8 Dec. 1832, The Cracker, 8 Dec. 1832.

5. See for example editorial in Leeds Intelligencer, 21 June 1832 and speech of James Mann to a gathering of unemployed workmen in Leeds Patriot, 4 Aug. 1832.

Marshall was accused of refusing to give children an extra quarter of an hour dinner break because it would decrease his profits by a thousandth part of a farthing per hank.<sup>1</sup> It was alleged that children at Marshall's mills were beaten with heavy straps with iron and wood handles and his nickname summed up his whole position, Mr. - Grind-the-Poor (for pelf and title) Signor Flaxspinero.<sup>2</sup>

Secondly his opponents satirically represented Marshall's social and economic philosophy as one of complete exploitation of the working population in the pursuit of wealth. Marshall had argued that Leeds and Manchester would have been mere villages had it not been for the 'advent of machinery', and although this system of mechanisation, 'Marshall's darling system', had enabled him to 'amass a million' it had at the same time 'pauperised countless thousands'.<sup>3</sup> Marshall was said to believe that 'the poor and working classes were intended by Providence merely to be used by the powerful and wealthy for the accumulation of still larger heaps of gold' and to be aiming for a time when he could

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1. To The Inhabitants of Leeds in Oastler and the Factory Movement 1830-1835, No.562 (4).
  2. The Cracker, 8 Dec.1832, Fresh Novelty in Representation of Leeds 1831-1841.
  3. Leeds Mercury, 8 Dec.1832, Leeds Intelligencer, 3 Nov.1831, To The Inhabitants of Holbeck in Oastler and the Factory Movement 1830-1835, No.547 (16).

work 'men, women and children the entire 24 hours for nothing'.<sup>1</sup>

The third charge against Marshall was concerned with his religion for as a recent researcher has pointed out there was doubt in 1832 about Marshall's religious opinions.<sup>2</sup> The Marshall family were staunch Unitarians, members of the Mill Hill Chapel, and John Marshall Junior was certainly baptised as a Unitarian.<sup>3</sup> It was generally assumed that it was Marshall's Unitarian views which attracted the support of the 'Whig-Dissenters' and on one occasion Foster constructed an editorial around the theme of a Unitarian candidate and his Unitarian backers.<sup>4</sup> This left the way open for the Tories to emphasise their own links with the Church of England, to denounce Marshall as a Socinian and to cry 'Christians! . . . Support a Christian Candidate.'<sup>5</sup> Immediately came back the reply that both Marshall and Macaulay were 'consistent members' of the Church of England.<sup>6</sup> If this was indeed so then there was a question that needed answering: 'When did Mr. Marshall cease to be a Unitarian' and the whole issue enabled the Tories to adopt a righteous tone and ask 'Who is on the Lord's side?'.<sup>7</sup>

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1. Marshall and Macaulay in Oastler and The Factory Movement 1830-1835, No. 565 (7), The Cracker, 1 Dec. 1832, Marshall's great wealth also led to the claim that he was footing the bill for the Liberals' election campaign, see Leeds Intelligencer, 27 Nov. 1832.
  2. Ram, op.cit., p. 125; there is no reference to Marshall's religious views in Taylor, op.cit., pp. 364-366.
  3. Ram, op.cit., p. 5.
  4. Leeds Intelligencer, 6 Sept. 1832, Leeds Patriot, 1 Dec. 1832.
  5. Is Leeds To Have Christian Or Infidel Representatives in The Cracker and Other Explosions . . . etc.
  6. Men of Leeds in ibid.
  7. Christian Electors of Leeds in Representation of Leeds 1831-1841.



Finally there was the charge levied against Marshall that he would be a complete nonentity even if elected. It was claimed before the election that he was 'a novice in public life without essential qualifications' and after it that he was amiable enough but without the necessary experience.<sup>1</sup> In the more extreme language of the election propaganda it was predicted that he would become 'a mere cipher in Parliament, a moping, droiting, avaricious tool'.<sup>2</sup> Thus whereas his supporters saw in John Marshall Junior a man whose local connections, 'high independence, . . . popular principles . . . and enlightened and consistent conduct' marked him out as a suitable M.P. for Leeds<sup>3</sup> his opponents saw a man in whose mill abuses took place, whose wealth was based on exploitation, whose religion was in doubt and whose whole character led to the conclusion that he would be ineffective and anonymous in Parliament.

Thomas Babington Macaulay, the second Whig-Liberal candidate, also had obvious characteristics which could be exploited by his opponents but his supporters cited his equally obvious talent as an overwhelming reason for his election. The way in which his name first emerged as a candidate has already been described<sup>4</sup> and, as was later claimed, Macaulay owed his election for Leeds to his sponsor Edward Baines.<sup>5</sup> It was always assumed that Macaulay was the nominee of Baines, hence the Leeds

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1. Leeds Intelligencer, 5 July, 20 Dec. 1832.

2. The Cracker, 21 Dec. 1832.

3. Report of the Committee . . . etc. (1832), p.5.

4. See above, p.42.

5. Taylor, op cit., p.437.



Association, whereas Marshall was more in line with the Leeds Political Union.<sup>1</sup>

Baines saw Macaulay much in the same light as Brougham in 1830. In both cases the constituency would be honoured by having a talented representative and its own support for reforming principles would be confirmed by its choice of candidate.<sup>2</sup> Macaulay was championed as the greatest orator in Parliament, a title which even the Committee of Operatives grudgingly accorded him.<sup>3</sup> The eulogies of his supporters heaped praise upon his great talents and throughout the appeals made on his behalf was the theme of an intellectual giant whose statesmanship earned for him the right to sit in Parliament.<sup>4</sup>

If Macaulay's talents deserved the support of the Leeds electors it was these same talents which had already secured for him an office in Grey's government. It was Macaulay "the placeman" who was attacked by the Tory Radical alliance, hence the name Ministerial Colt given to him in the races known as the St. Stephen's Stakes.<sup>5</sup> The abuse of Macaulay which was directly linked with his position in the government

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1. Leeds Intelligencer, 31 May 1832. It was on two occasions claimed that Baines hoped to benefit financially from his support of Macaulay, see Leeds Patriot, 23 June 1832, The Cracker, 29 Nov. 1832. Baines, Junior, believed his father's enthusiasm on behalf of Macaulay to be motivated by a desire to prevent thereby his own candidature, see Baines op.cit., p.137.
  2. Leeds Mercury, 23 June 1832.
  3. To The Public, in Oastler and The Factory Movement 1830-1835, No.538.
  4. Report of the Committee . . . etc., p.5, The Tables Turned, pp12-14 Brotherton Library .
  5. Leeds Races Extraordinary in Representation of Leeds 1831-1841.

made an interesting comment on the British Constitution.

Although it was argued that ministers had always been paid (more heavily under the Tories) and that Sadler would certainly not perform a job in government without a salary<sup>1</sup> the very fact of Macaulay's £1,200 per year was enough to damn him in the eyes of his opponents. Far from it being an honour for Leeds to have Macaulay it was claimed that Macaulay was merely using Leeds in order to gain even higher office and an even greater salary, choosing this particular constituency since it had done Brougham a great deal of good.<sup>2</sup> The search for money was regarded as Macaulay's main motive and he could be relied upon to adapt his views so that he could take the most profitable course, ending up, as William Rider put it, 'skulking into snug places'<sup>3</sup>.

As a placeman Macaulay was committed to supporting his paymasters and in the two letters signed by "Common Sense"<sup>4</sup>, which were the main Tory attacks on Macaulay, the theme of Macaulay as an obedient ministerial slave was fully explored. It was argued that Macaulay was only required to speak in Parliament 'when the brilliant Althorpe flags or the profound Palmerston is sleepy'.<sup>5</sup> It was not really his speeches but his vote,

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1. The Tables Turned, p.13.
  2. Leeds Intelligencer, 20 Dec.1832, The Cracker, 1, 10 Dec. 1832, To The Inhabitants of Holbeck in Oastler and The Factory Movement 1830-1835, No.574 (16).
  3. Marshall and Macaulay in ibid., No.565(7), Address to the Electors of Leeds of T.B.Mac All Hay in ibid., No.562(2).
  4. The first had first appeared in the Leeds Intelligencer, 18 Oct. 1832 and was then issued as a pamphlet, the second appeared as a pamphlet in the first week of December 1832 as a reply to The Tables Turned.
  5. A Second Letter to an Elector of Leeds, p.13. Leeds Ref.Lib.L324.C73 .

'already let out for the season', which the Whig government was interested in and since Macaulay and his family were indebted to the Whigs to the tune of £4,000 per year it was clear that his vote was the property of 'the ministerial whipper-in'.<sup>1</sup>

The main attack on Macaulay centred on his being a placeman but attempts were also made, as the younger Baines later put it, 'to convict him of holding unpopular opinions, especially on the question of factory labour'.<sup>2</sup> Macaulay, as a stranger to both Leeds and the factory system, had no intimate knowledge of factory conditions and on one occasion Oastler promised that he would 'read Babby his first lesson on Yorkshire Slavery and the Trade of Leeds'.<sup>3</sup> Oastler and Ralph Taylor on several occasions tried to nail Macaulay and get a direct answer when they asked him whether he supported a 10-hour day but they always failed and Macaulay was able to avoid being too closely connected with Marshall's opinions on this question not by what the younger Baines called 'the frankness and justness of his replies' but by exactly the opposite.<sup>4</sup>

Macaulay's mode of dealing with the challenge of the factory reformers illustrates the three characteristics of his whole campaign. First he exhibited verbal dexterity in being able to face both ways at the same time, by supporting legislation for children but without being tied down

1. A Letter to an Elector of Leeds, pp.2-12 in Oastler White Slavery Collection, Vol.6, No.3.

2. Baines, op.cit., p.137.

3. Address by Richard Oastler to the Operatives of Leeds in Oastler and The Factory Movement 1830-1835, No.541 (2).

4. Baines, op.cit., p.137.

on details. Macaulay by sheer weight of verbal and oratorical brilliance was always able to make the best of an argument, which his opponents attributed to his 'shuffling'.<sup>1</sup> Secondly he revealed his political philosophy of electoral campaigning by his refusal to give pledges to his supporters as well as his opponents. He had written in unequivocal language to his supporters at Leeds 'I will give no pledges. I will not bind myself to make or to support any particular motion' and he knew that his views on pledges were not likely to improve his chances.<sup>2</sup> He would not make promises to his supporters on the ballot nor to his opponents on the 10-hour day.

Thirdly Macaulay's philosophy of government was explicitly stated in his attitude to the factory question. As a supporter of individualism and laissez faire he believed that there were clear limits to the province of government. A government could not 'rain down provisions' or give the nation 'bread, meat and wine', it could not in short 'act directly' in the people's affairs.<sup>3</sup> So too on the factory question:

'The general rule - a rule not more beneficial to the capitalist than to the labourer - is that contracts shall be free and that the state shall not interfere between the master and the workman. To this general rule there is an exception. Children cannot protect themselves and are therefore entitled to the protection of the public'.<sup>4</sup>

Here in 1832 was a clear statement of the social philosophy which led to the 1833 factory act.

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1. Representation of Leeds in Oastler and The Factory Movement 1830-1833, No.33.

2. Trevelyan, op.cit., p.286-7. At a meeting of the Leeds Political Union Joseph Lees complained of Macaulay's refusal to give pledges, remarking that few people in Leeds would agree to a seven year apprenticeship without pledges, see Leeds Mercury, 18 Aug., 1832.

3. Ibid., 16 June 1832

4. Ibid.

Although Macaulay's attitude on the factory question usually enabled him to escape the odium attached to Marshall his "hyena"<sup>1</sup> remark about Sadler led to many counter-accusations. G.S.Bull, the "ten hours parson", compared unfavourably his own devotion to the cause of the poor with Macaulay's loyalty to his ministerial salary and Macaulay was declared to be a complete enemy of the poor.<sup>2</sup> William Rider believed that Macaulay intended to 'eat and drink the produce of those whom we intend to keep in slavery and want' and it was even claimed that he wished to work England's surplus population to death since 'the common herd are too rank on the ground'.<sup>3</sup> Thus in the end the Tory-Radical alliance was able to credit both Macaulay and Marshall with a common view of the poor.

It was this Tory-Radical alliance which was the main feature of the support given to the third candidate in the election, Michael Thomas Sadler. Sadler was a key figure in the campaign and his candidature made certain that the working-class factory reformers would throw their weight behind the Tory party in Leeds. As a resident in Leeds for more than 30 years, as a staunch Tory M.P., as a member of the Leeds Corporation and as a founder member of the True Blue Constitutional Association Sadler was a natural choice for the Tories. At the same time his endeavours in Parliament to obtain a 10-hour factory bill made him the champion of

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1. Sadler was compared to a hyena which 'has a singular knack of imitating the cries of little children'.
  2. Letter of G.S.Bull to T.B.Macaulay in Oastler and The Factory Movement 1830-1835, No.557 (11), G.S.Bull Reply to the Leeds Mercury's Remarks ... etc. in Oastler White Slavery, Vol.2, No.8, The Cracker, 8 Dec.1832.
  3. Address to the Electors of Leeds of T.B.Mac All Hay, loc.cit., Thomas Babington Hyena, To The Worthy Liberal and Philanthropic Electors of Leeds in Oastler and The Factory Movement 1830-1835, No.562 (5).

the factory reformers also.

Both opponents and supporters of Sadler were aware that his followers made unlikely bedfellows but whereas the alliance was condemned by the Whig-Liberals it was considered justified by the Tory-Radicals. Even a factory reformer noticed that Foster of the Patriot seemed 'hand and glove wi' Meekle Sadler altho' nae twa men can be farther asunder i' their political opeenions.'<sup>1</sup> In the Whig-Liberal view this 'unprincipled coalition' was the result of a 'disgraceful compromise'<sup>2</sup> and left Sadler facing the electors backed by Alderman Hall and John Ayrey, the Marchioness of Hertford and William Rider.<sup>3</sup> Sadler had developed the knack of being alternately an 'Anti-Reformer and an Ultra-Reformer' and he was designated as repulsive for his attempts to 'coquet with our radicals'<sup>4</sup>. Robert Ayrey summed up the alliance with the comment 'it is a bonny job that the old Tory Party is obliged to turn Radicals on anything and everything to keep their sistem'.<sup>5</sup>

The decision of Sadler's committee to abandon the party colour of blue signified that they were aware that his supporters were not all of one hue.<sup>6</sup> The difference between the Tories and Radicals was telescoped

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1. The Factory System (1831), p.11 in Oastler White Slavery Collection, Vol.4, No.5.
  2. Leeds Mercury, 23 June 1832, cutting entitled 'Purity of Election' in Representation of Leeds 1831-1841.
  3. The Tables Turned, p.4. The Marchioness of Hertford was the owner of Temple Newsam and was frequently cited as one of Sadler's unseen supporters.
  4. Leeds Mercury, 8 Dec.1832, Rev.R.Watson,Mr.Macaulay and Mr.Sadler (1831) in Oastler and The Factory Movement 1830-1835, No.521.
  5. R.Ayrey, MS Letter Book 1832, pp.119-120, Leeds Ref.Lib.MS 82679AY7AL .
  6. Leeds Patriot, 8 Sept.1832. In fact the 10-hour people continued to wear white and on nomination day the Tories wore blue.



considerably and confined to 'some minor points'.<sup>1</sup> Indeed particularly among the factory reformers there was general support for ignoring party distinctions. Operatives in Leeds wanted the electors to 'despise the idiotic cry of party' and an address from 2,000 operatives in Bolton-le-Moors spoke of the 'detestable distinctions of Party and Faction'.<sup>2</sup> Ultimately it would not matter what party a man identified himself with but what he was actually prepared to do;

'Why talk about Toaries and Redigals and such like while Oastler and Sadler and them'll stand up for us, I care nowt about what colour they wear; its not blue nor yellow at makes 'em either better or warse'.<sup>3</sup>

The coalition of previously opposing parties which the Whig-Liberals denounced so often was in fact unimportant according to the Sadler camp.

The reason for the frequent condemnation of the Tory-Radical alliance was the great faith on the Whig-Liberal side in political solutions to the problems of the day. Marshall, Macaulay, the Leeds Mercury, the Leeds Association, the Leeds Political Union and the mass of the Whig electors saw the issues of the day primarily in political terms. Because of this it was natural that a candidate's past and present political opinions be carefully studied and, when Sadler's previous Ultra-Tory statements were lined up, the support he was getting from working-class Radicals seemed unnatural.

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1. Ibid., 20 Oct.1832, Leeds Intelligencer, 20 Sept.1832, Address of the Committee of Operatives in Representation of Leeds 1831-1841.
  2. Address of the Committee of Operatives, loc.cit., To The Worthy Free and Independent Elector of the Borough of Leeds in Oastler and The Factory Movement 1830-1835, No.544.
  3. The Factory System (1831), p.12, loc.cit.



The Mercury pointed out on many occasions that Sadler had been the nominee of the Duke of Newcastle, the arch supporter of the boroughmongering system.<sup>1</sup> This had fitted perfectly with his previous opinions which were mercilessly exploited in the pamphlet literature. He had been the supporter of Pitt, a member of the Leeds Corporation, an opponent of Catholic Emancipation, a supporter of Church rates and of the corn laws, a "thick and thin" defender of Castlereagh and his system and finally he had opposed the Reform Bill.<sup>2</sup> The past and the present certainly appeared to conflict:

'What a contrast! - the deformity of your past political life and your present professions of patriotic liberal and benevolent sentiment. Under what spell were your patriotism, your liberality and your benevolence reposing when Castlereagh and the Boroughmongers with their friends rode roughshod over the field of Peterloo and the liberties of your country?'<sup>3</sup>

If Marshall was condemned for his factory and Macaulay for his office then so too was Sadler for his previous political opinions. The boroughmonger had changed his spots and become a humanity monger.<sup>4</sup>

In the recital of Sadler's political views one fact stood out; he had opposed the Reform Bill which had been responsible for Leeds being given representation. In the Whig-Liberal case the Reform Bill was absolutely the central issue for it was regarded as a 'means whereby the country is to be renovated'.<sup>5</sup> The Reform Bill was the essential

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1. Leeds Mercury, 1, 22 Oct. 1831, 18 Aug. 1832.
  2. See The Fables Turned, pp. 2-4 and The Cracker Cracked in The Cracker and Other Explosions . . . for examples of this dredging up of Sadler's past statements.
  3. Peter the Pearker's Letter to Michael Thomas Sadler, Esq., M.P. in Representation of Leeds 1831-1841.
  4. Mr. Sadler's Halton Feast Show in The Cracker and Other Explosions . . .
  5. Peter the Pearker's Letter . . . etc., loc.cit.

prerequisite for that programme of political reform which could solve current problems. This faith in the post-Reform era was expressed in simple terms, thus,

'our trade in England for this last three years has been in a very bad state but we have now got a reform in Parliament and we hope in the course of a year or 2 we shall have better times if we can have the taxes reduced and the Corn Laws done away with and all placemen and pensioners, then we might look for better times'.<sup>1</sup>

Yet Sadler had been against Leeds having M.P.'s, he had said that rotten boroughs were better than great industrial cities, he had supported the Duke of Newcastle's action in evicting tenants who had voted against Sadler at Newark and he had denounced the Reform Bill as revolutionary.<sup>2</sup> Joshua Bower on one occasion told Sadler publicly that he believed him to be the ideal M.P. for Leeds but for his attitude to Parliamentary reform expressed repeatedly over many years. On the one issue of the Reform Bill Bower had made up his mind to reject Sadler.<sup>3</sup>

Sadler's opposition to the Reform Bill which meant instant condemnation by the Whig-Liberals did not loom so large in the eyes of his working-class supporters partly because Sadler adapted his views somewhat and partly because of their disillusionment with the measure of 1832. When Sadler spoke at the meeting to form the True Blue Constitutional Association he emphasised the need to defend venerated institutions.<sup>4</sup> A little earlier he had seconded the Gascoyne motion in the Commons which in April 1831 had defeated the Whig government and caused

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1. Ayrey, op.cit., p.7.

2. Leeds Mercury, 10 Sept.1831, 21 July, 1832, The Tables Turned, p.3.

3. Leeds Intelligencer, 13 Sept. 1832.

4. See above, p.58.

a general election.<sup>1</sup> In that speech he had said that acts like the Reform Bill endangered the whole social system and that England was satisfied with its 'ancient and happy institutions.'<sup>2</sup> He opposed the Reform Bill on the grounds of defending these institutions and on the Bill's anomalies but had added that he had no wish to leave working men without any voice in the councils of the country as 'the slaves in our colonies'.<sup>3</sup>

This part of Sadler's speech which he had called only a 'garnish to my present argument' was taken up in Leeds and emphasised fully. A long letter was circulated as a handbill which developed the idea of the people having had some power before the Reform Bill and now being deprived of it;

'After England has for ages been exhibiting the wise and salutary effects of allowing the meanest subject in the realm some share and participation in the council of the nation it remained for these ill-omened rulers to affix the brand of poverty and shut nine-tenths out of the people without the sacred pale of the constitution.'<sup>4</sup>

From being only a "garnish" this idea became Sadler's central argument

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1. Hansard's Parliamentary Debates 3rd Series Vol.III, cols.1530-1568.
  2. Ibid., col.1568.
  3. Ibid., col.1559.
  4. Whig Fraud and English Folly in The Cracker and Other Explosions . . . etc  
This idea had been first used by Peel in his speech of 3 March 1831. 'It is an immense advantage that there is at present no class of people however humble which is not entitled to a voice in the election of representatives . . . I think it is an immense advantage that the class which includes the weavers of Coventry and the potwallopers of Preston has a share in the privileges of the present system . . . the class is represented. It has its champion within your walls, the organ of its feelings and the guardian of its interests. But what will be the effect of cutting off altogether the communication between this House and all that class of society which is above pauperism and below the arbitrary line of £10 rental which you have selected.' Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, 3rd Series, Vol.II, Col.I346.

in his opposition to the Reform Bill and when he appeared before the electors in September 1832 he argued that working men ought to have been given 'a fair share of public influence'.<sup>1</sup> Thus he was able to represent his opposition to the Reform Bill as in the interests of the working population.

The working men in Leeds had already come to the conclusion that the Reform Bill had left them outside the franchise<sup>2</sup> and really Baines and his allies ought not to have been surprised that to these people Sadler's attitude on the Reform Bill was unimportant. Baines himself had supplied to Lord John Russell in 1831 the statistics which explained working-class coolness on the issue of the Reform Bill. Baines estimated to Russell that only one working man in 50 would have the vote in Leeds and in 1832 a survey estimated that there would be only 355 working men on the electoral list.<sup>3</sup> It was a fact that in Leeds as Oastler later put it 'The People' don't live in ten pound houses'.<sup>4</sup> It was no wonder that the Committee of Operatives commented sarcastically on the 'great boon' of the Reform Bill, 'whose greatest beauty is that it totally proscribes the working classes from the exercise of their Political Rights'.<sup>5</sup>

To men who could see that the Reform Bill offered them nothing and

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1. Leeds Mercury, 8 Sept. 1832.
  2. See for example An Address to the Working Classes of Leeds 10 Dec. 1831, p.7 in Oastler White Slavery Collection, Vol.4, No.8.
  3. Baines, op.cit., pp.130-131; Russell to Baines 2 Nov. 1831, Baines MSS.
  4. R.Oastler Facts and Plain Words on Everyday Subjects (1833), p.21 in Oastler White Slavery Collection, Vol.2, No.11.
  5. R.Taylor and J.Hannam To The Public in Oastler and The Factory Movement 1830-1835, No.538.

who were encouraged to think that it had actually deprived them of previously held rights Sadler's past political conduct appeared as something of an irrelevance. Indeed the Whig political programme so ardently championed by Marshall, Macaulay and their supporters also appeared as an irrelevance. The working men in Leeds in 1832 sought solutions to social and economic problems not political ones. They wanted to improve the position of poor men in society and they wanted relief from economic exploitation in the factory system. The Reform Bill and the political reform that could be expected from it offered no solutions here and so the single issue which had swayed Bower against Sadler simply did not matter to working men.

What was important was that Sadler appealed to the electors of Leeds not on the political issues but on social and even moral ones. In what was one of the key statements in the whole election one of Sadler's supporters described him as 'far less of a politician than a philanthropist'<sup>1</sup> and it was on this that working-class support for him was based. Far from this support being unnatural it was claimed that it was inevitable that working men should wish to support a candidate who appeared to them as the 'champion of the poor'<sup>2</sup>. The Committee of Operatives urged support for Sadler because 'his general views are favourable to our interest' and this opinion was based on his efforts on behalf of 'the starving myriads of the Irish peasantry - the swarms of little slaves who are perishing in our factories - the harassed and

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1. A Letter To An Elector of Leeds (1832), p.1.

2. Leeds Intelligencer, 19 July 1832, A Second Letter to An Elector of Leeds (1832), p.18.

pauperised agricultural labourers of England'.<sup>1</sup> It was as a "philanthropist" that Leeds working men supported Sadler and that support was not meant to condone his past political conduct because his political opinions were not the main issue. As one operative explained at a meeting to discuss distress in October 1832, they did not support Sadler

'because of their admiration of the whole of his political principles but from the consideration of his long and persevering endeavours, both in and out of Parliament, to ameliorate the condition of the oppressed and taxridden millions of the country'.<sup>2</sup>

This was indeed Sadler the "champion of the poor" and not Sadler the "Ultra-Tory".

The public image of the candidates has been discussed and the course of the final canvass has been fully described elsewhere.<sup>3</sup> When the poll was completed it turned out, as Oastler put it, that the Leeds electors were more under the influence of the factory lords than the factory children.<sup>4</sup> One view was that Sadler was doomed to failure from the beginning because the majority of his supporters simply did not have votes.<sup>5</sup> Sadler finished up with 1587 votes but Marshall

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1. Address of the Committee of Operatives in Representation of Leeds 1831-1841, A Second Letter . . . etc., loc.cit.
  2. Leeds Patriot, 27 Oct. 1832.
  3. See Turbeville and Beckwith, op.cit., pp.59-77.
  4. R.Oastler Facts and Plain Words on Everyday Subjects (1833), p.8, loc.cit.
  5. Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Michael Thomas Sadler (1848), p.407.



gained 2011 and Macaulay 1983.<sup>1</sup>

When the voting is analysed as in Table I the most significant feature is the relatively small numbers who voted across party lines, particularly as Leeds had two local candidates in Sadler and Marshall.

TABLE I ANALYSIS OF 1832 POLL

	Sadler	Marshall	Macaulay
Plumpers	1380	38	39
Splits:			
Marshall - Macaulay		1855	1855
Marshall - Sadler	118	118	
Macaulay - Sadler	89		89
Total	1587	2011	1983

The cross party vote i.e. those that split their votes across party lines was only 5.89% whereas for the same election in Bradford the figure was 30.17%. Most voters had voted on strict party lines, Tories plumping for Sadler and Liberals splitting for Marshall and Macaulay. Table II calculates share of poll in Leeds and the out-townships assuming for statistical purposes a contest between the leading Liberal and the Tory i.e. the optimum vote each was able to achieve .

1. These are the figures given in The Poll Book of the Leeds Borough Election (1833), p.70, which corrected the earlier figures S 1596 M.2012 Mac 1984 which had been given in the newspapers.



TABLE II SHARE OF POLL 1832

	Liberal	Tory
Leeds Township	55.09%	44.91%
Out-Townships	57.37%	42.63%
Leeds Borough	55.89%	44.11%

Despite the fact that Sadler had the support of the 'better part of the community',<sup>1</sup> he had lost the election and the factory reformers had lost their Parliamentary leader.

The Leeds election of 1832 bequeathed three main characteristics to Leeds politics in the years that followed, a surprising Tory optimism, a faith in political organisation and an enduring party enmity. The Tory optimism was much more than the politician's eternal search for good omens in bad election results. At one point in the campaign the Whig canvassers had claimed, over-optimistically as Macaulay believed, a four to one advantage over Sadler.<sup>2</sup> Yet a party which, it had been claimed, was extinct had 'come forth in more than wonted strength and splendour'.<sup>3</sup> The Tories had probably done better than they had expected and regarded the 1832 election result as laying 'the foundation for fu-

1. Memoirs . . of . . Sadler, p.407.

2. Letter of Thomas Playfair to John Marshall Jun., Esq., 21 Sept. 1832 in Representation of Leeds 1831-1841, Macaulay to Marshall (?), 23 Nov. 1832, in the possession of the Thoresby Society. On the accuracy of canvassing see Conclusion, p.524.

3. Leeds Intelligencer, 20 Dec. 1832.

ture triumphs' which they believed certain at the next election.<sup>1</sup>

What justified this optimism was that the Tories had been able to detach working-class support from the middle-class Liberal party in Leeds. In many cities the middle- and working-class reformers were able to maintain a sometimes uneasy but nonetheless real alliance until 1839 when Chartism highlighted their differences of interest and aim. In Leeds however because the factory question was injected into the campaign and then utilised to illustrate this conflict of interest the middle- and working-class alliance died as early as 1832.

In many ways Baines was right in asserting that the factory question was an 'electioneering stalking horse'.<sup>2</sup> Hobhouse had pointed out how much the factory question had been mixed up with the 'party politics of Yorkshire and more especially of the Town of Leeds' and Oastler had also regretted that in Leeds the issue had become involved 'with party political squabbles'.<sup>3</sup> Yet it was Oastler's deliberate intention to keep this issue alive during the Leeds election campaign<sup>4</sup> and once Sadler had become a candidate it was natural that the factory question should be an issue in the election.

By forcing public attention on to the factory question Oastler and Sadler were able to show that on this vital working-class issue that

1. Ibid., Leeds Election in Representation of Leeds 1831-1841.
2. Leeds Mercury, 28 April 1832.
3. Ibid., 26 Nov. 1831, The Ten Hours Bill (1831), p.10 in Oastler White Slavery Collection, Vol.4, No.6.
4. Driver, op.cit., p.198, Ward, op.cit., p.70.

middle-class reformers were either hostile or indifferent and the working men of Leeds came to the same conclusion in 1832 as O'Connor was to do in 1841, that there was nothing in Whig reform for working men and therefore it was better to support the Tories. The Tories had engineered this rift in Leeds only by having a candidate like Sadler personally committed to the welfare of working men, and the duration of the Tory-Radical alliance very much depended on the character of future Tory candidates.

The second point of significance is that political activity in Leeds had centred to a great extent on political organisations. As has already been described there were five political organisations which participated in the political struggles in Leeds in the years 1830 to 1832 and when the election campaign was on the candidates had their election committees with various sub-committees.<sup>1</sup> In this baptism into Parliamentary election struggles Leeds learned the value of political organisation and when the 1832 campaign was over political organisation continued. In Bradford the need for organisation was not appreciated until a much later date.

The initiative for continuing this form of political activity was exactly the reverse of the situation in 1831. It will be recalled that in 1831 the Tories were prompted into action by the success of the Leeds Association but at the end of 1832 the Leeds Association was itself forced to continue because of renewed activity on the Tory side and the

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1. E.g. on the Whig side there was a sub-committee set up to look into Tory attempts to intimidate electors, see Corruption and Intimidation by the Friends of Mr. Sadler in The Cracker and other Explosions . . . etc. On the Tory side there was a sub-committee to challenge and refute the false claims of the Leeds Mercury, see Lies of the Leeds Mercury of Saturday 27 October 1832 in Representation of Leeds 1831-41.

issue which stimulated this activity was the registration of voters.

It has been pointed out that the development of party political organisation in the nineteenth century owed more to the need to register voters than to anything else<sup>1</sup> and in Leeds the first person to see the significance of a careful scrutiny of the electoral register appears to have been John Marshall Jun. in his address to the electors after his canvass.<sup>2</sup> The visit of William Wilkinson Matthews as revising barrister to draw up the first Leeds register gave the parties in Leeds their first opportunity to employ the method of claim and objection to adjust the electoral list and both sides appeared satisfied.<sup>3</sup>

Peel's often quoted 'register' speech and his claim that elections would be won in the registration courts was not made until 1837<sup>4</sup> but the Tories in Leeds had recognised this five years earlier. At a dinner given in Sadler's honour after the election Alderman Henry Hall announced that the True Blue Constitutional Association was to merge into a new society to be called 'The Leeds Association of Independent Electors' whose aim would be to secure the independence of the borough by returning Sadler or men of like opinion to Parliament.<sup>5</sup> His son Robert Hall explained why he and his friends had formed this association by pointing out that although they did not have annual parliaments the annual visit of the revising barrister was something like it and his visit

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1. J.A.Thomas "Registration and Party Organisation 1832-1870" in History (1950), XXXV pp. 81-95.
  2. Leeds Mercury, 20 Oct.1832.
  3. Ibid., 17 Nov.1832, claimed a majority of 230 in the revisions for Marshall and Macaulay while Leeds Intelligencer, 15 Nov.1832, claimed a majority of 83 for Sadler.
  4. N.Gash "Peel and the Party System" in Trans.R.Hist.Soc.,1951,5th Series
  5. Leeds Patriot, 29 Dec.1832. Vol. I, p.51.

made it necessary for constant vigilance and hence continued political activity through a political organisation.<sup>1</sup>

The formation of this society by the Tories stopped immediately any thoughts the Leeds Association might have had about whether 'the Association itself should not now be dissolved'<sup>2</sup>. The interest the Tories were showing in the register would certainly have to be echoed by the Liberals:

'The efforts made by that party at the late Registration to exclude numbers of good votes from the register and the great pains they took and are now taking to secure the registration of their own partisans imperatively call upon the friends of Reform to keep a fixed regard upon the same objects. It will be essential to give every facility to the registration of good votes at each visit of the Revising Barrister. For this purpose alone, it would be necessary that the Friends of Reform should continue united.'<sup>3</sup>

In addition the Leeds Association still believed it desirable that there should exist a means of organising public opinion on those questions of reform, solutions to which could be expected as the fruit of the Reform Bill. In circumstances altered since the Association had been founded it decided to adopt the new title, the Leeds Reform Association, which had on occasions been used during 1832.<sup>4</sup> It renewed its pledge to support the reduction of expenditure, the lowering of taxes, the abolition of slavery, the end of monopolies, the ballot, shorter Parliaments and a system of National Education and in the local sphere

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1. Ibid. Twenty years later after his defeat in 1852 Robert Hall proposed a similar plan, see Chapter VII, p. 489.
  2. Second Report of the Committee of the Leeds Reform Association (1833), p.6.
  3. Ibid.
  4. E.g. this title had been used by Edward Baines when he had denounced Oastler as a stranger to Leeds and Oastler had replied that so too was Macaulay, to which Baines gave the answer that Macaulay had been invited by the Leeds Reform Association, see Leeds Patriot, 23 June, 1832.

its aim was to secure the return of 'fit Representatives' for Leeds and the West Riding.<sup>1</sup>

Thus the election of 1832 bequeathed to Leeds a belief in the necessity of political organisation and it also bequeathed a legacy of bitterness born out of the fierce campaign between the candidates. The bitterness of party squabbles in Leeds was a feature of the period<sup>2</sup> and was the third significant point about the election. One of the common arguments used on the Tory side had been that the two parties should share the representation of Leeds and that this would avoid excessive hostility. The demand of the Whig-Liberals that they should have both seats made both present and future party rancour inevitable for the Tories realised 'how pregnant such a scheme is with future disquiet and division among us'.<sup>3</sup>

Edward Baines Junior commented afterwards on the 'purity which so honourably characterised the Leeds election' but the story of the election hardly substantiates this claim. In the atmosphere of divisive political combat extreme claims were made and extreme measures adopted. It is difficult to arrive at the truth in the walter of accusation and counter accusation which flowed from each camp but even if a quarter of these assertions were true this challenges the aptness of the word

1. Ibid., p.7.
2. Reference to the factions nature of politics in Leeds has been made in two recent theses, M.E.Rose The Administration of the Poor Law in the West Riding of Yorkshire 1820-1855, Oxford D.Phil.1965, pp. 135,164; R.W.Ram The Political Activity of Dissenters in the East and West Ridings of Yorkshire 1815-50, Hull M.A. 1964, p.189.
3. Letter of Thomas Playfair . . . etc., loc.cit.



purity to describe the election.

It would appear that both sides hired "marshals" to dissuade rival supporters at public meetings; both provided drinks to canvassers and supporters; both sides claimed that the other had threatened tenants with eviction and employees with dismissal. Some of the very bitter accusations, for instance about practices in Marshall's mill, would certainly be considered libellous to-day. In Sadler's memoirs there is reference to an apology by the two Baineses for accusing Sadler of threatening murder while Tory leaders were warned that if they continued their violent methods murder might follow and that some Leeds aldermen might find themselves 'hanging side by side with a body of ruffians on the New Drop at York'.<sup>1</sup>

Some of the accusations of the Whig side stemmed from Sadler's decision to make a personal canvass and gave rise to a bawdy song "I'll kiss in public, if you please, an operative's backside", about Sadler. It was even implied in what were condemned as 'nasty filthy disgusting obscene allusion' that Sadler was prepared to undergo circumcision in order to gain the support of the Jewish community.<sup>2</sup> The working men in Leeds, deprived of votes, decided to show their support for Sadler by refusing to deal with shopkeepers who supported Marshall and Macaulay<sup>3</sup>

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1. Memoirs . . . Sadler, p.408. Intercepted Letter from J--- H--- ... to R--- H--- ... etc. in Representation of Leeds 1831-1841 J.H. = John Hardy, R.H. = Robert Hall .
  2. To The Electors of the Borough of Leeds From a Hater of Indecency and Cant in Oastler and The Factory Movement 1830-1835, No.562 (3).
  3. Leeds Intelligencer, 27 Sept.1832.



so that the exclusive dealing of the old system was also a feature of the new. In this atmosphere of bitterness and extreme measures Macaulay found himself 'laying it on' Sadler as heavily as everyone else and added 'I despise myself for feeling so bitterly towards this fellow as I do'.<sup>1</sup> Macaulay assumed that he felt bitter because of his separation from his recently engaged sister but in fact it was probably that he was infected with the spirit of the campaign.

The character of the Leeds election of 1832 may best be gauged by a brief look at nomination day for there in microcosm was the whole campaign. About 20,000 people gathered for the nomination and there were a great number of banners. The 'hired ruffians' of the Whigs tore down a banner depicting infant slavery in Marshall's mills and so Sadler's 'bludgeon men' tore down the banner of the Leeds Political Union. After this 'Battle of the Standard' there occurred the 'dastardly flight of the Orangemen' as they were driven from the Cloth Hall Yard by the 10-hours supporters. As a reply Orange supporters threw down tiles from the roof of the Cloth Hall which were hurled back by the Blues. The Orange band played while Sadler spoke and the Blue band played while Marshall spoke. Macaulay did not bother to speak at all. As a result of the day's activities 11 people were in need of hospital treatment, four of whom were detained.<sup>2</sup>

One historian of Yorkshire wrote of nomination day 1832 'It is sincerely hoped that such a scandalous scene will never again be wit-

1. Trevelyan, op.cit., p.295.

2. Account based on Leeds Mercury, 11 Dec. 1832, Leeds Intelligencer, 13 Dec.1832, Leeds Patriot, 15 Dec.1832, Preserve Order Forsooth in Oastler and The Factory Movement 1831-1841, No.534 (2).

nessed in the town'<sup>1</sup> and it was events such as these which prompted another to ask

'whether corruption has been extinguished or has only changed hands; whether the purchase of a borough or the purchase of a crowd be a puzer transaction.'<sup>2</sup>

It may be that as Professor Gash has pointed out politicians of the day would not be shocked at what was merely 'a striat application of the accepted conventions of influence'<sup>3</sup> but the Leeds election of 1832 had hardly justified Edward Baines's comment on elections in newly enfranchised boroughs:

'How striking a contrast this is with the licentiousness of the Borough system . . . this striking contrast is one of the first fruits of the Reform Bill'.<sup>4</sup>

Some in Leeds wondered whether they had fought the boroughmongers merely to become boroughmongers themselves.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Mayhall, op.cit., I, p.393.
  2. H.Schroeder Annals of Yorkshire (1852), I, p.270.
  3. N.Gash Politics in the Age of Peel (1953), p.138.
  4. Leeds Mercury, 15 Sept. 1832.
  5. Purity of Election and Exclusive Dealing in Representation of Leeds 1831-1841.

CHAPTER III

THE FIRST OF THE NEW

AND THE LAST OF THE OLD

1833 - 1835

(i)

The mobilisation of public opinion on the great political questions of the day which was the dominant issue discussed in the previous chapter was less significant in the years 1833 -5. This was partly the consequence of the changes in political activity resultant from the Reform Bill itself which was to lead to the eclipse of organising bodies like the Leeds Association and their replacement by registration societies. Part of the answer lay in the expectations of these, the first years of the post-reform era, since the Whig government had to be given a fair trial. Again part of the answer lay in the immense activity over Parliamentary, municipal and parish elections which will form the bulk of this chapter.

This is not however to say that there were no political questions which activated Leeds in the years 1833 - 1835. There were three issues which produced meetings and petitions and these were slavery, the ballot and the question of Church reform.

Activity in Leeds on the slavery question was somewhat unique in that it had the support of all parties. Rival ministers like the Anglican Fawcett and the Independent Hamilton, rival editors like the Mercury's Baines and the Intelligencer's Perring and rival solicitors like the Liberal Richardson and the Tory Wailes joined together in urging the end to slavery. During 1833 three meetings were organised, petitions were sent to Parliament and even a deputation was despatched

to London to put the all-party case from Leeds.<sup>1</sup>

The only party opposition came in the form of Radical protests from Bower, Lees, Ayrey and Edward Parsons, first editor of the Leeds Times, against the compensation and apprenticeship clauses. This Radical activity formed a prologue to Bower's candidature in the 1834 election<sup>2</sup> and the election itself was a prologue to the discussion of the merits of the ballot. It was during the 1834 campaign that Baines changed sides on this question and he and others used the election as evidence for the need for the ballot. Many of the speakers at the meeting on the ballot in April 1834 admitted that they were only recent converts, and these included the two Leeds M.P.'s.<sup>3</sup> The Radicals dismissed the meeting as a sham and their newspaper refused to report it since the ballot without an extension of the suffrage would benefit only £10 householders. The Intelligencer weighed in with a defence of the traditional virtues of manliness which the ballot would erode.<sup>4</sup>

Dissenters had high hopes that the Whig government would remove some of their grievances and a meeting of Independents and Baptists petitioned Parliament hopefully in 1833.<sup>5</sup> These two groups were the most active

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1. Leeds Mercury, 26 Jan., 13 April, 25 May, 27 July 1833, Leeds Intelligencer 31 Jan, 30 March, 13 April, 25 May, 27 July 1833.

2. See below, pp. 103-112

3. Leeds Mercury, 5 April 1834.

4. Leeds Times 12 April 1834; Leeds Intelligencer 12 April 1834 'The electors are outraged by the assumption that they are timid, corrupt, contemptible, not men of spirit and independence but shrinking, skulking cowards who need a cloak when in the discharge of a great public duty'.

5. Leeds Mercury, 7 Dec. 1833.

of the Dissenters in Leeds and having opposed Althorp's abortive measure on Church rates they formed a standing committee in 1834.<sup>1</sup> The activity of Dissenters was echoed by that of Anglicans who in 1834 passed the 'Leeds Declaration of the Laity of the Church of England'.<sup>2</sup> The threat against Church rates rallied Leeds Tories around the banner of "Church in danger" and 7,000 signed another declaration of support for the Church.<sup>3</sup> Dissenters petitioned for relief from grievances but Tory Anglicans believed this to be an assault on the Church itself and as the Leeds Corporation put it

'the various sectaries are combined with the enemies of all religion in open and avowed hostility against our Holy Church . . . and will eventually accomplish the humiliation of our Church so ardently hoped for by her enemies'<sup>4</sup>

There was a strong "Church in danger" element in the Operative Conservative movement which began in Leeds in 1835. This was a strange phenomenon not to be confused with the working-class support for Sadler in 1832. There were many in the new movement who had supported Sadler's<sup>5</sup> protests in 1832 about the exploitation of labour caused by industrialisation. They were protests against the kind of society that was developing whereas the Operative Conservative movement was an expres-

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1. Ibid., 10, 17, 24 May 1834.

2. Leeds Intelligencer, 1 March 1834.

3. Ibid., 28 June 1834.

4. Court Book, p.412-14, 16 June 1834.

5. William Paul the Secretary admitted that he had supported factory reform and Cavie Richardson, according to Paul one of the inspirers of the society, was also a strong factory reformer.

sion of satisfaction with the state of society:

'We reverence the King and all in authority and pay due deference and respect to all who are in high stations and wish to uphold them in their just rank and dignity . . . "Honour to whom honour is due . . ." . . . we feel truly grateful for and exult that freedom is our birth-right as Englishmen'<sup>1</sup>

Sadler's supporters in 1832 did not believe that they had this freedom.

The Operative Conservative Society was very much a political organisation which shied away from the great social questions of the day.

Paul, the secretary, described the Operative Conservatives as those

'who were attached to an established monarchy . . . who were attached to the independence of the House of Lords . . . who were attached to the lower part of the legislature . . . who were attached to an indissoluble union between Church and State . . .'<sup>2</sup>

Not for them the agitation for a better lot for the working man, for they apparently believed that their employers were just, sincere men and society as it was was the ultimate apogee.

The society began in Leeds just after Beckett's victory in the 1835 election and it may be seen as a symbol of the renewed strength of Toryism in Leeds which was also manifested in the Tory activity in parochial politics.<sup>3</sup> One of their first meetings was a dinner to celebrate Beckett's victory and one of the toasts was 'To Mr. John Gott and Mr.

1. Fear God - Honour the King (initial address of the Operative Conservative Society) in W. Paul A History of the origin and progress of Operative Conservaties Societies (Leeds 1838), p.9.
2. Paul, op.cit., pp.7-8.
3. Both Beckett's victory and the parochial political activity are discussed later in this chapter.



Atkinson with all the Conservative masters of Leeds'.<sup>1</sup>

The operatives were represented by Paul at a Tory dinner to Beckett in November 1835 when Paul reminded the audience that although his supporters were socially and economically different from them they were all bound together by Toryism. He explained that Operative Conservative Societies were necessary because

'it was high time that some counteracting power should be opposed to those principles of anarchy, evolution and republicanism which were now flying through the land'.

A week later Paul addressed his own colleagues at their first annual dinner and reminded them of their great attachment to those principles 'which formed the stability of the constitution of the Empire'.<sup>3</sup> According to a hostile report the dinner was attended by 'a hotchpotch of all the refuse mingled with some of the heads of the Tory clique in this town'. It listed some of the 'operatives' who were wool merchants, linen merchants, surveyors and barristers and claimed that the majority of the genuine operatives were from Gotts, assembled in an orderly manner under their overseers.<sup>4</sup>

Critics might condemn the Leeds Operative Conservatives who were thus giving an important lead to the whole country and forming a new di-

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1. Gott and Atkinson were the proposer and seconder of Beckett at the nomination in both 1834 and 1835 and it was Atkinson whom Oastler later named as having driven off Sadler. Opponents of the Operative Conservatives always claimed that the society was composed of the employees of Tory masters. Gotts were the largest Tory wool men and Atkinson the largest Tory flaxspinners. William Paul worked at Hives and Atkinsons.
  2. Leeds Intelligencer, 21 Nov. 1835.
  3. Ibid., 28 Nov. 1835.
  4. Leeds Times, 28 Nov. 1835.

mension to Tory support and activity in industrial towns. As if to show that all operatives were not dupes and 'Tory gulls' many working-class Radicals attended a meeting addressed by O'Connor<sup>1</sup> at the end of 1835 and formed the Leeds Radical Association to support the five<sup>2</sup> radical demands of the Great Metropolitan Radical Association. Joshua Hobson was compensating somewhat for the stigma which Radicals believed William Paul had attached to Leeds. In the event the Operative Conservatives were to prove a more enduring force than the Leeds Radical Association.

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1. O'Connor stressed his favourite theme of union with the repealers in Ireland but the Leeds Radical Association considered this unsound and impolitic and refused to include it in their rules.
  2. Universal Suffrage, Equal Representation, the Ballot, Annual Elections, No Property Qualifications for M.P.'s.

## (ii)

The birth of the Operative Conservative Society, just described, was confirmation of Robert Hall's fears that the fierce election of 1832 would be 'the bitter presage of an incessant political and party warfare'<sup>1</sup>. Party conflict was unabated in these years, stimulated by two further Parliamentary elections in just under a year.

Apart from actual elections the annual revision of the register of voters made constant vigilance and organisation necessary. On the Tory side the Leeds Association of Independent Electors, announced at the dinner to Sadler in December, 1832, held its first meeting in the following February and elected its officers.<sup>2</sup> It was opposed by the Leeds Association, now named the Leeds Reform Association, whose continued existence was due to the need to 'watch over the Register of Voters'.<sup>3</sup>

It had been the example set by the Tories at the revision of 1832 and the fear that it might be repeated unchallenged<sup>4</sup> which led to the registration activity of the Whig side during 1833. In the event the Tories, whether by accident of design, put the Reform Association in a difficult position by not objecting to a single voter on the overseer's list at the 1833 revision. This may have been the result of inactivity, since nothing more was heard of the Leeds Association of Independent Elec-

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1. Leeds Intelligencer, 10 Jan.1833.

2. Ibid., 7 Feb.1833

3. Third Report of the Committee of the Leeds Reform Association (1834), p.2.

4. Second Report of the Committee of the Leeds Reform Association (1833), p.6.

tors, or of a belief that an election was not imminent.<sup>1</sup> Whatever the reason, the 220 objections which the Reform Association had already given notice of were abandoned since the Association believed that it would appear 'illiberal' to proceed while their opponents lay idle.<sup>2</sup> This noble gesture evoked no response from the Tories in the following year, by which time it was made to look rather foolish and amateur when compared with the professional way in which the Tories pressed home their advantage.

Long before that however Leeds had another election on its hands as Macaulay followed Brougham in deserting the Leeds electors for high office. Macaulay had some doubts about taking the post in India but these concerned his career and family and not his supporters in Leeds. He did however warn his sister in August not to leak the news of his impending appointment lest he 'be placed in a very awkward position with regard to the people at Leeds' and he even attended a dinner in Leeds in November without giving the game away.<sup>3</sup>

When the news did break in Leeds the Mercury put on a brave face believing it to be an honour to lose Macaulay for such a worthy office but the Intelligencer's claim that no political hanger-on can possibly discharge all the duties of a member for Leeds' was shared by many.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Both of these are more likely than the implied claim by the Leeds Intelligencer, 7 Sept.1833, that the Tories wished to extend the franchise, or that of the Leeds Mercury, 28 Sept.1833, that the Tories did nothing because their cause was hopeless.
  2. Third Report . . . etc., p.2; Leeds Mercury, 21 Sept.1833.
  3. Trevelyan, op.cit., p.237; Leeds Mercury, 9 Nov.1833.
  4. Leeds Mercury, 30 Nov.1833; Leeds Intelligencer, 7 Dec.1833. Cf. Baines Life of Baines, p.148, 'free reflections were made on the inconvenience of having lawyers and official men to represent large boroughs in Parliament. The facts involved no real blame on Mr. Macaulay but they certainly indisposed the electors to look for his successor among the holders or expectants of office.'

Macaulay had indeed proved those critics right who had foretold that he would use Leeds merely as a step on the ladder to success.

It had been the Leeds Association which had suggested Macaulay in 1831 and the men who originated it who had suggested Brougham in 1830 and therefore it was not surprising that when the Leeds Reform Association met to discuss the vacancy it was decided to refer the matter to a meeting of Liberal electors rather than launch a candidate independently<sup>1</sup>. At the meeting of electors attended by 500 people Edward Baines emerged as the most popular candidate. The two other names suggested were Joshua Bower and Dr. John Bowring, later famous as one of the leaders of the Anti-Corn Law League.<sup>2</sup> Bowring's name was automatically dropped once a requisition to Baines was organised but Bower was not to be pushed aside. Baines, always a preacher of unity, was anxious not to be a candidate unless the call to him was 'very general' and pressure was put upon Bower not to create disunity in the Liberal party.<sup>3</sup> After the election was over Edward Baines Junior could dismiss Bower's candidature as an insignificant interference by a small section of the Radicals<sup>4</sup>, who nevertheless represented a disturbing warning of the possibility of a split within the Liberal party, which was to reappear in the elections of 1837 and 1841.

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1. Baines, op.cit., p.149; Leeds Mercury, 7 Dec.1833; Third Report . . . etc., p.3.

2. Leeds Mercury, 14 Dec.1833.

3. Baines Papers (Leeds Archives Dept.), Baines to Edward Baines Junior, n.d., Baines, op.cit., p.153. See also speeches by Baines, Gaunt and John Clapham, Leeds Mercury, 14, 28 Dec.1833.

4. Baines, op.cit., p.152 'a small number of the Radical party . . .'; Third Report . . . etc., p.6. ' . . . a small portion of the radical party . . .'. Bower's poor show in the poll justified this view.

At the meeting of electors Joshua Bower bitterly criticised the composition of the meeting and warned the supporters of Baines that 'he was not to be set aside by the decision of that small junto.'<sup>1</sup> Evidence of a growing estrangement between Bower and the Leeds Reform Association can be detected during the course of 1833. There was first of all the somewhat surprising decision of the Leeds Political Union to continue its existence. Unlike the Leeds Reform Association it was not to concern itself with the registration of voters but deemed it its duty to see that the fruits of the Reform Bill were produced. As before, its great virtue was its ability to combine middle- and working-class support under the leadership of Bower who, in the words of one operative, 'was a sort of connecting link between the middle and operative classes'.<sup>2</sup>

The Leeds Political Union continued to meet and by May 1833 it was beginning to criticise Macaulay.<sup>3</sup> During the several town meetings on the issue of slavery already mentioned the difference of opinion was crystallised. Both Bower, the president, and Joseph Lees, the secretary, of the Leeds Political Union spoke out strongly against the compensation and apprenticeship clauses. On the compensation clause Macaulay and Marshall voted in opposite ways and when the Liberals arranged a dinner to the borough and county members Bower had a chance to question Macaulay on his actions.

It was this dinner which revealed fully that there was a split between the political Union and the Reform Association. All went well until Macaulay spoke a second time when Bower interrupted him and criti-

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1. Leeds Mercury, 14 Dec. 1833.

2. Ibid., 16 Feb. 1833.

3. Leeds Intelligencer, 4, 25 May 1833.

cised specifically his votes on the compensation and apprenticeship clauses. Macaulay was annoyed, Bower was shouted down but replied that he spoke on behalf of many who could not afford to spend fifteen shillings on a dinner.<sup>1</sup>

The Leeds Intelligencer, anxious to make capital out of the divisions on the Liberal side, devoted several editorials to the way Bower had been treated but in addition found further copy in the disclosures made by Joseph Lees. On the day of the dinner Lees had been arrested and sent to York gaol because of a case where he had stood bail for a man who had absconded to the continent. The Sheriff's officer who arrested Lees denied that there was any political connection with the timing of the arrest but Lees was convinced that he was taken at that time because he was going to ask awkward questions at the dinner.<sup>2</sup>

Lees decided to make public the differences of opinion which had previously been only hinted at. Lees claimed that the 'junto of the Reform Association' had advised the Leeds Political Union to dissolve despite the fact that without it the present members would not have been elected. He continued:

'I cannot omit to state that the Union have noticed the difference a single year has made in the conduct of the Association. Last year all was consultation and communication until their victory was obtained: this year when there is time to review the past and congratulate each other on the part each took the Union has been forsaken, neither consultation nor communication has taken place and the Union feel that their claims have been neglected - their past services

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1. Leeds Mercury, 9 Nov.1833; Leeds Intelligencer, 9 Nov. 1833.

2. Leeds Mercury, 30 Nov.1833; Leeds Intelligencer, 16,23 Nov.1833. Lees also used as evidence the fact that he was refused a ticket for the dinner when he tried to buy one.



forgotten.<sup>1</sup>

This estrangement which came to a head over Macaulay's votes on the slavery issue makes more understandable Bower's decision to stand against his allies of only a year previously. The Intelligencer was correct when it stated that 'the Political Union Radicals have had ample cause for dissolving the partnership with Whiggery.'<sup>2</sup>

If there was some disunity on the Liberal side, neither was all completely well with the Tories. It was naturally assumed that Sadler would again stand for the Tories and the Mercury obviously had Sadler in mind when it claimed that Leeds did not want a man who could be at the same time 'an aristocrat in Park Place and a radical in Marsh Lane'.<sup>3</sup> A canvass was immediately organised for Sadler yet suddenly he switched from Leeds to Huddersfield. There is no doubt that Sadler agreed to do this on the instructions of his own supporters.<sup>4</sup> To stand for another borough in the middle of an election campaign hardly seems the best way to win at Leeds and the only conclusion must be that despite the invitation to Sadler Leeds Tories, or at least some of them, simply

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1. Lees to editor of Leeds Intelligencer dated York Castle 12 Nov.1833 in Leeds Intelligencer, 16 Nov.1833.
  2. Ibid., 7 Dec.1833.
  3. Leeds Mercury, 7 Dec.1833.
  4. In the advertisement announcing the decision to stand at Huddersfield Leeds Intelligencer, 21 Dec.1833 Sadler's committee gave the reason as the fact that the Huddersfield election would come on sooner. Baines, op.cit., p.155, states 'his chance in Leeds being considered small his friends recommended him to offer himself to the constituency of Huddersfield'. When Sadler finally declined to stand at Leeds he reminded his supporters that he went to Huddersfield 'under your direction'. Leeds Intelligencer, 25 Jun.1834.

wanted to be rid of him.

In fact this was the case. As was emphasised in the previous chapter it was the personality of Sadler that was responsible for the intrusion of the factory question into the 1832 campaign and for the support of the factory reformers. While this brand of paternal Tory-Radicalism appealed to many non-electors it apparently did not satisfy some of the leading Tory manufacturers and John Marshall Junior had predicted in September 1832 that Sadler's 'coquetting with the Radicals will fling him out of his Tory saddle'.<sup>1</sup>

None of Sadler's supporters ever admitted publicly at either the 1832 or 1834 elections that Sadler did not command the full support of the whole party in Leeds although Sadler himself gave an indication of this when he listed his reasons for not standing. In his address to the electors he said that there would be opposition to him because of 'my conduct on a great manufacturing question' and when he spoke to his supporters he was more explicit. He stated that there were millowners who were normally Tories but who refused to support him because of his part in the factory question and because he was too friendly with the working classes. Sadler did not feel it was fair to deprive the Tory

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1. Brougham MSS, No.43078, Marshall Jn. to Brougham 4 Sept.1832. In the same letter, written after one day's canvass in the Leeds election, Marshall also predicted 'the Factory Bill does not promise popularity to Sadler' which seemed wide of the mark if applied to non-electors but nearer the truth if applied to Tory voters.

party in Leeds of this support for a second time and so he declined to stand.<sup>1</sup> Two years later Castler stated in an address to the Operative Conservatives of Leeds that a few millowners who refused to vote for Sadler had driven him out 'because he was resolved to defend your children from their iron grasp'.<sup>2</sup> There may be an indication of this in the fact that Benjamin and John Gott, the most important Tory woollen manufacturers, abstained in 1832 but voted for Beckett in 1834.<sup>3</sup>

Thus on the surface Sadler was declining but in practice the Leeds Tories were forcing him out. In going out Sadler expounded his philosophy of Toryism to his supporters:

'I trust the civil and religious opinions we profess as Tories, if we are to bear the name, will be worthy of their source and teach us what we owe not only to the altar and the throne but to the community at large even to those who are left without the pale of the constitution . . . Let us, as we are instructed equally by our feelings and our religion assert the rights and maintain the cause of the humbler classes . . . Nor let us, gentlemen, forget the attachment of the same class in this place. Little more than a year ago 'twas this that enabled us not only once again to unfurl our banner but to gather round it the mass of the people . . . Poor indeed are the notions of those who imagine that government is instituted for the advantage of a particular class'.<sup>4</sup>

Here was an appeal to the Leeds Tories not to forget this Sadlerian brand of Toryism nor to revert to a more exclusive kind. In turning

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1. Leeds Intelligencer, 25 Jan. 1834. It cannot have helped Sadler's image that in December Foster, editor of the demised Leeds Patriot, made accusations in the London papers with regard to the 1832 election and their alliance at that time. These were taken up vigorously by the Leeds Mercury and acted as something of a tit for tat for the recent revelations of Lees.
  2. Leeds Times, 14 May 1836.
  3. Poll Book 1832, pp.14,45; Poll Book 1834, pp.19,58.
  4. Leeds Intelligencer, 25 Jan. 1834.

their back on this advice and having Beckett's as their candidates for the next 18 years the Leeds Tories found that Toryism unencumbered with Radicalism yielded electoral advantage.

Once Sadler was definitely out of the way the Leeds Tories moved quickly and invited Sir John Beckett to stand. It was revealed that another member of the family, almost certainly William Beckett, had been approached both in 1832 and now in 1834 but had declined.<sup>1</sup> A deputation of John Atkinson, one of the leading Tory solicitors, Perring and William Perfect visited Beckett in Northamptonshire and he accepted the invitation and was to stand at the next three Leeds elections.

It would be a mistake to see the Leeds election of 1834 in the same terms as that of 1832 for Beckett was no Sadler. His candidature marked the beginning of a move away from the Sadler brand of social Toryism towards a more straightforward almost old-fashioned political Toryism. The Mercury was right in believing that the son-in-law of the Earl of Lonsdale would not go around wheedling the Radicals as Sadler had done.<sup>2</sup>

Beckett had much previous experience of Tory politics though he had first entered government as a Whig in 1806. He had been an Under-Secretary at the Home Office when Sidmouth was there, he had opposed Canning, he had resigned over Catholic Emancipation, he much more than Macaulay

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1. This was stated by Sadler (Leeds Intelligencer, 25 Jan. 1834) who mentioned 'a local member of the family' which indicated Sir John's younger brother William Beckett. This adds further evidence to the Oastler view that Sadler was not given 100% support since Beckett must have been approached before Sadler was in the field for the 1832 election.
  2. Leeds Mercury, 25 Jan. 1834.

had been a placeman. As Henry Rawson said during the canvass Beckett was the nominee of the Lowthers, Cardigans, Harewoods, Mexboroughs, the Marchioness of Hertford and the Leeds Corporation and Clergy and the Mercury echoed

'Beckett is a lawyer - a placeman, a Castlereagh and Eldon Tory! an ally of Bishops and Boroughmongers, a man bound up with the landed aristocracy not merely by his interests but by his prejudices'.<sup>1</sup>

Not only was this justified comment, the most interesting thing is that it was not denied but if anything confirmed in the Tory literature. As one handbill claimed 'I say then if he be a Tory of the Eldon school he belongs to an honest and constant school'.<sup>2</sup> His career and family connections rallied support from the people who, perhaps, had been unhappy with Sadler.

If Beckett's critics emphasised his family connections with aristocracy through marriage his supporters emphasised his own family connections with Leeds, for Becketts were the most important bankers in the town. Great play was made of the fact that the Becketts had saved Leeds in the financial crisis of 1826.<sup>3</sup> In answer to the charge that Beckett had been a drain on the taxpayer it was pointed out that he had never claimed the pension of £1,000 to which he was entitled by virtue of his office of Judge Advocate General.<sup>4</sup> His whole make-up seemed to

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1. Ibid., 8 Feb.1834.
  2. Leeds Intelligencer, 1 Feb.1834; a typical cry at Beckett's meetings was 'Beckett and Old England for ever'.
  3. See particularly two handbills both entitled Who Is Sir John Beckett? in Representation of Leeds 1831-1841.
  4. A Fact and Pension in ibid. The election campaign made this refusal to take the pension a part of the Beckett image and it is mentioned by Taylor, op.cit., p.423.

justify his claim that he wished to restore the 'independence of the borough.'<sup>1</sup>

This candidature put Sadler's former allies among the factory reformers in something of a quandary for Beckett was no more than a lukewarm supporter of factory reform. It is misleading to claim that Sadler's former friends lined up behind Beckett as they had done behind Sadler.<sup>2</sup> They were united in condemning Baines and he was attacked as the representative of those who 'make the steam giant instrumental of spreading poverty, vice, starvation, and death throughout the land'.<sup>3</sup> The addresses of Oastler and Rider in 1834 were as virulent against Baines as they had been against Marshall in 1832 but now that was as far as they went. In place of strong appeals for Sadler was Oastler's advice to question the candidates on factory reform and Rider's to support men who were for the working classes.<sup>4</sup>

Some of the factory reformers in fact went over to Bower who was advocating household suffrage, triennial parliaments and the ballot. John Ayrey and CavieRichardson, both of whom were before and after the election staunch factory reformers, were to be found supporting Bower. Richardson had signed the requisition to Sadler but once it appeared likely that he would not stand he saw Bower as the best candidate.<sup>5</sup>

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1. This was the main feature of his campaign, see his election addresses in Ibid and Leeds Intelligencer, 25 Jan., 15 Feb. 1834.
  2. This claim is made in Ward Factory Movement, p.117.
  3. To The Operatives of Leeds in Oastler and The Factory Movement 1830-1835, No.575. There is a MS note on this which states 'Put out by Rider'.
  4. Ibid and R.Oastler To The Electors of Leeds in Oastler and The Factory Movement 1830-1835, No.578 (2).
  5. Leeds Mercury, 4 Jan. 1834.



Ayrey, who had been one of the principal organisers of Sadler's working-class supporters in 1832,<sup>1</sup> had backed Bower at one of the meetings on slavery in 1833 and was described in 1834 as one of Bower's main supporters.<sup>2</sup>

Neither Ayrey nor Richardson was a voter nor indeed were the mass of Bower's supporters and it appeared that the crowds of non-electors who were in Sadler's camp in 1832 were to be found behind "General" Bower in 1834.<sup>3</sup> His decision to go to the poll, knowing that though he had the support of the crowds he had no chance of winning the election, was in part due to Bower's own stubborn personality and it was a symbolic turning point in Leeds' political history. The Leeds Times which gave Bower its full support believed the Leeds election to be the beginning of the emergence of "the people", unwilling to support either of the two factions of Whig and Tory.<sup>4</sup> Bower himself was aware that if the 'real reformers' in Leeds rallied behind him then they would create 'a Party that must hereafter be respected'.<sup>5</sup> The immediate prospects did not worry him for it was his opinion that 'if I only get 20 votes it will be setting a pattern card for Leeds'.<sup>6</sup> The 'pattern card' was Radical political activity independent of the Whig-Liberals

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1. Ibid. described him as 'distributor general of bludgeons at the last election'.
  2. Ibid., 27 July 1833, 1 March 1834.
  3. Leeds Times, 8 Feb., 1 March 1834 points out that Bower had the support of the great mass of the people who were of course non-voters. Bower said at one meeting 'I have the popular opinion in my favour' and Bingley at the nomination said that Bower was the 'nomination of the people'.
  4. Ibid., 15 Feb. 1834.
  5. Leeds Mercury, 8 Feb. 1834.
  6. Ibid., 1 Feb. 1834.



and it was to become a feature of both municipal and Parliamentary politics in Leeds.

The threat of this independent Radical activity was enough to raise the prospect of losing the election for Baines. In the event the 24 votes cast for Bower did not affect the result but in such a close contest it might well have done. During a public debate in Hunslet between Baines and Bower the former offered to stand down if Bower really thought he had a majority of electors behind him which may or may not have been a serious offer. Certainly Bower's views on the ballot were a decisive factor in Baines's change of opinion during the campaign. Baines was standing as a candidate as much on his past record as on his present views<sup>1</sup> yet it was of importance that Baines was opposed to the ballot and Bower for it, which made the likelihood of lost Radical votes even greater. When the campaign began Baines and the Mercury were against the ballot: within a short time they had changed their opinions.

It appears that Baines was influenced by a letter from John Whitehead, a committee member of the Leeds Association since January 1832, in which Whitehead put the view that an M.P. ought to reflect his constituents' views and that Baines ought to do this on the ballot. He agreed that open voting was manly but (in the present state of society

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1. Cf. Electors of the Borough of Leeds (9 Dec. 1833) in Representation of Leeds 'that debt of gratitude you owe him for having been mainly instrumental in prostrating Toryism not only in the borough of Leeds but in the county of York and for having effected so many important economical Reforms in the Parochial affairs of our Town'.

it has so much of personal risk'.<sup>1</sup> With Bower and apparently a majority of electors in favour of the ballot Baines deemed it politic to accept the ballot, using the events of the recent Huddersfield election as justification for the change.<sup>2</sup> This volte-face was mercilessly attacked by both the Tories and the Radicals and it was said that it released former supporters of Baines from their obligations to him.<sup>3</sup>

Having opposed the ballot before the campaign began Baines was claiming when the election was over that if the ballot had been in operation his majority would have been 1,000.<sup>4</sup> There were frequent accusations of undue influence by customers, landlords and employers and one of the Liberal agents, James Richardson, even believed that financial help was needed to help those who had been victimised.<sup>5</sup> In addition to general charges of intimidation there was a flurry over a handbill issued by Clapham and Luccock, the chairmen of Baines's election committee, accusing Beckett's friends of offering bribes to two employees of Newman Cash, a stuff merchant. The two concerned refused to reveal the names of the men who approached them and after a delegation from Beckett had visited Clapham they denied the allegation completely.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Whitehead to Baines 30 Dec. 1833 in Leeds Mercury, 25 Jan. 1834.

2. Ibid., 8 Feb. 1834.

3. See Political Honesty (Tory) and The History of Mr. Baines and the Ballot (Radical), also Baines With A New Face and Mr. Baines in Representation of Leeds

4. Leeds Mercury, 1 March 1834.

5. Ibid., 22 Feb. 1834. Cf. Baines op.cit., p. 156 and Third Report . . . etc. pp. 5-6

6. See Gross and Scandalous Bribery (Liberal) and Charge of Bribery in Representation of Leeds; Leeds Intelligencer, 8 Feb. 1834. In The Orange Gathering there is a verse 'Ho ye chairmen, where's your scribery, Get us up a charge of bribery' which is a reference to this episode.

One of the reasons why accusations were liable to come mostly from the Liberal side was that Baines's supporters had dispensed with flags, bands and inns, all three of which were used profusely by Beckett which proved, according to one account, that the days of 'electioneering, riot and dissipation are not yet over.'<sup>1</sup> It was later claimed that Baines wished to appeal solely to 'public principles and unbiassed reason' although expense may also have been part of it for Clapham had pointed out the need to be economical with the money at their disposal.<sup>2</sup>

When the poll finally took place it was a desperately close contest and in fact the Liberal majority was only 34.<sup>3</sup> After one day's poll Beckett was in the lead and this fact was apparently communicated to William IV as evidence of a Tory reaction.<sup>4</sup> The Mercury denied that it represented any growth in Tory feeling merely 'an improvement in the arts of corrupt influence'.<sup>5</sup> Whatever the reason a majority of over 400 had been cut to 34; the "Eldon Tory" Beckett had done substantially better than the Tory Radical Sadler:

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1. To The Electors of the Borough of Leeds
  2. Third Report . . . etc., p.6; Leeds Mercury, 28 Dec. 1833.
  3. It was one of the lowest in the nineteenth century, the lowest being a Tory majority of six in 1857.
  4. Baines MSS, Baines to Edward Baines Junior, 27 Feb.1834, Baines op.cit., p.160.
  5. Leeds Mercury, 22 Feb.1834.

TABLE I LEEDS ELECTION 1834<sup>1</sup>

	Baines	Beckett	Swing to Tories
Leeds Township	1355 (51.15%)	1294 (48.85%)	3.94%
Out-Townships	596 (48.89%)	623 (51.11%)	8.48%
Leeds Boroughs	1951 (50.44%)	1917 (49.56%)	5.45%

A swing of nearly  $5\frac{1}{2}\%$  had brought Beckett within an ace of snatching the seat and his net gain in terms of votes compared with Sadler in 1832 was 177 in Leeds Township and a massive 213 in the out-townships. This latter figure was especially noteworthy since, as Table II indicates, the electorate had increased substantially in the in-township though not in the out-townships.

TABLE II ELECTORATE AND POLL 1832 and 1834

	Electorate		Poll	
	1832	1834	1832	1834
Leeds Township	2724	3581	2304	2668
Out-Townships	1448	1481	1244	1224
Leeds Borough	4172	5062	3548	3892

In Leeds with over 800 new votes Baines had increased the Liberal vote by only 68 compared with Beckett's increase of 245 and in the out-townships on a slightly lower poll Baines lost 128 while Beckett picked up 85.

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1. The Table does not include the 24 votes cast for Bower.

A change in the polling districts makes direct comparison difficult in the in-township while in the out-townships the figures have to be juggled somewhat. However Table III shows the net gain in six<sup>1</sup> of the eight divisions which can be compared.

TABLE III. NET GAIN IN VOTES FOR TORIES 1832 - 1834

Leeds		Out-townships	
Mill Hill	61	Hunslet, Holbeck and Beeston	70
Hightown	27	Bramley and Headingley	85
S. and S.W.	63	Chapel Allerton and Potter Newton	51
Totals	151		206

Mill Hill and Hightown were contiguous divisions stretching from the west side of Briggate to beyond Park Square and extending up to the Headrows. Here had been the traditional home of the business community especially the wool merchants. The gains in South and South-West were more surprising since they comprised the area south of the river bounded by Hunslet Lane, Meadow Lane and Water Lane which was heavily industrialised and the new South Ward was later to become the safest Liberal ward in the whole borough.<sup>2</sup>

1. In Leeds Lower N.W. can also be compared but there was no gain in votes (the Liberal majority was 7 in each case) while in the out-townships the predominantly rural division of Wortley, Armley and Farnley registered only a gain of 7 for Beckett.
2. See Conclusion, pp.507-9.

In the out-townships too the Hunslet, Holbeck, Beeston division contained much industrial development although Beeston was still very rural. Bramley and Headingley were combined together for the first time (much to Baines's disgust<sup>1</sup>) and the gains here are difficult to apportion. The enormous 23% swing in Chapel Allerton was cited later by Baines as prima facie evidence of undue influence and there certainly were some changes as indicated in Table IV.

TABLE IV VOTES OF 45 LIBERALS IN CHAPEL ALLERTON

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Removed or off list	15
Voted Liberal	12
Voted Tory	15
Abstained	3

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One third of those voting Liberal in 1832 had changed sides in 1834 and they comprised six farmers, three stonemasons, three gentlemen, and one miller, innkeeper and joiner.

All these figures show that Toryism had made progress in widely differing areas of Leeds with the main emphasis on the out-townships.

Baines had won but the closeness of the contest indicated that both in the urban and the semi-rural parts of Leeds the Tories could make a fight of it.<sup>2</sup> The vision of the growing manufacturing centres of England as

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1. He criticised it on the grounds that Tory voters in Headingley would more easily be able to afford transport to the common polling station in Kirkstall than the less wealthy Liberal voters in Bramley and who were more scattered.
  2. The Tories emerged from the election in a jaunty mood, c.f. Leeds Intelligencer, 15 March 1834, 'The Blues have conquered one seat and Mr. Baines knows it. Of that there is no question. But it may become a question whether they will allow the other seat to be privately disputed betwixt Mr. Baines and Mr. Marshall.' Also *ibid.*, 22 March 1834.

'The battle is won though the seat is not ours  
And our path will next time be a pathway of flowers'.

undisputed bastions of Liberalism where Toryism withered certainly did not fit the facts of political life in Leeds and within another year Leeds was to have the distinction of being the first of the newly enfranchised cities to return a Tory.

This was largely the result of a spectacular gain at the 1834 revision of voters. Registration had made organisation essential and though it is much easier to follow the path of the Liberal organisation it was the Tories that made the first full and effective use of the registration in political combat. The suitability of the Leeds Reform Association as a vehicle for the detailed preparations necessary for registration may have been called into question at the beginning of 1834. Shortly before the 1834 annual general meeting of the Association Baines wrote to his son, who was secretary, 'You are quite right in continuing the Leeds Association' which indicates that its continuation was in some doubt.<sup>1</sup> The committee, no doubt aware of this, remarked in their report that they 'may probably be reproached with having been less active than their predecessors.'<sup>2</sup>

It was not anticipated that the absence of a registration contest would be repeated and in order to make the Leeds Reform Association more representative of the various divisions of the town the committee was increased from 21 to 34 ordinary members.<sup>3</sup> The committee members were to be assigned a certain district where they would organise a committee to

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1. Baines MSS, Baines to Edward Baines Junior, 15 March 1834.

2. Third Report . . . etc., p.1.

3. Ibid., p.7, resolution proposed by Edward Baines, Junior and John Peele Clapham.



look into the register. This was the only sensible way to tackle the job and it produced a bitter attack from the Leeds Times, which saw in the scheme the prospect of the two parties engaged in continual party espionage . . . to counteract each other's machinations.' Party spirit was already strong in Leeds and this would perpetuate 'never dying malevolence and spite' not just at election times but at all times which would carry 'the party spirit into all ramifications of society'.<sup>1</sup>

'Party spirit' must have guided the Tories as they prepared for the 1834 revision, encouraged by their good showing in the election. Either the Leeds Association of Independent Electors which had disappeared from view or some other registration organisation must have been in existence. They probably believed, as the Liberals were to do after 1834, that such an onerous and detailed task as the registration of voters was best left to agents quietly working through the lists without the publicity and glare attached to such bodies as the Leeds Reform Association.

When the details of claims and objections to the overseers' list of voters were published it became apparent that a great deal of hard work had been done, for there were 1,100 objections and 430 claims, nearly two-thirds of which came from the Tory side. Assuming a comparable rate of success between the two parties there was the painful prospect for the Liberals that the greater numbers of Tory claims and objections would inevitably lead to a Tory gain on the register.

The "liberal" gesture of 1833 in abandoning their objections now began to appear an error of judgment despite its propaganda value when compared with the disfranchising Tories. When in March 1834 there

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1. Leeds Times, 22 March 1834.

had been some talk of an appeal to the House of Commons against the recent election result the Mercury had promised 'the Reformers will not encourage frivolous and vexatious objections or an expensive contest before the Revising Barrister'<sup>1</sup> and this idea was now quickly revived. George Rawson, Vice-President of the Leeds Reform Association, addressed an urgent appeal to William Wailes, one of the secretaries of the Tory registration committee, offering to drop all objections if the Tories would do likewise. It was a vain appeal for, as the Intelligencer pointed out, the Tories would be giving up far more numerically than the Liberals.<sup>2</sup> As to the reminder that the Liberals had withdrawn 200 objections in 1833 the Tory secretaries, Wailes and Dibb, replied with damning innocence

'We are of course entirely ignorant of the motives which led your committee to abandon their objections to the List of Voters on the last Revision. This we may safely state, that it was not upon any application from our side of the question.'<sup>3</sup>

The Leeds Liberals learnt not for the last time that their opponents did not believe that generous gestures ought to be reciprocal.

If the Liberals were mortified by the mere numbers there was worse to come, for the Tories had a brilliant trump card which they were not going merely to throw away. They discovered, unknown to the Liberals, the wonderfully elastic and fruitful source of objection - the compounded ratepayer. Although Hildyard, the revising barrister, sat for 22 days the main issue was decided in two test cases heard on the first

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1. Leeds Mercury, 8 March 1834.
  2. Leeds Intelligencer, 13 Sept. 1834.
  3. Ibid.

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1. Leeds Mercury, 8 March 1834.

2. Leeds Intelligencer, 13 Sept. 1834.

3. Ibid.

two days.

In Leeds the compounded ratepayer - a tenant who paid a composite sum to his landlord to cover rent and poor rates - was affected by an old and sensible custom whereby the overseers offered an inducement to landlords to pay their tenants' rates. The reason for this was that overseers were much more likely to find a landlord financially solvent than his somewhat impecunious tenants and therefore they offered a discount of up to 25% if landlords would compound for the rates of their tenants. The tenant did not benefit but a landlord with several houses would certainly find it worth his while to collect the full rate from his tenant and pass on only 80% of it to the overseer. The Tories, possibly following the example of their fellows in Salford and Liverpool, questioned whether the payment of only a proportion of the poor rates satisfied the conditions of the Reform Act.

Ironically, the first of the two test cases in Leeds in 1834, that of Daniel Sugden, began as a Tory claim for a vote which the Liberals opposed. Sugden was a £10 tenant and paid his landlord a further 10s0d. for his poor rates for which his landlord received a 25% discount. James Richardson, acting for the Liberals, elicited from Sugden the fact that he was a compounded ratepayer whereupon Hildyard, the revising barrister, urged Richardson to argue the case against compounded ratepayers. Richardson, obviously aware by then that the main Tory attack was to come on the question of compounded ratepayers, dared not argue for a case which he would later be vigorously opposing and so he declined, saying 'nothing should come from his side to say that a man living in a compoun-

ded house had no right to vote.<sup>1</sup> Richardson's case was in fact that Sugden's £10 rent included a highway rate which was paid for him by his landlord and therefore meant that he was not a £10 householder. He refused, despite Hildyard's promptings, to make a case against compounded ratepayers per se, and the case was actually stated by Hildyard himself.

When Hildyard came to give judgment he coupled Sugden's case with that of James Baldwin, which this time was a Liberal vote objected to by the Tories. Baldwin, a committee member of the Reform Association, lived in a house whose value was not in question and he paid his poor rates along with those of several of his tenants who lived in houses adjoining his. The overseers allowed him a discount of between 20% and 25% on the rates for all the properties, which of course included his own. This time it was not the vote of a tenant that was in doubt but the vote of the owner of the property since in respect of the rates due on his own house Baldwin had obtained a discount. Edward Bond now argued the case which Richardson had refused. The simple question for the court to answer, according to Bond, was whether a man who paid 80% of the rates due on his property had in fact paid all his rates as demanded by the Reform Act. Richardson put two main points in opposition to this case. The first was that Baldwin had paid all the rates that

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1. Leeds Intelligencer, 20 Sept.1834; Leeds Mercury, 20 Sept.1834. See also a book of newspaper cuttings Reports in the Revision Courts 1834 and 1835 (Thoresby Society Library). This was the work of Edward Bond, the chief Tory solicitor acting in the Revision Court, and although the sources are not given they can be identified as follows: pp.1-13 Leeds Intelligencer 20 Sept.1834; pp.14-19 ibid., 27 Sept.1834; pp.20-25 ibid., 4 Oct.1834; pp.26-34 ibid., 11 Oct.1834. Sugden's case is to be found pp.2-4.

were demanded of him, that the overseers had only asked for 80% of the rates due. Secondly he put a general, almost moral, point that the Reform Act was an enfranchising act and therefore it would be against the spirit of the Reform Act to take votes away in this manner.

Hildyard gave a most impressive judgment, prefaced by the warning that if the contending parties disagreed with his verdict they could appeal to Parliament to change the law, which he was interpreting. In answer to Richardson's claim that the Reform Act was an enlarging statute and so ought to be applied liberally Hildyard pointed out that it was not in fact an enlarging statute at all,

'on the contrary in many cases this statute restrains the right of voting that existed in this country. It excluded many persons from voting where they had been in the habit of exercising that right by taking away the power of election altogether, and in many of the boroughs which still retain the right where the ancient scot and lot and common law right of voting existed in a very few years that right will be at an end: and by the operation of this statute the number of persons entitled to vote in the election of members of Parliament will be greatly restrained especially as regards the lower orders of people in this country.'<sup>1</sup>

Hildyard showed that the Reform Act thus had a very important disfranchising as well as enfranchising aspect.

Having stated this Hildyard then applied what he believed to be the relevant passage of the 30th clause of the Reform Act, namely that occupiers must have paid 'the full amount of the rate or rates, if any, then due in respect of such premises.' In giving judgment against compounded ratepayers he illustrated his point with the following example. If there were two identical houses which were rented at £9.18.0 and

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1. Leeds Intelligencer, 20 Sept.1834; Leeds Mercury, 20 Sept.1834; Report in the Revision Court 1834 and 1835, p.7.



rated at 10s0d. and one was compounded then a grave injustice might follow. The one that was not compounded did not earn a vote because the rent was below £10 but in the other where the composite sum was £10.8.0. if the landlord earned a discount of 20% then only 8s0d. went to the rates and £10 was then the remaining rent. The compounded ratepayer would get the vote but his neighbour who paid his own rates would not. Because this could not have been Parliament's intention Hildyard found that people were not entitled to their vote where there had been a discount allowed on the rates since the full amount of the rates had not been paid.

Many other sorts of claims and objections came up during the revision but the issue of compounded ratepayers involved a substantial number of votes and was the decisive factor in the advantage gained by the Tories at the revision of 1834. The Mercury complained that since all the Tory compounded ratepayers remained on the roll it was merely a paltry pettifogging electioneering stratagem'.<sup>1</sup> The Times believed that if all compounded ratepayers were disfranchised then the Reform Act would be even worse than before and that the whole episode was further evidence of the 'vile and execrable character of party spirit.'<sup>2</sup> Only the Intelligencer of the Leeds papers was satisfied with the decision, adopting a tone of high justice, saying that the reduction of rates for compounded tenants was 'illegal and unjust'<sup>3</sup> yet of course Tory compounded ratepayers retained the vote for another year at least.

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1. Leeds Mercury, 20 Sept.1834.

2. Leeds Times, 20 Sept.1834.

3. Leeds Intelligencer, 20 Sept.1834.



When the revision was over and the results analysed there was some conflict over the totals arrived at. The younger Baines later reported a net gain for the Tories of 171 votes, the Mercury gave the figure as 202, the Times as 274 and the Intelligencer as 281.<sup>1</sup> In trying to decide which is nearest the truth it is worth remembering that the younger Baines and the Mercury estimates were probably from the same source and that the Liberals would clearly wish to minimise the damage. Similarly the Intelligencer's might be slightly exaggerated also to serve party purposes but the Times felt itself above the struggle and claimed to give the only reliable guide to the revision. It can certainly be said that the Tories gained more than 250 votes on the register at least half of which came from compounded ratepayers.<sup>2</sup>

The revision had lasted 22 days and it was estimated that it had cost over £1,000. It was this revision which brought home to Leeds the full significance of the registration clauses of the Reform Act and from 1834 dated the long standing/opposition of the Mercury to this mode of registering voters.<sup>3</sup> The Mercury envisaged that if the events of 1834 were repeated for several years then the town would be

'placed under the control of some opulent family or a com-

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1. Baines op.cit., p.169; Leeds Mercury, Leeds Times, Leeds Intelligencer, 11 Oct.1834. The rival figures were made up as follows:

	Tory		Liberal	
	Objections	Claims	Objections	Claims
Mercury	452	70	279	41
Intelligencer	572	79	324	46
Times	511	76	763	45

Cf. Leeds Mercury, 10 Jan.1835 used the figure of 281, see below.

2. This was satirised by the Leeds Intelligencer, 18 Oct.1834 as 'reforming the Reform Bill'.

bination of some ambitious solicitors who would be creatures (paid in pelf or patronage) either by the then existing ministry or of a faction struggling to grasp the reins of government.<sup>1</sup>

The new system could thus create a second generation of pocket boroughs.

The defeat for the Liberals sounded the death knell of the Leeds Reform Association which now gradually disappeared, to be replaced by an organisation specifically geared to the needs of the electoral register. The Association soldiered on into 1835 only as a pale shadow of its former strength and in June the two secretaries invited members to a meeting to discuss the dissolution of the Association and the concentration of all strength on the Registration Association.<sup>2</sup> Changed circumstances had made the Leeds Reform Association obsolete in its present form although in its four and a half years' existence it had served Leeds well as a generating spark for political activity.<sup>3</sup>

The committee of the Reform Association had been active as never before during the actual revision and members were available to voters for advice on the procedure to be adopted to rebut a claim or an objection. Each evening a kind of council of war was held to discuss the

1. Leeds Mercury, 11 Oct. 1834.
2. Leeds Intelligencer, 27 June 1835. As late as Leeds Mercury, 12 Sept. 1835 the term Reform Association was used but the Registration Association had clearly superseded the Reform Association by that date.
3. It also proved a good breeding ground for future Leeds Liberal politicians. In 1834 the 34 man committee contained the names of 19 future councillors and aldermen and several other prominent leaders of political activity of the later 1830's and 1840's, including future Leeds M.P.

day's decisions and work out strategy.<sup>1</sup> Despite this flurry of activity little could be done to repair the breach caused by the compounded ratepayers and the superiority of the Tories' case may be gauged from the fact that although the Tories objected to 300 more names than the Liberals they failed in only 104 cases against the Liberals' 99.

Only one ray of hope brightened the political horizon for the Leeds Liberals and that was that the Tory advantage would only be temporary. Within a year, at the next revision, the Liberals could correct the balance either by removing the Tory compounded ratepayers from the register or by ensuring that the deficient rates would be made up. Repeatedly the Mercury prophesied that all would be well by the next year and John Marshall decided to soldier on as M.P. for Leeds despite his wish to retire because of ill health.<sup>2</sup> Marshall's decision, quashing earlier rumours of his impending resignation, was clearly the result of the Liberals' fear of fighting an election on the 1834 register.

Unfortunately for the Liberals events beyond their control decreed that they would have to fight an election before the next revision, with the virtually inevitable surrender of one seat to the Tories. The King's action in virtually dismissing Melbourne, denounced by the Mercury as 'the Tory Aristocracy declaring war upon the people of England',<sup>2</sup> made an election likely and put the Liberals in a very difficult position.

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1. Leeds Intelligencer, 20 Sept. 1834, printed a circular signed by Edward Baines Junior and William Kettlewell, the joint secretaries of the Reform Association, announcing daily meetings. See also Report in the Revision Court 1834 and 1835, p. 5, Edward Bond: 'he was well aware that there was a Court of Review held every evening at which a report was made of the proceedings in the court during the day'.

2. Leeds Mercury, 20 Sept., 4, 11 Oct. 1834.

3. Ibid., 22 Nov. 1834.

As a prelude to their election proceedings a meeting of protest against the King's action was held which was addressed by Baines and many of the leading Liberals.<sup>1</sup>

The Tories on the other hand were quickly in the field and even before the Liberal protest meeting they held a meeting to nominate Sir John Beckett again. Henry Hall expressed the confidence of the whole gathering in Beckett which stemmed mainly from the fact that Beckett was 'from that class whence representatives used formerly to be chosen - the class of English gentlemen'.<sup>2</sup> There were many voices raised in favour of nominating two Tories which were restrained by John Gott who believed they ought to wait to see what their opponents did.

When the Liberals did finally meet, unprompted by the Reform Association,<sup>3</sup> they found themselves in an embarrassing position, for as the Intelligencer wryly pointed out the Liberals had 'two members and only the glimpse of one seat for them'.<sup>4</sup> Marshall refused to stand again because of ill health and so Baines was left in the field unchallenged.<sup>5</sup> Yet this only solved part of the problem, for if only Baines were nominated this would hand one seat to the Tories on a plate yet the 1834 revision meant that to contest the second seat would be virtually hopeless. It was decided to canvass the Liberal electors on the question of a second

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1. Ibid., 25 Nov.1834.
  2. Leeds Intelligencer, 22 Nov.1834.
  3. George Rawson, Vice-President of the Reform Association, announced at the meeting that the election proceedings had not emanated from the Reform Association, further evidence of its eclipse.
  4. Leeds Intelligencer, 29 Nov. 1834.
  5. Leeds Mercury, 29 Nov.1834, Baines, op.cit., p.170.

candidate and a week later it was announced that two-thirds of them were against one, unless the Tories first put up a second candidate.<sup>1</sup> George Wailes, the Radical lawyer who had unsuccessfully put a strongly worded protest at the meeting to address the King, announced that he was standing and got the enthusiastic support of the Leeds Times, which felt that Baines was completely unsuitable and ought to stand down in favour of the Radical.<sup>2</sup> A few days before the election Wailes held a meeting at which he spoke for three hours, advising non-electors to use exclusive dealing to compensate for their lack of the franchise and he offered to stand if enough people signed his requisition.<sup>3</sup> Presumably the response was poor for he did not go to the poll.

Wailes was no more than a diversion to the main issue, which was whether there would be a contest in Leeds. Unlike in the two previous elections the air was clear of pamphlet warfare and all was peaceful during December 1834. One of the few placards that did appear was an obviously fraudulent appeal signed by Matthew Johnson urging electors to vote for Baines and Beckett.<sup>4</sup> It is doubtful whether any actual collusion took place. The accusation/grew from the community of interest which the two parties clearly had.

Neither side, for their own reasons, wished to fight a contested election. The Tories had in 1832 urged the peaceful sharing of the representation and now this was a real possibility. The Liberals claimed that they did not wish to disturb the peace of the town once more

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1. Leeds Mercury, 29 Nov., 6 Dec. 1834.
  2. Leeds Times, 29 Nov., 6 Dec. 1834.
  3. Ibid., 3 Jan. 1835; Leeds Mercury, 3 Jan. 1835, Leeds Intelligencer, 3 Jan. 1835 claimed that none of the leading Radicals of the town attended the Wailes meeting.
  4. Leeds Times, 29 Dec., 1834.

and while this was somewhat specious it was true that a fierce election had been fought only a few months earlier. Money was also a factor. The Intelligencer claimed that the Liberals still owed £200 for the 1834 election,<sup>1</sup> and if the revision did cost the reputed £1,000 then both sides' finances would have been rather depleted. Above all on the Liberal side the effects of the revision would have meant fighting a contest like a boxer with one arm tied behind his back and as was later pointed out

'Most of those who usually take the lead in that party were however too sensible of the fatal loss sustained by the Reformers on the late Registration, through mere technical objections to their votes, to think it prudent to offer battle on the present occasion.'<sup>2</sup>

This situation produced an uneasy calm as the two sides prepared and the respective leaders had more to fear from their own supporters than their opponents, for each had resolved not to put up a second candidate unless their opponents did likewise. On both sides 'prudent moderation was exercised in the face of supporters straining at the leash, the leaders on each side incline to rest where they are . . . a rather large body of electors on both sides cry out "push forward".'<sup>3</sup>

Since the Liberals had most to lose from a contest it was likely that it would be the Tories, if anyone, who breached this unwritten agreement to have no contest and so it turned out. Unprompted and unbidden by the Gotts, Becketts, Atkinson of the Tory party a group of Tories acted to bring a second candidate into the field. The lea-

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1. Leeds Intelligencer, 6 Dec.1834.

2. Leeds Mercury, 10 Jan.1835.

3. Leeds Intelligencer, 13 Dec.1834; Baines, loc.cit.



der of this group, which met at the Rose and Crown, was William Tottie Watson, a dyer from Headingley, who was later to be elected as councillor for Headingley in the new Leeds Corporation. Their first choice was Milnes Gaskell who was already committed to stand at Wenlock and so they turned to Colonel Lumbe Tempest of Tong Hall, a man even more reactionary than Beckett.<sup>1</sup> This move did not have the support of the main section of the Tory party but when nomination day came Tempest was nominated by James Brook, who had visited Tempest with the invitation to stand, and Watson. Reluctantly the Tories agreed at the last minute to coalesce with Tempest, which on the face of it threatened both seats.

Equally reluctantly Hamer Stansfeld and Thomas George nominated William Brougham, brother of Lord Brougham. He only arrived at the end of the first day's poll but to have got him to Leeds at all at such short notice was an achievement. Using only horse-drawn transport Thomas Luccock and William Smith had covered over 500 miles in 54 hours to bring Brougham up to Leeds.<sup>2</sup>

The monumental effort involved ironically in the end made a contest certain after the Tories had found a way of avoiding it. Having agreed to join with Tempest, Beckett's supporters, faced with a mass withdrawal of aid from the leading Tories, decided to advise Tempest that his candidature threatened Beckett's position and so Tempest withdrew at the beginning of the poll. Having discarded Tempest the Tories now approached the Liberals and urged them to drop their second candidate.<sup>3</sup>

1. Leeds Mercury, 3 Jan. 1835; Leeds Intelligencer, 3 Jan. 1835.
2. Leeds Mercury, 10 Jan. 1835.
3. Ibid., and Leeds Intelligencer, 10 Jan. 1835



It was however too late for they could hardly drag Brougham all the way up to Leeds and then tell him he was not wanted. Thus in the end the Liberals fought the election they had so wished to avoid.

The two main contenders Baines and Beckett remained out of the normal controversy associated with Leeds elections. What little mud was hurled related to Tempest and Brougham. Tempest, it appeared, had 14 years earlier prevented Wesleyan Methodists from holding services on his estates and this episode though beyond most people's memories and acquaintance, was effectively used on nomination day to paint Tempest as a persecutor of Dissenters.<sup>1</sup> Brougham, according to the Radicals, was, like Marshall in 1832, in favour of emigration in order to solve Britain's economic problems and a supporter of the new poor law. He was also accused along with Baines of caring nothing for the voters so long as he got into Parliament:

'I will just add a postscript that I my mind may tell  
If I and Neddy Baines be safe, why you may go to H--L'.<sup>2</sup>

As anticipated Baines was safe and Brougham was not so his great journey north went unrewarded.

The result of the 1835 Leeds election was, as Sir John Beckett said at the declaration of the poll, 'You have returned the first Blue member for Leeds': Beckett 1941, Baines 1803, Brougham 1665.<sup>3</sup> As indicated

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1. Tempest was closely questioned by J.S.Barlow on nomination day and the revelations about this "religious prejudice" may have been instrumental in persuading Beckett that he could not run with Tempest. See Leeds Mercury, 10 Jan.1835.
  2. The Blessings of Emigration Described by Billy Broom Esq. in Representation of Leeds
  3. Poll Book Leeds Election 1835. All subsequent figures have been derived from the poll book.

in Table V the swing since 1834 had been under 2½%, clearly sufficient to win a seat so narrowly lost the previous year.

TABLE V SHAPE OF POLL 1835 (Leading Liberal against Leading Tory)

	Liberal	Tory	Swing
Leeds Township	48.34%	51.66%	2.81%
Out-townships	47.74%	52.26%	1.15%
Leeds Borough	48.16%	51.84%	2.28%

The very small swing in the out-townships as a whole where Beckett had done well in 1834 masks an interesting redistribution of votes. There was roughly a 5% swing to Baines in Hunslet township and over 2% in Holbeck and Wortley (later to be combined in the new Holbeck Ward). These swings against the overall movement in the out-townships were compensated for by a pro-Tory swing in Bramley of 4%. In the Bramley/Headingley division there was a net gain of 65 votes for Beckett and it cannot be without significance that in Bramley at the previous revision the Tories had been successful in 63 objections to Liberal voters, including the 37 Allan Brig mill proprietors. Here was proof enough that elections would be won in the revision court.

This was confirmed in the results within the township of Leeds where the election was won for Beckett. In Leeds itself there was a swing of 144 votes and the total for Baines dropped by 132. It was not so much that Beckett had forged ahead rather that Baines's votes had dwindled somewhat. Again the revision of 1834 supplies the answer for the Tories had gained just over 200 votes at the revision in Leeds itself

and now they were cashing in on this gain. Electoral statistics can be used in a variety of ways and the totals arrived at by devious means but it is not without significance that Baines's 148 lost votes can be accounted for by the fact that approximately 120 Liberal compounded ratepayers were struck off at the revision of 1834 and 29 voters changed sides at the 1835 election.<sup>1</sup> Individual districts within Leeds can only be compared in three cases none of which produced decisive results but the pattern is clear. The bulk of the Tory gain at the 1834 revision was in Leeds rather than the out-townships and resulted from objections rather than claims. Equally the bulk of the Tory gain at the 1835 election came in Leeds rather than the out-townships and resulted more from Baines's lost votes than Beckett's increased total.

Baines had done worse than in 1834 but of course he was still elected and in a sense the real Liberal failure was in not securing Brougham's election. His total, 138 votes lower than Baines, indicates that there was a substantial minority who wanted Baines but would not vote for Beckett. This is confirmed if the totals of all three candidates are broken down into plumpers and split votes.

TABLE VI ANALYSIS OF 1835 POLL

	Beckett	Baines	Brougham
Plumpers	1795	45	17
Beckett and Baines	128	128	-
Beckett and Brougham	18	-	18
Baines and Brougham	-	1630	1630

1. The figure of 29 voters who changed sides was derisively cited by Leeds Mercury, 24 Jan. 1835 to disprove talk on the Tory side of a massive reaction in favour of Toryism in Leeds.

The bulk of Beckett's votes came in plumpers and the bulk of Baines's and Brougham's votes in splits between the two of them; most voters in other words followed their party line. The difference between the results of Baines and Brougham can be seen in the numbers who either plumped for Baines or in particular who split between Baines and Beckett. However the number of cross party splits (146), though significant in the 1835 result, was in fact 2% lower, at 3.92%, than that of 1832 (207) at 5.89%.

William Brougham and the Leeds Liberals passed like ships in the night. He left Leeds never to return after a one-day visit while they were left to piece together their shattered power. On the Liberal side there was no doubt as to the cause of the defeat, for it was in the words of the Mercury caused by the 'disreputable swindling of many worthy and well qualified Electors out of their votes'.<sup>1</sup> At the end of the poll both Baines and Brougham claimed that but for the hostile revision of 1834 there would have been two Liberal members and the latter's remark, that so long as Leeds got 'a righteous judge' at the next revision they would do well, earned him a letter of rebuke from Hildyard, who both then and at the revision was regarded as inimical to the Liberals.<sup>2</sup> Whereas the Liberals had previously played down the effects of the revision they now sought to ascribe their whole defeat to them. Both Baines and the Mercury now used a figure of 281 as the gain at the last

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1. Leeds Mercury, 24 Jan.1835.

2. Ibid., 10 Jan.1835; Leeds Intelligencer, 24 Jan.1835. During the revision Hildyard, ever conscious of slights on his integrity, had protested at the terms used by the Mercury about him.

revision in order to show that in fact the Tories would have done much better than they did if there had been a Tory reaction.<sup>1</sup>

On the other side the reverse process was in operation. Previously the Tories emphasised their great victory at the revision but now they had no wish to put their victory down to subtle electioneering and so they hailed it as evidence of a great Tory reaction in Leeds. At a dinner to celebrate Beckett's victory Robert Hall spoke of 'Church and State triumphant' and it was felt that Beckett had won because his supporters comprised 'three-fourths of the wealth, intellect and respectability of the borough'. It was true, admitted the Intelligencer, there had been a 'moderate exercise of electioneering skill', but this was only a small part of the victory. The main reason was clear in the Tory mind - 'the progress of Conservative principles . . . there is a "reaction" in Leeds.'<sup>2</sup>

There was a strong feeling in Leeds that this victory would inspire Tories throughout the country for surely if the Tories could win a seat at Leeds they could win a seat anywhere:

'the victory is such as must be productive of the happiest results in Leeds both politically and socially; and its influence upon the Conservative cause generally will be beneficial; for if such a battle can be successfully waged in Leeds wherein Dissent so abounds where is the county or borough in which victory might not so follow similar energy or spirit.'<sup>3</sup>

Rejuvenated Toryism with Leeds in the van of progress was indeed a heartening thought.

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1. Leeds Mercury, 10, 17, 24 Jan. 1835.

2. Leeds Intelligencer, 10, 17 Jan. 1835.

3. Ibid., 10 Jan. 1835.

Although such enthusiasm was understandable enthusiasm alone could not have won the election which showed indeed that 'enthusiasm is no match for a majority on the register.'<sup>1</sup> The facts were more in line with the Liberal than the Tory explanation of the result and the historian would have to search long and hard to find an equally good example of the electoral dividend which could now be drawn from efficient registration. At a dinner to Baines and the West Riding members Hamer Stanfeld admitted that had they been as active on registration as the Tories then Brougham would have been the sitting member but he added:

'their failure in accomplishing that object had taught them a lesson and excited in the whole party a degree of vigilance and zeal which he hoped would never again be allowed to slumber either as regarded the preparations for the borough or the county election.

This reference to the county was an indication of the fact that by 1835 the West Riding was once more an area of political conflict which it had not been since the passing of the Reform Bill. In the 1835 General Election there was the threat of a challenge from the Tories which prompted the Whig gentry into action. Francis Fawkes of Farnley became chairman of Morpeth and Strickland's committee and a district committee was formed in Leeds. One of the Harewoods and Edmund Denison were suggested as possible candidates but no Tory emerged.<sup>2</sup> However there was new Tory activity for Denison headed a Tory West Riding Committee which was formed to look into the register and try to obtain at

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1. The words used by Baines, op.cit., p.172.

2. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Intelligencer, 3, 10 Jan.1835.



least one West Riding seat.<sup>1</sup>

The renewed interest of the Tories in the West Riding was soon confirmed when Morpeth was invited to join Melbourne's Cabinet and so was forced to seek re-election. Now the Tories determined on a show of strength and put forward John Stuart Wortley, whose brother James had recently obtained a seat at Halifax by one vote, a result which caused a riot.<sup>2</sup> Both Morpeth and Wortley visited Leeds, the former staying with the Marshalls and the latter with the Gotts. They both had a public breakfast, visited the Coloured Cloth Hall and spoke to large crowds mainly on the great Parliamentary rather than local issues of the day.<sup>3</sup> Leeds was only one of many large towns in the Riding and so the election was fought at a distance to some extent. Morpeth won the election by over 2,800 votes but in Leeds polling district Wortley had a majority of over 190.<sup>4</sup> The Intelligencer hailed this as further evidence, along with the Leeds election earlier in the year, of the growth of Tory support in Leeds. The Mercury on the other hand emphasised that the Leeds polling district for West Riding elections included the agricultural areas of Harewood, Bramham and Kippax and that in Leeds itself Morpeth led Wortley quite comfortably.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Leeds Mercury, 4, 11 April, 1835. Evidence for this new activity may also be found in a bill circulated in 1835 by the "Conservative Society for the West Riding of Yorkshire, Leeds District". This explained the qualification for voting in county election and is in the Thoresby Society Library.
  2. Mayhall, op.cit., I, pp. 422-3.
  3. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Intelligencer, Leeds Times, 2, 9 May 1835.
  4. The figures were: Morpeth 9075 Wortley 6260 majority 2815  
Leeds district Morpeth 872 Wortley 979
  5. Leeds Intelligencer, 16 May 1835, Leeds Mercury, 16 May 1835 gave the figures for Leeds itself (excluding the agricultural areas) as Morpeth 675 Wortley 542.



Though they might squabble over how to render the result of the election both drew the same conclusion, that more effort was needed for the registration of votes in the West Riding. In particular the Liberals could learn from their opponents throughout the country with their Conservative Associations:

'Hundreds if not thousands of them with Committees, Sub-Committees, District Committees, Treasurers, Secretaries, monthly and quarterly meetings, subscriptions and all the means of concert of quick movement and powerful influence are now existing in England. If the Reformers do not meet Association by Association their political power is gone.'<sup>1</sup>

It was after the 1835 West Riding election that Morpeth's election committee transformed itself with Fawkes as chairman into the West Riding Reform and Registration Association.<sup>2</sup> The Tory challenge in contesting the West Riding forced the Whigs to take action to preserve their position and Newman, Fitzwilliam's solicitor, wrote to him 'I have recommended and shall most strenuously urge the more complete registration of votes, a measure which will add, throughout the Riding, 3 to 1 in favour of the Whig Interest'.<sup>3</sup>

Events in both Leeds and the West Riding had thus impressed upon the Liberals the need for registration activity and they were well prepared for the 1835 revision of voters in Leeds. There was a 'Reform Registration office' for advice and the Liberals objected to all known

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1. Leeds Mercury, 23 May 1835. Cf. a letter to West Riding Reformers from an elector in Leeds in *ibid.*, 20 June 1835, 'Registration is the ammunition of election warfare - the sword and shield of your canvassers and the artillery of your candidates'.
  2. This is described by Thompson "Whigs and Liberals . . . etc.", E.H.R., LXXIV (1959), pp.220-3.
  3. Wentworth Woodhouse MSS, Newman to Fitzwilliam, 22 May 1835.

Tory voters, numbering 2,598. This was certainly recompense for the failings of the previous year and acted as an escalation of party warfare which was to make the revision of voters as keenly fought as a contested election. The Tories objected to 1,000 less than the Liberals and so the revising barristers had to deal with over 4,000 objections.<sup>1</sup>

Both sides were now convinced that elections would be won in the revision courts and victory on election day would go to the most active and successful party at the time of the revision.<sup>2</sup> Above all neither side wished to give anything away, fearful lest agreed compromises might contain hidden depths, and so Richardson's offer to withdraw the Liberal objections 'based on rating technicalities' if the Tories did likewise was disdainfully rejected.<sup>3</sup> Both parties were committed to a programme of electoral drudgery and were forced to lie on the bed of nails which the Reform Act had made for them.<sup>4</sup>

The revision dragged on for 29 days and while there were no great decisions of principle as in 1834 the proceedings were not without interest. The hotly contested case of the Allan Brig Mill voters was fought again and the 40 proprietors were restored to the register much to the joy of the Liberals. There were several cases which acted as an epilogue to those of the compounded ratepayers of 1834. In some

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1. Leeds Mercury, 5, 29 August, 18 Sept.1835, Leeds Intelligencer,19 Sept.1835.
  2. Cf. Leeds Mercury, 19 Sept.1835, 'The Electors' battle must be fought in the revising barrister's court.' Leeds Intelligencer,5 Sept.1835, 'it is the Registration Courts that the battle is to be fought which will make the day of election a day of victory.'
  3. Leeds Intelligencer,19 Sept.1835; Leeds Mercury,26 Sept.1835.
  4. This revision finally convinced the Leeds Times, 19 Sept.1835, that the Reform Act really was a curse.

cases the Liberals used the same objection as the Tories had done in the previous year and Richardson now quoted the case of James Baldwin in support of his objections to Tory voters despite his bitter opposition to it previously.<sup>1</sup> However the Liberals were more intent on getting round the objection of compounded ratepayers and they used the practice of 'tender of rates.'

It was possible for a compounded ratepayer to offer to pay the arrears of rates due and thus fulfil the condition in the Reform Act about paying all rates. This 'tender of rates' could be refused by the overseer and yet still be a valid tender. In other words the discounts of 20% for compounded ratepayers could remain and yet still comply with the Reform Act which allowed for the tender of payment of rates. The key cases of William Rhodes and Jabez Cook, both Liberal voters whose tenders had been refused, were summed up by Edward Bond in his notebook 'A tender and refusal of arrears of rate is equal to payment though the amount be subsequently demanded.'<sup>2</sup> Ironically if this practice had been in operation in 1834 the compounded ratepayers would have been protected and the Tories might well have lost the 1835 election.

As usual, after the revision the parties could not agree on a common

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1. 'Mr. Richardson said that upon the authority of James Baldwin's case decided last year this mode of payment (compounding) was not sufficient'. Leeds Intelligencer, 3 Oct. 1835.
  2. Reports in the Revision Counts 1834 and 1835, p.53. One other relevant remark inserted by Bond was (p.51) 'A tender of arrears of Rates made without previous authority is bad'. This followed a case where a substantial number of tenders was made by a solicitor acting on behalf of several voters, without previously receiving individual authority from them to do so. This precluded the wholesale tendering by a party agent on behalf of a large number of voters. Separate authority was needed from the voter for each tender.

result. At first it was claimed that altogether 1,400 votes had been struck off but this included people with other qualifications and so the totals were modified.<sup>1</sup> The Liberals claimed that they had a majority of 500 on the new register of approximately 4,000 voters which was in fact not really a result of the revision for they claimed only 515 objections against 485 successes for the Tories.<sup>2</sup> In other words despite objecting to 1,000 more votes they led by only 30 votes on the objections which was probably the result of the fact that the majority of the Liberal objections were based on technical faults in the drawing up of the rate books, which though defective, were admitted as valid by the revising barrister. The figures issued by the Tories bore no relation to those of the Liberals for the Tories claimed a majority of approximately 230 votes on the revision and denied that the Liberals had a majority on the new register.<sup>3</sup> The most instructive statistic in the mass of figures issued by the two sides was the claim that the net gain by the Liberals over the original overseers list was 20 votes. Twenty-nine days and 4,000 cases in the revision court had produced a register which was only marginally different in party strength from the overseers' list. The parties dared not abandon the register for fear of their rivals yet they were committed to mountains of profitless toil.

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1. Leeds Times, 17 Oct. 1835.

2. Leeds Mercury, 24, 31 Oct. 1835, Leeds Times, 24 Oct. 1835

3. Leeds Intelligencer, 24, 31 Oct., 7 Nov. 1835. It was also claimed that the Tories were 209 votes better off than if they had accepted Richardson's offer to withdraw all technical objections.

(iii)

If the political leaders were busy in the years 1833 to 1835 in their Parliamentary activities they were also very active in parochial politics. It has previously been explained<sup>1</sup> that the parochial and township institutions were areas of political activity centred on Vestry meetings. Here it was that the earliest victories had been registered against the old Tory oligarchy, safe in possession of the Corporation but vulnerable in the three parochial bodies, the Churchwardens, the Workhouse Board and the Improvement Commissioners.

As far as the Churchwardens were concerned much of the motive for political control was financial and when John Armitage Buttrey, a Liberal Anglican woolstapler, had become senior Churchwarden in 1827 his main aim was to reduce expenditure and so economise on Church rates. It is not easy to be sure of the exact course of these rates in the years 1827 to 1833 and Table VII gives the estimates that have been worked out.

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1. Above, pp. 22-25.

TABLE VII CHURCH RATES COLLECTED 1827 - 1833

	Mercury	Elliott <sup>1</sup>	
	12 Feb.1839	Money	Real
1827	842	1526	1526
1828	1642	-	-
1829	1461	906	964
1830	1929	1929	2350
1831	1753	1714	1848
1832	1819	1684	1795
1833	974	614	633

Certainly in November 1832 a Church rate of  $\frac{3}{4}$ d. on buildings and 4d. on land was levied which was to be collected in 1833.<sup>2</sup>

However it was in 1833 that the Tories made a determined attempt to recapture control of the Vestry. Their whole organisation was set in motion:

'circulars are written - canvassers are out - lists are distributed - aldermen, parsons, lawyers sit in close conclave.'<sup>3</sup>

It was tradition for the Vicar to adjourn the Vestry on Easter Sunday until the following Wednesday for the election of Churchwardens and on this occasion in April 1833 Fawcett found the Vestry packed with a noisy crowd.

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1. C.M.Elliott op.cit., p.180, has derived the money rates from Vestry Minute Book and the Churchwarden's Account Book and the real values have been calculated with the use of the Silberling Index. Elliott criticises the Mercury figures on the grounds that they fail to take into account sums brought forward.
  2. Vestry Minute Book, p.63.
  3. Leeds Mercury, 13 April, 1833.



Baines led the attack against a Tory list of Churchwardens which was to be proposed and he claimed that Buttrey and his colleagues had reduced expenditure from £1,500 to £500. Few of the speakers could be heard above the din and George Hirst eventually abandoned his attempt to put the Tory list as he was drowned by the cheers and hoots of the Liberals. Alderman Henry Hall put the view that only Anglicans should be elected as Churchwardens to which Baines replied that he accepted this if only Anglicans were forced to pay Church rates.<sup>1</sup>

In fact nobody was asked to pay Church rates for the next year since when the Vestry met again in August Buttrey announced that there was a balance of £437 from the previous year which would satisfy their expenses. The Vestry passed a resolution, congratulating Buttrey on lessening 'the obnoxious tax of Church rate' and the Mercury believed that Leeds now had the prospect of not having to face another Church rate ever again.<sup>2</sup>

Having failed to unseat Buttrey and his colleagues in 1833 the Tories renewed their efforts in the Churchwardens elections of 1834. Both parties were out in full force during the previous week and rival placards were displayed throughout the town. Liberal voters were warned that if the Tories gained control of the Vestry they would not only levy Church rates but also gain control of the Workhouse Board and use their influence there to falsify voters lists.<sup>3</sup>

Four thousand people attended the Vestry to elect Churchwardens led according to the Intelligencer by 'Marshall's mill people in full array

1. Ibid. and Vestry Minute Book, pp.68-69.

2. Leeds Mercury, 10 Aug. 1833 and Vestry Minute Book, p.73.

3. Leeds Mercury, 29 March, 1934.



under the command of their overlookers'.<sup>1</sup> The proceedings were the most riotous ever seen in the Parish Church as a three hour dispute arose over the first nomination. Baines, returned from London especially for the meeting, and George Newton proposed Buttrey as Churchwarden for the East Division of the town and he was opposed by Perring, editor of the Intelligencer. The normal procedure was for a show of hands, which on this occasion was overwhelmingly in Buttrey's favour. The Tories demanded a poll and a violent argument ensued on whether the divisions should be voted on individually, and whether now or later. The Vicar stood by the Tories and refused to allow a poll individually and in the Vestry. Amid growing outcry several people were threatened with prosecutions for brawling in Church and eventually the exasperated Fawcett left the meeting:

'The plan was to bully, to beat down, to tire out the Chairman, to intimidate the opponents of Orange monopoly - the meeting therefore acted upon their instructions and refused anything like fair play.'<sup>2</sup>

The 'fair play' was needed in the Tories' opinion because they claimed that the meeting was packed by non-voters and only a poll would allow the ratepayers a fair expression of their wishes.

The meeting was left in the hands of the Liberals who placed Robert Baker in the chair and proceeded to elect all the other Churchwardens, whose names were then entered into the Vestry minutes as though nothing untoward had happened.<sup>3</sup> The demand for a poll was denounced in the Press as merely a manoeuvre to 'gratify party spleen' and to unseat

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1. Leeds Intelligencer, 5 April 1834 (This was denied by the Leeds Mercury, 12 April 1834).
  2. Ibid.
  3. Vestry Minute Book, p.84.

Buttrey by 'a few snarling poll brawling Tories.'<sup>1</sup>

Again the Tories had been repulsed and so now they resorted to the law and a protest was entered claiming that the Churchwardens' elections were illegal and thus invalid. They had to begin proceedings in the Court of King's Bench before November 1834 otherwise the elections would stand.<sup>2</sup> On the face of it the Tories had a good legal case. They had demanded a poll which had not been granted and this was how Lushington saw it in issuing a mandamus to order proper Churchwardens' elections to take place.<sup>3</sup> The Tories were jubilant for the decision had shown that Baines and Buttrey were not above the law and they claimed that all they wanted was 'a fair participation of power.'<sup>4</sup>

The Tories saw it as a contest between Church and Dissent while the Liberals, emphasising that Buttrey was an Anglican denied this, believing it to be a challenge of economy and extravagance.<sup>5</sup> Perring and Hirst had their opportunity for a poll but the slow process of the law had left them in an awkward position. It was now only eight weeks before the 1835 Churchwardens' elections and so even if they went to a poll and won it they would still have to fight again in a few weeks. In order to overcome this Wailes and Dibb, two Tory solicitors, were sent to plead for a compromise - half the Churchwardens to be Tories, half Liberal. This was flatly rejected on the grounds that the Tories already controlled

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1. Leeds Mercury; Leeds Times, 5 April 1834.
  2. Leeds Mercury; Leeds Intelligencer, 21 June 1834.
  3. Lushington's decision (Mandamus on the Choice of Churchwardens, King and Churchwardens of Leeds) assumed that elections had not taken place. A copy has survived in the Baines MSS.
  4. Leeds Intelligencer, 7 Feb. 1835.

the Corporation and were not prepared to share that control.<sup>1</sup>

Thus only several weeks after the general election of 1835 Leeds was again in the heat of party political warfare just as strong as at the time of a Parliamentary contest. Rival handbills and placards appeared which denounced their opponents in violent terms. Tories were characterised as 'these Litigators, these Despisers of the Votes of Vestries' while Liberals were simply 'the enemies of the Church'.<sup>2</sup> When the Vestry meeting was held the Liberals showed themselves nice lawyers by claiming that due notice of the meeting had not been given and so the meeting was postponed a further week.<sup>3</sup>

After all this there was an anti-climax for in view of the time factor the Tories, despite Perrings' opposition<sup>4</sup>, decided not to contest the elections so that all the Churchwardens except one were re-elected

1. Leeds Mercury, 31 Feb.1835. A Tory handbill denounced this refusal as evidence of a wish to make 'this Borough a scene of continued agitation', see ibid.
2. Leeds Mercury, 21, 28 Feb.1835.
3. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Intelligencer, 21 Feb.1835. It is interesting to note that Baines Junior and Perring were both in the Vestry Room to argue the legal case about notice while the majority of the crowd waited, as usual, in the choir of the Church. In the Mercury and Intelligencer there was a full report of the legal argument but the Leeds Times, 21 Feb.1835, began its report only when the rival leaders emerged from the Vestry to announce the postponement. This showed that Bingley of the Times was not a member of the Liberal clique in this activity.
4. This may be surmised from his condemnation, in an editorial in Leeds Intelligencer, 28 Feb.1835, of a placard announcing the postponement of any poll until Easter when the 1835 elections would be held. He did not wish to give the Liberals even a 'momentary triumph'. Leeds Mercury, 7 March 1835, stated clearly that Perring had been abandoned by his friends.

and the anticipated poll did not take place.<sup>1</sup> However it was the timing not the intention that was doubtful for the Tories had lost faith in these rowdy Vestry meetings which exhibited 'sans culotteism in one of its worst forms'.<sup>2</sup> Indeed one of the placards of February 1835 had promised to 'pour on the heads of the lovers of incessant agitation the accumulated indignation of an insulted parish'.<sup>3</sup>

The desire for a poll had thus been postponed and not abandoned and so at the next Vestry meeting William Wailes demanded a poll in six divisions of Leeds and in two of the out-townships. This time the meeting was a quiet orderly one and the 1834 Tory demand to adjourn for a poll on the whole list was not opposed by the Liberals. Baines Junior enquired at the end whether the Tories did really want a poll and mocked the Tories for having every other position of patronage in the town yet still desiring this. The Tories were not to be put off and so an eight-day poll was granted, open to all ratepayers.<sup>4</sup>

Both sides mobilised their resources and rival bills were produced with a full list of the eight candidates on either side, blue for the Tories, orange for the Liberals.<sup>5</sup> It was fought in the same way as a Parliamentary election with clear party divisions. There were also clear divisions on how the contest was regarded. As before the Tories

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1. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Intelligencer, Leeds Times, 28 Feb.1835; Vestry Minute Book, p.102, contained copy of the mandamus and a plan of how the poll would have been organised had a poll been demanded.
  2. Leeds Intelligencer, 21 Feb.1835.
  3. Leeds Mercury, 28 Feb.1835.
  4. Ibid., 18, 25 April 1835, Leeds Intelligencer, 25 April 1835, Vestry Minute Book, pp.108-110.
  5. One of each has survived in Representation of Leeds 1831-1841.

regarded the present Churchwardens as enemies of the Church supported by those who were intent on her destruction.<sup>1</sup> The Liberals wanted Church reform but saw the contest more in the light of parochial economy and even believed many Tories would do likewise. In the previous year when a poll was anticipated Baines had written from London to his son:

'The Tories have often talked of turning out Mr. Buttrey but they have never yet succeeded, indeed the parishioners unless they prefer extravagance to economy will never allow it. Nor would a poll by plurality of votes save them for the Tories around them would rather pay 300£ a year than 1500£ and many would vote for Mr. B. on that ground.'<sup>2</sup>

This proved to be a judicious prophesy and at the end of the poll the figures stood for the East Division

J.A. Buttrey	4,551
William Maude	1,625

There were only minor variations in the other seven contests and so the Liberal Churchwardens were resoundingly elected.<sup>3</sup> It was an indication of the breeding ground which the Churchwardens provided for potential local politicians that five out of the eight Churchwardens elected in this poll were later elected Councillors in the new Corporation. It was clear that deprived of municipal office by the exclusiveness of the Corporation ambitious and industrious men used the only avenues of political power that were open to them.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Leeds Intelligencer, 25 April 1835.
  2. Baines MSS, Baines to Edward Baines Jun., 15 March 1834.
  3. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Intelligencer, Leeds Times, 2 May 1835; Vestry Minute Book, p.111.
  4. Peter Fairbairn may be cited as an example of a selfmademan who by his own efforts became one of the most famous engineers in the town and an influential local political figure. As his business position improved so too did his political achievements, first as churchwarden, then a Councillor, then an Alderman and finally Mayor in the year when the Town Hall was opened. See Taylor, op.cit., pp.491-496.



The poll had something of an unpleasant aftermath since there was the problem of the expenses incurred which amounted to some £200. The question was who should pay. The vicar agreed to pay the legal fees himself and a bill for £40 from Perring later turned out to have been sent in error since virtually all of it was due from the blue committee.<sup>1</sup> This left a net amount of £134 and the Vestry passed a resolution proposed by James Musgrave and Samuel Clapham that since the poll had been

'to the serious annoyance of the parishioners and (led to) the interruption of industry and tranquility . . (and was) an insult to the Vestry and a factious annoyance to the Parish'

those who demanded the poll ought to pay for it.<sup>2</sup> Perring, regarded by the Liberals as the driving force behind the Tories in this matter, was furious and denounced the decision as illegal, just as illegal as the refusal of a poll in 1834. He believed that the costs ought to come out of Church rates which had not been levied for two years.<sup>3</sup>

Though nothing to do with the poll a Church rate was levied at the end of 1835 to meet the normal running costs of services in the Church. One section of the Liberals led by Darnton Lupton was against any Church rate being levied and would tolerate only the minimum of expenses. But-trey claimed that they must provide bread and wine for the sacrament and

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1. It appeared that £40 was the gross amount owed to Perring and since £37 was due from the Tories the Leeds Mercury, 27 June, 4 July 1835, accused Perring of having a financial interest in prolonging the struggle.
  2. Vestry Minute Book, pp.113-4.
  3. Leeds Intelligencer, 4 July 1835; No Church rate was needed in August 1833 or August 1834, and Elliott, op.cit.,p.202, claims that 1833 was the last one to be levied. As is described below that last (according to all the evidence) was in fact in 1835.



for this they needed a  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. rate. Joseph Lees reminded the Vestry that they had put the Liberal Churchwardens in and they could not leave them in the lurch to pay the expenses themselves. Thus for the last time a Church rate was levied in Leeds, demanded by Liberal Churchwardens and voted by a Liberal Vestry.<sup>1</sup>

The contests for the office of Churchwarden were important in their own right and they also represented an attempt by the Tories to regain control of the Workhouse Board. The levy of a poor rate was far more weighty a matter than the levy of a Church rate and involved the biggest local expenditure in the town's affairs.<sup>2</sup> The Workhouse Board which administered the Poor Law in Leeds represented a delicate balance between Corporation and Vestry. Thirteen Overseers were appointed by the Corporation, all but two or three of whom were Tories, while the eight Churchwardens, seven of whom were Liberal<sup>3</sup>, and the 12 Liberal Trustees made up the numbers. The office of Trustee to the Workhouse was like that of Churchwarden, an avenue to political power and a breeding ground for Liberal politicians.<sup>4</sup> The numerical ratio meant that the Liberals had a majority on the Board which the Tories naturally resented. Though in matters like the preparation of electoral lists the overseers were the senior partners, officially the Board was always

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1. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Intelligencer, Leeds Times, 5 Dec.1835: Vestry Minute Book, p.123.
  2. Cf. Dec.1835 Church Rate  $\frac{1}{2}$ d, Poor Rate 1s6d. on buildings, 2s3d. on land. Report of Municipal Corporations, etc., p.9, para.43 gave the Poor Law assessment as over £43,000 for 1833.
  3. The Vicar had the right to nominate one of the eight Churchwardens for Leeds.
  4. The Trustees elected in May 1835 included three future councillors, while those in November 1835 included four: Vestry Minute Book, pp.113, 123.

referred to by its component parts.<sup>1</sup>

Relationships between the rival factions both within the Board and between the Board and the Vestry were potentially explosive. Thus the simple matter of appointing a new master of the workhouse produced a series of power struggles in the Vestry at the end of 1834.<sup>2</sup> On this occasion the Tories were trying to use the open Vestry to counteract the efforts of the Liberals on the Workhouse Board. The defeat in 1835 in the Churchwarden's poll blocked two possible strategies. A victory would have left the Liberals in a minority on the Workhouse Board and it would have allowed the Tories to continue to appeal with some hope of success to the ratepayers.

With control of the Workhouse Board beyond their grasp through open electioneering the Tories sought a way out through the law and they challenged the custom which allowed the Trustees and the Churchwardens any place on the Workhouse Board. The issue which brought the breach between

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1. Cf. two letters, Johnson to the Poor Law Commission, 11 Sept., 11 Oct. 1834, frequent references to 'the Churchwardens, Overseers and Trustees'; also letter of Barr to P.L. Commission, 14 March 1835 'as solicitor to the Board of the Leeds Workhouse (comprising the Churchwardens, Overseers of the Poor and certain Trustees appointed by the inhabitants to act with them) . . .' P.R.O. MH 12/15224.
  2. A quiet Vestry meeting appointed William Farmery, a Tory, though without giving prior notice. Eyebrows were raised but nothing was done until Farmery's old post of Collector of Bastardy Arrears was given to Samuel Maud, a Liberal, by the Workhouse Board without reference to the Vestry. Perring and his reporter, Beckwith, brought this up at a Vestry meeting which censured the Board, despite a vigorous defence of it by Johnson, Lupton and the two Baineses. As a tit-for-tat Baines then raised the unconstitutional appointment of Farmery which was quashed. In the end at a later date Farmery was appointed Master but Maud was replaced by George Smith as Collector. See Leeds Mercury, 27 Sept., 8 Nov. 1834; Leeds Intelligencer, 24 Sept., 25 Oct., 8, 29 Nov., 6 Dec. 1834; Leeds Times, 6, 29 Nov. 1834; Vestry Minute Book, pp. 83, 90, 97.

the Overseers on the one hand and the Trustees and Churchwardens on the other to a head was the preparation of the electoral lists for the first Municipal election. There were two lists prepared and the difference between them was that the Tory Overseers had produced one list which left out the compounded ratepayers, while the Churchwardens and Liberal Overseers had prepared another which included them.<sup>1</sup> The decision of the revising barristers that the list prepared by the Churchwardens had no validity opened up enormous possibilities. If the Overseers were solely responsible for the electoral lists perhaps they were solely responsible for levying the poor rate and administering the poor law. According to the Intelligencer 'Churchwardens are not Township Overseers of the Poor and are mere interlopers at the Workhouse Board.'<sup>2</sup> The overseers took the legal advice of the Attorney General and with his authority behind them began to administer the Poor Law alone.<sup>3</sup>

Normally the levying of a poor rate was not a momentous occurrence but the levying of the rate in December 1835 was a great turning point in parochial affairs since the Overseers refused to admit the Churchwardens and Trustees to their deliberations. As soon as the new rate was passed and entered on the Vestry minutes six Churchwardens led by Buttrely solemnly appended a protest to the minutes. This challenged the right of the Overseers to act alone and claimed for the Churchwardens and Trustees a share in the administration of the Poor Law.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Leeds Intelligencer, 31 Oct., 14 Nov. 1835.

2. Ibid., 5 Dec. 1835.

3. Ibid., 9 Dec. 1835; Leeds Mercury, 19 Dec. 1835.

4. The signatures and the protest are in Vestry Minute Book, p.124.

On the following evening 2,000 ratepayers attended the Vestry to look into the 'late and present distracted state of the Workhouse Board'. They were in an angry mood and refused to allow William Atkinson to speak in defence of the Overseers, whose case was that their authority was being usurped. The view of the Vestry was that the old system had for 100 years

'contained the Intelligence and philanthropy of men of all parties in the service of the town and has given the Ratepayers a wholesome influence over the expenditure of their money'.<sup>1</sup>

There was no doubt in Liberal minds that this move of the Overseers was activated solely by party spirit while the Tories emphasised legality and according to the law the Trustees sat on the Workhouse Board 'by courtesy; the Churchwardens by usurpation'.<sup>2</sup> All that was left for the Vestry to do was to seek legal advice and bide its time.<sup>3</sup> Thus on the eve of losing control of the Corporation the Tories regained control of the Workhouse Board and so remained in possession of an important slice of local patronage and power.<sup>4</sup>

The full effects of the power struggle at the Workhouse Board worked themselves out after 1835 and the same is true of the major pro-

1. Ibid., p.125.

2. Leeds Intelligencer, 26 Dec. 1835.

3. Ibid. and Leeds Mercury, Leeds Times, 26 Dec.1835.

4. The impending change in the Corporation made this a somewhat self-defeating strategy since the appointment of Liberal magistrates would eventually be reflected in a change in the political complexion of the Overseers also. In addition it would mean that when at some future time, as happened in the later 1830's, the Tories were able to control the Vestry this would be no way of controlling the Workhouse Board as it had been up to 1835.

blem and dispute which confronted the Improvement Commissioners.

These 19 men were usually Liberals some of whom were also Churchwardens or Trustees<sup>1</sup> and had an unenviable task in trying to cleanse with very limited powers a growing industrial town. The cholera epidemic of 1832 was a massive indictment of the failure of the local Acts to cope with the problem of urban health and Baker's report commented on the fact that 'so few streets are regularly cleansed'.<sup>2</sup>

The Improvement Commissioners were in addition responsible for the supply of water which was also defective. Many of the directories echo the official verdict of 1835 that 'Leeds is very badly supplied with water.'<sup>3</sup> Indeed if one report is reliable then a 14 h.p. steam engine could consume in one day more water than the existing waterworks could supply.<sup>4</sup> To set this right the Commissioners embarked on a scheme to supply Leeds effectively and the Vestry authorised an expenditure of £500 at the beginning of 1834 to take professional advice.<sup>5</sup> Optimistically the Vestry passed a resolution at the end of the year vainly hoping that an Act could be got through Parliament in the next Session. The engineers began to fall out and the Commissioners split between two, Abraham, a London engineer, and a local man, Fowler. The squabble between the engineers deprived Leeds of an effective scheme

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1. E.g. of the 19 elected in January 1833 only three cannot be identified from other political activity as definite Liberals; three were Churchwardens and four overseers.
  2. Report of the Leeds Board of Health (1833), p.19.
  3. Report from Commissioners: Municipal Boundaries (England and Wales): Leeds (1835).
  4. Leeds Intelligencer, 10 Oct.1835, which also stated that there were only 2,336 consumers of water from the works.
  5. Vestry Minute Book, p.80 date given is 30 Jan.1833 but from the order of the entries and from subsequent references it should have been 30 Jan.1834 .



because the Commissioners were unable to place before the Vestry a clear cut unanimous plan of action.<sup>1</sup>

By March 1835 it was becoming clear that dissensions among the Commissioners themselves rendered the success of a scheme run by them extremely doubtful. The Vestry did approve the appointment of Mylne and Abraham as engineers and this was accompanied by several doubts about the cost, Abraham's competence and the virtues of Fowler's rival scheme.<sup>2</sup> The chance of a bill in Parliament in 1835 was lost and although little real progress was being made the ratepayers' money was being spent, which made a complete abandonment of the scheme difficult.<sup>3</sup>

At first there had been no hint of any party feeling in this water scheme. Elections for Improvement Commissioners were not hotly contested, there was general agreement that a joint stock company working merely for profit could be a bad thing, and the Intelligencer contrasted the party politicking of the Vestry meetings about the new Master of the Workhouse with the absence of it when the water scheme was discussed.<sup>4</sup> What tended to bring party feeling into the arena was that the internal squabbles between the Liberals and their engineers meant that time and money was being wasted with the Improvement Commissioners powerless to

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1. Ibid., pp.92-94, Leeds Mercury, Leeds Intelligencer, 15 Nov.1834, Leeds Times, 1 Nov.1834. See J. Chiesman A Brief Review of the Plans . . . for . . . water (1834).
  2. Vestry Minute Book, pp.105-6, Leeds Mercury, 28 March 1835, Leeds Times, 7 March 1835.
  3. Joseph Lees complained bitterly about the cost in November 1834 but by March 1835 he was more worried about the prospect of wasted money if the project were to be abandoned through dissension.
  4. Leeds Intelligencer, 15 Nov.1834.



act. Perring was stung into attack by the criticism of him in the matter of the Churchwarden's poll and he began to compare the Liberal concern with saving money on Church rates with their waste of it on the 'blundering committee' over the water works.<sup>1</sup>

When in the autumn of 1835 the Commissioners, enfeebled by their own dissensions, finally admitted defeat and urged the formation of some more permanent body to launch the scheme<sup>2</sup> Perring tore into the attack

'It is time to give over this wretched farce. Let the Commissioners stick to their sweepings and their drains and leave pure water alone, because this is a soilable article. In a word Leeds can only be properly supplied by a Joint Stock Company.'<sup>3</sup>

The inability to agree on a viable scheme prevented the Commissioners from acting and cast doubts on the whole principle of public control of the water works through the ratepayers in the Vestry. The Liberals, despite their failure, still believed that some responsibility to the public was essential but the abdication of the Improvement Commissioners seemed like an admission of incompetence and many Tories led by the Intelligencer now favoured a joint stock company whose guarantee of competence would be the profit motive.<sup>4</sup> For the time being the Vestry was

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1. Ibid., 4, 11 July, 19 Sept. 1835. A majority of the Commissioners did approve Mylne and Abraham's scheme but a minority supported Fowler's: see the documents entitled Leeds Water Works (1835) (Thoresby Society 22B10).
  2. Vestry Minute Book, pp.121-2.
  3. Ibid., 26 Sept. 1835. Cf. ibid., 15 Nov. 1934: there ought not to be company 'whose sole object would be a large percentage of the capital employed'.
  4. It is fair to point out that the Tory argument did not completely ignore the public interest, e.g. Leeds Intelligencer, 10 Oct. 1835 urged precedence for the domestic over the industrial consumer and a cheaper water rate for houses rated below £6.

prepared to compromise and have a company half of whom were responsible to the ratepayers and half who were "capitalists".<sup>1</sup>

This had not really been a political failure at all. It had been a case of, in the words of a nineteenth century saying, 'what can the layman do when the doctors disagree?'. The engineers could not agree on either the best source or the best mode of carrying water to Leeds and so confused the laymen trying to embark on this project. It was true that most of the Commissioners were Liberals but this was basically a technical and not a political dispute. However the party capital to be gained was great, for just when Liberals were claiming to be the best local administrators in anticipation of the forthcoming Municipal elections here was evidence of their bungling. Leeds ought not to be ruled, wrote the Intelligencer.

'by a noisy and ignorant cabal like the worthies who have so illustriously proved their incapacity for public affairs in the instance of the Water Works'<sup>2</sup>

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1. Leeds Intelligencer, 3 Oct. 1835, Leeds Mercury, 3, 10 Oct. 1835.
  2. Leeds Intelligencer, 10 Oct. 1835.

(iv)

The concern in 1835 over who should rule Leeds was of course a reference to the impending dissolution of the old Leeds Corporation and its replacement by a freely elected assembly. These years which mark the first of the new post-Reform era in Parliamentary politics also were the last of the old order in Municipal affairs. Indeed the very nature of the old self-elected Corporation had elevated into prime importance the power struggle in the parochial and townships institutions just described. It was clear from the remarks already quoted from the Municipal Corporations Commission Report that many felt that Liberal parochial institutions were necessary to counterbalance a Tory Corporation.<sup>1</sup>

However it would be wrong to assume that the Leeds Corporation was an example of rabid political corruption, like that at Leicester for instance, and the Commission admitted that 'none of the funds of the Corporation have been applied to the support of particular candidates or principles at elections.'<sup>2</sup> On the other hand there was no doubt that it was a close Corporation:

'The close constitution of the corporation is obvious; all vacancies in each branch of it being filled by the Select Body, gives to that body absolute and uncontrolled self-election. Family influence is predominant. Fathers and sons and sons-in-law, brothers and brothers-in-law succeed

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1. Above, p.23.

2. Reports From Commissioners on Municipal Corporations . . Leeds, p.9, para. 43.

to the offices of the corporation like matters of family settlement'<sup>1</sup>

As a close corporation whose membership was limited to Tory Anglicans it naturally received the opposition of the Liberals in Leeds but its relative inoffensiveness affected their attitude towards it. Denied extensive local evidence of abuse the Liberals were forced to make out a general case against the unreformed corporations rather than conduct a vigorous local battle.

It was generally felt on the Liberal side that reform of the corporations would be a natural consequence of the Reform Act, that municipal representatives would soon be elected in the same way as Parliamentary ones.<sup>2</sup> It was the general rather than the local case which was discussed when the question was raised in Leeds in 1833. When Bower and Baines presented the mayor, Tennant, with a requisition to call a meeting on corporation reform they explained to him that they did not 'show any particular hostility towards the Leeds Corporation' but wished to discuss the question generally.<sup>3</sup> Even with this proviso Tennant declined to call the meeting and so it went ahead without him.

Joshua Bower, Edward Baines and James Richardson all exempted Leeds from their condemnation of close corporations and Richardson claimed that of the 160 corporations '159 were all worse than Leeds'.<sup>4</sup> When J.R. Drinkwater, a member of the Municipal Corporation Commission, visited

1. Ibid., p.6, para.23. Cf. Drinkwater's original report, 26 Jan.1833, P.R.O. H052/23.
2. Leeds Mercury, 16 Feb.1833, 20 Sept.1834. Even on the Tory side it was anticipated that the Reform Act would lead to municipal reform, see The Cracker, 7 Dec.1832 for a satirical article on the composition of a new Whig Corporation which would follow Municipal Reform which was expected to occur in 1834.
3. Leeds Mercury, 7, 14 April 1833.
4. Ibid.

Leeds informally in January 1833 he gained a similar impression:

'Every person whom we consulted agreed so remarkably in eulogising the present Corporation of Leeds that we cannot doubt that the town is well governed through their means and it appears that the defects usually attendant upon their method of election are almost neutralised by the circumstance of their possessing little or no property.'<sup>1</sup>

A week before the Commission visited Leeds officially there was a Vestry meeting held where the general arguments were again voiced, this time by Bower and Edward Parsons and the only local evidence cited was the levying of a Court House rate without any accounts. There was some justice in the Intelligencer's comment that the meeting could find nothing wrong with the Leeds Corporation.<sup>2</sup>

The visit of the Commissioners to Leeds put the issue in local perspective. There was far more enthusiasm for a meeting of Baines's supporters in the forthcoming election held in the same week than for the visit of the Commission. Only 20 people attended the hearing which lasted merely six and a half hours. The Corporation regarded the Commission as illegal and placed on record their view that attendance could not be compelled. Nevertheless they were prepared to allow Nicholson, the Town Clerk, to answer questions 'provided such questions be put by the Commissioners only'.<sup>3</sup> The Corporation had no wish to become involved in a public slanging match with its detractors.

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1. Report of J.R.Drinkwater and R.J.Saunders, 26 Jan.1833, P.R.O.Ho 52/23.
  2. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Intelligencer, 14 Dec. 1833.
  3. Leeds Corporation Court Book 1773-1835, pp.398-9.

In fact everything passed off very quietly<sup>1</sup> and in the words of the Intelligencer the Commission 'did not scent a single hidden secret, there was nothing to inquire about, nothing to blame, not a peg on which to hang a solitary doubt.'<sup>2</sup> The Mercury certainly did not agree<sup>3</sup> but the evidence of Richardson and Clapham to the Commission was merely that the Corporation was pure but exclusive. Richardson and Lupton consulted the accounts of the Court House rate and the Commission left Leeds.

The Corporation had no complaints about the conduct of the Commission in Leeds<sup>4</sup> and were no doubt pleased with the remark in the report that 'the great respectability of the present members of the corporation and their impartial conduct as justices were universally acknowledged.' They were not so pleased with the statement that 'the restricted system and want of a more popular method of election were loudly complained of.'<sup>5</sup> However on the whole the Corporation came out favourably in the report and the question of municipal reform did not arise in Leeds again until the summer of 1835 when the bill to reform the corporations was going

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1. Compare this with the difficult and prolonged session at Leicester; see R.W.Greaves The Corporation of Leicester (1939), pp.124-129 and A.T.Patterson Radical Leicester (1954), pp.200-205.
  2. Leeds Intelligencer, 21 Dec. 1833.
  3. Leeds Mercury, 28 Dec.1833: 'It has been characterised by the most rigorous exclusion of all persons differing in politics or religious creed from the favoured few and the offices of Aldermen and Common Councillors have run greatly in family connexions. All the weight it possessed has generally been employed to resist every kind of improvement and reform.'
  4. Stated in a letter from Nicholson to the Corporation of Norwich, Leeds Corporation Court Book, p.405.
  5. Report, Leeds, p.6. An anonymous MS note reads 'false/nobody complained but Richardson the Attorney (afterwards appointed by the Whigs Clerk of the Peace) and the two Glaphams - one afterwards a Russell Justice!!!!'.



through Parliament.

When the Municipal Reform Bill was introduced by Russell the Leeds Corporation protested that Municipal Government would be thrown 'into the hands of Political Partizans and religious sectaries opposed to the best and most sacred Institutions of the Country'. It also pointed out with some justification that as it had been acquitted of corruption it was unfair to find itself condemned along with all the other corporations.<sup>1</sup> When the bill looked like getting delayed in the House of Lords both opponents and defenders of the corporations reacted quickly.

The Corporation petitioned the House of Lords to reject the bill believing that it had a 'tendency to create and perpetuate great popular excitement and discord.' If passed the Corporation believed the bill would confer local power on 'a Class of Persons who though numerically the greatest are from their education habits and station in life not likely to be the most intelligent or independant'.<sup>2</sup> Above all the Corporation was concerned about the rights of property. Taxation would come from property yet those with most property would not find themselves with most power and therefore it was necessary to have a bill which

'will secure to Property that fair and legitimate Influence which it ought to possess and commensurate in a reasonable

1. Court Book, pp.424-5, resolutions passed 12 June 1835.

2. Ibid., pp.427-8, petition approved 28 July 1835.

degree with the local burthens which it will have to sustain in giving efficiency to the Powers and Functions of the Governing Body.<sup>1</sup>

Robert Barr, the Town's Coroner and solicitor to the Workhouse Board, had previously visited London to lobby Parliament on behalf of the Corporation and he was now despatched again this time with the authority to engage counsel and spend £200 of Corporation funds in opposition to the bill.<sup>2</sup>

On the other side 106 people signed a requisition to hold a meeting on the bill to encourage the Lords to pass it.<sup>3</sup> Six thousand people attended when once more it was admitted by the younger Baines that the Leeds Corporation was 'one of the purest because one of the poorest Corporations in the country'. Joshua Bower pointed out that the Radical demand of household suffrage was being granted in local elections. However two Radicals, the solicitor George Wailes and the bookseller Joshua Hobson, criticised the bill sharply and the latter denied that it gave 'real representation' because of the disfranchising effect of the rating clauses.<sup>4</sup> The Leeds meeting was echoed by a great West Riding meeting

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1. Ibid., p.429. This concern about property rights had been expressed previously by the Corporation at the time of the Reform Bill. Cf. petition (ibid., pp.361-63) passed 14 April 1831; the Bill will destroy 'the just balance between population and property' . . . it grants (to Population a preponderant influence over Property' . . . it will not 'preserve to Property its just influence'.

2. Ibid., pp.425, 429.

3. Leeds Mercury, 1 Aug.1835.

4. Ibid., 8 Aug.1835, Leeds Intelligencer, 8 Aug.1835. Hobson received no support from the Liberals on this point about the payment of rates although it was later admitted in the Leeds Mercury, 24 Oct.1835, that the proviso of having to have paid rates for three years would limit the number of voters to about 5,000 (i.e. not much bigger than the Parliamentary register). The bill had the support of the Radical Leeds Times, 1 Aug.1835.

to support the bill which was attended by the leading Whig gentry.<sup>1</sup>

Eventually after a series of compromises between the Commons and the Lords the bill passed and Leeds could prepare in earnest for genuinely representative local government. Unknown to the Liberals the Tories in the Corporation were preparing for its dissolution by disposing of its assets. A series of bland dispassionate entries containing no explanation, in the minutes of the Corporation, record actions which were to shock the Liberals when they came into power and provide party controversy for years.

In May, 1835, presumably anticipating impending disaster, the Corporation voted the control of all its assets to John Wilson of Seacroft, William Beckett of Leeds and John Blayds of Oulton. The resolution stated clearly that the transfer would 'divest this Corporation of all power and control over the same'<sup>2</sup> yet subsequent resolutions indicated how the money was to be spent, thus showing that the three men concerned were intended to act merely as agents of the Corporation. £7,000 was involved comprising £6,500 of 3% consols and £500 invested in the Toll of the Leeds and Wakefield road.<sup>3</sup> Shortly before the final dissolution it was decided that the money should be given to Anglican Churches and

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1. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Intelligencer, 5 Sept. 1835.
  2. Court Book, p.422, 30 May 1835.
  3. In the Report by the Commissioners (p.9, para.41) the figure given for the 3% consols was £3,600 and in the early debates of the reformed corporation councillors used the figure of £3,600. It may be thought that the Corporation had given false information to the Commission in 1833 but at the time the Leeds Mercury, 28 Dec.1833, gave the figure of £6,500. Therefore it would appear that the Commission made a clerical error in incorporating their evidence into the Report which ironically nobody noticed.

local charities.<sup>1</sup> Even at its last gasp the Leeds Corporation was honourable for whereas corrupt corporations like that at Leicester were pocketing the civic wealth, in Leeds the assets were made over to such selfless institutions as churches and charities. It is almost certain that no member of the Corporation benefited financially from the transfer of the Corporation funds.<sup>2</sup>

While the Corporation were thus putting financial matters in order in the manner of a last will and testament the Liberals were preparing for the first elections for the new Council. After the decision relating to compounded ratepayers in the Parliamentary revision of 1834 the Liberals were anxious about the fate of the compounded ratepayers in local elections. Baines had urged Russell to accommodate these potential voters into the Bill and on several occasions the Mercury discussed the question<sup>3</sup>, reluctantly pointing out that although the landlord

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1. Court Book, pp.431-33 (27 Nov.1835 and 12 Dec.1835). The main provisions were £1,000 each for Christ Church and St.Mary's Church, and £1,500 to be shared between the General Infirmary, the House of Recovery and the Dispensary. The details are printed in Leeds Mercury, 19 Sept. 1840.
  2. The word 'almost' is intentional for one small shadow can be found. The last provision of the Corporation was that £500 should be set aside for opening a new street in the Calls and it was specifically stated that the project should be embarked upon quickly. When the project came before the Vestry (24 Nov.1836) the owners whose property would be traversed were listed in the Vestry minutes (Vestry Minute Book, p.149). They were virtually all leading Tory families of the town; Rev.Fawcett, Benjamin and John Gott, Henry and Robert Hall, Christopher and Thomas Beckett, J.Wilson, George Banks, Lepton Dobson, Wm.Hey, Griffith Wright, George Biscohoff, J.M.Tennant, Thomas Blayds. It may be only coincidence but it seems odd that £500 of Corporation funds should be devoted to providing a road across the property of most of the leading Leeds Tories. There may have been some special pleading here and the owners listed will probably have increased the value of their property but no one ever mentioned the scheme in the Press so presumably the opponents of the Corporation were satisfied with the basic genuineness and honesty of the scheme and the participators in it.
  3. Leeds Mercury, 4 July, 17, 24 Oct., 14 Nov.1835.



could pay the rates for a tenant if there had been any reduction then the voters would be disfranchised.<sup>1</sup>

Again there were a large number of claims and objections totalling over 4,000 and the younger Baines, as chairman of the Municipal Reform Committee, offered to withdraw some of them if the Tories did likewise. A meeting took place between the Tories Sangster and Nelson and the Liberals Eddison and Rawson which ended in stalemate and a refusal to agree a compromise.<sup>2</sup> The revising barristers were faced with two overseers lists, one of which contained the compounded ratepayers, and they decided that only the other one was valid, much to the joy of the Tories.<sup>3</sup> The Tories made further gains when they profited from a slip by the Liberals. Richardson, the Liberal solicitor, was away from Leeds when the revision opened and had forgotten to leave written authority for someone to act on his behalf, which was necessary since all objections had been signed by him. In vain the Liberals asked the Tories to postpone the relevant cases until written authority arrived but unblushingly the Tories rammed their advantage home and for two whole days were able to establish votes with the Liberals powerless to act.<sup>4</sup> Once more the

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1. George Evers, treasurer of the Workhouse Board, suggested that those who had obtained a discount should have their property rated at a lower amount. The reduction in rating should correspond to the discount and so the voters would have paid all their rates.
  2. Leeds Mercury, 21, 28 Nov.1835. The figures were:
 

Liberal claims	1,071	Liberal objections	627
Tory claims	761	Tory objections	1,673

 The Tories 'numerical advantage probably persuaded them not to give anything away.
  3. Leeds Intelligencer, 5 Dec.1835.
  4. Leeds Mercury, 5 Dec.1835, Leeds Times, 5 Dec.1835.

'generous' gesture at the revision of 1833 was reciprocated by uncompromising party advantage.

The revision, costing £1,000<sup>1</sup>, ended only shortly before the first election was due to take place. Most of December 1835 was taken up with election meetings in the search for candidates. There was as much excitement as at a Parliamentary election and as Leeds prepared to elect its new Council it was warned of the importance of these elections:

'This year is the year. The character of the Leeds<sub>2</sub> Corporation is to be determined for an age to come.'

It was indeed the beginning of a new era for politics in Leeds.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Leeds Mercury, 19 Dec.1835.

2. Ibid., 5 Dec.1835.

3. The election of December 1835 is discussed in the following chapter.



CHAPTER IV

THE FIRST FRUITS OF REFORM

1836 - 1838

## (i)

The most decisive political event in Leeds which separated 1835 from 1836 was the creation of the new Town Council. Politics are basically about power and the exercise of it and the Municipal Corporations Act had thrown open to citizens of Leeds a source of local power and patronage which had previously been denied to many of them. When the first election ended in a decisive victory for the Liberals it was proclaimed that 'a transference of local power beyond all calculation has been made'.<sup>1</sup> It was a struggle for local power that the election had been fought by the parties, the Tories identified as the representatives of the Old Corporation and the Liberals as the heralds of the promised land of freely elected Municipal institutions.

The elections of December 1835 were keenly contested and although the result was a 42 - 6 victory for the Liberals the overall voting showed that the Tories were not without support: Liberals 3,025, Tories 2,129.<sup>2</sup> The Tories had managed to get three of the six seats for Mill Hill and all three for Headingley both of which were centres of Tory strength for many years.

Table I indicates that the cross party vote in this first Municipal election was much higher than the norm in Leeds for Parliamentary elec-

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1. Leeds Mercury, 2 Jan.1836.

2. Ibid. and Poll Book of the First Election of Municipal Councillors for the Borough of Leeds (1836).

tions. The large number of seats to be contested gave to voters a freedom to spread their support between candidates of opposite parties. It is interesting to note that Mill Hill, West, Kirkgate and East Wards (though not Hunslet) which had over 10% of voters splitting across party lines were wards where the Tories did well in the early years of the new Corporation.

TABLE I CROSS PARTY VOTE IN FIRST MUNICIPAL ELECTION 1835

	%
Whole Borough Parliamentary 1835	3.92
Whole Borough Municipal 1835	10.00
Wards 1835	
Mill Hill	15.88
West	11.38
North-West	6.90
North	2.95
North-East	4.76
East	11.17
Kirkgate	11.35
South	6.10
Hunslet	12.89
Holbeck	8.88
Bramley	8.73
Headingley	No contest

The overwhelming Liberal majority placed the Liberals in an immediate quandary over the aldermanic elections. They clearly had the power

to nominate all 16 as Liberals but for years they had attacked the exclusiveness of the old Corporation and if they were now to emulate it then their previous protests would have appeared specious indeed. Were they against exclusiveness on principle or only against Tory exclusiveness? The Mercury before the elections had stated<sup>1</sup> that a mixed corporation of all parties would be the ideal and prior to the first Council meeting Edward Baines presided at a meeting of Liberal Councillors which agreed to give the Tories some share of the Aldermen.<sup>2</sup>

The Aldermen elected comprised 12 Liberals and four Tories<sup>3</sup> and this left vacancies for Councillor which had to be filled up. This attempt to show a friendly hand to the Tories was not appreciated by them nor was it popular with the more radical section of the Liberal party.<sup>4</sup> By choosing two of the Aldermen from Mill Hill and two from Headingley the Liberals threw<sup>o</sup> open seats to the Tories which they need not have gained. A surprise Tory seat in Kirkgate made up the 13 Tory members in the new Corporation which faced the 51 Liberals.

The Aldermanic vote raised the whole question of the role of party politics in the Town Council. There were some who believed that they ought to forget party politics in the Council chamber and none more so than the Unitarian solicitor Tottie. As Whig party agent in Leeds for Fitzwilliam and the most respected solicitor in the town Tottie no doubt had many friends in both parties and he sought to 'divest himself of party

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1. Leeds Mercury, 21 Nov.1835.

2. Leeds Intelligencer, 2 Jan.1836.

3. Council Minutes, Vol.IV, p.2. Leeds Civic Hall .

4. Leeds Times, 2, 16 Jan.1836 criticised this action and was to do so for many years. It claimed that this led to an immediate cooling off among voters who refused to exert themselves for a party 'whose first exercise of power was to neutralise the efforts of its supporters'. Ibid., 17 Sept. denounced it as 'a shameless going over to the enemy'.

feeling . . and avoid resolutions which might at all have the appearance of party politics.'<sup>1</sup> On several occasions Tottie showed by his actions that he wished to encourage cross party voting. In the election for Mayor in November 1836 he voted for Beckett, the Tory rather than Dr. Williamson the Liberal<sup>2</sup> in a three-cornered contest in which he himself was a candidate. He chose to vote for Barr the Tory candidate for the office of Town Clerk even though Barr had acted for the old Corporation against the Municipal Corporations Act.<sup>3</sup> He opposed the sending of a petition of the Council on the Irish Municipal Bill since he believed it was a party question.\* According to one report it was Tottie who was most in favour of giving Tories a share of the Aldermen and in the early debates of the Council he tried to lower the political temperature by showing courtesy to those who, though political opponents, were old friends. This was noticed by the Tories and one satiriser of the Corporation congratulated him on his independent line and his work in 'checking the intemperance, correcting the crudities and exposing the pretensions of the Liberal majority.'<sup>4</sup>

It was this independent line which earned for Tottie the persistent

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1. Spoken in a Council debate, Leeds Mercury, 30 April 1836.
  2. Council Minutes, IV, p.120. This fact did not go unnoticed in the Leeds Intelligencer, 12 Nov. 1836, which claimed that Tottie's first vote was responsible for the support he received from the Tories on the second ballot in which Williamson was elected. \* Leeds Mercury, 30 April 1836.
  3. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Intelligencer, 9 July 1836. See above, Chapter III, p.165 and below, p.180.
  4. "Thoughts on the Town Council by one of the Rabble" No.2. Leeds Intelligencer, 26 March 1836. This series of 14 anonymous articles on the Town Council has been bound together in one volume in the Hailstone Collection, York Minster.



scorn of the Leeds Times. Despite Tottie's great efforts on the finance committee his "Conservative-Whig" attitude brought attacks from three very different editors of the Times. Robert Nicoll, the pseudo-Chartist, once dubbed him 'this worthy worshipper of Lords and devout adorer of Dukes.'<sup>1</sup> Charles Hooton, the London editor who replaced Nicoll after his sudden death, complained in one of his earliest editorials of cross party voting on the Council and criticised Tottie's 'strong Tory bias . . . he partakes far too much of the Tory hue.'<sup>2</sup> When Samuel Smiles arrived a year later he too denounced Tottie and the "Tory-Whigs" on the Council.<sup>3</sup> The persistent attack of the Times and its Radical supporters on the attempts of Tottie to reduce party tension in the Council suggests that it was the Radical wing of the Liberal party which wanted the Council to be exclusive and fight issues on party lines.

It was certainly the Tories who wished the opposite and they were always ready to criticise matters before the Council on the grounds that they were party questions. In its very first business meeting the Council adopted an address to the King drawn up by Robert Baker, thanking him for allowing the Municipal Corporations Act to go through.<sup>4</sup> In the debate preceding the adoption of the address two Tories opposed the address on the grounds that it was a political question. Henry Hall, the most respected member of the old Corporation who had been an Alderman and magistrate for over 20 years, said 'I conceive it is desirable

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1. Leeds Times, 4 March 1837. This, an obvious reference to his connection with Fitzwilliam, came in an article condemning Whigs who were Tories in disguise.

2. Ibid., 20 Jan. 1838.

3. Ibid., 16 May 1840.

4. Council Minutes. IV, pp.10-12.



as far as possible to exclude politics altogether' and he was supported by Alderman Scarth who believed they ought to be motivated by 'liberality and benevolent disinterestedness . . . which motives party politics are calculated to corrupt.'<sup>1</sup> On the face of it this was a plea to exclude party politics but in fact in opposing a Liberal address of thanks for a measure brought in by a Whig government which had destroyed a Tory Corporation in Leeds the Tories were using a non-party front for party advantage.

From the first then party politics were the rule in the Leeds Corporation and the Town Council became "The Leeds House of Commons". Just as in Parliament, business to some extent had to be arranged beforehand and the Intelligencer persistently claimed that the Council was managed 'in the laboratory behind the curtain' and urged independent members like Tottie not to stand for the domination of a caucus.<sup>2</sup> Accusation of prior meeting do not necessarily represent wholesale management of the Council but quite early on Tottie Watson, a Tory dyer from Headingley, complained 'if gentlemen were to come there with measures cut and dried it was all a farce coming there to discuss them'<sup>3</sup> and the Council debates do show evidence of a certain amount of preconcerted

1. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Intelligencer, 16 Jan.1836.
2. "Thoughts on the Town Council", No.8 in Leeds Intelligencer, 17 Sept. 1836. For other references to prior meetings of Liberal councillors see ibid., 2 Jan, 4 June, 12 Nov.1836.
3. Leeds Mercury, 16 Jan.1836.

action.<sup>1</sup>

Many on the Liberal side in any case believed that party politics were appropriate for the Town Council. Darnton Lupton, the wealthy Unitarian cloth merchant, reminded the Council that they had 'been sent there owing to party politics'<sup>2</sup> and the most outspoken defence of parties came from George Goodman, the first Mayor and a Baptist wool-stapler. Ironically it occurred in his address at the end of the registration of 1836 when he was urging closer cooperation between the two parties to reduce the burden of registration. Lest he be interpreted as an advocate of a party truce in the Council he added:

'He was far from considering the existence of parties as an evil nor should he wish to see parties in this town merged in one quiescent mass; on the contrary he thought they were useful in exciting a spirit of competition and vigilance and had the effect of bringing a greater degree of energy into the service of the public.'<sup>3</sup>

The most obvious expression of party politics came in the Municipal appointments which were in the Council's gift. In Leeds to some extent a spoils system existed, indeed one Tory view of Municipal Reform generally was that 'it was the robbery of one party in order to pamper another party with the spoils.'<sup>4</sup> Nowhere was this more evident than in the nomination of magistrates, those "Russell Justices" as the Tories

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1. This however in no way puts the proposition that all votes in the Council were on party lines. There was plenty of independent activity. Tottie has already been quoted and of the many others that might be cited Robert Baker was notable for taking his own initiative. In 1837 for example he produced his own budget and financial statement which was carried against that of the finance committee; see Leeds Mercury, 10 June, 1837.
  2. Leeds Mercury, 30 April 1836, "Thoughts on the Town Council", No.3 in Leeds Intelligencer, 14 May 1836.
  3. Leeds Mercury, 15 Oct.1836.
  4. Leeds Intelligencer, 2 Jan.1836.

contemptuously called them. When the Council voted on a list of 18 names to be submitted to the Home Secretary only one, Thomas Beckett, was a Tory. Perring in his poll book commented

'the Yellow party voted with preconcerted lists and upon political grounds without reference to the wants of the Borough or the merits of individuals; the best and most experienced men were passed over for party reasons'<sup>1</sup>

The Tory protest was not confined to the Press and a deputation of Robert Hall and Anthony Titley travelled to London to see Russell who was informed that one party had not received a fair share of the nominations for the bench, especially since 'the preponderance of property is in favour of the excluded party.'<sup>2</sup> Russell asked Baines senior to provide some additional names and he suggested William Hey, son of the famous Leeds surgeon, and John Heaton, a wool merchant, commenting of them that they were 'of very respectable character and of moderate political sentiments though of Conservative politics'. Lest Russell should forget where his main loyalties lay Baines pointed out that in equity the list ought to have included Darnton Lupton on the grounds of the votes he received in the Council and though only 30 'his services to the Liberal party in Leeds have been valuable.'<sup>3</sup>

This was the key point. Seats on the bench were rewards for political loyalty and it was no wonder that men long denied the social and political honours to which they believed their economic status entitled them should feel that the previous inequitable distribution of spoils

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1. Poll Book of the First Election of Municipal Councillors (1835), p.vii.

2. Hall and Titley to Russell, 21 Jan.1836, P.R.O. H.O. 52/31.

3. Baines to Russell, 29, 31 Jan.1836 in ibid.

should now be corrected. If the magistrates were to be predominantly Liberal then past history justified this:

'Almost everywhere the Lord Lieutenants, the County Magistrates, the Clergy, the Police, the functionaries of our Law Courts from the Judges on the Bench to the humblest officer and all the endless train of dependants on each, including the publicans, the employes of the Corporations, etc. have within living memory been of the Tory party'<sup>1</sup>

The final commission which comprised 19 Liberals and three Tories redressed the balance somewhat.<sup>2</sup>

There was not only the desire of previously proscribed citizens for magisterial honours involved here, there was also the control of the Poor Law, for the magistrates nominated the Overseers. Thus Liberal magistrates meant Liberal control over the Poor Law also so that in quick succession the Tories of Leeds were forced to hand over the two biggest spending authorities in the town. They were further galled by a succession of political appointments all in the nature of rewards for past services.

Predictably Baines got the Corporation printing and while this did not remain with him continuously it was no mean item, being worth over £200 in the first year alone.<sup>3</sup> James Richardson, a long standing Liberal

1. Leeds Mercury, 16 Jan.1836. Cf. Parkes to Brougham, 18 Aug.1835, 'it is a fact that the Liberals are naturally looking to the Municipal patronage - County attorneys to Town Clerkships - Liberal bankers to Treasurerships, etc.,etc. Now our supporters have a right to indulge these influences - it is human nature.' Quoted by G.B.A.M.Finlayson "The Municipal Corporation Commission . . ." in B.I.H.R. (1963), p.51.
2. See below, Chapter VII, pp. 451-3 for further discussion on the magistrates.
3. Leeds Mercury, 4 Feb.1837. Perring was naturally a little upset at losing this important appointment and in answer to his protest Baines wrote 'For more than half a century the Intelligencer office has been almost as closely attached to the Court House as the Town Clerk's office.' Ibid., 13 Feb.1836.



solicitor and a former partner with Tottie and Gaunt, got the post of Clerk of the Peace.<sup>1</sup> Richardson it was who had signed all the objections to votes in the Burgess Revision of 1835 and his professional colleague on that occasion, Edward Eddison, was appointed Town Clerk.<sup>2</sup> Eddison was opposed by Barr, the leading Tory solicitor of the town and councillors were perfectly aware that they were making a political appointment. Matthew Gaunt reminded the Council that Barr had vigorously opposed municipal reform and if Eddison was an avowed Liberal 'he would ask whether it would not be more congenial to their feelings to go to a gentleman who agreed with them than to one who differed from them in political opinions.'<sup>3</sup> The appointment within a fortnight of two professional Liberal electioneering agents to Corporation positions angered the Tories, who claimed that local appointments were now 'to be held as a reward of political subserviency; they are to be withheld as a punishment for political opposition.'<sup>4</sup>

Another member of the Baines family nearly became Recorder when Matthew Talbot Baines was nominated for that position by the Council in February 1837. Russell refused to make the appointment on the grounds that Baines had a connection with the M.P. for the town and he gave him the Recordership of Hull instead.<sup>5</sup> The nomination of Baines confirmed

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1. Ibid., 18 June 1836, Leeds Intelligencer, 18, 25 June 1836, Council Minutes, VI, p.58.
  2. Council Minutes, IV, p.65. For further discussion on the appointment of Eddison, see below, pp.196-8
  3. Leeds Mercury, 9 July 1836.
  4. "Thoughts on the Town Council", No.6 in Leeds Intelligencer, 13 Aug. 1836. See also ibid., 9 July 1836 and 27 Oct.1838, 'They have filled every place with their creatures and slaves. They have put the public money into the pockets of their partisans in the most unblushing manner.'
  5. Leeds Mercury, 4, 11 Feb. 1837; Magistrates Minutes, 21 Jan.1837.

in the Intelligencer's opinion that the persistent Liberal attack on the old Corporation stemmed merely from a desire 'to finger the public money'.<sup>1</sup> Now they were in control the Liberals

'grasp at every possible thing in the shape of profit or power with the most unblushing inconsistency and hypocritically pretend to be serving the public while solely aiming at party monopoly and personal aggrandisement.'<sup>2</sup>

In a sense the Intelligencer was right for men long denied political power do revel in the early exercise of it and as Lord Morpeth put it the Liberals were 'sharing in the first fruits of that system in all possible prosperity and credit.'<sup>3</sup> Yet the venom in all Tory criticism of the Liberal majority stemmed from frustration and jealousy at no longer being in control and the only way to regain control was to win seats at the annual Municipal elections. Tories in Leeds only briefly flirted with the plan used at Leicester to leave the Liberal majority to disgrace itself by its mismanagement and extreme measures.<sup>4</sup> In Leeds Tories made a fight of it and managed to increase their strength.

The seeds of Municipal victory were to be sown in the registration

1. Leeds Intelligencer, 25 Feb.1837.
2. Ibid., 11 Feb.1837. It must be noticed that in appointing four Tory Aldermen, one Tory magistrate and retaining, at least for a time, the old Town Clerk and Chief Constable the Liberals had a better record than the Tories. Even this small concession to their opponents was criticised for many years by the Radicals.
3. Leeds Mercury, 3 Sept.1836.
4. Cf. Leicester Journal, 26 Oct.1838; 'Let the Radicals manage affairs a little while longer and the growing disgust of the inhabitants at the measures they adopt will do more to annihilate the faction than the return of any minority of Conservatives, however respectable in number and character.' Leeds Intelligencer, 5 Nov.1836, also expressed this view but only in passing.



court and it was here that the Leeds Tories began their campaign. In 1836 they challenged in only two wards, West and Mill Hill, and though the Liberals gained 187 votes ~~and~~ the registration as a whole the Tories gained a seat in each of these wards at the 1836 election.<sup>1</sup> In the 1837 registration the Tories again concentrated their effort, this time in three wards, Mill Hill, West and North-East, and once again gained a seat at the next election in each of the wards they had contested.<sup>2</sup> 1838 was the first year in which the Tories challenged in all wards both at the registration and at the election and they did very well indeed. When the registration went in favour of the Tories to the tune of 335 votes the Mercury commented

'We feel bound to tell the Reformers that the Tories are far before them in the perfectness of their organisation and arrangements - not from any individual superiority on the part of the agents but from the long time during which the Tories have employed a regular professional agency and the money they have spent in supporting it in every department'<sup>3</sup>

It appeared that the Tories were making a really big effort in 1838 and as the Intelligencer commented 'the note of Municipal war is sounding.'<sup>4</sup> War it was and victory also, for the Tories gained six seats on a 55% poll, returning 10 out of the 16 seats.<sup>5</sup> Superior registration, undue influence, public apathy and disappointment with the new

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1. Leeds Mercury, 15 Oct., 5 Nov.1836; Leeds Intelligencer, 5 Nov.1836. The seat in West Ward was gained as a result of legal action, see below, p.185.
  2. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Intelligencer, 30 Sept.,4 Nov.1837. Again a further seat was won by legal action, see below, p.185.
  3. Leeds Mercury, 13 Oct.1838.
  4. Leeds Intelligencer, 20 Oct.1838.
  5. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Intelligencer, Leeds Times, 3,10 Nov.1838.

Corporation, the four Tory Aldermen in 1836 and increased expenditure were the reasons suggested from various quarters for the Liberal defeat. The Liberals were sufficiently worried by the election for Henry Marshall and Hamer Stansfeld to call a meeting to discuss the cause of defeat.<sup>1</sup>

One consequence of the defeat was that any thoughts of again giving Tories a share of the Aldermen in 1838 were now abandoned and despite Perring's prophesy that the Liberal majority would not dare to monopolise the Aldermanic positions the Council elected Liberals into all eight vacancies.<sup>2</sup> It was noticeable that the Liberals were not caught out as in 1836 by elevating Councillors. They chose previous Liberal Aldermen, Councillors recently defeated in the elections or leading Liberals outside the Council. This meant that no further elections in the pro-Tory atmosphere of 1838 were necessary.

The election of eight Liberal Aldermen caused a bitter row in the Council about exclusiveness.<sup>3</sup> The Tories argued that their representation on the Council entitled them to seven out of the 16 Aldermen and that was exactly why the Liberals dare not risk appointing Tories to safe positions on the Council for the next six years. The justification voiced inside the Council was that the majority of the burgesses were Liberals and outside that justification lay 'with the uniform proceedings of the Old Corporation who for fifty years consecutively elected none but Blue Aldermen.'<sup>4</sup> To some extent this healed the breach between Liberals

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1. Leeds Intelligencer, 17 Nov.1838.

2. Ibid., 3, 10 Nov.1838.

3. Leeds Mercury, 10, 17 Nov.1838.

4. Ibid., 10 Nov.1838.

and Radicals ever the Aldermanic elections of 1836 and consequently it further embittered relationships between Liberals and Tories.

John Howard, a carpet manufacturer and one of the Tories sitting for Mill Hill, claimed that a Tory share of the Aldermen in 1838 would have gone a long way to end party strife in the Council but that Liberal monopoly would worsen the situation. Perring, in the Intelligencer, previously no friend of the Liberals, now stepped up his attack on the 'Caucus which meets at the "Reform Registration Rooms" in the Commercial Buildings to dictate the measures of the Whig majority'.<sup>1</sup> Was it right, he asked,

'to hold a little caucus in the "Reform Registration Office" and there to appoint delegates under the name of Aldermen to counterbalance the votes of the Councillors elected by the Burgesses who have been electing more and more Tories every year?'<sup>2</sup>

His remarks about the progress of Tory strength and its relationship to Aldermanic elections are highlighted by the following Table showing the political composition of the Council after the first four elections.

TABLE II. POLITICAL COMPOSITION OF THE COUNCIL

YEAR	ALDERMEN		COUNCILLORS		WHOLE COUNCIL	
	Liberal	Tory	Liberal	Tory	Liberal	Tory
Dec. 1835	-	-	42	6	42	6
1836	12	4	39	9	51	13
1836 - 1837	12	4	37	11	49	15
1837 - 1838	12	4	33	15	45	19
1838 - 1839	16	0	27	21	43	21

1. Leeds Intelligencer, 17 Nov.1838.

2. Ibid., 1 Dec.1838.

It will be seen that the Tory gain at the 1838 election was virtually nullified by the loss of four Tory Aldermen but the fact remained that the Tories had within three years increased their share of the councillors from 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ % at the first election in December 1835 to 42 $\frac{1}{2}$ % in November 1838.<sup>1</sup>

In their quest for party advantage the Tories had shown themselves 'fond of legal quibbles'<sup>2</sup> and on two occasions they gained seats on the Council by legal action. After the 1836 election Richard Bramley disputed the election of Thomas George for West Ward on the grounds of bad votes and miscounting and although George took his seat he was eventually forced out by a decision of King's Bench which banned him from ever again becoming a Councillor.<sup>3</sup> In the following year the Council failed to declare a seat vacant owing to a bankruptcy and then filled it and the normal annual vacancy together at the election of November 1837. It was John Beckwith, reporter for the Intelligencer, who suggested that Wood, the Tory, ought to have been returned since there was only one vacancy not two as the Council stated. He was right and Wood took the seat even though he had been defeated by 2 to 1 at the actual election.<sup>4</sup> The Intelligencer was also involved in a further flurry of legal activity when Robert Perring suggested that James Holdforth as a Roman Catholic

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1. They were eventually to reach 66 $\frac{2}{3}$ % in 1840-41.
  2. Leeds Times, 4 November 1837.
  3. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Intelligencer, 3 Dec.1836, 28 Jan.1837. The Council refused to fight George's case for him although he took his seat as a bona fide representative. Cf. Municipal Election, 31 Oct. 1837 in Representation of Leeds 1831-41, 'Sentence of Municipal death has since been pronounced . . upon the snorting official who called his constituents "the rabble".'
  4. Leeds Mercury, 11 Nov.1837, Leeds Intelligencer, 11 Nov.1837, 3 March 1838.

had not sworn the appropriate oaths on becoming Mayor in November 1838. This charge produced a quick dash to London to see the Attorney General by Holdforth and the Town Clerk. He said Holdforth was legally the Mayor but the Tories denied it and John Atkinson, himself a solicitor and newly elected Tory Councillor for Mill Hill claimed that all meetings called by Holdforth were illegal because he was not the Mayor.<sup>1</sup>

This particular episode ended with the taking of counsel's opinion and went no further but it showed a Tory willingness to use the law to obstruct their opponents particularly where technical details were involved. The Liberals were prepared to resort to the law when it really mattered and indeed the most important legal case affecting the new Corporation was the Chancery suit begun by the Council over the alienation of Corporation property. This and the issue of the cost of the new system were the two perennial subjects which fanned the flames of party strife in the first few years of the reformed system.

The alienation of all the money belonging to the old Corporation which has already been described<sup>2</sup> was unknown to the incoming councillors in 1836. For a few weeks the new Council remained in this ignorance and were taken aback by Nicholson, the Town Clerk of the old Corporation, when he reported to them on 5 February 1836 'there are no goods, securities, effects, or property belonging to the Body Corporate except the Mace and certain Pews.'<sup>3</sup> What, everyone wished to know, had happened to the £3,600 referred to in the Commissioners' Report on the Leeds

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1. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Intelligencer, Leeds Times, 17, 24 Nov., 1 Dec. 1938.

2. Chapter III, p.46 and cf. Hill, Georgian Lincoln, pp.237-259.

3. Council Minutes, IV, p.25.



Corporation (which was in fact £6,500) . Two weeks later the new Council finally got access to the Minute Book of the old Corporation and the dreadful truth was revealed. The cupboard was bare and the last item in the expenditure of £2,000 worth of stock which had been sold to meet current needs between September and December 1835 summed up the position, 'to the Treasurer of the National School £34.8.1'.<sup>1</sup> In other words this was clearing away the last penny of the funds belonging to the old Corporation.

On 6 April 1836 the Council agreed to begin legal proceedings for the recovery of the £7,000 in all which had been voted away.<sup>2</sup> The wheels of the law turned very slowly for the Liberals on the Council, for it took five years for the case to be decided and in that period the Chancery suit for the recovery of the Corporation funds was discussed again and again both in the Council Chamber and in the Press. Despite this all the arguments were fully explored within the first few weeks and no new themes were developed in the frequent debates on the subject.<sup>3</sup>

On the Liberal side there was unity between the Whigs and the Radicals, the Mercury and the Times on the 'absorbing propensities of the defunct Leeds Corporation.'<sup>4</sup> To members of the new Corporation the

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1. Ibid., p.32. On 17 Feb.1836 the minutes of the old Corporation in alienating the Borough funds were copied into the minutes of the new Corporation together with a balance sheet of the £1,937.10.0. spent between 23 Sept. and 26 Dec. 1835. The minutes also appeared in full in Leeds Mercury, 27 Feb.1836.

2. Ibid., p.40.

3. The only thing that did change was that the growing number of Tory Councillors made even more possible the abandoning of the suit by a vote in the Council where the Tories might be able to get a majority.

4. Leeds Times, 27 Feb.1836.



the motives seemed obvious, to deprive the new Corporation of all of the Corporate funds. This they felt was illegal and later on Matthew Gaunt read to the Council the legal opinions of four Tory lawyers who also said it was illegal.<sup>1</sup> These were opinions which Nicholson and Barr had taken for the old Corporation which only deepened their treachery for they alienated the funds knowing it to be illegal. The stated aim in taking counsel's advice was 'to prevent the property passing into the hands of the Town Council under the proposed Municipal Corporations Reform Bill.'<sup>2</sup>

The Liberals did not charge members of the late Corporation with financial corruption but this still left the field wide open:

'we do deliberately charge them with breach of trust to the Borough, - with a gross misappropriation of public property - with a distribution of funds as unfair as it was wrongful - with a palpable attempt to evade the law - with an unworthy and disreputable trick - and with a flagrant insult towards the New Corporation and towards the Burgesses whom the Corporation represent.'<sup>3</sup>

Above all the Liberals denounced the alienation as the robbery of the burgesses since they believed that it was public property that was at stake. This was confirmed in the preliminary decision of the Vice-Chancellor on 29 November 1837 'The Corporation in this case was merely calling for a restitution of its own property.'<sup>4</sup>

This sentence got to the core of the problem for the Tory case centred on the fact that this was not public property belonging to Leeds

1. Ibid., 22 Oct.1836.
2. Leeds Mercury, 22 Oct.1836. The full opinions can be seen in a report drawn up for the Council to summarise the proceedings thus far, see ibid., 19 Sept.1840.
3. Leeds Mercury, 27 Feb.1836.
4. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Times, 2 Dec.1837.

but private property belonging to the members of the Corporation.

Inside the council two members of the old Corporation, Henry Hall and William Hey Junior, defended the alienation vigorously, continually reminding the Council that the income of the Corporation had been derived solely from fines which made any action disposing of the funds perfectly legal.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore since the funds were derived from Anglican sources there was nothing wrong with Anglican charities benefiting.<sup>2</sup>

'Neither they (the Liberals) nor theirs, nor the township nor the parish nor the public nor any charitable grant, devise, or bequest whatsoever contributed a single sixpence: there is not one dissenting farthing amongst it. It was contributed entirely by the Corporators and for the Corporators.'<sup>3</sup>

Even if there was a dispute over the nature of the property what, the Tories enquired, would the Chancery suit result in? The answer they gave was simply a robbery of charities. Quite early on Scarth and Howard suggested that only the charities would suffer by this action,<sup>4</sup> and Perring claimed that it was nothing but

'taking away from the Churches, the Infirmary, the Dispensary, the House of Recovery, the Parochial Schools and other truly public and borough institutions sums so much required by each and all.'<sup>5</sup>

Thus on one side the Chancery suit was denigrated as the robbery of charities while on the other side the alienation was denigrated as

1. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Intelligencer, 27 Feb, 9 April 1836.
2. This point was made forcibly in a speech by Ralph Markland at a North-West Ward Conservative Dinner, see Leeds Intelligencer, 1 Dec.1838.
3. Ibid., 5 March, 1836.
4. Leeds Mercury, 11 June 1836.
5. Leeds Intelligencer, 27 Oct.1838; see also ibid., 2 Dec.1837.

the robbery of the burgesses. Yet both sides did agree that the whole affair personified party politics in Leeds. The Tories claimed that the Chancery suit represented the 'gratification of party spleen' which was exactly what the Liberals thought the alienation represented. George Hayward, agent of the Earl of Cardigan, who sat for Headingley, criticised the Liberals for saying that the Chancery suit was commenced for the good of the borough and went on 'The whole proceedings had commenced in party spirit, had progressed in it and would end in it.'<sup>1</sup> Similarly on the other side the alienation was seen as the 'promotion of party and sectarian interests', the money 'alienated and appropriated to Tory purposes.'<sup>2</sup> There was in this 'gratification of their own partyspirit' a desire to distribute the money in 'such a manner as should be most agreeable to the sect and party to which the Corporation belonged.'<sup>3</sup>

The Chancery suit thus exacerbated party strife on the Council and in one sense merged into the wider party dispute over finance. By October 1838 nearly £600 had been spent out of the Borough fund on the Chancery suit and a year earlier the Tories on the Council led by Adam Hunter, a doctor who sat for West Ward, had begun to complain about the burgesses having to foot the bill for the Chancery suit.<sup>4</sup> The whole question of local taxation and the service provided for the ratepayers was the second great running sore in Council debates.

Perring had predicted before the new Council came into office that

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1. Leeds Mercury, 18 Nov.1837.
  2. Leeds Times, 22 Oct.1836, 20 Oct.1838.
  3. Leeds Mercury, 9 April 1836.
  4. Ibid., 6 Oct.1838, 18 Nov.1837; Leeds Intelligencer, 28 Oct.1837, 3 Feb.1838.

municipal expenditure would rise under a 'swingeing borough rate' to half the cost of running the Poor Law in Leeds.<sup>1</sup> This was taken locally to mean £25,000 a year and while the precise figure was soon lost sight of the first three years of the new Corporation saw a running battle to show on the one side that expenditure had gone up and on the other it had gone down.

It is difficult to come to any firm conclusion about expenditure for three reasons. Firstly comparisons must be between like and like and the situation was that after 1835 the Corporation had to bear many costs which had previously been borne under different guises elsewhere, for instance in the prosecution of criminals, so that it depended on whether one's figure for the old Corporation included such charges or not. Secondly there were expenses which stemmed directly from the reformed system, for instance those of registration and election which were completely new phenomena.<sup>2</sup> Thirdly there were once and for all items like the Chancery suit or a new valuation or the building of a new gaol which were not regular expenses and again it depended on whether these were included or not.

The result was that a juggling with the figures could produce any result and in general the Tories gave the lowest possible figure for the

1. Leeds Intelligencer, 26 Dec.1835.

2. To gauge this one may cite the cost of registration and election in the first poll which was £664.13.9. (Leeds Mercury, 4 Sept.1836) or the figure given in 1838 by the Town Clerk which was £310 for one registration and election n.b. in 1837 to which this figure referred only a small number of wards had been contested .



old Corporation and the highest for the new and the Liberals did exactly the opposite. What was more interesting than the figures was the clear desire on the part of the Liberals to show that the reformed system was cheaper. When the Mayor's chain was presented to Goodman, James Marshall pointed out that their hopes for local government centred on 'economy and efficiency'<sup>1</sup> and on one occasion James Whalley got the Council to pass a motion that its duty was 'not only to keep down but lessen borough expenses'.<sup>2</sup>

There were many estimates made on the Liberal side which attempted to illustrate the reduced cost of running the town. Robert Baker estimated in the first year that Leeds was £2,000 better off than under the old system and in 1837 the Mercury estimated a saving of £1,000.<sup>3</sup> During the third year the main efforts were to show that any increases were perfectly justified in view of the growth in population and the better service the ratepayers were getting but even here one estimate was that local taxation was down by 14%.<sup>4</sup> Robert Baker claimed that the Tories were backing the former Chief Constable, Read, and his claim for compensation merely to saddle the town with financial burdens while on the other side it was felt that the Liberals opposed compensation for fear of those burdens.<sup>5</sup> The Mercury was always on its guard to coun-

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1. Leeds Mercury, 30 April 1836.

2. Ibid., 24 March 1838.

3. Ibid., 24 Sept. 1836, 14 Oct. 1837.

4. Ibid., 14 April, 27 Oct. 1838. The point about increased population was made in Leeds Times, 20 Oct. 1838 and by William Pawson in the Council, Council Minutes, IV, pp.178-9.

5. Leeds Intelligencer, 6 Aug. 1836, Leeds Mercury, 3 Sept. 1836.

teract the claims of the Tories over expenditure particularly at election time<sup>1</sup> but the argument between the parties could never be resolved simply because they were using rival statistics. Thus, for example, Adam Hunter on one occasion complained that the Borough expenditure had gone up from £7,000 in 1835 to £16,000 in 1838 while the Mercury gave the figures as £13,000 and £14,000.<sup>2</sup>

There was plenty of talk about cost but very little about what might be done for the benefit of the town, acknowledging that it might involve expense. Robert Baker plugged away over sanitation and managed to get the Council to foot the bill for the valuable statistical enquiry of 1838-9. The Council also involved itself in the building of a new gaol and provision of better water supply.<sup>3</sup> However there was nobody in the Council who was prepared to forget cost and propound the kind of civil gospel that was to be heard in Birmingham 40 years later. Joshua Bower at one of the earliest meetings of the Council pointed out that 'there was nothing done without expense . . . and if it cost more very likely they would have things better done.'<sup>4</sup> Yet later on he became one of those known for being an "economist" and he even earned the praise of the Northern Star which commended his 'usual and laudable anxiety for saving pounds, shillings and pence.'<sup>5</sup> George Goodman once warned about the dangers of 'false notions of economy'<sup>6</sup> but the rare statements about the positive need to spend money came in the Press. The Times warned

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1. Leeds Mercury, 29 Oct.1836, 14 Oct.1837, 27 Oct.1838.

2. Ibid., 6, 27 Oct. 1838.

3. See below, pp.200-I,248-257 .

4. Leeds Mercury, 16 Jan.1836.

5. Northern Star, 24 Nov.1838.

6. Leeds Mercury, 6 Oct.1838.



against false economy:

'where a great public benefit is proposed, where public justice is to be made cheaper and more accessible, where public order is to be rendered more stable and secure the man who grudges the outlay required is not an economist but a miser.'<sup>1</sup>

This was later echoed in the Mercury which reminded Councillors 'there may be an injudicious and shortsighted economy which sacrifices the public good to the saving of money'.<sup>2</sup> In particular Leeds was in need of a spending programme:

'In a large and increasing borough like ours neglected as it has been in some of its most important interests, viz. the cleanliness and good order of the town and the education of its poor inhabitants, expenses will have to be incurred, which cannot be prevented.'<sup>3</sup>

The Council did of course incur expense but in a sheepish way, always apologetic, and this stemmed directly from a fear of being labelled extravagant. The Tories went to the poll in 1837 as the party of 'economy and reform' and much as the Liberals might mock they had no desire to be identified as great spenders of public money. In the Press this Tory concern for economy was seen as a specious party manoeuvre. Robert Nicoll was the first to see the Tory strategy here:

'We well know that there is a party which, having always opposed popular interests seeks to delude the people to its support by professing to advocate a system of the most miserly and niggardly kind; a party which never found out that a lavish list of Tory sinecurists and pensioners was extravagant and iniquitous but which when out of office

1. Leeds Times, 30 Jan.1836.

2. Leeds Mercury, 14 Oct.1837.

3. Ibid., 27 May 1837.

4. Leeds Intelligencer, 28 Oct.1837; cf. Leeds Mercury, 20 Feb.1836, 'The Tories setting up for Economists par excellence is truly amazing'.

seeks popular favour by a hypocritical whining about economy whenever a public improvement is proposed'<sup>1</sup>

This prophesy about Tory tactics was borne out by events:  
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'See/no prospect of their return to domination and annoyed by every appearance of improvement not originating with themselves the opponents of municipal reform grasp at straws to rescue themselves from the memory of the past; and aware that no point is so sensitive as the pocket they have laboured from the passing of the act and from the scandalous alienation of the Borough Fund of £7,000 down to the present period, first to cripple the hands of the new Council, by taking away its resources and then to excite the people against the rate by alarming accounts of lavish expenditure.'<sup>2</sup>

Attacks like these did nothing to abate the torrent of abuse heaped on the "Mountain" or 'tyrant Whig majority' which ran things in this period. The perpetual theme of increased cost was music to the ears of the Tories and Hunter inside the Council and Perring outside beat the drum relentlessly. Perring felt that his prophesy of 1835 had definitely been proved true and in lengthy editorials juggled the figures about to show that the Borough expenses had doubled since 1835.<sup>3</sup> This sort of accusation always increased in intensity and virulence towards election time and was never stronger than in October 1838 when Perring produced figures of an increase from £9,000 in 1835 to £19,000 in 1838.<sup>4</sup> These figures were widely placarded during the Municipal election of that year and no doubt contributed to the Tory success in that year.

Having discussed the two major controversies over the Chancery suit

1. Leeds Times, 30 Jan.1836.
2. Leeds Mercury, 27 May 1837.
3. Leeds Intelligencer, 30 Sept.1837, 22, 29 Sept.1838. Prior to this there had been frequent accusations of swingeing borough rates and increased expenditure; cf. ibid., 16 Jan, 10Oct.1836, 6,13 May 1837.
4. Ibid., 20, 27 Oct., 3 Nov.1838.

and expense we may now examine three issues of lesser importance which caused political controversy, the Town Clerk's salary, the police force and the new gaol. Questions of overall cost could be seen simply in party terms; the issue of the Town Clerk's salary cut right across party lines. Nicholson, the former Town Clerk, was initially engaged by the Council at a salary of £250. This was small beer compared to the £700 he had previously received and so he resigned.<sup>1</sup> His successor Eddison received the same salary at first, though with additions for extra duties.<sup>2</sup> Then about a year later the Council appointed a sub-Committee to look into the Town Clerk's salary which recommended £600 a year, a figure which the Council accepted at the end of 1837.<sup>3</sup> The Intelligencer denounced the whole proceedings as a means of getting rid of Nicholson by offering a low salary and then inflating it after a lapse of time. There may have been something in this because having resigned rather than having been dismissed affected the compensation due to him.<sup>4</sup>

Many Councillors were unhappy about so high a figure as £600 and when the attack on it came it originated in a cross party alliance. William Clarke, Liberal brewer from Bramley, found himself supported by Edward Charlesworth, Tory banker from Mill Hill in proposing a reduction of the Town Clerk's salary to £400.<sup>5</sup> After a heated debate a decision

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1. Leeds Mercury, 30 Jan, 25 June 1836, Council Minutes IV, p.63.
  2. For instance three guineas a day for attending at the revision of the register, ibid., 24 Dec.1836.
  3. Ibid., 23 Dec.1837; Council Minutes, IV, pp.299, 303.
  4. Leeds Intelligencer, 23 Dec. 1837. If this was the reason then ironically the Council need not have bothered, for Nicholson died before a year was up; ibid., 3 Dec.1836.
  5. Leeds Mercury, 17 Feb.1838. Two ward meetings of Liberal electors met to congratulate Clarke on his action in opposing the Town Clerk's salary. They were in North and East Wards; ibid., 24 Feb., 10 March 1838.

was deferred and a month later Charlesworth brought up the question again, denouncing £600 as 'an extravagant, an unjustifiable and he might almost add a wanton expenditure of the public money.'<sup>1</sup> Joshua Bower reminded the Council that they had heard about the difficulty in collecting the rates owing to the distress in the town and asked 'were the Council after its collection to lavish it away in extravagant salaries?'. When Joshua Bower echoed the sentiments of Edward Charlesworth things were far from normal. Bower thought they ought to reflect the views of the Burgesses who were against so high a salary while Aldermen Williamson and Clapham thought public opinion irrelevant to this issue.<sup>2</sup> When a vote was taken the Council divided 33 - 14 in favour of leaving the salary at £600. The 14 who voted in favour of £400 per year comprised nine Liberals and five Tories.<sup>3</sup> In this strange vote six of the nine Liberals were from the out-townships and this was probably the result of the concern in the out-townships over sharing the burdens but not the services of the new Corporation. In matters like watching the out-townships were to some extent subsidising the main township of Leeds.<sup>4</sup>

A week later the question was raised again and Whalley delivered a petition from a public meeting at Holbeck chaired by Nell, who had been

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1. Ibid., 17 March 1838.
  2. Ibid. As Aldermen and not Councillors they could afford to be more independent of public opinion than Bower.
  3. Council Minutes, IV, pp.338-9. The Liberals were Bower, Buttrey, Clarke, Derham, Hebden, Moss, Rogers, Whalley and Wilson. The Tories were Bramley, Charlesworth, Hall, Hayward and Wright.
  4. Matthew Moss, for instance, frequently raised this question in the Council debates.



a Councillor in 1836 and a Liberal magistrate, which denounced the 'exorbitant salary' of the Town Clerk and complained that 'economy has been entirely lost sight of, the expenses being great and unjust.'<sup>1</sup> Again a vote showed a mixture of parties on both sides and this time with a smaller attendance the voting was 24 - 13 in favour of £600.<sup>2</sup> There for the time being the matter rested but was raised again in 1839 and the salary eventually came down to £500.<sup>3</sup> The episode showed how the spending of public money could cut across party lines.

Adam Hunter, the great Tory champion of economy, had been found in these two votes on the side of £600 as an appropriate salary but on the issue of the police force he was definitely for reducing expenditure. The first party struggle over the police occurred when in 1836 the Watch Committee, led by Baker, dismissed Read, the former Chief Constable, without giving any reason.<sup>4</sup> The issue of Read's compensation became a bone of contention as did the production of the minute book of the Watch Committee. The affair ended in a strange way for Read's replacement, William Haywood, was himself dismissed in November 1837 and his replace-

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1. Council Minutes, IV, p.353.

2. Ibid., pp.349-50. Whalley, strangely enough, voted against his former colleagues despite having presented the petition. However since the vote was over a compromise salary of £500 he might have voted against on the grounds that even £500 was too high.

3. Ibid., Vol.4, p.512.

4. Watch and Finance Committees' Minute Book, pp.7-10. On p.29 the Committee resolved that Baker should inform the Finance Committee that Read 'was unfit for the office of Chief Constable.'

ment was Read, the former Chief Constable.<sup>1</sup>

On the question of the size and cost of the police force the Tories were very unhappy about the new system on the Metropolitan pattern devised by Robert Baker.<sup>2</sup> The Watch Committee reported to the Council that the old system of a small day force separate from the night force was to be abandoned in favour of amalgamation. At the same time they estimated that the cost would grow from £4,368 to £5,343, mainly owing to extra day police<sup>3</sup>, and by 1838 there were 32 day police and 73 night police.<sup>4</sup>

The force received new uniforms and this combined with the extra emphasis on day police gave rise to the claim that huge amounts of money were required for 'the day parades of dandy policemen.'<sup>5</sup> Robert Baker was singled out for attack on the police question and on one occasion the Intelligencer put into his mouth these words 'We have an expensive holiday police force to keep up to parade the streets who are drilled to pull their hats off to us as we pass.'<sup>6</sup> According to the Intelligencer it was the police force which was mainly responsible for increased expenditure:

'The streets have been studded with an idle day police, the main performance of which is the payment of abject

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1. For the whole episode see Leeds Mercury, 6 Aug., 3 Dec. 1836, 18 Feb., 28 Oct., 4 Nov., 9 Dec., 1837; Leeds Times, 9 Nov. 1837; Leeds Intelligencer, 26 March, 3 Sept., 10 Dec. 1836, 9 Dec. 1837.
  2. Watch and Finance Committees Minute Book, p.4. The magistrates of the old Corporation had reorganised the police only about a year earlier: see Magistrates Minutes, Nov., Dec. 1834.
  3. Council Minutes, IV, pp.36-7. The full figures were: old system day police £538.10.0., night police £3,829.18.0. New system day police £1,513.4.0., night police £3,829.18.0.
  4. Ibid., p.457.
  5. Leeds Intelligencer, 28 Oct. 1837.
  6. Ibid., 2 Dec. 1837.



homage to their Whig-Radical creators by the salute-military as they pass along. On foolish frippery of this sort it is that the public money is squandered until the expenditure of the new Corporation has been run up Eight Thousand a year above that of the Old Corporation.<sup>1</sup>

While Perring thus castigated the Council from outside Adam Hunter tried to get expenditure on the police force reduced without success. He too was concerned about 'idle day police' because he believed Leeds to be so quiet a place:

'Leeds was a quiet inland town unlike London, Liverpool or Bristol and he never could for the life of him understand why except as a compliment to the new concern so many policemen should be employed.'<sup>2</sup>

Feargus O'Connor was always willing to back Tory opposition to the police force and in the case of Bridget Cone, an Irishwoman who alleged police brutality, the Northern Star was found championing her case which was taken up by the Intelligencer.<sup>3</sup> A similar sort of alliance occurred on the question of the new gaol which Williamson had brought to the notice of the Council in March 1837 and the building of which had been authorised in November of that year.<sup>4</sup> Perring denounced the alacrity which was shown 'to vote away out of the pockets of the Burgesses from £25,000 to £30,000 for building a Borough prison'<sup>5</sup> and three months later

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1. Ibid., 27 Oct.1838.
  2. Leeds Mercury, 6 Oct.1838.
  3. Northern Star, 19, 26 May 1838; Leeds Intelligencer, 26 May, 2, 9 June 1838. O'Connor addressed a letter to the working men of Leeds where he called upon them 'to assist me in first driving Clapham from the Bench and then from Leeds'. John Clapham was the magistrate involved.
  4. Leeds Mercury, 25 March, 26 Aug.1837; Council Minutes IV, pp.242-3,275; Magistrates Minutes, 14 Mar., 4 Nov. 1837.
  5. Leeds Intelligencer, 18 Nov.1837.

the Tories mounted a big attack on this decision to build. Griffith Wright moved an amendment to reverse the decision to build and Henry Hall and Adam Hunter posed a series of leading questions about the cost of the whole project.<sup>1</sup> The amendment was lost which produced the following comment from O'Connor:

'These worthies met on Monday last to spend the people's money, to mortgage their labour for 14 years to Whig brutality, starvation, ignorance and taxation.'<sup>2</sup>

Even the Tories would not have supported his supplementary comment that the £50,000 involved ought to have been distributed to workers, which would have made a gaol unnecessary.

From this account of the progress of party politics, the disputes over the Chancery suit and the cost of the new system and the issues of the Town Clerk's salary, the police force and the gaol, it will have become clear that Leeds Town Council meetings were rarely dull affairs. This may have been the reason for the fairly high attendance figures especially in the first year. Table III shows the average attendances for both the whole Council and for each party.

TABLE III COUNCIL ATTENDANCE JAN. 1836 - OCT. 1838

Year	No. of meetings	Average attendance		Average No. of meetings attended by Liberals		Average No. of meetings attended by Tories	
			%		%		%
1836	20	48	75	15.4	77	11.0	55
1836-7	21	38	59.4	14.0	66.6	7.0	33.3
1837-8	14	41	64	9.8	70	5.8	41.4

1. Ibid. and Leeds Mercury, 17 Feb.1838; Council Minutes.IV, p.322.

2. Northern Star, 17 Feb.1838.

The high figure in the first year followed by a drop in the second was probably caused by the initial excitement caused by the new system followed by a reaction when the novelty had somewhat worn off. In each year the Tories attended less well than the Liberals and this no doubt reflected their being in a minority and unable to influence affairs very much. This was particularly noticeable in 1836-7 when Tories on average attended only one-third of the Council meetings. Better election results produced better attendances as will be seen in the next chapter.

Average figures hide many variations and these attendance figures are no exception. The best attender at Council meetings was John Smith Barlow, a Briggate hatter who sat for Kirkgate as a Liberal and attended every meeting in this period. Adam Hunter was not elected until November 1837 but he had a 100% attendance record in his first year. At the other end of the scale were to be found the Becketts, famed bankers of Leeds. Thomas Beckett who had been one of the four Tory aldermen in 1836 and the only Tory magistrate nominated by the Council attended fairly well in the first two years but attended no meetings at all in 1837-8. His younger brother William Beckett, who as a leading light among the Tories was to be M.P. for Leeds in 1841 had the worst over-all record for he attended only six meetings out of a possible 55 in the first three years.<sup>1</sup>

Members of the Corporation had to be prepared to give a considerable amount of time to attend to their Council duties. Council meetings usually lasted between four and eight hours but all day meetings were

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1. Another Tory, James Maude of Headingley, attended only seven times in the same period.



common. In the first 10 months of 1836 meetings were being held on average once a fortnight and members of the Council would have to be possessors of some affluence to afford the time.\* Many of them were also on committees which involved quite large numbers since there were for instance no less than 11 sitting in 1837.<sup>1</sup> On the face of it it would have been difficult for working men or even petty bourgeoisie to be effective Council members.

Yet there were persistent Tory claims that this new Corporation was composed of men socially inferior to their predecessors of the un-reformed Corporation. The first notice of this came in an attack on Joshua Bower, famed for his Leeds dialect. Into his mouth the following words were put: 'Bud sum o'd Leeds faine fooaks ses ah've nut heddi-caashun anuff for'd sitewashun ov a Cawnsiller.'<sup>2</sup> This individual attack was generalised in Charles Scarborough's address to the electors of East Ward in the Municipal election of 1837:

'I hope the time is not far distant when we shall again have something like order - when rank and station, education and moral worth, will resume their proper places in Society, when innkeepers and tradesmen will be content to allow those who are more justly entitled, to hold all offices of trust and power'<sup>3</sup>

Since Scarborough was himself only a hotelkeeper the attack on innkeepers seems somewhat out of place but this theme was also taken up lower down

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1. Council Minutes, IV, pp.276-282, 11 committees appointed or re-appointed.
  2. Gentlemen O' The Ward o' Unslit, handbill in Representation of Leeds 1831-1841.
  3. C.Scarborough, To the Chairman . . . in the East Ward in Representation of Leeds 1831-1841.

\* James Holdforth on becoming Mayor in 1838 decided to be at the Court House to see ratepayers every Monday morning for one hour, which presupposed a degree of leisure.

the social scale. William Paul, secretary of the Operative Conservative Society, said of the Town Council at the great Conservative festival in Leeds in 1838

'There was a time when men of learning, wealth and respectability occupied that office but they had been sent to the right about and their places supplied by political mountebanks, bankrupt tradesmen and potato carriers.'<sup>1</sup>

Baines on the other hand was quite adamant that this was not the position:

'The Old Corporation was very much in respect to station like the new Corporation. He saw no difference. There were a great many respectable merchants and tradesmen in both.'<sup>2</sup>

Only a careful analysis of the social composition of the Council in its early years can establish which of these opinions is the truth. Some have argued that the old Corporation was dominated by merchants and the new by manufacturers.<sup>3</sup> This view has been disputed by Dr. Hennock who has argued that there was no social or economic difference between old and new.<sup>4</sup> The results produced here broadly support the latter view even though the figures and the categories used are not quite the same. Hennock took one year and specific occupations; Table IV takes the first six years of the new Council and divides the membership into four broad social/economic classes: Group I gentry and professional, Group II merchant and manufacturing, Group III craftsmen and retailers and Group IV the drink and corn interests. The figures for the last years of the old Corporation were 9 in Group I, 26 in Group II and 2 in Group IV, there being none in Group III.

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1. Leeds Intelligencer, 18 April 1838.
  2. Leeds Mercury, 2 Feb. 1839.
  3. D. Read Press and People (1961), p.76 and R.G. Wilson, op.cit. Chap VI
  4. E.P. Hennock 'The Social Composition of Borough Councils. .' in Dyos (ed) The Study of Urban History (1963), pp.327-331.

TABLE IV SOCIO-ECONOMIC COMPOSITION OF LEEDS TOWN COUNCIL

Year	I		II		III		IV	
	Gentry	Profes- sional	Merchants and Manufacturers	Non- Textiles	Craft	Retail	Drink Interest	Corn Interest
1836	6	9	30	8	1	4	4	2
1836-7	6	10	30	9	1	4	3	1
1837-8	6	11	26	10	2	3	4	2
1838-9	4	14	25	8	2	4	4	3
1839-40	9	10	21	10	3	5	3	3
1840-41	10	12	20	11	4	3	2	2

Table IV indicates that it is not completely true that there was no difference between old and new for men of lower social status in Group III did begin to get a foothold in the Council. However what does emerge clearly is that both the old and new Corporations were mainly composed of men from Groups I and II, professional men and wealthy merchants and manufacturers. There is in Table IV no evidence of the dilution of the Council by men of inferior social status. This was to happen, but not until the mid-40's.

The accusations of a lowering of status which have been mentioned above were in fact a reflection of the political change which had taken place between 1835 and 1836. Tory wool merchants of the old Corporation like Henry Hall and Thomas Motley had been replaced by Liberal wool merchants such as George Goodman and Joshua Bateson; Tory bankers like



Perfect had given place to Liberal bankers such as William Williams Brown. Tory solicitors like John Upton had been succeeded by Liberal solicitors like Thomas William Tottie and Matthew Gaunt. Tory doctors such as William Hey had given way to their Liberal counterparts Robert Baker and James Williamson. J.R. Atkinson and Anthony Titley were flaxspinners of the old Corporation, Thomas Benyon and John Wilkinson represented the same occupation in the new. The old Corporation had an ironfounder in John Cawood, the new in Richard Jackson. The list could go on, the new echoing the old if not in the same proportions at least in the same character. It was the other side's turn to bat but they were the same sort of chaps, they had merely been denied an innings before.

If the most obvious difference between old and new Corporations was political, the discontinuity in religious affiliation was equally significant. A man's religious opinions can often be as elusive to detect as his social status and a comprehensive and exhaustive analysis is not possible. However general indications are clear. After the first election Perring counted only six Anglicans on the Liberal side and Baines gave the overall total as only 20. That this was a transfer of power from the Church to Dissent was apparently crystal clear to observers at the time. Broadly speaking religious affiliation seemed to follow a sort of syllogism when compared with political opinions. All Dissenters were Liberals and most Liberals were Dissenters, there being no more than nine Anglicans out of 51 Liberals on the Council in

1836.<sup>1</sup> On the other side virtually all Tories were Anglicans (there were two Tory Methodists in 1836)<sup>2</sup> and most Anglicans were Tory. The domination of the Council by Dissenters was reflected in the first four Mayors, George Goodman a Baptist, James Williamson an Independent, Thomas William Tottie a Unitarian and James Holdforth a Roman Catholic.<sup>3</sup>

The small minority of Anglicans who were also Liberals indicates that while religion played some part in determining political loyalty it cannot explain the whole story. In the last analysis the only thing which distinguished Robert Baker and Adam Hunter, both Anglican doctors, or John Atkinson and Matthew Gaunt, both Anglican solicitors or Peter Fairbairn and Samuel Lawson, both Anglican engineers (later of course to establish the great engineering firm of Fairbairn, Lawson) was that they were opposed politically. Men from the same social, economic and religious groups thought differently because of their political opinions. Hence political divisions were determined largely by political opinions and hence again issues were seen in party political terms. Thus wrote the Intelligencer:

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1. The term Dissenter is used here to mean Unitarians, Baptists, Independents and other Protestant Dissenting sects but does not include Methodists who were regarded as a sort of halfway house between the Church and Dissent. The best guide to Anglicans on the Council were the annual debates on the advowson to St. John's where it was agreed that only Anglicans should be nominated. The nine were Aldermen Brown, Benyon, Bywater and Hebden and Councillors Bateson, Baker, Buttrey, Gaunt and Fairbairn.
  2. These were Scarth and Howard. Methodists seemed to divide between Liberals and Tories mostly in favour of the former but see below, p.225 for Tory Methodist activity in the 1837 election.
  3. It ought to be pointed out that before Goodman was nominated in 1836 two Anglicans, Benyon and Brown, had declined to serve.

'In treating Municipal matters we should wish to avoid as much as possible all reference to politics and to parties but that dissenting and discontented politico - religious body which by the cast of the die obtained a temporary ascendancy in the Council Chamber at the first election has been so immediately governed in all its acts and appointments of paid and honorary public servants by party distinctions and political predelictions that any attempt on our part to discard politics when treating of Municipal affairs would be utterly futile.'<sup>1</sup>

Perring was right. In Leeds and in the Council there was no getting away from party politics.

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1. Leeds Intelligencer, 2 March 1838.

(ii)

The Liberal victory at the first Municipal election to some extent compensated for the loss of one seat which the Liberals had sustained in the Parliamentary election of 1835. That defeat could only be reversed by systematic attention to the register and the restoration of a Liberal majority on the register had begun at the 1835 Revision described in the previous chapter. In the following year the revision took 14 days and once more there was feverish activity which produced an insignificant gain, this time 14 votes for the Liberals.<sup>1</sup>

In the West Riding too the registration activity increased for here it was realised that excitement at election time was no substitute for a favourable register and yet the great landed families found the task tedious and beneath their station. It was therefore up to the towns to organise registration societies in order to provide the effort which the squires were unwilling or unable to make. Yet the Tories with the majority of their strength in the rural areas had an inherent advantage over the Liberals whose power base was in the towns. This stemmed from the natural connections and cohesiveness of rural society and was pinpointed by Edward Baines Junior at a meeting to launch a registration society in Pudsey:

'they (the urban Liberals) have not that natural connection together which exists among the tenant-at-will of a large landowner - by means of the steward by means of the landowner himself, who takes very great care to attend to the registration of their votes and to escort them in companies

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1. Leeds Mercury, 12 Nov. 1836.



to the poll. They have this mode of connection among themselves but you in a very considerable measure want that connection. How is that want to be made up but by the very association which you are now forming? It is only by such means and by that combination which common principle induces you to make that you will be able to counterbalance the advantages which the Tories, by measure of their system possess on the other side.'<sup>1</sup>

This activity on the Liberal side did not produce dividends quickly in the West Riding for even the Mercury had to admit that the Tory gain at the 1836 revision was over 600 despite Newman's comment to Earl Fitzwilliam in the previous year 'I have recommended and shall most strenuously urge the more complete registration of votes which will add 3 - 1 in the Whig interest.'<sup>2</sup>

In the Borough Revision the struggle got fiercer each year for as a further consequence of the Liberal control of the Corporation the overseers' list was now produced by Liberals. The Liberal Corporation appointed Liberal magistrates who in turn appointed Liberal overseers. They elected three of their number to draw up the Parliamentary and Burgess rolls. According to the Tories this justified their numerous objections<sup>3</sup> which in 1837 amounted to well over 2,000. Added to those on the Liberal side it meant that on a Parliamentary register of 5,000 to 6,000 votes the Revising Barristers were forced to consider nearly

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1. Ibid., 27 Jan. 1838. The point about companies of tenants trooping to the poll together was usually illustrated in Leeds at a West Riding election when amongst others the tenants of George Lane Fox of Bramham and of the Earl of Harewood arrived to vote in great wagonloads.
  2. Wentworth Woodhouse MSS, G.49, William Newman to Fitzwilliam, undated 1835. In 1838 the Intelligencer (27 Oct. 1838) congratulated West Riding Tories on their registration efforts. Their two years success had shown 'the importance of attending systematically to it.'
  3. Leeds Intelligencer, 23. Sept. 1837.

4,000 cases. The extension of the Tory objections led to a parallel movement on the other side and by 1838 the Times was urging 'let every Tory in the borough and in the riding be objected to.'<sup>1</sup>

The Tories were happy with their achievements and <sup>a</sup>claimed in 1837 a 48% success rate against 39% by the Liberals. In that year the Tories believed they had made a gain of 575 yet the Liberals on the same Revision claimed a gain of 76.<sup>2</sup> This shows how difficult it is for the historian to arrive at the true results of the annual Revision. Even in the following year when the Tory claim of a 338 gain was not disputed the Liberals still believed they had an overall majority on the register.<sup>3</sup>

There was no longer one overwhelming source of objections which could produce startling gains but ingenuity on both sides led to an infinite variety of cases to be considered. Among the more popular reasons for objections were insignificant errors in rendering addresses, names descriptions of property, etc., removals, defective rating, joint occupation of property and doubts about the value of property. Even the compounded ratepayer still lingered on:

'that fruitful mine of objections, the compounding of rates, discovered by the Tories is not yet completely worked out; for although a partial remedy has been found out by making tender of payment to the overseer - tenders never meant to be accepted and which seem very much like the fictitious payment of a fictitious debt - it only bars the objection for that time and does not remove the ground of it which will exist as long as the party retains the same premises.'<sup>4</sup>

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1. Leeds Times, 18 Aug. 1838. According to Leeds Mercury (22 Sept. 1838) there were just under 6,000 cases to be heard in that year, which meant that every voter on the list must have been objected to.
  2. Leeds Intelligencer, 30 Sept. 1837, Leeds Mercury, 14 Oct. 1838, Leeds Times, 7 Oct. 1837.
  3. Leeds Mercury, 22 Sept. 1838 admitted that the rival parties' renderings of the results of a Revision were like 'the canvass at an election when both parties claim a decided majority.'
  4. Leeds Mercury, 22 September, 1838.



This repetition of claim and objection was the most common grievance expressed by voters in the Revision Court. It was not uncommon for a man to be called four or five years running to answer the same objection.

Both sides complained about the registration yet really did nothing to reduce the burden. The Liberals did on occasion offer to withdraw objections, though how genuine this was it is difficult to determine.

Nevertheless the 1837 Revision opened with the following exchange:

'Mr. Richardson: "Then will you withdraw all your objections and we will do the same?"

Mr. Dibb: "Now don't waste time, Mr. Richardson, we shall go on in the regular way."<sup>1</sup>

This appears very much like going through the motions, neither side believing that there was any chance of an agreement. Though the Mercury might complain that the Revisions brought to the town the excitement of 'Annual Elections'<sup>2</sup> neither side dare risk reducing this excitement for on the registration depended the result of a subsequent election. No one could foresee when an election would take place so that every Revision was of equal importance. Neither side could really give way since registration had become 'the infallible and only Oracle that tells Candidates their destiny.'<sup>3</sup>

If the Liberals had most to fear from the Tories at the Revision they had plenty of worries at election time about keeping their own ranks united. The continual threat which hung over every Leeds election was the possibility of independent Radical activity which could mobilise both

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1, Leeds Times, 16 Sept.1837.

2. Leeds Mercury, 9 Sept.1837.

3. Ibid., 10 Nov.1836.

middle- and working-class support. In 1834 Joshua Bower had raised this spectre which had in the event proved to be chimeric. Deference to the Whig-Liberals did not persist and in 1837 the shadow became a reality with the candidature of Sir William Molesworth.

Molesworth was one of those strange aberrations of nineteenth century England, a Radical aristocrat, a levelling peer. As Perring was later to put it Molesworth knew 'as much about the West Riding of Yorkshire as a West Riding pig knows about the German flute',<sup>1</sup> yet he was enthusiastically supported by people in Leeds as though he had dwelt among them all his life. The origin of his candidature lay in the activity of the Leeds Times, its editor Robert Nicoll, proprietor and printer Frederick Hobson and several electors of Holbeck ward.

The whole question of the representation of Leeds was raised by Baines at a Whig dinner in September 1836 when he complained that his votes in the House of Commons were neutralised by Beckett, his Tory colleague.<sup>2</sup> The claim that Leeds would have two Liberals at the next election was predictably denied by the Intelligencer which found itself supported by Nicoll in its criticisms of the Whigs.<sup>3</sup> The following week Nicoll lashed into the Whigs:

'What have we gained by the Whig-Radical union? Let it end.  
No more unions with the Aristocracy either Whig or Tory'<sup>4</sup>

He was however prepared for a union with a Radical Aristocrat and some days later Frederick Hobson put out a handbill which claimed that

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1. Leeds Intelligencer, 31 March 1838.
  2. Leeds Mercury, 3 Sept. 1836.
  3. Leeds Intelligencer, Leeds Times, 3 Sept. 1836.
  4. Leeds Times, 10 Sept. 1836.

'Leeds is now represented by two Conservative members.' It went on to suggest:

'The Whigs have turned Sir William Molesworth out of East Cornwall for his Radicalism and the Radicals of Leeds ought to repay the Whigs by electing him member for Leeds and turning out Edward Baines for his Whiggism.'

This handbill of Hobson's together with Nicoll's editorial supporting it were the first public references in Leeds to the possibility of Molesworth standing at the next election. Nicoll followed this up with subsequent editorials where he warned the Whigs that they would have to support Molesworth for if they did not their own candidate would surely be defeated.<sup>2</sup>

To judge from the Mercury nothing was afoot for it gave no reference to Molesworth until a public meeting of Holbeck electors in November.<sup>3</sup> This meeting had originated with 45 of Holbeck's electors who formed themselves into the Holbeck Reform Association and two days later summoned a public meeting to discuss the representation of Leeds. It was estimated that one quarter of those who attended were non-electors and it was subsequently claimed that Leeds had been the first town to allow non-electors to participate in the choice of candidates.<sup>4</sup> At this mee-

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1. Leeds Times, Leeds Intelligencer, 17 Sept.1836.
  2. Leeds Times, 22 Oct.1836.
  3. It is interesting to note that in the younger Baines' subsequent account of the proceedings prior to the election no developments before January 1837 were mentioned, Life of Baines, p.197. Heaton's pamphlet Sir William Molesworth (1837) which narrated the proceedings began its account with the Holbeck meeting of November 1836.
  4. In Oldham non-electors virtually controlled the whole local system; see Foster "Nineteenth Century Towns - A Class Dimension" in H.J.Dyos (ed.) The Study of Urban History (1968), pp.281-301.

ting a desire was expressed by the chairman, Councillor James Whalley, to be ready with two candidates in contrast to their unpreparedness in 1835. Baines was suggested as the first candidate and Molesworth as the second.<sup>1</sup>

The Holbeck meeting completely reversed the normal procedure which was for a central election committee to activate the wards in favour of a previously agreed candidate. Now a ward meeting had suggested a candidate and it galvanised the central committee and other wards into activity. Nicoll warned the Radicals not to be put off by 'a few of their Whig dictators' and when ward meetings were held Whig opposition to Molesworth began to emerge. In South ward Samuel Clapham wished to know 'what claim Molesworth had upon the borough of Leeds' and in two wards, probably West and Mill Hill, electors refused to make a decision on Molesworth until further information was obtained about him.<sup>2</sup>

At the delegate meeting to discuss the question there was unanimity on Baines but the delegate from Mill Hill, Hubbard, together with Flint from West ward, refused to accept Molesworth. They were clearly playing for time and raised doubts about Molesworth's religion, his division record in the House of Commons and his radical views. As a compromise a sub-committee was appointed to enquire further into Molesworth and the committee included the two opponents, Hubbard and Flint, but also

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1. Whalley, forgetfully perhaps, attributed their defeat of 1835 to their lack of a suitable second candidate whereas it had been the result of the 1834 Revision; Leeds Times, Leeds Mercury, Leeds Intelligencer, 19 Nov.1836.
  2. Ibid., 26 Nov.1836, The Public and Parliamentary Speeches of Sir William Molesworth . . . (printed by John Heaton) 1837, p.3.



four of Molesworth's strongest supporters, Bywater, Whalley, Cummins and Whitehead, all of whom had been active at the original Holbeck meeting which first publicised Molesworth's name.<sup>1</sup> Press comments on this meeting were extremely instructive. The Intelligencer rightly decided that Molesworth's candidature was splitting the Whig-Radical union and Nicoll once more warned against the 'aristocracy of would-be Liberalism.'<sup>2</sup> The Mercury confirmed Whig hostility to Molesworth by its own coolness. It did not come out against Molesworth nor did it support him. Instead it merely urged unity among the reformers and said that Baines would support anyone whom the electors chose. The paper which had launched Brougham in 1830 and Macaulay in 1831 was suddenly leaving the initiative to the electors instead of pushing its own candidate.<sup>3</sup>

With some justification the Times complained that those who would have nothing said about Macaulay's religion were now doubtful about Molesworth's and that dissenters like Samuel Clapham and James Hubbard were the last people who ought to proscribe a candidate for his religious beliefs.<sup>4</sup> Whatever the doubts, Molesworth certainly was not going to pander to the susceptibilities of the Leeds Whigs and he replied disdainfully to enquiries about his religion:

'I acknowledge myself responsible on that subject to no human being and consequently I refuse in the most decided

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1. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Times, 10 Dec.1836, Sir William Molesworth, p.3.
  2. Leeds Intelligencer, Leeds Times, 10 Dec.1836.
  3. Leeds Mercury, 10 Dec. 1836.
  4. Leeds Times, 26 Nov., 24 Dec.1836.

manner to give them any explanation of any sort or description.<sup>1</sup>

The best he would do was to refer them to his articles in the London Review.

When the sub-committee reported back to the delegate meeting at the end of 1836 there was a stormy debate in which Hubbard now aided by Hatton Stansfeld, also of Mill Hill, came out in the open and spoke against Molesworth. Much to the joy of the vast majority letters were read supporting Molesworth and in his own letter he came out firmly in favour of Corn Law repeal, universal suffrage, peerage reform and the ballot. This was far too strong for the Whigs of Mill Hill and when it came to a vote Stansfeld and Hubbard, both wool merchants, Smith, a banker, and Ikin, Whig party agent for the West Riding, all abstained.<sup>2</sup>

The Whigs were clutching at straws but had not really found any defect in Molesworth important enough to sway the majority. All the delay, according to Nicoll, stemmed from the fact that

'some 20 or 30 people hate him for being brought forward by the people . . . It has been flung into the teeth of the Liberals by some of the purse proud Mammon worshippers that they have the cash and ought therefore to have the choice of candidate - that as they subscribe to pay the expenses they should be the electors.'<sup>3</sup>

In this context Hatton Stansfeld's outburst about Molesworth having been chosen by the rabble was enlightening.

The whole question was put to a meeting of Leeds electors in January

1. Molesworth to Whitehead, 3 Dec.1836 in Sir William Molesworth, p.4.
2. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Times, 31 Dec.1836. Sir William Molesworth, pp.5-10.
3. Leeds Times, 31 Dec.1836. Cf. ibid., 21 Jan.1837: '20 or 30 mere Whigs who hated Molesworth as the People's choice and because he had not been brought forward by themselves - the dictators at former elections - were against Molesworth'.



1837 and the former hostility of the Whigs was now replaced by a willingness to merge their differences and make common cause with the Radicals. Hubbard, Flint and Hatton Stansfeld were now urging union behind one Radical, Molesworth, and one Whig, Baines. The younger Baines later gave the true reason for this willingness to accept Molesworth 'contrary to their own inclination' and it was of course that 'there was no small danger of a split between the moderate and the radical sections' which might have given one or even both seats to the Tories.<sup>1</sup> Joshua Bower expressed the universal hope of the meeting:

'I hope the time has at length arrived when both parties will go together in favour of reform: and if one party happen to go further than another still let us go together as far as we can without quarrelling on the road. I call upon both parties to go hand in heart together for if we do not we cannot succeed, We must act as one set of men and at your peril any of you make a split.'<sup>2</sup>

All now seemed peaceful for the threat of independent Radical activity and a refusal to support Baines unless there was corresponding Whig support for Molesworth had brought the Mill Hill Whigs into line. Yet there was still a fly in the ointment which ironically nobody had noticed in Leeds. One of the resolutions relating to Molesworth had referred to his 'steady support of a reforming ministry' and he immediately took exception to this, denouncing it as a device which had been inserted 'to meet the views of the influential gentlemen of the Whig party'. He made his position quite clear:

'I consider it would be the duty of the Radical party to steadily pursue an independent line of policy, whatever

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1. Baines, Life of Baines, p.198.

2. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Times, 7 Jan.1837.

the consequences may be . . . If by supporting Ministers you mean, that I will support them in opposition to the Tories - undoubtedly I will. If you mean that I must abstain from expressing my opinions in speeches, motions or by amendments, through fear of indirectly destroying the present Administration, - then I must tell you distinctly that I will not give that species of support.'<sup>1</sup>

Resolutions which had been applauded the previous week were now denounced by the Times as evidence that the 'clique will deceive us if they can.'<sup>2</sup>

So once more the representation of Leeds had to be discussed by a public meeting of the Liberal electors and the meeting was held two days after an important Whig dinner in the town which had been given for the West Riding M.P.'s. At that dinner, which had been organised by James Hubbard, the theme of the speeches was the over-riding need to keep the Whig Ministry in office.<sup>3</sup> The concern of the high Whigs of the town and the county for the fate of the Ministry made Molesworth's refusal to pledge his support for the Government absolutely crucial.

The doubt about Molesworth's attitude towards Melbourne's government showed that the former agreement between the Whigs and the Radicals had merely been papering over the cracks. Flint was now to be found supporting Molesworth but Hatton Stansfeld urged the importance of the member for Leeds voting with the Government. Hubbard and Smith went even further and moved an amendment that since Molesworth could not be counted on to support the Ministry they should wait until well into the session and see how his votes went. This produced a near riot and hoots of derision and the meeting finally passed a motion acceptable to

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1. Molesworth to Goodman, 11 Jan.1837 in Sir William Molesworth, pp.10-11.
  2. Leeds Times, 14 Jan.1837.
  3. Leeds Mercury, 21 Jan.1837.

Molesworth which did not limit his freedom of action.<sup>1</sup>

Though Molesworth was at last agreed upon the events of the previous three months had shown that there was no trust between the two sides and that only the need for mutual support at election time kept them in harness together. They needed each other in the Parliamentary election but the Radicals hoped to gain revenge on

'the Tories in disguise - the Hubbards, Stansfelds and Totties, who under the name of Whigs have tried so perseveringly and ineffectually to damp the ardour of Sir William Molesworth's friends and by slanders and silly senseless objections to play into the hands of the Tories whom they, acting on the advice of their oracle Mr. Baines elected Aldermen - these men and their tools must be marked by the municipal electors in preparation for the next election.'<sup>2</sup>

Baines himself disliked being referred to as merely the representative of the Leeds Whigs and but for the difficulties with the Radicals he might well have retired in 1837. Given freedom of choice he would have retired yet he was unwilling to leave the Liberals in the lurch and was prepared to stand again if they needed him.<sup>3</sup> The whole question of continuing as an M.P. was obviously on Baines's mind at this time for he wrote to his wife that he was not really sure why he accepted the drudgery of the long hours in Parliament. There was of course 'a certain degree of honour and distinction shed over' their large family. Yet Baines saw in the position of M.P. for Leeds honour and something more:

'It is a high personal honour for a person who commenced life in a very humble station to have him twice selected by his fellow Citizens and fellow Townsmen who are the best judges of his character and conduct to fill the first station in the land that a commoner can fill independent

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1. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Times, 21 Jan.1837.

2. Leeds Times, 4 March 1837.

3. Baines, op.cit., pp.193-9.



of Court favour. But if the honour was all it could be purchased at too high a price. Independent of the honour there is given by a seat in Parliament a power of doing good to the people of Great Britain and Ireland and to all their dependancies and not only of doing good to the present age but to after ages and that to an extent that cannot perhaps be done in any other situation.<sup>1</sup>

Whether Baines would find Molesworth a more congenial partner than Beckett remained to be seen for Molesworth showed no deference towards his future electors. After his uncompromising letters about his religion and his support for Melbourne he then declined to come to Leeds until a requisition was organised (people in Leeds expected it to be the other way round) and further refused to stand unless he had a good chance of winning.<sup>2</sup> This offhand attitude must have annoyed the Whigs who, as Perring correctly pointed out, were in a position of being 'unable to quiet the Radicals or to do without them'.<sup>3</sup> Molesworth eventually came to Leeds to speak to the electors during Easter week and brought with him Woolcombe, his legal and party adviser, to look into the state of the register.<sup>4</sup> The idea had been that the electors should have a look at Molesworth, instead he was inspecting the borough to see if it was suitable. By this time even the Whigs and the Mercury were preaching unity on behalf of Molesworth yet it was not until the middle of April that he finally announced that he would definitely stand.<sup>5</sup>

The candidates did not have to wait long before they faced the

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1. Baines to Charlotte Baines, 5 March 1837 in Baines Papers.
  2. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Times, 25 Feb., 4 March 1837.
  3. Leeds Intelligencer, 25 March 1837.
  4. Leeds Mercury, 1, 8 April 1837.
  5. Leeds Times, 22 April 1837.

electors as the death of William IV brought a general election sooner than had been anticipated. The successful Tory candidate of 1835, Sir John Beckett, was brought out once again and the Tory case was that they wished for only a share of the representation and had not put up a second candidate.<sup>1</sup> Beckett once more dealt in vague generalities, using the jargon of old-fashioned Toryism. In his address he said that he stood for 'the Monarchy - our Protestant Constitution in Church and State - the Welfare and Happiness of the People'.<sup>2</sup> There was no longer any real connection between the Tories and the factory reformers as in Sadler's day for as Oastler had already pointed out:

'Since then (1832) the Blues have banished Sadler; they have returned Beckett and Beckett has voted against Sadler's successor, Ashley! He has separated the Blue cause from the factory child's cause'.<sup>3</sup>

Thus Beckett could be considered as a Tory of the pre-reform era and so all the old talk of Peterloo and its age was trotted out once more.

'Down with the bloody Tories!', thundered Nicoll, 'Remember Oliver and Castles and the hangman's work at Derby! That innocent blood cries out yet for vengeance.'<sup>4</sup>

There was only one issue on which Beckett showed any genuine interest in working-class welfare and that was the New Poor Law. Here he argued against the uniformity of the new system and questioned its suitability for the West Riding:

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1. Leeds Intelligencer, 1 July 1837.
  2. J.Beckett, To The Independent Electors of the Borough of Leeds (1837) in Hailstone Collection, York Minster, H.H.17.
  3. Letter from Richard Oastler in Leeds Times, 7 Jan.1837.
  4. Leeds Times, 8 July 1837.

'Hampshire and Sussex are as different from Yorkshire as if they had been at the other end of America. Therefore, I say, it was than no general law could be laid down in one Act of Parliament which could be made applicable to all districts.'<sup>1</sup>

Molesworth, for his part, had already expressed his support for the Poor Law Amendment Act when he had been in Leeds earlier in the year and, echoing the Poor Law Report, he had said that 'laws cannot be made for particular cases.'<sup>2</sup> Baines too had always supported the new system but had said that it could not be administered in the manufacturing districts without the reintroduction of outdoor relief.

Baines came off very lightly in the campaign of 1837. His main case rested on a defence of the Whig Ministry and of his own record in Parliament.<sup>3</sup> On the whole the Tory campaign tended to assume that Baines was certain to get in and so they concentrated on Molesworth. The latter emphasised that his own candidature brought into conflict two completely antagonistic principles. Beckett's party had to be opposed because it set itself against

'the great and growing demands amongst the people for a greater control over their own affairs . . . power is passing from the hands of the few into the hands of the many and the masses are rising in the social scale to greatness and power.'<sup>4</sup>

That Molesworth's own Whig supporters were equally opposed to this

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1. Speech of the Right Hon. Sir John Beckett (1837) in Hailstone Collection.
  2. Leeds Mercury, 1 April 1838. Cf. Poor Law Report (1834) 'The bane of all pauper legislation has been legislating for extreme cases'.
  3. Leeds Mercury, 1, 8 July, 1837, Baines, op.cit., pp.200-261.
  4. Speech at the nomination in Leeds Mercury, 29 July 1837.



growth in social and political influence of the masses was not lost on Perring, who used Molesworth's views to show that there was an unholy alliance ranged against Beckett. Nicoll admitted that the Radicals were forced to support the Whigs not from any love of Baines but merely in order to secure Molesworth's election<sup>1</sup> and Perring denounced this union of 'essentially opposing parties but united for the attainment of electoral power.'<sup>2</sup>

Criticism of a cross party alliance applied equally to Baines's supporters but on the question of religion Molesworth was singled out. If Whig Dissenters had doubts about Molesworth on religious grounds it was hardly surprising that Tory Anglicans should feel even stronger. The Leeds Protestant Association, strong supporters of Beckett, issued a fierce attack on

'the Infidel, the Sceptic, the Unitarian and the political Dissenter all united with the Papist, all engaged in an unhallowed warfare against everything sacred, great or good in our land.'<sup>3</sup>

This was followed by a series of anonymous handbills which urged all God-fearing men to reject Molesworth. Dissenters were reminded that Molesworth was against sectarian education and that he would 'kick out the Bible from your colleges and schools'.<sup>4</sup> Radicals were warned that voting for Molesworth would be tantamount to abandoning the word of God

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1. Leeds Times, 15 July 1837.
  2. Speech of the Right Hon. Sir John Beckett (1837) in Hailstone Collection; see also Leeds Intelligencer, 29 July 1837.
  3. Address of the Leeds Protestant Association to the Electors of the Borough of Leeds (1837) in Hailstone Collection.
  4. Alpha, To The Electors of the Borough of Leeds (1837) in Hailstone Collection.

and supporting religious infidelity.<sup>1</sup> Wesleyan Methodists, the only non-Anglican religious denomination which gave support to the Tories, were reminded by one of their number that Molesworth was in favour of that 'spurious Liberalism which would place Protestantism and Popery, Christianity and Mahomedanism on the same level.'<sup>2</sup> There had never been at a Leeds election accusations about religion of this kind and in particular there had never been appeals to all denominations against a particular candidate.<sup>3</sup>

This may be seen as a last ditch effort by the Tories to erode away some of Molesworth's support and thus enable Beckett to win the seat. As an electoral stratagem it failed and if Molesworth's agent Woolcombe is to be believed the majorities achieved by the two Liberal candidates surpassed the best estimates put forward on the Liberal side.<sup>4</sup> If this was so then the election campaign brought a small movement of voters to Molesworth and Baines rather than against them.

On what was in fact a 92% poll<sup>5</sup> Baines and Molesworth got home comfortably:

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1. Beta, To The Electors of the Borough of Leeds (1837); An Elector, To The Electors of the Borough of Leeds (1837), both in Hailstone Collection.
  2. A Wesleyan Methodist, To The Wesleyan Methodist Electors of Leeds (1837) in Hailstone Collection.
  3. Thus previous religious literature at election times had specifically appealed to Anglicans to support a proper Christian candidate.
  4. Leeds Mercury, 29 July 1937.
  5. On the face of it this figure is not correct since 3,719 people voted on a register of 5,595. However both in the Poll Book and in Leeds Mercury, 2 Sept. 1837, figures of actual deductions that ought to be made from the total register, i.e. Duplicates 1,008, Dead 120, Removed 406. Thus if the total who voted is compared with those actually able to vote then the 92% figure emerges.

Baines	2,028
Molesworth	1,880
Beckett	1,759 <sup>1</sup>

To avoid the statistical distortion caused by the unequal number of candidates put up by each party the relative strengths have been assessed on the same basis as before, i.e. leading Liberal against leading Tory. Comparing 1835 and 1837 on this basis it is possible to see where the Liberals had made their gains.

TABLE V                      COMPARISON OF LEADING LIBERAL AND  
LEADING TORY AT 1835 AND 1837 ELECTIONS

	Share of Poll in			Majority of Votes in		
	Leeds	Out-townships	Borough	Leeds	Out-townships	Borough
	<u>1835</u>					
Beckett	51.66%	52.26%	51.84%	83	55	138
Baines	48.34%	47.74%	48.15%	-	-	-
			<u>1837</u>			
Beckett	45.35%	48.59%	46.45%	-	-	-
Baines	54.65%	51.41%	53.55%	233	36	269
Swing	6.31%	3.67%	5.39%	316	91	407

From this table it can be seen that three-quarters of the gain for Baines came in Leeds, where the swing in percentage terms was about double that of the out-townships and more than treble in terms of actual votes.

1. Poll Book of the Leeds Borough Election (1837), p.12. All subsequent figures relating to the 1837 election derived from the Poll Book.

Thus in both 1835 and 1837 the swing in the out-townships had been approximately half that of Leeds itself.<sup>1</sup>

With the coming of the new Corporation new wards had been introduced so that in the township no comparison of wards is possible. In the out-townships new combinations of districts were used but by extrapolating the figures from the poll books a comparison on the basis of the new wards can be provided.

TABLE VI 1837 ELECTION IN THE OUT-TOWNSHIPS

Ward	% Share of Poll		% Swing to Liberal since 1835
	Liberal	Tory	
Hunslet	67.02	32.98	-0.28
Holbeck	63.20	36.80	3.49
Bramley	50.59	49.41	4.83
Headingley	25.30	74.70	3.25

Hunslet, a strong Liberal ward in 1835, was virtually the same and in Holbeck the Liberal share of the poll was the highest so far for that ward. The restoration of the votes of the Allan Brigg Mill proprietors helps to explain the higher than average swing in Bramley. The swing in Headingley, largely in Chapel Allerton and Potter Newton, still left the Liberals with only a quarter of the votes.

The most interesting feature of the in-township is the information revealed in Mill Hill about the degree of willingness on the part of the Whigs to compromise with their own disapproval of Molesworth. Molesworth

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1. In 1835 the figures had been: swing to Beckett in Leeds 2.81% in the out-townships 1.15%.

gained 148 votes less than Baines, and the discrepancy between the two was made up as follows:

TABLE VII DIFFERENCE IN VOTES BETWEEN BAINES AND MOLESWORTH

Leeds		Out-townships	
East Ward	6	Armley	0
Kirkgate Ward	4	Beeston and Holbeck	3
Mill Hill Ward	40	Bramley	7
North Ward	11	Farnley and Wortley	0
North-East Ward	8	Chapel Allerton and Potter Newton	6
North West Ward	15	Headingley	6
South Ward	7	Hunslet	3
West Ward	32		
Total	123	Total	25

From this breakdown it can be seen that half of the discrepancy between these allies occurred in Mill Hill and West Wards. These were the two wards which refused to endorse Molesowrth's candidature in December 1836 and it was the delegates from these two wards who had objected most strongly at the delegate meeting of the same month. It has already been shown that the Whigs of Mill Hill had put up the strongest barriers against accepting Molesworth and had only done so under duress.

Much though the Radicals might threaten to withdraw their support from Baines it was always Molesworth who was most in danger and his return was dependent upon the Whigs honouring the agreement of mutual support. If the Whigs had plumped in large numbers for Baines it would



have been fatal for Molesworth. Analysing the poll into plumpers and splits makes it possible to see to what extent this had happened.

TABLE VIII ANALYSIS OF 1837 POLL INTO PLUMPERS AND SPLIT VOTES

	Baines	Molesworth	Beckett
Plumpers	90	14	1,667
Splits: Baines and Molesworth	1,856	1,856	-
Baines and Beckett	82	-	82
Molesworth and Beckett	-	10	10

This shows that broadly speaking the compact held good and as it turned out the 1,856 votes who followed the party and voted for Baines and Molesworth were alone enough to secure two seats. However the 90 plumpers for Baines and the 82 splits between Baines and Beckett were a sign that not everyone was happy with Molesworth even with the threat of losing one seat. In 1832 there had been 38 plumpers for Marshall and in 1835 45 for Baines so that the 90 represented a substantial increase in those who refused to support the second Liberal candidate.

Who were these 90 men who could not stomach Molesworth? The poll book throws up their names if not their motives. Most of those who had created the fuss over Molesworth had in fact come round and Hatton Stansfeld, James Hubbard, Samuel Clapham and John Arthur Ikin were found voting for Baines and Molesworth. George Smith however persisted in his opposition and plumped for Baines and he was joined by John Hebblethwaite, the well known wool merchant who always boasted at public meetings of being the oldest reformer in Leeds. Two Aldermen of the Leeds



Corporation, Thomas Benyon and William Williams Brown, ironically the first two to be chosen abortively as Mayor in 1836, and the two most respectable men on the Liberal side, also plumped for Baines. The list also included John Wilkinson, a silversmith of Briggate who had been suggested as a possible Councillor.

James Brown, brother of William Williams Brown, and a nomination for Alderman in 1838 split between Baines and Beckett and a similar family discrepancy occurred with the Nusseys, friends of Fitzwilliam and influential in the Coloured Cloth Hall, father split between Baines and Beckett, son plumped for Baines. These were the more important names to be found in the anti-Molesworth camp and the rest were men whose political activities had not brought them into the limelight. As the voting figures for Baines and Molesworth had already shown a large number of these plumpers were from Mill Hill.

The 90 plumpers for Baines may be compared with the 14 for Molesworth and the 82 splits between Baines and Beckett with the 10 between Beckett and Molesworth. One hundred and seventy-two voters were prepared to support Baines but not Molesworth while only 24 were prepared to support Molesworth and not Baines. In this latter band was to be found Joshua Hobson, the Radical bookseller who was soon to be involved with the infant Chartist movement and who had already aided O'Connor in organising the Radical Association in Leeds. No doubt Hobson regarded Baines with the same distaste as that with which Benyon and Brown regarded Molesworth.

Though the Times might rant about the plumpers for Baines as 'that miserable and decreasing and doomed minority, the mere Whigs'<sup>1</sup>, the

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1. Leeds Times, 16 Sept. 1837.

majority of the Whigs had guaranteed Molesworth's success. Indeed, having worked so hard on the register in order to win back the second seat they were not likely to hand it to the Tories, even though Molesworth was not their ideal candidate. Both sides put the Liberal victory down to superior registration activity, though the Tories added for good measure the charge that many Liberals had moved to new addresses yet had still voted.<sup>1</sup> This theme was developed by Perring, for when he produced the poll book some weeks later he appended to the names of 94 Liberal (but not Tory) voters who had moved the word "left".<sup>2</sup> This incensed both the Mercury and the Times which complained that never before had the production of a poll book been so allied to party propaganda.<sup>3</sup>

Party propaganda was plentiful a few days later at the West Riding nomination at Wakefield which ended in a riot and a running battle between Yellows and Blues, each side of course blaming the other for starting it.<sup>4</sup> It appeared that many working-class Tories were incensed about the New Poor Law and Edward Scruton, a member of the Leeds Operative Conservative Society, led a charge on Edward Baines who was on the hustings, with the cry

'No bastiles - down with Morpeth - down with Strickland  
- down with the devils - throw the bastile b----rs  
down - throw 'em down.'<sup>5</sup>

Baines was threatened with murder by the Tory mob and no doubt rejoiced

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1. Leeds Intelligencer, Leeds Mercury, 29 July 1837.
  2. According to the Leeds Times, 16 Sept.1837, there were in fact 44 Liberals and 49 Tories who were guilty of voting despite removal yet the Poll Book identified 94 Liberals but no Tories who had done this.
  3. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Times, 16, 23 Sept.1837.
  4. Two people were in fact killed by flying stones.
  5. Leeds Mercury, 5 Aug.1837.

when Morpeth and Strickland were once more victorious. Morpeth's vote (12,576) was estimated to be the highest ever cast for a single M.P. in the history of Parliament.<sup>1</sup> Once more the agricultural interest in the Leeds polling district meant that the result in Leeds was a resounding victory for Wortley.<sup>2</sup> George Lane Fox in answer to the charge that he influenced his voters replied that he merely led like a shepherd while they followed like sheep, knowing he was leading them the right way.<sup>3</sup> Wortley's improved showing was the result of efficient Tory registration societies and though the battle was lost in 1837 the Tories were to gain sweet revenge both in the town and the county in 1841.

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1. The full result was Morpeth 12,576, Strickland 11,892, Wortley 11,489.
  2. Wortley 1,815, Morpeth 1,137, Strickland 1,093.
  3. Leeds Intelligencer, 5 Aug.1837.

(iii)

The Tory challenge had been successfully counted<sup>er</sup> in both Municipal and Parliamentary politics in Leeds in these three years but this did not prevent continued Tory activity in the parochial politics of the town. As far as the Church Vestry was concerned and the election of Churchwardens the main Tory play for power had come in 1835 and the appeal to the ratepayers by means of a poll.<sup>1</sup> The failure of that strategy did not signify a Tory willingness to leave the battlefield free for the Liberals and their persistence may be attributed to two factors.

Firstly, there was no issue which so animated the Tory conscience as the question of the Church. While the election of Churchwardens and the levy of Church rates did involve the important issue of the exercise of local power there was much more to it than this. Indeed, this was true of both sides, since the Dissenting Liberals were mainly motivated by a desire to prevent the exercise of the local power involved in levying Churchrates not, as in so many other areas of political activity, to share in it. To the Tory the levy of Church rates involved the question of moral and legal right but also touched on the whole concept in the 1830's of a conspiracy against the Church. Tories saw in most Liberal Dissenters potential anarchists who were intent on the eventual destruction of Church and Monarchy. As the chairman of a Conservative

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1. See above, Chapter III, pp.146-150.

ward dinner put it:

'The Whigs of North-West Ward were part and parcel of a mighty power which was at work in the British Dominions that was attempting the separation of Church and State and the ultimate destruction of the Protestant Religion'<sup>1</sup>

At the local level this attack was most manifest in the election of Churchwardens, hence the need to continue the fight.

This was a general reason for activity in the Vestry; the second was much more specific. The appointment of Walter Farquhar Hook to the Parish of Leeds in 1837 gave High Church Toryism a shot in the arm. The Hall family in the person of Henry and his son Robert were instrumental in getting Hook elected<sup>2</sup> yet influential though the Halls were Hook did not command universal support among the Anglicans of Leeds. Three leading Leeds Tories, Edward Charlesworth, a banker, Thomas Shann, a wool manufacturer, and William Osburn Jun., a publican<sup>3</sup>, presented an address against Hook signed by 400 to the Trustees who were to make the appointment.<sup>4</sup> If Hook was too right-wing for men like Charlesworth Leeds really was getting a Vicar who would not compromise with the Dissenters. Hook's appointment was seen by the Mercury in the context of local politics for what would be expected from these Trustees.

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1. Leeds Intelligencer, 1 Dec.1838. He went on to propose a toast 'Church and State - and may they never be separated by the hands of infidels and Whigs who are now arrayed against us'.
  2. As will be seen from the account in W.R.W.Stephens The Life and Letters of Walter Farquhar Hook (1873), I, pp.295-318.
  3. Charlesworth and Shann were Tory Councillors for Mill Hill while Osburn had been closely associated with the Tory campaign in the 1832 election. He was the Osburn of 'Osburn's heady wine', a phrase used in the Liberal election literature of 1831-2.
  4. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Intelligencer, 18 March 1837. The address and a rival one from 300 who favoured Hook are both printed in Stephens, op.cit., pp.314-6.



'A great majority of them belong to the High Church party and are Tories of extreme opinions. Most of them too were members of the Old Corporation and the various mortifications they have received from the popular party seemed to have provoked them to recede to the furthest point from popular feelings on most subjects'.<sup>1</sup>

With Hook to lead the fight on the Church question in Leeds the Liberals would not have things all their own way.

In 1836 they had managed to secure the election of Liberal Churchwardens and had refused to accept Perring's promise that if Anglicans were elected they would guarantee not to levy a Church rate.<sup>2</sup> This election was most noticeable for the fact that all of the previous Churchwardens retired and a completely new set of men were elected with Edward Johnson, a manufacturer's agent, replacing Buttrey as senior Churchwarden.<sup>3</sup> One reason put forward was that since the Churchwardens no longer sat on the Workhouse Board<sup>4</sup> Buttrey and his colleagues lost interest<sup>5</sup> but a much more likely explanation was that the opening of the Corporation enabled these men who had served their apprenticeship as Churchwardens now to set their sights higher. Buttrey, Fairbairn, Musgrave and Bateson all became Councillors in 1836 having been Churchwardens in the years before Municipal Reform.

The relative peace of the 1836 election was a sharp contrast to the uproar of 1837 which was described by the Times as 'one of the most tur-

1. Leeds Mercury, 25 March 1837.
2. Leeds Times, 9 April 1836.
3. Vestry Minutes, pp.134-3. Johnson was appointed senior warden on 14 July 1836, some weeks after the election. See also Leeds Mercury, 9 April 1836.
4. Because of the legal decision obtained by the Tory Overseers, see above, Chapter III, pp.153-155.
5. Leeds Intelligencer, 9 April 1836.



bulent vestry meetings ever held in this town'.<sup>1</sup> The near riot broke out when the Liberals, led as usual by the younger Baines, disputed the right of the curate, the Rev. R. Taylor, to nominate the Vicar's Churchwarden in the absence of Hook who had not yet arrived from Coventry.<sup>2</sup> Churchwardens, all Liberals, were eventually elected on a show of hands but not before Taylor had been subjected to two hours' verbal abuse for refusing to put a motion condemning his own action in making the appointment of John Garland.<sup>3</sup>

Hook probably congratulated Taylor on his action and once he arrived in Leeds he was determined to keep these rowdy meetings out of the Church and to stop 'profane outrages' like sitting on the holy table. He soon reprimanded the Churchwardens with their failure to provide for the Church properly and he prevailed upon them to call a Vestry meeting to levy a Church rate. Two years previously the Liberal wardens had managed to get a Church rate of  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. passed and now in August 1837 George Nussey Jun. and Edward Johnson proposed a similar rate. Hook's son-in-law allowed his admiration for the great man to reverse the historical truth when he recorded 'The day was gained. The rate was passed'.<sup>4</sup> In fact the rate was refused on the motion of Darnton Lupton and the Baptist minister, J.E.Giles<sup>5</sup>, and largely due to Hook's own supercilious

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1. Leeds Times, 1 April 1837. Stephens, op.cit., p.373 described the parishioners who attended to elect their Churchwardens as 'a large mob.'
  2. Leeds Intelligencer, Leeds Mercury, 1 April 1837.
  3. The dispute is reflected in the Vestry Minutes, pp.157-160, where the list of Churchwardens is signed by Taylor, Perring and Beckwith, which is followed by a protest against Taylor's action signed by Baines and 17 others. This in turn is followed by a protest by Perring that the entering of the first protest was illegal.
  4. Stephens, op.cit., pp.377.
  5. Vestry Minutes, pp.166-7.

and reactionary attitude.<sup>1</sup>

By 1838 Perring was congratulating Hook on the way he was rallying support for the Church in Leeds and it was fear of his designs on the ratepayers' pockets to rebuild the Parish Church which prompted the Liberal Press to urge a full attendance at the Churchwardens' elections.<sup>2</sup> The Liberals turned out in great numbers with orange placards and banners and Baines Junior addressed the crowd on the evils of Church rates and the virtues of the voluntary system. However the expected Tory challenge did not materialise and the Liberal Churchwardens were elected without opposition.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to frustrating the Tory desire to levy Church rates the Liberals held two meetings to petition against Church rates generally. In December 1836 Goodman, Giles, Baines and Clapham found themselves opposed by a band of Tories led by Henry Hall, George Hirst and Perring. The Tories put up a good fight though their amendment was defeated.<sup>4</sup> In the following spring the Tories decided against attending a Liberal meeting in support of the ministerial measure for abolishing Church rates

1. It is certainly true that both the Mercury and the Times had beforehand urged that there should be no Church rate no matter what the circumstances. However in similar circumstances two years earlier Lupton's motion had been defeated. Now it was easily carried and the most likely explanation is that in 1835 the Vestry responded to the appeals of the Liberal Churchwardens alone but in 1837 the Churchwardens backed by a High Church Vicar were a different matter. In particular Hook's claim that since certain expenses had legally to be incurred these would be borne by the Churchwardens themselves was resented. See Leeds Mercury, Leeds Times, 12, 19 Aug. 1837.
2. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Times, 14 April 1838, Leeds Intelligencer, 21 April 1838.
3. Leeds Mercury, 21 April 1838. Vestry Minutes, p.182.
4. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Intelligencer, 24 Dec. 1838. The Liberal petition eventually received 13,950 signatures.

and instead held their own meeting in defence of Church rates.<sup>1</sup>

Though Liberal Dissenters saw the whole question as a matter of conscience they always appealed to the ratepayers on the question of economy. Whatever the arguments over the equity of Church rates nobody could deny the Liberal claim that at least the Church's hands had been kept out of the ratepayers' pockets. Perring would never acknowledge the figures Baines used yet the latter's claim that between 1800 and 1826 £40,000 had been levied in Church rates in Leeds and a further £33,000 spent on "Parliamentary Churches" was never successfully countered. During Buttrey's tenure of office Church rates had been abolished in Leeds.<sup>2</sup>

This forced Anglicans to adopt that voluntary system so dear to the heart of the younger Baines. One of the ways to improve relations between Anglicans and Dissenters was for the Anglicans to support their own establishments in the manner of the Dissenters and after the failure to levy a rate in 1837 the Churchwardens opened a subscription for the running of the Parish Church.<sup>3</sup> This was in fact voluntarism, for Anglicans could thus contribute to the maintenance of services without infringing the conscience of the Dissenter. The rebuilding of the Parish Church recommended by Hook was also financed by subscription and not, as Dissenters feared, out of Church rates. Though this could reduce tension it could never remove the Tory fear of "Church in danger" and Bateson, one of the few Liberal Anglicans who bothered to turn out for Tory meetings on the Church question, was speaking to a deaf audience

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1. Ibid., 1 April 1837.

2. Leeds Mercury, 15 Oct.1836, 14 Oct.1837, 8, 22 Dec.1838.

3. Ibid., 1 Oct.1836, 26 Aug.1837.

when he pleaded that the Church was not a political question.<sup>1</sup> In the days of Fawcett it was unlikely that any Tory would believe that; once Hook arrived it became a heresy.

Previously control of the Churchwardens had meant control of the Poor Law. The action of the Overseers in claiming sole responsibility for the running of the Poor Law had however placed the Churchwardens in a doubtful position on the Workhouse Board. This move of the Overseers had been the result of a long history of party conflict over parish affairs. The situation was well described by Robert Baker:

'The Board room has long been a sort of arena for party politics on a small scale; . . . of late politics have run high with us, the Trustees and Churchwardens chosen by the people in Vestry have been a little opposed to the overseers chosen by the magistrates and to such a pitch has this feeling been carried that public poor law business has been very much neglected and very bad feeling has existed. The affair has ended in the overseers taking Sir John Campbell's and Sir F. Pollock's opinions as to the legality of the votes of the Churchwardens and Trustees both of whom have decided in favour of the overseers. The confusion consequent on the latter decision which came a few days ago may be imagined.'<sup>2</sup>

Confusion there was indeed for the Liberals had held high hopes that Pollock's opinion might differ from Campbell's and thus give them some legal claim to participate in the administration of the Poor Law. When Barr, the solicitor to the Board, read out Pollock's opinion one of the Tory Overseers, Thomas Sidney, with 'domineering insolence' took the minute book of the Workhouse Board from Buttrey, claiming that it could

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1. Leeds Intelligencer, 27 Feb. 1836.

2. Baker to Chadwick, 18 March 1836, Poor Law Commission MSS., P.R.O. MH 12/15224.



now be used only by the Overseers.<sup>1</sup>

The Mercury's suggestion that the Vestry should nominate men suitable to be Overseers and recommend their appointment to the magistrates was taken up the following week when an angry Vestry meeting condemned the Tory break-up of the Workhouse Board 'for mere personal and party purposes.'<sup>2</sup> The transfer of Municipal power and the subsequent appointment of "Russell Justices" meant that the Liberals could now use the office of Overseer to regain control of the Poor Law administration in Leeds. Perring had suggested that parochial affairs ought now to be run on the principle of 'public usefulness instead of party animosity' and wanted eight Overseers of each party to be chosen.<sup>3</sup> Instead Darnton Lupton and his fellow magistrates chose 10 Liberals and only three Tories<sup>4</sup> so that two weeks after being confirmed in control of the Workhouse Board the Tory Overseers were ousted by the new Leeds magistracy and replaced by Liberals.

The new Overseers in fact invited the Trustees and Churchwardens back to the Workhouse Board<sup>5</sup> and there was now the possibility of a harmonious administration of the Poor Law. Party feeling could now perhaps be banished simply because the Workhouse Board would now be the pro-

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1. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Intelligencer, 19 March 1836. This Minute Book would no doubt cast a great deal of light on the affairs of the Workhouse Board but unfortunately it has not survived.
  2. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Intelligencer, Leeds Times, 26 March, 1836; Vestry Minutes, pp.130-31.
  3. Leeds Intelligencer, 19 March 1836.
  4. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Intelligencer, 2 April 1836. It is interesting that Tories as well as Liberals considered these parochial offices as apprenticeships for future appointments. One of three Overseers appointed here, Charles Scarborough, appealed to the electors of East Ward on his record as an Overseer and Thomas Sidney returned in 1852 as Tory candidate at the General Election.
  5. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Intelligencer, 9, 16 April 1836.

vince of one party.<sup>1</sup> Yet this traditional arrangement could only be temporary since the Tories, despite their failure to retain control of the Poor Law, had shown that poor law administration in Leeds was contrary to the law and would have to be remodelled. As one of the Trustees, Matthew Johnson, put it, the Workhouse Board

'had been advised that they possess no authority in law to administer the Poor Laws in that Township; although their predecessors in office have for more than a hundred years performed all the acts necessary for the purpose.'<sup>2</sup>

Johnson himself led a deputation from Leeds, which was joined at the Poor Law Commission headquarters by Baines and Beckett, the town's M.P.'s, to discuss what could be done. The advice was that the most active and efficient of the old Workhouse Board should be kept on to work with the new Overseers possibly until the Commission had received a report from their local inspector, Alfred Powers.<sup>3</sup>

Powers, in his report, surveyed the recent history of the Workhouse Board in Leeds and explained that some of the old officers had been kept on since the new Overseers were inexperienced and that in March 1837 another set of inexperienced Overseers would be appointed.<sup>4</sup> The only way

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1. The Liberals could expect to carry the Vestry with them and always elect Liberal Trustees and Churchwardens and the Liberal magistrates could be expected to appoint Liberal Overseers.
  2. Johnson to Poor Law Commission, 23 April 1836, P.R.O. MH 12/15224.
  3. Leeds Intelligencer, 23rd April 1836, Leeds Mercury, 2 July 1836. Baines to the Poor Law Commission, 20 April 1836. P.R.O. loc.cit. There is no direct evidence that Powers was asked to report as a result of this meeting but it seems a likely explanation since the arrangements were temporary and Powers sent in a long report (16 pages) shortly afterwards.
  4. A.Powers, Report on the Township of Leeds, 18 Nov.1836, pp.1-4, P.R.O. MH 12/15224. The inexperience of the Overseers was made worse, though Powers failed to mention this, by the inexperience of the new Churchwardens; see above, p.235.



a less transitory system could be introduced was if the Poor Law Amendment Act were applied to Leeds and Powers advised that this should be done before March 1837. Powers cited three reasons for speedy action. Firstly the existing authorities were in favour of his recommendation. Secondly, and rather ironically as events turned out, if the new system were introduced in Leeds it would 'present an early example to the other large towns of the West Riding, the benefit of which will no doubt extend itself into Lancashire.' And thirdly the quicker they assumed their authority the quicker the new guardians would be able to build a new workhouse.<sup>1</sup> The Poor Law Commission accepted most of Powers' recommendations and the election for a Board of 20 Guardians was fixed.<sup>2</sup>

The prospect of a Board of Guardians for Leeds put to the test both sides' frequently expressed desire to remove party politics from parochial affairs. The old party squabbling and the tri-partite division of the Workhouse Board could be forgotten and the new system could be introduced free of past associations and recriminations. Despite the loud claims both sides went into this election with party colours flying and as usual both sides blamed the other. Thus wrote the Intelligencer:

'It is at all times desirable that party politics should be excluded from matters connected with parochial affairs but the grasping spirit of our political opponents has turned the election of every petty parish officer into a question of party.'<sup>3</sup>

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1. Powers, op.cit., p.8. He had pointed out on p.6 that a new Workhouse had been proposed and rejected by a Vestry meeting and that only by the new system could they hope to have a new workhouse in Leeds.
  2. MS. note at the end of Powers' Report dated 29th Nov.1836. They did not accept his idea that the election should be in wards (which is discussed below) nor his belief that the first set of Guardians should remain in office until March 1838.
  3. Leeds Intelligencer, 7 Jan. 1837.

So it was a matter of party in self defence yet the following week the Mercury announced that because the Tories had put up a party list the Liberals would have to do the same even though they had wanted to avoid it.<sup>1</sup> This exchange could have been written about party in the Municipal Council or objections in the Revision Court or any other political matter. It was always a case of a reluctant resort to party politics merely because of the initiative taken by the other side and in this case the election of Poor Law Guardians 'has been made entirely a party question . . . and all the excitement and mutual jealousies of parties have been entertained here in a very strong degree.'<sup>2</sup>

With such a keen interest felt by both parties it was important that the election should be conducted properly so that the defeated party could have no real complaint about the method of election. As it turned out the election got to a state 'which whatever may be the result is not likely to give public satisfaction'.<sup>3</sup> Powers had warned in his earlier report that the election ought to be contested in wards and the subsequent confusion over voting on a borough list of 20 vacancies proved him right and showed the 'inapplicability of the present provisions of the Poor Law Amendment Act to the election of Guardians in very large towns.'<sup>4</sup>

Everything that could go wrong did in fact go wrong. The Overseers having been assigned a district each by Powers proceeded to act for whatever district took their fancy and so some ratepayers got two voting

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1. Leeds Mercury, 14 Jan.1837.

2. Powers to Poor Law Commission, 13 Jan.1837, Report on the Leeds Poor Law Elections, p.1, P.R.O., loc.cit.

3. Ibid., p.3.

4. Ibid., p.2.

papers and others none at all. Voting papers with different lists of candidates were in circulation and many voting papers were not collected after the poll. The list of ratepayers was defective which resulted in many complaints about omission. When the Overseers refused to hold an appeal court which Powers had advised as the only way to bring the election to a satisfactory conclusion he had no choice but to abandon the election as null and void.<sup>1</sup>

The Tories were quick to accuse the Overseers of partiality in their treatment of the electors<sup>\*</sup> and the rumour gained ground that the Tories had in fact won the election which had only been nullified because of local Whig pressure brought to bear upon Powers. The Intelligencer contained this accusation and John Beckwith, the paper's reporter, warned the Poor Law Commission that while it might be justified to collect the outstanding voting papers there was no case for a new election simply because the Overseers and their party had been defeated.<sup>2</sup>

Though the story circulated freely in Leeds especially among the Tories there was no truth in it. This was not a case of underhand political pressure; it was much simpler than that: it was plain incompetence on the part of the Overseers. It must be remembered that this was their first year in office, with new Churchwardens, and as the Times pointed out the election involved novel and difficult methods of voting.<sup>3</sup> Matthew Johnson later put it down to deficient election machinery<sup>4</sup> which

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1. Ibid., pp.3-12, Leeds Mercury, Leeds Intelligencer, 14 Jan.1837.
  2. Beckwith to Poor Law Commission, 14 Jan.1837, P.R.O. MH 12/15224, Leeds Intelligencer, 14, 21 Jan.1837.
  3. Leeds Times, 14 Jan.1837.
  4. Select Committee on the Poor Law Amendment Act, 1837-3, XVIII, Evidence of M. Johnson, Q.4038 et seq.
- \* Powers, op.cit., p.13, said this charge originated with the activity of one Liberal Overseer who was also a candidate for the office of Clerk to the Guardians.



was the theme of Powers' report. In fact it is extremely unlikely that anyone knew the result of the election for so defective was it that it was pointless to count the votes since both parties had said that they could go to King's Bench, if defeated. This was not the sort of example the Poor Law Commission wished to set for the rest of the West Riding. Indeed the study of the development of the Poor Law in the West Riding shows that the Commission would have been pleased to launch the new system in Leeds whichever party had won.<sup>1</sup> It was far more interested in getting a locally accepted Board of Guardians working efficiently than in the details of local party politics. Baines anticipated another election in March and wrote to the Liberal solicitor, Ikin,

'I should be glad if you and your friend Mr. Edwd. Johnson would give attention and get other persons to do the same to the approaching Election of Guardians for the poor in the Leeds Union so that we may at all costs have a Liberal Guardianship . . . The Tories I have no doubt are working hard to secure success at the next election. I trust that our friends will not be less zealous nor less early in their movements.'<sup>2</sup>

In fact though they might think of a new election there was no alternative for the Poor Law Commission but to postpone another election indefinitely.<sup>3</sup>

This left the situation as it was after the Tories had obtained the

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1. See M.E. Rose The Administration of the Poor Law in the West Riding of Yorkshire 1820-1855, Oxford D.Phil. Thesis, 1965.
  2. Baines to Ikin, 30 Jan. 1837 in Baines MSS.
  3. Beckwith to Poor Law Commission, 17, 26 April 1837, asked whether they had 'wholly abandoned the intention to establish a Board of Guardians in Leeds'. The reply, Commission to Beckwith, 4 May 1837, said that arrangements were being considered and a decision would be made public. In fact it was not until 1844 that the attempt was renewed in Leeds.

legal decision about the responsibility of the Overseers and it meant that the Overseers would be running the Poor Law themselves. The party politics of Poor Law administration exploded once more at the end of 1837 when George Evers, the Tory treasurer to the Workhouse Board, was dismissed for incompetence and replaced by a Liberal Overseer, Christopher Heaps. The salary for the post was increased from £120 to £250 a year and this immediately gave rise to Tory accusations of corruption and the affair got the title 'the Heaps job'.<sup>1</sup>

The affair had unfortunate overtones. Evers was a Tory, Heaps a Liberal and an Overseer and the latter's salary was double that of his predecessor, yet as Matthew Johnson reported Evers had not produced proper accounts and in 1837 there had been a deficiency of £300 which left the Overseers no alternative but to dismiss him.<sup>2</sup> The situation produced by 'the Heaps job' was objectively summed up by Robert Barr, himself a Tory:

'The majority of the Workhouse Board happens to be of one political party and have for some time past been the subject of attacks and vituperation by the Leeds Intelligencer which were renewed on the removal of Mr. Evers and the appointment of Mr. Heaps as his successor.'<sup>3</sup>

Attacks in the Press were followed up by letters from Beckwith to the Poor Law Commission questioning the legality of Heaps's appointment. These attacks made the Overseers jumpy and they appealed urgently for the backing of the Commission in this matter.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Intelligencer, 23 Oct., 4 Nov.1837.
  2. Johnson to Poor Law Commission, 11 June 1838, P.R.O. MH 12/15224.
  3. Barr to Poor Law Commission, 11 June, 1838, P.R.O. loc.cit.
  4. Beckwith to Poor Law Commission, 20 Nov.1837, 19 May, 8 June, 4 Aug.1838; Barr to Poor Law Commission, 11 Jan.1838, urged the speedy granting of authority for the appointment 'for the Overseers' protection and for the sake of harmony'.



Eventually the Commission granted the authority although the delay gave Beckwith a loophole for further harassment of the Board. The relevant dates were that Heaps was appointed on 23 October 1837 by the Overseers who set out a formal appointment document on 24 January 1838. The Poor Law Commission's order approving the appointment was dated 9 January 1838<sup>1</sup> and it was on the grounds that Heaps was paid for two months without authority that Beckwith objected to the Overseers' accounts in 1839. In this he was successful and the magistrates struck out £54.17.1. which was the amount paid to Heaps in the interval until the authority had arrived. It was ironic that when the Commission was told of this it took a less stringent view about retrospective authority and the Workhouse Board was informed that the authority dated from the original appointment.<sup>2</sup>

The successful objection to the Overseers' accounts was poor compensation for the sort of victory the Tories had originally looked for, since they had claimed that the appointment of paid officials rested with the Vestry and not the Overseers.<sup>3</sup> They were in 1837-8 finding out the basic weakness of their strategy in 1835. It was perhaps natural for Tories, raised on close corporations and the like, to prefer less democratic control in parochial affairs, yet they chose to remove democratic control at the time when they were to lose possession of the body which appointed magistrates. Under the old system the Workhouse Board was

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1. These dates were copied from the Minute Book of the Workhouse Board and forwarded to the Commission by Barr; Barr to Commission, 16 June 1838.
  2. Naylor to Poor Law Commission, 27 May 1839; Poor Law Commission to Naylor, 8 July 1839.
  3. Leeds Intelligencer, 4, 25 Nov. 1837.

popularly controlled by the annual election in the Vestry of Trustees and Churchwardens. Now that democratic control was much more remote. Since Overseers were appointed and not elected the only way to gain control was first to control the Council, then appoint the Magistrates who could then in turn replace the Overseers. 'The Heaps job' showed that the Tories had denied themselves the access via the Vestry to the Workhouse Board which their opponents had in earlier times. Thus wishing to remove Heaps altogether, Tories found that the limit of their achievement was merely the annulment of a small part of his salary.

The developments in the Poor Law administration thus exhibited no relaxation of party warfare. Something of a contrast however was provided by the water works scheme where a party truce was eventually called, though not before some internecine struggles. The delay in providing Leeds with an adequate water supply when its deficiency was admitted on all sides is an instructive lesson in the practical and administrative problems that can confront the most well-meaning social reform.

Over two and a half years after the Vestry had originally authorised the opening of enquiries on the water scheme Leeds was no nearer getting an adequate water supply. There had been three abortive schemes suggested. The first was that the management of the concern should be vested in the Improvement Commissioners whose internal dissension had prevented that plan from operating successfully.<sup>1</sup> Secondly the Vestry had suggested a combination of half Commissioners and half 'capitalists' but the committee appointed to look into this had themselves dismissed it as unworkable.<sup>2</sup> The committee had suggested a joint stock company,

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1. See above, Chapter III, pp.156-158.

2. Leeds Water Works, 2 Nov.1835, (Thoresby Soc., 22B10)

the third scheme, and though a share list had been opened<sup>1</sup> this did not seem to be getting off the ground.

When a committee of the Town Council reported on the problem in August 1836 it claimed that all three schemes had serious deficiencies and a fourth scheme was therefore suggested. This was to raise a loan to purchase the old water works, build a new one, run the scheme until such time as a profit was made and to back the loan with an Improvement Rate. The committee believed that the public interest would justify the levy of rates in this way and recommended that a combination of Magistrates, Councillors and Commissioners run the scheme.<sup>2</sup>

Events moved quickly when the scheme was launched. The Vestry approved the plan to back any low interest loan with money from rates on the real property of the town and to use the same source to make up any deficiencies in running costs.<sup>3</sup> The Council and the Improvement Commissioners met and it was agreed that a committee of 19 should manage the concern, with the Mayor, six Councillors, six Magistrates and six Water Commissioners elected by the Vestry composing the committee. This body, now known as the United Committee, appointed Mylne and Abraham as their engineers, drew up an Act of Parliament and opened a public subscription to cover the Parliamentary costs, which produced £5,435 within a week.<sup>4</sup>

The United Committee blazoned forth the virtues of its scheme when

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1. A meeting of existing consumers of water approved it; see Leeds Improvement Act, Proceedings of the Commissioners, 30 Oct.1835.
  2. Report on the Proposed New Water Works, 29 Aug. 1836, Thoresby Soc. 22B10; Leeds Mercury, 3 Sept.1836.
  3. Vestry Minutes, pp.141-2, 29th Sept.1836.
  4. Leeds Mercury, 10,17 Sept., 22, 29 Oct., 26 Nov.1836; Leeds Times, 12 Nov.1836; Council Minutes, IV,p.106; Proceedings of the Commissioners, 14 Sept.1836.



compared with a joint stock company. It was equitable, combined utility and economy, would save the town over £20,000, would be a boon to the poor and would probably have no need of a contingent rate on the property of the town.<sup>1</sup> Thomas Beckett's comment on this last statement, 'no man of common sense can believe one word of this'<sup>2</sup>, pinpointed the fears of property owners of what was termed by another 'the taxing of the few without their consent for the benefit of the many'.<sup>3</sup> There was indeed in this scheme an element of redistribution of wealth through taxation, since, as Beckett explained, his £10,000 worth of property, already supplied with water at great cost to himself, was to be taxed in order to provide water for others who could not afford to make their own arrangements. He went on

'Baines Jr. says the water works would be better managed under the Town Council than Joint Stock Company because the public would have combined stability with responsibility. Let these people who say a property tax won't be wanted come forward as subscribers to a Joint Stock Company at 4 or 5 p.c. and no more and shew their philanthropy. I believe not one of 'em will take a single share. All they want is to expend other people's money and get popularity by letting what they may call poor have the water for nothing and also accommodating themselves and tenants at other people's expense.'<sup>4</sup>

The fear of taxation levied on property owners gave new heart to those who were organising the joint stock company. Owners of real

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1. Projected Leeds Water Works, 24 Oct. 1836, Thoresby Soc., 22B10.
  2. Thos. Beckett MS note on ibid.
  3. Letter from A Real Voluntary Principle Man to Leeds Intelligencer, 29 Oct. 1836. This letter complained of a Vestry 90% of which was composed of tenants being asked to approve a tax on their landlords.
  4. Beckett MS note loc.cit.

property were invited to two meetings in November 1836 to devise means of opposing the scheme of the United Committee, which was unjust 'to those numerous proprietors wh<sup>o</sup> have either no need of an artificial supply of water or have at a large private expense already obtained it for themselves.'<sup>1</sup> It was decided that the only just, efficient and sensible method was to have a joint stock company, which was actively canvassed. The rival scheme, it was argued, gave to the Town Council 'an irresponsible power' whereas a board of directors 'having none of the dangerous power of general taxation in their hands' would be controlled by the shareholders and would inevitably run the scheme more efficiently. Above all the income of the water works would derive solely from water rents paid 'by those only who consume the water.'<sup>2</sup>

On an ideological plane there was here a division between what might be termed embryonic collectivists, wishing to organise a public utility by redistributing wealth through taxation and to maintain firm public control, and on the other hand individualist capitalists wishing to provide Leeds with water by the normal commercial procedures adopted for other developments, like canals or railways, where the profit motive was the main guarantee of efficiency.\* This split was aggravated by the identification of the Liberals with the public control of the Town

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1. Atkinson Dibb and Bolland and John Blackburn to William Hargreaves, 17, 19 Nov.1836; Leeds Water Works, Nov.1836, Thoresby Soc., 22B10.
  2. Leeds Water Works, Proposal to establish a Joint Stock Company, 16 Nov. 1836, Thoresby Soc., 22B10.
- \* Cf. Leeds Times, 10 Dec.1836, 'The Joint Stock Company is just a scheme for throwing the Town of Leeds bound hand and foot into the power of these men to do as to them seemeth good. The public have over them no control and their scheme is just a monopoly of one of the necessities of life'.



Council and the United Committee and the Tories with the Joint Stock Company.

The identification of the parties resulted firstly from the composition of the two rival bodies. On the United Committee only one Tory magistrate and one Tory Alderman were nominated while the original shareholders on the other side included mostly Tories with such Tory leaders as Richard Bramley, William Maude, Adam Hunter, Henry Hall, the Becketts, the Blayds, William Hey and Robert Perring.<sup>1</sup> The idea of a Liberal United Committee and a Tory Joint Stock Company was reinforced by the propaganda of the Press.

There is no doubt that it was the proposed taxation on real property which produced the enthusiasm among many Tory property owners for a Joint Stock Company and Perring was able to add to this a Tory fear of Liberal domination and mismanagement.

'Vastly Liberal certainly to pawn the real property of the Township to make up losses which may be occasioned by the management of Messrs. Baker and Co!'

The Mercury was right when it said that the Intelligencer was fighting this issue on party lines and inciting hostility to the Town Council

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1. Leeds Mercury, 17 Sept.1836, Leeds Joint Stock Waterworks Company List of Shareholders, Thoresby Soc. 22B10. See also Atkinson Dibb and Boland and John Blackburne to Wm. Hargreaves, 29 Nov.1836 where all five nominated to canvass for shareholders in West Ward were Tories.
  2. Leeds Intelligencer, 12 Nov.1836. See also ibid., 19, 26 Nov., 3,10 Dec.1836. Baker was singled out probably because of his activity on the drainage question in the Council and in December 1836 he urged in a Council debate that the projected water scheme should include provisions for the proper sewerage cleansing and drainage of the streets. Leeds Mercury, 26 Dec.1836.

scheme. For his part Baines always argued that the virtue of the United Committee was that the scheme would be run 'by the town for the town' and even on the question of cost it was a choice between a high rate of interest with the joint stock company and a low rate with the United Committee.<sup>1</sup> All the old bitterness was in fact revived in that Mylne and Abraham were the engineers for the United Committee and Fowler for the joint stock company and it had been the professional disagreement between Fowler and Abraham which had thwarted the original Commissioners' plans.<sup>2</sup> The identification of parties on this issue was plainly seen in the 1837 election for Improvement Commissioners which was fought on the water works question alone, the Tories standing as supporters of the Joint Stock Company and the Liberals supporters of the United Committee.<sup>3</sup>

However there was always some degree of cross party identification on the water question. Henry Hall supported Baker in the Town Council on the question of using this water scheme for sewerage and drainage and the shareholders included two Liberal Aldermen, James Holdforth and Thomas

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1. Leeds Mercury, 22 Oct., 26 Nov., 3, 10 Dec.1836. A Tory rejoinder was that the issue was not high or low interest rates but 'shall the town obtain money by a tax upon a few and appropriate it for the benefit of the many'. Letter cited p.250 n.3.
  2. The revival of old disputes was further emphasised by the fact that three of the original Commissioners who disagreed with their colleagues and supported Fowler in 1834-5, Thomas Hebden, Christopher Heaps and Thomas Kirkby, were now in 1836 shareholders in the new company to the tune of £500 each; see List of Shareholders (1836) and H.R.Abraham. Leeds Water Works, 24 Sept.1835.
  3. It resulted in a 12 - 7 victory for the Tories thanks to the votes of the Operative Conservatives. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Intelligencer, Leeds Times, 7 Jan.1837.

Hebden.<sup>1</sup> Thus when Harewood refused to discuss the question of the water coming from his land because there were two rival schemes and he offered to mediate to bring the two sides together there was some prospect of success. Perring, on the very day he advocated a Tory party list for the Poor Law election, urged cooperation between the two sides on the waterworks.<sup>2</sup>

The initial move was made by the Joint Stock Company to the Town Council<sup>3</sup> and within a few weeks the two sides had merged their differences. The Council dropped the idea of a contingent rate and their London engineers; the Joint Stock Company agreed that the Council could eventually buy the works. The new company would be managed by a committee of 18, half nominated by the Town Council and half by the shareholders in the Joint Stock Company. Men like Goodman and Baines Jun. had not lost their faith in the former scheme of the United Committee which they defended in the Vestry but had merely recognised that their scheme had aroused implacable hostility and that if both sides resorted to Parliament the costs would be enormous. The old party divisions were reflected in the nominations to the Leeds WaterWorks Company for the whole of the Council nomination was Liberal and all but one, Hebden, of the Joint Stock Company nomination was Tory.<sup>4</sup>

It was not often that party warfare was suspended in this way but at the first meeting of the new company after an Act had been got through

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1. The nomination of Thomas Hebden for Mayor in 1837 by Henry Hall and Griffith Wright (both staunch Tories) is inexplicable except if one recalls his part in the water question. He, like they, was an Anglican and in favour of the Joint Stock Company.
  2. Leeds Intelligencer, 7 Jan. 1837; see also Leeds Mercury, 26 Nov., 3 Dec. 1836.
  3. Council Minutes, IV, p.152.
  4. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Intelligencer, 28 Jan., 4, 11, 18 Feb. 1837.



Parliament the wasteful expenditure of duplication was revealed for up to that date £9,000 had been spent.<sup>1</sup>

As John Atkinson later put it, the Act of Parliament was:

'an act of compromise . . . it was a compact a covenant, under which two parties who had long been engaged in personal strife and animosity should cease their opposition and think and act together for the attainment of a great and public good.'<sup>2</sup>

Yet despite good intentions party strife was not over and the professional squabbles continued. The Mercury had regretted the dropping of Mylne and Abraham in favour of Fowler and Leather and much to Fowler's consternation Leather was appointed sole engineer once the Act had gone through. A deputation unsuccessfully tried to persuade the Directors to appoint Fowler assistant engineer.<sup>3</sup> Two anonymous handbills appeared, possibly written by Fowler himself, condemning the unfair treatment Fowler had received, and complaining of extravagance, secrecy, delay and inefficiency.<sup>4</sup>

The Directors were at first adamant in refusing to reconsider the matter and simply reaffirmed their confidence in Leather.<sup>5</sup> However so persistent were Leather's opponents that there was no course but to call

1. Leeds Mercury, 2 Sept. 1837.
2. Ibid., 31 March 1838.
3. Leeds Water Works Company Minutes, Vol.I, p.15 (22 Dec.1837), p.16 (5.Jan. 1838), p.19 (8, 16 Feb.1838).
4. A Shareholder in the New Leeds Water Works, Leeds New Water Works, 31 Jan.1838. A Shareholder and Water Consumer, Leeds New Water Works, 14 Feb.1838, both Thoresby Society, 22B10.
5. Leeds Waterworks Company Minutes, I, pp.21-2 (5 March 1838), p.23 (19 March 1838).

a special meeting of shareholders at the end of March 1838.<sup>1</sup> The two anonymous handbill writers (if there were two) now produced a further version of their case and it became clear that a question of confidence was emerging so that if the Directors were defeated there was the real possibility of their mass resignation and the collapse of the company.<sup>2</sup>

Alderman James Williamson expressed the frustration that both sides felt at the possibility of further delays:

'He regretted deeply that the question of the Leeds Water Works too long, alas, of angry discussion, of - he was going to say - party feeling - of feelings of acrimony and personality, by which their proceedings had been so much embarrassed and the execution of their project so long delayed - should still excite hostility among parties who could only have one common object in view - that now when they had hoped all occasion for such discord had ceased there should be a spirit of division on most important points.'<sup>3</sup>

The Company was in fact saved from death by self inflicted wounds by Leather himself. He had produced, just a few days before the meeting, two pamphlets which, most shareholders felt, had fully answered his critics.<sup>4</sup> Robert Derham, the important worsted spinner of Meadow Lane, of Hindes and Derham, who led the pro-Fowler brigade was persuaded to abandon any critical motion he had in mind.<sup>5</sup> The Company survived this

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1. It is interesting that there is no report of this meeting in the Minutes, probably because no resolutions were in fact put and because the Company solicitor, Atkinson, explained that the purpose of the meeting did not conform to the provisions of the act.
  2. A Shareholder in the Leeds Water Works, To The Shareholders in the Leeds Water Works, 22 March 1838; A Shareholder and Water Consumer, Leeds New Water Works, 23 March 1838; Leeds Mercury, 17, 24 March 1838.
  3. Leeds Mercury, 31 March 1838.
  4. J.W.Leach, Statement of Facts in Reply to Two Anonymous Letters (1838), p.24. J.W.Leach, Reply to . . Henry B. Abraham of London (1838)p.16.
  5. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Intelligencer, 31 March 1838.



this crisis and some weeks later at the annual general meeting the last convulsions of the struggle were felt when Derham, Heaps and Fowler himself criticised the Board of Directors, who were despite this eventually re-elected.<sup>1</sup> This meeting showed how party labels had been confused by the personal frustration of Fowler. Baines Junior, a Liberal editor, and Joseph Rayner Atkinson, Tony flaxspinner and opponent of Sadler, found themselves defending the Directors against attacks by Christopher Heaps, Liberal Treasurer of the Workhouse Board, and Derham, Liberal Councillor for South Ward. For once the Intelligencer and Mercury were at one in condemning Fowler and his friends.<sup>2</sup> Leeds water had indeed cooled the fire of party politics.

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1. Leeds Water Works Company Minutes, I, pp.29-32 (23 May 1838).
  2. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Intelligencer, 26 May, 2 June 1838.

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During these three years, as in the previous three, the most lasting political organisations were those relating to the registration of voters. Elections, both Parliamentary and Municipal, were dependent upon the result achieved in the Revision Court and this type of activity has already been described, as has the development of public opinion on the Church question which activated men on both sides in these years.

As far as middle-class political activity was concerned these years produced no decisive or significant political organisation to compare with, for instance, the Leeds Association of Reform Bill days. Two organisations on each side have been identified in this period though only one out of the four achieved anything important.

On the Liberal side 1836 produced the Leeds Brunswick Reform Association<sup>1</sup> which, apart from organising the portrait of George Goodman, the first Mayor of the reformed Corporation, achieved little and seemed to disappear fairly quickly. The same is true of the two Tory organisations, the Leeds Protestant Association and the Tradesmen's Conservative Association.

The Leeds Protestant Association was in existence over a year before it held its first public meeting in May 1837.<sup>2</sup> It seems to have been primarily a religious society and its prime mover was the Rev. R. Taylor, one of the Vicar's staunchest curates.<sup>3</sup> However the Mercury denounced

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1. Leeds Mercury, 11 June 1836.

2. Leeds Intelligencer, 27 May 1837.

3. He it was who had stood up against the Liberals over the Churchwardens elections before the arrival of Hook; see above, p.236.

it as a group of 'ultra bigots of the Tory party' and evidence that Tories would always 'mix up politics with religion.'<sup>1</sup> Leeds did not have to wait long to discover the political bias of the Protestant Association for during the 1837 election it was one of the garbs adopted by the Tory supporters.<sup>2</sup> Indeed the Association came out right into the open when it urged the electors to 'support the man who will support your religion'.<sup>3</sup> Since Molesworth was deemed to be an 'infidel' and Baines a 'political dissenter' it was clear that the Association was campaigning for Beckett. Once the election was over the Protestant Association went into hibernation once more.

It was the 1837 election which brought the Protestant Association into the field of political activity and Beckett's defeat in that year led to the formation of the Tradesmen's Conservative Association. In order to try to win back at least one Parliamentary seat this group was formed to organise support for the Tories. It was primarily aimed at rallying support among the shopkeepers, craftsmen/retailers and lesser merchants of the town and the original address forming the society was signed by people of this type.<sup>4</sup> Its president was George Hirst, a wool merchant, a member of the Protestant Association and a lively Tory leader in Churchwardens' elections, and its two secretaries, Jackson and

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1. Leeds Mercury, 27 May 1837;

2. Leeds Times, 24 June 1837.

3. Address of the Leeds Protestant Association to the Electors of the Borough of Leeds (1837) in Hailstone Collection.

4. Twenty-eight people signed the address and they were made up as follows: one saddler, two licensed victuallers, four cornfactors, three druggists, one hosier, one jeweller, one grocer, one draper, one tobacco manufacturer, two ironfounders, one accountant, one paper manufacturer, four wine merchants, one dyer, one drysalter, three wool merchants; see Address of Tradesmen, 11 Aug. 1837, in Representation of Leeds 1831-1841.

Young, were also merchants. It held one or two meetings and though it inherited many members from the Headingley Pitt Club it was not a success.<sup>1</sup> It was said that this was the tenth experiment of the Tories to launch a society like this and within a year or so it had followed the other nine into obscurity.

Only the Holbeck Reform Association could point to any real success. Its origin lay in the transient organisations which sprang up at election time and Parker, its secretary, had been active party worker in Holbeck at every election since 1832. It was probably after the 1835 election that the Holbeck Reform Association was put on a more permanent footing than an electioneering body could achieve.<sup>2</sup> Its main success came in November 1836 when it organised the first public meeting to discuss the candidature of Sir William Molesworth.<sup>3</sup> Here, as has already been described<sup>4</sup>, the Holbeck Reform Association was following up the lead of Frederick Hobson and the Times and was bringing into the open the whole question of the representation of Leeds.

Among its leaders were to be found a magistrate, Nell, a number of councillors including Maclea and Whalley and several important businessmen. These men resented being confused with operatives in the same ward who had formed a similar association<sup>5</sup> yet they supported many Radi-

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1. Leeds Mercury, 19 Aug.1837; Leeds Intelligencer, 28 Oct.1837, 20 Jan.1838.
  2. Parker was presented with a silver cup in November 1837 for his services to the reformers in Holbeck and he mentioned that it was less than three years since the association had been formed, though it did little until the autumn of 1836 (see Leeds Mercury, Leeds Times, 4, 11 Nov.1837)
  3. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Times, 19 Nov.1836.
  4. See above, pp. 213-216.
  5. See letter in Leeds Mercury, 14 April 1838.



cal measures and were to be found petitioning the Council against exorbitant salaries and Parliament in favour of the ballot.

These middle-class associations were somewhat desultory affairs and were something of a contrast to the lively working-class activity which was of greater interest and significance. The working-class reaction to industrialisation was never a unitary process and it would be wrong to think always in terms of the working-class movement. The response to a system of society which encouraged working-class poverty varied considerably from region to region but it also varied in the same town depending on the personality, ideas, employment and politics of the people concerned. In Leeds where an embryonic proletariat still rubbed shoulders with craftsmen, tradesmen and small shopkeepers in large numbers it is not surprising that there was a variety of political associations.

Leaving out a-political movements like Owenite socialism and trade unionism four strands of activity among the working-classes can be identified. There was firstly the orthodox Radical lineage which went from the Radical Association through the Leeds Working Men's Association to the Great Northern Union and the Chartists.<sup>1</sup> From the crowds of working men who had supported the Liberals in 1832 and had been members of Bower's Leeds Political Union there had emerged a working-class view which rejected extreme Radicalism and produced in these years the Holbeck Operative Reform Association. The third strand was that which was also a working-class adoption of middle-class ideas and confirmed the existence in Leeds of what has recently been called 'an anomalous Toryism among labourers in

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1. This has been well described in J.F.C.Harrison "Chartism in Leeds", in Briggs (ed.) Chartist Studies (1959), pp.65-79.



boroughs'.<sup>1</sup> This was the Operative Conservative Society which made great strides in these years and provides the most puzzling reaction to industrialisation. Fourthly there was the intermittent though still identifiable activity of the Short Time Committee, whose great days of 1831 and 1832 were now past but whose members still dreamed of the 10-hour day. Although there was in concept and personnel some merging of these strands, they represented distinctive approaches to the problem of the place of the working-man in society and their panaceas were basically different.

The formation of the Leeds Radical Association represented O'Connor's first contact with Leeds and his long term aim of uniting English labourers and Irish peasants into one great movement may be seen here in his persuading the new association to adopt repeal of the Union as a major aim together with five of what were later to be the six points of the People's Charter.<sup>2</sup> The Radical Association began with a great whirl of activity holding regular meetings on such subjects as newspaper stamps, the prosecution of Alice Mann, the Radical printer, the representation of Leeds and Municipal affairs.<sup>3</sup> O'Connor in May 1836 hoped that the Radical Association would 'serve as a rallying point for the Radicals of Yorkshire',<sup>4</sup> which was to be a forlorn hope since the Association gradually lost its momentum though it was still in existence at the beginning of 1837 when it suggested O'Connor as a candidate for the Leeds election.<sup>5</sup> Its lead to the West Riding was virtually non-existent and one of the speakers at a great anti-Poor Law meeting at Hartshead Moor

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1. J.R.Vincent, Poll Books (1967), p.14.

2. Leeds Times, 2 Jan. 1836. 3. Ibid., 23 Jan., 6 Feb., 5, 19 March 1836.

4. Ibid., 7 May 1836.

5. Leeds Intelligencer Extraordinary, 17 Jan. 1837.

observed that 'Leeds had never been appealed to at all, for it was one of the most humbug places in all England.'<sup>1</sup>

In August 1837 Leeds had a chance to wipe out the stain of apathy with the formation of the Leeds Working Men's Association, which was a merging of the political and social Radicals of the town.<sup>2</sup> That there was more to this than just a demand for political change was illustrated by one of John Francis Bray's lectures to the Association when he said:

'the present arrangements of society enable masses of capital to grind between them masses of labour and thereby necessarily doom the majority to toil and deprivation for the benefit of the minority . . . a change is needed in that social whole which keeps the millions poor.'<sup>3</sup>

Though all were agreed that poverty was an evil most of the Radicals saw their salvation coming through political rather than social change and the Northern Star emphasised six months later that the Working Men's Association's main aim was 'the political emancipation of the masses.'<sup>4</sup>

In addition to the divergent aims of the political and social reformers there were tensions within the ranks of the former. These became apparent in January 1838 when the issue of physical force and apathy in Leeds was raised by Augustus Beaumont. Beaumont was condemned by all the Leeds papers except the Star<sup>5</sup> and from then on it was a matter

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1. Leeds Mercury, 20 May 1837.
  2. Leeds Times, 19, 26 Aug., 2 Sept. 1837; Harrison, op.cit., pp.72-3.
  3. Leeds Times, 23 Sept. 1837.
  4. Northern Star, 3 March 1838.
  5. Leeds Times, Leeds Mercury, Leeds Intelligencer, Northern Star, 13 Jan. 1838; Robert Nicoll, editor of the Times, died in December 1837 and his temporary replacement, Charles Hooton, was much less sympathetic towards O'Connor and the more militant leaders like George White than Nicoll had been. There was also from 1838 increasing professional rivalry between the Times and the Star.

of time until a more militant body replaced the Working Men's Association. This occurred in June 1838 with the foundation of the Great Northern Union which spent the remainder of the year preparing for the Chartist Convention in London.<sup>1</sup>

Robert Nicoll admitted in 1837 that the Working Men's Association did not have the universal support of working men in Leeds and he particularly referred to the Operative Reform Society as an alternative body of Radical working men.<sup>2</sup> The Holbeck Operative Reform Association was formed in December 1836 and its leading lights were Thomas Craven, a newsagent, John Butterfield, a book-keeper, George Carr, a paperhanger and William Williamson, a wood turner.<sup>3</sup> The coincidence of time, location and subsequent activity suggest that the society began from the non-electors who were actively supporting Molesworth in November 1836. Their main activity in the following year was to support Baines and Molesworth during the 1837 election and several addresses were written to the electors of Leeds.<sup>4</sup> This society represented the sort of Radicalism which the Leeds Times stood for in 1836 and once the split between the Times and the Northern Star had occurred John Butterfield, its secretary, was once more found supporting the paper in its attacks on O'Connor and Oastler.<sup>5</sup> Though in favour of radical reform the Holbeck Operative Reform Association was always found siding with the middle-class Liberals, particularly the more Radical Liberals and against their fellows who turned to

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1. Harrison, op.cit., pp.75-6.

2. Leeds Times, 23 Sept.1837.

3. Ibid., 24 Dec.1836.

4. Ibid., 15 July, 9 Sept. 1837.

5. Leeds Times, 15 Sept.

Chartism. It was in fact John Butterfield and not the Chartists who first tried to get Radical working men on to the Council when in 1838 he narrowly failed to get Holbeck Liberal electors to adopt John Jackson as their candidate. Perhaps some of Marshall's men were to be found here and perhaps those who were craftsmen depended on the wealthier citizens of Holbeck for their livelihood and so these Holbeck Operative Reformers fell in behind Liberal leaders.

In many ways the Operative Conservatives represented the parallel movement on the Tory side and may have even been the inspiration to Butterfield and his colleagues. The beginning of the Leeds Operative Conservative Society has already been described and during these three years its membership gradually increased. If its own propaganda is to be believed its membership was 200 in March 1836, 400 in October 1836 and it had reached 600 in 1838.<sup>1</sup> A library and reading room was established with 300 volumes and weekly meetings were held. William Paul, chronicler of the movement and its secretary, always referred to the position of Leeds as the inspirer of the national development of this movement and similar societies were found imitating Leeds in Lancashire. Nearer home Paul and his committee were personally involved in establishing societies in surrounding places like Pudsey, Bramley, Kirkstall and

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1. These were the figures given by Paul himself at various times; see Leeds Intelligencer, 9 Jan., 5 March, 29 Oct. 1836; W. Paul A History of the Origin and Progress of Operative Conservative Societies (1838) pp.10-12.



Armley.<sup>1</sup> This spread of Conservative influence among the humbler classes produced for the Tories not just a rewarding conversion to sound principles but the accession of a phalanx of willing party workers and enthusiastic audiences. In Parliamentary and Municipal registration, in the signing of petitions, in the packing of Vestry meetings and in the heckling of Liberal gatherings the Operative Conservatives justified Ferring's epithet of 'valuable characters'.<sup>2</sup>

The question that immediately suggests itself to the historian was the one which perplexed non-Tory observers at the time. Who were these men and why did they find *society* in the 1830's so conducive to their interests when most of their fellow working men wished to change things in one way or another? Baines always called them 'that anomalous body'<sup>3</sup> and the incongruity of the idea of an Operative Conservative was best expressed by the Northern Star

'But why a poor devil depending upon his day's work and obliged to give a portion of that to the support of the Church and other Institutions should rank himself as a Conservative Operative is rather astonishing . . . the society consists of overseers who do the dirty work of their masters and who act as crimp sergeants to kidnap those whom machinery make dependent upon the owner for subsistence. If the market for labour was open we should have no such nondescript animals as poor men, professing to support a system which produces their "poverty" and causes their "destitution".'<sup>4</sup>

The bulk of these Operative Conservatives, it seems, were in the employ

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1. Paul op.cit., pp.26-32, Leeds Intelligencer, 11 Feb., 4 March, 22 April, 20, 27 May 1837, 9 June 1838.
  2. Paul op.cit., pp.13-17; see Leeds Intelligencer, 7 Jan., 1 April 1837 for the two earliest examples of the use made of Operative Conservatives for party advantage. The first was in the Improvement Commissioners' elections of 1837 and the second at a Liberal meeting to petition against Church rates.
  3. Leeds Mercury, 15 April 1837.
  4. Northern Star, 21 April 1838.



of Tory masters<sup>1</sup> and this is certainly true of William Paul who worked for Hives and Atkinson, the big Tory flaxspinners. This cash nexus with a man like Atkinson earned for Paul such epithets as 'lickspittle and parasite' and 'atom of venality'.<sup>2</sup> Paul himself always maintained that he had held the same views when he worked for Liberal masters.

Paul was more than just a factory operative for he was also a Sunday school teacher which earned him £10 a year. He voted in the 1837 election but was struck off in 1838 on the grounds that he lived in only a £7 house and the £15 school next door where he taught once a week could hardly be considered his residence.<sup>3</sup> If Paul did actually write all that bore his name then he was certainly an articulate educated man<sup>4</sup> and his speeches compared favourably with those of the Becketts or the Halls at Tory dinners.

There was more than this. His speeches might have in fact been delivered by a Hall, a Beckett or an Atkinson; they would not have been out of place if delivered by Lord Wharncliffe, such loyal Tory sentiments did they contain.<sup>5</sup> Operative Conservatives are not to be seen as a

1. See Leeds Mercury, 1 April 1837: 'it is evident that the squad is a mere handful of workmen (in the employ of two or three Tories at the west end of the town).' Gott's factory was so located. Cf. also Leeds Times, 1 April 1837: 'a small number of men dependent on Tories for employment . . '.
2. Leeds Times, 29 Oct. 1836, 1 July 1837.
3. Ibid., 29 Sept. 1838.
4. A doubt must inevitably be raised about the authorship of Paul's material since it was so obviously Tory propaganda and even his history of the society may have been written by someone at the Intelligencer. Not only was Perring a keen supporter of the movement but his reporter, John Beckwith, had a brother William who was for a time president of the Leeds Society. There is no evidence at all that Paul did not write his own material but one's suspicions are aroused by its fulsome Tory character.
5. See for example Leeds Intelligencer, 29 Oct. 1836, 1 April, 1837, 18 April 1838.

variation on the 1831-2 theme of a Tory-Radical alliance; they were quite definitely Tory and a glance at their public statements shows them in complete unison with the orthodox Toryism of Sir John Beckett. Above all they wished to defend the constitution in Church and state from on the one hand Dissenters and on the other democrats. The Operative Conservatives had no time for such crotchets as the ballot, the suffrage or annual Parliaments, they were instead

'joined together a body of humble men for the purpose of showing the King upon the throne, to the nobles of the land and to the House of Commons that there were to be found in the lowest ranks of society those principles which are the glory the honour and the ornaments of the country.'<sup>1</sup>

Perring admitted that working men had not the time to learn about politics and so they took their lead from the Tories who had their interests at heart,<sup>2</sup> and who it might be added were also their employers.

Nothing is more instructive about the nature of the Leeds Operative Conservatives and Leeds Toryism of the post-Sadler period than the mortification of Richard Oastler at the way things had developed in Leeds. Oastler reminded Paul that they were desecrating Sadler's memory by supporting a man like Beckett who was not a factory reformer. Paul replied that his society was not intended to discuss contentious questions like factory legislation. To Oastler this was simply a negative type of conservatism merely 'to chain you to the millowner's car' and to sell workers and their children into slavery 'at the bidding of a few mill-owners and overlookers'.<sup>3</sup> Oastler was an anachronism to Paul and his

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1. Leeds Intelligencer, 22 April 1837; Paul op cit., pp.14-17.

2. Ibid., 14 April 1838.

3. Leeds Times, 14, 28 May 1836.

supporters, for whereas Sadler led his band of Leeds operatives against the self-interest of the factory owners Paul was arming his men against Radicalism. Oastler had always said in 1832 that working men should make their minds up in the election on only one issue, the factory question; to Paul this was irrelevant. The Operative Conservatives were founded 'for the exclusive purpose of forwarding the interests of Conservatism' and had only one aim, 'the support and firm establishment of national Conservatism.' Whatever Beckett's views on factory reform they would support him and only when he became a Radical would they desert his ranks.<sup>1</sup>

Factory reformers were thus denied the support they had counted on earlier and in these years the factory movement merged into other agitations over the Poor Law and the Charter.<sup>2</sup> O'Connor said later that 'the Tories had made a handle' of the factory question<sup>3</sup> but they were certainly not doing so now as the story of the Operative Conservatives had shown. The Short Time Committee was led in these years by Edward Scruton and in the spring of 1836 two fairly quiet meetings were held in favour of a reduction of factory hours.<sup>4</sup> Eighteen months later a much more lively meeting occurred where the Short Time Committee was able to defeat Baines who was advocating an 11-hour bill.<sup>5</sup> Before the factory movement submerged into the Chartist movement there was another

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1. Ibid., 11 June 1836, Leeds Intelligencer, 21 May 1836. The difference between Sadler and Beckett and the type of Toryism they represented has been discussed above, Chapter III, pp.105-108.
  2. See J.T.Ward The Factory Movement (1962), Chapters VII and VIII.
  3. Leeds Times, 23 June 1836.
  4. Ibid., 29,16 April,28 May 1836, Leeds Intelligencer, 9 April 1836.
  5. Leeds Mercury, 11 Nov.1837: Report of the Proceedings . . (1837).

meeting in Leeds led by Edward Scruton in June 1838 specifically geared to further effort on factory legislation.<sup>1</sup> However, in the same month the Great Northern Union had been formed and thus enveloped the Leeds factory reformers with the usual Chartist ploy, better the wholesale remedying of evils through political change than the satisfaction of one grievance by Parliamentary legislation.

These four elements of working-class organisation and activity indicate a much greater vitality than their middle-class counterparts. The reason for this probably lies in the only common factor between the four working-class bodies. Their members were virtually all non-electors and so they were denied the sort of electoral activity which now characterised middle-class politics in Leeds, through Parliamentary contests, municipal elections and parochial disputes. They were all on the outside looking in and so their stock in trade was agitation. Denied votes these men swelled the crowds and cheered their favourites but the Operative Conservatives had shown that even without Parliamentary votes humble men could sway elections in the Vestry. This was a precedent which was to be increasingly imitated in the years that followed.

This chapter has chronicled the sweet fruits of political power which fell into the Liberals' lap in the years 1836, 1837 and 1838. The massive transfer of Municipal power consequent on the reform of the Corporations gave to a new set of men the spoils of office and the exercise of influence. The same men revived their party's spirits by once more

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1. Leeds Times, 23 June 1838.

gaining both the Parliamentary seats in the 1837 election. The Liberal hold on the Churchwardens was confirmed and the Tory challenge on the Poor Law was repulsed. In all this and in the political movements just described there was the feverish conflict of party politics. Yet party tension had not yet reached its height. The four years of economic depression which followed 1838 were to produce party rivalry such as even Leeds had not seen.



CHAPTER V

THE PEAK OF PARTY POLITICS

1839 - 1842

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The years 1839 to 1842 witnessed the trough of the early-Victorian depression which characterised the English economy. With high unemployment, dwindling trade, diminished profits and business failures came a growing challenge to the political system. The basic economic problems of urban society were being aggravated by a political system dominated by the interests of rural society. Both middle- and working-class groups in Leeds brought pressure to bear upon the political sphere in order to achieve social and economic ends. It was time once more to gird on the armour of 1832 and persuade a hesitant Parliament by displays of extra-Parliamentary strength to move in the correct direction.

For the middle-class leaders in Leeds, many of whom were engaged in overseas trade, the repeal of the Corn Laws offered the most obvious solution to economic difficulties. Cobden later claimed that Leeds in 1839 was a far more likely place for the Anti-Corn Law movement to grow than was Manchester. In its Press, its leaders and its peaceful citizens Cobden believed Leeds was the ideal place for the cause to prosper.<sup>1</sup>

Initially the cause did prosper and Paulton's somewhat lack lustre lecture at the end of 1838<sup>2</sup> was followed in January 1839 by a lively meeting. At this meeting James Holdforth, the Roman Catholic silk

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1. Cobden to Smiles, 21 Oct. 1841, quoted in T. Mackay (ed.) The Autobiography of Samuel Smiles (1905), p. 112.

2. Mackay, op.cit., p. 88.

spinner who was Mayor at the time, put the Corn Law issue blatantly as one involving a challenge between the land and commercial interests. Holdforth was supported by George Goodman, Thomas Plint and Hamer Stansfeld all of whom quoted their own commercial experience as evidence of the need for free trade.<sup>1</sup> Feargus O'Connor and George White forcibly put a Chartist amendment which was decisively rejected by the meeting<sup>2</sup> and so it appeared that the free traders were masters in their own house.

Holdforth described the day's proceedings as a 'triumphant meeting' and he, along with Stansfeld, Plint and Baines Junior, were appointed delegates to the Manchester conference in the same month.<sup>3</sup> The petition emanating from the meeting gained over 23,000 signatures and more encouraging still on 21 January 1839 the Leeds Anti-Corn Law Association was formed with James Garth Marshall as President, Hamer Stansfeld as Vice-President and Thomas Plint as secretary.<sup>4</sup> Leeds was well represented at the early delegate meetings and Baines and Stansfeld travelled to London in February 1839.<sup>5</sup> A month later a high-powered delegation of seven members of the Anti-Corn Law Association attended a delegate conference in

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1. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Times, 19 Jan.1839.
  2. Northern Star, 19 Jan.1839, claimed that O'Connor's amendment had in fact been carried. Cf. Smiles Autobiography, p.88, 'Feargus O'Connor was defeated'. O'Connor's version of the day's events was 'On Tuesday morning I left Bradford for Leeds to beat Neddy Baines and the Whigs which, let them say what they may, I did most effectually.' See also A.Prentice History of the Anti-Corn Law League (1853), I, pp.95-96.
  3. Holdforth to Smith, Anti-Corn Law League Letter Book, No.74.
  4. Leeds Mercury, 2 Feb.1839; Plint to Smith, 21 Jan.1839 (A.C.L.L.Letter Book).
  5. Leeds Mercury, 9 Feb.1839; Baines Junior to his wife, 5 Feb.1839  
Baines MSS

Manchester.<sup>1</sup>

The initial enthusiasm withered somewhat which Flint blamed upon the depressed state of local trade<sup>2</sup> and though the Association imported some Prussian cloth to show the competition from Germany its activities were not mentioned when Bowring visited Leeds in November to discuss the Prussian Commercial League.<sup>3</sup> However Leeds initially ordered 200 copies weekly of the Anti-Corn Law Circular in April 1839 and this had risen to 250 by May and to 300 by December 1839.<sup>4</sup>

In that month the wheels of the League machinery began to turn again and Leeds was once more invited to send delegates to Manchester, which led to a recall of the Association.<sup>5</sup> Stansfeld reported to J.B.Smith, the League's secretary

'It is high time now to buckle on our armour again and your circular of yesterday will sound the tocsin throughout the town. I have called our association for next Friday and shall do my best to get our troops together.'<sup>6</sup>

In the next two weeks Leeds was a hive of activity with a series of ward and out-township meetings which led Stansfeld to predict confidently 'there will be no want of steam in this town.'<sup>7</sup>

When the full town meeting was held to petition for a repeal of the

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1. Leeds Mercury, 9 March 1839, Stansfeld to Smith, 5 March 1839 A.C.L.L. Letter Book . The seven were Marshall, Stansfeld, Flint, Baines Junior, Peter Fairbairn, John Wilkinson and John Nussey.
  2. Flint to Smith, 23 May 1839 A.C.L.L. Letter Book .
  3. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Times, 10 Aug., 23 Nov. 1839.
  4. Greig to Wilson, 23 April, 4 May 1839; Greig to Ballantyne, 13 Dec. 1839 A.C.L.L. Letter Book .
  5. Greig to Ballantyne, 7 Dec. 1839 in ibid.
  6. Stansfeld to Smith, 11 Dec. 1839, Smith Papers.
  7. Leeds Times, 7, 14, 21 Dec. 1839; Leeds Mercury, 14, 21 Dec. 1839, Stansfeld to Smith, 19 Dec. 1839. Smith Papers.

Corn Laws at the end of December 1839 the middle-class leaders found themselves once more assailed by Chartist detractors. Thomas Bottomley, the chairman of the unemployed operatives who had shocked philanthropists in Leeds by warning them that starving working men were entitled to take bread where they could find it, was joined at the anti-Corn Law meeting by three Chartists preaching violence, David Black, George White and William Rider. Despite powerful speeches by these four a Chartist amendment was once more defeated and the orthodox free trade resolutions of Stansfeld, Marshall and the two Baineses were carried.<sup>1</sup> Again a large Leeds delegation, composed of Stansfeld, Fairbairn, Greig, Baines Junior, William Smith (the Mayor), John Waddingham, John Wilkinson and George Wise, attended the Manchester conference.<sup>2</sup> Ward meetings continued and the Holbeck Operative Reform Association sent John Butterfield as their own delegate to Manchester.<sup>3</sup>

It was in this atmosphere of activity and confidence that the Leeds Anti-Corn Law Association decided to donate to the League the services of their lecturer George Greig. Greig, a Registrar of births, marriages and deaths under the Poor Law, had been appointed paid secretary and lecturer in March 1839<sup>4</sup> and it was he who carried the torch of the Leeds repealers into the surrounding districts. A sample of his engagements shows his great activity. In March 1839 he was in Thirsk, in April in Barnsley, in May in Doncaster<sup>5</sup> and by December he was even venturing to Sunderland

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1. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Times, Leeds Intelligencer, 4 Jan.1840.
  2. Greig to Ballantyne, 4 Jan.1840 (A.C.L.L.Letter Book).
  3. Leeds Times, 11, 18, 25 Jan.1840.
  4. Leeds Mercury, 9 March 1839.
  5. Ibid., 23, 30 March, 27 April, 4 May 1839.



where 'if he can set the coal ablaze the fire will soon spread to Newcastle.'<sup>1</sup> Greig was not everyone's ideal and George Wise complained 'he speaks too much to the passions of his audience and too little in the way of reasoning and in the conviction of the judgment of the more discriminating'<sup>2</sup> but his enthusiasm could not be doubted. Stansfeld asked him to give Smith a summary of his activities and on Greig's own reckoning he had visited 53 places, 14 of them twice which had resulted in petitions signed by 150,000 people.<sup>3</sup>

Clearly the League could use such a man and in February 1840 Stansfeld proposed a motion at a committee meeting of the Anti-Corn Law Association that London should be canvassed and that Greig should go there if the Council of the League thought it desirable. Stansfeld informed Smith that Leeds would pay his expenses and Wilson was told that in addition Leeds would subscribe a further £200 to the League's funds.<sup>4</sup> From the spring of 1840 Greig became a full-time League lecturer and though his work was unfinished in Yorkshire he was released because as Stansfeld put it 'a pistol discharged in the Metropolis would produce as

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1. Stansfeld to Smith, 11 Dec.1839 Anti-Corn Law League Letter Book .
  2. Wise to Stansfeld n.d. attached to ibid. Cf.N.Mc The Anti-Corn Law League (1953), p.59.
  3. Stansfeld to Smith, 20 Feb.1840,in Smith Papers; Greig to Smith,27 Feb. 1840(Anti-Corn Law League Letter Book). All this activity got him into trouble with his other employer, the Poor Law Commission; cf. Powers to P.L.C.,18 May 1840, P.R.O. MH 12/15225, 'he has latterly failed to give satisfaction in consequence of his avocation as Anti-Corn Law Lecturer'.
  4. Resolution dated 17 Feb.1840 attached to Stansfeld to Smith, 18 Feb.1840, Smith Papers. Stansfeld to Wilson, 16 April 1840 (A.C.L.L.Letter Book)

great an effect as a cannon here.'<sup>1</sup>

The departure of Greig marked an important turning point in the anti-Corn Law activity in Leeds not because Leeds lost a good man but because the summary rejection of Villier's motion by the Commons in 1840 led many leading Leeds repealers to turn away from the League. The spring of 1840 thus marked the end of the first and very successful period of League activity in Leeds which was followed by political fragmentation and dissension. As will be described later the rest of 1840 was occupied with the suffrage question.

Cobden was disappointed in Leeds for deserting the cause and remarked to Smiles 'I wish the Leeds A.C.L. men had held on to the question for a year or two more'.<sup>2</sup> He was to find little consolation in the revival of interest from the spring of 1841. An anti-Corn Law meeting was held at the end of March 1841 though the requisition for it had not originated with the Anti-Corn Law Association. Resolutions were advertised by the Association and speeches reported but in fact it was a rowdy meeting with two chairmen, one elected by the Chartists, and with a continuous din which drowned all argument.<sup>3</sup> In what the Intelligencer called a 'mortifying and complete defeat' and the Star termed 'the "last kick" of the League' the repealers finally left the hall in the hands of Hobson and

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1. Stansfeld to Smith, 20 Feb. 1840; Smith Papers. McCord op.cit., p.59, argues that even while secretary of the Leeds Association Greig was at the League's disposal in areas near to Leeds. Greig appears to have taken up his duties in April but did not resign from his registrar's job until 28 May 1840 which again produced critical comment. Powers to P.L.C., loc.cit. 'as he is continually absent the Poor Law Commission should tell him they are to make the appointment' (of a successor).
  2. Quoted in Smiles Autobiography, p.98.
  3. Leeds Times, Leeds Mercury, 27 March, 3 April 1841.

the Chartists.<sup>1</sup>

A West Riding delegate meeting in May 1841 was not attended by the Chartists but once more Cobden felt that Leeds was working against the League for the meeting resolved on the formation of a West Riding Anti-Monopoly Association to work for free trade generally.<sup>2</sup> Stansfeld had warned Smith earlier that he believed the causes of repeal and free trade ought to be joined<sup>3</sup> and Mercury editorials written by Baines Junior tended to support the Whig fixed duty. To both of these ideas Cobden and the League were hostile. Cobden warned Baines 'we have done our duty in eschewing Chartism - Toryism - Household Suffrageism - and now we are determined to resist Ministerialism',<sup>4</sup> and he stated to Smiles that a move to link corn with timber and sugar duties (which was what occurred in Leeds) 'will be a virtual secession from the League'.<sup>5</sup>

The election of Beckett in 1841 only confirmed Cobden in his long-held opinion that even in Leeds there was vast ignorance on the Corn Law question and after the election he pointedly asked Smiles whether repealers in Leeds were sufficiently strong to 'join in a unanimous demonstration at a public meeting against the bread tax without interference from

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1. Leeds Intelligencer, Northern Star, 3 April 1841. Another defeat, this time by the Tories, occurred when the Town Council refused to admit a letter by George Wilson, the League President, in April: Council Minutes, 5, p.310.
  2. Leeds Times, Leeds Mercury, Leeds Intelligencer, 15 May 1841
  3. Stansfeld to Smith, 11 March 1841 in Smith Papers.
  4. Cobden to Baines, 4 Jan. 1841, in Sir Edward Baines Correspondence and Papers - Letter No.25.
  5. Quoted in Smiles Autobiography, p.99. The letter continued 'It will be an infringement upon the rules which restrict us exclusively to the subject of total and immediate repeal.'

the Chartist or Tories.<sup>1</sup> Two months later events showed that they were not, for at a meeting held in response to what the Intelligencer called 'the private mandate of the Anti-Corn Law League' Andrew Gardner, a moderate Chartist and former member of Illingworth's Radical Association,<sup>2</sup> captivated the audience with a distressing tale of privation and suffering and carried a Chartist amendment, which was later withdrawn after some diplomatic talk by John Goodman.<sup>3</sup> Andrew Gardiner had been able to achieve by reason what his colleagues had achieved by noise six months earlier.

From the League's point of view the six months activity in Leeds from the spring of 1841 was a sorry catalogue of failure and misdirected energy. In effect two meetings had been sympathetic to Chartism and a third to a cause outside the League's immediate ambition. A protectionist Tory M.P. had been elected and many of the leading repealers were still flirting with the suffrage. All this followed 12 months of complete inactivity when the majority of the free traders had turned their back on the League entirely. It was little wonder that Cobden wrote

'I confess when I think of the materials you have had to work with in Leeds compared with ours in Manchester I cannot acquit you of having made a very bad use of them.'<sup>4</sup>

Leeds needed to restore its reputation and in December 1841 and January 1842 delegates attended from the West Riding to report on distress in

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1. Cobden to Smiles, 3 Aug.1841, quoted in Smiles Autobiography, p.109. In August the dissenting ministers, J.E.Giles and R.W.Hamilton, attended the conference of ministers in Manchester: Prentice op.cit.,I, p.244
  2. Northern Star, 9 May 1840.
  3. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Times, Leeds Intelligencer, 2 Oct.1841.
  4. Cobden to Smiles, 21 Oct.1841 quoted in Smiles Autobiography, p.112.



the area.<sup>1</sup> Thomas Flint's speech at the first meeting was produced as a pamphlet and the Town Council was once more assailed. The restoration of the Liberal majority in the elections of November 1841 enabled the Council to send a free trade petition to Parliament on New Year's Day 1842.<sup>2</sup> A petition from the Anti-Corn Law Association received over 25,000 signatures and Stansfeld, Fairbairn and Henry Marshall attended an Anti-Corn Law Conference as delegates from Leeds.<sup>3</sup> The renewed strength of the Leeds repealers was emphasised at a crowded meeting in February 1842 which Chartists were urged to attend where two Chartist amendments were defeated even though Joshua Hobson was there urging on his troops.<sup>4</sup> A month later the Anti-Corn Law Association held another meeting, this time to protest about the income tax.<sup>5</sup>

The Intelligencer believed in March that the League was virtually defunct yet in July the Leeds 'section of the League' was meeting together to issue dire forebodings about the unprecedented distress of the summer of 1842<sup>6</sup>, warnings which were to be justified by the events of August. When the immediate danger was over the Association met in November 1842 to plan for the winter campaign and to respond to the League's £50,000

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1. Leeds Mercury, 11, 18 Dec. 1841, 22 Jan. 1842. Cobden had suggested such trade meetings to Baines earlier; Cobden to Baines, 12 Oct. 1841. Correspondence and Papers of Sir Edward Baines.
  2. Council Minutes, VI, p.7.
  3. Leeds Mercury, 5 Feb. 1842. Stansfeld despite his previous activity on the suffrage question continued to work for the League and Marshall was also back in harness after the abortive experiment over free trade generally with which he was associated in May 1841.
  4. Northern Star, 12 Feb. 1842, Leeds Mercury, 19 Feb. 1842.
  5. Leeds Mercury, 19 March 1842.
  6. Ibid., 23 July 1842, Leeds Intelligencer, 5 March, 23 July 1842.



appeal.<sup>1</sup> This time Leeds demanded the visit of some big guns from Manchester in order to inspire support and Cobden, Perronet Thompson and Bowring were booked for December.

The soiree organised by the Anti-Corn Law Association was a great success as a meeting. In addition to the three distinguished visitors the ladies and gentlemen assembled heard from their M.P. Aldam, and three of the leading repealers in Leeds: Stansfeld, Baines Junior and Plint. On the next day there was also a public meeting at which Cobden and the others spoke. It was in short an encouraging display of anti-Corn Law support yet there was one sombre note. The purpose of the activities was to help the £50,000 fund and the response was disappointing. The Marshalls gave £150, Stansfeld, William Pawson, Edwin Birchall and John Wilkinson £50 each but the overall total at £1,349 was somewhat below expectations.<sup>2</sup>

Baines Junior who had been in touch with Cobden before the campaign opened was consoled by the latter. 'We are obliged to you for the energetic appeals in your paper. It is not your fault if the Leeds people do not contribute all that we would wish to the Fund.'<sup>3</sup> One explanation for the poor show was the political complexion of the mercantile class in Leeds, a fair proportion of which was Tory. As the Times put it

'Many of the large capitalists of Leeds even though suffering greatly from the general depression of the last few

1. Leeds Mercury, 12 Nov.1842.
2. Ibid. and Leeds Intelligencer, 10,17 Dec.1842. Huddersfield had the previous week subscribed £1,320. Cf. Prentice op.cit.,I, pp.413-15.
3. Cobden to Baines, 17 Dec.1842. B.M. Add MSS 43664 f.136.

years are found ranged on the side of monopoly. They can only see the corn law question through the medium of party.<sup>1</sup>

The more important Tory merchants and manufacturers rejected the League and preferred to continue agitation as before through the indirect channels of the Operative Conservative Society which continued to rely heavily on patronage from above. The suspicion lingered among critics that the Operative Conservatives were not really working-class at all and were merely a Tory trick. Richard Heaps at a dinner in Hunslet mocked the

'endeavour to prop up the cause of Toryism by the establishment of those mongrel societies yclept Operative Conservatives, the majority of the members being anything but operative, consisting as they did for the most part of maltsters, grocers, distillers and a few members of the medical profession to boot, all well to do in the world.'<sup>2</sup>

It was certainly a feature of the society's dinners that they were patronised by such non-operatives as Henry Hall, Richard Bramley and Robert Perring. The most common accusation from critics was that the Operative Conservative Society was composed of Tory masters and their men, who were pressed into service by the fear of dismissal.<sup>3</sup> Other reasons offered to explain why an operative should be a Tory were the supply of cast-off breeches and the frequent subsidised "guzzles".<sup>4</sup>

The operatives themselves were well aware that they were something of an anomaly. They cited the 1841 elections in the West Riding as evidence that Toryism was not just a rural philosophy and the very exis-

1. Leeds Times, 10 Dec.1842.
2. Leeds Mercury, 7 Dec.1839.
3. Leeds Times, 14 March 1840.
4. Ibid., 6 July 1839, 6 June 1840.

tence of the Operative Conservative Association proved in the opinion of William Overend that 'conservatism was well adapted for the working man as it was for the higher ranks of society.'<sup>1</sup> Certainly they were staunch supporters of the Tories and for this they received in Hook's words 'the pitiless pelting of the profligate Whig Press'<sup>2</sup> and while they were less active at public meetings than they had been their dinners and quarterly meetings maintained their existence. There were branches in Hunslet and Holbeck and the main Leeds branch held just their annual dinner in 1839 and 1840.<sup>3</sup> In 1841 there were two dinners, one of which was to celebrate the return of Beckett and the other the usual quarterly meetings to elect a new committee.<sup>4</sup> In these years Thomas Hargreave replaced Paul as secretary.

Some might say that Tory masters with their great factories could control their men but Henry Hall believed that the domestic system of the pre-industrial era had encouraged class cooperation more:

'That was a system calculated to promote good feeling between masters and men: he sent them work into their houses and did not send them into large factories. He did not undertake to condemn the system which had since sprung up; it had arisen out of the circumstances of the times but the system that was followed when he was a young man was better adapted to provide the true interests of the people.'<sup>5</sup>

Henry Hall did not condemn the factory system. The factory reformers did and they were intermittently active in these years, though as before denied the Tory support of earlier years.

In 1839 little was heard of the factory reformers and Baines remarked

1. Leeds Intelligencer, 16 April 1842.
2. Ibid., 6 June 1840.
3. Ibid., 14 March, 6 June 1840, Leeds Intelligencer, 26 Jan. 1839, 6 June 1840.
4. Leeds Intelligencer, 13 Feb., 31 July, 21 Aug., 24 Dec. 1841.
5. Ibid., 21 Aug. 1841.

'this most inflammatory subject in the hears 1832 and 1833 has now settled into the most tame of all political and manufacturing topics'.<sup>1</sup>

Something of a revival occurred in the summer of 1841 and the Short Time Committee was reformed under Joshua Hobson. The great Parliamentary leader Ashley came to Leeds in August and over 1,000 attended a Short Time meeting to hear him. The remnants of 1832 were gathered together with the presence of Michael Sadler's brother Benjamin and the two former protagonists William Rider and Robert Perring.<sup>2</sup> However the dominant figure in Leeds was now Joshua Hobson<sup>3</sup> and he was the Leeds delegate in the committee which visited Peel and other ministers in December 1841.<sup>4</sup> There was a meeting in support of Oastler in May 1842 organised by Perring<sup>5</sup> but the summer was dominated by the events of August and no more was heard of the factory reformers in 1842.

The leadership of Hobson symbolised the absorption of the factory movement by the Chartists and in January 1842 there were reports of complaints by Leeds working men about the factory reformers' lukewarm attitude towards the Charter.<sup>6</sup> It was the Chartists who were the most active in working-class politics in the years 1839 to 1842. Their story has

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1. Leeds Mercury, 30 Nov.1839. Cf. Leeds Times, 14 Aug.1841, 'the factory reform movement is an agitation which has gone astray!' There had been a meeting of the Short Time Committee in January; see Northern Star, 9 Jan. 1841.
  2. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Intelligencer, 7 Aug.1841.
  3. Smiles described Ashley's meeting as one with the 'no surrender Chartists'. Leeds Times, 7 Aug. 1841.
  4. Leeds Intelligencer, 1 Jan 1842, Northern Star, 22 Jan.1842.
  5. Leeds Intelligencer, 7 May 1842, Leeds Conservative Journal, 14 May 1842.
  6. Leeds Mercury, 22 Jan.1842.

been fully told<sup>1</sup> and in outline their activities went through three phases: a militant Chartism in 1839, a more peaceful radicalism in 1840 and 1841 and a resort to Municipal politics in 1842.

The Chartists at times posed problems of public order which are discussed later and their participation in Municipal and parochial politics are described in the relevant sections. Here in the context of political agitation it is worth remembering that, in 1839 especially, the Chartists were a mobile and adaptable threat to any public meeting in Leeds. Apart from the anti-Corn Law meetings which were assailed the Chartists' most spectacular success was taking over an education meeting organised by the Dissenters in Leeds in September 1839.<sup>2</sup>

The Mercury often echoed the Chartist description of Leeds as a place virtually asleep to the need for working-class militancy<sup>3</sup> but it was worried once the spectre of class war was raised. When the two Chartists, White and Wilson, charged with demanding money with menaces, were refused bail, the Northern Star attributed this to class interest:

'The Leeds Justices were middle men appertaining to the class of profit-mongers and money hunters whose unrighteous emoluments were thought to be endangered by the principles of Chartism.'<sup>4</sup>

The same fears of "spoliation" were raised again three months later when the Chartists joined Thomas Bottomley and the unemployed operatives in

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1. J.F.C.Harrison "Chartism in Leeds" in A.Briggs (ed.) Chartist Studies (1959), pp.76-90.
  2. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Times, Northern Star, 7,14 Sept.1839. It is interesting to note that in the rather smug report in the Leeds Intelligencer, 7 Sept.1839 no mention was made of Chartist participation; it was simply a resounding defeat at a public meeting for Baines and his supporters.
  3. Leeds Mercury, 22,29 June, 3 Aug.1839, Leeds Times, 6 April,1839.
  4. Northern Star, 31 Aug.1839.



claiming the right to take bread where they could find it. Even Robert Owen who attended the meeting of operatives seemed preferable to the 'help yourself system' of the Chartists with their 'language of spoliation and plunder.'<sup>1</sup>

It was of course the persistence of distress caused by high unemployment which caused Chartist activity to continue and in the winter of 1841-2 the Operative Enumeration<sup>er</sup> Committee, after a statistical survey, estimated that there were 20,000 people living on an average of 11 $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per head per week.<sup>2</sup> It had not been much better in the early months of 1840 when it was estimated that nearly 6,000 people were unemployed and a subscription of nearly £4,000 was collected to relieve distress.<sup>3</sup> It was the severity of the depression of 1840 that convinced middle-class Radicals in Leeds like Hamer Stansfeld and Samuel Smiles that Parliament would be forced to consider the Corn Law question. Thus the failure of Villiers to get a fair hearing convinced many of the leading repealers that no relief would ever be found until the suffrage were extended.

The problem of working-class distress was one which had been exercising Smiles's mind for some time and in August 1839 he had countered the Mercury's hostile attack on the Chartists by posing a series of questions:

What is to be done to remove the grievances of the murmuring millions? How are the increasing numbers of the poor to be

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1. Leeds Mercury, 28 Dec.1839. After Bottomley's statement the middle-classes temporarily dropped the plan for a subscription to aid the unemployed.
  2. Leeds Times, 12 March 1842.
  3. Leeds Mercury, 4, 11 Jan.1840.

to be fed? How are the claims of the working classes for political existence to be disposed of? How is their alienated confidence in the middle classes to be regained? How are the rights of labour to be protected?<sup>1</sup>

There were reports of William Whitehead, a tea dealer, forming a new Radical Association to link working men disillusioned with Chartism with the advanced and liberal middle classes disgusted with Whiggery.<sup>2</sup> This society apparently foundered. It was soon replaced by the famous Leeds "new move", the Leeds Parliamentary Reform Association.<sup>3</sup>

This Association originated at a meeting in London in April 1840 of leading Radicals which was convened by Hamer Stansfeld and James Garth Marshall, Leeds anti-Corn Law delegates. Three weeks later a frank discussion was held in Leeds on the failure of the Whigs on the Corn Law question where only Edward Baines, M.P. for Leeds, defended the Government's conduct. It was decided at that meeting that Leeds ought to lead the way with an association reuniting middle and working classes on household suffrage.<sup>4</sup> In July an address written by Smiles was placarded in the town, members were enrolled and a petition was signed by 16,200 people.<sup>5</sup> At the end of August the Leeds Parliamentary Reform Association was launched with its five point programme: household suffrage, the ballot, equal constituencies, triennial elections and the abolition

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1. Leeds Times, 10 Aug.1839. According to Smiles Autobiography, p.92, Stansfeld had read this article and the implication is that it was instrumental in persuading him to change his course.
  2. Ibid., 29 Feb., 7 March 1840.
  3. For a brief account see N.McCord The Anti-Corn Law League (1958), pp.73-80.
  4. Leeds Times, Leeds Mercury, 2 May 1840.
  5. Leeds Times, 11,18 July, 1 Aug.1840, Leeds Intelligencer, 11 July 1840. The address also found its way to the League and there is a copy in the Smith Papers No.327.

of the property qualification.<sup>1</sup>

In composition the Association was a successful merging of middle- and working-class leaders. Its initial committee of 43, half middle- and half working-class, was somewhat modified in February 1841 and taking the two lists one finds an impressive array of names. On the middle-class side there were the two Marshall brothers James and Henry, two Aldermen, Stansfeld and Goodman, together with 11 Councillors and two who were to be councillors within a couple of years. The working-class representatives were drawn from the men who rejected the extremism of Chartism for the class cooperation of this movement. The Holbeck Operative Reform Association was an enthusiastic supporter of the new move and two of its leaders took office, William Nichols Junior as a vice-president with Stansfeld and John Butterfield as joint secretary with Smiles. Two further active members were Robert Martin and David Green both of whom had been founder members of the Leeds Working Men's Association.

These men did not have the support of Hobson and the Chartists who refused to budge on universal suffrage<sup>2</sup> nor did Stansfeld, Marshall and Smiles have the universal support of the middle classes for Baines and the Mercury remained hostile. In a series of letters to Stansfeld Baines made two main points against the new programme. Firstly he argued that household suffrage would lead to social revolution by giving the vote to the uneducated masses. Stansfeld and Marshall continuously referred to the same sort of social revolution but for them it was only

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1. Leeds Times, Leeds Mercury, 5 Sept. 1840.

2. Northern Star, 12, 19 Sept. 1840, was very critical.

to be avoided by the extension of the suffrage.<sup>1</sup> Baines's second point was a straight party political one that equal electoral districts would in fact swamp the Liberal party because it was strong only in the towns.

Initially this hostility did not matter as there were enough enthusiastic middle-class participants, like Stansfeld, who refused to be Mayor in 1840 because he was so keen on the new movement. The Association held a splendid festival at Marshall's mill in January 1841 when Hume, Roebuck, Perronet Thompson and Sharman Crawford joined the Leeds leaders to debate the suffrage question and on the next day O'Connell came to Leeds.<sup>2</sup> Although the Chartists succeeded in getting amendments on universal suffrage passed<sup>3</sup> there was great enthusiasm among the local leaders and a belief that this was the beginning of a glorious movement of class cooperation.<sup>4</sup> At the Annual General Meeting a few weeks later all speakers both middle- and working-class assumed that the nucleus of class co-

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1. Cf. these speeches in Leeds Times 5 Sept.1840. For the exchange of letters see Leeds Mercury, 21 Nov., 5,12,19,26 Dec.1840, 2,9 Jan.1841. The argument was somewhat reminiscent of that between Whigs and Tories in Parliament in 1831-2, the former wishing to preserve the social fabric by extending the suffrage, the latter by withholding it. The Intelligencer, 28 Nov.1840, implicitly supported the Mercury line by warning that if the new programmes were enacted then Marshall's wealth would all disappear.
  2. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Times, Leeds Intelligencer, 16, 23 Jan.1841.
  3. The Mercury and the Star called the meeting a Chartist one to which Smiles replied (Leeds Times, 30 Jan.1841) 'Chartism originates in discontent with existing institutions and they are all actuated by the spirit of Chartism who aim after redress of grievances and emancipation from wrong and tyranny'.
  4. This view was not of course shared by the Northern Star, 23 Jan.1841, which produced a cartoon version of the 'Fox and Goose Club' and commented 'the poor thing has died peacefully - rest its soul! whilst the spirit of Chartism trips lightly over its grave and chaunts right merrily its requiem.'

operation which their Association had achieved would grow into a mighty engine working for organic change.<sup>1</sup>

Years later Smiles believed that galvanising the Association was 'like flogging a dead horse to make it rise and go. It would neither rise nor go'.<sup>2</sup> At the time he was far more optimistic and he had written to Roebuck

'Do you observe how our Association has already set the Bees a discussing the question of further Reform? This is the extent of the good we will accomplish. We will ripen public opinion and this is certainly no small thing.'<sup>3</sup>

Smiles had fine ideas about tracts and a monthly circular in order to lead the nation but the national movement never developed and he had to be content to see political education spread locally through the Association's news room which was established in September 1841.<sup>4</sup> The Association held meetings there and Stansfeld gave two lectures which were later published as pamphlets.<sup>5</sup> Early in 1842 there were 400 subscribers, a 300 volume library, weekly lectures and evening classes yet by November the news room had closed and the Association was virtually defunct.<sup>6</sup>

It was the Association's view of the suffrage which caused this rapid decline for they were in a dilemma since to go for universal suffrage

1. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Times, 13 Feb.1841.
2. Smiles Autobiography, p.96.
3. Smiles Papers SS/IV/8, Smiles to Roebuck, 23 Dec.1840 (Archives Dept.)
4. Smiles had often spoken at the Association's meetings of the need for a news room open to the working men without political education. Leeds Times, 21, 23 Aug., 18 Sept.1841.
5. Ibid., 20 Nov.1841, 8,15,22 Jan.1842. Monopoly and Machinery (1841) and Compensation Not Emigration (1842) L.R.L. P331.8 ST 26L .
6. Ibid., 5 Feb.1842, Leeds Intelligencer, 12 Nov.1842, Leeds Mercury, 19 Nov. 1842. It appeared that the room had been rented in the names of Stansfeld and Marshall and they were left to pay the arrears.



would alienate the middle classes while sticking at household suffrage meant continual Chartist opposition.<sup>1</sup> When Perronet Thompson returned in October 1841 to lecture to the Association the meeting was invaded by the Chartists<sup>2</sup> and when Sturge launched his Complete Suffrage Movement in the spring of 1842 the more radical members of the Association followed him. The Association sent delegates to the Complete Suffrage conference in April 1842 and in September resolved to convert itself into the Leeds Complete Suffrage Association with new rules and a new committee.<sup>3</sup> Gone were the big names of the middle-class leaders. Smiles remained with his fellow doctor Robert Craven while Robert Martin and David Green were the staunchest of the working-class leaders. Even this body had trouble with the Chartists and were not able to elect their own delegates to the Birmingham conference in December. The Leeds Parliamentary Reform Association was seen by the League leaders as hostile to it yet in a strange way the Association protected the League cause in Leeds in 1842. In other cities, such as Birmingham and Nottingham<sup>4</sup>, the Complete Suffrage Movement swallowed up the Anti-Corn Law Associations. In Leeds it swallowed up the Parliamentary Reform Association and thus returned the League leaders like Stansfeld and Marshall to the corn law question.

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1. Northern Star, 23 Oct.1841, advised Marshall and Stansfeld of the 'utter inutility of wasting their energies in attempting to satisfy the people with mere segments of reform and class crotchets'.
  2. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Times, 16, 23 Oct.1841.
  3. Leeds Times, 16, 23 April, 17, 24 Sept. 1842.
  4. See my articles "Nottingham and the Corn Laws" in Trans Thornton Society, 1966, pp.95-6, and "Birmingham and the Corn Laws" in Trans B'ham Arch. Society, 1967, pp.14-15.

(ii)

The activity of the Leeds Parliamentary Reform Association in 1840 and 1841 made it certain that in the event of an election in Leeds there would definitely be a Radical candidate. It seems likely that Smiles would have preferred Roebuck who had given two well received lectures to the Association.<sup>1</sup> In 1840 he had quoted in his newspaper an article about Roebuck from the Weekly Dispatch in which the writer had stated 'I can recommend him to any large Radical constituency as just the man to do their work.'<sup>2</sup> Smiles was confident that Leeds would choose Roebuck but there was however a drawback:

'I may mention confidentially that you are talked of as our next representative by a large portion of the Radical constituency. But for that confounded Sabbath question which would be carefully raked up there would be no fear of success. But the other day Mr. Richardson (Clerk of the Peace) mentioned you as the most likely man and I suggested the probability of the Tories and Whigs making a handle of the aforesaid question when he immediately expressed his strong fears lest it might be done with too much chance of success . . . the influence which it might have on the mind of the less informed Methodists and Dissenters would no doubt be very considerable.'<sup>3</sup>

It was not just the 'less informed' Dissenters who would have to be placated for the strength of feeling on the Sabbath question was illustrated just after the 1841 election when Baines Junior invoked righteous indignation against the Leeds Zoological Gardens for deciding to open on

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1. Leeds Times, 24 Oct.1840, 9 Jan.1841.

2. Ibid., 19 Sept.1840.

3. Smiles Papers, Smiles to Roebuck, 23 Dec.1840.

a Sunday. His editorial on 'The Public Desecration of the Sabbath'<sup>1</sup> could hardly have been much stronger if Satan himself had been collecting the gate money.

In the event the need to avoid a further split in the Liberal camp probably excluded Roebuck. There was general agreement that whoever was chosen it should not again be Molesworth. The Whig Liberals certainly had no love for him after the way he had been forced upon them in the 1837 election and his action in moving a vote of no confidence in the Whig government in 1838 had not endeared him to them.<sup>2</sup> During the "Bedchamber Crisis" Molesworth had informed Leeds 'I in no way regret the dissolution of the Ministry nor do I conceive it to be an event in any way injurious to the cause of progressive Reform.'<sup>3</sup> The official local party line put out by the Mercury was of course that any Whig ministry would be preferable to the Tories and so Baines disagreed with him on this issue and was not altogether happy with his attitude to the possibility of war with France in 1840.<sup>4</sup> Nor were the Radicals satisfied with Molesworth. On one of his rare visits to Leeds in 1840 he addressed a ward dinner and was well received<sup>5</sup> but at the end of the year Smiles confided to Roebuck

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1. Leeds Mercury, 21 Aug. 1841. It was interesting that in ibid., 28 Aug. 1841 Hamer Stansfeld defended the decision thus revealing a link between the religious and political arguments between the two men.
  2. Leeds Mercury, 3 March 1838, remarked 'his constituents at Leeds will give him small thanks for such a service'.
  3. Ibid., 11 May 1839.
  4. Ibid., 24 Oct., 14 Nov. 1840.
  5. Ibid., 8 Feb. 1840.

'Between you and me Sir W. Molesworth will not do for the Leeds people. They want an active man - one who will say and do something to advance their principles.'<sup>1</sup>

Molesworth, it appeared, no longer suited the Radicals. His agent Woolcombe told a Leeds meeting of Molesworth's views

'He felt he could not retire from the representation of those interests unless it was clearly made manifest to him, by parties on whom he believed the Radicals had entire confidence, that by again becoming a candidate he should endanger the Liberal cause in the borough'.<sup>2</sup>

The "parties" referred to, probably Stansfeld, Marshall and Goodman, made it clear to Molesworth he was not wanted and so he withdrew. Since Baines was also retiring because of ill health<sup>3</sup> the field was open on the Liberal side for new candidates to emerge.

The question was whether the Whig-Liberals would repeat their 1837 performance and put stumbling blocks in the way of a Radical candidate. In fact events showed that a lesson had been learned and even before discussions took place Baines wrote 'the just and fair course is to select one candidate from each section of the Liberal party'.<sup>4</sup> This statement was doubly significant for firstly it openly admitted the existence of a split in the Liberal party and secondly it willingly acknowledged the right of the Radicals to one candidate. At secret and unreported

1. Smiles Papers, Smiles to Roebuck, 23 Dec.1840.
2. Leeds Mercury, 29 May 1841.
3. He had wished to retire at the end of 1840 but had been persuaded not to by the party leaders in Leeds. Baines Life, p.225.
4. Leeds Mercury, 22 May 1841.

preliminary conferences<sup>1</sup> the two sides got together and worked out a strategy for the meeting of Liberal electors which would choose the candidates.

Using a device sometimes utilised on nomination days to show party unity, it was decided that one from each party would propose each candidate, thus indicating that the candidates had the support of both sections of the party. Thus it was that Hatton Stansfeld, the leader of the opposition to Molesworth in 1837, now proposed a motion that there should be one candidate from each section of the party and that both sections should support both candidates. Stansfeld the Whig was seconded by Smiles the Radical. Then James Marshall proposed and Baines Junior seconded Joseph Hume as the Radical candidate, while James Hubbard proposed and Hamer Stansfeld seconded William Aldam Junior as the Whig candidate.<sup>2</sup>

The leaders of the two sections set an impeccable example of compromise and cooperation. Hatton Stansfeld issued what for him was near revolutionary talk when he said that the 1841 election involved 'the interests of the people against the privileged few; the interests of the masses against what were called class interests'<sup>3</sup> and his brother Hamer emphasised the need to support the Whig candidate wholeheartedly. This

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1. Nothing would be known of these meetings but for an admission by Thomas Plint that they had occurred. He was trying at a meeting of the Leeds Parliamentary Reform Association to placate irate Radicals by telling them that at those meetings the Whigs had been very accommodating; ibid., 29 May 1841.
  2. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Times, Leeds Intelligencer, 29 May 1841. The meeting was obviously carefully planned and the three main resolutions were introduced by three Radicals, Smiles, Marshall and Hamer Stansfeld, and three Whigs, Hatton Stansfeld, Baines and Hubbard.
  3. Ibid.



was where the tension reached near breaking point for whereas in 1837 it had been the Whigs who had objected to the Radical candidate in 1841 it was exactly the opposite. The day before the electors' meeting the Leeds Parliamentary Reform Association had met to discuss the Leeds election and several speakers had angrily rejected cooperation with the Whigs and Thomas Plint had been unable to calm their fears. At the electors' meeting Plint again sought to defend the Whigs and to remind the voters that a compromise involved both sides giving way somewhat. George Newton and William Whitehead urged George Goodman to stand but he refused and James Richardson and the Rev. J.E.Giles asked some very awkward questions about Aldam. Eventually after this 'little display of temper'<sup>1</sup> agreement was reached and even Smiles admitted of Aldam "with proper drilling he may be rendered sufficiently acceptable to the electors".<sup>2</sup>

Aldam certainly was the problem for everybody knew of Hume's long years in Parliament as a Radical leader<sup>\*</sup> but few had ever even heard of "Oldham" as some called him. His father had been born William Pease in 1779 but succeeding to Aldam property through his mother's family he took the name Aldam in 1810.<sup>3</sup> William Aldam Junior had been born in 1813 and after an education involving a Darlington Quaker school, London University and Trinity College, Cambridge he was called to the Bar in 1839, though he had never practised.<sup>4</sup> He had never had to worry about

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1. Leeds Mercury, 29 May, 1841.

2. Leeds Times, 29 May 1841.

3. He remained in partnership with his brother Thomas Benson Pease as a stuff merchant in Leeds.

4. For Aldam's background and subsequent career see J.T.Ward "The Squire as Businessman: William Aldam of Frickley Hall (1813-1890)" in Trans. Hunter Arch.Soc., 1961, pp.196-217.

\* Leeds Intelligencer, 29 May 1841 called him 'a sort of political pestilence.'

earning a living and had travelled widely but had of course done nothing at all to justify a political reputation.<sup>1</sup> In short he was a leisured gentleman whose family and commercial links with the town solved for Leeds the problem of finding a suitable candidate who could afford to go to Westminster.<sup>2</sup>

On the Tory side there were also new candidates, for ill health prevented Sir John Beckett from standing again. However the Beckett family, which held a grip on Leeds Toryism from 1834 to 1852, was still represented by William Beckett who ran the family's banking business in Leeds. Beckett's name was canvassed from the beginning of the campaign although he was somewhat of a pressed man and did not formally announce that he was a candidate until the third week of election activity.<sup>3</sup>

Lord Ashley, the factory reformer, was invited to be the second Tory candidate but he refused<sup>4</sup>, so John Atkinson, the Tory solicitor, and Adam Hunter, the Tory doctor who was so active in the Town Council, quickly went to London in search of a candidate. As Atkinson reported,

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1. What little was known was hardly to his advantage for it was found that his father had voted for Beckett in previous elections.
  2. Others who were mentioned, James Marshall and George Goodman, perhaps felt that the economic climate of 1841 did not allow them the extravagance of prolonged absence from Leeds. Aldam later joined the ranks of the country gentry but in 1841 was keen to profess his urban connections: 'He was a townsman and his father had for thirty years or more been a tradesman and been assiduously employed in the industry of the town.' Leeds Mercury, 23 June 1841.
  3. Leeds Intelligencer, 29 May, 12 June 1841. Beckett gave his requisition and the register a close scrutiny before standing.
  4. E. Hodder The Life and Work of the 7th Earl of Shaftesbury (1836), I, p.337.

'we were not a day too soon for London is at this moment full of deputations on a similar errand.' A candidate was found, Lord Jocelyn, the son of the Earl of Roden, who was warned 'Leeds is a bustling place and the electors like to worry a candidate a little.'<sup>1</sup> Jocelyn's military career and Orangeman background seemed to be hardly appropriate for Leeds but there was an important link. Jocelyn was Lord Ashley's brother-in-law and Ashley had apparently arranged for Jocelyn to go to Leeds to revive the factory cause.<sup>2</sup>

However the factory question was not the main issue of the election which was fought largely on the Corn Laws and the current economic depression. Free trade was the main theme of the election speeches by Hume and Aldam, of the editorial support in the Press and of the letters and speeches of local political leaders while the candidates themselves were referred to as 'Free Trade candidates' and their supporters as the friends of Tree Trade.<sup>3</sup> Yet the Liberals in Leeds could not really exploit this issue because of the attitude on the Tory side. Beckett said in his address

'I can admit that a reduction and modification of the present scale of duties would not be attended with any injustice to any class of the community . . . that our Commercial Code requires deliberate investigation and that many obstacles which now impede the current of Trade may be removed without injury to any existing interest.'<sup>4</sup>

Here was a Peelite indeed who was willing to move some way towards Free

1. Leeds Intelligencer, 29 May 1841.
2. Ashley's diary for 22 June contains the statement 'I have laboured hard for Jocelyn at Leeds.' When he heard of Jocelyn's defeat (July 3) he remarked 'Thus fall my hopes and efforts. The Ten Hours Bill if not retarded has lost a grand means of advance'. Hodder op.cit., pp.333-40.
3. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Times, 29 May, 5,12,19 June 1841.
4. Leeds Intelligencer, 12 June 1841.

Trade and who obviously could not be denounced as a bigoted and ignorant Protectionist.<sup>1</sup>

Nor did the Liberals have things their own way on the Corn Law itself. Stansfeld addressed a letter to the merchants of Leeds in favour of repeal and two of his workmen paraded the streets with two loaves stuck on poles, a large American one decorated with orange and a small English one decorated with blue. It was a good stroke which was countered by John Atkinson's claim that Corn Law repeal meant lower wages, since the manufacturers had filled their factories with machinery.

'and the capital that was to work them must have a return; how then were they to get their manufactures cheaper? What was there squeezable? Was there anything else but wages?'<sup>2</sup>

In a campaign where the Chartists were active with their own candidates this was an important point. Beckett's explanation of the depression was over-production:

'there has been too much capital; the bankers have been too free; we have opened the money drawers too much; there has been too much machinery built - Gentlemen the beam of the steam engine has made too many strokes, the flywheel has made too many revolutions.'<sup>3</sup>

This was said at an eight-hour meeting at the White Cloth Hall Yard where all the candidates for both Leeds and the West Riding spoke in what must have been for all concerned something of an endurance test. Nomination Day was scarcely less so for this time 50,000 attended for six hours on Woodhouse Moor. The show of hands was slightly in favour of the Liberals and the two Chartist candidates James Williams and James Leach, neither of

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1. It is not surprising after declarations like these to find that Beckett voted with Peel in 1846.

2. Leeds Intelligencer, 19 June 1841.

3. Ibid., 26 June 1841.

whom were townsmen, withdrew.<sup>1</sup>

When the poll opened the Liberals went into the lead but from 11 o'clock in the morning Beckett went ahead and stayed there. The final result

Beckett (T) 2076

Aldam (L) 2043

Hume (L) 2033

Jocelyn (T) 1926<sup>2</sup>

was proof of the care which had gone into Beckett's scrutiny for before the election he had forecast 2018 for himself and 1980 for Jocelyn which was remarkably accurate when it is considered that over 4,000 voted on a 91% poll.<sup>3</sup>

The Radicals were mortified by the defeat of Hume and Smiles was at a loss to explain it.<sup>4</sup> Hume himself could hardly believe the result and double checked the lists before the declaration, during which time a yellow coffin was paraded which was inscribed 'The mortal remains of Joe Hume who departed this life July 1 1841 at four o'clock.'<sup>5</sup> What was particularly galling for Hume was that he had been offered several seats which he had rejected in favour of Leeds because 'he knew no place where the principles of Free Trade could be so effectually asserted as in the West Riding of Yorkshire.'<sup>6</sup> Indeed the offer of other seats was the theme of

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1. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Times, Leeds Intelligencer, 3 July 1841.
  2. All election figures are derived from the Poll Book of the Leeds Borough Election (1841).
  3. 4092 voted out of a register of 6334 which included 1331 double entries, 438 removals and 92 deaths, leaving a net register of 4473.
  4. Leeds Times, 3 July 1841.
  5. Leeds Intelligencer, 3 July 1841.
  6. Leeds Mercury Extraordinary, 23 June 1841.



one of the few squibs which appeared, when it leaked out that Dundee wanted Hume and that he was prepared to stand in both places, no doubt as an insurance policy.<sup>1</sup> He must have longed for Dundee when he heard the result for it was strange to him to find so Radical a town returning one Liberal and one Tory which meant

Leeds was out of the question! What an event! . . .  
he could not but repeat that it was mortifying to think that in a town like Leeds where they ought warmly to support the principles of Free Trade they had come to a decision so adverse to the welfare of the State'.<sup>2</sup>

At first people assumed that Whig plumpers had not honoured their agreement and voters in Holbeck were incensed that James Brown, an important wool merchant, had plumped for Aldam but was advising West Riding voters to vote for both the Liberals there.<sup>3</sup> In fact an analysis of the vote shows that the Whig-Radical alliance held together well.

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1. Prodigious! Electors of Leeds in Representation of Leeds 1831-1841.

Cf. also the squib Cute Joseph in ibid.

A beggar man is Joseph full well he plied the trade  
In Middlesex and from his dupes a pretty living made  
Then to Kilkenny under DAN he went to count his beads  
And now complete in craft he brings his begging box to Leeds.

2. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Times, 3 July 1841.

3. Leeds Times, 10 July 1841.

TABLE I ANALYSIS OF 1841 POLL

	Beckett	Jocelyn	Hume	Aldam
Plumpers	68	1	18	19
Beckett and Jocelyn	1,919	1,919		
Hume and Aldam			1,972	1,972
Beckett and Hume	39		39	
Beckett and Aldam	50			50
Jocelyn and Hume		4	4	
Jocelyn and Aldam		2		2
Totals	2,076	1,926	2,033	2,043

As the Table shows plumpers were only really important on the Tory side where there was a big discrepancy between Beckett and Jocelyn. The bulk of Aldam's votes came from splits with Hume which indicated a successful compact between Whig-Liberals and Radicals. The small difference between Hume and Aldam was accounted for by the splits with Beckett, where Aldam gained a few more votes than Hume.

There had been a swing of 3.94% to the Conservatives since 1837 and once more the swing in the township was much more decisive than that in the out-townships. In the out-townships the swing was 1.71% while in Leeds it was 5.10%. Indeed within Leeds township two wards, East and South, had anti-Liberal swings of 15%. This does suggest some switching of loyalties no doubt the result of the abysmal failure of the Whig Govern-

ment to fulfil its early promise.<sup>1</sup> Yet a massive desertion of Liberal ranks is not indicated by Table II which examines the votes of 100 people (roughly a 2% sample) in 1837 and 1841. Only six people changed party, five from Liberal to Conservative and one the opposite way. This would leave a net gain of four votes in 100, remarkably near the swing of 3.94% cited above.<sup>2</sup>

TABLE II SAMPLE OF 100 VOTERS

	Liberal	Tory
Voted same way 1837 and 1841	41	44
Abstained in one	8	1
Changed party	5	1

The answer for the election defeat lay not so much in the voting as in the register itself. Several references were made to the knife-edge difference between the parties in 1841 which meant that a small gain in the revision could be decisive. One letter to the Times suggested that the Radicals did not know the true state of the register<sup>3</sup> and Hume himself cited insufficient attention to the register as the main cause of his defeat. The two revisions prior to the election of 1841 had gone against the Liberals. In 1839 the Tories claimed a gain of over

1. It was this disillusion which no doubt prompted even the party leaders in London to regard Leeds as a doubtful seat and Joseph Parkes anticipated that both seats would be lost to the Conservatives. Parkes to Russell, 7 May 1841, quoted by N.Gash Reaction and Reconstruction in English Politics (1965), pp.209-11.
2. Taking account of abstentions the net gain is in fact three for the actual results were 1837: Lib. 47, Tory 45, 8 abstained; 1841: Lib.49. Tory 50, 1 abstained.
3. Leeds Times, 10 July 1841.

250 while in the following year they submitted 400 more objections than their opponents and Baines was forced to admit that they had spent more money and shown more zeal than the Liberals.<sup>1</sup>

The history of elections in Leeds from 1834 to 1841 indicated the precarious majorities which each party had in turn. The parties were, broadly speaking, evenly balanced and so the register became all important. The Liberals' narrow majority of 1834 had been converted by a successful revision into a Tory majority in 1835. That in turn was eaten away by registration to produce the 1837 Liberal success and now in 1841 registration and some movement of opinion again gained the Tories one seat.

The same combination also accounted for the stunning defeat of the Whigs in the West Riding where the Tories gained both seats. The result

JohnStuart Wortley	(T)	13,165
Edmund Beckett Denison	(T)	12,780
Lord Milton	(W)	12,080
Lord Morpeth	(W)	12,031

was as Morpeth admitted 'the most signal and the most decisive which has yet been attached to the cause of Conservative reaction.'<sup>2</sup> Wortley, the son of Lord Wharncliffe, and Denison, the brother of William Beckett, had achieved a significant success. In defeating Morpeth they were removing the only Whig minister defeated in the 1841 elections<sup>3</sup> and in defeating

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1. Leeds Intelligencer, 28 Sept.1839, Leeds Mercury, 29 Aug., 5, 12 Sept.1840

2. Leeds Mercury, 17 July 1841.

3. This was one of the main reasons for the testimonial which was organised for Morpeth; see J.W.Tottie to Fitzwilliam, 25 Aug.1841 in Wentworth Woodhouse MSS G.5.

Milton they were aiming a blow at the dominance of Wentworth House. As Wortley said

'It shows that the representation of the West Riding is not a mere appendage to a noble house, however high the station and however deserved the popularity of the members of that house may be.'<sup>1</sup>

Some attributed the defeat to the Poor Law and one well wisher advised Milton to steer clear of it or he would lose the election.<sup>2</sup> However agricultural fear over Corn Law repeal was a much bigger issue<sup>3</sup> and the strong links with trade in the West Riding did not placate that fear. As Fitzwilliam put it, voters might have been expected to remember

'how much the activity of manufacturers and the enterprise of trade contribute to the welfare of the proprietors and cultivators of the soil and here we might have expected a practical manifestation of that knowledge.'<sup>4</sup>

But it was not to be, for superior registration activity in the years since the 1837 election had given the Tories the chance of victory in a constituency which Fawkes had believed was impregnable to Tory attack.

The lesson was clear in both Leeds and the West Riding that the plodding, painstaking and detailed work of registration would have to be pursued more vigorously. No doubt, as always, dwindling faith in the Government accounted for the unwillingness of party activists to do the

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1. Leeds Intelligencer, 17 July 1841. Fitzwilliam would no doubt have rejected this view in 1841 but changed circumstances forced him in 1842 to tell the Tories 'that it was not his opinion that the Whigs were entitled permanently to engross the whole of the representation for the West Riding'. Report of speech of Fitzwilliam, 24 Nov. 1843, in Wentworth Woodhouse MSS G.7(b)
  2. MS note from "A Voter" on back of Milton's address. W.W.MSS. G.6.
  3. Cf. M.E. Rose Admin. of P.L., p.89, 'Neither Whig nor Tory was much inclined to use Anti-Poor Law sentiment as a rod with which to beat their opponents'.
  4. Draft Address of Fitzwilliam, n.d., in W.W.MSS. G.5.



necessary chores. Renewed effort was required and in both Leeds and the West Riding gains were reported at the 1841 revision.<sup>1</sup> However the West Riding Registration Association was not functioning well and only four delegates attended from polling districts at a meeting in Leeds early in 1842 when Tottie reported

'there was anything but an exhibition of spirit in regard to supplies in aid of the funds of the Association . . . but all agree that active and persevering attention to the registration are indispensable to regain for our friends the representation of the West Riding.'<sup>2</sup>

It has been pointed out that enthusiasm could not be expected in the first year of a new Parliament<sup>3</sup> but in addition a new attitude and a new structure of politics in the West Riding was required during the 1840's if the Whig-Liberal party was to re-emerge as a strong urban/rural coalition of equal partners. Many of Fitzwilliam's coterie assumed that the 1841 defeat was a temporary rebuff and that the Whig landed interest would regain its supremacy. Thus an Otley squire advised Fitzwilliam

'We have to teach Chartists and Millocrats, Marshalls and O'Connors Ballotteers that their desertion of the Whigs is not the road in the end they would be at. We shall have them penitent enough as it would seem ere long. But now let us grant them absolution till we feel that we can keep them in tether.'<sup>4</sup>

In fact the Conservative victory had meant that the urban Liberals were not to be 'in tether' any longer for to regain the seat the Whigs needed the essential help of the urban registration associations. Yet again had Peel's clarion cry struck, "Register! Register! Register!".

1. Leeds Mercury, 25 Sept. 1841 and n. below.

2. T.W. Tottie to Fitzwilliam, 18 Jan. 1842 in Wentworth Woodhouse MSS. G.83.

3. Thompson "Whigs and Liberals . ." loc.cit., p.224.

4. Trawly (?) to Fitzwilliam, 4 Sept. 1841, in Wentworth Woodhouse MSS.G.5.

(iii)

The Tory victory in the 1841 Parliamentary election gave the Liberals in Leeds a worrying few months until the Municipal elections, for in 1841 the parties each had exactly half of the Municipal seats. Since 1841 was also the year of Aldermanic elections it was the most crucial election in the short history of the reformed Corporation. Since the resounding Liberal victory of December 1835 the Tories had gained steadily until by spring 1841 they had two-thirds of the Councillors, which was half of the whole Corporation. Party totals for 1835 to 1838 have already been given<sup>1</sup> and from 1838 the picture was as follows:

TABLE III POLITICAL COMPOSITION OF THE COUNCIL

	Aldermen		Councillors		Whole Council	
	Lib.	Tory	Lib.	Tory	Lib.	Tory
1838 - 9	16	0	27	21	43	21
1839 - 40	16	0	20	28	36	28 <sup>2</sup>
1840 - 41	16	0	16	32 <sup>3</sup>	32	32 <sup>4</sup>

That the Liberals feared even in 1839 the possibility of a massive Tory victory was shown by an Aldermanic change in the week before the 1839

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1. See above, Chapter IV, p.<sup>184</sup> Table II.

2. During the year a vacancy in Bramley led to a Tory gain which left the totals 35 - 29.

3. Includes the two disputed elections discussed below, p.<sup>310</sup>.

4. Just before the election of 1841 the Tories by something of a subterfuge got one of the Aldermanic seats so for one week the totals were actually 31 - 33.

election. Alderman Bywater had been struck off the burgess roll at the 1839 revision and so on 1 November 1839 when the new roll became operative he would have been disqualified, thus creating an Aldermanic vacancy. However that would have been after the election and the Liberals might not then have been in a position to vote in their nominee so Bywater resigned a week early and paid a £50 fine, leaving a vacancy which Matthew Gaunt filled.<sup>1</sup> The Tories did not in fact gain control but they won 12 seats during the 1839 election<sup>2</sup> and in three wards, Mill Hill, North-West and Headingley, they were unopposed while in winning East and Bramley the Tories were for the first time breaching Liberal strongholds.

In 1840 the Tories made one gain at Bramley during the year<sup>3</sup> and then one further gain at the 1840 election when the parties won eight seats each<sup>4</sup>, leaving the Council divided 34 - 30 in favour of the Liberals. However the 1840 revision had not been completed and so the election had been fought on the 1839 register leaving many problems of double entries and removals hanging over. In two wards, Mill Hill and North-West, a Liberal had been returned by one vote after a recount involving the dis-

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1. Leeds Times, Leeds Mercury, Leeds Intelligencer, 2 Nov.1839; Council Minutes, 5, pp.591-97. The Tories were convinced that there was collusion here and claimed that the Liberals paid Bywater's fine for him. When asked for proof Atkinson admitted that he had none but asked what other explanation was there for a man to pay £50 to do something which he could have done for nothing the following week. Not only did this device keep the Alderman in the Liberal party, it also found a safe haven for Matthew Gaunt who faced defeat in his own Ward, North-West.
  2. Eleven Liberals and five Conservatives retired and four Liberals and 12 Conservatives returned.
  3. Council Minutes, 5, p.79.
  4. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Intelligencer, Leeds Times, 7 Nov.1840.

qualification of several Tory votes. As often before the Tories immediately applied to the Court of Queen's Bench for redress. In North-West they were able to get a judgment of ouster removing William Whitehead and seating R.D.Skelton in his place.<sup>1</sup> In Mill Hill a protracted dispute before the courts was avoided by a compromise whereby the two claimants for the seats both resigned and caused a new vacancy which a member of the old Corporation, J.G.Uppleby, won for the Tories.<sup>2</sup> This meant that from March 1841 the Council was equally divided between the two parties and the Tories held four times as many seats as the Liberals in the Township of Leeds itself.<sup>3</sup>

With the parties so nearly balanced good attendance became not just a corollary to public duty but a vital factor in political control. There is no doubt that what affected the attendance rate in the Town Council was the degree of political excitement generated either by subjects under discussion or by the state of the parties. This can be clearly seen from Table IV where the revival of Tory interest was paralleled by their improved attendance record. In addition the whole Council attended better and in the crucial years 1839 to 1841 the 75% attendance of the first year of the reformed Corporation was overtaken.<sup>4</sup> It was not the Liberals who were responsible for this but the Tories, fired by the prospect of imminent control. In 1838 they gained six seats from the Liberals

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1. Council Minutes, 5, pp.270-79, 5 March 1841, Leeds Mercury, 6 March 1841.

2. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Intelligencer, 13 March 1841.

3. Cf. Table IV below, p.315 .

4. In 1839-40 the meeting of 20 July 1840 was of a non-controversial character on the visit of the Queen Dowager to Leeds. If this is ignored then the attendance of the whole Council would have been almost 80%.

in 1839 seven and in 1840 four and in each of these years their attendance record was higher than that of the Liberals, particularly so in 1839-40 when their massive gain at the 1839 election renewed their enthusiasm for civic affairs.<sup>1</sup> During the vital year of 1841 their better attendance record gave the Tories effective control of the Council even though they did not have a numerical majority overall.<sup>2</sup>

TABLE IV ATTENDANCE RECORD, LEEDS TOWN COUNCIL, Nov.1838 - Oct.1842

Year	No. of Meetings	Average Attendance	%	Average No. of Meetings attended by Liberals	%	Average No. of Meetings attended by Tories	%
1838-39	12	44.8	70.0	8.33	69.5	8.77	73.0
1839-40	13	49.3	77.0	9.74	74.92	10.33	79.85
1840-41	14	49.0	76.5	10.34	73.86	10.81	77.21
1841-42	20	44.35	69.0	15.36	76.8	12.32	61.6

The relationship between political strength and attendance is abundantly clear on the fringes of this swing to the Tories. Condemned in 1836-37 to ineffective opposition in the face of the larger Liberal majority the Conservatives only registered a 33% attendance record. Then the election successes led to a much higher rate reaching almost 80% in 1839-40. Yet when the 1841 election was passed and the Liberal control confirmed, once more, the Tory attendance dropped back and the Liberal attendance moved up, in its turn stimulated by election success.

Since they had control in 1841 by virtue of better attendance and

1. This can be particularly seen in the meetings of 9 Nov.1839 and 1 Nov. 1840 immediately after the elections when there was a very high turn out, 61 and 64.

2. One example of this has already been quoted above, p.279 n.I



they had headed the poll in the 1841 Parliamentary election, the Tories were convinced that they would be electing the new Aldermen in November. Their confidence was illustrated by the way they dispatched Alderman Williamson in the week before the election and elected Henry Hall in his place to be an Alderman for just one week.<sup>1</sup> There were 11 Tories and five Liberals retiring in 1841 and since for the new Aldermanic elections the Liberals would be denied the votes of the eight retiring Aldermen the position was that the Tories needed to win only eight of the seats to be able to elect their own Aldermen and control the Council for the next few years.<sup>2</sup> Given that they could even lose three of their existing seats and yet still gain control of the Council the Tories were told by Perring 'we hold it impossible that they should fall short of the eight necessary.'<sup>3</sup>

Yet in politics the impossible often happens and the Tories were defeated 12 - 4 in the 1841 election<sup>4</sup> which was the same result they had achieved in November 1836 well before the Tory revival. In the Leeds township itself the Tories won only one seat, in East where they were un-

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1. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Intelligencer, 30 Oct.1841, Council Minutes, 5, pp.378-9. Williamson no longer resided in Leeds but was on the burgess list until 1 November 1841. However the Tories mustered their full strength of 32 and voted him out on the grounds that he was disqualified. The Liberals regarded this as an insolent trick and the Mercury later claimed that this example of the partisan and underhand attitude of the Tories was instrumental in their defeat in the 1841 election.
  2. The mathematics are as follows: the Council after the election of Hall stood at 31 Liberals and 33 Tories which meant that deducting retiring Councillors left a total of 26 - 22. A further eight has to be deducted for retiring Aldermen leaving 19 - 21. Hence if they won eight seats each the vote for Aldermen would have been 27 - 29 and the final Council 27 - 37.
  3. Leeds Intelligencer, 30 Oct.1841.
  4. Leeds Intelligencer, Leeds Mercury, Leeds Times, 6 Nov.1841.

opposed, and this was their worst ever performance. The Liberals gained some notable successes for they won Mill Hill for the first time since the very first election and West and North-East for the first time since 1836. In the out-townships the Tories were unopposed in Bramley and Headingley and in fact for the first time ever the Tories had not won one contested seat.

The Liberals were now safe but it had been a desperately close thing. The Tories were four short of their eight seats and in the four closest contests there was only a hair's breadth between the parties. In Kirkgate John S. Barlow, the Briggate hatter with a 100% attendance record when he had previously been a Councillor, got in by one vote over Thomas England, the Tory corn merchant and retiring Councillor. In Mill Hill the retiring Tories were beaten by four votes and in North-East by only seven.<sup>1</sup> Thus four Council seats were won by a total majority of 12 votes.

The narrowness of the Liberal victory strengthened the Conservative case for a share of the Aldermen. As Martin Cawood pointed out, they still had a majority of elected representatives and

'He thought they would not be doing justice to the large and influential party to which he belonged if they did not elect all or some of them. He thought the time had arrived when the Council should no longer be a mere arena for political strife . . . but if they would elect Aldermen all from one side although the Conservatives had a majority of Councillors chosen by the people the Council room would continue to be the scene of party strife.'<sup>2</sup>

This appeal fell on deaf ears and eight Liberals were elected leaving the

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1. The figures were    Kirkgate    Barlow    (L) 254, England    (T) 253  
                          Mill Hill    Birchall    (L) 376, Hey        (T) 374  
    Smith        (L) 375, Atkinson    (T) 373.

2. Beeds Mercury, 14 Nov. 1841.

Council as follows

	Aldermen	Councillors	Whole Council
Liberal	16	23	39
Tory	0	25	25

It was a safe Liberal majority yet if a dozen people in Leeds had voted the opposite way the result would have been 37 - 27 for the Tories. Such was the knife-edge balance of politics in Leeds in 1841.

At such a point, when the two parties were balanced in the Council and in particular when the Conservatives were at their peak it is appropriate to enquire into the social and economic background of the two parties. In the previous chapter it was argued that there was little difference in social status between old and new Corporations and that there was no evidence for a drop in the social composition of the Council up to 1841. Was there however any social difference between the two parties by that date?

The distribution of seats between 1835 and 1842 is indicated by Table V which gives the overall representation of each ward after each election. Something of the varying political complexion of the wards emerges from this.

TABLE V DISTRIBUTION OF COUNCIL SEATS BY WARDS 1835 - 1842

	DEC. 1835	JAN. 1836	NOV. 1836	NOV. 1837	NOV. 1838	NOV. 1839	NOV. 1840	NOV. 1841	NOV. 1842
	L T	L T	L T	L T	L T	L T	L T	L T	L T
East	3 0	3 0	3 0	3 0	3 0	2 1	1 2	0 3	0 3
Kirkgate	3 0	2 1	2 1	2 1	2 1	1 2	0 3	1 2	2 1
Mill Hill	3 3	1 5	0 6	0 6	0 6	0 6	0 6	2 4	2 4
North	3 0	3 0	3 0	2 1	1 2	1 2	2 1	3 0	3 0
North East	3 0	3 0	3 0	2 1	1 2	0 3	0 3	1 2	1 2
North West	3 0	3 0	3 0	3 0	2 1	1 2	0 3	1 2	2 1
South	3 0	3 0	3 0	3 0	3 0	3 0	3 0	3 0	3 0
West	6 0	6 0	5 1	3 3	1 5	0 6	0 6	2 4	3 3
Leeds Township	27 3	24 6	22 8	18 12	13 17	8 22	6 24	13 17	16 14
Bramley	6 0	6 0	6 0	6 0	6 0	4 2	3 3	2 4	2 4
Holbeck	6 0	6 0	6 0	6 0	6 0	6 0	6 0	6 0	6 0
Hunslet	3 0	3 0	3 0	3 0	2 1	2 1	1 2	2 1	2 1
Headingley	0 3	0 3	0 3	0 3	0 3	0 3	0 3	0 3	0 3
Out- Townships	15 3	15 3	15 3	15 3	14 4	12 6	10 8	10 8	10 8
Whole Borough	42 6	39 9	37 11	33 15	27 21	20 28	16 32	23 25	26 22

South and Holbeck wards were safe for the Liberals, Headingley and Mill Hill for the Tories. The former were largely industrial, the latter largely business and residential areas. However the Liberals lost ground to the Conservatives in a variety of areas, for example North-East

which included some of the poorest areas of the town as did Kirkgate which was a mixture of shops and lower class housing. The large West ward also moved towards the Conservatives during these years. All this supports the evidence cited in earlier chapters that Conservatism could appeal to a cross-section of opinion both socially and geographically.

If there were any basic difference in the social composition of the two parties it would have revealed itself inside the Council. Table VI analyses the composition of each party on the Council by social class, indicating the relative proportions of each social class within the party concerned. The same social/occupational categories are used as in the previous analysis of the social composition of the whole Council. The most significant figures are those for 1840 - 41 when the parties

TABLE VI POLITICAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC COMPOSITION OF LEEDS COUNCIL

Year	Proportion of Party on Council Falling in each Occupational Group							
	I		II		III		IV	
	Gentry and Professional		Merchants and Manufacturers		Craft/Retail		Drink/Boon Interest	
	L	T	L	T	L	T	L	T
1838-39	23.2%	38.0%	55.9%	42.8%	9.3%	9.6%	11.6%	9.6%
1839-40	25.0%	35.8%	55.6%	39.3%	8.3%	17.8%	11.1%	7.1%
1840-41	34.3%	34.3%	56.3%	40.7%	3.1%	18.7%	6.3%	6.3%

were equal on the Council for there is very little difference between the two revealed here. Just over a third of each party comprised the gentry/professional element and each had the same small proportion of the drink/



corn interest. In all three years the Liberals had a higher proportion in Group II, the Tories a higher proportion in Group III. The Liberals who were in the commercial/manufacturing category remained fairly constant, at just over half the party. This might have been anticipated but the greater Conservative proportion in Group III among men of lower social status was less expected and further strengthens the evidence just cited above of the wide appeal of the Conservative view. Operative and Tradesmen's Conservative societies were thus a reflection of the structure of the party. The overall impression from Table VI is that the parties were broadly speaking composed of the same social elements.

One issue still remains to be discussed at this stage, namely the discrepancy between the Parliamentary and Municipal elections of 1841. In the former a Conservative was returned which only served to emphasise the Liberal victory in the latter. It will be recalled that in 1835 the same thing had happened. If one compares the Parliamentary elections of 1837 and 1841 with the Municipal elections of the same years it appears that in 1837 North-East and West wards swung more to the Conservatives in the Municipal elections than in the Parliamentary while in 1841 these two together with Mill<sup>Hill</sup> and North West swung more to the Liberals in the Municipal than the Parliamentary.

Samuel Smiles had no doubts that the 1841 Municipal election results illustrated the value of a more extensive franchise, for the Municipal franchise was in fact household suffrage. He therefore concluded that the 1840 Parliamentary franchise hid the true feeling of the people which could be revealed in a Municipal election and so the discrepancy in results was the consequence of the discrepancy in the electoral rolls.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Leeds Times, 6 Nov. 1841.

Table VII examines the truth of this claim by comparing the two rolls in 1837 and 1841. In each case the actual figures are given and assuming that all Parliamentary voters were Municipal voters an index has been arrived at with the Parliamentary total as 100 in each case.

TABLE VII PARLIAMENTARY AND MUNICIPAL VOTERS 1837 and 1841

	1 8 3 7			1 8 4 1		
	Parliamentary List	Municipal List	Municipal, assuming Parliamentary as 100	Parliamentary List	Municipal List	Municipal, assuming Parliamentary as 100
East	246	1932	785	308	1151	374
Kirkgate	526	861	164	552	690	125
Mill Hill	1001	1292	129	1051	1004	96 <sup>1</sup>
North	443	2001	450	493	1068	209
North East	241	2078	862	288	1419	493
North West	383	1336	349	489	1109	226
South	318	1071	337	360	626	171
West	843	2338	277	1038	1936	186
Township of Leeds	4001	12909	322	4578	9003	197
Bramley	609	2084	342	632	1796	284
Headingley	309	376	122	395	846	219
Holbeck	410	1451	354	417	2155	517
Hunslet	250	710	284	294	1653	562
Out-Townships	1578	4621	293	1738	6450	371
Borough of Leeds	5579	17530	314	6316	15453	245

1. Unusual drop accounted for by severe registration contest in 1841 revision.

As Table V shows the Municipal list was very much larger than the Parliamentary and there may be some significance in the fact that in both 1837 and 1841 there was the biggest difference in size within Leeds in North-East ward. North-East voted differently in both years in the Parliamentary and Municipal elections and it may have been that people lower down the social scale tended to accentuate swings of favour in the Municipal poll, to the Tories in 1837 to the Liberals in 1841. However there is no clear link between the size of the electorate and the pattern of voting. The truth of the matter was, as Smiles chose to ignore, that the more extensive electorate which preserved the Liberals' hold over the Council in 1841 was the same as that which steadily increased Tory representation in the Council between 1837 and 1840.

Perhaps the £4 or £5 householder was more volatile in his political affiliations than his £10 counterpart but even if this is so what swung him one way or the other were the issues before him. In 1835 a Tory had gained a seat in the Parliamentary election yet in the same year the Liberals swamped the Tories in the Municipal poll, probably because people wished to see how the new regime could perform. Gradually rising expenses and unfulfilled expectations led to a steady swing to the Tories until 1841 when it really mattered. Given the political atmosphere of Leeds where people seemed not to vote according to occupational group or social status and political opinions did matter it seems likely that faced with the eventual choice between a Liberal and a Tory controlled Council the electorate, or at least enough of them, saw the Liberals home because of the choice which faced them. In earlier elections a vote for the Tories did not endanger the whole Council; in 1841 it did.

This gradual swing to the Tories coupled with their better attendance did at least enable them to get their own way in the Council on several occasions. In 1840 they prevented any nomination to the advowson of St. John's on the ground that Dissenters were not competent to legislate for the Church.<sup>1</sup> There was great Tory elation when expenses were disallowed relating to the Contested Mill Hill election of 1840,<sup>2</sup> as there was when Hall replaced Williamson as an alderman just before the 1841 election. The decision to build a new gaol was reversed in June 1841 and in the previous March the Tories got their own nominees elected as printers against Hobson and Smiles, the choice of the Liberals.<sup>3</sup>

These were pleasing signs of Tory strength but the main bone of contention between the parties, the Chancery suit, remained just beyond their grasp. There is no doubt that if they had achieved a majority they would have abandoned the suit and so the Liberals were very fortunate that the case was eventually heard in December 1840; another few months and all might have been lost.<sup>4</sup>

The Chancery suit, what the Intelligencer called 'this Whig stalking horse', was a continual source of tension and argument between the parties throughout 1839 and 1840. As the costs of the suit passed £1,000 and

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1. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Intelligencer, 11 Jan. 1840; Council Minutes, 5, pp. 62-3.

2. Ibid., 8 May 1841; Council Minutes, 5, pp. 323-4. This was subsequently allowed when the Liberals regained their majority, ibid., , pp. 18-21.

3. Council Minutes, 5, pp. 294, 343-4, Leeds Intelligencer 19 June 1841.

4. There was a suspicion on the Tory side that something untoward had been done to advance the hearing and it may have been that the disastrous election results in 1840, coupled with the two disputed seats, forced the Liberals to bring pressure to bear perhaps through the Attorney General to bring on the hearing.

approached £2,000,<sup>1</sup> all paid out of the Borough Fund, so the Tories put up stronger opposition to the progress of the suit. Their strategy seemed to be one of passive opposition in court and active opposition in the Council. By the former they hoped to delay the suit by the latter to abandon it. Adam Hunter usually proposed motions to drop the suit as in the heated debate at the end of September 1839 and six months later he failed by only one vote to get the suit abandoned.<sup>2</sup>

Throughout 1840 the same arguments were once more expounded, relating to the nature of the Corporate property whether private or public<sup>3</sup> and an attempt was made to clarify the issue in September 1840 by a comprehensive report prepared by Edward Eddison, the Town Clerk, and presented to the Council by the Chancery Suit Committee.<sup>4</sup> Even this caused dispute for Matthew Gaunt, the Chairman of the Committee who had become notorious for his description of the Old Corporators as "Turpins", claimed that books had been deliberately withheld and two furious rows developed over the expunging of these words, which even some Liberal Aldermen found a little offensive.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Estimates were as follows: Leeds Mercury, 23 Feb. 1839 £1,100; ibid., 18 May £1,100; ibid., 3 April £1,300; ibid., 17 Aug. £1,472; Leeds Intelligencer, 30 March 1839 £1,600; ibid., 4 July, 15 Aug. £2,000.
  2. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Intelligencer, Leeds Times, 5 Oct. 1839, 4 April 1840; Council Minutes, 4, p.585, 5, p.102.
  3. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Intelligencer, 1, 15 Aug., 19 Sept, 14 Nov. 1840.
  4. Chancery Suit Committee Minutes, pp.19-21. The report appeared in full in Leeds Mercury and Leeds Times, 19 Sept. 1840. The costs already amounted to £1,459.
  5. Two Tory amendments to reject the report were defeated as was a Liberal amendment to remove the offending word. On this amendment all but one of those in favour were Liberal Aldermen and it was rejected by members only two of whom were Aldermen. It seems that on this occasion Alderman Gaunt and the majority of the Councillors were far less conciliatory than most of the Liberal Aldermen. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Intelligencer, Leeds Times, 3 Oct., 21 Nov., 1840; Council Minutes, 5, pp.187-9, 221-2; Chancery Suit Committee Minutes, pp.20-2, 25-6.



The 1840 elections left the Chancery Suit Committee fearful lest in the last hour the Tories might abandon the suit and before a meeting in November Gaunt circularised all Liberal members of the Council imploring them to attend.<sup>1</sup> At last after nearly five years of waiting Lord Cottenham, the Lord Chancellor, decided the case in Chancery in December 1840. After hearing the Attorney General describe the events of 1835 as an illegal alienation of Corporate property and defence counsel plead that private property was involved Cottenham decided in favour of the new Corporation and ordered that all the money should be repaid together with full costs.<sup>2</sup>

Nine months later the Chancery Suit Committee was able to submit a final report and dissolve itself. The Council's legal expenses had totalled £2,531 and two-thirds of this was recovered. In financial terms it had cost the Borough Fund £803 to recover stock worth £6,183 and this was the Committee's final statement.<sup>3</sup> In political terms it had produced a Liberal victory in the struggle between old and new Corporations. The long delay, rising cost and general disillusion of the voters had not swayed people like Gaunt, and Tottie who felt that the question had to be put for a decision. The Liberals had shown their mettle and tenacity and had scored a great political victory.

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1. Chancery Suit Committee Minutes, p.24A.
  2. For a full report of the case see English Reports, Vol.XLI, Chancery XXI, Craig and Phillips, pp.389-400. For the Chancellor's decision see also Council Minutes, 5, pp.392-403.
  3. Council Minutes, 5, p.409. This figure of £6,183 took account of the genuine expenses of the Old Corporation which had to be paid out of the original alienated sum of £7,000.

Though their opposition to the Chancery suit was grounded in political partisanship the main plank in the Tories' public argument was the cost of proceeding with it. This was of course part of their general stratagem to discredit the Liberals by fears of rising local taxation. Especially at election time the Tory cry of extravagance was heard and on the Liberal side it was felt that false rumours of increased cost were responsible for the election defeats of 1839 and 1840.<sup>1</sup> However the welter of accusations about cost in the early months of 1839<sup>2</sup> gradually subsided and from the end of 1840 far less was heard in Tory attacks about increased cost. This was certainly the result of the increased Tory representation on the Council since to criticise the Council for spending too much money would have meant in 1840 - 1841 a self-criticism. Tories were certainly in a majority on most of the committees which spent money and once more their better attendance gave them overall supervision of finance in 1841.

Hunter, Atkinson, Cawood and Heywood were still prepared to use finance as the main reason for opposing the building of a new gaol in Leeds. Ironically the Liberals believed it would save money, since enlargements to the gaol at Wakefield would have meant increased costs for Leeds over the next few years.<sup>3</sup> The Council had agreed in principle to build a new gaol in November 1837, a decision which was confirmed in February 1838 and

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1. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Intelligencer, 5,12,19,26 Oct.1839, 17,24 Oct.1840, Leeds Times, 24 Oct.1840.
  2. Leeds Intelligencer, 5 12,19 Jan, 16 Feb.,30 March, 13 April 1839, Leeds Mercury, 12 Jan.,16 Feb.1839, Leeds Times, 23 Feb.1839.
  3. Cf. Leeds Mercury, 9 April 1842, £25,000 to Wakefield over 10 years, Leeds Times, 19 Nov.1842, £15,000 to Wakefield.

January 1839.<sup>1</sup> However nothing was done while negotiations were still pending with the Wakefield justices. The question was raised again early in 1841<sup>2</sup> and after presenting a petition against the gaol in May John Atkinson and Martin Cawood successfully moved an amendment in June 1841 reversing the decision to build a gaol.<sup>3</sup> This was the main achievement of the Tories in 1841 and was the fruit of their increased representation and good attendance record.

It was inevitable that the restored majority of the Liberals in the 1841 election would produce a reconsideration of the whole question of the gaol and in March 1842 discussion was renewed despite new arrangements made with the West Riding magistrates consequent upon the decision not to build in June 1841.<sup>4</sup> At two Council meetings in April 1842 it was agreed despite strong Tory opposition that the present gaol was insufficient and Leeds would prefer to have its own gaol.<sup>5</sup> In the following month it was once more resolved to build a new gaol in the face of two Tory devices to block the proposal. Firstly Martin Cawood moved an amendment that in view of the decision of June 1841 no gaol was necessary and secondly, adopting a novel role relating to consulting the public, William Hayward moved that no decision be taken until the burgesses had held a public meeting.<sup>6</sup> Both of these suggestions were defeated and in effect the Council had restored itself in May 1842 to its November 1837 position.

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1. See above, Chapter IV, pp200-I , Leeds Mercury, 5 Jan.1839.

2. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Intelligencer, 6 Feb.1841.

3. Ibid., 8 May, 16 June, 1841; Council Minutes, 5 , pp.320, 343.

4. Leeds Intelligencer, 5 March 1842.

5. Council Minutes, 6 , pp.43-48.

6. Ibid., 6 , pp.63-70; Leeds Intelligencer, Leeds Mercury, Leeds Times, 7 May 1842.

The Tories stuck persistently to their line that the cost involved was too heavy. Even in November 1842 Cawood once more raised the question of cost and proposed dropping the project.<sup>1</sup> Estimates varied as to the possible cost of building a gaol and as usual the Tories' estimates were high, the Liberals' low. The Intelligencer spoke often of costs of up to £60,000 and Tottie's estimate of £30,800 was dismissed peremptorily with the remark '£35,000 is a mere flea bite we must wait for the horse leech'.<sup>2</sup> Even when Sir James Graham, the Tory Home Secretary, agreed to help with finance the Tory cry was that the Liberals would still have power and patronage.<sup>3</sup>

On the gaol and other questions party disputes were very bitter in the years 1839 - 1841. There was a wrangle over the political activities outside the Council of Hamer Stansfeld which is discussed later<sup>4</sup> and even the Statistical Committee enquiry into the state of Leeds in the late 1830's was opposed by the Tories on the grounds of expense and because they believed that 'it had been dishonestly converted into a party engine'.<sup>5</sup> The annual election for the office of Mayor was also keenly contested and there was usually a very high attendance for this, in November 1840 actually 100%. In November 1839 and November 1840 William Smith, a Wesleyan wool merchant of Burley, was elected against Richard Bramley, the Tory cloth merchant. In November 1841 Bramley was again unsuccessful against

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1. Leeds Intelligencer, Leeds Mercury, 12 Nov. 1842, Leeds Times 19 Nov. 1842.

2. Leeds Intelligencer, 13 Nov. 1841, 7 May, 9 July 1842.

3. Ibid., 25 June 1842.

4. See below, p. 335

5. Leeds Intelligencer, 28 Sept. 1839; see also ibid., 25 May 1839, 15 Aug. 1840; Leeds Mercury, 13 April, 5 Oct. 1839.

another Methodist, William Pawson, a clothier from Wortley, and the first man from the out-townships to become Mayor. In November 1842 however the first Councillor to be elected Mayor, Henry Cowper Marshall, one of the flax spinning family, was elected unopposed and he was the first Mayor to be so elected. This was one of the signs of a decrease in party warfare during 1842.

There were five reasons for the mellowing of party warfare on the Council. Firstly in a strange way the election defeat of 1841 reconciled the Tories to semi-permanent minority status. Up to 1841 there was the rampant expectancy of office and this made for an arrogant assertion of party dignity and identity. Thereafter the Tories had to make the best of it and they were more likely to gain influence by cooperation than by opposition. Secondly there was some compensation for the election defeat in the appointment by the new Peel Government of nine Tory magistrates. Henry Hall believed these appointments

'presented the first opportunity since the existence of the New Corporation of breaking down party spirit amongst the magistrates and he should be glad if it produced the same effect in the Town Council.'<sup>1</sup>

Thirdly the Chancery suit was now over and becoming a memory and fourthly the Improvement Act of 1842, which is discussed later, enabled both parties to cooperate in solving basic problems about conditions in Leeds. The Chancery suit had been divisive whereas the Improvement Act was cohesive. Finally 1842 saw great threats to the social order and both Liberal and

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1. Leeds Intelligencer, 16 April 1842.



Tories were interested in defending it. Hamer Stansfeld warned in July that the main problem was 'how a revolution and a violent one too was to be averted' while Samuel Smiles predicted a great national disaster 'which may issue in the disturbance and disruption of the entire social system'.<sup>1</sup>

Similar fears of attacks upon property had been raised by Tottie in 1839 when Chartist activity in Leeds had led to the importing by the Town Council of cutlasses from London, the drilling of the police and the enrolling of special constables. Moves to reduce the size of the police force were defeated and in August 1839 the increases caused by fears of disorder were approved.<sup>2</sup> There was a certain degree of cross party activity among those who supported the increase in the police and those who opposed it. Among the latter the Tory corn merchant Ralph Markland found himself supported by Joshua Bower who in his inimitable way remarked

'As to all this talk about Chartism it reminded him of Billy Pitt who when he wanted to increase the army was continually telling the country that Bonaparte was expected in England every day.'<sup>3</sup>

Tories however were not to be found allying with Radicals in 1842 in opposition to increases in the police force, for Leeds clearly had quite a scare in August even though much worse disorder was experienced elsewhere. In such circumstances as the Intelligencer put it 'it behoves all to hold themselves at their country's service as defenders of social order and vindicators of the law.'<sup>4</sup> On 15 August 1842 preparations were begun to

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1. Leeds Mercury, 23 July 1842, Leeds Times, 16 July 1842.
  2. Leeds Mercury, 13 April, 17 Aug. 1839; Council Minutes, 4, pp. 544-5, 565-7. For action of the authorities see Magistrates Minutes, 10, 15 May, 24 July, 1 Aug., 24 Oct. 1839.
  3. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Intelligencer, Leeds Times, 5 Oct. 1839; Council Minutes, 4, pp. 583-4.
  4. Leeds Intelligencer, 20 Aug. 1842. For other districts see F.C. Mather, Public Order in the Age of the Chartists (1959).

cope with the 'tumultuous assemblage' which, it was anticipated, would invade Leeds from the West and troops were called in, special constables enrolled and a magistrate dispatched to London to report in person to the Home Office.<sup>1</sup> On the following day all arrangements were made for the approaching struggle and detailed plans were laid down assigning specific duties for each magistrate and providing for the protection of the Court House and the Gaol. When the mob entered Leeds from the west there were mills stopped in Bramley and later in Holbeck. In the latter township trouble recurred and there was something of an affray at the engineering works of Maclea and March in Dewsbury Road.<sup>2</sup> Worse was expected to follow but calm was gradually restored by 'the terror which the appearance of the military has no doubt produced on the part of the disaffected.'<sup>3</sup> Within a week it was reported 'our Borough is at peace . . . public confidence is fast recovering and altogether the prospects for the future are still brighter.'<sup>4</sup>

Once the immediate danger was over the magistrates began to count the cost, not least to their own pockets for they had paid for the temporary

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1. Magistrates to Home Secretary, Pawson (Mayer) to Home Secretary, both 15 Aug. 1842, P.R.O. HO 45/264. Between 15 and 25 August Pawson sent daily reports to the Home Office and the subsequent account is based on this correspondence.
  2. Pawson to Home Secretary, 17 Aug. 1842, enclosing Minutes of special meeting of the Borough Magistrates, 16 Aug. 1842, P.R.O. loc.cit. the Magistrates Minute Books peter out in 1842 and there are no references to the disturbances. Cf. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Times, Leeds Intelligencer, 20 Aug. 1842.
  3. Pawson to Home Secretary, 19 Aug. 1842, loc.cit.
  4. Markland and Bramley to Home Secretary, 24 Aug. 1842, loc.cit.

accommodation for troops<sup>1</sup>, and it was realised that public order could not permanently depend on the units of soldiers and the 1,700 special constables who had been enrolled. As an aftermath of the "holiday insurrection" 100 extra men were taken on to the police force and without a Tory whisper of extravagance<sup>a</sup> the Council approved the levy of a 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. rate to raise the £5,565 necessary to pay for the extra police and prosecutions.<sup>2</sup>

The only voices raised against this came from the Radicals and the Times protested about displays of armed force and unnecessary increases in the police force.<sup>3</sup> The petition organised by the Radicals against the increase in the police force was a herald of the revival of independent Radical activity in the face of an apparent Liberal-Tory coalition. The participation of Radicals, Universal Suffrage candidates and Chartists in the 1842 Municipal election was part of this process and was to some extent a reaction against the events of August.

Working-class Radical participation in local elections did not begin with the Chartists who were hostile to this in 1840<sup>4</sup> and as early as 1838 'A Voice from North West Ward' was advising working men to choose their own candidates and 'make the Municipal Council of Leeds in miniature what we want the Commons House of Parliament to be.'<sup>5</sup> In 1838 John Jackson stood as a candidate as he did again in 1842 and the Chartists in that year

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1. It was a sure sign that the disturbances were over when the magistrates began to worry about who was going to pay. This was the subject of protracted correspondence; see Barr to Home Secretary, 25 Nov. 1842, loc.cit., also series of letters from the Magistrates in HO 45/264 A.
  2. Council Minutes, 6, p.121-2; Report Book Municipal, Vol.I, pp.101-2.
  3. Leeds Times, 20, 27 Aug., 3 Sept. 1842. It was to do the same in 1843, see below, Chapter VII, p.
  4. Northern Star, 24 Oct. 1840 advised 'let no Chartist take part in the dog fight'. See also ibid., 31 Oct. 1840.
  5. Ibid., 13 Oct. 1838.

were merely part of the Radical body of candidates. It is misleading to see the Chartist participation in the 1842 election merely in the context of Chartism for it must also be viewed in the context of local politics overall. Barron and Hobson were unsuccessful Chartist candidates yet in Sellers at Kirkgate Ward, Hornby at North, White at North-West, Morton and Craven at West and Cliffe at Holbeck were to be found Radicals who supported universal suffrage. Further still in South Ward most people regarded William France as a Chartist in the Town Council.<sup>1</sup>

This injection of Radical Councillors who were sympathetic to or members of the working class meant that in the better atmosphere of Council proceedings the most likely party warfare would occur between Whig-Liberals and Radicals and the latter began holding separate meetings beforehand to plan their actions.<sup>2</sup> However there was little real unity since in the context of 1842 some were Chartists, some Complete Suffrageists and some Radicals. As the Intelligencer put it

'It remains to be seen whether the sans culottes of the Charter will take to weaving "complete" suits of "shoddy" manufactured from the worn out garments of Whiggery'<sup>3</sup>

The only thing common to this Radical union in 1842 was a desire for economy and the Times which for years had defended the Liberals against Tory attacks of extravagance now weighed in with a massive assault on local

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1. Ibid. and Leeds Mercury, 5 Nov.1842. There is a certain degree of inconsistency in Dr. Harrison's account of this in Chartist Studies, pp. 83-91. On p.88 he says only two Chartists stood (Hobson and Barron) yet there was also France who got in and was referred to at the time as a Chartist and White also successful in 1842 and referred to as a Chartist on p.91. John Jackson also stood in 1842 and he was referred to on p.90 as a Chartist when he stood in the following year.
  2. Leeds Intelligencer, 12 Nov.1842.
  3. Ibid., 24 Sept.1842.

expenditure.<sup>1</sup> That working-class Radical participation in local government could lead to parsimony and frustrate genuine attempts to improve working-class welfare was shown by the bitter attack of the South Ward Radicals on Robert Baker. No member of the Council had done more to stimulate public interest in the sanitary condition of Leeds nor more to improve the physical environment and, as the Mercury put it, Baker deserved a public monument rather than public censure.<sup>2</sup> Yet William France's supporters in South Ward believed that Baker's expressed motive of the 'public health welfare and happiness' was a mere pretence. Uppermost in their minds was not the improvement in conditions but the cost. Two hundred and sixty inhabitants of South Ward called on Baker to resign and when he questioned whether they were all Liberal voters they replied

'Do they not all suffer from the injuries that your public extravagance may inflict . . . Are they not called upon to pay their proportion of the cost of your expensive schemes and speculations'<sup>3</sup>

Robert Baker was finding, as did Edwin Chadwick in organising the Public Health Movement, that those who had most to gain from sanitary reform thought the price too high to pay.

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1. Leeds Times, 8 Oct. 1842, 'They have doubled the borough expenditure in six years during a period of increasing distress among the population'.
  2. Leeds Mercury, 3, 10 Dec. 1842.
  3. Leeds Times, 31 Dec. 1842.



(iv)

Baker's interest in the sanitary condition of Leeds had led him to support the waterworks scheme described in the previous chapter. The water question had been removed from party politics during 1837-9 and thereafter became a matter of civil engineering while the town waited for the benefits of pure water. The Poor Law, too, gradually lost its partisan aspect and became a matter of administration. There were little tiffs like the refusal to pass the overseers' accounts in 1839 which was the result of 'opposition from political motives of a certain party.'<sup>1</sup> Complaints about the overwhelmingly Liberal character of the overseers appointed were finally settled by the injection into the bench of nine Tory magistrates in 1842 and the plan adopted to appoint one Liberal and one Conservative overseer for each ward.<sup>2</sup> Behind the scenes pressure was building up in support of a new workhouse. The crucial problem was cost, for as Luccock explained 'I fear a vestry would not sanction the expenditure of so much money however necessary it might be.'<sup>3</sup> Overseers, magistrates, Improvement Commissioners and doctors all reported to the Poor Law Commission in 1840 that a new workhouse was required which was confirmed by a Poor Law inspector in the following year.<sup>4</sup> His conclusion was that the vestry could be by-passed by incorporating Leeds into the Poor Law Amendment Act and despite the earlier fiasco in 1837 he was

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1. Naylor to Poor Law Commission, 27 May 1834, P.R.O. MH12/15224; see above, Chapter IV, p.247
  2. Leeds Intelligencer, 30 March, 6 April 1839, Leeds Mercury, 26 March, 9 April 1842.
  3. Luccock to Poor Law Commission, 15 June, 1840, P.R.O. MH 12/15225.
  4. Mott to Poor Law Commission, 24 Aug.1841, loc.cit.

confident that 'I could form an Union at Leeds and introduce the rules and orders of your Board without much difficulty.'<sup>1</sup> His optimism was not to be put to the test in Leeds until 1845.

The decline of party conflict over the Poor Law was certainly not echoed in Church administration. Hook clearly identified himself with the Tories, not least by his hurried return from the Continent to canvass and vote in the 1841 election and Leeds Dissenters therefore felt that they must 'in pure and necessary self defence elect Dissenters to be Churchwardens.'<sup>2</sup> In 1839, 1840 and 1841 Liberal Dissenters were elected fairly comfortably,<sup>3</sup> in the last year unopposed,<sup>3</sup> and their party indemnified the Churchwardens for any expenses they would have to bear. In 1842 however the Chartists participated in the elections and put up their own list. There were in fact three lists, a Chartist one proposed by William Briggs and Joshua Hobson, a Liberal one proposed by Baines Junior and Chiesman and a High Church Tory one proposed by Richard Bramley and Thomas Tennant. Such was the overwhelming strength of the anti-Church party that Hook admitted 'the contest was between the Chartists and the Radicals.'<sup>4</sup> Even the leader of the Church party in Leeds did not anticipate an Anglican success and when the Chartist list was carried Smiles remarked of the Church 'she is in the very paws of Chartism.'<sup>5</sup>

Since grave doubts rested on the status of many who had voted for the

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1. Mott to Poor Law Commission, 20 Jan.1842. loc.cit.
  2. Leeds Mercury, 26 March 1842.
  3. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Intelligencer, Leeds Times, 6 April 1839, 25 April 1840, 17 April 1841; Vestry Minutes, pp.196, 215-6, 238.
  4. Hook to Wood quoted in Stephens Life of Hook, II, p.118.
  5. Leeds Times, 2 April 1842; see also Vestry Minutes, p.253.

Chartist list<sup>1</sup> an appeal by the Liberals for a poll might have been expected. Yet there was none, and perhaps the Liberals were quite happy to leave the tedious duties of Churchwarden to the Chartists<sup>2</sup> and still be immune from Church rates, since the new Churchwardens promised that they would not levy them.<sup>3</sup> It was above all else hostility to Church rates which had initiated the Liberals' assault upon the Vestry and the office of Churchwarden. The Intelligencer had reported earlier a degree of intransigence on the part of some Liberals at the higher costs of running the new Parish Church which had been reopened in September 1841<sup>4</sup> and the election of the Chartists was something of a way out.

That the Dissenters were only interested in Churchwardens as a means of opposing Church rates was seen by two fiery and enthusiastic anti-Church meetings in 1840. At the first the growing hostility towards Hook and the Church extension scheme spilled over into a direct attack upon Church rates and the link between Church and State.<sup>5</sup> Two weeks later even more intemperate language was heard when not only Church rates and the Church establishment were criticised but also opposition was voiced to Bishops sitting in the House of Lords.<sup>6</sup>

At both these meetings the leaders included Radicals like Smiles, Stansfeld, Goodman and Craven who were soon to launch the "new move" in Leeds. The Church question was at the heart of party politics and the

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1. The Mercury for instance immediately got into a row with the Chartists for saying that the vast majority of them were not ratepayers.
  2. There were such things as sweeping the Church and laundering surplices.
  3. Leeds Mercury, 16 April 1842.
  4. Leeds Intelligencer, 26 March 1842.
  5. Leeds Mercury, 7,14,21 March, 11 April 1840, Leeds Times, 11 April 1840.
  6. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Times, Leeds Intelligencer, 25 April 1840.

Tories reacted in a political way not by Church activity but by a personal attack on Stansfeld. The authority of the Church was to be vindicated by the public disgrace of a political and religious Radical. Stansfeld was an Alderman and a magistrate and the Tories claimed that he had violated his oath in participating in the anti-Church meetings. In 1838 Perring had mooted the idea of questioning the validity of an official participating in Radical politics and in April 1840 the idea was revived.<sup>1</sup>

Smiles had highlighted Stansfeld's position by commending the example set by an Alderman in refusing to imitate his colleagues who had 'put a padlock on their mouths because of the oaths of office.'<sup>2</sup> The Tories began with a subtle ploy in moving in the Council a vote of thanks to the Mayor William Smith who had refused to call the anti-Church meeting because of his oath of office. Many Liberals abstained on this motion and it was carried thus being an indirect attack on Stansfeld who had sworn the same oath as the Mayor and yet had participated.<sup>3</sup> The Tories thereafter came out into the open and Adam Hunter organised a petition to Lord Normanby, the Home Secretary, calling upon him to remove Stansfeld from the Bench in the way that John Frost of Newport had been removed.

Stansfeld was in Prussia selling cloth while this attack was brewing and on his return he decided to make a stand on this issue which he believed was crucial for Dissenters. If the Tories were right that holding any official position immediately muzzled a Dissenter from speaking his mind then this would effectively prevent Dissenters from participating in local government. He sought therefore to get the Council to state categorically

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1. Leeds Intelligencer, 22 Sept. 1838, 25 April 1840.

2. Leeds Times, 25 April 1840.

3. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Intelligencer, Leeds Times, 16, 23 May, 1840; Council Minutes, p. 119.

that there was a distinction between the office and the man. In his oath he had sworn

'I will never exercise any power authority or influence which I may possess by virtue of the office of Alderman to injure or weaken the Protestant Church as it is by law established in England or to disturb the said Church, or the Bishops and Clergy of the said Church, in the possession of any rights or privileges to which such Church or the said Bishops and Clergy are or may be by law entitled.'<sup>1</sup>

Stansfeld argued that this oath did not preclude him as an individual from exercising his rights as a free citizen. His motion was carried but only just for it needed the casting vote of the Mayor, who ironically had chosen to interpret the oath differently.<sup>2</sup>

At the two meetings in question in 1840 there had been no wavering on the Liberal side on the utter refusal ever again to tolerate a Church rate in Leeds yet during 1841 a situation arose where some Dissenters were prepared, as the lesser of two evils, to support the levy of a Church rate. This had come about because of the need for a new burial ground, the necessity of which was made clear by the macabre discovery early in 1841 that grave diggers were removing bodies from existing graves in order to make room for more recent corpses. At that time the question was aired only briefly and the Mercury did admit that if there was no other way then a new burial ground would have to be provided out of Church rates.<sup>3</sup>

As the pressure of space grew so the problem became more acute and the Tories did not bother to contest the 1841 Churchwardens' elections because they were so sure that a Church rate was inevitable.<sup>4</sup> Hook also assumed that this was the position and called a Vestry meeting in December

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1. Declaration Book, Vol.I, p.54. This was the standard oath and the same as sworn by magistrates and councillors.
  2. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Intelligencer, Leeds Times, 1 Aug.1840; Council Minutes, 5, p.153. Tory Councillors again raised this matter in 1841 when Stansfeld was active in the Parliamentary Reform Association.
  3. Leeds Mercury, 30 Jan.1841, Leeds Intelligencer, 16 Jan.1841, Leeds Times, 6.2.41



1841 for the levy of a Church rate to provide a new burial ground, which, he said, Baines and the Mercury supported.<sup>1</sup> At a private meeting of Liberal Dissenters a split in the ranks occurred for while a majority wished merely to refuse a Church rate the two Baineses wished to propose some method of providing a new burial ground. Baines Junior was particularly incensed at what he viewed as a garbled report in the Times of a private meeting 'of the gentlemen who usually meet at the private arrangements of the Liberal Party for Parliamentary, Municipal, Registration and Church Rate contests and for other purposes.'<sup>2</sup> The Baineses had always been loath to publish details of these private meetings, going right back to the days of the Leeds Association.<sup>3</sup> In addition the younger Baines resented the personal attack upon himself since he had for eight years 'taken the most decided stand against the system and had (by the request of successive yearly meetings of the Liberals - private meetings they were and never published) for those eight years moved the Liberal Churchwardens at the Vestries.'<sup>4</sup>

The man who thus led in previous Vestries was now shouted down at the Vestry meeting in December 1841 since the combination of Hook's statement about his cooperation and the attacks of the Times made Baines Junior appear in the popular mind a mere apologist for Church rates. As he feared, the Vestry enthusiastically rejected a Church rate, yet at the same time refused him to move an amendment suggesting a possible solution.<sup>5</sup> Baines

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4. (from p.336) Leeds Intelligencer, 17 April 1841.

1. Leeds Times, 27 Nov., 4 Dec. 1841.

2. Leeds Mercury, 24 Dec. 1841.

3. See above, Chapter II, p. 59 et. seq.

4. Leeds Times, 11 Dec. 1841, Leeds Mercury, 24 Dec. 1841.

5. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Times, Leeds Intelligencer, 18 Dec. 1841.

was therefore left to argue his case in the Mercury where he continued to maintain that a Church rate would be tolerable for Dissenters on this occasion since they would benefit by the provision of parochial burial grounds. Since however Dissenters felt strongly against Church rates he recommended either a joint stock company or a subscription, neither of which however Hook and the Anglicans were prepared to participate in.<sup>1</sup> Despite this fairly rational case the Times continued to complain of the Mercury's desertion of the Dissenters, which was all of a piece with the hostility of Baines towards the "new move", so dear to Smiles. In contrast to the education dispute of 1847 Baines now took the pragmatic rather than the ideological line.<sup>2</sup>

The solution to the burial problem was eventually found in the Burial Grounds Act of July 1842 which passed through Parliament in conjunction with the Leeds Improvement Act. The act enabled the Town Council to provide burial grounds and separate consecrated from unconsecrated ground<sup>3</sup>, thus satisfying both Anglicans and Dissenters and avoiding 'unpleasant collisions in Vestry Meetings on the subject of Church Rates.'<sup>4</sup> The close connection between this act and the Improvement Act, which both received the Royal Assent on the same day, was the first of three important links between Church rates and burial on the one hand and the Improvement Act on the other. The second was that both these acts stemmed from a fear for

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1. Ibid., 1,8,15,22 Jan.1842.

2. In 1841-2 on the burial ground Baines took the view that the practical need to provide burial grounds outweighed Dissenting opposition to Church rates. In 1847 when many Dissenters took the view that the need to provide education for the masses outweighed Dissenters' opposition to State education Baines persisted with the no-compromise voluntary principle.

3. 5 and 6 Vict Cap 103, Clauses XXVIII - XXXVI.

4. Report Book Municipal, Vol.I, p.86.

public health in consequence of continued neglect. The third link was a political one in that before the Chartists captured the Churchwardens' elections in 1842 they had already been victorious in the elections for Improvement Commissioners.

In packing Vestry meetings with many who were probably not ratepayers the Chartists were imitating the example of the Operative Conservatives who had first done this in 1837<sup>1</sup> and who had made possible a Tory victory in the Improvement Commissioners elections of 1838 and 1839. As Smiles put it, the Tory Commissioners owed their election to 'the absence rather than the support of the ratepayers at the last annual meeting of the Vestry.'<sup>2</sup> During 1839 the Commissioners made themselves unpopular by levying the lamp rate on cottage property rated at below £5, which had previously been exempt on the grounds of poverty.<sup>3</sup>

There was therefore a great deal of interest in the 1840 Improvement Commissioners' election when a Chartist list, a Liberal list and a Tory list of Commissioners were proposed. There was something of a scuffle when, after Greig's Liberal list had been carried, John Beckwith demanded a poll. There appeared to be a Liberal victory but the adjournment for the poll was, according to Sir William Follett's opinion, illegal and so the Tory Commissioners elected in 1839 actually remained in office throughout 1840.<sup>4</sup> Vestry meetings condemned the "usurping Commissioners" who

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1. See above, Chapter IV, p. 266 n. 1

2. Leeds Times, 7 Sept. 1839.

3. Leeds Mercury, 21 Sept., 9, 23 Nov., 1839.

4. Leeds Times, Leeds Mercury, Leeds Intelligencer, 4, 11 Jan., 1, 8 Feb., 1842; Vestry Minutes, pp. 203-4; Proceeding of the Commissioners, 2, 29 Jan. 1840. It is strange in view of the dispute over the election and the subsequent frequent criticism of the Tory Commissioners who remained in office that J.F.C. Harrison "Chartism in Leeds", loc.cit., p. 86, should claim 'in 1840 an alliance of Whigs, Radicals and Chartists combined to defeat the Tory bloc.'

remained in office despite appeals for them to resign, both Liberal papers kept up a barrage of attacks on the leech-like way the Tories clung to office and the Commissioners dwindled in numbers as the rate-payers refused to elect replacements until they had all resigned.<sup>1</sup> Despite this obviously hostile public attitude the Commissioners were safe in office until 1841.

In that election a poll was immediately granted when demanded and the Liberal list was voted in by about 2,220 votes to 1,790, even though in three wards (Mill Hill, East and North-East) the Tories polled more votes.<sup>2</sup> The three-year Tory period was over to be succeeded by a Liberal regime lasting only one year for in 1842 a Chartist list was carried and even though it contained seven of the 1841 Commissioners<sup>3</sup> it represented a defeat for the Liberals and an important working-class accession of power.<sup>4</sup>

The Chartist Commissioners inherited a massive task, for their predecessors had recently begun to prepare for a new Improvement Act following the decision of the Vestry in June 1841 that the general acts under discussion in Parliament were unsuitable for Leeds and that a local act was necessary.<sup>5</sup> At that meeting Robert Baker had been one of the main speakers in favour of sanitary improvements in Leeds and this was only one of

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1. Leeds Mercury, 28 March, 18, 25 April, 9 May, 22 Aug., 12 Sept., 1840; Leeds Times, 28 March, 18 April, 12 Sept., 10 Oct. 1840; Vestry Minutes, pp. 210-11, 213-5; Proceedings of the Commissioners, 26 March, 1840, 13 April, 1840.
  2. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Times, Leeds Intelligencer, 9, 16 Jan., 1841; Vestry Minutes, pp. 219-23; Proceedings of the Commissioners, 7 Jan. 1841.
  3. Though not William Brook, the Chartist grocer, who had been a Commissioner in 1840.
  4. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Times, Leeds Intelligencer, 1, 8 Jan., 1842; Vestry Minutes, pp. 243-4; Proceedings of the Commissioners, 6 Jan., 1842.
  5. Vestry Minutes, pp. 240-41.

the occasions when he had tried to arouse Leeds on this issue.

In 1833 he had written the Cholera Report and in 1839 the Report of the Statistical Committee, which was presented to the Town Council. On reviewing the results of the latter report Baker reminded the Town Council that there ought to come a time

'when party spirit would be mitigated and when the bickerings in that Council which he had seen would subside into inquiries after more sober duties and when both sides of the Council would take up this great question - a great public question he would call it - and never allow it to rest until all the improvements had been effected . . he would ask anyone whether the moral and social condition of the poor in this town was not a matter of vital importance . . He called upon the Council as they valued their characters as Christians and philanthropists to extend the hand of sympathy and benevolence to those whom Providence had not blessed with the same enjoyments as themselves.'<sup>1</sup>

Part of the Statistical Report found its way via Alderman Williamson's evidence into the Report of the Select Committee on the Health of Towns of 1840 and it is almost certain that Baker composed the memorial on public health from the Town Councils to the Home Secretary, Lord Normanby, in 1841.<sup>2</sup> In the spring of 1841 Baker explained in letters to the Press that landlords regarded paving and drainage as luxuries which working men could not afford and later in the year he showed that these "luxuries" were in fact necessities by revealing a variation in the death rate in Leeds between one in 30 and one in 56 depending entirely on drainage.<sup>3</sup>

Given the evidence that Baker had accumulated, few could dispute the necessity of a new and extended Improvement Act and the first meeting of the new Commissioners resolved that the drafting of the new bill should

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1. Leeds Mercury, 2 Nov., 1839.

2. Ibid., 11 July 1840; Council Minutes, 5, p.245.

3. Leeds Times, 13 March 1841, Leeds Mercury, 18 Dec.1841.



be continued and a version of it placed before the Vestry for further direction.<sup>1</sup> When the bill was ready the Mercury was pleased to report that there appeared no real dispute over the provisions and Baker was convinced that at last the Statistical Report was bearing fruit.<sup>2</sup>

However there was basic disagreement in Leeds over where the powers under the new act should be vested. There were three possibilities. Firstly Baines Senior, who had done most of the drafting<sup>3</sup>, and the committee responsible for launching the bill favoured the solution at one time offered for the Waterworks in 1837. This was a combination of magistrates, Councillors and Commissioners which the Council and the magistrates in 1841 had in principle accepted.<sup>4</sup> The Council later changed its mind and in a series of motions, reports and petitions pushed strongly for the second possibility, that all powers should be vested in the Town Council itself.<sup>5</sup> The third possibility, that favoured by the Chartists, was that the powers should be vested only in Commissioners elected by the Vestry.<sup>6</sup>

In a series of Vestry meetings in February, March and April 1842 Hobson and the Chartists used their control over the crowds at the Vestry to mould the bill into the sort of measure that would make working-class

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1. Proceedings of the Commissioners, 8 Jan.1842.
  2. Leeds Mercury, 5, 12 Feb.,1842.
  3. Proceedings of the Commissioners, 1 Aug.1842.
  4. Leeds Mercury, 26 March 1842; Council Minutes,<sup>5</sup> , p.432; Report Book Municipal, I, pp.21-7; Magistrates Minutes, 16 Oct. 1841.
  5. Council Minutes,<sup>6</sup> , pp.32-4, 50-1; Report Book Municipal,I,pp.48-51.
  6. Proceedings of the Commissioners, 12 Feb.1842. Ironically this was also supported by Robert Ferring in his short-lived paper Leeds Conservative Journal, 4,13,25 June 1842, who saw it as a way of avoiding perpetual Liberal control in the Council.

participation in local affairs really meaningful. Acting rather like a Parliamentary Committee the Chartists reviewed the bill clause by clause and made some far-reaching amendments. The powers of the act were to be vested in 33 Commissioners elected by the Vestry and the magistrates and Councillors were to have no part whatsoever.<sup>1</sup> There was to be no financial qualification for a Commissioner merely an 18 month residential one.<sup>2</sup> Separate authority was to be needed from the Vestry for any improvement costing more than £500 and all Vestry meetings were to be held at seven o'clock in the evening rather than the usual 12 noon.<sup>3</sup> Progressive taxation was introduced into the rating clauses and a scale was introduced whereby houses under £10 were rated at one-third the rate of houses above £50.<sup>4</sup>

Baines read into these changes the view that the Chartists were attempting to destroy the bill<sup>5</sup>; in fact they were merely trying to make the Charter live. The purpose of the People's Charter was to facilitate a working-class assumption of power in Parliament and here the Chartists were doing the same for local government. All their amendments were part of an attempt to democratise local government. Popular control was possible through the election via the Vestry; working men would easily be able to become Commissioners; financial control was retained through the £500 limit and working-class participation made possible by the even-

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1. Leeds Mercury, 16 April 1842; Vestry Minutes, pp.257, 260.
  2. Vestry Minutes, p.259.
  3. Ibid., pp.245, 259.
  4. Ibid., p.258. For example the Lamp Rate was to be levied as follows: £50 and above 9d. in £., £10-£50 6d. in £, under £10 3d. in £.
  5. Leeds Mercury, 23 April 1842.

ing meetings; finally progressive taxation introduced the idea that those most able to bear the burdens should pay the lion's share of the cost. Here was municipal Chartism in its essence. Hobson, William Brook and Thomas Frazer were bringing to life the Chartist vision.<sup>1</sup>

While so doing they were however creating powerful enemies for themselves. The Town Council hardened on its line that the powers had to be vested in the Council, which according to the Chartists was not the popular view, which was 'against the transference of the powers of the executive of the new bill from the Commissioners to the Town Council'.<sup>2</sup> The Chartists felt strongly on this issue not least because polls were very rare in Vestry elections but the norm in Municipal elections. It is probably not without significance that in 1842 the two Chartist successes, in the Improvement Commissioners' and Churchwardens' elections, were gained on a show of hands and in the two where a poll was held, the elections for Surveyors of Highways<sup>3</sup> and for the Town Council, the Chartists were defeated. Clearly working-class control would be much more possible via annual elections in the Vestry than by triennial elections for Councillors and indirect election of Aldermen.

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1. There is paradoxically no mention of Chartist participation in the Improvement Act debates by J.F.C.Harrison, op.cit., in his section specifically devoted to Municipal Chartism.
  2. Vestry Minutes, p.260; Report Book Municipal, I, p.87.
  3. The Chartists actually claimed a victory here and altered the Vestry Minutes accordingly but this was because they ran their own poll at their rooms in defiance of the official poll called at the Court House. Even on their own poll the Chartists got only 150 votes while in the official poll the Liberals got about 600; see Vestry Minutes, pp.247-52.

As the changes became more radical so the influential people who were originally prepared to pay the expenses of a private act, reckoned at £3,000 to £4,000, gradually withdrew. In March Marshall informed the Commissioners that the Council could no longer cooperate in the passage of the bill through Parliament and within a month the magistrates did the same, followed by the legal agents of the Commissioners themselves.<sup>1</sup> Hobson finally realised that no House of Commons was going to pass a bill with such popular control in it and so he did not oppose D.W.Nell when he proposed that the Commissioners themselves would also have to drop the bill.<sup>2</sup> It was as Robert Barr pointed out a bizarre situation for 'the Council had gone out, the magistrates had gone out and now the Commissioners said they would not go on with it.'<sup>3</sup>

Hobson defended the abandonment of the bill on the grounds that there was no chance of it passing Parliament in a way 'conformable to the wishes of the majority of the persons who will be affected by the measure.' He recommended that they support the general acts under consideration in Parliament<sup>4</sup> and got the Vestry to accept a motion that no local act should be passed which did not contain all the alterations made in the Vestry. This, he believed, would prevent any section using 'their party political and legislatorial influence to procure the passing of the Bill in a shape to suit their own party and class interests but in a shape objectionable to the majority of the inhabitants.'<sup>5</sup>

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1. Proceedings of the Commissioners, 16 March, 20 April 1842; Vestry Minutes, p.261; Magistrates Minutes, 9, 18 April 1842

2. Proceedings of the Commissioners, 25 April 1842.

3. Leeds Times, 30 April 1842.

4. Which had been condemned by the Vestry in 1841 as unsuitable for Leeds; see above, p.340

5. Vestry Minutes, p.261; Leeds Mercury, Leeds Times, Leeds Intelligencer, 30 April 1842.

Despite Hobson's proscription of any bill but the one he had fashioned in the Chartist image, the Leeds Improvement Act received the Royal Assent in July 1842 and bore little resemblance to the bill amended in the Vestry during the spring. Once the Commissioners had dropped the bill it was taken up by the Council and the magistrates on condition that £4,000 be raised by subscription to meet expenses and that the question of the executive powers under the act be left for Parliament to decide.<sup>1</sup> The subscription was raised, the offending clauses re-amended, Baines and Baker appeared before a Parliamentary committee and the bill passed with full powers vested in the Town Council.

The Leeds Improvement Act of 1842<sup>2</sup> had 392 clauses, 10 schedules and covered a multiplicity of local problems including paving, sewerage, lighting, cleansing and widening of streets. It also contained regulations for all sorts of factories and workshops and for smoke control. It replaced existing regulations for hackney carriages. In conferring vast new powers on the Town Council the Act enabled the Council to borrow up to £100,000 on mortgage. Gone indeed was the financial control of the £500 limit.

Robert Baker took it upon himself to explain the Improvement and the Burial Acts to the Council and he thought that 14 Council committees would

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1. Council Minutes, 6 , p.73; Report Book Municipal, I, pp.89-92.
  2. 5 and 6 Victoria Cap 104, full title 'An Act for better lighting, cleansing, sewerage and improving the Borough of Leeds in the County of York'.



be necessary though in the event they managed with nine.<sup>1</sup> The new duties conferred on the Council took up most of the time of Councillors in the second half of 1842 and they were determined that the new act would be a boon to the working classes. Working-class districts were to receive some of the benefits previously reserved for the more privileged and indicative of the new spirit was a simple resolution referring to East Ward

'that the paving stones shall be of good stones such as have been used and are now standing or set in the best streets in Leeds.'<sup>2</sup>

The work of improvement had a noticeable effect in reducing party tension on the Council<sup>3</sup> and there was much more harmony when the work began. As Martin Cawood said

'We are not sanguine enough to expect that all party feuds will from this time be banished from the Council Chamber but the public may confidently hope that in proportion as the important duties of the members are increased by their new functions in the same proportion the war of words will be diminished'.<sup>4</sup>

There was certainly an element of philanthropic community spirit which crossed party lines and enabled the two sides to work together but in addition the debates on the Improvement Act had shown Liberals and Tories in the Council that they had much more to fear from the Chartists than

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1. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Times, 30 July 1842; Council Minutes, 6, pp.90, 103-10. The nine committees with their membership were Finance (9), Rates (9), Lamp (9), Market (9), Scavenging and Nuisance (9), Hackney Coach (5), Burial Act (17), General (45), Street (13).
  2. Council Minutes, 6, p.149.
  3. See above, p.26. It also may have brought nearer Chartist participation in local government for some Chartists argued that the only way they could control improvement (having failed to get their bill) was to enter the Council; see Leeds Conservative Journal, 21 July 1842.
  4. Leeds Mercury, 6 Aug.1842.

from each other. When Chartist rioters entered the town Liberals and Tories closed ranks to protect property and it must be remembered that the Chartist Improvement Bill was in its own way as much a threat to the social order as the Plug Plot. They were both an attack upon the political and social power of a property owning middle-class.

Thus in these years of economic slump the political battlefield hitherto reserved for Liberals and Conservatives was invaded by lesser social elements. In the political arena they had captured the Churchwards and Improvement Commissioners and were now making a play for the Council. In the Council the Liberals having withstood the fierce Tory challenge could face these newer elements with confidence. Their own defeat in the 1841 election merely strengthened their will to act via extra Parliamentary movements such as the League.

CHAPTER VI

EQUILIBRIUM DISTURBED

1843 - 1847

## (i)

On the eve of the Anti-Corn Law League's great triumph Cobden spoke in Leeds of the decisive position of the West Riding in British politics:

'Yorkshire is always the scene of great triumphs. It seems always destined to turn the scale in great movements. It is always the arbiter in fact of the nation's struggle'<sup>1</sup>

He later repeated this theme in a letter to Baines Junior<sup>2</sup>, for it appeared that with the conversion of Lord Morpeth Yorkshire and Leeds had fully joined the ranks of the League. Yet there had always been some disappointment over the achievement of Leeds in the anti-Corn Law activity, some of which has already been mentioned. It is necessary to trace the anti-Corn Law movement in Leeds in order to analyse its particular contribution to the League.

The first phase of anti-Corn Law activity in Leeds in these years was the winding up of the League's £50,000 appeal and the delegate meetings of January to May 1843. Leeds sent a high-powered 21-man delegation to the League banquet in January 1843 which included the two Stansfelds, the two leading Dissenting ministers in Leeds, Scales and Giles, and Bower, Plint and the younger Baines.<sup>3</sup> At Manchester the Leeds subscription was announced as £1,500 and although the final figure reached £1,743 it was by no means generous considering the size of the town. At first

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1. Leeds Mercury, 29 Nov.1845.

2. Cobden to Baines Junior, 22 Dec.1845. Cobden Papers, B.M. Add MSS 43664 f 195, 'Yorkshire is destined to be the arbiter of great national questions'.

3. Leeds Mercury, 28 Jan.1843.

Cobden was kind to Leeds and wrote to Baines 'It is not your fault if the Leeds people do not contribute all that we could wish to the fund.'<sup>1</sup> Later when the next appeal was under way the true opinions emerged and Moore, one of the League's Manchester leaders, complained that 'Leeds had not done its duty in the cause yet', while Cobden himself chastised Leeds for being 'a drag and a drawback to the Free Trade (party) in Parliament.'<sup>2</sup> Even in Leeds it was admitted that the £50,000 subscription was a disgrace to the town.<sup>3</sup> Aldam, for instance, gave nothing and declined the invitation to attend the Manchester banquet in January 1843, though he had voted for Villiers' motion in Parliament.<sup>4</sup>

In the spring of 1843 the Leeds Anti-Corn Law Association organised an anti-Corn Law petition which, despite the competition of an anti-education petition, received 38,000 signatures.<sup>5</sup> Baines Junior had addressed two public letters to Russell on the shortcomings of a fixed duty and on his suggestions the League agreed to pay for 250,000 copies of the letters when they appeared in pamphlet form.<sup>6</sup> Graham's Factory Bill dominated political interest in Leeds at this time and though Baines and Stansfeld headed the Leeds delegation to the May conference of the League

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1. Cobden to Baines, 17 Dec.1842, B.M. Add.MSS. 43664 fl36.

2. Leeds Intelligencer, Leeds Times, 16 Dec.1843.

3. Leeds Times, 9 Dec.1843.

4. Aldam to Wilson, 5 Jan.1843. Wilson Papers.

5. Leeds Mercury, 6 May 1843: the education petition received 22,000 signatures.

6. The letters appears in Leeds Mercury, 25 Feb., 4 March 1843. For Baines' suggestion and Wilson's reply see Baines to Wilson, 10 March 1843 (Wilson Papers) and Wilson to Baines, 11 March 1843. Baines Papers No.80.



no meetings were held in Leeds.<sup>1</sup>

The launching of the £100,000 appeal towards the end of 1843 renewed enthusiasm in Leeds. It is important to note that the inspiration came from Manchester and meetings in the West Riding were only arranged when Cobden and Bright announced that they would be coming.<sup>2</sup> In Leeds a soiree was arranged at which Hamer Stansfeld, the current Mayor, agreed to preside after doubts about the constitutional propriety of so doing.<sup>3</sup> The £100,000 soiree was a much more inspiring affair than the previous year's effort and on all sides it was agreed that Leeds was beginning to pull its weight on the League bandwagon. In one evening more than £2,500 was subscribed, including £800 from the Marshall family, and it was no wonder that Cobden could say that in Leeds the League had 'at their head the prince of manufacturers.'<sup>4</sup> There was more money to come and the final Leeds subscription totalled £3,879, more than double the previous year's effort. In addition a pledge had been given not to vote for any candidate who was not in favour of a total and immediate repeal of the Corn Laws. Furthermore, Leeds was now resuming its role of mentor to the West Riding and Thomas Plint, an accountant and secretary of the Leeds Anti-Corn Law Association, was sent round the manufacturing

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1. Leeds Mercury, 6 May 1843. Lowson, op.cit., p.122, states that 'Baines obviously planned a great Leeds meeting' in the early part of 1843. There is no evidence for this and his assumption rests on a misdating of a letter from Bright also quoted on p.122. The letter dated by Bright "12 mo 2 1843" is in fact 2 Dec. and not 12 Feb., as Lowson assumes. The meeting to which Bright refers is clearly a county meeting in Wakefield in 1844 and not a Town meeting in Leeds in 1843.
  2. Baines Junior to Wilson, 20 Nov.1843. Wilson Papers.
  3. Leeds Mercury, 25 Nov.1843. His action was predictably attacked by Leeds Intelligencer, 2, 16 Dec.1843.
  4. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Times, Leeds Intelligencer, 16 Dec.1843.

districts to lecture.<sup>1</sup>

It was from Leeds that the suggestion originated for a great West Riding <sup>meeting</sup> to be held at Wakefield at which delegates would report on the progress of the £100,000 appeal and which the free trade leaders would attend.<sup>2</sup> Williers, who was not able to attend, anticipated that it would be 'one of the most important demonstrations that have yet been made in England against the Corn Law.'<sup>3</sup> It was widely rumoured that Lord Morpeth would at last declare himself in favour of total and immediate repeal and this would certainly have satisfied Cobden, who had severe doubts about Morpeth, and Bright, who had warned earlier that the whole occasion had to be 'a real thoroughgoing one - a total and immediate gathering.'<sup>4</sup> Although, in the words of the Mercury, the dinner on 31 January 1844 was 'a brilliant and most effective meeting' and Marshall was certainly in form with his eulogy of industrial society, there was considerable disappointment that Morpeth would go no further than a fixed duty.<sup>5</sup> There was a further delegate meeting in Leeds a few weeks later followed on the same day by a town meeting at which Chartists noisily interfered without actually breaking up the meeting.<sup>6</sup> The subsequent petition and the last of a series of

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1. Leeds Mercury, 6, 13 Jan., 16 March 1844; Flint to Wilson, 22 Dec. 1843, Wilson Papers.
  2. Baines to Wilson, 3 Jan. 1844, Wilson Papers.
  3. Williers to Baines Junior, 29 Jan. 1844, Baines MSS. No. 78.
  4. Cobden to Baines, 6 Feb., 1844. B.M. Add. MSS 43664 f. 149; Bright to Baines Junior, 2 Dec. 1843, Baines MSS. No. 2.
  5. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Times, 3 Feb., 1844.
  6. Ibid., 23 March 1844.

Baines Junior's letters to the Earl of Harewood<sup>1</sup> completed the phase of the £100,000 appeal in Leeds. The pattern was now established that regional anti-Corn law movements followed the lead of annual appeals from Manchester rather than continuous agitation<sup>2</sup> and so in Leeds there was no further activity in 1844 until the League launched its registration campaign for the West Riding in December.

Cobden had once remarked that he would not have been sorry to see the League resolve itself into one huge registration society and during 1844 he had reminded Baines that three great English county seats were the League's ambition:

'What are you doing in the West Riding county matter? S. Lancashire, the West Riding and Middlesex may and must be won. . . I suggest that a portion of the League fund could not be better expended than in a judicious attention to your important district.'<sup>3</sup>

Though there were signs of reviving enthusiasm among West Riding Liberals to get the register in order there was persistent evidence of, in Tottie's words, 'the apathy of the Whig gentlemen as a body' and while Charles Wood was able to prevent the League interfering in the summer of 1844 the Whig gentry were powerless to resist the League at the end of the year.<sup>4</sup>

Indeed Cobden was anxious that, because of the temerity of the Whig squires and the poor showing in the 1844 revision, a new and separate League registration machinery be set up.<sup>5</sup> Baines managed to persuade him

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1. Leeds Mercury, 2, 9, 16 30 March, 6 April 1844. The League was interested in them; see Wilson to Baines, 6 April 1844, Baines MSS. No.81.
  2. Cf. my article "Nottingham and the Corn Laws" in Trans.Thornton Society, 1966, p.97.
  3. Cobden to Baines Junior, 24 June 1844. B.M. Add.MSS. 43664 f153.
  4. Tottie to Fitzwilliam, 19 July 1844, Wood to Fitzwilliam 25 July 1844; Wentworth Woodhouse MSS. G.11.
  5. Cobden to Baines, Oct./Nov.1844 passim. Add.MSS 43664 f.161,162,164,169, 172,173.

that the Fitzwilliam interest was worth preserving as an ally in the Liberal cause and concluded

'It would not therefore be prudent, in my opinion to attempt to set up a new Registration machinery in the West Riding but rather to do all that is practicable within the present committees . . . all this may be done without coming into conflict with the Whigs'<sup>1</sup>

This was the course that was adopted but it hardly made it more acceptable to the Whig gentry. The Lancashire invasion began in December 1844 when Cobden and Bright attended in Leeds to promote the West Riding registration campaign.<sup>2</sup> Flint and Stansfeld were the main Leeds speakers on that evening, urging that qualifications in the form of 40 shilling freeholds be bought by January 30 1845 in order to qualify for the 1845 revision and they became closely involved with the campaign. The way that anti-Corn Law tentacles enveloped the registration may be illustrated by the fact that both in personnel and headquarters the anti-Corn Law movement, the borough and the Riding registration committees were identical.<sup>3</sup>

The registration activity could not bear fruit until the following autumn and in the meantime Leeds was occupied in the early months of 1845 with preparations for the League bazaar in London. In toto the League bazaar was a comment upon the industrial progress of England in 1845, a sort of precursor of the Great Exhibition, yet in preparing for it the League campaign in Leeds was less inspiring than earlier efforts. The League speakers were only second string and the response from Leeds manu-

1. Baines to Cobden, 12 Nov. 1844. B.M. Add.MSS. 43664 F.175.
2. Leeds Mercury, 7 Dec. 1844.
3. The Leeds Anti-Corn Law Association, the Leeds Reform Registration Committee and the West Riding Reform Registration Association all met at 187 Wellington Street under the aegis of Stansfeld and Flint who held key offices in all three groups. See Flint to Patterson, 12 Aug. 1845, Wilson Papers.

facturers was less encouraging than had been hoped, although over £1,000 was raised by the Leeds stall when the bazaar was eventually held.<sup>1</sup>

The League entered its last phase in the autumn of 1845 and amid the mounting enthusiasm in Leeds it is possible to detect three distinct though interdependent strands of activity; first the continuing registration campaign, second the fruits of it in the unopposed return of Lord Morpeth in February 1846, and third the activity engendered by the political crisis consequent upon the Irish famine.

The effort invested by the League on the register came home to roost in October 1845 when a gain of 2,100 was recorded in the annual West Riding revision.<sup>2</sup> Spurred on by this result Cobden and Bright once more promoted the registration campaign in Leeds in November. Coinciding as it did with the Corn Law crisis it heightened political excitement. The themes were ever the same for as Cobden put it 'we are always fiddling upon the same string and yet you come to see your old Paganinis again'.<sup>3</sup> Although opponents tried to denounce the meeting as composed mainly of railway speculators<sup>4</sup>, Leeds was now a League stronghold. Stansfeld reported later that six week activity was devoted to the registration and Thomas Morgan, the Liberal agent in Leeds, advertised in the Press for cottages for sale suitable for voting qualifications. The 1846 revision, after the Corn Law crisis was over, yielded a further gain of 1,600 votes to the Free Traders.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Leeds Mercury, 15, 22 March 1845, 19 April, 7 June 1845. The general tenor of all activities in the first half of 1845 was of a lower key than before. Cf. my article "Birmingham and the Corn Laws", in Trans. B'ham.Arch.Society, 1967, p.17.

2. Leeds Mercury, 4 Oct.1845.

3. Ibid., 29 Nov.1845.

4. Leeds Intelligencer, 29 Nov.1845.

5. Leeds Mercury, 17 Oct.1846.



Lord Morpeth could clearly see the usefulness of such gains on the register and he was certainly playing the shy innocent with regard to a seat for the West Riding since he wrote in November 1845 of his West Riding electors 'I less than ever anticipate any probable renewal of political connection between us', yet a few days later refused to participate in a West Riding meeting for fear it would be seen as electioneering.<sup>1</sup> Showing that masterly Whig sense of timing and ability to move with the groundswell of political opinion which produced Russell's Edinburgh letter, Morpeth declared himself in November 1845 in favour of total and immediate repeal at the registration meeting in Leeds already described. In a letter to Baines Junior read at the meeting he acknowledged that he had earlier 'forbore from pledging myself to the entire extent of those (the League's) objects' but then without consultation or concert he declared himself fully behind the League.<sup>2</sup>

In view of this Lord Wharnccliffe could not have been more accommodating towards Morpeth in the timing of his death. The elevation of Wortley to his father's peerage left a seat vacant in the Riding at an ideal time and, as Cobden put it, 'if we had had the cap of Fortunatus for a moment

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1. Morpeth to Baines Junior, 24 Nov. 1845, Baines MSS. No. 15; Baines Junior to Wilson, 27 Nov. 1845, Wilson Papers. Morpeth's specific instruction was that his name should not be mentioned and the point is that if he had not been anxious to be elected he would not have worried about accusations of electioneering. Only if he really were electioneering would such an accusation injure his plans.
  2. Morpeth to Baines, loc.cit.

that is what we should have wished'.<sup>1</sup> Morpeth immediately declared himself a candidate and made the Corn Law the central issue of his campaign, declaring in his address 'I should deem it the main object of my mission to insist upon an immediate and final Repeal of the Corn Laws.'<sup>2</sup> Morpeth was pleased to report early on 'I hear of no opponent in the field'<sup>3</sup>, but there was a flutter of excitement with the arrival post-haste from Paris of Knaresborough's M.P., Busfield Ferrand, who had returned 'to save Monopoly and to annihilate the League.'<sup>4</sup> There was certainly a good deal of hostility towards the Free Traders and Kemplay, editor of the Intelligencer, urged a Tory to come forward 'to save us from being unresistingly scourged by Manchester money bags, from being trampled upon by supercilious and ambitious Cotton Lords.'<sup>5</sup> Ferrand did his best, first sounding one of Harewood's sons, who declined, and then getting a cautious promise to stand from George Lane Fox of Bramham, one of the leading lights in the abortive pro-Corn Law Yorkshire Protective Committee which had been launched in 1844.<sup>6</sup> In the event Morpeth was returned unopposed partly because of the expectation of another election shortly but mainly because of the League's registration campaign.<sup>7</sup> Exactly the same happened in July 1846 when Morpeth stood again on his ap-

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1. Cobden to Baines, 22 Dec.1845, B.M. Add.MSS.43664 f.195.

2. Leeds Mercury, 3 Jan.1846.

3. Morpeth to Baines Junior, 28 Dec.1845, Baines MSS. No.16.

4. Leeds Times, 31 Jan.1846.

5. Leeds Intelligencer, 24 Jan.1846.

6. Ibid., 9 March 1844, Leeds Mercury, 2 March 1844.

7. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Times, Leeds Intelligencer, 17,31 Jan.,4 Feb.1846.

pointment to Russell's cabinet.<sup>1</sup>

Baines believed that the election coupled with the series of West Riding meetings on the Corn Law crisis would be of decisive importance<sup>2</sup> and there was no lack of interest in Leeds at the crucial time. Very soon after Cobden and Bright's visit to Leeds in November 1845 590 householders signed a requisition to call a meeting for the immediate opening of the ports. Marshall, Baines Junior, Flint and Stansfeld were the main speakers, aided on this occasion by two Dissenting ministers, Ely and Wicksteed, neither of whom were known as 'political parsons'.<sup>3</sup>

Both Baineses believed the time had now come for decisive county meetings and Baines Junior set off for Castle Howard to solicit Morpeth's help. As already indicated he refused to participate, though he supported the idea of a meeting<sup>4</sup> which attracted a huge crowd in December 1845, the result of, according to one unkind observer, 'cheap trains, closed mills, paid fares and the agreeable temptation of a holiday'.<sup>5</sup> This Wakefield meeting was followed by an impressive West Riding dinner in Leeds in January 1846 in support of the League's quarter of a million fund and Yorkshire delegates subscribed £33,000 in one evening. Of that Leeds' share was £3,600, which included £1,000 from Marshalls and four donations of £300 each from Stansfeld, Fairbairn, John Wilkinson and Edwin Birchall.<sup>6</sup> The meeting was important not simply for the finance or the political ex-

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1. Ibid., 25 July 1846. The link with free trade was exemplified by his seconders at the two nominations, J.G.Marshall in February, Hamer Stansfeld in July.
  2. Baines Junior to Wilson, 24 Dec.1845, Wilson Papers.
  3. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Times, 6 Dec.1845.
  4. Baines Junior to Wilson, 26, 27 Nov.1845, Wilson Papers.
  5. Leeds Intelligencer, 20 Dec.1845; see also Leeds Times, Leeds Mercury, 20 Dec.1845.
  6. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Times, Leeds Intelligencer, 17 Jan. 1846

citement but also because Cobden and James Garth Marshall gave voice to ideas which indicated the philosophy of the League. Cobden put quite simply what the League was all about, the impact of a changing society upon politics:

'Sir Robert Peel will govern through Lancashire and Yorkshire or he will not govern at all . . . We are going to assert the right of the great mass of the middle and industrious population to the influence which they are entitled to in the government of the country.'<sup>1</sup>

Marshall for his part expressed that vision of industrial society based upon peaceful social relationships which had motivated his political actions since his flirtation with the suffrage in 1840. Free trade, he believed, could produce a juster society in which 'the great spirit of improvement', the idea of the age could work freely:

'It was the root from which thousands of other social benefits must spring . . . a great measure of peace and reconciliation among all classes of the community. The cause of all our discords would then be removed. An inestimable opportunity would be given for the development of the great spirit of improvement among the more intelligent part of the working classes and there would arise an increase of union among the people of every station and an enlightened beneficence on the part of the wealthy classes . . . Then they might hope to see the landowner and the manufacturer, the employer and the employed ceasing to regard each other with jealous selfishness and emulous only to see which should be the foremost in the race of improvement.'<sup>2</sup>

Thereafter Leeds had to wait and watch in that strange limbo of paralysis which struck the League while the Corn Law drama was acted out inside Parliament. The extra-Parliamentary work had been done; now the scene shifted to the real seat of power. It was still necessary to keep

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

up the pressure to support Peel and action was neatly dovetailed between the Anti-Corn Law Association and the Town Council. Even before the crisis had fully developed J.C.Barrett had introduced a memorial into the Council for an immediate opening of the ports.<sup>1</sup> In February 1846 an anti-Corn Law petition received 12,000 signatures in one day and it was echoed by a Council petition urging immediate repeal.<sup>2</sup> In May when the House of Lords were threatening to delay the repeal the Anti-Corn Law Association petitioned the Lords via Earl Fitzwilliam to pass the bill and at the same time Stansfeld introduced a similar petition in the Council.<sup>3</sup>

During the debate on this petition William Heywood, the arch-Tory scourge of the Liberals, complained about the renegades in his own party on the Corn Law issue, which was an implicit attack on William Beckett, Tory M.P. for Leeds.<sup>4</sup> Beckett had fought his 1841 campaign partly on the Corn Law issue and in 1844 in answer to a Leeds free trade petition he had written 'The abolition of these laws would, as it appears to me, be an extreme and violent measure.'<sup>5</sup> His change of heart, like Peel's, was received very quietly by Leeds Tories and in the Tory Press, for Beckett was not singled out for specific criticism. It appeared that

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1. Council Minutes, Vol.7, pp.124-5; Report Book Municipal, I, pp.418-9; Leeds Mercury, 15 Nov.1845.
  2. Council Minutes, Vol.7, pp.137; Report Book Municipal, I, pp.436-7; Leeds Mercury, 7 Feb.1846.
  3. Council Minutes, Vol.7, p.167; Report Book Municipal, I, p.454; Leeds Mercury, 30 May 1846.
  4. Ibid. John Yewdall, a Liberal, made this explicit by congratulating Beckett for his change of opinion.
  5. Leeds Times, 25 May, 1844.



Leeds Toryism was simply prepared to salvage what they could and praise Peel at least for having honourable motives.<sup>1</sup>

When news of the passing of the bill was received in Leeds there was firing of cannon and the peal of bells.<sup>2</sup> Two weeks later a half-holiday was enjoyed by the people of Leeds in celebration of Corn Law repeal and a circus performed on Woodhouse Moor, while a balloonist ascended from the White Cloth Hall.<sup>3</sup> Much more down to earth was Beckett's "pastoral" letter to his constituents with sombre warnings of increased foreign competition and hopes of further harnessing technology to Britain's industrial progress.<sup>4</sup> The Free Trade Association wound up the campaign with the subscription to the Cobden testimonial to which the two Leeds champions of repeal, James Marshall and Hamer Stansfeld, made donations of £200 and £100 respectively.<sup>5</sup>

As in Birmingham, the enthusiasm of 1845-6 compensated for earlier disappointments and Leeds could rank itself among the citadels of the League. Earlier one observer had felt that Leeds could not be so:

'Leeds is usually a dull, spiritless and inert town. It is wanting in social as well as political activity and energy. It is an inert mass always difficult to be moved. It wants the enthusiasm of Manchester, the enterprise of Glasgow, the volatile gaiety of Liverpool, the intense feeling of Birmingham and the power of London . . . Thus Anti-Corn Lawism has never obtained any strong hold on the minds of the middle classes of Leeds nor has Chartism ever led to the same vagaries among the working classes of this town

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1. See for the mild attitude of the Press Leeds Intelligencer, 24 Jan., 7 March, 23 May, 13 June, 27 July 1846. For a real Peelite conversion in the Press vide Nottingham Journal, discussed in my article "The Nottingham Press 1800-1850" in Trans.Thornton Society (1963), pp.52-53.
  2. Leeds Times, Leeds Mercury, 27 June 1846.
  3. Ibid., 18 Aug.1846.
  4. Ibid., 4 July 1846.
  5. Ibid., 15 Aug.1846.

that it has done in other places.'<sup>1</sup>

Certainly the comment applied to Chartism and as the historian of Leeds Chartism has written 'Chartism in Leeds during the five years between 1843 and 1848 was in something of a backwater.'<sup>2</sup> During 1843 and 1844 it appeared that the Leeds Chartists were split between the Independents led by William Baron and the Imperialists led by William Brook. Their main bone of contention was O'Connor himself, the Independents being hostile to him and the Imperialists his great supporters.<sup>3</sup> From 1845 Chartist attention was focussed on the Land Plan but throughout these years Chartism was in a sickly state and almost all of the activity concerning the extension of the suffrage came from the Complete Suffrage movement, which managed to capture the support of some of the Independent Chartists.<sup>4</sup>

In many ways the Complete Suffrage movement in Leeds was also sickly though it struggled on, repeatedly denying charges that it was completely dead. Billiard rooms in Kirkgate were taken over for regular lectures and meetings and the leaders of the movement were the remnant of the old Leeds "new move" of 1840, Joseph Cliff, Councillor for Holbeck, Robert Martin, formerly of the Holbeck Operative Reform Association, Edward King, the Radical auctioneer, and later on the young Arthur Lupton.<sup>5</sup> Two im-

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1. Leeds Times, 16 Dec.1843.
  2. Harrison, op.cit., p.93.
  3. Leeds Mercury, 6 May 1843, 2 March 1844, Leeds Times June, July 1844 passim, 24 Aug.1844. This division is not mentioned by Harrison.
  4. Cf. L.Brown "The Chartists and the Anti-Corn Law League" in Briggs (ed.) Chartist Studies (1959), p.363, the Complete Suffrage movement 'succeeded though for a short time only in winning support from those Chartists who opposed O'Connor'.
  5. Leeds Times, 18 Feb., 1, 8 April, 30 Sept., 14 Oct., 1843. Cf. C.A.Lupton The Lupton Family in Leeds, pp.55-6 Arthur Lupton (1819-1867) 'was dubbed "the Achilles of the Leeds Complete Suffrage Association"! He was first cousin to Darnton Lupton.

portant events were organised, a Complete Suffrage soiree in April 1843 and a meeting to refuse to pay taxes in December.

The former meeting went off well and Sharman Crawford, Joseph Sturge, Henry Vincent and John Collins attended. Cliff, the president, argued that the movement was only in its infancy in Leeds and anticipated great developments.<sup>1</sup> These hopes were not really fulfilled but after the Annual General Meeting in November<sup>2</sup> Sturge was once more in Leeds at the end of the year supporting Sharman Crawford's idea of stopping supplies in Parliament until the suffrage had been extended. Giles, the Baptist minister, James Richardson, Smiles and the Chartists Brook, Ross and Jackson, participated at this time.<sup>3</sup> This renewed former involvement with Chartism and at a further meeting in February 1844 to support Crawford's motion in the House of Commons the two Chartist factions ruined the evening with their bickering with O'Connor once more the central point at issue.<sup>4</sup> Arthur Lupton circularised M.P.'s in Support of Crawford's motion in June 1844 and the last was heard of the Complete Suffrage movement in Leeds with a meeting to discuss Free Trade in July 1844.<sup>5</sup>

Extra-Parliamentary agitations usually needed the stimulus and inspiration of some hope of potential Parliamentary result and this was

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1. Ibid. and Leeds Mercury, 22 April 1843.
  2. Leeds Times, 18, 25 Nov. 1843.
  3. Ibid., 30 Dec., 1843; 6 Jan. 1844.
  4. Ibid., 17 Feb., 2 March 1844.
  5. Ibid., 8 June, 27 July 1844. As an echo of earlier events, though of a different lineage, a meeting for an extension of the suffrage was held, composed mainly of operatives, in February 1847. It was for complete suffrage but not really part of the Complete Suffrage movement; see ibid. and Leeds Mercury, 20 Feb. 1847.

largely denied the Complete Suffrage Movement, a sharp contrast to the factory movement in these years. In 1843, 1844, 1846 and 1847 factory reformers could not only theorise about their goals but also discuss the provisions of bills actually before Parliament. The story in Leeds has been fully told<sup>1</sup> and after the controversy over Graham's educational proposals (which are discussed later) the first priority was the release of Oastler, whose Liberty Fund united previously hostile elements in Leeds. Liberals, Radicals, Chartists and Tories united in supporting the fund but once Oastler was free and once more campaigning the temporary alliance was over and the Mercury again criticised legislative interference during the spring campaign of 1844, when two meetings were held in Leeds.<sup>2</sup> By this time Hook had become closely identified with the factory question and the old Tory support was only tenuously retained by John and Martin Cawood, father and son ironfounders. The Tories who were involved were, like Ferrand, from outside Leeds.

Hook was again the chief Leeds participant in the meetings in 1846. In March the Leeds factory reformers heard Ashley and in December Hook chaired a meeting supporting a 10-hour bill<sup>3</sup> which was finally achieved in May 1847. Thus, apart from Hook and his fellow evangelical Anglican clergy the factory movement lost its earlier close links with Leeds Toryism and since the Operative Conservatives withered away some time after

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1. By J.T.Ward Factory Movement passim and "Leeds and the Factory Movement", Thoresby Society, 1961, pp.111-116.
  2. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Intelligencer, Leeds Times, 16 March, 13 April 1844.
  3. Ibid., 14 March, 5 Dec. 1846.

the spring of 1843<sup>1</sup> Leeds Toryism itself lost some of its own roots among working men.

In some ways Leeds Tories saw in education a means of renewing those bridges to the working class and this was exactly what Dissenting Liberals feared, that education would become a mere tool of political combat. The story of the opposition of Dissenters to the educational clauses of Graham's 1843 Factory Bill is well known<sup>2</sup> and Leeds, largely through the personality and achievement of Baines Junior, played no little part in the movement. Baines addressed letters to Peel and Wharnccliffe and organised a massive collection of statistical data all of which were published in his famous pamphlet on the manufacturing districts.<sup>3</sup> Historians have cast doubt on Baines's statistics and even at the time an opponent of the bill still had to admit that the figures proved little 'unless it be imagined that two or three hours spent on one day in the week in a Sunday School constitutes a sufficient education for the rising generation.'<sup>4</sup>

This did not matter overmuch in the 1843 context of bitter Church

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1. The latest reference to the Operative Conservatives which I have found is Leeds Intelligencer, 1 April 1843, when a debating society was formed. The society addressed at the same time a letter to Ferrand, dated 30 March 1843, quoted by Ward "Leeds and Factory Movement", loc.cit., p.110. There was a brief revival of an Operative Conservative Society in 1852 though it had no links with the earlier movement.
  2. See Ward Factory Movement, pp.258-268, Baines Life, pp.314-317, Cowherd, op.cit., pp.125-8, Lowerson op.cit., pp.138-142, Ram op.cit. pp.235-242.
  3. E.Baines Junior The Social Educational and Religious State of the Manufacturing Districts (1843).
  4. Leeds Times, 16 Sept.1843. Cf. J.T.Ward & J.Trebble, 'Religion & Education...', Journal of Ecclesiastical History XX(1969), pp.90-92.



versus Dissent hostility, in a situation where Hook was found to be stating privately 'in anything done by the Church I am steadily opposed to any concession to Dissenters.'<sup>1</sup> In view of subsequent political developments on the education question the most significant feature of the Leeds agitation against the 1843 bill was the unanimity and participation of all Dissenting denominations. There were three Leeds meetings on the education question, in March, April and May 1843, and there were prominent speakers from the Unitarians (Stansfeld and Wicksteed), Independents (Scales, Hamilton and Baines Junior), Baptists (Giles, Goodman and Richardson), Methodists of various branches (Bower, Pawson, Saul, Harris & Musgrave Yewdall and Heaps), Catholics (Holdforth) and Quakers (West).<sup>2</sup> At the third meeting a vigorous Chartist challenge was resisted and two petitions were forwarded to Parliament with a combined total of nearly 50,000 signatures. This was an impressive mobilisation of the united strength of Protestant Dissent in Leeds.

The Maynooth grant of 1845<sup>3</sup> was a chance to repeat this cohesion but already divisions were beginning to appear. There were in the national anti-Maynooth movement deep divisions both between Low Church Tory opponents and their temporary bedfellows the Liberal Dissenters, and within

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1. Quoted by Leeds Intelligencer, 14 Oct. 1843, from a letter of Hook's which mysteriously arrived in the hands of Baines.
  2. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Times, 25 March, 15 April, 20 May 1843.
  3. For which see Cowherd, op.cit., pp. 159-160; E.R. Norman, Anti-Catholicism in Victorian England (1968), pp. 23-51.

the Dissenters between moderates and extreme Voluntaryists.<sup>1</sup> In Leeds it was noticeable that the movement was almost wholly led by Dissenting ministers. Few of the leading political figures were prominent at meetings which were dominated by Ely, Hamilton and Morgan (Independents), Giles and Williams (Baptist) and Davis, Robinson and Peters (Methodists).<sup>2</sup> There were notable absentees. Clearly the Catholics were not opposed to Maynooth but then apparently neither were the Unitarians and it was claimed that Mill Hill was the only non-conformist chapel not to petition against the grant.<sup>3</sup> For some in Leeds the agitation reeked too much of "No Popery" since many of the speeches in Leeds were anti-Catholic (i.e. the endowment of error) rather than pro-disestablishment (i.e. the abolition of all State endowments). Using terms which were to become increasingly familiar in the next two years the Times complained of the prevailing 'narrow, illiberal and sectarian spirit.'<sup>4</sup>

No man did more to encourage this sectarian spirit than Edward Baines Junior, whom even the leader of the Anti-State Church movement, Edward Miall, acknowledged as the moving spirit in the education debate of 1846-7, when he said 'somebody from Leeds came up to London to call upon all true-hearted Nonconformists to assert a great principle.'<sup>5</sup> In national terms Voluntaryism revived only with the Government's scheme in December 1846 for apprentice teachers<sup>6</sup> but in Leeds it had begun in July 1846 with Hook's

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1. G.I.T.Machin "The Maynooth Grant, the Dissenters and Disestablishment 1845-1847" in E.H.R., 1967, pp.61-73. Leeds Intelligencer, 3 May 1845, noted the incompatibility of the anti-Maynooth group, some of whom were clearly bent on attacking the Church via the Maynooth episode.

2. Leeds Times, Leeds Mercury, 19 April, 3 May 1845.

3. Leeds Mercury, 7 June 1845.

4. Leeds Times, 19 April 1845.

5. Leeds Mercury, 30 Oct. 1847.

6. Machin, op.cit., p.77.

famous pamphlet.<sup>1</sup> Hook surprised many former opponents by the moderate tone of his proposals for government aid to all denominations in order to increase the scope of education for working-class children. Predictably Kemplay supported Hook and so too did the Times, remarking that 'to educate a whole people is a great and glorious object' and warning that careful thought was needed before rejecting entirely all government education.<sup>2</sup>

However for Baines Hook's pamphlet was the signal for a massive literary assault on behalf of Voluntaryism: 'I stand up for the English, the free, the voluntary method.'<sup>3</sup> He made his aim clear, complete self-help in education; 'Let us see the noble spectacle of a self-educated people and that will be the proudest example that England can offer the world.'<sup>4</sup> A series of 12 letters was addressed to Russell and later appeared as a pamphlet.<sup>5</sup> A further torrent of words was heaped on Vaughan, a fellow Congregationalist, the Radical, Ewart, the Westminster Review, the British Quarterly and the Morning Chronicle. Thus Baines and the Mercury were completely captivated by the education issue for the whole of the latter half of 1846, well before Voluntaryism had fully revived nationally.

What could have been passed off as an idiosyncratic intellectual adventure in 1846 became politically explosive early in 1847 when the Russell Government decided to go ahead with its proposals. Baines knew that he had to subdue

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1. W.F.Hook Letter to the Bishop of St.Davids . . . (1846). See also Stephens Hook, II, pp.205-212; O.Chadwick The Victorian Church (1966), pp.342-3.
  2. Leeds Intelligencer, 11, 18, 25 July, 3, 15 Aug. 1846, Leeds Times, 11 July 1846.
  3. Leeds Mercury, 25 July 1846.
  4. Ibid., 28 Nov. 1846, Cf. ibid., 2 Jan. 1847, 'it is not the province of Government to train the mind of the people.'
  5. Ibid., 25 July - 17 Oct. 1846; E.Baines Letters to . . . Russell . . . on State Education (1846).

'my personal feelings and party attachments . . . my old political connexions. But neither personal respect nor party attachment can or ought to prevent me from obeying an imperious sense of public duty.'<sup>1</sup>

The fact that the Voluntaries, urged on by Baines, failed to stop the educational proposals passing Parliament in April 1847 by 372 to 47<sup>2</sup> was less important locally than the political havoc caused to the Liberal party in Leeds. Ironically the Times had at first assumed that the Government's rather moderate education proposals had been introduced 'for the sake of peace and quietness'<sup>3</sup> but it soon modified its view and perceptively summed up the position:

'The repeal of the Corn Laws broke up old political combinations, severed old political connexions and destroyed old political leaderships. The question of Education seems likely to be as potent in this way as Free Trade itself. It is doing for the Liberals what the Corn Law agitation did for the Tories - it is unsettling and redistributing the elements of party organisation.'<sup>4</sup>

The Leeds Liberals were split from top to bottom and the old political labels of Whig, Liberal and Radical were rendered meaningless in the context of 1847. Broadly speaking the division of opinion was on religious lines with the Independents, Baptists, Methodists and Quakers opposing the Government scheme, while Unitarians, Anglicans and up to a point Catholic were in favour of Government aid to education. Working-class views, in so far as they were expressed by Chartist Councillors like Brook and Robson and working-class philanthropists such as James Hole, were in favour of the Government scheme and there was a Chartist petition in its

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1. Leeds Mercury, 13 Feb.1847.

2. Nachin, op.cit.,p.77; the Voluntaries organised a delegate conference of 500 and produced petitions signed by nearly half a million.

3. Leeds Times, 13 Feb.1847.

4. Ibid., 13 March 1847.

support.<sup>1</sup> Table I indicates the main personalities who took a stand on the issue and there were exceptions to the broad pattern outlined above. Virtually all Tory Anglicans supported the scheme and so did most Liberal Anglicans, the important exceptions being Buttrey, former Churchwarden, Alderman Gaunt and Peter Fairbairn. Buttrey and Gaunt probably decided on the straight political grounds of personal and political liberty but Fairbairn was more complex. He may have had early doubts, for he attended the original preparatory pro-Government meeting<sup>2</sup> but he soon emerged as one of the champions of Voluntaryism largely because his own career was the very personification of self-help. His own 30-year contact with working men convinced him that Government aid led to a loss of self-respect and a personal decline.<sup>3</sup> Equally distinctive were the Unitarians, Munnely and Carbutt who deserted their Mill Hill colleagues and sided with the Voluntaries. Indeed Carbutt became Baines' chief lieutenant during 1847. On the other side the exceptions were less prominent since neither Smiles (Baptist) nor Smith (Methodist) participated to the same extent as Fairbairn and Carbutt.

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1. Ibid., 27 March 1847. For Hole and his subsequent work on education see J.F.C.Harrison Social Reform in Victorian Leeds (1954), pp.27-44.

2. Leeds Intelligencer, 27 Feb. 1847.

3. Leeds Mercury, 20 March 1847.



TABLE I

DIVISION OF OPINION ON EDUCATION QUESTION 1847<sup>1</sup>

Voluntaries (against)	Educationists (for the Government Scheme)
<u>Independents:</u> E.Baines, Senior and Junior; the Revs. Hamilton, Scales, Ely; John Wales Smith; T. Flint; J. Wilkinson.	<u>Independents:</u> -
<u>Baptists:</u> James Richardson; George Goodman; John Jowitt Junior; G. Morton.	<u>Baptists:</u> Samuel Smiles
<u>Methodists:</u> J. Yewdall; J. Bower; Joseph Richardson; William Pawson; the Rev. Peters.	<u>Methodists:</u> Wm. Smith
<u>Catholics:</u> -	<u>Catholics:</u> James Holdforth
<u>Anglicans:</u> M. Gaunt, P. Fairbairn, J. Buttrey, A. Titley	<u>Anglicans:</u> The Rev. W.F. Hook, J. Gott, T.T. Dobb, the Rev. Sinclair, R. Baker; J. Hope Shaw; Joshua Bateson, H.C. Marshall, J.G. Marshall
<u>Unitarians:</u> F. Carbutt, T. Nunnally	<u>Unitarians:</u> H. Stansfeld, H.H. Stansfeld, T.W. Tottie, J.D. Luccock, D. Lupton, A. Lupton, C. Wickstead.
<u>Quakers:</u> G. Birchall Junior, H. Wilson	<u>Quakers:</u> -
<u>Working-class View:</u> -	<u>Working-class View:</u> J. Hole; Wm. Brook; George Robson
<u>Press:</u> <u>Leeds Mercury</u>	<u>Press:</u> <u>Leeds Times, Leeds Intelligencer</u>

1. Selected on the basis of participation in meetings, discussions, lectures, etc., signing of requisitions and joining delegations. Cf. vote in Town Council below, p. 375

Each side was very active in the flurry of meetings and lectures that were held. The Voluntaries began with Baines's letters to the secretary of the Congregational Board of Education and to Lord Lansdowne, together with his fiercely propagandist 'An Alarm to the Nation'.<sup>1</sup> Their first meeting was a delegate conference of Congregationalists at East Parade Chapel in February which was followed a fortnight later by a meeting to organise a requisition for a full town meeting.<sup>2</sup> The town meeting in March was reckoned to be one of the largest ever held in Leeds and the extreme anti-Government resolutions of Baines, Fairbairn, Carbutt and Ely were passed by a majority of 2 - 1 in the face of pro-Government amendments from Hamer Stansfeld (Liberal), John Gott (Tory) and William Brook (Chartist).<sup>3</sup> Delegates were appointed to lobby Parliament and they certainly gave Aldam an uncomfortable reception when they met him.<sup>4</sup> There was a meeting of Sunday School teachers at Belgrave Independent Chapel and a Methodist meeting at Oxford Place while the Anti-State Church Association also met in Leeds.<sup>5</sup>

The Voluntaries in one sense represented a unitary attitude since they took their stand on the simple and extreme principle that the State had no right whatsoever to educate. It was unconstitutional, restricted individual liberty, would lead to indoctrination, would make school teachers State pensioners and the reductio ad absurdum was the question asked by Jowitt 'would they take the hospitals and infirmaries and put them under the control of the State allowing the State to find nurses and retiring

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1. Ibid., 6, 13, 27 Sept 1847

2. Ibid., 20 Feb., 13 March 1847.

3. Ibid., Leeds Times, Leeds Intelligencer, 20 March 1847.

4. Ibid., 10 April 1847.

5. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Times, 27 March, 17 April 1847.

pensions for the doctors?'<sup>1</sup> Ironically, since Smiles was on the other side, here was Smilesian mid-Victorian self-help and again to use Jowitt's words 'the laissez faire principle, though much abused was best. We were going on pretty well'.<sup>2</sup>

This unitary extreme Dissenting position left the middle ground to the education party, which comprised not only different political and religious elements but also conflicting educational opinion. There were Tory philanthropists and evangelicals together with pragmatic Unitarians and politically motivated working men. As one observer put it, 'give us universal education and we shall not be long without universal suffrage'.<sup>3</sup> They were by no means all agreed on the value of the 1847 proposals and Brook at the public meeting, Hatton Stansfeld at Mill Hill, John Hope Shaw in the Council and the Leeds Times in its editorials all had the ultimate vision of a rate-paying democracy controlling education through non-sectarian local boards (something like the 1870 model) as against the centralisation inherent in the Government scheme. Yet the party held together by the desire to see something done to improve working-class education and to stand against the sectarianism of the Voluntaries.

The supporters of the Government scheme held their first meeting in February<sup>4</sup> and the leadership emerged as an alliance of Tory Anglicans and Liberal Unitarians. Then and at the main pro-education meeting the

- 
1. Ibid., 3 April 1847. Posed as a ridiculous question in 1847 yet passed by Parliament 100 years later.
  2. Ibid.
  3. Leeds Times, 27 Feb. 1847. The chronological relationship of 1867 and 1870 and Robert Lowe's "we must educate our masters" shows that the reverse happened.
  4. Leeds Intelligencer, 27 Feb. 1847.

leading speakers were Hook, John Gott, Hamer Stansfeld, Wicksteed, Tottie and J.G. Marshall.<sup>1</sup> Most of their arguments revolved about one central point, namely that the current position indicated that voluntary education quite definitely did not meet the needs of education since in comparison with the required day schools the voluntary efforts of Dissenters were, in the words of Stansfeld, 'a mere farce'. Both the Catholics and the Unitarians held denominational meetings in support of the Government and Stansfeld introduced a petition very similar to that signed at Mill Hill into the Town Council. After an 11-hour debate stretching over two Council meetings the petition was rejected by 27 to 23<sup>2</sup> and the division list sums up the political fragmentation of 1847. Table II shows the nature of the political and religious coalition involved.

TABLE II  
DIVISION ON PRO-GOVERNMENT EDUCATION PETITION  
WITHIN TOWN COUNCIL<sup>3</sup>

	Voted for Petition (Pro-Government)	Paired	Voted against Petition (Voluntaries)	Paired
Liberal	13	2	26	4
Conservative	<u>10</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>-</u>
Total: Political	23	4	27	4
Methodist	-	-	6	1
Baptist	-	-	3	-
Quaker	-	-	7	-
Independent	-	-	2	-
Church	16	2	2	1
Unitarian	3	2	1	1
Uncertain (i.e. Religion un- known)	<u>4</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>1</u>
Total: Religious	23	4	27	4

(For footnotes see over)

It had always been implicit in this division of opinion that serious political consequences would follow at election time. Carbutt warned Aldam that few Liberal electors supported Government education and all Aldermen were privately warned that their vote on Stansfeld's petition would affect the Aldermanic elections due in November. When the Government's proposals passed Parliament Baines announced that Dissenters would 'refuse to be made the tools of those who are doing us the greatest injustice.'<sup>4</sup> A week later Yorkshire delegates meeting once more at East Parade Chapel resolved not to support any Parliamentary candidate who had voted with the Government.<sup>5</sup> John Yewdall's prophecy<sup>6</sup> was coming true: the passing of these measures would, he had warned, break up the Liberal Party in the West Riding.

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1. (From p.375)

1. Leeds Times, Leeds Intelligencer, Leeds Mercury, 13 March 1847.

2. Ibid., 3, 10 April 1847.

3. Source - Division List in Council Minutes, 7 , pp.243-4.

4. Leeds Mercury, 1 May 1847.

5. Ibid., 3 May 1847.

6. Ibid., 13 March 1847.



(ii)

The Liberals in Leeds might well have complained that twice in 12 years fate had dealt them an unkind blow in the timing of elections. Had the 1835 election been held a few months later<sup>1</sup> and the 1847 election a few months earlier, the whole history of Parliamentary elections in Leeds would have been different. If, as might conceivably have happened, Russell had gone to the country immediately on taking office after the defeat of Peel in the summer of 1846, there is little doubt that the Liberals would have captured both seats. If the Peelite and Protectionist schism was muted in Leeds there was certainly little enthusiasm for Beckett's betrayal of his pledges to the Tory voters in 1841. Indeed Beckett's main chance of returning to Parliament lay in the possibility of an agreement to avoid a contest by having one Liberal and one Conservative. His vote on free trade might have earned him the tacit acceptance of the Liberals but on the Radical wing there was a strong desire to rectify the blot on Leeds's reputation by the defeat of Hume in 1841. As early as 1845 there were suggestions in the Press of Hume standing again or, failing this, the return of two Liberal free traders.<sup>2</sup> There had been less registration activity than in earlier years partly because of new regulations involving fines for frivolous objections but what gains had been made were in favour of the Liberals and in the two revisions

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1. Cf. above, Chapter III, pp.120-7 ; the Liberals had to fight the election before having a chance to rectify the register after their defeat in the 1834 revision.

2. Leeds Times, 20 Dec. 1845.

prior to the 1847 election the Liberal net gain on the register totalled nearly 100 votes.<sup>1</sup> All seemed set fair for a decisive Liberal victory.

The educational controversy of 1847 and the consequent split in the Liberal party (described above) completely altered the political outlook in Leeds. Before the passage of time could heal the wounds of verbal battle on the education issue and while passions were still roused the election had to be fought. As a result the 1847 Leeds election was the most complex and unorthodox election in the Parliamentary history of Leeds in the period between the two Reform Acts. In order to understand the political activity concerned with the election it will be necessary to discuss the emergence of the candidates, the issues involved, the progress of the campaign and the significance of the result.

At the meeting of the Reform Registration Association called to discuss possible candidates in May 1847 the first signs of schism appeared.<sup>2</sup> It was normal for this body to have names ready for the preliminary meeting of Liberal electors which had been summoned for the following week but no agreement could be reached so John Hope Shaw was asked to be intermediary between the rival parties and three from each side met for discussions.<sup>3</sup> It appeared from subsequent letters in the Press that several abortive suggestions were made by Stansfeld on behalf of the education party. These were that the traditional custom be followed of having one from each section of the party united in a Liberal coalition, or that a mod-

- 
1. Leeds Mercury, 27 Sept. 1845, 3 Oct. 1846. This no doubt rectified the situation which had worried Cobden when he wrote after the 1844 revision 'Leeds is our most dangerous point', Cobden to Baines, 20 Oct. 1844. B.M. Add.MSS. 43664 f.170.
  2. Ibid., 15 May 1847.
  3. Leeds Times, 15 May 1847.

erate Congregationalist like Vaughan be chosen, or that Beckett and Aldam be allowed to walk over. To all these the answer of Baines and his party was 'No' and the only alternative suggested by the latter was for Stansfeld's section of the party to abstain from any activity and allow the Voluntaries to carry on alone. This was quite unacceptable to Stansfeld since, as he pointed out, 'you will acknowledge that three-fourths of the time, labour and expense'<sup>1</sup> of registration was provided by his section of the party.

Thus from the first compromise was impossible and many leading Liberals were absent from the first meeting of Liberal electors where the chair was taken by Fairbairn<sup>2</sup> instead of Stansfeld (who as chairman of the Reform Registration Association ought to have had it) since the latter could not be trusted to call the amendments of the Voluntaries. That meeting voted by 2 - 1 in favour of Voluntaryism and the way was therefore open for a Voluntary anti-State Church candidate. Ironically four years earlier Joseph Sturge had visited Leeds and urged the Complete Suffrage Association to have a Radical candidate ready to stand independent of the Whigs.<sup>3</sup> Now he was to fulfil his own vision for Leeds. He was first sounded about standing for Leeds by Thomas Scales, the Independent

- 
1. Leeds Mercury, 17 July 1847.
  2. Fairbairn emerged in the educational controversy of 1847 from his political hibernation. He had not been active politically since he resigned his seat in the Council in 1842.
  3. Leeds Times, 29 April 1843. He had made a similar suggestion in Bradford earlier, see Bradford Observer, 29 Sept. 1842, cited by Wright, op.cit., p.278.

minister, and Sturge indicated that he 'would not be indisposed to pay a visit to Leeds with a view to addressing the Electors'.<sup>1</sup> Baines, inviting him to Leeds, warned that 'we should lose an important advantage if the other party should be in the field before us'<sup>2</sup> and a fortnight later Sturge was in Leeds, introduced to the electors by Baines, Bower and Scales as the ideal man for Leeds.<sup>3</sup> Sturge's canvass included town meetings, a tour of the out-townships and an appearance before the non-electors. As a result a requisition was circulated and an election committee organised.<sup>4</sup>

The pro-education Liberals could not accept what Stansfeld termed 'so narrow and sectarian a policy'<sup>5</sup> as that advocated by Sturge, Baines and the Voluntaries and they organised an election committee even before they knew exactly what strategy they were to adopt.<sup>6</sup> At first the suggestion was that Aldam should stand again since many felt that he was morally entitled to the seat in view of his votes on the key issues of the previous three years, Maynooth, Corn Law repeal and education. Stansfeld and Marshall went to see Aldam, who was uncertain of his position. Later the Liberals pressed him again which produced a declaration of willingness to stand but a decision not to do so in view of the split in the party.<sup>7</sup> This was probably a wise decision as Aldam had never really inspired much enthusiasm from Leeds and one observer had commented with damning simplicity 'his vocation is obviously private and domestic life.'<sup>8</sup>

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1. Baines Junior to Sturge, 22 May 1847, in Sturge Papers, B.M.Add.MSS.43845.

2. Ibid.

3. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Times, 5 June 1847.

4. Ibid., 12, 19 June 1847.

5. Ibid., 17 July 1847

6. Ibid., 5 June 1847

7. Leeds Times, 29 May, 5, 12 June 1847. 8. Ibid., 20 Dec. 1845.

In addition his candidature could only exacerbate the rift in the party since as early as 1845 the Leeds Dissenters were saying that they could not support him again.<sup>1</sup> His vote on Maynooth made his withdrawal likely: that on education made it inevitable.

Unwilling to allow Sturge to have a walk-over and without waiting for a formal requisition, the Liberals invited James Garth Marshall to stand and as he put it 'under the present peculiar circumstances I agree to stand without delay'.<sup>2</sup> Marshall had been suggested on previous occasions for his family, economic and social connection with Leeds made him an ideal candidate while his political commitments to such organisations as the 1840 "New Move" and the Anti-Corn Law League gave him a respectable political lineage. To have such an industrialist in the Commons which was composed of 'the scions of the aristocracy' and which looked down on industry would be invaluable; indeed in other circumstances a coalition of Marshall and Sturge would have well represented the political structure of the Liberal party in Leeds. However this was impossible and the composition of the rival election committees, echoing the divisions earlier in 1847, indicated the political fragmentation which had occurred (see Table III).

This division in the Liberal party certainly brightened the Tory horizon and soon after Sturge had visited Leeds William Beckett announced that he would stand again.<sup>3</sup> There were clearly some Tory leaders unhappy with Beckett's votes in 1846 and, for instance, pressure was brought to bear upon J.R. Atkinson, the flax spinner who had reputedly disapproved of Sadler

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1. Ibid., 2 May 1845.

2. Leeds Times, Leeds Mercury, 19, 26 June, 3 July 1847.

3. Leeds Intelligencer, 5 June 1847.



TABLE III COMPOSITION OF ELECTION COMMITTEES 1847

STURGE	MARSHALL <sup>1</sup>
<u>Chairman:</u> P.Fairbairn	<u>Chairman:</u> Hamer Stansfeld
<u>Secretary:</u> Thomas Morgan	<u>Secretary:</u> Arthur Megson
<u>Committee Included:</u> J.Bower, Baines Junior, Carbutt, Gaunt <sup>2</sup> , Plint, Nunnely, James Richardson, J.W.Smith, A.Titley, Wm.West, W.B.Holdsworth, C.Heaps, J.Dickinson, G.Morton, Joseph Richardson, H.Birchall, John Cliff, John Wilkinson	<u>Committee Included:</u> J., W.W., and W.Brown, T.W.Tottie, T. and H.B. Benyon, J.D.Luccock, J.Bateson, J.Holdforth, C.G.Maclea, Edwin Eddison, Joseph Cliff, H.H.Stansfeld, T.Hebden, D.C. and J.Lupton, J.Kitson, S.J. and S.Birchall, J. Dufton, G.J.Crowther, J.Gill, G. Botterill, S.Smiles

in 1834, lest he absent himself from Beckett's adoption meeting and thereby give the appearance of a split.<sup>3</sup> In the event it was the education issue which held the Tory party together and enabled them to win an election which in the summer of 1846 they seemed destined to lose.

Quite obviously education was the central issue in the 1847 Leeds election and put on the simplest plane it can be said that Sturge was opposed to Government education while Beckett and Marshall were in favour of it. The significance of the education controversy in 1847 lay in its effect on the parties in Leeds. The Tories clutched at

- 
1. This committee was originally headed by Marshall himself to secure the return of a candidate favourable to Government aid to education.
  2. Gaunt was in the original committee but probably withdrew at some stage for he eventually voted for Beckett and Marshall; see below, p.395
  3. Leeds Intelligencer, 26 June 1847.

education as a drowning man clutches at a life belt; it was their life line to survival, a healing balm for a broken party. In the words of Kemplay 'the great question of Education . . . has united a divided party and divided a united one.'<sup>1</sup> He claimed that before the education controversy the Tories in Leeds were 'divided and disorganised, listless and apathetic'<sup>2</sup> and it was therefore no wonder that they welcomed education as an election issue since it gave them a cause for enthusiastic reunion. A well developed Tory consciousness and political ambition could have been relied upon to bring a degree of unity once an election approached but education provided a stimulus to genuine and meaningful cohesion and, as one of the speakers at Beckett's adoption meeting said, it was necessary to forget previous differences and maintain unity by concentrating completely on the education question.<sup>3</sup>

The education issue which thus acted as a centripetal force on the Tories became a centrifugal force for the Liberals. At the very first meeting of Liberal electors, before any candidates were nominated, Arthur Megson, a Unitarian Councillor, put an amendment which would have avoided any pledge on education because of its divisive effects on the party.<sup>4</sup> This was rejected and so the meeting pledged any future candidate against Government education. When Sturge first spoke to the electors his main themes were education and the separation of Church and State<sup>5</sup> and this continued throughout his campaign. The arguments were merely a repetition of those used earlier in 1847 with the Sturge party

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1. Ibid., 3 July 1847
  2. Ibid., 31 July 1847
  3. Ibid., 26 June 1847
  4. Leeds Mercury, 22 May 1847
  5. Ibid., 5 June 1847

taking up the uncompromising position that the Government had no right to educate and as Sturge himself put it 'I maintain that it is the duty of Parents and not of the Government to educate the rising generation.'<sup>1</sup> Baines Junior argued that the progressive extension of pernicious State control had to be opposed and for him 1839 represented the gnat, 1843 the camel and 1847 the mammoth.<sup>2</sup>

Stansfeld, on the other side, argued that Government aid to education had been Whig policy since 1833 and throughout the campaign he emphasised that they were not faced with the possibility of compulsory education and complete State control but merely increased Government aid to existing schools. Luccock, in answer to the general proposition of the State having no right to educate, pointed out that the State did in fact educate felons and paupers and if it was competent to do this why was it not competent to educate others.<sup>3</sup> Though Marshall tried to widen the campaign by reference to other issues there could be no denying Baines's point that he had been brought forward because 'he is a thorough-going State educationist' and in his election address he said he wanted 'a large efficient and just system of education.'<sup>4</sup> Indeed he later went further in opposition to Sturge for he declared (as an Anglican convert from Unitarianism) that he was against the separation of Church and State.<sup>5</sup>

This concentration on education submerged the other two important issues, the suffrage and free trade, which were implicitly involved in the

- 
1. Ibid., 26 June 1847.
  2. Ibid., 17 July 1847
  3. Ibid., 22 May 1847
  4. Ibid., 3 July 1847
  5. Leeds Times, 26 June 1847.

candidacy of these three men. Joseph Sturge was not just a Voluntary, he was also the founder of the Complete Suffrage movement and he made no secret of the fact that his views had not changed on the question. Yet his supporters adopted a very ambivalent and vague attitude to the suffrage in sharp contrast to their unitary and disciplined stand on education. At the very first meeting of Liberal electors in May the first resolution concerned the suffrage and the proposers themselves disagreed, John Chalk Barrett favouring household suffrage and Thomas Plint supporting universal suffrage. Joseph Cliff, formerly president of the Leeds Complete Suffrage Association, moved a universal suffrage amendment but James Richardson made an eloquent plea to avoid discord by preserving the original resolution for a large undefined extension of the suffrage.<sup>1</sup> This was carried and so as the Times pointed out the Voluntaries were prepared to allow a wide divergence of view on the suffrage yet on education 'the man who does not go with them to the last inch of their journey shall not go with them at all.'<sup>2</sup>

In addition, as Sturge's opponents frequently pointed out, Baines had for years denounced Sturge and his ideas in the most violent terms. Baines openly admitted this to Sturge himself:

'I have differed from you sometimes especially on the subject of complete suffrage, which I do not think expedient in the present state of society (though I am friendly to a large extension of the suffrage): but I must heartily concur with you on the great questions now before the public as to the severance of Church and State and the repudiation of Government interference in Education and I shall feel it a duty to give you my zealous support.'<sup>3</sup>

Here was the key to it all. Sturge's views on education enabled his

- 
1. Leeds Mercury, 22 May 1847.
  2. Leeds Times, 22 May 1847.
  3. Baines to Sturge, 22 May 1847, loc.cit.

supporters simply to ignore his other policies.

Equally on the other side education prevented Marshall from capitalising on one of his great assets, his long years of activity on behalf of free trade. He mentioned it in his addresses but more and more he was forced to reply to points concerning Church and State. Stansfeld, in one of his public letters to Baines, reminded him that Marshall had been a loyal leader of the League unlike Sturge 'who after joining the League deserted it and refused further cooperation until the Charter should be obtained.'<sup>1</sup> This was of no avail and Stansfeld was unable to shift education from the centre of the stage and replace it with free trade, which in 1846 had promised to be and which in 1852 once more became the central election issue.

For the Tories also education submerged free trade and for them it meant the avoidance of bitter recriminations concerning Beckett's votes in 1846. Henry Hall, opening Beckett's adoption meeting, reminded Leeds Tories 'we have been deserted by leaders . . . we have to deplore . . . the lapse of some friends who have been led astray by those leaders . . . there is a great deal for us to forgive and forget.'<sup>2</sup> Education enabled the Tories to forgive and forget by simply ignoring free trade. It also enabled them to become once more a distinctive party since the legacy of Peel's Ministry had been to draw the parties closer together and the split of 1846 had made bedfellows of Peelites and Liberals. On this point Kemplay remarked

'at a moment when all parties are fraternising on many points and suspending their differences upon others,

- 
1. Leeds Mercury, 17 July 1847.
  2. Leeds Intelligencer, 26 June 1847.



it would have been irksome and it would have been indecent to fall suddenly back into conventional attitudes we had abandoned, to separate under banners which had lost their distinctiveness'<sup>1</sup>

Thus education became for the Tories the great issue of the day and free trade the great unmentionable.

The discussion of the issues involved will have made clear that most of the verbal battle of the campaign concerned education and this also affected the mechanics of the campaign which were distinguished by three features; the abortive attempts at Liberal reunion, the growing Liberal-Tory compact on education and the strange quirks of political identification and activity. In Bradford where Voluntaryism was also strong the Liberal-Radical union held firm in the end<sup>2</sup> and this was an inspiration for Leeds Liberals to continue to work for reunion. The early attempts at compromise have been mentioned<sup>3</sup> and when, by an accident of double booking, Luccock found himself the chairman of a ward meeting composed of both sections of the party he suggested reunion on broad grounds of agreement, omitting any mention of education.<sup>4</sup> This was impossible in view of the pledge Baines and the Voluntaries had given not to support anyone favourable to Government education. The same stumbling block ruined the negotiations between Fairbairn and Stansfeld shortly before the election. Fairbairn suggested that both candidates should stand before the Liberal electors who would then choose either Marshall or Sturge and the defeated candidate would retire. This seemed fair enough except that the Voluntaries refused to support Marshall should

- 
1. Ibid., 12 June 1847.
  2. Wright, op.cit., pp. 290-311.
  3. See above, p. 378
  4. Leeds Mercury, 3 July 1847.

Sturge be rejected since in their view it was sufficient merely to withdraw from the contest. Stansfeld would not accept this as a quid pro quo and denounced the suggestion as a piece of electioneering. In his view Sturge's party was responsible for the split and had they really wanted reunion they would have accepted earlier suggestions especially that of one from each party as in 1837 and 1841.<sup>1</sup>

As the possibility of reunion receded so a coalition of Liberals and Tories emerged as a likely consequence. As soon as Marshall was declared a candidate Baines argued that there was a plan for a coalition between him and Beckett aimed at defeating Sturge.<sup>2</sup> This was probably an overstatement though it was true that Marshall and Stansfeld had visited Beckett in London for some undisclosed purpose and Stansfeld had already declared that 'he could more conscientiously vote for a Conservative who was a friend to commercial freedom and a supporter of this education movement than for a candidate who was pledged to oppose it.'<sup>3</sup> There were meetings between delegations from Marshall's and Beckett's committees and the Tories said they would not put up a second candidate while Marshall was in the field.<sup>4</sup>

The way this electorally decisive coalition emerged illustrates the strange quirks of political behaviour which made the 1847 election one of euphemism and self-deception. No formal compact was made, no bills is-

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1. The exchange of letters, six in all, appeared in Leeds Mercury, 24 July 1847.
  2. Ibid., 19 June 1847.
  3. Ibid., Leeds Times, 5 June 1847.
  4. This produced squibs on the following lines:  
 "Tickle me says Jemmy Marshall,  
 Tickle me, good Beckett, do.  
 If you'll tickle Jemmy Marshall  
 He in turn will tickle you."

sued calling for support for Beckett and Marshall. It was simply announced that members of each committee were as individuals to vote for each of the education candidates. Baines had warned that a formal Liberal-Tory coalition would not be possible since 'the True Blue Tories would never stand it' and on the Liberal side men whose whole political history had been fought against Toryism could not bring themselves to mouth the words "Beckett and Marshall". Thus Stansfeld said at the nomination he would vote for those candidates who were for education.

For the Liberals Beckett's votes in 1846 made him so much more acceptable as an ally and they could refer to him as a Peelite yet for the Tories themselves this was his great sin that was to be ignored so that no Tories could be found mouthing the words "corn law repeal". Nobody discussed 1846 at any length despite its great political significance. Beckett mere<sup>ly</sup>/mentioned 1846 as part of a general review of Peel's ministry and John Gott at Beckett's adoption meeting set the tone of the whole campaign when he said that the end of Peel's Government called for some censure but on education they were united. This was the recurrent theme of the speeches and the editorials of Kemplay. There were things which had occurred which were not to everyone's liking but . . . always veiled hints at the unmentionable sins, never a full review of corn law repeal. Like sex below stairs, it was not discussed in polite company.

Another major omission in the campaign was the presence of one of the candidates. Marshall (probably deliberately) was kept out of the way 60 miles off at Scarborough and his first appearance before the electors was on nomination day. This was strange indeed for a constituency where the protocol of an adoption by the Liberal electors was always re-

ligiously observed even when the arrangements had been cut and dried behind the scenes. Marshall was not invited to stand by any meeting of electors nor did he conduct any kind of canvass. Marshall explained on nomination day that it was unnecessary for him to canvass since they all knew him and his opinions from his past actions:

'I do not know how a man can offer to a constituency a more perfect measure of his real opinions and character than the open tenor of his whole life, the whole scope both of all his words and of all his actions. This is the personal canvass I have made.'<sup>1</sup>

This was all very fine but the truth probably was that Marshall dare not appear before the Liberal electors since at least two-thirds of them were supporters of Sturge.

The final quirk of behaviour that deserves a mention is the way that activists saw in the candidates what they wanted to see. For instance, among Sturge's leading supporters there was only one whose personal history made him an appropriate lieutenant for Sturge. This was James Richardson, the Baptist Clerk of the Peace, who had been a leading member of the Complete Suffrage Association, of the Anti-State Church movement and had participated prominently in the Dissenting agitations of 1843 and 1845 and 1847. For Richardson (and to a lesser extent for Mor ton and Bower) Sturge was an echo of his own views but for Baines, as has already been pointed out, and for many middle-class Voluntaries like him, Sturge had certain disagreeable aspects relating to the suffrage which were discreetly ignored. For others it was the education aspect which was ignored in favour of the suffrage. Thus the Chartists had petitioned in favour of education, their Councillors, Brook and Robson, had voted for

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1. Leeds Mercury, 31 July 1847.

it and the Leeds Times had supported it. Yet all these now forgot education and made the suffrage their shibboleth and so supported Sturge in spite of, not because of, his views on education. Marshall's committee included Joseph Cliff and Samuel Smiles, both of whom had formerly been leaders of the Complete Suffrage Association who now regarded education as the more important issue in 1847. Beckett's supporters as a body ignored Marshall's overall programme and voted for him, as Beckett said, because he was 'the friend of the Church . . . the friend and upholder of the connection between Church and State.'<sup>1</sup>

Having explained the emergence of the candidates, the handling of the issues and the progress of the campaign, we are now in a better position to understand the result. This strange and unique election culminated in the defeat of Sturge largely owing to the Liberal-Tory compact. The result was

Beckett	(T)	2,529
Marshall	(L)	2,172
Sturge	(R)	1,978

An analysis of the poll reveals the reason for Sturge's defeat.

TABLE IV ANALYSIS OF 1847 POLL<sup>2</sup>

		Beckett	Marshall	Sturge
Plumpers Splits {	Plumpers	290	84	1,617
	{ Beckett + Marshall	1,983	1,983	
	{ Beckett + Sturge	256		256
	{ Marshall + Sturge		105	105
Total		2,529	2,172	1,978

1. Leeds Mercury, 31 July 1847
2. Source Poll Book of the 1847 Election.



On an actual poll of 35.8%<sup>1</sup> which was much lower than on any previous election there was an enormously high cross party vote. 51.65% of those who voted cast their votes across normal party lines and in the highly disciplined two-party system which existed in Leeds this figure was higher than the aggregate percentage of the cross party vote in *other elections* Leeds between the first two Reform Acts. (See Table VI).

Table V indicates the share of poll in each ward. Earlier elections have been rendered in percentages in terms of leading Liberal against leading Tory but these terms are meaningless in the context of 1847 and so a simple share of poll for each candidate has been given.<sup>2</sup> This gives an indication of the nature of the election for Sturge did worst in Headingley (11.67%), Mill Hill (22.5%), East (28.86) and North-East wards (29.61%) and these were wards where Toryism had always been strong.<sup>3</sup> Here it was that the Tory-Liberal coalition was decisive and the strong Tory vote was put at the disposal of Marshall so that the minority Liberal vote was even less than usual. Sturge did best in Bramley and North wards, both of which had a record of substantial though not continuous Liberal success. Here Marshall got less support from the Tories and in wards where Marshall was dependent upon his own votes he did worst. Most interesting was the result in Holbeck, traditional stronghold of Radicalism in Leeds where even the enormous economic influence of the Marshalls could not break the political identification with Radicalism. It was significant that no ward was won by Marshall himself and it was

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1. 4,335 voted on a register of 6,300. Deducting 1,252 for deaths, double entries and removals leaves a net register of 5,043.
  2. There is an overall 0.6% discrepancy in Sturge's share since the figures given in the Poll Book for wards do not tally with the overall totals.
  3. Cf. 1841 election Tories won in Headingley, Mill Hill and North-East and were only marginally beaten in East.

evident that he was dragged into Parliament on Beckett's coat tails.

TABLE V 1847 ELECTION % SHARE OF POLL FOR EACH CANDIDATE

Ward	Beckett	Marshall	Sturge
East	37.53	33.56	25.86
Kirkgate	37.21	32.45	30.34
Mill Hill	40.57	36.38	22.55
North-West	36.66	33.03	30.31
North	33.61	28.28	38.11
North-East	37.83	32.57	29.61
West	38.02	30.99	30.99
South	34.17	30.00	35.83
Leeds Township	37.47	32.55	29.98
Hunslet	35.28	31.39	33.33
Holbeck	34.34	31.67	33.99
Bramley	35.50	24.81	39.69
Headingley	47.91	40.42	11.67
Out-Townships	38.50	32.28	29.22
Leeds Borough	37.86	32.52	29.62

TABLE VI CROSS PARTY VOTE IN LEEDS ELECTIONS 1832 - 1868

Year	1832	1835	1837	1841	1847	1852	1857	1859	1865	1868
Percentage	5.89	3.92	2.48	2.33	5.65	2.15	8.99	7.17	4.55	8.89

An interesting test of the persistence of the party fragmentation on education earlier in 1847 was the vote of the Town Council in the election. The key vote on Stansfeld's pro-education petition has been

analysed<sup>1</sup> and this may be compared with Table VII. Here the votes cast by members of the Council have been analysed by party and by reference to their previous views on education.

TABLE VII VOTE OF COUNCIL MEMBERS IN 1847 ELECTION

	No.	Council Members who voted . .							
		Bkt + Mshl	S	B	M	Mshl + St	Bkt + St	Ab- stain	Un- found
Whole Council	64	23	29	1	2	1	1	5	2
Liberal	51	13	29	0	2	1	1	4	1
Tories	13	10	0	1	0	0	0	1	1
Pro-education in vote April 1847 <sup>2</sup>	27	19	2	1	2	0	0	2	1
Against education in vote April 1847 <sup>2</sup>	31	1	26	0	0	1	1	2	0

The large Liberal majority made the 62 members traced in the Poll Book a more Radical sample than the electorate itself and the overall total of votes cast for each candidate was in reverse order to that of the result, i.e. Sturge 31, Marshall 26, Beckett 25. Even here the Liberal-Tory coalition distorted the normal political pattern and the decisive Liberal majority became in the Poll Book a much more marginal Radical victory. Almost all the Tories and about a quarter of the Liberals split between Beckett and Marshall and this was a fair echo of the breakdown

1. Above, p375, Table II.

2. Includes pairs, four on each side.

of the parties in the wider electorate. Seventy per cent of those pro-education on Stansfeld's petition and 84% of those against voted on the education orientated basis of splits between Beckett and Marshall by educationists and plumpers for Sturge by Voluntaries. The exceptions were significant. Three Councillors<sup>1</sup> followed the dictates of normal party loyalty and plumped for their own traditional party, thus supporting education without contaminating themselves by a cross party vote. Two, the Chartists Brook and Robson, ignored their previous vote on education and plumped for Sturge because of the suffrage. On the other side Gaunt reversed entirely his former views on education and succumbed to the political pressure to go with his traditional colleagues and so split between Beckett and Marshall. Birchall<sup>2</sup> was the sole Councillor to vote Marshall and Sturge, which would have been in other circumstances general Liberal practice. Alderman Jackson's split between Sturge and Beckett defies analysis.<sup>3</sup>

The Voluntaries in Leeds were quick to blame their defeat on the influence of two great Leeds families and Baines wrote in an editorial that Sturge was faced by 'a coalition of the two most wealthy and powerful families in the manufacturing districts of Yorkshire' while Sturge himself blamed his defeat on the powerful influence of two such family connections'.<sup>4</sup> The facts were otherwise for the Leeds election of 1847 was not decided by social and economic pressure but by political opinions.

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1. Botterill and Crowther (Liberal), Hirst (Tory).

2. Birchall's family was split on this issue, as were the Bowers and Cliffs

3. Inconsistent as such a split appears a surprisingly large number of voters (256) cast such a split, 2½ times as many as voted on the more explicable split between Marshall and Sturge.

4. Leeds Mercury, 31 July 1847.

The size of the electorate always made the influence of property and station electorally less decisive than in smaller boroughs and rural villages. This was true of all Leeds elections and it was especially true of 1847 when even the traditional ties of party could not trammel the free judgment of an electorate which voted according to conscience on an issue of principle. The source of Sturge's defeat lay not in social and economic influence but in the influence exercised by Baines through the Press and as a critic remarked the origin of Sturge's defeat lay 'in the yards of letters which the junior editor of the Leeds Mercury inflicted on his readers on the subject of State Education which served to work many worthy and zealous men into a fear of fever and indignation.'<sup>1</sup>

In the electoral post-mortem it was generally agreed that Liberal party had been split and that the Liberal-Tory coalition had been decisive. Although opinion differed as to the arithmetic nature of the Liberal split a broad consensus did emerge. Stansfeld, basing his information on registration machinery, estimated the Liberal electorate at about 2,700 and although this was high there were roughly 300 Liberals who abstained, probably because of the coalition and Marshall's statement on Church and State. The Times calculated that on a normal party election the result would have been 2,400 - 2,100 in favour of the Liberals. Baines, intending only to show that Sturge had in reality won the election, admitted this implicitly by calculating that something under 500 Liberals had split between Beckett and Marshall.<sup>2</sup> There was thus a broad

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1. Leeds Times, 7 Aug. 1847. It is in fact a gross over-simplification to conclude from the election that the influence of Baines and the Leeds Mercury was less in 1847 than in 1830-32, as is claimed by D. Read Press and People (1961), p. 131

2. Ibid., 7, 14 Aug. 1847, Leeds Mercury, 31 July, 1847.



measure of agreement that the election might have resulted in a Liberal victory of the order of 2,400 - 2,000.

In other words it was possible on the register of 1847 to return both Sturge and Marshall. At best the intransigent attitude of the Voluntaries could only return Sturge and Beckett, i.e. one Voluntary and one educationist. If so, surely it was better, argued some Liberals, to have a Liberal educationist than a Tory and if the Voluntaries had agreed on a coalition between Marshall and Sturge the latter's return would have been secured. In the event Sturge's own party by refusing to ally with Marshall engendered their own defeat. The "obvious" solution of one from each party as in 1837 and 1841 was impossible in view of the stance already taken during the previous 12 months by Baines and his friends and, as Kemplay put it, Baines had recanted on education and he 'inexorably insisted in the name of his sect that every man in his party should make a similar recantation'.<sup>1</sup> It was not without significance that in Bradford the influence of Byles and the Bradford Observer was firmly in favour of the preservation of the old Liberal - Radical coalition and that there the alliance held firm. The course of the election was not simply a reflection of the large Dissenting population in Leeds for in the two towns with the highest Nonconformist population (Nottingham and Sunderland) the education controversy was not the decisive issue. Baines it was who gave the Leeds election its distinctive character.

The view Baines took of the borough election left him in an intolerable situation the following week in the West Riding election. There

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1. Leeds Intelligencer, 31 July 1847.

was a concerted move by those divided over education to reunite on the question of free trade in support of Cobden.<sup>1</sup> Just when it appeared that Morpeth and Denison would have a walk-over George Wilson and Alderman Brooks came to Leeds from Manchester to suggest Cobden as a suitable candidate.<sup>2</sup> There was a symbolic gesture of reunity when John Wilkinson who had headed Sturge's procession in the borough election chaired a meeting of Liberals in Leeds to support Cobden. Another Voluntaryist, George Goodman, emphasised that the meeting believed 'the question of Free Trade to be the question at issue in the impending contest for the West Riding.'<sup>3</sup> In other words they were not going to allow education to divide them in the Riding as it had done in the borough and Newman warned Fitzwilliam ominously 'Mr. Baines and the anti-education party will merge their differences of opinion on that question and will cordially muster with the free traders.'<sup>4</sup> This certainly happened to the Voluntaries and former Sturge supporters like Bower, Holdsworth, Gill, Titley and Flint joined with former Marshall supporters like Eddison and Kitson in Cobden's committee.

However Baines himself did not join in and as Tottie later reported 'the Baines's did not appear at all.'<sup>5</sup> Having already pledged not to support any candidate who was in favour of education Baines took up the patently contrived stand that he could not support Morpeth since he was for education and he would remain neutral as far as Cobden was concerned

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1. See Thompson; Whigs and Liberals . . .', loc.cit., pp.228-231.
  2. Newman to Fitzwilliam, 4 Aug.1847, Wentworth Woodhouse MSS. G.11.
  3. Leeds Mercury, 7 Aug.1847.
  4. Newman to Fitzwilliam, 5 Aug.1847, loc.cit.
  5. Tottie to Fitzwilliam, 8 Aug.1847.

since Cobden's views were unknown.<sup>1</sup> Baines remained firm where some of his friends wavered.

For the country gentry of the West Riding the "Lancashire invasion" of the League was far more significant than any contortions of Baines on the education issue. The influence of the League in the revision court has been discussed and it was possibly in order to forestall outside interference that Fitzwilliam, Sir Charles Wood and even Stansfeld made it known that they were not anxious to disturb the peace of the Riding with a contest. However the 4,000 free trade majority was too great a weapon to allow a Protectionist like Denison to walk over the course and Wood had warned Fitzwilliam the previous year that though he may designate the free traders as 'the rump of the League' nevertheless 'if they don't act cordially with you you may despair of having a Liberal member for the Riding'.<sup>2</sup>

In 1845 John Bright had promised 'they should have a famous train to come through the tunnel of the Leeds and Manchester railway whenever an election should take place in the West Riding'<sup>3</sup> and now in 1847 the promise was being honoured so that Wood was forced to admit

'It very little signifies what either you and I think about who should be members for the West Riding. I never thought that the free traders would be content not to use the majority we had and I am only sorry that we have not two good men of our own instead of a stranger'<sup>4</sup>

In a masterly piece of understatement Newman reported 'our party have missed their way'<sup>5</sup> and the failure to put up two free traders had led to

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1. Leeds Mercury, 7 Aug. 1847. See Leeds Times, 14 Aug. 1847 for a severe criticism of this view.
  2. Wood to Fitzwilliam, 29 Aug. 1846. Wentworth Woodhouse MSS. G.11.
  3. Leeds Mercury, 29 Nov. 1845
  4. Wood to Fitzwilliam (n.d.) postmark 8 Aug. 1847. Wentworth Woodhouse MSS. G.11.
  5. Newman to Fitzwilliam, 8 Aug. 1847, loc.cit.

the revival of the town versus county battle within the West Riding Liberal party. Cobden was imposed upon the county against the wishes of its leading citizens and his return was made possible by a registration campaign in which the county squires had played little part. Fitzwilliam sent a celebrated letter to Denison assuring him of his support which might have in fact provoked Denison to fight a contest and which Fitzwilliam's friends denounced as a serious mistake.<sup>1</sup>

Fitzwilliam was not short of advice to bring forward 'two men of legitimate family influence' at the next election and some feared the dominance of Manchester cotton spinners since 'there is too much power in the hands of that class already.'<sup>2</sup> It was felt that because of 1846 'the democratic principle has made real progress and is very much strengthened indeed through the country and the Yorkshire election is at once a symptom of it and a first confirmation of its power.'<sup>3</sup> If the initial response of an elite whose prestige had been challenged was to suppress these upstart tendencies with a display of aristocratic power (as was to happen in the 1848 election) wiser counsel came from Newman, the party agent, who saw that the real trouble originated with the register. Only when the Whig squires took appropriate registration action would they be able to re-establish their hold on the county and as Newman reminded Fitzwilliam 'if the "House of York" neglects so great a duty rely upon my word, my Lord, that the "House of Lancaster" will only be too happy to undertake to attend

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1. Fitzwilliam to Denison, 6 Aug. 1847; see also Thompson, op.cit., pp. 230-31.

2. J. Brown to Fitzwilliam, 13 Aug. 1847, loc.cit.

3. J. E. Denison to Fitzwilliam, 10 Aug. 1847, loc.cit.



to it for them'<sup>1</sup>

The prospects of a renewed registration campaign did not look promising since Leeds could not be relied upon and Tottie reported that

'owing to the divisions which the two Baines's have occasioned in respect to the Education question amongst the members of our Registration Association the operations of that association have been suspended for a year'<sup>2</sup>

These divisions persisted for Baines Junior drew up new rules for the borough Reform Registration Association which included voluntary education as one of its aims.<sup>3</sup> Thus Stansfeld and his Unitarian friends, would be excluded. Lest anyone should be misled by the unity in support of Cobden in the West Riding Carbutt, one of Baines's chief supporters on education, addressed to him a public letter disputing Morpeth's statements at the nomination and reassuring Baines, 'our champion in this hitherto so little understood but all important cause of popular education',<sup>4</sup> that he would continue to fight on education. The West Riding election was thus a misleading diversion. The Leeds Liberal party still remained deeply divided.

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1. Newman to Fitzwilliam, 8 Aug.1847, loc.cit.

2. Tottie to Fitzwilliam, 8 Aug.1847.

3. Leeds Mercury, 21 Aug.1847.

4. Ibid., 14 Aug.1847.



(iii)

This Liberal schism over education also affected the Town Council and, as has already been discussed<sup>1</sup>, the Council split across normal party lines on this issue. Earlier the Liberals had re-established a firm political control over the Council as the Tory challenge withered away. Table VIII analyses the composition of the Council by wards after the six elections between 1842 and 1847 and it will be seen that the Tory party dwindled to 10 in 1845-6, which was their lowest ever total up to that time.<sup>2</sup> It was as if their strong challenge in the years up to 1840-41 had exhausted them and they were now a spent force. As early as spring 1842 Perring, so long the champion of the Conservatives inside the Council, had conceded defeat to the Liberals and assumed the Council to be a permanent Liberal stronghold.<sup>3</sup>

The mellowing of party warfare, noticed earlier<sup>4</sup>, was also a feature of these years and a sure sign of this was the confusion over which party label to attach to some new Councillors. When contemporaries were unsure of a man's political affiliations it was clear that he was not a political partisan. The Municipal elections of the mid-1840's were often very lifeless and lacked the interest of earlier years and on one occasion Thomas Barlow gave a lecture explaining public apathy on Muni-

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1. Above, pp. 375,394

2. In Jan.1836 the Tories gained only nine of the elected seats but they had also four alderman.

3. Leeds, Conservative Journal May/June 1842 passim. This view of the Council was the main reason for Perring's belief that the powers under the new Improvement Act should be with the Vestry.

4. Above, Chapter V, pp. 326-7

TABLE VIII POLITICAL COMPOSITION OF COUNCIL BY WARDS AFTER EACH  
NOVEMBER ELECTION<sup>1</sup>

	1842		1843		1844		1845		1846		1847	
	L	T	L	T	L	T	L	T	L	T	L	T
East	0	3	1	2	2	1	2	1	1	2	0	3
Kirkgate	2	1	3	0	2	1	1	2	0	3	0	3
Mill Hill	2	4	4	2	4	2	6	0	6	0	5	1
North	3	0	3	0	3	0	3	0	3	0	3	0
North-East	1	2	1	2	0	3	0	3	0	3	1	2
North-West	2	1	3	0	3	0	3	0	3	0	3	0
South	3	0	3	0	3	0	3	0	3	0	3	0
West	3	3	4	2	5	1	6	0	5	1	5	1
Leeds Township	16	14	22	8	22	8	24	6	21	9	20	10
Bramley	2	4	0	6	2	4	3	3	4	2	3	3
Holbeck	6	0	6	0	6	0	6	0	6	0	6	0
Hunslet	2	1	3	0	3	0	3	0	3	0	3	0
Headingley	0	3	0	3	1	2	2	1	2	1	1	2
Out-Townships	10	8	9	9	12	6	14	4	15	3	13	5
Leeds Borough	26	22	31	17	34	14	38	10	36	12	33	15
Aldermen	16	0	16	0	16	0	16	0	15	1	16	0
Whole Council	42	22	47	17	50	14	54	10	51	13	49	15

1. In this Table the Chartist Councillors have been aggregated with the Liberals.

municipal affairs.<sup>1</sup> This was partly the result of the Improvement Act and the routine humdrum nature of the Council's work, for as the Minute Books got fatter and the committees multiplied so political interest declined. There was certainly a noticeable drop in the number of contested elections as shown in Table IX.

TABLE IX                      CONTESTED ELECTIONS FOR TOWN COUNCIL 1836 - 1847

Year	Dec. 1835	Nov. 1836	Nov. 1837	Nov. 1838	Nov. 1839	Nov. 1840	Nov. 1841	Nov. 1842	Nov. 1843	Nov. 1844	Nov. 1845	Nov. 1846	Nov. 1847
Number of Wards Contested (Total 12)	11	2	3	12	8	11	9	10	10	7	5	3	10

The elections of 1844, 1845 and 1846 were accompanied by comments about apathy among the electors and the revived interest of 1847 was an echo of the Parliamentary election of that year.

Liberal dominance in the Council meant a Liberal monopoly of Municipal honours and Henry Cowper Marshall, an Anglican from a formerly Unitarian family, was followed as Mayor by three Unitarians, Hamer Stansfeld (1843-44), Darnton Lupton (1844-45) and J.D.Luccock (1845-46), which earned for Mill Hill Chapel its famous designation 'the Mayor's nest'. Charles Gascoigne Maclea, the engineer and son-in-law of Matthew Murray, was elected in November 1846 but forced to retire owing to ill health and George Goodman saw the year out. By November 1847 the Liberal Anglican solicitors, Shaw and Gaunt, were complaining that there had been only one and a quarter years of Anglican Mayoralty since 1835 and they wanted Bateson. In normal years this might have been acceptable but the education contro-

1. Leeds Mercury, 9 Nov.1844.

versy still rankled and so a Voluntary had to be chosen. Francis Carbutt was elected and so became the fourth Unitarian Mayor in five years.<sup>1</sup>

The Tories could not look to the Aldermanic elections to enlarge their party in the Council although there were some voices raised even on the Liberal side in their favour. The Mercury saw the election of a small number of Conservatives as a means of reducing party tension but the Times felt that the Councillors were honour bound to reflect the views of the burgesses and since the burgesses had rejected the Tories the Councillors must do the same.<sup>2</sup> The Aldermanic election of 1844 elevated a high powered Liberal group (Marshall, Bateson, Shaw, Gaunt, Bower, Cates, Carbutt, Maclea) and so Kemplay could denounce Baines's olive branch and conclude that the Tories could never expect 'any fairness or justice from the Whig-Radical faction.'<sup>3</sup>

One man more than any other tried to steer the Council towards an accommodation with the Tories and this was John Hope Shaw, the solicitor who had acted for the Liberals in the early stages of the Chancery suit and who had earned widespread commendation for his work as revising assessor in the annual Municipal revision. In the election for Mayor in 1845 he publicly supported Wilson, the Tory candidate, because he believed that 'the higher offices of the Corporation ought not now to be confined exclusively to one party but that the time had arrived when they ought to adopt

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1. For the election of Mayors see Council Minutes, 6, pp. 313,438; Vol. 7, pp.123,212-4, 350-51; Leeds Mercury, 11 Nov., 1843, 16 Nov. 1844, 15 Nov. 1845, 14 Nov. 1846, 13 Nov. 1847.

2. Leeds Mercury, 2 Nov. 1844, Leeds Times, 9 Nov. 1844. It had always been the more Radical elements who had criticised the original elevation of four Tory aldermen.

3. Leeds Intelligencer, 16 Nov. 1844.



a more conciliatory policy.<sup>1</sup> Six months later on the death of Alderman Thomas Benson Pease, uncle of Aldam, the sitting M.P. for Leeds, Shaw was instrumental in getting Wilson elected in his place. Baines Senior, the first choice, declined on the grounds of age and despite the reminder from one Councillor that the original four Tory Aldermen in 1836 had been 'a matter which gave such offence to the burgesses that the Liberals had been nearly thrown overboard', Wilson was elected, a lone Tory among 15 Liberals.<sup>2</sup> By a strange coincidence the election of Wilson occurred at the same meeting as a decisive vote on sewerage and Kemplay compared the two, since Wilson's election was

'a moral sewerage . . . a first step towards draining off that accumulation of party feeling which has been hitherto suffered to infect and paralyse party bodies. Mad political party hate is beginning to be an old-fashioned vice. It is unavoidable it should be so, the moment there springs up a real earnestness about the public good.'<sup>3</sup>

Shaw and Kemplay no doubt looked to the 1847 Aldermanic elections to continue the good work but they were frustrated by the education controversy since the atmosphere of conciliation of 1846 had been replaced by a vendetta in 1847. There were political scores to settle and Wilson was ~~aged~~ along with Stansfeld and Lupton because of their views on education. Goodman and Tottie refused to serve although elected<sup>4</sup> and so of the eight new Aldermen only two<sup>5</sup> had previously held the office. Here

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1. Leeds Mercury, 15 Nov.1845.

2. Ibid., 6, 20 June 1846; Council Minutes, 7, p.173.

3. Leeds Intelligencer, 20 June 1846.

4. E.P.Hennock "The Social Compositions of Borough Councils" in H.J.Dyos (ed.) The Study of Urban History (1968), p.332, erroneously dates Tottie's departure as 1850.

5. Jackson and Luccock.



was an injection of new blood into the upper echelons of power and with the departure of Goodman, Tottis~~Stansfeld~~, Lupton and Pawson<sup>1</sup> part of the old elite was replaced.<sup>2</sup>

If the Tories had little chance of Aldermanic rewards which were distributed every three years, they knew they had even less chance of getting the top job in the Council's gift, that of the Town Clerk. When Edward Eddison resigned as Town Clerk in 1843 because of ill health the only candidate as his successor was John Arthur Ikin, the Liberal registration agent for the West Riding. He had served the party well and, as Kenplay put it, 'in the scramble for Municipal offices in 1836 he went without his reward.'<sup>3</sup> Ikin was appointed<sup>4</sup> and at the same salary as Eddison, namely £500 as Town Clerk and £150 as Clerk for the Improvement Act. Though his appointment was unchallenged his salary was the subject of a lively debate when Cawood allied with some of the more radical Liberals in favour of a reduction in salary. The £500 was carried by 29 - 15 but the £150 only scraped through 24 - 23<sup>5</sup> and in each case the voting split both parties.<sup>6</sup>

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1. The rejection of Pawson must have been from some other cause than education for he had voted Sturge in the 1847 election.
  2. The six new Aldermen were Edwin Birchall Sen., Richard Wilson and James Ogle from outside the Council and three sitting Councillors, Joseph Richardson, John Wilson and Joseph Whitham (Whitham had actually retired in Nov. 1847 from the seat for Headingley, the first ever Liberal Councillor for that ward).
  3. Leeds Intelligencer, 15 July 1843.
  4. Because of this he gave up his post as Secretary of the West Riding Reform and Registration Association. Only then did Newman become Secretary. Ikin's tenure of the office is not mentioned by Thompson, op.cit., p.223. See Leeds Mercury, 12 Aug. 1843.
  5. Council Minutes, 6, p.287; Council Minutes Improvement Act., Vol. I., p.92.
  6. The failure to reduce the salary incensed the Leeds Times, 22 July 1843, which denounced 'this jobbing as infinitely worse than that of the old Tory Corporation . . . This Augean stable does want a thorough cleansing'.

A few months after this Liberal dominance ensured Ikin's election, Liberal tactlessness produced a Tory withdrawal from all the Council committees. In 1841 and 1842 leaders of the two parties had negotiated the membership of the committees but in 1843, perhaps cocksure of their power, a small clique of Liberal Alderman had arranged the lists without prior consultation with the Tories and had circulated printed circulars before the Council had even confirmed the appointments. After a letter of protest to Ikin and a 'withdrawal of labour' the matter was settled with the concession that one-third of all committee places would be filled by Tories.<sup>1</sup>

Had the Tories stuck to their guns and thrown the whole burden of local government on to the Liberals the committee work would have become an intolerable strain. Even with Tory participation some members of the Council were very heavily committed as 14 or 15 committees were appointed each year. Thus in 1842-3 two members, Luccock and Newsam, were on 10 committees each.<sup>2</sup> Table X analyses the attendance record of the whole Council in the one year 1842-3 as a sample of the burdens involved. Certain committees involved more work than others, particularly the Watch Committee, which met 52 times in 1842-3 and 53 times in 1844-5 and, under the Improvement Act, the Streets Committee which met 57 times in 1842-3 and was running at 14 meetings a quarter during 1844-5.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Leeds Mercury, 18 Nov., 9 Dec.1843, 13 Jan.1844, Leeds Intelligencer, 11, 25 Nov.1843, 13 Jan.1844; Council Minutes, 6, p.334.
  2. Luccock attended 239 meetings, Newsam 177.
  3. All Committee attendances derived from Report Book Leeds Improvement Act, Vol.I, pp.78-83, 87-93, 111-6, 117-23, 126-132, 150-5, 178-182, 185-190, 192-202, 226-242, 258-264; Report Book Municipal, Vol.I, pp.267-271, 288-292, 311-314, 339-342, 359-364, 398-401, 425-428, 445-447, 457-460, 508-511, 530-534.

TABLE X ATTENDANCE AT COMMITTEES BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL 1842 - 3

No. of Members (64)	No. of Committee meetings attended
11	100 +
11	50 - 99
18	10 - 49
14	0 - 9
10	Not on any committee

All this was in addition to the regular Council meetings which varied between 10 and 15 a year and which have been analysed in Table XI. The

TABLE XI ATTENDANCE RECORD OF TOWN COUNCIL 1842 - 7

Year	Number of Meetings	Average Attendance	%	Average No. of Meetings Attended by Liberals	%	Average No. of Meetings Attended by Tories	%
1842-3	15	47.60	74.38	11.69	77.93	9.09	60.6
1843-4	11	45.82	71.59	8.64	78.5	6.71	61.0
1844-5	11	44.73	69.89	7.84	71.27	6.79	61.73
1845-6	10	42.30	66.09	6.79	67.9	7.3	73.0
1846-7	13	43.62	68.16	9.14	70.31	8.31	63.92

decline in political interest was reflected in the somewhat lower attendance record in these years. However, the Council attendance, running at an average of about two-thirds of its members, was no mean achievement and the best indication of the relationship between politics and attendance was seen within each yearly record. Invariably the first meeting after the November election was the best attended when there was usually a struggle over the election of the Mayor, the Aldermen and the Committees.<sup>1</sup>

1. There was also the renewed enthusiasm of old members facing a new year and the injection of new Councillors.

The very high attendance on 1st January 1845 (59) was a result of the threat of political controversy over a police enquiry and Stansfeld education petition produced two large meetings within a week.<sup>1</sup>

These attendances placed great demands on the time of the members of the Council and on one occasion the Chartists Brook and Hobson fell out over the inordinately long speeches of the latter and the consequent waste of precious time of the former. Many members' occupations did not allow the time demanded and Kemplay was aware of this when he evolved a theory which, he argued, explained the lowering of the social composition of the Council. Men would always try to improve their social standing by associating with their social superiors. The old Corporation had done this by inviting such people into the Council and so the social tendency was upward. Under the reformed system the Council were the social superiors and so men of lower status wished to enter, thus the social tendency was downward:

'he is one who feels the official status into which he desires to step to be superior to that which in his private capacity he is entitled to. To no other would the object be one of personal ambition . . . Thus the corporation barge soon dips its sides so low in the water as to be easily boarded by the smallest wherry.'<sup>2</sup>

Table XII analyses the Council on an occupational basis (giving 1841-2 for comparison) and it does appear that the craft/retail group increased considerably in the mid-1840's. Clearly such social categories are never

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1. Fifty-seven members attended each meeting yet the previous meeting had been 45 and the subsequent one was 33.
  2. Leeds Intelligencer, 16 March 1844. Cf. ibid., 10 Oct. 1843, 19 Oct. 1844, for the need for men of rank and standing in society to enter the Council. Leeds Mercury, 16 Nov. 1844, was worried on this score and remarked of one Chartist candidate 'if the Town Council should be filled by persons of his intellectual stamp all its respectability would be at an end.'



TABLE XII SOCIO-ECONOMIC COMPOSITION OF TOWN COUNCIL 1842 - 1847

	I		II		III		IV	
	Gentry	Profes- sional	Merchants and Manu- facturers Textiles	Merchants and Manu- facturers Non- Textiles	Craft	Retail	Drink Interest	Corn Merchants
1841-2	9	7	22	15	5	3	2	1
1842-3	8	10	22	10	6	4	3	1
1843-4	9	7	21	8	7	7	2	3
1844-5	6	8	17	8	5	12	4	4
1845-6	6	6	18	6	9	9	5	5
1846-7	5	7	22	8	6	9	3	4

precise, the craftsman shades into the manufacturer and the retailer into the merchant, but this does give an indication that between, for instance, 1841 and 1845, Group I fell by 25% and Group II by 30%, while Group III more than doubled and Group IV trebled its representation.

The decline in the social composition of the Town Council<sup>1</sup> was contemporary with the increase in the number of Chartist Councillors and Kemplay may have had them in mind when he evolved his theory of social status and elected Councils. It has already been pointed out that it is somewhat misleading to isolate the Chartists as a separate group<sup>2</sup> and the experience of the mid-1840's confirms this view. They did, however, take the lead in stirring up trouble for the Liberal majority on two important topics.<sup>3</sup>

1. For which also see Hennock, *op.cit.*, pp.331-335

2. See above, Chapter V, pp.329-330

3. Apart from these two issues Hobson in particular made a nuisance of himself by the use of the filibuster. His speeches were of inordinate length and he often moved amendment after amendment to delay business.



Firstly they made some serious accusations about the police with regard to maladministration of fines and gross immorality with female prisoners.<sup>1</sup> Special enquiries were launched by the Watch Committee which discovered no foundation in the charges, a conclusion which did not satisfy the Chartists who periodically raised the matter again.<sup>2</sup> Secondly they persistently introduced motions to open up the Committees of the Council, particularly the Watch Committee, to public view.<sup>3</sup> They were especially suspicious of the more important committees since the exclusive nature of their selection meant that troublemakers like Hobson and Jackson were kept out.

On this issue the Chartists were sometimes supported by the Tories who, since the trouble over the dismissal of Read as Chief Constable in 1836,<sup>4</sup> were keen to expose Liberal jobbery. However the main alliance with the Chartists came from the more Radical of their fellow Councillors. Table XIII analyses the division lists on motions on which the Chartists might have been expected to take a distinctive stand. In the mid-1840's the Chartist Councillors comprised John Jackson, first elected at a by-election in June 1843 and re-elected in the November<sup>5</sup>, Hobson, Brook, Rob-

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1. Hobson was fond of making charges on flimsy evidence. He accused Bateson of having deliberately provoked the 1842 riots, yet as one Alderman remarked the charge was merely that 'Mr. Somebody, living somewhere had written a letter to somebody else that said something about somebody' (Leeds Mercury, 6 Jan. 1844). On one occasion Hobson accused a flaxspinner of using unfenced machinery which tore off a little girl's arm but when asked to name the man he said he could not remember the name. (ibid., 16 Mar. 1844)
  2. Leeds Times, 30 May 1846, Leeds Intelligencer, 22 March, 12 April 1845, Leeds Mercury, 11 Feb. 1843, 5 April, 17 May 1845; Council Minutes, 6, pp. 205, 498; Report Book Municipal I, pp. 353-359.
  3. Leeds Mercury, 9 Dec. 1843, 28 Sept., 23 Nov. 1844, 17 Feb. 1846, 3 April 1847. Vide Table XIII.
  4. See above, Chapter IV, p. 198.
  5. Harrison, op.cit., p. 90, fails to mention Jackson's victory in June and assumed that he entered the Council in November.

son and Thomas White, first elected in 1842 and sometimes referred to as a Chartist and sometimes not.<sup>1</sup> The voting pattern indicates that

TABLE XIII VOTING PATTERNS IN TOWN COUNCIL 1843 - 1847<sup>2</sup>

Date	Motion	Those Voting Included
July 1843	To reduce Town Clerk's salary	Jackson, White + Bower, France, Sellers, Hornby, Dufton, Craven, J.W.Smith
Dec. 1843	To open Committee to public	Jackson, White, Hobson + Hornby, Brumfit.
Jan. 1844	To discuss Bate-son case	Jackson, White, Hobson + Dufton, J.W.Smith
	To lower a rate for drainage	Jackson + Hornby, Heaps, Brumfit, Dufton, Yewdall
	To oppose Council on Potts Case (1840)	Jackson, Hobson, White + Dufton, Cliff, Craven, J.W.Smith
May 1844	To oppose Skinner Lane scheme	Jackson + Hornby, Yewdall, Dufton, Brumfit, France.
Sept. 1844	To open Committees	Jackson, Hobson, White + Hornby, Brumfit, Smith, Bower, Dufton
Nov. 1844	To elect Jackson v. Lupton	Jackson, White, Hobson, Brook, Robson + Horner, Brumfit, Hornby
	To appoint Watch Committee	Jackson, White, Hobson, Brook, Robson + Heywood and Tories
Jan. 1845	To petition for John Frost	Jackson, Hobson, Brook, Robson + Horner, Dufton, France, Craven
	To oppose the increase in Surveyor's salary	Brook, Robson + Hornby, Horner, Yewdall
Feb. 1846	To open Watch Committee	Jackson, White, Brook, Robson + Brumfit, Dufton
March 1846	To oppose the purchase of Fire Plugs	Jackson, White, Brook, Robson + Bower, Heaps, Heywood
March 1847	To open Watch Committee	Brook, Robson + Morton, Horner, Dufton

L. The fluctuating designation of "Chartist" strengthens the view that (continued, with Footnote 2, on page 414)

they were not standing alone but receiving regular support from the Liberals and in no vote, not even on the Bateson case, did the Chartists find themselves voting alone. These sympathisers were either of a higher occupational group whose politics had always been Radical, like Bower, Brunfit, Dufton, Craven and Cliff, or were from that same shop-keeper/craftsman class which produced most of the Chartists, like Smith (draper), Yewdall (grocer), Hornby (tobacconist), Heaps (plumber) and Horner (corn miller).

While it is true that Chartist Councillors felt morally obliged to oppose unnecessary expense (as Brook put it 'I am opposed to the outlay of any large sum of money if it can be avoided')<sup>3</sup> nevertheless they did not always vote in favour of "economy". Table XIV highlights six votes involving expense where Chartist Councillors were found on both sides of the fence, which thus firmly contradicts the claim 'they could always be counted on voting in favour of keeping expenditure down'.<sup>4</sup> If there was something of a group of Councillors who might be termed "economists", i.e. who usually voted merely with the rates in mind, then their leader was not a Chartist at all. The arch economist of the mid-1840's was the Briggate tea dealer, John Yewdall, who had been a great enemy of parish extravagance in the 1820's.<sup>5</sup>

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Chartists were not an isolated group. France elected for 1842 was referred to as a Chartist yet the Northern Star, 5 Nov. 1842, did not know of him. James Dufton was a regular member of Chartist nomination lists in Vestry meetings and sometimes referred to as a Chartist in the Council yet it turned out that he was the owner of much slum property in Kirkgate and the Boot and Shoe Yard Report Book, Leeds Improvement Act, I, p.43 .

2. Source Council Minutes, Vols. 6&7 . Not all divisions were recorded since there had to be a special motion to that effect so that in many motions overall voting totals only were given.
3. Leeds Mercury, 30 Oct. 1847
4. Harrison, op.cit., p.92.
5. Cf. Elliott, op.cit., p. 185

TABLE XIV SPLITS IN CHARTIST VOTING 1844 - 1846

Date	Motion	Yes	No
Jan.1844	To levy a 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ d rate for drainage	Hobson, White	Jackson
May 1844	To embark on the Skinner Lane scheme	White	Jackson
Jan.1845	To increase Surveyor's salary	White	Robson, Brook
Feb.1845	To enlarge the Court House	Jackson, Robson	Brook
Feb.1846	To alter Kirkgate Market	Jackson, White	Robson, Brook
Aug.1846	To purchase road sweeping machines	White	Jackson

Yewdall first emerged as a Municipal "economist" at a Kirkgate ward meeting in March 1843, which turned out to be the first of a series of six (only Mill Hill and West Ward were excluded) opposed to the great expenditure involved in the Improvement Act of 1842. Yewdall set the tone of all the meetings by complaining of the enormous powers vested in the Council, of the enormous expense ('hundreds were nothing in the Council, they generally went by thousands') and of the borrowing powers:

'It was but putting off the evil day and if pursued would involve them and their children in such an amount of debt as would completely set them fast and prove absolutely overwhelming'<sup>1</sup>

All the meetings sent petitions to the Council<sup>2</sup> and in the ratepayers' backlash the following November Yewdall entered the Council and Robert

1. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Times, Leeds Intelligencer, 11,13,25 March 1843.

2. Leeds Mercury, 1, 8 April 1843, Council Minutes, 6, pp.227,241-2.



Baker was sent packing.<sup>1</sup>

Yewdall established himself as the leading "economist" in the first half of 1844. First in January he proposed that a rate for drainage be lowered from 3½d. to 3d. and was defeated by 30 - 7.<sup>2</sup> Two months later he put the ratepayers' argument against Vetch's sewerage plan when he pointed out that 'the people were more solicitous about draining rates from their pockets than draining the streets.'<sup>3</sup> In May 1844 he led the opposition to the Skinner Lane scheme of improvement and warned the Council that they were doing too much too quickly.<sup>4</sup> Thereafter he was to be found speaking up consistently for economy though his support dwindled somewhat. In June 1846 he was left in a minority of two, with Bower, against a sewerage scheme and in November 1846, despite accumulated Council debts of £78,760, he was defeated by Bond, the Tory solicitor, at the annual election.<sup>5</sup>

That Chartists were not always to be found in Yewdall's ranks was

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1. Popular opposition in 1842 to Baker has been cited (above, Chapter V, pp. 330-I) and in March 1843 the meeting in South Ward was very hostile to him. In September 1843 a meeting to organise a presentation to him was over-ruled by the majority which opposed the expense involved in all his schemes. He moved out to Whitkirk about this time and therefore may not have been able to retain his seat but the impression remained that he had been expelled from the Council by his South Ward constituents on the grounds of expense. One sympathiser said this publicly at an Oddfellows Dinner attended by Baker (see Leeds Times, 1 May 1847).
  2. Leeds Mercury, 13 Jan. 1844.
  3. Ibid., 2 March 1844.
  4. Ibid., 25 May 1844.
  5. Ibid., 20 June, 7 Nov. 1846. £50,000 had been borrowed under the Improvement Act and £28,670 for the gaol. It is interesting to note that much of this money was borrowed from a group of Liberals of whom Thomas Benyon, William Williams Brown and the Luptons were the most important. (See Report Book Leeds Improvement Act, I, pp. 209-211).



well illustrated in February 1846 when the Skinner Lane improvement came up again and was carried by 29 - 8. The eight comprised Yewdall, Bower, Brumfit, Heaps, Watson, Richardson, Birchall and Nunnely, while the four<sup>1</sup> Chartists on the Council all voted in favour.<sup>2</sup> Indeed on two occasions Chartists were pushing the Council forward to new expenditure. In 1845 Hobson criticised the mealy-mouthed partial improvements that were agreed on and instead urged that the rown of buildings in Boar Lane be demolished and replaced by 'a new range of shops of creditable beauty and elegance'. Furthermore, he wanted a new street laid out between Briggate and Mill Hill which would be 'a new street of shops in first rate style to serve as a model street for the town' and which would include a Town Hall 'befitting the present size and importance of the Borough'.<sup>3</sup> Robert Hall, the barrister, reported to the Council that they had no powers to build a model street<sup>4</sup> and so nothing was done but Hobson's scheme gave an indication that even in the field of beautifying the town a Chartist did not necessarily stand for a crimping parsimony.

On a question more closely related to working-class welfare, the sewerage, Robson and Brook argued in 1846 that there was greater economy in paying for a drainage scheme than in not and Brook reminded the Coun-

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1. Though Hobson was still nominally a member of the Council he did not attend at all during 1845-6, by which time he had left Leeds for Huddersfield. He had been struck off the voters list in 1845.
  2. Council Minutes Improvement Act I, p.401.
  3. Leeds Mercury, 16 Aug.1845; Council Minutes Improvement Act I, p.348.
  4. Ibid., p.360.

cil that the working classes were in favour of sewerage because 'they dread the doctor's bill more than the rate.'<sup>1</sup> A year later when nothing had been achieved despite a grant of money by the Council Brook complained of their indifference to working-class sickness caused by fever:

'It was the great fault of the Council that they thought more of fighting the battles of Whig and Tory or Education and non-Education than the real interests of the inhabitants of the borough.'<sup>2</sup>

There were serious practical difficulties facing any drainage system for Leeds because of the protected position of the Aire and Calder Navigation Company whose interests were certain to be defended with litigation and because of the natural physical geography of the town which made the low-lying area south of the river difficult to drain.\* The absence of a system of drainage, combined with the inhibitions over economy and with the inability of the Council to seek out nuisances<sup>3</sup>, rendered the Improvement Act of 1842 less useful than it might have been.<sup>4</sup> Some, like Yewdall, believed that the Council were doomed to failure if it was thought that Leeds could be converted 'into a state of purity, cleanness and comfort such as was to be seen in some rural town like

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1. Leeds Intelligencer, 20 June 1846. Cf. Hobson two years earlier 'It is essential that an efficient system of drainage should be devised, determined on and the work executed without further delay.' Council Minutes Improvement Act I, p.351.
  2. Leeds Times, 15 May 1847.
  3. There were frequent suggestions for ward sanitation committees to seek out nuisances and then report to the Council, ibid., 27 Feb. 1847, Leeds Mercury, 31 Oct. 1846.
  4. Kemplay argued that a future historian reading the Act would assume that 'Leeds must have been the cleanest and sweetest and most decent of all the cities of all the cities of Christendom'. Leeds Intelligencer, 7 Dec. 1844.
- \* There were in fact no less than five reports on sewerage before work began, viz: Vetch, Dec. 1842, Walker 1844, Leather 1845, Wicksteed Nov. 1848 and Leather Dec. 1848.

Pontefract.<sup>1</sup> Others attributed failure to deal with the drainage system to the fact that members of the Council did not themselves face the same health problems as their constituents. Whatever the reason Leather's plan for the sewerage of the town which was voted through in 1846 was not physically embarked upon until 1850.<sup>2</sup>

The Council also took up the question of providing public baths and wash houses, though apparently with the main motive of stopping working men resorting to the local inn to escape from their cottages filled with washing hung up to dry. Brook and all three newspapers supported the scheme but a doctor, Thomas Nunnely, spoke up against it:

'He did not think it at all the province of Parliament or the Town Council to interfere in providing washhouses. He believed it was just another measure for saving landlords from providing proper conveniences to their property . . . He felt a strong conviction that this was one of those instances of petty legislation which was the tendency of the present day.'<sup>3</sup>

Public health was also involved in the dispute over the burial grounds which developed into a conflict with Hook and the Churchwardens and is

1. Leeds Times, 11 March 1843
2. Vetch's plan of 1843-4 involved two separate systems for north and south of the river. It was rejected by the Council in 1844 partly through the fears of economists like Yewdall and partly through doubts about Vetch's calculations of the financial return on treated sewerage. Leather's plan envisaged a much lower return on the sale of fertiliser and one coordinated system for both north and south Leeds. By 1846 the Press was in favour of spending money on drainage and economy ceased to be a delaying factor. However practical problems in dealing with the Aire and Calder Navigation and doubts as to the extent of powers inherent in the Improvement Act delayed the commencement of the scheme. For further details see Toft Public Health in Leeds, pp.160-180, and below, Chapter VII, pp.456-8
3. Leeds Times, Leeds Intelligencer, Leeds Mercury, 12, 19 Sept. 1846. Nunnely, though a doctor, set himself against most of the improvements mooted in 1846 (e.g. increased grant to Nuisances Committee and Skinner Lane improvement). He appears to have been very much a laissez faire man and said, for instance, on education in 1847 'I deny in toto the right of the State to educate'.

dealt with in the next section.

The Committee work multiplied and grants of money were voted, yet contemporaries still complained that the Improvement Act had not brought the boons which had been expected. Kemplay reminded Bradford when it was agitating for a Charter of Incorporation that 'Corporations are neither certain nor the only instruments of practical benefits.'<sup>1</sup> Leeds was finding that the complexities and problems of governing a growing industrial town were proving too great since they involved

'duties far too various and complex to be well performed by one body and that a fluctuating one, whose members have scarcely time to learn their official business ere the period for which they were elected has expired, when the glorious uncertainty of popular election or personal unwillingness to renew acquaintance with the troubles of official life may deprive the public of the service of those who have just begun to have a practical knowledge of their duties.'

In local government it was becoming clear that party politics were no substitute for administrative efficiency and practical reform .

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1. Leeds Intelligencer, 16 Aug.1845.

2. Ibid., 4 Nov.1843.

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The burial question straddled Municipal and Parochial politics for its solution involved negotiations with Hook and the local Anglican hierarchy. Hook's main concern in the mid-1840's was to make the Anglican Church more accessible to the working classes, to give every poor man a pastor. This, he conceived, could be done by a plan, outlined in 1844 in a pastoral letter,<sup>1</sup> which would divide the unwieldy and heavily populated Leeds parish into 21 smaller parishes each with a resident Vicar and enough free seats to accommodate the poor. The result would be as far as Hook was concerned that 'I shall divide this living and sink from Vicar of Leeds to Incumbent of St.Peter's.'<sup>2</sup> Dissenters were immediately suspicious of a plan involving an 'enormous Church extension and Clergy multiplication' and Hook's subsequent Parliamentary bill was denounced as 'the "more Church" bill for Leeds . . for stocking Leeds with Parish Churches and Clergymen.'<sup>3</sup> This attitude was replaced by an indifference when it was realised that it would not affect Church rates or interfere with Dissenters in any way.

Hook was prepared to give up something like £400 of his income in order to get his scheme through since he believed that 'unless the Church of England can be made in the manufacturing districts the Church of the

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1. Stephens Hook, II, pp.166-173.

2. Ibid., p.165

3. Leeds Mercury, 27 Jan.1844, Leeds Times, 22 June 1844; Cf. Leeds Intelligencer, 20 Jan, 25 May, 29 June 1844.



poor, which she certainly is not now, her days are numbered.'<sup>1</sup> This selflessness over the Church Vicarage Act contrasts sharply with his attitude over burial dues which were a stumbling block to a solution of the burial question. As has been explained earlier, Hook was instrumental in drawing attention to the need for a new burial ground<sup>2</sup> which was eventually opened in 1844. The problem was the surplice fee of 1s0d. on every burial to which the Vicar was entitled and which the Council after a long debate decided should not be paid out of the rates.<sup>3</sup>

Because of the higher burial fees for Anglicans many continued in 1845, 1846 and 1847 to resort to the old parochial ground at St. Peter's and Quarry Hill which had been condemned in 1840-41 and because of what Hook regarded as an injustice over surplice fees he refused to petition the Bishop of Ripon to close the old grounds. In 1847 a Liberal Councillor jumped from relative obscurity into the political limelight by drawing attention to the burial question in the Council and in the Press. Joseph Richardson, a Methodist upholsterer from West ward, made speeches in the Council and addressed letters in the Press pointing out that 2,000 burials a year were being made in the parochial grounds while only 137 burials had taken place at the new grounds at Burmantofts at an average cost to the ratepayer of £5.8.6. each, while at Hunslet the average cost

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1. Stephens, op.cit. II, p.175.

2. Above, Chapter V, p.336.

3. At first the same scale of fees was agreed for both the consecrated and unconsecrated positions but on reconsideration it was felt that Anglicans should pay the surplice fee themselves, i.e. 1s0d. (1s7d. in Hunslet) higher than the burial fee for a Dissenter. See Leeds Mercury, Leeds Times, Leeds Intelligencer, 30 Nov.1844, 22 Feb., 1 March 1845; Council Minutes Improvement Act, 1, p.268.

was the ludicrous figure of £36.8.5. each.<sup>1</sup> Richardson managed single-handedly to rekindle that righteous indignation about the "pestilential burial grounds" which had produced the Burial Act of 1842 and his political reward came in his elevation to Alderman in 1847. Hook eventually agreed to a commutation of the surplice fees but only after the offending dual scale of charges had been dropped.<sup>2</sup>

Hook's stand was defended by Kemplay in the Intelligencer and by the Leeds Churchwardens<sup>3</sup>, who for the first time in 20 years were Tory Anglicans. In the Churchwardens election of 1847 the Tory list was carried in opposition to the Chartists. Brook was worried about the possibility of a renewal of Church rates and was anxious for a poll but the Chartists were unable to finance it and so their five year tenure of office came to an end.<sup>4</sup> After their initial success in 1842 the Chartists were only challenged once more, in 1843, when Morgan proposed a Liberal list and Bramley a Tory one, both of which were defeated by Brook's successful nomination of Chartists.<sup>5</sup> Thereafter in 1844, 1845 and 1846 the Chartists were elected unopposed.<sup>6</sup> By the mid-1840's the Churchwardens had ceased to be really important as a political institution, when there were higher avenues to fulfil political ambitions and so long as there was no question of Church rates being levied<sup>7</sup> the Liberals were happy to leave

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1. Leeds Times, 14, 21, 28 Aug., 11 Sept. 1847; Report Book Leeds Improvement Act, I, pp. 243-248.
  2. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Times, 4, 11 Sept., 2, 30 Oct. 1847; Report Book Leeds Improvement Act, I, pp. 253-257.
  3. Leeds Intelligencer, 11 Sept., 2, 30 Oct. 1847.
  4. Ibid., 10 April 1847.
  5. Leeds Mercury, 22 April 1843; Vestry Minutes, p. 269.
  6. A list of Churchwardens appears in J. Rusby St. Peter's at Leeds (1896), pp. 282-4.
  7. Hook from 1843 was prepared to acknowledge that Church rates had been replaced by voluntary subscriptions in financing the running of the Church.

Chartists in charge of what were, if the truth be told, humble duties.<sup>1</sup>

Hook was happy to have working men as Churchwardens although when the Factory Bill of 1843 threatened to give the office (or a similar one) more responsible educational duties he stated that 'it would never do for seven Chartists to be trustees.'<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, on two occasions Hook publicly expressed his satisfaction with the way Chartists performed their duties and it was his view that they were vastly superior to their Liberal Nonconformist predecessors.<sup>3</sup> In receiving these plaudits the Chartists were showing, as was the case on the Council, that they could manage local affairs as well as their social superiors and were thus strengthening the case for a working-class franchise. They were equally effective in their other parochial role of Highway Surveyors, whose election the Chartists monopolised in the 1840's.<sup>4</sup>

The Chartist Highway Surveyors were from the same occupational groups which produced the Chartist Councillors. For instance, of the 19 elected in 1845 13 were small shopkeepers and the remaining third were craftsmen or tradesmen of the painter/bricklayer variety. In the following year there were 11 retailers and the remaining eight craftsmen included two engaged in cloth manufacturing, neither of whom were operatives.<sup>5</sup> The social origins of the Chartist Highway Surveyors merely

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1. Cf. difficulties over the Chartists' failure to clean the Church properly, Stephens, op.cit., II, p.119.
  2. Leeds Intelligencer, 14 Oct.1843.
  3. Leeds Mercury, 22 April 1843, 13 April 1844.
  4. For the elections see Vestry Minutes, pp.264-6, 270-1; Leeds Mercury, 6, 13 April 1844, 28 March 1846, Leeds Times 29 March 1845.
  5. One was a cloth manufacturer who had been suggested at one time as a Liberal Councillor for Mill Hill, the other was a cloth dresser.

confirm the non-proletarian nature of Leeds Chartism and in their views regarding the functions of the office Chartists made explicit the purpose of Municipal Chartism. When there was a move to bring the highways under direct State control through a bill in 1847 Chartists like Brook opposed it on the ground that it would remove direct local control.<sup>1</sup> Opposition to centralisation was shared by more than the Chartists<sup>2</sup> but the Leeds Chartists had a particular interest here. In becoming Improvement Commissioners, Churchwardens, Highway Surveyors and Councillors Chartists were bringing to reality a meaningful working-class participation in politics and in order to maintain this the ultimate political control had to lie with the massed ratepayers in the Vestry.<sup>3</sup> If one adds together Chartist views on the Improvement Act discussed earlier<sup>4</sup>, on education (wishing for an elected local board) and on this proposal to centralise highways control, then one finishes up with a coherent programme of direct democratic control by the local majority. Chartism as a general movement was concerned with achieving real working-class participation in politics and Leeds Municipal Chartism was the achievement of that participation and involved attempts to create the context in which further working-class participation was possible.

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1. Leeds Mercury, 15 May 1847.
  2. The best example of this was the local resentment at the continued presence of troops in Leeds originally called in to deal with the 1842 disturbances. Many Leeds citizens had been pleased to see them arrive but soon were preaching about local control over law and order; see Leeds Mercury, 7, 21, 28 Jan., 4, 11 Feb., 4 March, 13 May, 17 June 1843, 15 June 1844; Council Minutes, 6, pp. 195-6, 272-4.
  3. Perring admitted that the failure of "real ratepayers" to participate in Vestry meetings gave control of the Vestry to the Chartists; Leeds Conservative Journal.
  4. Above, Chapter V, pp. 342-345.

The introduction of the new Poor Law into Leeds at the end of 1844 gave the Chartists a new avenue of political activity. Ever since the legal decision in 1834-5 confirming the overseers in sole control of the Poor Law in Leeds<sup>1</sup> political participation was at the whim of the magistrates who appointed the overseers. The exclusive political appointments of the 1830's gave way in the early 1840's, after the Tory nomination of magistrates, to the elimination of politics by appointing an equal number of overseers from each party.<sup>2</sup> The elder Baines wanted to go even further and forget party labels entirely:

'the sooner they got rid of party the better; and the more they attended to the fitness of men for parochial duties and the less they attended to the particular colour men might wear the more fitly they would discharge their duties as magistrates.'<sup>3</sup>

This was asking a lot in the heated political atmosphere of Leeds and Kemplay regarded the compromise as worthwhile, 'party has, after many years of injustice, been at length put on such an equilibrium as must to all reasonable ratepayers give satisfaction'<sup>4</sup>

The introduction of the new Poor Law would certainly threaten that equilibrium since, as Matthew Johnson pointed out, any popular election would 'be conducted exclusively upon political grounds' and whichever party was victorious there would be a return to an exclusive political system.<sup>5</sup> There were other grounds of opposition from Leeds. The experience in the abortive election of 1837 did not persuade anyone that

1. Above, Chapter III, pp. 153-155.
2. Leeds Mercury, 8 April 1843.
3. Ibid., 13 April 1844.
4. Leeds Intelligencer, 8 April 1843; CP letter from "One Who Will Have a Vote" in Leeds Mercury, 19 Oct. 1844: 'A more respectable Board never managed the parochial affairs or acted with greater harmony and cordiality'.  
to P.R.O.
5. Johnson, 20 March 1844, P.R.O. MH12/15226.



it would be easy to elect guardians in so large a parish. Further, many of the improvements brought in by the 1834 Act, such as relieving officers, had been introduced in Leeds so that there appeared no reason to disturb that political balance which had evolved. However, from the Poor Law Commission's point of view, the over-riding reason was to be found in the disgraceful state of the Leeds Workhouse. One of the Poor Law inspectors reported that 'the arrangements are altogether discreditable to a civilized country'<sup>1</sup> and the Leeds magistrates frequently urged the need for a new workhouse. The stumbling block was that under the prevailing local act passed in 1809 the authority to build a new workhouse lay with the ratepayers in Vestry and it was unlikely that they would agree to the expense. By establishing a Board of Guardians the Poor Law Commission would be making a new workhouse possible by by-passing the Vestry.<sup>2</sup>

This time the Commission took the advice of Clements and ordered an election by wards instead of on one township list as in 1837. Once more a Poor Law election was to challenge all those pious aspirations about removing party politics from parochial affairs. The Liberals put up a party list, using as an excuse the existence of a Tory list, which in turn was justified in Tory minds by the exclusive behaviour of Liberals on the Town Council, especially over the election of Aldermen.<sup>3</sup> The Poor

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1. Report of Charles Clements, 20 Jan.1843, para.21, P.R.O., loc.cit.
  2. Ironically though this was always felt to be the case by the time the new system was mooted for Leeds local pressure had built up in favour of a new workhouse and had in fact to be delayed until the introduction of the new Poor Law; see Clements to Poor Law Commission, 18 Oct.1844 and Leeds Intelligencer, 7 Sept.1844. A further irony was that the new Guardians refused to build a new workhouse: Beckwith to Poor Law Commission, 22 May 1845.
  3. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Intelligencer, 7,14 Dec.1844.

Law election occurred one month after the Council had once more refused to elect any Tory Aldermen and so the Tories pursued political power through the Poor Law as a compensation for their disappointments in the Town Council. No excuses were offered in defence of the Chartist list. The result was a resounding win for the Tories who captured 15 of the 18 seats, the remainder going to the Chartists.<sup>1</sup> Thus the institutional change involved in the introduction of the new Poor Law resulted in the control of the Poor Law in Leeds reverting to the Tories who had reluctantly given it up after the brief ascendancy in 1836.

The new political masters soon made their presence felt by dismissing two relieving officers and two registrars of births, marriages and deaths and above all by replacing the Clerk, Christopher Heaps, notorious in Tory legend because of the "Heaps job" of 1837, with one of their favourite sons, John Beckwith, assistant editor of the Intelligencer.<sup>2</sup> Beckwith's undoubted familiarity with Poor Law matters made him a reasonable choice<sup>3</sup> but his appointment, together with that of Edward Auty, Tory party agent, as registrar and others of a political nature indicate that a political spoils system was at work. Bingley, formerly reporter with the Leeds Times and one of the dismissed registrars, complained bitterly that 'no other than political motives' influenced the Guardians while Naylor,

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1. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Intelligencer, Leeds Times, 21, 28 Dec. 1844.
  2. Ibid., 4, 18 Jan. 1845; Rhodes (one of the dismissed relieving officers) to Poor Law Commission, 26 Dec. 1844, P.R.O. MH 12/15226.
  3. He was the most frequent Leeds correspondent to the Poor Law Commission and had a full collection of all their reports, returns, etc. He had indeed on many occasions criticised the Commission over what he considered their faulty interpretation of the law. His testimonial from Robert Perring, former editor of the Intelligencer, remarked on his mastery over the Poor Law. MH 12/15226.

solicitor to the Overseers, claimed that all appointments were 'referred solely to political considerations'.<sup>1</sup> The Tory defence was that they were not obliged to use the former officers and that the whole episode involved far less jobbery than when the Liberals gained control of the Council in 1836.<sup>2</sup> It was to be expected that a party deprived of local power for a decade should wish to reward its faithful with some office once it was again in the saddle.<sup>3</sup>

As a reaction to this the Liberal Overseers retained Heaps at a slightly lower salary and offered the post of assistant overseer to Rhodes and Mason the dismissed relieving officers. This produced a Tory outcry against extravagance and a striking handbill from the Radical printer Alice Mann headed 'Monstrous Extravagance by Overseers - Last Desperate Bid For Power'.<sup>4</sup> Whether Heaps had any real duties to perform was questioned since Beckwith was now doing his job for £100 a year instead of £250<sup>5</sup> and yet Heaps was still to receive £200 as Clerk to the Overseers. In addition the legality of any new appointment was challenged since assistant overseers had originally been appointed as paid relieving officers, yet now all poor relief was in the hands of the Guardians and the only

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1. Bingley to Poor Law Commission, 13 Jan.1845, Naylor to Poor Law Commission, 21(?) Jan.1845, P.R.O., loc.cit. Bingley must have been particularly incensed since he had moved house in 1840 especially to get the job. MH 12/15225. Two years later Leeds Mercury, 21 Nov.1846, was still complaining of Beckwith 'he was elected to his Clerkship for party purposes'.
  2. Leeds Intelligencer, 25 Jan.1845.
  3. Other examples of this process were the award of the printing contract to the Intelligencer, the appointment of Bertie Markland as Law Clerk and the employment of Tory tradesmen for jobs in the workhouse.
  4. Leeds Intelligencer, 18 Jan.1845; Handbill in MH 12/15226.
  5. However, Beckwith reported (20 Jan.1845) that he was not employed full-time. Cf. Leeds Mercury, 4 Jan.1845, on Beckwith's 'very gentlemanly hours 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.'.

duties Overseers had was to collect the poor rate.<sup>1</sup> The Poor Law Commission found itself in the centre of a political battle, requested on the one hand by the Guardians not to sanction any appointment by the Overseers and by the Overseers not to sanction any rival appointments by the Guardians.<sup>2</sup>

Clements, the Poor Law inspector, considered Heaps and the Overseers' appointments an embarrassment but his superiors believed the embarrassment originated with the refusal of the Guardians to use the existing officers.<sup>3</sup> They approved the appointment of the assistant overseers to collect the poor rates while pointing out that it was hoped 'that it may eventually be found profitable to provide for the collection of the poor rates at less cost to the township.'<sup>4</sup> The Guardians were furious and considered the confirmation of the Overseers' appointments to be an insult to their authority.<sup>5</sup> Relations were very strained between the Guardians and the Overseers and the former turned the latter out of their offices at the workhouse,<sup>6</sup> while the Overseers complained that poor rates would have to go up from 1s4d. in the £ to 2s0d. because

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1. Beckwith to Poor Law Commission, 15 Feb.1845, enquired perceptively whether an assistant overseer who was a relieving officer could really be considered a poor rate collector.
  2. MH 12/15226 passim.
  3. Clements to Poor Law Commission, 25 Jan.1845, Poor Law Commission to Clements, 27 Jan.1845, ibid.
  4. Poor Law Commission to Naylor, 11 Feb.1845, ibid. There were seven offices in all, Heaps at £200, five at £100 and one at £70.
  5. Beckwith to Poor Law Commission, 6 Feb.1845, ibid., 10 Dec.1845. P.R.O. MH 12/15227.
  6. The dispute over the use of the office at one time threatened to develop into an open assault by the Guardians who were determined to evict the Overseers and rejected all compromise suggested by Clements: Clements to Poor Law Commission, 1 May 1845, Clements to Beckwith, 13 May 1845, Beckwith to Poor Law Commission, 22 May 1845, Poor Law Commission to Beckwith, 31 May 1845. P.R.O. MH 12/15227.

of the new regime.<sup>1</sup> There was further political controversy when Hook was given by the Guardians exclusive access to the workhouse pulpit, replacing the former rota whereby each denomination took it in turn to preach to the inmates.<sup>2</sup>

This frenetic political interest which had been somewhat artificially stimulated soon died down as the Guardians got down to running the day to day administration of the Poor Law. This was reflected in the elections for Poor Law Guardians which are analysed in Table XV. In the first two elections there was an interesting echo of Council politics for

TABLE XV POOR LAW GUARDIANS ELECTIONS 1844 - 1847

	Dec.1844		Apr.1845		Apr.1846		Apr.1847	
	Candi- dates	Seats	Candi- dates	Seats	Candi- dates	Seats	Candi- dates	Seats
Liberals	18	0	0	0	2	2	3	2
Chartists	3	3	4	3	10	1	0	0
Tories	15	15	15	15	16	15	16	16
No. of Wards Contested	8		1		5		1	

Cawood had threatened a Tory-Chartist alliance on the Council after the Aldermanic elections had gone against the Tories. In December 1844 and again the following April the names of three Chartists (Brook, Jack-

1. Leeds Mercury, 10,24,31 May 1845; Cf. Clements to Poor Law Commission, 18 Feb.1845. P.R.O. MH 12/15226, 'the Guardians are inclined to be a little over liberal in their relief.'
2. Ibid., 23 June,12 July 1845, Leeds Intelligencer,19 April,5,19 July 1845. Hook's predecessor, Fawcett, had shared these duties but Hook had declined to do so when the Workhouse Board refused to allow him sole control; see evidence of M.Johnson in Clements' Report 1843.



son and Ayrey) were included in the Tory list and were elected with Tory support.<sup>1</sup> By 1846 when this alliance had withered away and the Chartists put up 10 candidates only one (Jackson) was elected and that was at a supplementary election in November. The most significant feature of Table XV is its evidence of abdication by the Liberals who, after the initial election, were clearly not interested in getting control of the Board of Guardians. No Liberal lists were nominated and so the elections were denuded of political interest. Hence for a while Liberal abdication removed politics from the Poor Law. This was a reflection of the changed nature of political institutions in Leeds. Before 1832 when the Council was closed to Liberal ambition and there were no Parliamentary elections the parochial institutions were objects of political aspiration. By the 1840's the Churchwardens and the Guardians were no longer of sufficient importance to be worth fighting for. The Tories were then able to feast on Liberal left-overs.

This chapter has attempted to illustrate how in a variety of ways the equilibrium of the political system in Leeds was disturbed in the mid-1840's. The knife-edge balance on the Council was replaced by a Liberal domination which reduced to insignificant proportions the Conservative influence over decision-making. With the Liberals no longer under the threat of imminent loss of power the strict party voting inside the Council of the early years of the reformed Corporation gave

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1. In passing it might be pointed out that the election of Chartist Poor Law Guardians was further evidence that the Chartist movement in Leeds was not proletarian for at a time when a £10 franchise was too high for most working men these Chartists were able to qualify as Guardians for which the qualification was to be rated at £40.

way to some fragmentation and cross party voting, particularly on the issue of "economy". In the sphere of Parliamentary elections also the "partified" system was challenged. In the election of 1847, unique in the period between the first two Reform Acts, the strong party discipline exhibited in other elections crumbled under the impact of the divisive education issue. The split in the Liberal party during the election had been an echo of the division of opinion in the field of agitation over the same schismatic question of education. Once more there was schism where on the Corn Laws there had been unity. Finally, as has just been discussed, the political truce and state of balance over the Poor Law was ended when control of the Poor Law was once more thrown into the cauldron of party politics in Leeds.

CHAPTER VII

THE LIBERAL VISION ACHIEVED

1848 - 1852

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The Parochial and Township political institutions which had been in the early 1830's and before the important entry for the Liberals into the local political arena had become less important by the late 1840's. Three areas of potential conflict remained in the elections to the offices of Churchwardens, Highway Surveyors and Poor Law Guardians. In the period 1848 - 1852 the Churchwardens became once more a province of the Tory-Anglican connection, which had recovered control from the Chartists in 1847. The office had become by then what it had originally been intended that it should be, namely a truly parochial office concerned solely with the maintenance of the Parish Church.

There were no great disputes in the annual elections as had been the case in the 1830's but Hook knew each year that he might have to face a further challenge from the Chartists. From the reports of his handling of these Vestry meetings it would appear that he used his powers as chairman to the full in order to head off a potential threat. In 1848 the Tory list was carried against a Chartist list on a show of hands<sup>1</sup> yet this may have resulted from the fact that hundreds of Chartist supporters could not gain access to the vestry room and Hook refused to adjourn the meeting to a more commodious meeting place. In the following year a Tory list was again carried against Chartist opposition and in 1850 the Chartists "carried" their own list but only after Hook had left the chair, having declared the meeting over and Tory wardens

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1. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Intelligencer, 29 April 1848.

elected.<sup>1</sup> 1851 was a quiet election when Tories were returned without opposition and the 1852 election also passed off quietly despite expected opposition, perhaps because Hook held the meeting two hours earlier than usual.<sup>2</sup>

The 1852 Churchwardens elections had been expected to be hotly contested since the Tories, some weeks earlier, had made a determined effort to capture the Board of Highway Surveyors. This had been controlled by the Chartists since 1843 and on the whole the Board had done its work well, being able to report each year that they carried forward a surplus of money similar to that which had been inherited in 1843. The Chartists had no trouble in carrying their own list under the guidance of William Brook in 1848 and 1849.<sup>3</sup> From 1850 Brook referred to the Surveyors as members of the working classes rather than as Chartists<sup>4</sup> and the declining political identification with Chartism was confirmed in the disputed election of 1852.

Brook and his fellow Surveyors stood for popular control of local bodies and they had petitioned on this ground against proposed public health legislation in 1848 and highways legislation in 1850.<sup>5</sup> Yet Brook found himself under severe criticism from his ally, Robert Meek Carter, over a visit the Surveyors made to London to lobby against certain clauses of the Small Tenements Act.<sup>6</sup> Popular control by ratepayers meant that even the slightest suspicion of jobbery would lead to careful public scrutiny of expenses incurred.

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1. Leeds Intelligencer, 14 April 1849, 6 April 1850.

2. Ibid., 26 April 1851, 17 April 1852.

3. Leeds Mercury, 1 April 1848, 31 March 1849.

4. Ibid., 30 March, 1850, 29 March 1851.

5. Ibid., 4 March 1848, 27 April 1850

6. Leeds Intelligencer, 12 July 1851.



All this produced a Tory revival of interest for, as Kemplay put it, the visit to London had been 'a bootless errand unless it was to see the Great Exhibition without making much demand on their own pockets'.<sup>1</sup> Therefore the annual meeting to elect Surveyors in 1852 became a noisy scene of party conflict, reviving memories of vestry meetings 20 years earlier. For three hours a crowded meeting argued the toss over who should be chairman, Seth Joy, a Tory Poor Law Guardian, or William Brook, the leader of the Chartist surveyors throughout the 1840's. All Brook could do when he was finally elected chairman was to adjourn the meeting for the actual election.<sup>2</sup>

A week later the Tories put up a spirited show and in the words of their leader Gregory they wished to make a change in the 'ultraliberal, democratic or Chartist character of the Board.'<sup>3</sup> It was clear from the debates that the suspected jobbery over expenses for the London visit had prompted the Tory action. The fact that by the early 1850's Chartism had merged with Liberalism in Leeds was amply illustrated by the poll for Highway Surveyors in 1852. In the words of Baines 'it is now a contest between Tories and Liberals'<sup>4</sup>; the Chartists had become respectable allies within the Liberal camp. The poll resulted in a vic-

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1. Ibid., 3 April 1852.

2. Ibid. and Leeds Mercury, 27 March 1852.

3. Leeds Intelligencer, 3 April 1852.

4. Leeds Mercury, 3 April 1852.

tory for Newton's Liberal list by roughly 2,600 votes to 700<sup>1</sup>, a comfortable margin.

The two most significant names in Gregory's list were those of Seth Joy and John Beckwith, both key members of the Leeds Poor Law Board and in 1852 the Poor Law was the most important issue in township politics. In these years the power struggle between Overseers and Guardians which had been a feature of the transition to the new Poor Law was replaced by a friendly cooperation between the two bodies and they even dined together in 1850<sup>2</sup>, the first public sign of cordiality between them. The Guardians did face a challenge to their authority from the magistrates, who were often approached by paupers who had been refused relief.

On several occasions Robert Barr, the Clerk to the magistrates, enquired of the Poor Law Commissioners what powers the bench had to order relief or removal.<sup>3</sup> In 1849 a dispute arose over two cases where the two bodies could not agree and in the words of the Times 'the bench and the board are at issue.'<sup>4</sup> The magistrates referred the cases to the Poor Law Board despite protests from the Guardians that their action in interfering with Poor Law matters was not only 'unauthorised by law but is calculated to weaken the authority of this Board.'<sup>5</sup> The Poor Law Inspector, Alfred Austin, supported the magistrates and tersely reminded the offending relieving officer that 'the legal claim to relief in all

1. Leeds Mercury, 10 April 1852.

2. Ibid., 19 Oct.1850.

3. Barr to Poor Law Commission, 2 Nov.1847, P.R.O. MH 12/15228; Barr to Poor Law Commission, 7 Feb.1849 and 11 Dec.1850. MH 12/15229.

4.Leeds Times, 24 Feb.1849.

5. Guardian Minutes, No.7, p.7.

cases is destitution.'<sup>1</sup>

The magistrates were predominantly Liberal and the Board of Guardians Tory but the disputes between them did not really take on a political character. Three issues, however, in Poor Law administration did become politically controversial; religious education, the running of the industrial school and the question of extravagance and high poor rates. The question of religious guidance for inmates of the workhouse was raised once more when Hook resigned as chaplain in 1849. The possibilities of injustice and offence to conscience in this matter had been amply illustrated by the frustrated attempts of Walmesley, a Roman Catholic priest, to preach to children who, he claimed, were Catholics.<sup>2</sup>

When the sole chaplaincy of Hook had replaced the old voluntary rota system the Liberal Dissenters had protested strongly and Hook's resignation threw the question into the melting pot once more, the Dissenters hoping to end the exclusive system of preaching.<sup>3</sup> William Hudswell, Independent Minister at Salem Chapel, offered to the Board of Guardians the unpaid services of 32 Dissenting ministers who were prepared to work in harmony with Anglicans, though not with Catholics or Unitarians.<sup>4</sup> The Guardians were interested in appointing a paid chaplain to the workhouse though the idea was shelved for the moment in 1849 and Hook was succeeded by a rota of Anglican clergy.<sup>5</sup> The exclusive system was to be maintained.

Two years later the question of the paid chaplain was raised again,

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1. A. Austin to A. Moore, 6 April 1849 in Letters From the Poor Law Board . . . 1849. For his report see Leeds Mercury, Leeds Intelligencer, 21 Apl. 1849.
  2. See his letters in P.R.O. MH 15228 and Guardians Minutes, 8, p.509.
  3. Leeds Mercury, 17 Feb. 1849.
  4. Guardians Minutes, 7, p.25.
  5. Leeds Mercury, 3, 17 March 1849, Guardians Minutes, 7, p.52.

possibly because four of the Guardians were also Churchwardens. The Board decided to appoint a chaplain at £50 a year and Edward Jackson took the appointment.<sup>1</sup> Hudswell this time offered the services of 37 Dissenting ministers but his offer was refused.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless he persisted in his attacks on the decision, addressing letters to the Press and attending further Board meetings.<sup>3</sup> The appointment of a paid chaplain was, in the words of the Times, 'a wanton attack on the principles of religion, equity, freedom and equality. In our view it is even more odious than a Church Rate'.<sup>4</sup> Since his salary was paid out of poor rates, paid by Dissenters as well as Anglicans, there was some point in the comparison. As if to add insult to injury the man who was later to become Canon Jackson treated the appointment as a virtual sine-cure and his slothful attitude was the subject of a fierce debate in both the Press and board meetings.<sup>5</sup>

On the question of chaplain to the workhouse the Guardians could be criticised for religious and political bias and on the industrial school their competence was called into question. The building of the industrial school was the cornerstone in the Guardians' policy for it justified to the Poor Law inspectors their refusal to build a new workhouse. Within six months of the opening of the school in the autumn of 1848 there were reports arriving in London of the imminent break-up of the school because

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1. Leeds Mercury, 25 Jan., 15 Feb. 1851; Beckwith to Poor Law Board, 27 Feb. 1851, P.R.O. MH 12/15230.
  2. Guardians Minutes, 9, pp.138-142.
  3. Leeds Intelligencer, 19 April 1851, Leeds Mercury, 22 March 1851.
  4. Leeds Times, 22 Feb. 1851.
  5. Leeds Mercury, 12 July, 16 Aug. 1851. Jackson was replaced in Feb. 1852, Guardians Minutes, 10, pp.40-41, 126-3. Predictably there is no mention of the dispute over Jackson's tenure as chaplain in the laudatory biography, L.&K. Sykes, Sketches of the Life of Edward Jackson (1913)

of the poor master and the Guardians' insistence that children should work at shoemaking nine hours a day.<sup>1</sup> Alfred Austin, the Poor Law inspector, thought the troubles exaggerated but told Beckwith, the Secretary of the Board, that changes in the school time-table were needed. The problem with the master was merely that he was young and 'unaccustomed to the free spoken members of public bodies in this part of the world.'<sup>2</sup> Austin thought the problems were merely teething troubles yet a few months later the inspector of schools reported that 'the constant interference of the Leeds Guardians in the management of the school which they cannot be expected to understand is very vexatious.'<sup>3</sup>

Even these minor matters of administration in 1849 provided opportunities to attack the Guardians and their school and Kemplay defended them against the Unitarian former Counciller, Arthur Megson.<sup>4</sup> In 1851 the matter became public when the master, the Rev. Nicholls, complained about moral discipline in the school and H.B.Farnall, the newly appointed inspector, conducted a public enquiry which revealed that there had been obvious irregularities in the running of the school.<sup>5</sup> Clearly there

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1. E.C.Tufnell to G.Nicholls, 23 Feb.1849; P.R.O. MH 12/15229.
  2. Austin Report, 2 March 1849 in ibid.; Austin to Beckwith, 6 March 1849 in Letters From The Poor Law Board 1849.
  3. T.B.Browne to Poor Law Board, 28 July 1849; P.R.O. MH 12/15229
  4. Leeds Intelligencer, 10 March 1849.
  5. Guardians Minutes, 9, pp.19-20; Report of Austin, 22 Feb.1851, MH 12/15230; Courtenay to Beckwith, 6 March 1851 in Letters From The Poor Law Board 1851.



were personality problems between Nicholls and his subordinates<sup>1</sup>, or as Courtenay put it, 'the want of harmony and cordial cooperation amongst the officers impairs the usefulness of the institution.'<sup>2</sup> However, the rules imposed by the Guardians were also found wanting and they were forced to eat their own words and rescind all their previous orders in July 1851.<sup>3</sup>

In his original attack Megson cited the school as an illustration of extravagance and accusations such as this were the most persistent feature of the Liberal attack on the Tory Guardians. This was predictable and was very similar to the Tory attack on the Liberal Council in its early years. Increases in salaries for officers together with Beckwith's multiplicity of part-time appointments were the usual subjects of discussion in the Press.<sup>4</sup> Letters were also addressed to the Poor Law Commissioners who were informed of the 'useless waste of public money' in the running of the Poor Law in Leeds and that the Guardians' conduct 'has been marked by a disposition to extravagance.'<sup>5</sup>

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1. Browne, the school inspector, had warned the Guardians when they appointed Nicholls that it was better to get 'an efficient schoolmaster of a somewhat lower grade in society than to have an inferior schoolmaster with higher social claims'. Report of T.B.Brown, 9 July 1848, MH 12/15229. The Guardians themselves fell out with Nicholls soon afterwards over whether it was his duty to say prayers each day and he resigned in Nov. 1851. Guardians Minutes, 8, pp.394-8; Leeds Mercury, 15 Nov.1851.
  2. Courtenay to Beckwith, 3 May 1851 in Letters From the Poor Law Board 1851.
  3. Guardians Minutes, 9, pp.385-6.
  4. Leeds Mercury, 29 April, 12, 19 Aug.1848, Beeds Times, 27 Nov.1852.
  5. Anonymous letters dated 12 Jan.1848, MH 12/15228, and 31 Jan.1850, MH 12/15229. Both were signed 'A Rate Payer' which was also the signature above a letter in similar vein in Leeds Mercury, 12 Aug.1848.

Somerset House was aware of the need for economy and always asked for precise reasons for increases in salaries. On one occasion over the appointment of a pay clerk the Poor Law Board refused to sanction the appointment for nine months and when Beckwith's salary was reviewed in 1852 they ordered that no increase should be made until after the 1853 elections.<sup>1</sup> One of the planks in the Tory case was that they had refused to introduce the harsh rigours of the new Poor Law into Leeds and Poor Law inspectors often cited examples of doubtful expenditure.<sup>2</sup> Indeed in 1851 Farnall, commenting on petitions from Leeds about the mode of election, pointed out that in his view 'the Ratepayers of Leeds have sounder grounds for discontent than those which they allege exist in the election of their Guardians'. He quoted two sets of figures to support his case. Firstly that at £4.5.9½. per pauper Leeds was spending a pound a head per annum more than the rest of the West Riding and secondly that 4.4% of Leeds population were getting relief whereas the figure was 2.7% in Bradford.<sup>3</sup>

The high poor rates which were the corollary of Farnall's figures had already produced an outcry in Leeds and in March 1849 a public meeting on the subject had appointed a committee of enquiry headed by Richard Bis-sington, a Liberal hatter.<sup>4</sup> The report of the Rates Enquiry Committee<sup>5</sup>

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1. MH 12/15228-9 passim; Guardians Minutes, 10, pp.460-2, 510-1; 11, pp.33, 154.
  2. Cf. for example Austin's Report, 22 April 1847, 'A large quantity of wine and sugar is given to the outdoor sick under the direction of the medical officers. Whether the quantity is necessary or not I have no means of judging'; MH 12/15228. Cf. also Ebrington to Beckwith, 29 Jan. 1850 in Letters From The Poor Law Board 1850 on the too generous distribution of beer and tobacco in the workhouse.
  3. Comments of H.B.Farnall, dated 16 June 1851, on Lupton to Baines, 10 June 1851; MH 12/15230.
  4. Leeds Mercury, 24, 31 March 1849. James Hole was also a member.
  5. Report of the Rates Enquiry Committee (1850), pp.24 + 14 tables.

# POOR RATES IN LEEDS TOWNSHIP 1832-1848.



Source: Report of the Rates Enquiry Committee (1850)

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was a wide-ranging document which looked at much more than the Poor Law but many saw that its main conclusion was that the new regime from 1845 had resulted in much increased Poor Law expenditure. As the graph shows the movement of poor rates was from 1845 to 1848 in line with the price of wheat and cholera was also a feature of those years, yet despite Kemplay's efforts in the Intelligencer to defend the Guardians, they were convicted of incompetence and extravagance in the eyes of the Liberals.<sup>1</sup>

The solution lay outside the field of Poor Law administration in the electoral process which determined the political composition of the Board of Guardians and here the mode of election was open to severe criticism. Frequent charges of electoral corruption were made against Beckwith as Clerk to the Guardians<sup>2</sup> but students of nineteenth century Leeds politics soon realise that accusations about corruption were the stock-in-trade of defeated politicians. Historians can certainly find other plausible reasons for the defeat of the Liberals in Poor Law elections, not least of which was the way the Tories were able to identify themselves as opponents of the new Poor Law and enemies to the building of a new workhouse.<sup>3</sup> Typical of Tory propaganda was the following editorial from Kemplay's pen:

'Many attempts have been made to induce the guardians to erect a new workhouse but the Conservative guardians . . . successfully resisted them . . . saved us from the horrors of the New Poor Law . . . we do not wish to give power to those who have been the advocates of the law in its worst form and who would soon in connexion with the higher Poor

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1. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Times, Leeds Intelligencer, 23 March, 18 May 1850.
  2. See, for example, Leeds Mercury, 18 March, 8 April 1848.
  3. Leeds had after all been very sensitive on the issue of a new workhouse and had been the source of much anti-Poor Law propaganda; see M.E. Rose "The Anti-Poor Law Movement in the North of England", Northern History, (I) 1966, pp.70-91.



Law authorities force the erection of a large new workhouse upon the township.'<sup>1</sup>

The idea of a new workhouse had always been unpopular in Leeds because of the cost and perhaps this explains Tory successes in Poor Law elections. Yet the case against Beckwith had some powerful advocates. Even before the 1848 election Matthew Johnson, an overseer for nearly 30 years, wrote to the Poor Law Board about the mode of electing Guardians. The method of delivering and collecting voting papers meant in his view that those employed for the task

'will always in contested elections be chosen if possible for their adhesion to the party views of the clerk especially when his own happen to be the reflexion of the Board in possession, willing and perhaps anxious to retain office.'<sup>2</sup>

They were bound, he argued, to be judged by results and so in Leeds, he reported, voting papers had been tampered with.

Over two years later the case was renewed when Joshua Bateson forwarded a petition, following the meeting in Leeds to discuss the report of the committee on poor rates, and Richard Bissington, the supreme authority on Poor Law matters in Leeds, supported the memorial by claiming that electoral malpractices were 'exceedingly objectionable and worse in Leeds than in any other town in the kingdom.'<sup>3</sup> Six months later Bissington reminded the Poor Law Commissioners of the complaints from Leeds which made the Board of Guardians self-elected and wrote 'nothing short of personal voting on the Municipal basis can be satisfactory'.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Leeds Intelligencer, 1 April 1848.
  2. Johnson to Poor Law Commission, 13 Jan.1848, PRO MH 12/15229.
  3. Bateson to Poor Law Commission received 23 May 1850; Bissington to Poor Law Commission, 20 May 1850, MH 12/15229.
  4. Bissington to M.T.Baines, 16 Jan.1851, MH 12/15230.

The campaign seemed to be having little effect and Liberal indifference to Poor Law elections (there were no contests in 1849 and only one in 1850) pushed the issue out of the public mind. The turning point came in 1851 when the question of the chaplaincy (discussed earlier) revived interest in the election and half the wards were contested. Accusations of corruption were revived with increased bitterness and the Mercury was involved in a running battle with Beckwith.<sup>1</sup> Two respected Liberal Unitarians, Tottie and Darnton Lupton, previously silent on this issue, now put their decisive influence behind the campaign. Tottie reported in the Mercury that he had not received voting papers and came out strongly against a system of voting which the Guardians and their Clerk could influence.<sup>2</sup> Darnton Lupton agreed to chair a meeting of protest and forwarded the memorial from the meeting to the Poor Law Board. Over 2,000 people of all parties signed the memorial which argued that the Clerk was enabled 'to promote objects of self interest or of party preference.'<sup>3</sup>

The Board were prepared, despite earlier objections<sup>4</sup>, to lower the qualification for Guardians from £40 to £30 rated property, demands for which had been featured in both memorials of 1850 and 1851. However, the national mode of electing Guardians could not be varied and so the Board reminded Lupton that any reported cases of electoral malpractice would be minutely investigated to arrive at the truth and to preserve

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1. Leeds Mercury, 5,12,19,26 April 1851.
  2. Ibid., 19 April 1851.
  3. Ibid., 3,24 May 1851; Leeds Intelligencer, 10 May 1851; D.Lupton to M.T.Baines, 10 June 1851, MH 12/15230.
  4. Austin had for instance declared in 1850 that to lower the qualification was 'of doubtful expediency', 26 May 1850, MH 12/15229; Ebrington emphasised to Beckwith that the £40 qualification had to be strictly enforced; Ebrington to Beckwith, 31 March 1848 in Letters, 1848.

'freedom of election'.<sup>1</sup> This was an open invitation to the Liberals to produce the evidence and so the 1852 election was fought by them not to win control of the Board but in order to trap Beckwith in his own web of electoral intrigue.

Only two wards, North and Kirkgate, were contested by the Liberals in 1852 but they kept a close watch on the voting. When both wards were declared to have been won by the Tories William Hornby and Thomas Brumfit from North and William Kettlewell, William Sellers and R.M.Carter from Kirkgate applied to the Guardians for permission to go through the voting papers. The voting in North ward was analysed by Morgan, the Liberal agent, but the Guardians then reversed their decision to open the papers for inspection and so Kirkgate was not examined.<sup>2</sup> In the opinion of the Mercury this was because of the revelations from North and the fear that similar 'might follow Mr. Morgan's diggings among the rubbish in Kirkgate'. However, the Guardians said it was because they had asked for an official Poor Law enquiry which Farnall was to hold.<sup>3</sup>

The Liberals were genuinely shocked by the 'reckless dishonesty' of the election and by the fact that it had been 'managed by the Clerk of the Guardians and his satellites'.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand the main source of the complaint was, as the Guardians put it, that 'no very extensive

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1. Courtenay to Lupton, 4 Nov.1851, MH 12/15230.
  2. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Times, 17 April, 8, 15 May 1852; Guardians Minutes, 10, pp.222-3, 264, 272-3, 284-6; Hornby to Poor Law Board, 2 June 1852; Poor Law Board to Hornby, 5 June 1852, MH 12/15230.
  3. Leeds Mercury, 22 May 1852; Guardian Minutes, 10 pp.299-304, 314; Courtenay to Beckwith, 5 June 1852 in Letters From The Poor Law Board 1852.
  4. Leeds Times, 17 April, 15 May 1852.

change has at any of the annual elections taken place in the persons constituting the Board'.<sup>1</sup> This was after all a Tory island in a Liberal lake and appeals for an enquiry did not stem from disinterested motives: 'they do not like the Clerk. Of course they don't I believe his is almost the only Tory appointment in the borough.'<sup>2</sup>

Farnall's enquiry into the disputed elections revealed election corruption such as he had never come across before; 'I have seen a great many electioneering proceedings but I never saw anything as gross as this'. Voting papers had been destroyed, altered, miscounted and filled in by the clerks. Witness after witness swore on oath (often confirmed by others) that papers had been returned with a vote one way and yet the actual papers were produced with the vote for the opposite candidates. Farnall had turned over a big stone and cast a light on the dark activities beneath it so that Leeds could now see how the Tories had managed to retain control, for as Bingley put it, 'The Leeds Poor Law Guardians are not the representatives of the ratepayers, they are in reality the representatives of a large we may say unexampled mass of frauds, forgeries tricks and knaveries'.<sup>3</sup> Even Kemplay had to admit that the revelations 'appear to be almost incredible so great has been the tampering with the voting papers'.<sup>4</sup>

Farnall's report to his superiors confirmed that there had been gross irregularities and in particular censured Beckwith:

'The evidence annexed clearly points out how very negligent and careless he was as regarded both the issuing and the

1. Guardians Minutes, 10, p.302.
2. Anonymous letter to Leeds Intelligencer, 24 July 1852.
3. Leeds Times, 3 July 1852.
4. Leeds Intelligencer, 3 July 1852.

reception of the voting papers and how completely regardless he was of the state of the voting papers upon which he declared the poll in both elections . . . the Clerk has been very far from using that caution which the trust reposed in him so much required'.<sup>1</sup>

The petitioners from Leeds, Hornby and Kettlewell, were informed that only a full scrutiny could yield an actual result and this was held by Farnall in December 1852, when the two defeated Liberal candidates were found to have won the election in North ward.<sup>2</sup> Eventually in February 1853, 10 months after the original election, the two Tory Guardians, Stead and Singleton, withdrew and the Liberals, Linsley and Broadhead, replaced them. It had been a long battle and within two months the whole Board had to stand for election again. Yet it had cleared the air, illustrated the weaknesses in the mode of election and highlighted Beckwith's doubtful behaviour. The fruits were to be seen in the new era which opened in 1853 with the first Liberal chairman of a completely Liberal Board of Guardians.<sup>3</sup> In 1853 the Board of Guardians itself was petitioning the Poor Law Board for changes in the mode of election.<sup>4</sup> The 1852 enquiry had ended Tory control over the Poor Law.

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1. Farnall's Report, dated 6 Aug. 1852. The first comment on the report was that the election was to be declared void 'and the clerk strongly condemned. He manifestly conducted the election in the most improper and slovenly manner.' MH 12/15230.
  2. Poor Law Board to Kettlewell, 10 Oct., 17 Dec. 1852, Poor Law Board to Hornby, 10, 29 Oct. 1852, MH 12/15230. Beckwith had originally given the results as Stead 248, Singleton 238, Linsley 209, Broadhead 209. Farnall declared the result as Broadhead 236, Linsley 235, Stead 177, Singleton 166. Guardians Minutes, 11, p.104.
  3. A protracted election which took five weeks to complete and which saw two Conservative agents imprisoned for a month for electoral offences finally resulted in the election of all 18 Liberal candidates. Leeds Mercury, 16 April, 27 May 1853.
  4. Guardians Minutes, 11, pp.309-318.



(ii)

The Tory control over the Poor Law in Leeds contrasted sharply with their dismal performance in Council elections. By these years the Leeds Town Council had become virtually the province of the reforming interest and often the Tories refused to contest wards, leaving the field open to a walk-over or to a domestic dispute between rivals within the Liberal party.<sup>1</sup> Table I indicates the downward trend of Tory representation so that by the early 1850's Tories could command only one-eighth of the seats on the Council.

TABLE I POLITICAL COMPOSITION OF COUNCIL 1847 - 1852

	Annual Election 16		All Councillors 48		Aldermen 16		Whole Council 64	
	L	T	L	T	L	T	L	T
	1847-48	11	5	33	15	16	0	49
1848-49	14	2	35	13	16	0	51	13
1849-50	14	2	39	9	16	0	55	9
1850-51	13	3	41	7	16	0	57	7
1851-52	13	3	40	8	16	0	56	8
1852-53	14	2	40	8	16	0	56	8

The immense Liberal majorities meant that honours like that of Mayor and Alderman could be monopolised by one party. The solitary Tory Alderman had been despatched in 1847 and in 1850 eight Liberals were again

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1. Cf. Leeds Intelligencer, 7 Oct. 1848, 'Conservatives do not seem to think municipal honours worth fighting for'.

elected.<sup>1</sup> John Hope Shaw was once more the conscience of the party urging a sharing of the Municipal honours. When in February 1851 Alderman Edwin Birchall compounded with his creditors Shaw spoke up for Thomas Newsam, an active Tory Councillor, as his successor:

'it was not right to confine the Council to one political class and to hold that a wealthy class of ratepayers - not equal perhaps in numbers but equal in wealth - should be excluded from the honours of the borough.'

Luccock disagreed with this line of argument and claimed that Councillors should reflect the will of the burgesses. Hence he asked 'was a member returned to the Council as a Liberal perhaps after a severe contest as his first act to vote for a Tory Alderman?'<sup>2</sup>

Arguments such as these had figured strongly in the discussions during 1848 over the need for more magistrates. Seats on the bench, which John Vincent has aptly termed 'the spoils of the game', were generally regarded in mid-Victorian England, especially in the cities, as legitimate rewards for party loyalty.<sup>3</sup> When death, removal and the failure to qualify had reduced the active Leeds magistrates to 18 the Council discussed a further list to be recommended to the Lord Chancellor. Hepper suggested a list containing 12 Liberals and four Tories but Shaw claimed that in terms of 'numbers station property and intelligence' the Tories deserved more. Stead, himself a Tory, even went so far as to say that they should have six each since

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1. They were Goodman, Maclea, Bower, Bateson, Broadhead, Carbutt, Shaw and Hepper. Their votes ranged from 29 to 40 but no Tory received more than two votes: Council Minutes, 1851, p.293; Leeds Mercury, 16 Nov.1850.
  2. Leeds Mercury, 22 Feb.1851. Cf. above, Chapter IV, pp.173-4 for earlier arguments over this issue.
  3. J.Vincent The Formation of the Liberal Party (1966), pp.126 et seq.

'although the party to which he belonged was in a minority on the Council still in respectability wealth and standing in the town the two parties were equal'.<sup>1</sup>

The question was adjourned and a list of 5 - 4 in favour of the Liberals emerged. However, three additional Liberals were added and then a further one so that the Council finally petitioned Lord Cottenham for 13 new magistrates, nine Liberal and four Tory.<sup>2</sup> Cottenham accepted most of the names on the list and elevated 11 local citizens to the bench which retained its predominantly Liberal character. Table II indicates how closely the appointment of magistrates reflected the political composition of the Government of the day, Whig in 1826, Tory in 1842 and Whig-Liberal in 1848.

TABLE II THE POLITICAL COMPOSITION OF THE LEEDS BENCH

	Liberal	Tory
Appointed 1836	19	3
Appointed 1842	0	9
Active magistrates 1848	14	4
Appointed 1848	7	4
Whole Commission 1848 <sup>3</sup>	20	9

The political balance of the bench echoed that of the Town Council yet it is interesting to note signs of growing tension between the two bodies. Rivalry grew up which culminated in a dispute over advances

1. Leeds Intelligencer, 24 June 1848.
2. Ibid., 8 July 1848; Report Book Municipal, Vol.2, pp.154-158.
3. The slight numerical discrepancy is accounted for by the fact that Baines one of the acting magistrates in 1848 died before the new commission was issued. This left the Liberals with 20 instead of the 21 suggested by the Table. The extra Tory was Thomas Beckett who had not been an acting magistrate because of non-residence yet was included in the new commission.

in salaries at the gaol which nearly erupted into a protracted legal battle in the Court of Queen's Bench.<sup>1</sup> In view of the fact that the magistrates were also involved with the Guardians for exceeding their powers,<sup>2</sup> this dispute may be attributed simply to inflated self-importance. Yet the estrangement from the Council, containing as it did political allies, was unusual in the light of Liberal politics since 1836, when the new Corporation had first created Liberal magistrates.

The real cause of the estrangement was bound up with the decline in social importance and status of those standing for election to the Council. On both sides of the political fence this decline was lamented. Compare these two comments made within a week of each other:

'we do not hesitate to assert that the higher classes of our townsmen as a body have not only withdrawn from offering themselves as willing candidates for the honours of the Council but have in many cases repeatedly rejected the solicitations of their fellow townsmen to be put in nomination. In some instances they have even manifested a contemptuous sneering indifference to the constituted authorities.'<sup>3</sup>

That was Baines; this was Kemplay on the Municipal offices:

'Once objects of ambition to the grave substantial burgess they are now shunned as a nuisance by the class which of old eagerly sought them as a prize . . . To fill them it is necessary to lower the price of admission and suffer the noisy company of the gallery to be the sole patrons of the place.'<sup>4</sup>

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1. The magistrates ordered the Council to pay increased salaries for the officers at the gaol which had not been through the Council for prior approval and so the Council refused to pay them. A case was prepared for Queen's Bench by the magistrates but was withdrawn at the last minute and finally tactful concession on both sides settled the issue. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Times, 13 April, 11 May, 1 June 1850; Council Minutes, 1850, pp.201-2, 223; Report Book Municipal, Vol.2, pp.341-348.
  2. See above, p. 438
  3. Leeds Mercury, 21 Oct.1848.
  4. Leeds Intelligencer, 14 Oct.1848.

The evidence for the decline is contained in Table III and to this may be added the fact that the Council lost several distinguished leaders in these years. Tottie, Darnton Lupton, Pawson, Stansfeld and Goodman (temporarily) had gone in 1847 and in 1850 Matthew Gaunt retired, having been in the Council continuously since 1836. All this meant that the sort of social elite which would aspire to the magistracy was no longer

TABLE III SOCIO/ECONOMIC COMPOSITION OF COUNCIL 1847 - 1852

Year	I		II		III		IV	
	Gentry	Profes- sional	Merchants and Manu- facturers Textiles	Merchants and Manu- facturers Non- Textiles	Craft	Retail	Drink	Corn
1847-48	4	7	21	9	7	9	4	3
1848-49	4	5	19	7	13	11	3	2
1849-50	6	5	12	9	14	12	3	3
1850-51	6	3	12	11	15	13	1	3
1851-52	9	4	14	11	9	14	2	1

in large numbers aspiring to the Council. This becomes clear when the membership of the bench and the Council are compared. Of the 22 magistrates appointed in 1836 15 were members of the Council either then or soon after and eight of the nine appointed in 1842 were so, yet of the 29 in the new Commission of 1848 only seven were in the Council. Whereas in the first decade of the reformed Corporation the bench and Council shared in substantial numbers the same membership by 1850 three-quarters of the bench were outside the Council. Hence the estrange-



ment between the bench and the Council, which was also manifest in the early discussions on the Town Hall, was the result of changes in the composition of the two bodies.

Relations between the magistrates and the Council were further jarred by the refusal of the former to convict in 1851 an Anglican minister for officiating at a burial in the old parochial grounds in contravention of the Council's decree forbidding the use of these grounds.<sup>1</sup> The burial question had apparently been settled in 1847<sup>2</sup> but the owners of private graves considered that their rights had been removed unjustly and Hook himself officiated at a burial in 1848. This raised once more the whole question of the old and new burial grounds and the payment of the Chaplain's salary and the Vicar's surplice fee. The private grave owners petitioned the Council and the Bishop of Ripon, Luccock fought hard to keep the old grounds closed and a by-election in East ward was fought on this issue.<sup>3</sup> Carbutt, formerly the champion of an uncompromising Dissenting viewpoint, now argued that private intra-mural graves ought to be opened where no health hazard was involved and this was easily carried in the Council in November 1848. His second string that the Council should pay the Chaplain's salary of £80 a year and £5 as a commutation fee for the Vicar's surplice fee was only carried by the casting vote of the Mayor on a 20 - 20 vote.<sup>4</sup> There was further negotiation with Hook which resulted in the Council agreeing to £30 as a commutation of the fees

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1. Leeds Intelligencer, Leeds Mercury, 8, 15 March 1851. The decision is given in Mayhall, op.cit., I, p.593.
  2. See above, Chapter VI, pp. 422-33
  3. Leeds Mercury, 18 March, 1, 15 April, 20 May, 8 July, 12 Aug. 1848; Leeds Intelligencer, 8 Jan., 19 Feb., 27 May 1848; Council Minutes Improvement Act, Vol.2, pp.73, 103-4, 127-133; Report Book Leeds Improvement Act, Vol.1, pp.285-6.
  4. Leeds Mercury, 11, 18 Nov. 1848; Council Minutes Improvement Act, Vol.2, pp.130-1.

in January 1850 despite Joshua Barker's protest at what he called a Church rate. After the magistrates' decision in March 1851 agreement was finally and amicably reached between the Council and Hook.<sup>1</sup>

The Intelligencer saw the problem as a challenge by Dissent to the rights of Anglicans but men like Luccock and Carbutt in the Council and Baines and Bingley in the Press were overwhelmingly concerned with the health problem associated with the "pestilential graveyards".<sup>2</sup> Indeed Baines was prepared, as in the early 1840's,<sup>3</sup> to compromise on the question of church rates (or something akin to them) if it meant that disease could be avoided:

'Any pecuniary sacrifice that may be required from the Town Council to satisfy the clergy of the Established Church will be preferable to the demands of the sacrifice of the health of the labouring portion of the population by the burial of the dead amongst the living'.<sup>4</sup>

The other great challenge to health in Leeds was the lack of an adequate sewerage system which like the burial question seemed to have been settled in 1847 when the Council agreed to go to Parliament for a new act. The Leeds Improvement Amendment Act (11 and 12 Vict.Cap 102) proved far more difficult to get through Parliament than the 1842 act largely because of a dispute with Ingram over access to his land<sup>5</sup> and it was not passed until the late summer of 1848. Having spent nearly £3,000 getting the

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1. Leeds Mercury, 5 Jan.1850, 8,15 March 1851.
  2. Leeds Intelligencer, 28 July 1849, Leeds Times, 21 June 1851.
  3. See above, Chapter V, pp.336-7
  4. Leeds Mercury, 15 March 1851.
  5. The dispute was over the use he might have of the sewage water for manuring his land. The Council was adamant that he should be paid a money compensation and that Leeds rather than Ingram should have any profits from the waste. See Leeds Mercury, 27 May 1848, Leeds Intelligencer, 24 June,1848; Council Minutes, 7, p.424, 8, pp.29-31.

Act passed the Council found itself hamstrung by uncertainties over the new legislation and fears about costs. As in 1843 the immediate aftermath of the passing of the Act and the tentative agreement to go ahead with the £30,000 scheme<sup>1</sup> was a series of ward meetings in January 1849 urging the Council to delay the scheme until trade revived. Marshall's motion to go ahead was defeated in January 1849 by 20 - 19 and it was noticeable that the aldermen divided 7 - 2 in favour of the scheme.<sup>2</sup> Three weeks later when the scheme was reintroduced Brook's amendment for delay was carried 27 - 13 with the aldermen again dividing 2 - 7. The opponents of the scheme could cite evidence from at least four ward meetings in favour of delay and Brook now reversed his earlier opinions and argued 'want of food more than want of sewerage was the great creator of disease'.<sup>3</sup>

Poor rates were high early in 1849 as a result of the distress of the previous year and went even higher on the visitation of cholera which arrived in Leeds in June. Ironically it was the cholera, which claimed some notable victims especially in Hunslet,<sup>4</sup> which shook the Council out of its complacency. Kemplay referred to the 'boon of cholera' which was highlighting the need for drainage and he was well supported by Bingley in

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1. Alderman H.C.Marshall, the most consistent supporter of the sewerage scheme, urged the Council in November 1848 to vote £30,000 for the commencement of the scheme (which had been agreed in 1846-7 anyway). A motion was passed ordering the Streets Committee to proceed but no mention of the £30,000 was made; Leeds Mercury, 11 Nov.1848.
  2. Ibid., 20 Jan.1849, Leeds Intelligencer, 27 Jan.1849; Council Minutes Improvement Act, Vol.2, pp.199-200.
  3. Leeds Mercury, 17 Feb.1849, Leeds Times, 24 Feb.1849; Council Minutes Improvement Act, Vol.2, pp.206-6. See also Joseph Barker's defence of the postponement on the grounds of distress, The People, II, 1850, pp.9-10.
  4. There was over 2,000 deaths from cholera which in Hunslet accounted for one of the ward's Councillors, Joseph Wilkinson, a flaxspinner, and for the daughter and son-in-law of Joshua Bower.

the Times.<sup>1</sup> The cholera indeed reminded

'cashiered town councillors that they were false to their functions and clumsy speculators for popularity when instead of checking they encouraged the shortsighted and mistaken economy of ratepayers'.<sup>2</sup>

In September 1849 the Council reversed its two earlier decisions and agreed to go ahead with the sewerage scheme and in November supported by 35 - 4 a fourpenny rate for the purpose.<sup>3</sup> At last in January 1850 the contract with Leather was confirmed and the work begun. There was a further scare in the summer when ratepayers in Potter Newton questioned the rights of the Council to sewer private streets and went to law over it<sup>4</sup> but the matter was finally settled by the Council agreeing to sewer private streets out of the sewer rate.<sup>5</sup> In July 1852 construction works and the laying of sewers in many of the main streets of Leeds forcibly illustrated to Leeds citizens that the sewerage problem was at last being tackled.

Both the burial and sewerage questions had thus been settled by 1852 and in that year the Council embarked on a solution to a third problem involving health, namely the water supply. Again, this issue had apparently been settled earlier and the lively debates during the 1830's have been

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1. Leeds Intelligencer, 11 Aug., 6,13,20 Oct. 1849; Leeds Times, 18,25 Aug., 1,8,15 Sept.1849.
  2. Leeds Intelligencer, 15 Sept.1849.
  3. Ibid. and Leeds Mercury, Leeds Times, 10 Nov.1849; Council Minutes Improvement Act, Vol.2, pp.242-3, 267. The Chartists were once more divided, Bobson and Joseph Barker voting against the rate while Brook and Waring voted for it.
  4. Leeds Mercury, 17 Aug., 30 Nov.1850.
  5. This was intended to avoid delay and enable the construction of main sewers in convenient places even though they were not adopted public highways. It was a benevolent intent but it was not supported by all. Cf. Leeds Times, 6 Sept.1851 'a decision which will be more gratifying to the owners of property\* a present of £45,000 out of the pockets of the ratepayers'. The decision was later reversed in 1857 and 1863 and further confirmed in 1859 and 1865. See Toft, op.cit., p.187.  
\*Insert: than to the ratepayers at large...equivalent to making the owners of property

reviewed already. The waterworks company's problems over increased supply (the number of houses supplied went up from 3,000 in 1842 to 22,700 in 1851) were not solved by the discovery of water at the Bramhope tunnel and in 1850 the company decided it would be too costly to take this water. A drought in 1851 led to widespread complaints that the company had lost its way<sup>1</sup> and the failure in 1852 of a scheme to use the Washburn meant that action was urgently needed.

As early as January 1848 Edwin Eddison, former Town Clerk and now Councillor for Mill Hill, had introduced in the Council a scheme for the Council itself to purchase the waterworks and the two gas companies. He renewed his suggestion two years later and in November 1850 the Council agreed to look into the matter.<sup>2</sup> There were many, including Aldermen Carbutt and Richardson in the Council and Kemplay and Bingley in the Press, who believed the competition of another company would solve the problem. It was widely felt that the Council itself ought not to be that competitor 'for it must necessarily crush its competitor having the public purse to support it and being free from the necessity of shewing a balance of profits.'<sup>3</sup> Kemplay reluctantly acknowledged that the Council would have to step in in some capacity but he had no confidence in the Council, preferring private enterprise:

'the pecuniary success of waterworks will depend chiefly like any other enterprise on ability and vigilance in management and all experience goes to prove that these conditions are

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1. Cf. Leeds Intelligencer, 5 July 1851. 'The water - to use a conventional term is offensive to taste and smell and not sightly to look at; or rather we should say full of sights'. For criticism of the company see ibid., 14, 28 June 1851.
  2. Leeds Intelligencer, 3 Jan. 1848, Leeds Mercury, 5 Jan., 16 Nov. 1850; Council Minutes, 7, p. 391.
  3. Leeds Intelligencer, 6 Sept. 1851.



best secured by the direct interest of those who undertake them . . . The burgesses may rest assured that whatever else be the result an increased amount of local taxation will accrue from our municipal water cure.<sup>1</sup>

The reference to cost was an attempt to revive the old ghost of "extravagance" and the Times recalled another former bug bear, the unwillingness to pay rates for water which was not needed<sup>2</sup>, though this did not seem to be a problem this time. There was a further very real problem of cost and as Luccock pointed out forcibly it was hardly fair to pay shareholders out at the price originally agreed in the Act of 1837 when the company's fortunes were at a low ebb and share prices depressed.

All these criticisms were successfully parried by John Hope Shaw who played the major part in getting the water supply settled by the Council. He spoke in the Council of the need of the citizens for water and this was his main case, requiring no further justification. The town was in need of water, could the Council stand aside and do nothing? In August 1851 he produced a long report citing testimony in favour of a properly constituted public body running public utilities, like water supply. In the next two months he produced two further reports with the aid of a committee which recommended that the Council should purchase the waterworks at the original valuation. This was carried in October 1851 despite opposition from Carbott and Luccock.<sup>3</sup>

When the question came up for confirmation in the following spring

1. Ibid.
2. Leeds Times, 6 Sept. 1851, 'a compulsory rate for the objects contemplated will, we are sure, be felt as an injustice in parts of the town already supplied with water from other sources'.
3. Report Book Leeds Improvement Act, Vol. 2, pp. 1-24, 36-44; Report Book Municipal, Vol. 3, pp. 23-39; Council Minutes, Vol. 8, pp. 396-8; Leeds Mercury, 6 Sept., 4 Oct. 1851.

Shaw spoke for two and a quarter hours arguing that

'the Town Council was the proper body to manage the supply of water and that no principle of trade would be violated by their undertaking the management of such works.'<sup>1</sup>

His reasoned argument persuaded the Council and the purchase went ahead now supported by Luccock who had changed sides and the Chartist Robert Meek Carter, who saw it as a great boon.<sup>2</sup> As the necessary legislation went through Parliament Goodman echoed the high hopes of Shaw:

'He had no doubt that the Corporation would carry on these works far more efficiently than a limited proprietary could do and from this important movement he anticipated great and lasting benefit to the community of Leeds'.<sup>3</sup>

The purchase of the waterworks was finally completed in November 1852 for the somewhat frightening sum of £227,417.<sup>4</sup> It was a large sum of money and further costs would have to be incurred in developing the Washburn source or the alternative supply from the Wharfe. Clearly for the moment social welfare had conquered parsimony.

The issues of health, such as water supply, burial and sewerage, which dominated the Council in these years, were a marked contrast to the political petty issues which took so much of the Council's time in the later 1830's. Bingley, the editor of the Times, was conscious that the agenda of the Council involved great issues<sup>5</sup> and it was common to find water, smoke, sewerage, lodging houses and streets discussed on the same day. No-

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1. Leeds Mercury, 1 May 1852.
  2. Council Minutes, 8, p.453. Again the Chartists were divided for although Carter and Waring voted for the purchase in both October 1851 and April 1852 on the former vote Benjamin Barker opposed the purchase and on the latter Parker did likewise.
  3. Leeds Mercury, 14 Aug.1852. For the progress of the legislation see Report Book Municipal, Vol.3, passim.
  4. Leeds Mercury, 20 Nov.1852.
  5. See, for example, his comments in Leeds Times, 30 Aug.1851.

body could doubt that these issues were of greater importance than those of the early years of the Corporation yet it is interesting to note from Table IV that Council attendance did not improve accordingly. The political issues still produced the best attendances.

TABLE IV COUNCIL ATTENDANCE 1847 - 1852

Year	No. of Meetings	Average Attendance		Attendance Record of	
		Actual	%	Liberals %	Tories
1847-48	16	41.75	65.23	68.37	54.0
1848-49	8	46.5	72.65	75.5	61.5
1849-50	10	44.9	70.1	70.0	71.5
1850-51	12	40.93	63.95	64.0	63.08
1851-52	12	43.5	67.96	67.83	68.75

In the midst of this flurry of well-meaning activity the Council also turned its attention to the subject of a town hall. There had been created in the early 1850's something of an "improvement party" by the launching of improvement societies in Holbeck, Hunslet, Chapel Allerton and Headingley in the out-townships and particularly by the "Society for Promoting Public Improvements in the Borough of Leeds". The Leeds Improvement Society and particularly its secretary, Dr. Heaton, played a great part in creating the public climate in which the Council could successfully push forward the town hall scheme.<sup>1</sup>

It was in January 1850 that the first talk of a town hall was heard in the Council since Hobson's abortive suggestions in the mid-1840's<sup>2</sup> and

1. Cf. A. Briggs Victorian Cities (1963), pp.159-164.

2. See above, Chapter VI, p. 417

it was again a Chartist, who pointed the way forward. In a debate on the possible alteration of the Court House William Brook spoke up against merely patching up the existing building and in favour of the building of a 'good town hall'.<sup>1</sup> At the meeting to organise a memorial for Peel widespread dissatisfaction with the lack of a hall in Leeds was expressed particularly in view of Bradford's plans for St. George's Hall.<sup>2</sup> The failure to erect a hall by subscription led the project to be transferred to the Council which approved the basic idea in January 1851. There were differences of opinion with the magistrates but these were settled by the late summer.<sup>3</sup>

However, this was not the main problem. There were persistent doubts among a minority on the Council composed of all parties about the question of cost. This was not simply shortsighted economy of the sort seen in Leeds in 1843 but a view of the overall financial commitment of the Council. "Economists" who were doubtful about the town hall were not necessarily economists on other questions like the water or the sewerage but they were concerned with the total debt the Council was accumulating. As a Liberal Alderman, Richard Wilson, put it:

'They were now owing £110,000, the sewerage would cost £40,000 more and if they expended £40,000 in this object the amount would be nearly £200,000, making it something more than a borrowough debt - almost a small national debt'.<sup>4</sup>

This was supported by another Liberal, Anthony Titley, who put several mo-

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1. Leeds Mercury, 5 Jan. 1850.
  2. Cf. Thomas Flint 'Bradford - and they all knew what a go-ahead place that was now - told them openly that they would take the lead and become the capital of the West Riding'; Leeds Mercury, 3 Aug. 1850.
  3. Ibid., 12 July 1851; Report Book Municipal, Vol. 3, pp. 96-99.
  4. Leeds Mercury, 17 May 1851.

tions for delaying the town hall. He computed the borough debt to be a quarter of a million (including the industrial school) and this besides the impending purchase of the waterworks, which we have already seen involved a further quarter of a million. Because of this his view was that 'the Council should pay off what they owed or get their debts reduced before they incurred further liabilities for a Town Hall'.<sup>1</sup> As Bingley pointed out one could not but admire the courage of a Council which in one day voted to spend something like £400,000.<sup>2</sup>

Because of fears over the global sum involved in the borough debt there were no less than six votes in the Council between January 1851 and May 1852 on whether to proceed with the scheme. The majority in favour of the town hall scheme fluctuated between its original 12 in January 1851 and as high as 30 a year later on a motion to delay for a year yet as low as four on the adoption of the Town Hall Committee's report.<sup>3</sup> On this thorny question of expense the Chartists were once more divided along the lines indicated in Table V.

The economists were defeated largely because there was public support for the scheme. The cheap day trips to the Great Exhibition had led many Leeds citizens to resent the 'mean buildings the contracted and irregular streets'<sup>4</sup> and the publication of the Ordnance Survey map of Leeds drew at-

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1. Ibid., 14 Feb. 1852.

2. Leeds Times, 6 Sept. 1851.

3. The votes were 24 - 12 in January 1851; 21 - 17 and 23 - 18 in Sept. 1851; 35 - 5 in January 1852; 28 - 14 in February 1852 and 21 - 15 in May 1852.

4. Leeds Intelligencer, 7 June 1851.



tention to the town's ill planned growth. The Town Hall was an opportunity to remedy past mistakes:

'One chance at least remains of redeeming our character. We hope that the town will so far deviate from the example set by the wisdom of our ancestors as to produce in the new Town Hall a building worthy of the importance of Leeds as the first seat of the woollen manufacture throughout England and the world'.<sup>1</sup>

TABLE V VOTES OF CHARTISTS ON TOWN HALL QUESTION<sup>2</sup>

Date	Yes	No
1 January 1851	J.Barker, Carter	Robson, Waring
1 September 1851	Carter, Lees	Robson, Waring, B.Barker
29 September 1851	Carter, Lees	Waring, B.Barker
1 January 1852	Carter	Parker
1 February 1852	Carter	B.Barker
29 May 1852	Carter	Waring, Parker

The adoption of Broderick's plan in December 1852, the laying of sewers in the main streets, the purchase of the waterworks all combine to make 1852 an appropriate year to close this study of Leeds politics during one generation. Also 1852 saw at long last the establishment of ward committees to seek out nuisances and the formal cooperation of the Improvement Society and the Nuisance Committee for the same purpose. As Baines put it 'the schoolmaster is abroad' and Goodman could say with some truth

1. Leeds Mercury, 25 Sept. 1852.

2. Source: Council Minutes, 8, pp.315-6, 360, 391, 429, 437, 484-5.  
N.B. The Chartists were no different from others here and both the Liberals and Conservatives were split on the town hall question.

'at the present time the borough of Leeds was provided with an active energetic and well working Town Council'.<sup>1</sup> Kemplay had anticipated that the main function of an "improvement party" in Leeds would be to 'over-rule and neutralise those conflicts of political partisanship which have hitherto been the disease of our municipal faculties'.<sup>2</sup> The achievements of 1852 fulfilled these hopes and the Mayor, John Hope Shaw, as much as anyone the instrument of the change, congratulated the Town Council because 'it had opened out so wide and extensive a field of usefulness'.<sup>3</sup> For the Town Council 1852 meant that the age of party conflict was over and that the age of improvement had begun.

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1. Ibid., 27 March 1852.
  2. Leeds Intelligencer, 7 June 1851
  3. Leeds Mercury, 20 Nov.1852.

## (iii)

One of the main achievements of the Council in these years had been the commencement after much delay of the sewerage scheme and it was on the issue of public health that Leeds Liberals opposed Government intentions in 1848. As a belated result of Chadwick's 1842 report Lord Morpeth reintroduced a Public Health Bill in 1848 which social historians cite as evidence of a more enlightened view of social policy by the State. Yet contemporaries were aghast at what they viewed as 'paternal despotism'.

The key issue was centralisation and its irresponsible tendencies.<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note the attitudes of the day which would not give up one jot of municipal self-government even for the boon of public health and as Bingley put it, the people wanted sanitary reform but not 'by the sacrifice of the principle of self government. The price is too high'.<sup>2</sup> The Council petitioned twice against the bill and sent an unsuccessful deputation to see Lord Morpeth.<sup>3</sup> According to the Council a new scheme of central direction would be a 'vexatious as well as an unnecessary interference' . inconsistent with the system of local self-government' and Carbutt denounced it as 'insidious and mischievous'.<sup>4</sup> It was left to the lone voice of Kemplay to point out the 'cant of anti-

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1. Irresponsible in the constitutional sense that it was not responsible to local voters. Clearly what Leeds feared was a massive expenditure of money by a central board over which local interests had no control.

2. Leeds Times, 13 May 1848.

3. Report Book Municipal, Vol.2, pp.105-9,113-4,137-141.

4. Ibid., p.109, Leeds Mercury, 11 March 1848.

centralization'<sup>1</sup> where such opposition could be launched in a town which had done nothing to solve its public health problems which had been fully documented 10 years earlier.

Such ideas were drowned by the powerful voice of the Mercury which denounced Morpeth's measure as a 'Bill for nullifying Municipal Corporations' and warned that the people would not stand by while 'the municipal institutions . . . are offered up a holocaust on the altars of that newest of idols - centralization'.<sup>2</sup> Like everyone else Baines wanted sanitary improvements but

'to substitute for the free action of municipal corporations responsible to every ratepayer in their respective boroughs action on their part at the bidding of a central board in London which must found all its commands on the evidence of its own creatures would be paying too dear even for those undeniable benefits'.<sup>3</sup>

Language such as this makes all the more understandable James Hole's remarks nearly 20 years later about the need for a 'little wholesome despotism'.<sup>4</sup>

In the event the Public Health Act of 1848 was permissive rather than compulsory and the worst fears of central direction by a Government agency were not fulfilled. This did not mean, however, that Liberal enthusiasm for Russell's Government returned for there was also hostility in

1. Leeds Intelligencer, 11 March 1848.
2. Leeds Mercury, 26 Feb. 1848.
3. Leeds Mercury, 13 May 1848. The Chartists opposed the bill and the Board of Highway Surveyors, which they controlled, petitioned against it.
4. J.Hole The Homes of the Working Class (1866), p.26, 'to the ratepayers themselves a little claptrap about centralisation and still more an appeal to their pockets . . . is sufficient to cause the rejection of the most useful measures . . . where local self government means merely misgovernment we are apt to wish for a little wholesome despotism to curb such vagaries'.

Leeds about increased Government expenditure. This was best expressed by the simple question of the Leeds Times 'where shall it stop?'.<sup>1</sup>

There were no less than five meetings in Leeds on what was called 'financial reform' between March 1848 and December 1849. The first, in March 1848, was in response to increases in Government estimates of expenditure and many working-class Liberals attended. A year later the budget proposals produced further protests from Leeds and in April 1849 Cobden attended a crowded Leeds meeting. During the same visit a great West Riding dinner was held in honour of Cobden and in support of the financial reform movement. In the following December Cobden once more spoke in Leeds in order to try and encourage registration activity in the West Riding. This was reminiscent of the League's activities in 1845 and in personnel this movement was very much an echo of the League. Its main supporters in Leeds were Baines, Carbutt, Goodman, J.G.Marshall and Thomas Flint, all of them former leaders of the Anti-Corn Law Movement in Leeds.

A persistent theme at these meetings was that defence expenditure was too high and so there was a close link between the financial reform movement and the pacifist enthusiasm which intermittently appeared in Leeds. Early in 1848 an anti-war petition was signed by over 36,000 following a meeting of the 'League of Universal Brotherhood' in Leeds.<sup>2</sup> A year later a meeting was held and a petition signed in support of Cobden's peace motion in the House of Commons and over two years after that in June 1851 a repeat of Cobden's motion was similarly supported.<sup>3</sup> Pre-

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1. Leeds Times, 26 Feb. 1848, this was the title of an editorial which included the following, 'The perpetual increase of the national expenditure is perfectly appalling. Year by year it goes on augmenting for no visible reason and with no visible limit to its expansion'.
  2. Leeds Mercury, 29 Jan., 5 Feb. 1848.
  3. Ibid., 3, 10 Feb. 1849, 21 June, 1851.



dictably these pacifist meetings had the enthusiastic support of the Dissenting ministers, particularly Charles Wicksteed, the Unitarian from Mill Hill.

The question of public health, increased expenditure and peace were all prominent in the first half of 1848 and the same period was also notable as a time of renewed Chartist activity. This began with a West Riding meeting at Peep Green attended by some 5,000 including 400 from Leeds.<sup>1</sup> In the next two months there were lively meetings in Leeds both in the Vicar's Croft and on Woodhouse Moor, all attended by several thousand people.<sup>2</sup>

Carbutt's reports to the Home Secretary indicate that he was inclined to play down the seriousness of the threats to public order<sup>3</sup> though he did concur with the magistrates' decision to enrol special constables as a precaution.<sup>4</sup> He was none too pleased with the Republican Chartist, Joseph Barker, who had issued a handbill without a printer's name and he urged the Attorney General to prosecute.<sup>5</sup> However, there was serious alarm in Leeds only when drilling began on Woodhouse Moor in May. The advice from London was that a reminder of the illegality of drilling

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1. Northern Star, Leeds Mercury, Leeds Times, 18 March 1848; Carbutt to H.O., 11, 12 March 1848. P.R.O. HO 2410 AC.
  2. Northern Star, Leeds Times, 25 March, 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 April 1848.
  3. Carbutt to H.O., 4, 7, 10, 12, 22, 25 April 1848, P.R.O. H.O. 2410 AC.
  4. This was bitterly attacked by the Leeds Times, 15 April 1848, as a sickening array'. It argued that this sort of over strong precaution was not at all necessary in Leeds.
  5. Carbutt to H.O., 17 April 1848, P.R.O. H.O. 2410 AC. Barker, later arrested at Bolton, held meetings later in the year to raise funds in order to defend himself and when he was acquitted there was a public celebration by his fellow Chartists. Leeds Mercury, 6 Jan. 1849; J.T. Barker (ed.) The Life of Joseph Barker (1880), pp. 291-2; The People, Vol. 1, (1849), pp. 160, 198, 231.

should be issued and that the arrest should take place of 'two or three of the ringleaders, all possible care being taken to effect this without occasioning a riot'.<sup>1</sup> Leeds Chartism being what it was the handbill of the Chief Constable forbidding arming and drilling was sufficient to remove this menace.

William Brook and Joseph Barker used all their influence to combat the violent talk of some of the more militant Chartists and particularly emphasised the need for a union with middle-class reformers.<sup>2</sup> This was a feature of Barker's propaganda in his journal The People and indeed the offending handbill mentioned above was an appeal for middle-class support. This produced quick results in the summer of 1848 when Chartists and middle-class reformers joined forces to support the so-called "Little Charter" of Hume.

Fifteen hundred people signed a requisition to the Mayor and Carbutt, despite warnings from his fellow magistrates, decided to call the meeting in June 1848. It was boycotted by most of the leading Liberals but Carbutt spoke up strongly in favour of further reform and a motion in favour of household suffrage was passed.<sup>3</sup> This alliance was shortlived although there were further meetings for what came to be called the People's League. Brook explained that they would not desert the Charter even though they supported the new reform movement and further Chartist meetings occurred in 1849.<sup>4</sup>

From these uncertain beginnings there blossomed a much firmer alliance

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1. R.Barr to H.O. and reply, 26 May 1848; D.Lupton to H.O. 31 May 1848. P.R.O. loc.cit.
  2. See, for example, Leeds Intelligencer, 15 April 1848.
  3. Carbutt to H.O., 13 June 1848, P.R.O. loc.cit.; Leeds Mercury, Leeds Times, 29 April, 6 May, 17 June 1848.
  4. Leeds Times, 22 July 1848, 23 June 1849.

for further reform which bore fruit in 1852. By then Robert Meek Carter had come to the fore and in December 1851 he publicly urged 'the working classes to lend the middle classes all the aid in their power'.<sup>1</sup> A month later the leaders of the Liberal party, led by Carbutt once more, agreed to launch a movement to stimulate the Government into some further reform.<sup>2</sup> The subsequent meeting which was held in January 1852 marked the union of the more advanced Liberals and former Chartists which was later in 1855 to produce the Leeds Advanced Liberal Party. J.G. Marshall, Baines and Carbutt now allied with David Green, Brook and Carter to support a programme which included household suffrage, the ballot, triennial Parliaments, the abolition of the property qualification and redistribution of seats. This was not the People's Charter but it was a big step towards it and the new willingness to cooperate was illustrated by Carter:

'he had come to that meeting determined to go with those of their friends who did not go so far as himself in order by their aid to obtain an instalment of that to which he thought the people were entitled'.<sup>3</sup>

Clearly 1852 was a year of Liberal reunion when former troubles over education would be forgotten. As early as 1848 Brook had virtually admitted the illogicality of his stand with Baines in 1847 for he told a Chartist meeting that Baines had

'only attempted to make use of the working classes for the purpose of carrying out his narrow ideas on education . . . let us show our contempt for the nonsense of Edward Baines who would send all your children to the Sunday school under

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1. Leeds Times, 6 Dec.1851.
  2. Leeds Mercury, 10 Jan.1852.
  3. Ibid., 24 Jan.1852. The union of Chartists and Liberals has already been mentioned in connection with the election for Highway Surveyors, above, p. 437

the pretence that voluntary education is of more consequence to us than the suffrage'.<sup>1</sup>

Here was a man who was no longer enamoured with Voluntaryism yet what he called 'the nonsense of Edward Baines' still had some powerful support in Leeds.

Baines was a keen advocate of the Anti-State Church Association which held several meetings in Leeds and Dissenting Voluntaryism was also offended by the so-called Papal Aggression of 1850. However, voluntary education continued to be Baines's main plank and all the old divisions on this question were re-enacted when the subject was discussed again in the spring of 1850.<sup>2</sup> Once more Baines launched into attack on behalf of Voluntaryism:

'lend not the influence of Leeds to schemes for coercing the people into education and putting that education under either Government or Parish trammels when you have both the power and the will to promote such schools as you yourself approve and to keep them perfectly free'.<sup>3</sup>

Once more Baines was supported by the Unitarian Carbutt who argued at a large meeting that the doctrine of Government responsibility for education was 'based on false principles and had in it a strong tinge of communism and socialism'.<sup>4</sup>

As in 1847 Carbutt's religious compatriots from Mill Hill, Stansfeld, Lupton and Wicksteed, were found campaigning against Voluntaryism and in favour of national secular education. These "educationists" were supported by Liberal Anglicans like Shaw, Tory Anglicans like the Rev. W. Sinclair and Chartists like Joseph Barker and William Brook. Two meetings were held by the education party in the space of five days in April 1850 and

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1. Leeds Times, 1 April 1848.
  2. This was the occasion of a private member's bill on education in the Commons.
  3. Leeds Mercury, 13 April 1850.
  4. Ibid., 20 April 1850.

strong support was expressed by the Chartists for locally controlled secular education financed out of local rates.<sup>1</sup>

Baines put all his hopes on a third meeting called by the Voluntary party where he and Carbutt put the voluntary case. Stansfeld bravely confronted the meeting with a pro-education amendment which he doggedly stuck to despite a rough passage because of his vote for Beckett in 1847. He was seconded by Samuel Smiles and the two of them represented a firm challenge to Baines on his own ground. Surprisingly the amendment was carried, thanks largely to a 90-minute speech by Barker which delayed putting the motion until early evening when many working-class educationists had entered the hall.<sup>2</sup> Baines had not been able to repeat his conquest of Leeds opinion as in 1847 yet since he had in the Mercury a continual outlet for his Voluntaryism it was still valid to say that Leeds was

'the very focus of the most violent and unscrupulous opposition to national education, the seat of the great oracle of voluntaryism.'<sup>3</sup>

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1. Ibid., Leeds Times, Leeds Intelligencer, 13, 20 April 1850.
  2. Ibid.
  3. Leeds Intelligencer, 19 Oct.1850.



(iv)

Though Baines could not carry Leeds in 1850 he had two years earlier shown that Voluntaryism still could wreak havoc with party divisions. It will be recalled that many in 1847 had blamed Baines for presenting Beckett with the seat for Leeds and in 1848 many believed that Baines was responsible for sending another member of the Beckett family to Westminster as M.P. for the Riding. Baines had kept quiet during the 1847 West Riding election and it had appeared that the education schism would not spread to the county. In the following year, however, Baines put on a repeat performance and the West Riding election of 1848 may best be regarded as an appendix to those of 1847 in Leeds and the county. It has been pointed out that this election was a mixture of town versus county and church versus chapel<sup>1</sup> and it will be argued here that these two elements can be precisely identified, the former characterising the opposition to the Fitzwilliam candidate and the latter dominating the later stages of the election itself.

The elevation of Lord Morpeth to the peerage gave Earl Fitzwilliam a chance to remedy the wrong he thought the county had suffered by the election of Cobden. Clearly he resented what he viewed as an imposition by external and improper forces and he would certainly have agreed with Kemplay's initial comment that a leader of the League must not be

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1. F.M.L.Thompson "Whigs and Liberals . . .", loc.cit., p.233. See ibid., pp. 231-237 for an account of this election.

allowed 'like another Attila at the head of his Lancastrian Huns to impose upon us a second nominee'.<sup>1</sup> He appealed for and received Tory support for his son Charles, who at 22 was young and inexperienced and who would rely solely on his family background.

Charles Fitzwilliam, under his father's direction, issued a non-descript address which would not offend the Tories but which did offend the urban Liberals.<sup>2</sup> Initially Leeds was very cooperative and at the first meeting on the election it was agreed that the county Whigs should have the nomination this time, as the manufacturing interest was already represented by Cobden.<sup>3</sup> At the first Normanton meeting and at two subsequent delegate meetings at Wakefield called by Carbutt, Charles Fitzwilliam was called upon to agree to a series of resolutions which would prove that he was in fact a Liberal. On these points he failed to give satisfaction despite personal letters from Carbutt and the visit of a deputation of Baines and Carbutt to Wentworth House.<sup>4</sup> Cobden thought that Baines was taking too much trouble to preserve the unity of the Whig-Liberals in the West Riding since he believed that Fitzwilliam's letter to Denison in 1847 together with his son's address in 1848 proved that the party no longer existed:

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1. See Fitzwilliam's letters and draft letters to Wharnccliffe 10 and 31 Oct. 1848, to Wentworth 19 Oct. 1848, Wentworth Woodhouse MSS.G.7(b); Leeds Intelligencer, 14 Oct. 1848.
  2. Leeds Times, 23 Oct. 1848, commented 'a more inane unmeaning anything or nothing manifesto was never issued'.
  3. Leeds Mercury, 21 Oct. 1848; T.W.Tottie to Fitzwilliam 13 Oct. 1848, J.W. Tottie to Fitzwilliam, 16 Oct. 1848, Wentworth Woodhouse MSS. G.7(d).
  4. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Times, 4, 11, 18 Nov. 1848; T.W.Tottie to Fitzwilliam, 30 Oct. 1848, Newman to Fitzwilliam, 17 Nov. 1848, Fitzwilliam to Dunn, 1 Nov. 1848, Charles Fitzwilliam to Carbutt, 26 Oct. 1848, W.W. MSS. G.7(d). Cf. a sarcastic editorial in Leeds Intelligencer, 18 Nov. 1848 entitled 'A Day Trip to Wentworth House', which was very critical of Baines and Carbutt and the 'impudent message' which they carried with them.

'surely the conduct of this Wentworth Cub must convince everybody excepting the incurably snobbish that the union between the Mercury politicians and the Whig aristocracy is at an end. Why will Baines still cherish the delusion that there is a party to which Lord Fitzwilliam and he belong?'<sup>1</sup>

Fitzwilliam was openly allying with the Tories for it was, as one of his friends told him, 'an amalgamation between Blue and Orange' and the Intelligencer made it clear that a victory for Fitzwilliam would be regarded as a Conservative triumph hence no Conservative was started in opposition.<sup>2</sup> Yet Fitzwilliam expected he could do this in defiance of Liberal opinion in the manufacturing areas. Although the issue of further State endowment to religious bodies was a key point nevertheless the main reason for opposition to Charles stemmed from the cavalier and anachronistic way his father was treating the county. This, not religion, was the main theme of the Mercury attack in October and November<sup>3</sup> and was even more strongly put by Bingley in the Times who commented of Earl Fitzwilliam:

'He would fain dispose of the representation of the riding according to his own individual view and purposes and would treat a constituency of thirty six thousand electors as nothing more than a "pocket borough" of the Wentworth family'.<sup>4</sup>

It was the symbols of aristocratic pretensions which were resented most and at one meeting Newman, Fitzwilliam's Barnsley solicitor and party agent, was asked to withdraw while Tottie, veteran of Liberal campaigns

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1. Cobden to Bright, 1 Nov.1843, B.M. Add. MSS. 43649 F.85.
  2. Milner to Fitzwilliam, n.d., Fitzwilliam to Milner, 6 Nov.1843, Wentworth Woodhouse MSS. G.7(d); Leeds Intelligencer, 28 Oct.1843.
  3. E.g. Leeds Mercury, 11 Nov.1843 'The West Riding will not allow itself to be reduced to a state of dependence on any aristocratical house or coterie of landed gentry.'
  4. Leeds Times, 21 Oct.1843.

since 1807, spoke of 'my own unexampled cold reception.' It was not Voluntaryism which caused Tottie to report that he could not form election committees for Charles in Leeds, Bradford, Huddersfield, Halifax, Wakefield and other populous districts in which hitherto the great strength of the Orange party has been found'.<sup>1</sup> Here was early Victorian England with its social ambiguities seen in their raw state, a landed aristocratic interest relying on traditional deference and a bursting self assertive manufacturing interest breaking out of the semi-feudal shackles. Fitzwilliam himself saw the issue in social terms and had nothing but contempt for those who were trying to frustrate his aims, those like Baines and Carbutt who were merely 'a small fragment of the inferior aristocracy of Leeds not of the high aristocracy of that great city . . . (but) the second rate aristocracy of Leeds'.<sup>2</sup>

The long purse that his father was prepared to put up was seen as a great asset to Charles who, despite his troubles with the Liberals, still began his canvass as the only candidate in the field.<sup>3</sup> He began, of all places, in Leeds where Carbutt, Joseph Barker<sup>4</sup>, James Richardson and a hostile audience mercilessly exposed his deficiencies as a candidate.

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1. Tottie to Fitzwilliam, 30 Oct. 1848. Wentworth Woodhouse MSS. G 7(d).
  2. Draft letter, not sent, Fitzwilliam to Eardley, 25 Nov. 1848, Wentworth Woodhouse MSS. G 7(d). Cf. Thompson *op.cit.*, p.234.
  3. The Mercury continually bemoaned the fact that the cost of a contest against the Fitzwilliam interest was a powerful deterrent against the launching of a second candidate. Cf. Newman to Fitzwilliam, 17 Nov. 1848, on one of the Wakefield meetings 'one or two of the most violent proposed the immediate bringing out of candidates but a dead silence ensued when it was asked, who?'
  4. Barker had already published a series of public letters to Charles Fitzwilliam which were blunt to the point of rudeness. In one he told Charles flatly that the West Riding electors 'wish to have a man to represent them not a boy', The People, I (1849), p.206.

Many had warned Fitzwilliam that he must prepare Charles adequately but he recalled his own baptism in 1807: 'it is an arduous undertaking at 22 though I was only 21 and therefore don't rate the difficulties quite so highly as some people do'.<sup>1</sup> Charles Fitzwilliam's inexperience and lack of preparation proved fatal to his (or rather his father's) hopes and after what even opponents admitted was a cruel and shattering experience he withdrew.<sup>2</sup> Here was a great victory not for chapel over church but for urban over rural, middle-class over aristocracy, 'a heavy blow and great discouragement has been thereby given to aristocratic pretension not only in the West Riding but throughout the country'.<sup>3</sup>

It was only with Fitzwilliam's withdrawal that the divisive influence of sectarianism emerged in its full vigour. Prior to this the task was, as Cobden had pointed out, the maintenance of the union between middle-class Liberals and aristocratic Whigs but now these two became almost separate parties with the Fitzwilliam interest moving nearer than ever to the Tories. Fitzwilliam saw John Gott and J.H. Scarlett, two important Leeds Tories, at Wentworth House and told them that he did not feel that the Whigs had a permanent right 'to engross the whole of the representation for the West Riding'.<sup>4</sup> Once the Tories had brought out E. Beckett Denison Fitzwilliam made it clear that he would support

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1. Fitzwilliam to Fawkes, 7 Nov. 1848. On the question of prior training for Charles see Wood to Fitzwilliam n.d. (p.m. 11 Oct. 1848) 'unless a youth is prepared to go through awkward catechisms with true eclat I think it would be imprudent of you to start him'. See also Brown to Fitzwilliam, 23 Oct. 1848 on the results of 'reading up a little, it will soon be done and he will be amply repaid for his trouble in feeling himself at home among clear interrogation'.
  2. Leeds Mercury, 25 Nov. 1848, 'a more painful infliction than the bitterest opponent of the noble earl could possibly desire'.
  3. Leeds Times, 25 Nov. 1848.
  4. Fitzwilliam memo., 24 Nov. 1848, Wentworth Woodhouse MSS. G 7(b).



him and wrote to Scarlett 'the time is coming for a union of moderate men of both parties for the common safety'. Scarlett relised<sup>h</sup> the explosive nature of this statement and enquired whether he should publish it. Fitzwilliam was prepared that it should be made public but Tottie intervened, warning that Scarlett was a 'decided Tory and will do what he can to promote the strength of that party' and that Fitzwilliam's public support of Denison 'may have a tendency to conciliate the Tory party but I fear it may have the effect of damping to say the least the zeal of the Whig party'.<sup>1</sup>

It was the church versus chapel dispute which produced this alliance of what Scarlett called at a Leeds meeting Constitutional Whigs and Liberal Conservatives. This was made explicit by Kemplay who said that Leeds Dissenters wished 'to force the chapel down our throats whether we will or no' and who described the election as 'a deliberate contest between Dissent and the Church'.<sup>2</sup> The sectarian spirit of Baines and Carbutt not only led to the alienation of the aristocratic Whigs, it also split the middle-class urban Liberal party.

Once Fitzwilliam was out of the way the field was open for Baines to get a strong Voluntaryist nominated and Sir Gilling Eardley, a leading Dissenter from Exeter Hall, agreed to stand. Whereas the urban Liberals had been united over their opposition to aristocratic high-handedness their unity was shattered over a possible alternative candidate. All those Liberals in Leeds who in 1847 had opposed Sturge were naturally opposed to Eardley in 1848 and they were joined by many political Radicals.

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1. Scarlett to Fitzwilliam, 26 Nov., 30 Nov., 1 Dec. 1848, Fitzwilliam to Scarlett, 29 Nov. 1848, Tottie to Fitzwilliam, 30 Nov. 1848. Wentworth Woodhouse MSS. G 7(d).
  2. Leeds Intelligencer, 25 Nov., 28 Nov., 9 Dec. 1848.

Sturge, by virtue of his career and opinions, had been able to combine Voluntaryism and Radicalism but in 1848 Eardley was seen solely as a narrow sectarian while Roebuck was the choice of the Leeds Times, the Radicals and the Chartists. Thus Carbutt and Fairbairn who had been allies in 1847 were in open conflict in 1848, Carbutt supporting Eardley and Fairbairn Roebuck. Roebuck withdrew and Eardley faced Denison who received some Whig support and a larger amount of Whig benevolent neutrality. Though Eardley won on the show of hands on nomination day he lost at the polls by 14,743 to 11,795.<sup>1</sup>

There were many who had belittled the voting strength of Carbutt and his followers. Fitzwilliam had reckoned their strength to be 4,000 while Ikin, the Leeds Town Clerk, thought it even less. Newman had told his master early on 'I really see no reason for succumbing to Mr. Carbutt' and a Leeds woollen merchant had comforted Fitzwilliam with his opinion 'on the whole I think the Leeds Mercury is losing ground'.<sup>2</sup> In view of the lost Whig votes and the split among the Liberals the performance of Carbutt and his party was quite an achievement and as Cobden pointed out 'with three or four great rents in the Liberal party it is wonderful that the defeat was not more signal.'<sup>3</sup>

It was of course true that to get nearly 12,000 votes in the circumstances of 1848 was almost tantamount to a Liberal victory yet the great schism in the Liberal party remained. For a second time Baines and Carbutt had forced an influential section of the party to turn away from their former political allies. The 1848 West Riding election

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1. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Times, Leeds Intelligencer, 2, 9, 16 Dec.1848.
  2. Newman to Fitzwilliam, 27 Oct.1848, Nussey to Fitzwilliam, 23 Nov.1848. Wentworth Woodhouse MSS. G 7(d).
  3. Cobden to Baines, 21 Dec.1848. B.M. Add.Mss.43664 f 203.

witnessed a considerable number of abstentions and Table VI lists 20 Leeds Liberals who would not support Eardley yet who could not plump for Denison. Here was the backbone of the Liberal party. Seventeen

TABLE VI LEEDS LIBERALS WHO ABSTAINED IN 1848 W. R. ELECTION<sup>1</sup>

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Robert Arthington	J.G.Marshall
Robert Baker	Arthur Megson
Joseph Bateson	D.W.Nell
Edwin Birchall Jun.	Jas. Ogle
James Dufton	T.Pease
Peter Fairbairn	J.Hope Shaw
Matthew Gaunt	Samuel Smiles
Jas. Kitson	Hamer Stansfeld
J.D.Luccock	Hatton Hamer Stansfeld
H.C.Marshall	Thomas Tatham

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had been Liberal members of the Council and all of them were household names in Leeds politics. They have featured strongly in this study yet here they were standing on the touchlines. Leeds Liberalism had masochistically cut off its own right arm.

A Liberal defeat had occurred in 1848 when on the state of the register a Liberal victory had been eminently possible. There was common agreement on all sides that Liberal mistakes had once more saved the Tories from the jaws of defeat. Kemplay reminded his party that 'thanks to their (Liberal) folly a Conservative candidate again recovers his seat for the Riding and a party by its own neglect numerically the

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1. Source: West Riding Poll Book 1848.

most feeble has the honour of a splendid triumph'.<sup>1</sup> Baines and Carbutt had given Beckett the borough in 1847 and his brother Denison the county in 1848. Exactly the same interpretation came from the opposite side of the political fence:

'The West Riding election has been a repetition of the blunder of the Leeds election. Mr. Baines and his followers have made the contest turn on sectarian points . . . the great Liberal cause has on this occasion been sacrificed to sectarian crotchets. We cannot conceal our indignation at the conduct of the men who have placed us in our present humiliating condition'.<sup>2</sup>

Cobden for his part did not regret the alienation of the county Whigs but he bitterly criticised Baines for breaking up the middle-class Liberal party. It was this division which would prevent a successful assault on the Whig-Tory coalition and he told Baines 'the Liberals are so divided amongst themselves that you will not find a common standing ground upon which to marshal the party to the attack upon the aristocracy'.<sup>3</sup> To Bright he was more outspoken, Baines was the great bugbear:

'If he were not there I could rally the West Riding in two years and defeat the Whigs and Tories together. Literally speaking he and he alone is the obstacle . . . He has weakened the dissent party by severing it from Liberal politics and dividing it against itself and by his fierce opposition to National Education in every form he has enabled the Tory Churchmen to turn his flank . . . Baines is destined to be a standing obstacle to the success of the Liberal party in the West Riding'.<sup>4</sup>

The 1848 West Riding election thus represented a severe rift between urban Liberals and aristocratic Whigs on the one hand and a further schism in the middle-class Liberal party on the other. It was not until 1852 that these wounds began to heal somewhat though even then it was more

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1. Leeds Intelligencer, 16 Dec.1848.

2. Leeds Times, 16 Dec.1848.

3. Cobden to Baines, 28 Dec.1848. B.M. Add.MSS. 43664 f.205.

4. Cobden to Bright, 22 Dec.1848. B.M. Add.MSS. 43649 f.107.

noticeable in the borough than the county. During the 1848 election Marshall had told Fitzwilliam that his difficulties were natural in a popular party:

'If the body has now run away from the Head if we have a little patience they will have to come back. Popular parties will now and then toss up their noses and run away like a pack of unruly hounds and will not be whipped back again in a hurry. Those who are their natural leaders on such occasions should have much patience and forbearance and be very slow to forget or disown their long cherished traditional principles.'<sup>1</sup>

Fitzwilliam had been restrained from allowing his resentment of the urban Liberals to drive him completely into the Tory camp but his followers played no part in the registration work in the West Riding over the next four years. The 1848 election expenses were paid with 'scarcely a sixpence of contribution from the aristocracy' and gains of over 2,000 had been recorded on the revisions by 1852, again without aristocratic aid.<sup>2</sup> In that year the reunion of the West Riding Liberal party began to take place and at the election of 1852, fought on Free Trade, Carbutt reported 'the fusion of the two sections of the Liberals was now in a fair way of being completed.'<sup>3</sup> Cobden still had no faith in Fitzwilliam who seemed to him to be 'more eccentric than ever' and he tested aristocratic sincerity by agreeing to stand in 1852 because Free Trade was at stake ('excepting for that question I have no business to sit for the Riding').<sup>4</sup> However, Sir Charles Wood among others spoke publicly in support of Cobden and a compromise was agreed whereby the return of Cobden and Denison, the sitting Members, was achieved without a contest,

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1. Marshall to Fitzwilliam, 29 Nov. 1848. Wentworth Woodhouse MSS. G 7(d).
  2. Leeds Mercury, 13 Jan. 1849, 3 July 1852.
  3. Ibid., 3 July, 1852.
  4. Cobden to Baines, 23 Feb. 1852, Baines Correspondence.



despite the popular view that two Liberals could be returned.<sup>1</sup>

In Leeds the process of revision was even more marked and comprehensive for, as has been discussed, the Chartists joined forces with the more advanced Liberals in 1852.<sup>2</sup> Indeed the very meeting which agreed in January 1852 to push for further reform also resolved to attempt a reunion of the party so decisively split in 1847. It was clear that no reconciliation had been attempted before January 1852 and H.C. Marshall reported to the pro-education Liberals that the process had begun 'at a recent meeting of the subscribers to the Borough Registration Society to join again the other section of Reformers'.<sup>3</sup> Since the pro-education Liberals had withdrawn from the Registration Society in 1847 it was thus the Voluntarists who had moved from their previous position and who were no longer to make voluntary education their shibboleth. A deputation of three from each section cordially agreed that they should each put up one candidate who would then receive the mutual support of all which was exactly the proposal rejected by the Voluntary party in 1847. Baines supported the nomination of Carbutt, who had after all been in charge of the registration for both Leeds and the Riding, and he was nominated by the Registration Society. It was assumed that since H.C. Marshall was in charge of all the negotiations for the education side

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1. Leeds Mercury, 17 July 1852. Cf. Leeds Times, 5 Oct. 1850: 'the Liberals could win both seats if they were united and true to themselves'.
  2. See above, p. 472. During the election Luccock cemented the alliance by claiming that 'he did not know a Chartist in the whole borough of Leeds who could be bought for money . . . for purity and for independence he would back them against any class of men in the whole kingdom'. Leeds Mercury, 17 July 1852.
  3. Leeds Mercury, 23 Feb. 1852; Cf. Leeds Times, 24 Jan. 1852.

his brother, James Garth Marshall, would once more stand. However, in the event neither Carbutt nor Marshall was nominated. The former was too much identified with past divisions and so by popular acclaim was replaced by Goodman, recently knighted for his work during the Great Exhibition.<sup>1</sup> Marshall for his part announced his retirement on the grounds of ill health which was not the whole truth:

'you must admit that I acted with decision in retiring from that position (of M.P.) as soon as I found it was my duty to take that step. You of course will have understood pretty well that it was not mere considerations of health that led me to that step; but seeing that our concern wanted my personal labour and attention'.<sup>2</sup>

The needs of the family business thus deprived Leeds of Marshall's services.

In his place Matthew Talbot Baines, eldest son of Edward Baines Senior and brother of Baines Junior, was nominated. Obvious local connection made him a popular candidate and with the party once more united behind Goodman and Baines the canvassers expected a Liberal majority of 600.<sup>3</sup>

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1. According to Carbutt's minister at Mill Hill, Wicksteed, his teetotal views made him unpopular; 'it was announced that the "publicans" were much opposed to Mr. Carbutt's return'. Quoted in Memorial of the Rev. Charles Wicksteed (1886), p.133. It was a sign of how out of touch with popular opinion the Voluntaries were that their nominee was over-ruled at a full meeting of the Liberal electors. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Times, 23 Feb., 6 Mar. 1852.
  2. J.G. Marshall to H.C. Marshall, 11 March 1853, quoted in W.G. Rimmer Marshalls of Leeds Flaxspinners (1960), p.269. There is some confusion in Rimmer's account as he dates Marshall's tenure of the position as 1846 - 1853 and earlier, p.222, gives as one reason for Marshall's withdrawal his radical proposals for electoral reform whereas these had been long forgotten by 1852, even by Marshall himself. Cf. Marshall to Fitzwilliam, 29 Nov. 1848: 'I am more disposed to be content with gradual reforms since that great settlement of the Corn Monopoly and all that its fall involves.'
  3. Leeds Mercury, 13, 20 March, 24 April, 1 May 1852.

In the face of this new-found Liberal unity the Tories in Leeds were in disarray for the Free Trade chicken of 1846 had finally come home to roost. The repeal of the Corn Laws which had been the great unmentionable in 1847 had been cloaked by the education question at the previous election but the defeat of Russell and the Protectionist Ministry of Derby meant that it now became in 1852 a key issue. Indeed there was a curious parallel of political influences working in opposite ways between the two elections. In 1847 the Liberal insistence on making education the key issue saved the Conservatives from division on Free Trade and in 1852 Derby's dissolution on the issue of Free Trade enabled the Liberals to heal their wounds on education.

Beckett's votes in 1846 with Peel had not been popular among Leeds Conservatives and in 1852 they were faced with trying to defend a Protectionist ministry with a Peelite Conservative candidate. The Leeds Tories were very dilatory in preparing for the anticipated election, Beckett was suitably vague about his intentions, Kemplay prophesied confidently that Beckett would stand and Bingley perceptively anticipated that he would not.<sup>1</sup> Beckett, wishing to retain a seat in Parliament, interpreted the lack of action in Leeds as both a vote of no confidence in himself and as a sign that the Conservatives were not adequately prepared for an election. No doubt as a pragmatic Peelite Beckett knew that Protectionism would have little chance in a place like Leeds and so he peremptorily announced that he would end his 11 year tenure as M.P. for Leeds and declared himself a candidate for the much more congenial spires

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1. Leeds Intelligencer, 28 Feb., 13, 27 March 1852, Leeds Times, 20 March 1852.

of Ripon. To his new potential constituents he explained that in Leeds there had been meetings, resolutions and candidates yet

'when in regard to himself he never heard his name mentioned he had come to the conclusion that his services were not wanted . . . He had therefore retired from Leeds but he made no complaints against the people there because they could do as they pleased'.<sup>1</sup>

Too late did his former supporters rally. Beckett had announced his withdrawal on 30 March but it was not until 14 April that even preliminary moves began. Kemplay tried to stimulate enthusiasm by bringing out an extraordinary announcing that Beckett had been adopted.<sup>2</sup> This was a little ironic since by then Beckett considered himself firmly committed to Ripon and despite deputations, letters and even his own admission that he had misconstrued the mood of his own supporters, he refused to stand again for Leeds.<sup>3</sup>

J.R. Atkinson, the leading Tory flaxspinner, scolded his own party over the internal divisions which had left them facing an election without a candidate. However, the problem went much deeper and Kemplay put his finger on the real cause several times. He referred to 'the total neglect of organisation for the last five years' and considered that 'if an organisation of the party had been in existence the original misunderstanding could not have been admitted nor the concluding mortification endured'.<sup>4</sup> In his view the solution was obvious for 1852 had illustrated to Tories

'the necessity of keeping up some permanent organisation

1. Ibid., 8 May 1852.
2. Ibid., 27 April 1852.
3. Ibid., 24 April, 22, 29 May 1852.
4. Ibid., 24 April, 5 June 1852.

if they intend to bring their legitimate influence to bear with effect upon the parliamentary representation and the local government of the borough whenever the occasion for action arises'.<sup>1</sup>

Kemplay's warning in 1847, that the Tories could not rely on the fortuitous circumstances of that election being repeated, had gone unheeded and so it was left to Robert Hall, the man who had announced in 1832 the formation of the Association of Independent Electors, to remind his allies 20 years later of the continuing need for party organisation.<sup>2</sup>

In view of such Conservative problems it was no wonder that the Liberals confidently expected a walk-over for Baines and Goodman. The party was now united but by no means unitary in ideas. Matthew Talbot Baines was, unlike his brother Edward, an Anglican and did not share his family's views on Voluntaryism.<sup>3</sup> Nor did he support the ballot and John Bright was worried 'what a miserable thing it will be for Leeds on this question to say aye by one member and no by another'.<sup>4</sup> There was therefore some justice in the critical description of the Leeds Liberal party of 1852 as 'the conglomerated advocates of Church and no Church; of Quinquennial, Triennial and Annual Parliaments; of Ballot and no Ballot, of Whiggery and Radicalism, of Monarchy and Republicanism'.<sup>5</sup> However, this merely illustrated the all-embracing unity of the Liberal party which could thus accommodate a wide spectrum of political opinion.

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1. Ibid., 29 May 1852.

2. Leeds Intelligencer, 31 July 1852. Cf. above, Chapter II, p87.

3. Cf. M.T. Baines to E. Baines, 3 Aug. 1847. Baines MSS.

4. Bright to Baines, 20 March 1852, Baines Correspondence No. 8.

5. Leeds Intelligencer, 10 April 1852.



Despite all the prophecies of a walk-over there was a contest, for at the last minute the Tories nominated Robert Hall, son of the most respected Leeds Tory, Henry Hall, and Thomas Sidney, a London alderman but formerly a tea dealer in Leeds. If nothing else it meant that the Liberals had to postpone their celebration dinner for 24 hours 'in a state of the thermometer in which it might be easy to keep the soup hot but exceedingly difficult to keep the wine cool or the jellies stiff'.<sup>1</sup> The expected Liberal victory occurred and Goodman and Baines polled more than double the votes of their opponents:

Goodman	2,344
Baines	2,311
Hall	1,132
Sidney	1,089 <sup>2</sup>

This result represented a share of poll of 67.43% for the Liberals and a swing of just under 18% since 1841, both of which were the highest recorded in Leeds. Yet it was an unprecedentedly low poll, being only 54% of the total registered electorate and even allowing a 20% reduction for deaths, removals and double entries it was still only 68%. The Liberals polled something approaching their full strength but the Tories clearly had no heart for the fight and many abstained.

The 1852 elections thus restored party unity in both county and borough and particularly in Leeds the convincing victory for the Liberals fulfilled the vision of a comfortable Liberal dominance which had so of-

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1. Ibid., 10 July 1852.

2. Poll Book of the Leeds Borough Election (1852).

ten been forecast since 1832. The election joins the other factors in suggesting 1852 as a terminal date for this study. The big Poor Law enquiry, the sewers, the purchase of the waterworks, the town hall, the merging of Chartism into that Radical Liberalism out of which it had first grown, the laying of the education bogey (temporarily at least) and the Liberal victory in the election all combined with the changing economic and social climate of the early 1850's to mark 1852 as the end of an age of social and political conflict and the beginning of the mid-Victorian 'age of equipoise'. The divisions within the Liberal party had been shored up. Marshall had said in the dark days of 1847

'I will not abandon the hope that time and the salutary teaching of experience may soften and ultimately heal up and obliterate these differences'.<sup>1</sup>

Now in 1852 he could write

'the public spirit and intelligence of the Liberal party in Leeds . . . have led to the healing of previous differences and to a hearty unison in support of the great principles we hold in common'.<sup>2</sup>

In Leeds the political equilibrium of the Liberals had been restored.

By 1852 the Liberals had reached a point of political dominance in almost all spheres of local affairs. The Poor Law was about to fall into their lap once more while their control over the Town Council was unassailable and they were at last able to fulfil the promise of a socially useful organ of local government. The spoils of office consequent upon political control of local institutions meant that the fruits of reform were sweet for men previously denied the prestige and

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1. Leeds Mercury, 31 July 1847.

2. Ibid., 6 March 1852.

status conferred by them. The stunning victory in the 1852 election made Leeds appear the safe Liberal seat which reformers had always assumed it would be. The wounds of disunity over education and the suffrage were healed by the merging of the Chartists and Voluntaries with the Liberals. A broadly based alliance of progressive opinion had been created and Leeds could enter the mid-Victorian period with confidence. The Liberal vision had been achieved.

C O N C L U S I O N

P O L I T I C S   A N D   S O C I E T Y   I N   E A R L Y

V I C T O R I A N   L E E D S

One point which emerges clearly from this study of urban history is that in Leeds there existed a heightened political awareness stimulated by a keenly contested party struggle. The role of party in Leeds politics was a central and all-embracing one. When such diverse matters as the offices of factory inspector, collector of bastardy accounts, master of the workhouse and surgeon at the Infirmary, together with the questions of charity, burial and preaching to the poor, were all made avenues of political activity, 'politics being the rule it seems in this matter', then we can confirm Ralph Markland's opinion that 'politics ran very high in Leeds'.<sup>1</sup> The Leeds surgeon Thomas Metcalfe was indeed expressing a minority point of view when he commented 'I have discarded politics for I find all parties the same'.<sup>2</sup>

There were many pious hopes expressed that politics would be discarded particularly in regard to Township and Parochial administration and on one occasion Baines pointedly remarked 'surely the office of sweeping the streets and lighting the lamps . . . has not much to do with politics or religion'.<sup>3</sup> Politics had originally entered Township administration because Parliamentary and Municipal avenues were closed and parochial power was the only source of influence that could be contested politically. The use of the Vestry as a political institution had been part of that

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1. Leeds Intelligencer, 14 Sept. 1833, Leeds Mercury, 13 April 1839.

2. Leeds Mercury, 19 April 1834.

3. Ibid., 11 Jan. 1840.

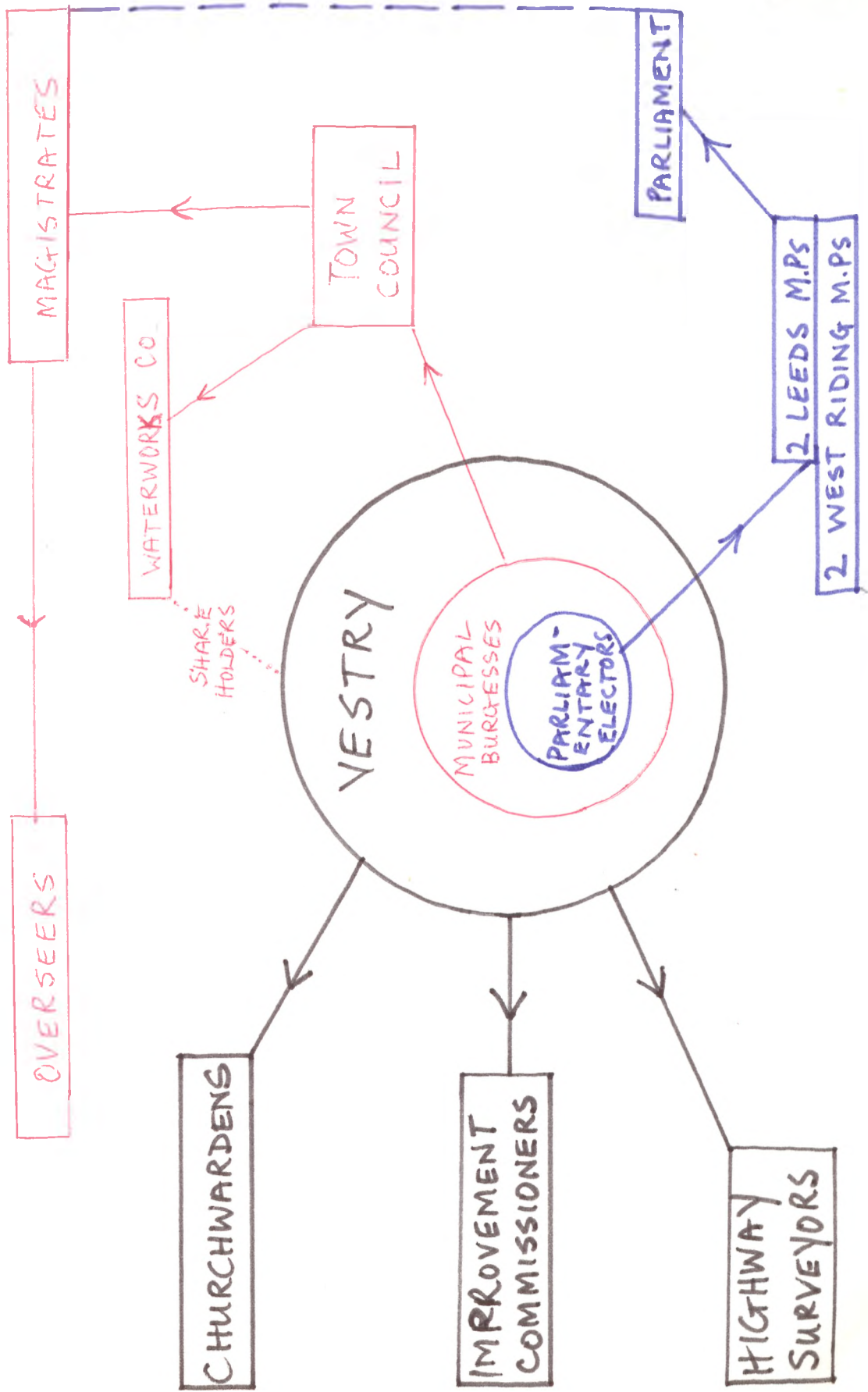


balancing process which had produced a Whig-Liberal counterweight to a Tory Corporation.

In the period under examination the offices appointed by the Vestry were objects of political ambition partly as a means of achieving local power and partly as a mode of political identification. The story of these political battles indicates how they represented a storming of fortresses seriatim, when one fell quickly on to the next. The Liberal domination of the Churchwardens in the early 1830's was the result of Dissenting concern over Church rates and the desire for political control over the Poor Law via the Workhouse Board. The Tory attempt to regain power, too, was motivated by religious and political zeal, to preserve the Church and again control the Poor Law. The bitter disputes over the Churchwardens' election could thus be seen as at once a political struggle for power and a Church versus Dissent contest over the religious policy to be pursued in Parish affairs. The failure of the Tories in 1835 by law and poll to get control of the Churchwardens left them no option but to go to law to establish their prescriptive right to control the Poor Law via the Overseers appointed by the magistrates.

Their success here was short-lived, neutralised by the political results of Municipal reform and it is no coincidence that the first attempts by the Conservatives to gain control of the Improvement Commissioners occurred in the later 1830's when the Churchwardens, the Poor Law and the Corporation had in quick succession eluded their grasp. The totality of local power seemed to be ebbing away from them and so it was necessary to reassert their political identity by regaining some poli-

POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS OF LEEDS II c. 1837



tical control:

'The prize contended for is of no value itself . . . the question is shall the Whigs and Whig Radicals be permitted to monopolise everything'.<sup>1</sup>

The Conservative search for political dominance was rewarded in the later 1840's in the reformed Poor Law in Leeds when they controlled the Poor Law Guardians. Once more there was a quid pro quo, their failure to make the expected coup in the Council elections was mitigated by their success in the election for Guardians.

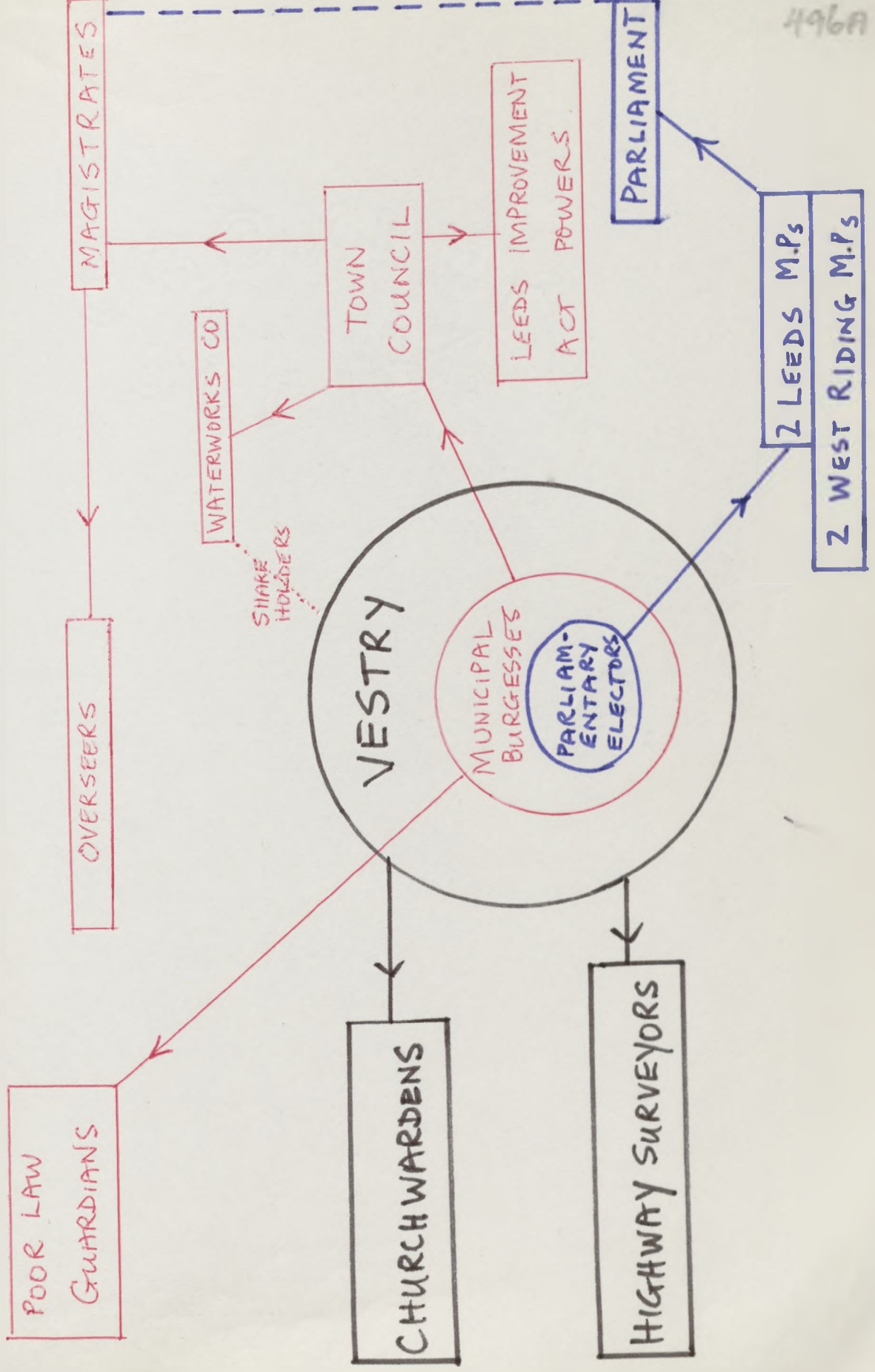
The degree of intensity in a political battle over a local office depended on the recent course of political fortune but also on the power and responsibility of the institution concerned. During these two decades the institutional pattern changed considerably in Leeds from that outlined in the Introduction. The diagram, Political Institutions I c 1830, given earlier, has to be modified to produce a second version which represents the true picture as it was in the later 1830's. Political Institutions II c 1837 takes account of the institutional changes consequent on the Reform Act, the Municipal Reform Act, the legal decision relating to the Poor Law and the establishment of the Waterworks company. Thus in the diagram a new area of politics had been opened up by the enfranchisement of Leeds (blue power flow). Similarly the Council was now an arena for party warfare and the legal decision regarding the sole control of the overseers made the Municipal area (red power flow) a worthwhile field in which to plough. The Waterworks Act similarly removed an item of responsibility from the Improvement Commission and vested part of the control in the Council.

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1. Leeds Intelligencer, 9 Jan. 1841.

POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS OF LEEDS III c. 1845

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This meant that the massed ratepayers in the Vestry (black power flow) were left with only three institutions, one of which, the Highway Surveyors, was at that period of little political interest.

Two further important developments took place in the 1840's which changed the institutional pattern once more. The 1842 Improvement Act saw the demise of the Improvement Commissioners and vast new powers were vested in the Council, thus reducing the influence of un-disciplined "masses" in the Vestry. The introduction of the new Poor Law belatedly in 1844 put a further area of Township administration under the influence of Municipal electors, although here it did remove direct control over the Poor Law from the magistrates whose appointees now became merely rate collectors. These changes are represented in the diagram Political Institutions III c.1845 which helps to explain the declining importance of Township politics.

The Churchwarden had been the highest local office open to the citizens of Leeds in the 1820's and it had thus represented an honour worth contesting. It had also carried with it effective control over Parish affairs and the Poor Law and so was a legitimate prize of political ambition. Once it ceased to carry with it control of the Poor Law and new avenues of honour and power were opened up in the Municipal field then it existed from the Liberal point of view merely to preserve the conscience of Dissenters and protect their pockets. Thus when Chartist Churchwardens and a High Anglican Vicar of Leeds were prepared to guarantee that there would be no Church rates the office itself was denuded of political interest except for Chartists themselves who considered it in turn an object of honour and political identification -



the gaining of some political power which was within their grasp. Hence when in the later 1840's Tory Anglicans regained the Churchwardens for the first time in 20 years there was no Liberal rush to defend the office. The institutional pattern had changed and so it had ceased to represent either honour or power.

The Highway Surveyor, which was the other office remaining in the gift of the Vestry, was slightly different. This had never been an office of political ambition since it was so low down the list in terms of status, function and money involved. To Chartists, however, like the Liberals earlier, who saw little prospect of effective control over the Parliamentary or the Municipal sphere and who had just lost what control they had over improvement, this body was worth fighting for. The Chartists dominated the office without much difficulty from the mid-1840's but here, unlike the Churchwardens, the Liberals did defend their Chartist colleagues when they were challenged in 1852. This was partly the result of the reunion of Liberals and Radicals which was progressing then and partly because there was public money involved in the maintenance of the roads.

The three diagrams of the political institutions of Leeds illustrate how Poor Law politics were fought out on shifting institutional sands. The traditional tri-partite structure of the Workhouse Board had been largely responsible for elevating Township administration into political predominance and the Board itself was aptly described by Robert Baker as 'a sort of arena for party politics on a small scale'.<sup>1</sup> The confirmation of the overseers' control over the Poor Law meant that the poli-

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1. Baker to Poor Law Commission, 18 March 1836, P.R.O. MH 12/15224.

tical composition of the bench was the crucial factor in Poor Law politics from 1836 to 1844. The appointment of Conservative magistrates in 1842 led to the via media of an equal division between the parties and reduced the political temperature. The third phase with the introduction of the new Poor Law produced in the Board of Guardians an office controlled by popular election and hence further political squabbling. However, Liberal indifference to this new institution meant that the intensity of former disputes would not return. Only when corruption was revealed did Liberal political interest revive. Clearly the Poor Law which had seemed the summit of political ambition earlier was by mid-century low on the list of political priorities. There was always a comparative element as men measured the status of the institution concerned in terms of what was socially and politically possible at any point in time.

The struggle for the control of the institutions of Township administration was a component of the overall power struggle in local affairs. Perring was right when he wrote of 'a plan to get possession of all the local offices . . . the object of which is the acquirement of local power'.<sup>1</sup> It was the political power attached to an institution which made it an object of ambition and the one factor more than any other which reduced interest in township politics was the opening up of Municipal government to popular control. Here was a spectacular reversal of political fortune as the "outs" replaced the "ins" and as Thomas Plint put it 'an immense change has taken place in those who exercise power'.<sup>2</sup>

Politics is about the pursuit and exercise of power and so per se

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1. Leeds Intelligencer, 4 Jan. 1840.
  2. Leeds Mercury, 30 April 1836.

Municipal government became a matter of politics and political dispute. Once more there were those who would have banished politics from the Council chamber.

'Municipal business is not properly or necessarily connected with politics any more than it is with religion and we wish it were possible to sever it from party influences.'<sup>1</sup>

In the "partyfied" politics of Leeds this was a vain hope for the Council provided yet another arena for a trial of strength between rival groups. The Council was in Kemplay's phrase 'a mere pontoon for shifting the loose baggage of party influence from side to side of the political stream'.<sup>2</sup> In addition to party political triumph there were the spoils of power, the Mayor's chain, the Alderman's robe, the seat on the bench, the clerkships and petty offices in the Council's gift. In Leeds as elsewhere it was argued by the opponents of the "new masters" that it was these fruits of office that were the main motivation in seeking Municipal reform. Thus in Birmingham an opponent of incorporation wrote:

'It is a personal aggrandisement they seek. Power and influence and some share of the loaves and fishes of official rank are the things they look for'.<sup>3</sup>

In Leeds where previously these "loaves and fishes" had been exclusively confined to an oligarchy of Tory Anglicans it was no wonder that they should be sources of social and political ambition.

Party political conflict was greater on the Leeds Council, especially in the early years, than any which has so far been described. Manchester

1. Ibid., 2 Nov.1844.

2. Leeds Intelligencer, 4 Nov.1843.

3. Birmingham Advertiser, 2 Nov.1837. Cf. Leicester Herald, 19 Dec.1835.

'Indeed the Rads are working hard  
Each in his own vocation  
To get a finger in the pie  
Of a party Corporation.'

Liverpool, Birmingham and even Leicester<sup>1</sup> did not, or so it appears, have the potentiality of a quick return to Tory local government which was the case in Leeds. The rapid strides made by Conservatives in the early Council elections meant that within six years of the Municipal Reform Act there was a very good chance of the Conservatives recapturing control. This surprised even Conservatives somewhat; 'the Liberals will be ejected next year under the new system which was intended to give them the monopoly for half a century'.<sup>2</sup> It was this Tory counter attack which bound the Liberals closer together and heightened political awareness. The Chancery suit over the alienation of the old Corporation's funds, disputes over increased costs and the exclusive distribution of Corporate honours kept the political pot boiling.\*

The threat to Liberal control meant that Council proceedings were perpetual trials of party strength encouraged and echoed by the virulent political battles in the Press. 1841 in Leeds and 1844 in Nottingham<sup>3</sup> marked the decisive and victorious trial of strength with Conservatism which finally confirmed the Liberal hold on local power until almost the

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1. Only in the case of Leicester (A.T.Patterson Radical Leicester (1954)) have the politics of Municipal government been fully explored as in this study. For the others the broad story has been told, see A.Redford and I.Russell A History of Local Government in Manchester (1939), Vols.I and II, W.H.Thomson History of Manchester to 1852 (1957), B.D.White A History of the Corporation of Liverpool 1835-1914 (1914), G.Gill A History of Birmingham, Vol.I.
  2. Leeds Intelligencer, 2 Nov.1839.
  3. In that year the Conservatives needed only one seat to capture the Council. Nottingham Corporation had been Whig prior to 1835 and so this was not a return but a potential assumption of power for the Conservatives. Again the full story has not been told but see R.A.Church Economic and Social Change in a Midland Town (1967).
- \* The language used in the Council was frequently insulting and on one occasion the Northern Star, 3 Oct.1840, commented pointedly on 'a scene in which the most disgraceful innuendoes and epithets were freely bandied from one side of the Council Chamber to the other and which if it had taken place at a meeting of working men would have been triumphantly quoted as a proof of their ignorance and their incapacity to take a part in public affairs.'

end of the century. The Mercury's prophecy proved more than mere rhetoric: 'the Tories have been thrown back for six years and it may be for 60'.<sup>1</sup> The Conservative challenge withered away as quickly as it had grown and thereafter the political temperature was allowed to cool from the mid-1840's onward. Politics, especially party politics, involves conflict and challenge. The virtual monopoly of a political institution by one party can of course remove party politics from its internal decision making, after the fashion of the election manifesto seen recently in a dormitory town in the stockbroker belt 'Vote Conservative and keep politics out of local government'.

The decline of straight party conflict and the emergence of an independent Radical-Chartist group in the Council meant that issues could be discussed more on their merits in the later 1840's than they had been earlier. Cross party voting on the division lists were the evidence of the political fragmentation which resulted from the removal of a Tory threat and the creation of a safe Liberal hold on power. Prior to 1842 it was only the occasional special case such as the Town Clerk's salary which cut across party lines, thereafter questions associated with economy frequently produced alliances of all parties for and against a particular motion. The reference made in the appropriate chapters about divisions in the Chartist ranks was merely illustrative of the general pattern prevailing in the decade from 1842.

The one general question which still produced straight party voting was the disbursement of Municipal honours. The generous gesture in electing four Tory Aldermen in 1836 was the cause of much political disillusion.

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1. Leeds Mercury, 13 Nov. 1841. The Conservatives did not capture control in Leeds until 1895.



sion in Liberal ranks and was not repeated. Despite the efforts of the two solicitors, Tottie and Hope Shaw, who spoke up for the more equitable distribution of honours, there was only one Conservative alderman elected after 1837 and even he was only elevated to fill a vacancy caused by death. A monopoly of power did not produce a feeling of sympathy for the vanquished and there was no Conservative Mayor until 1895. This was all part of the political game and the Conservatives gained some revenge in their partisan distribution of Poor Law appointments. In Leeds the political loyalties were sufficiently well developed to retain overall unity on the Council even when questions such as economy did cause divided counsels. The Liberal party in Leeds was never split like that at Leicester into "Economists" and "Improvers" and the fears over economy which appeared in 1843 and 1849 were as much as anything a nervous reaction to the Improvement Acts of the previous year in each case and a reflection of depressed local trade.<sup>1</sup>

Political battles make fascinating reading for the historian and provided ready-made entertainment for contemporaries but people enter politics to do something as well as to be something<sup>2</sup> and the question naturally arises of what positive achievements the new system produced in Leeds. If Municipal elections provided merely 'the sinews of factious warfare', then indeed it was valid to ask 'what boots it to the

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1. "Economists" were a perennial feature of local government. Cf. E.P. Hennock "Finance and Politics in Urban Local Government . ." in Hist. J., VI, (1963), pp.212-225.
  2. Cf. Baines to his wife, 5 March 1837, 'Independent of the honour there is given by a seat in Parliament a power of doing good to the people of Great Britain . . . to an extent that cannot be done in any other situation'. Baines MSS

people whether a fool wear a blue cap or a yellow one?'<sup>1</sup> George Goodman, four times Mayor and the sort of political volunteer essential to the working of English Municipal government, stated the ultimate purpose of the reformed system. It was intended, he argued, to 'effect a material improvement in the condition of the burgesses . . . and promote those objects which would tend to their happiness and prosperity'.<sup>2</sup> How well had the Town Council measured up to his hopes by 1852 when he left to become M.P. for Leeds?

As the story of the waterworks indicated the path to social improvement was never a smooth one and pioneers like Robert Baker left the Council disillusioned with its achievements. Yet the record of the Corporation in early Victorian Leeds was not unimpressive. There was no one overwhelming problem such as amalgamation of powers in Birmingham, the need for enclosure in Nottingham or the "economist" dispute in Leicester.<sup>3</sup> Leeds could compare favourably with large cities like Manchester, Liverpool, Newcastle and Sheffield in intent if not in ultimate achievement later in the century.<sup>4</sup> In Leeds the list of achievements of the Council is a fairly long one. There had been the building of Armley Gaol which required considerable persistence in the face of factious opposition.

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1. Northern Star, 31 Oct., 7 Nov. 1840; Cf. 'I care nowt about what colour they wear; its not blue nor yellow at makes 'em better or warse': The Factory System (1831), p.12, Castler White Slavery Collection, Vol.4, No.5.
  2. Leeds Mercury, 27 Jan. 1838; Cf. ibid., 12 Oct. 1839, 'it will materially contribute to the prosperity and well-being of the burgesses at large'.
  3. See J.T. Bunce History of the Corporation of Birmingham I, 1878; Gill op. cit.; J.D. Chambers "Nottingham in the Early 19th Century", Trans. Thornton Society 1941-3; M.I. Thomnis The Politics of Nottingham Enclosure, ibid., 1968; Church op. cit.; Patterson, op. cit.
  4. See Redford and Russell, op. cit. Vol. II; White, op. cit.; S. Middlebrook Newcastle-upon-Tyne (1950); G.P. Jones and J.E. Tylor, A Century of Progress in Sheffield (1935).

There had been the reform and extension of the police force. There had been the Improvement Act of 1842 which heralded unfulfilled hopes of cleansing Leeds. Despite Yewdall and the economists there was still a major improvement undertaken in the Marsh Lane area in the mid-1840's. The vexed and much discussed sewerage question was finally resolved with the Improvement Act of 1848 and the laying of the drainage system in the early 1850's. Water supply had been provided by the 1837 Act and the deficiencies remedied by the purchase in 1852. Nuisance inspectors were appointed, baths and wash-houses provided. Even the 10-year long burial dispute was eventually settled satisfactorily. Finally the great monument to early Victorian Leeds, the Town Hall, was decided upon by 1852. Goodman was perhaps a biased witness when he reported on departing for Westminster 'Leeds is provided with an active, energetic and well working Town Council',<sup>1</sup> but there was justice in the claim. Unfortunately the ground so assiduously prepared by the early Victorian Corporation was not nurtured by its mid-Victorian successor and so the expected harvest of improvement failed to materialise.<sup>2</sup>

Apart from the list of positive improvements there was what some regarded as an equal achievement, namely the introduction of popularly elected responsible local self government. In the long years of campaigning by Edward Baines there had been more to his case than merely the selfish status seeking of emergent capitalists. What underlay his case for opening up local government was the same belief in Rousseau's "general will" which made the Parliamentary and the Parochial situation also in need of

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1. Leeds Mercury, 27 March 1852.

2. In 1865 The Privy Council instituted an enquiry into the sanitary condition of Leeds which led to the Leeds Improvement Act of 1866.

reform. In parish, town and country the old system had preserved an elite in power and as one of Baines's followers put it:

'they wanted the oligarchy to have supreme power in this country and they also wanted to have little aristocracies in the towns and villages to tyrannise over the rights, privileges and immunities of the people at large'.<sup>1</sup>

Popular control was the essential prerequisite of good government and while argument might range over how popular the control should be the principle was never in doubt.

To Baines and his party it seemed clear that 'municipal honours . . . emanate solely from their only legitimate source, the choice of the people' and thus his main aim was as Goodman described it 'to secure for the inhabitants of Leeds the right of a voice in the election of those who were to be entrusted with the management of their local affairs'.<sup>2</sup> Hence in Liberal eyes the difference between old and new Corporations was not just a change of men but the difference between freedom and tyranny, responsible and irresponsible government, election and cooption, open debate and secrecy, published accounts and speculation.

In practice of course the key difference was that the old Corporation was open to a few and the new open to many so that Municipal administration became a further adjunct of political warfare. This provides for the historian an additional guide to the political feeling in Leeds. The political composition of the Council and the political affiliations of the various wards are a vital insight into Leeds politics. Table I represents in diagram form the fortunes of each party<sup>3</sup> in seats gained

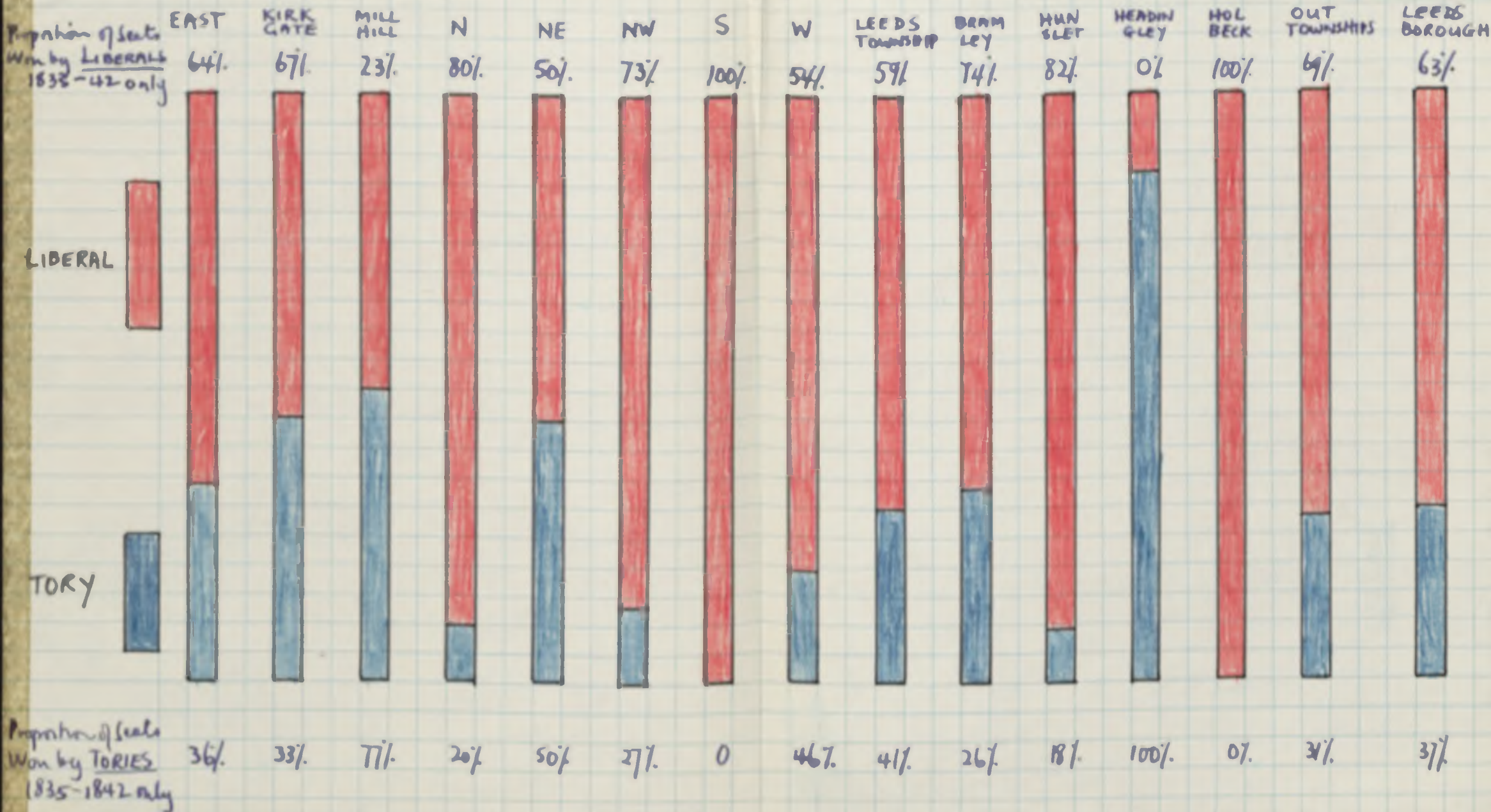
1. Leeds Mercury, 7 Dec.1839.

2. Ibid., 16 Feb.1833, 27 Nov.1841.

3. For this Table the Chartist representation has been aggregated with the Liberals.



TABLE I DISTRIBUTION OF SEATS WON AT MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS 1835-1852  
(Each Box Represents 5%)





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in all the wards of the borough. In addition figures are given for seats won in the period 1835 - 1842 only, which of course was the time of greatest Tory strength.

A pattern can be detected. The Liberals were clearly invincible in the contiguous wards of Holbeck and South and nearly so in Hunslet, North and North-West. The Conservatives virtually monopolised Headingley and did fairly well in Mill Hill (especially in the early years), Kirkgate, East and North-East. The early promise in West ward failed to materialise (46% 1835-42) but a pact in Bramley led to an improved performance there. Ideally one would have liked to have compared Parliamentary and Municipal voting right through the period to see how far this pattern revealed in Table I reflected voting patterns in Parliamentary elections. This can be done after a fashion but the absence of Municipal poll books make it impossible to compare actual voters.

This can only be done in the case of 1835 for a poll book does exist for the first Municipal election. Table II examines the votes of 100 electors at the two elections of 1835. The Conservative victory in the 1835 Parliamentary election is reflected in the slightly greater number of Conservative voters in the sample. There was, as we have already seen in Chapter III, a greater inclination to split in Municipal than in Parliamentary elections and it is noticeable that 10% of the sample changed from a party to a split vote while the number splitting in the Municipal poll was more than double that of the Parliamentary. The strength of party feeling is witnessed by the mere 3% who actually changed sides completely.

TABLE II      COMPARISON OF PARLIAMENTARY AND MUNICIPAL VOTING  
RANDOM SAMPLE OF 100 VOTERS

	Parliamentary 1835(Jan.)	Municipal 1835 (Dec.)
Liberal	45	40
Tory	47	43
Split	6	13
Abstained	2	4
<u>20 Voters Who Changed Their Votes</u>		
Abstained at one	5	
Changed Party	3	
Party — Split	10	
Split — Party	2	

Denied access to individual voting habits we can only look at the wards overall which can be done via Table III. This adopts the statistical method used throughout of measuring leading Liberal against leading Tory<sup>1</sup>, at all parliamentary elections except that of 1847. The unique nature of that election which was fully discussed in Chapter VI

1. The case for using this method has been argued before but is repeated here. To aggregate each party's total would distort the figures in favour of the party putting up the most number of candidates. The problem is of course the two member borough and in my view would not be overcome (in Leeds anyway) by aggregating the total party vote and dividing by the number of candidates. This would distort where, as in 1841, there was a significant difference in the performance of two candidates from the same party. It seems to me that the main purpose of the exercise is to indicate the true state of political feeling prevailing at any election. Thus this method would indicate on a comparative basis the optimum strength of each party.

TABLE III

SHARE OF POLL AT LEEDS ELECTIONS 1832-1852  
(Assuming Leading Liberal Against Leading Tory)

WARDS	1832		1834		1835		1837		1841		1852	
	L.	T.	L.	T.	L.	T.	L.	T.	L.	T.	L.	T.
East							67.86	32.14	52.43	47.57	76.32	23.68
Kirkgate							56.62	43.38	50.58	49.42	63.37	36.63
Mill Hill							47.86	52.14	48.18	51.82	61.60	38.40
N.W.							50.00	50.00	49.20	50.80	68.97	31.03
N.							55.63	44.37	51.34	48.66	71.83	28.17
N.E.							47.93	52.07	42.44	57.56	69.05	30.95
W.							54.94	45.06	49.36	50.64	67.61	32.39
S.							68.56	31.44	53.54	46.46	83.16	16.84
LEEDS TOWNSHIP	55.09	44.91	51.15	48.84	48.34	51.66	54.65	45.35	49.55	50.45	68.91	31.09
Hunslet	69.19	30.81	62.43	37.57	67.30	32.70	67.02	32.98	64.35	35.65	77.89	22.11
Holbeck	60.40	39.60	57.23	42.77	59.71	40.29	63.20	36.80	62.15	37.85	79.48	20.52
Bramley	57.91	42.09	49.90	50.10	45.76	54.24	50.59	49.41	49.00	51.00	64.66	35.34
Headingley	41.30	58.70	23.79	76.21	22.05	77.95	25.30	74.70	24.73	75.27	47.60	52.40
OUT TOWNSHIPS	57.37	42.63	48.89	51.11	47.74	52.26	51.41	48.59	49.70	50.30	66.63	33.37
LEEDS BOROUGH	55.89	44.11	50.44	49.56	48.16	51.84	53.55	46.45	49.61	50.39	67.43	32.57

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makes it completely invalid to attempt to apply to it the same terms as the rest. The wards of Leeds township cannot be directly compared in the first three elections owing to the redrawing of boundaries and in the out-townships the figures are the result of a count from the actual poll book where the township results were declared in an inconvenient form. Table III also indicates Liberal strength in South (where the highest percentage for either party was achieved in 1852 - 83.16%), Hunslet and Holbeck. Conservative strength in Headingley and competent showing in Mill Hill and North-East is also revealed. However, there are important differences between the Parliamentary and Municipal results which are shown clearly in Table IV which computes the mean Liberal share of poll in Parliamentary elections<sup>1</sup> with rank order of seats for the Liberals in Municipal results.

Table IV does indicate a close correlation for many of the wards. The four safest Liberal wards in Municipal elections, South, Hunslet, Holbeck and North, were in the first five in Parliamentary results. Mill Hill and Headingley were clearly the best Conservative wards in both contests. In rank order West and North-East were in the same position in both Municipal and Parliamentary results. In East, Kirkgate, North-West and Bramley there was some discrepancy.

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1. The wards in Leeds township are based on three elections, the rest on six.

TABLE IV COMPARISON OF PARLIAMENTARY AND MUNICIPAL VOTING

	Mean Liberal Share of Poll 1832 - 1852 <sup>1</sup>	Rank Order of Seats won by Liberals
1. South	68.42	1=
2. Hunslet	63.03	3
3. East	65.54	8
4. Holbeck	63.65	1=
5. North	59.60	4
6. West	57.30	6
7. Kirkgate	56.86	9=
8. North-West	56.06	5
9. North-East	53.14	9=
10. Bramley	52.97	7
11. Mill Hill	52.55	11
12. Headingley	31.28	12

If some distribution of political strength is clear from these figures the next interesting question to ask is whether there is any relationship between the political feeling of a ward and its economic and social structure. Table V accumulates information from a variety of sources to establish on a comparative basis the economic character of the wards. VA examines the out-townships using rateable values derived from Corporation archives<sup>2</sup> and the census figures for 1841. Table VB gives information about rents in Leeds township particularly relating to the proportion

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1. Excluding 1847.

2. Council Minutes V, p.186, (1840); VI, p.234 (1843).

TABLE V.

LEEDS WARDS: ECONOMIC STATUSA OUT TOWNSHIPS - Average Rateable Value Per Capita

	<u>1840</u>	<u>1843 (New Valuation)</u>
	£	£
Headingley	4.85	6.37
Bramley	2.17	2.73
Hunslet	1.74	2.15
Holbeck	1.70	2.12

B LEEDS TOWNSHIPRents% of houses over £10 p.a.% of houses under £5 p.a.

	<u>1839</u>	<u>1844</u>	<u>1839</u>
Mill Hill	64	63	11
Kirkgate	57	53	13
West	36	34	10
North West	27	26	35
North	23	19	20
South	22	28	25
East	9	10	51
North East	8	9	42

C LEEDS BOROUGHAverage Per CapitaPoor Rate Payable 1840Rateable Value 1841

	<u>Shilling</u>	£
Mill Hill	14.90	11.94
Kirkgate	9.73	7.52
Headingley	7.03	6.27
South	4.28	3.82
West	4.16	3.67
Bramley	3.13	2.82
North West	3.07	2.78
North	2.62	2.24
Hunslet	2.38	2.23
Holbeck	2.31	2.11
East	1.94	2.39
North East	1.64	1.49



rated at over £10. The figures for 1839 derive from Robert Baker's statistical report and for 1844 from the report of a Poor Law inspector.<sup>1</sup> Tables VA and VB are useful in establishing some relationship between the wards in the township and out-townships respectively, and Table VC attempts to put all 12 wards on the same scale together. The absence of rate books made this task difficult for the figures in Corporation archives do not distinguish the wards of Leeds township. The average poor rate payable was as useful a guide as rateable value and this was computed, using Baker for Leeds and Corporation archives for the out-townships using an appropriate multiplier.<sup>2</sup> The new valuation commissioned by the Corporation was utilised for the rateable values and thus produced similar figures except in the case of East ward.<sup>3</sup> Both Tables in VC were computed using the 1841 Census. In all cases the figures were deliberately taken from the middle years of the period in order to have some relevance to the earlier and later years.

Some interesting pointers are revealed by comparing Table V with earlier information of the distribution of political strength. Table VA is roughly in rank order of Conservative strength when merely looking at the out-townships alone. VB suggests that the discrepancy in East ward between its Parliamentary and Municipal results might be the result of its housing structure and the fact that its Parliamentary voters were so small

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1. Baker, op.cit., p.19; Clements to Poor Law Commission, 18 Oct. 1844, P.R.O. MH 12/15226.
  2. Baker, op.cit., p.16; Council Minutes, V, p.186. Baker quoted figures for a 1/4d poor rate, the Corporation archives for a 4d. borough rate. It was found that the latter had to be multiplied by 4.11 to produce comparable figures.
  3. Leeds Intelligencer, 18 Dec. 1841. There were many complaints about this valuation which was later abandoned. It certainly elevated East beyond its situation in the other Tables.



a minority of all householders. Before one leaps to this conclusion North-East, with an almost identical housing structure, provides a salutary warning since Table IV shows that it finished ninth in rank order in both Parliamentary and Municipal results. Table VB does also show that in Mill Hill where the Parliamentary voters were the highest proportion of householders there was no difference in the two types of elections.

Table VC must be the most definitive of the three, for it includes all wards, and Mill Hill emerges as the richest ward in Leeds and East and North-East the poorest. Mill Hill was the centre of the business community and was in 1885 combined with the next richest, Kirkgate, to produce the new central division, later to be described as 'one of the most important communities of businessmen in the country'.<sup>1</sup> These two wards were among those most sympathetic to the Conservatives but in the period as a whole the balance was in favour of the Liberals. The political distribution highlighted the strong Liberal support south of the river in South, Holbeck and Hunslet which continued throughout the century<sup>2</sup> and is paralleled at the present by the political strength of Labour south of the river. Can it be said that this reflected political support of a lower social order? Holbeck and Hunslet certainly were towards the bottom of the list economically yet near the top in Liberal support. Yet South was quite high up on both. North and East again supported Liberals strongly and were near the bottom of the social ladder, yet here again East's performance in Municipal elections is an awkward factor that cannot be ignored. Headingley, the safest of all for the Conservatives,

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1. Yorkshire Daily Observer, 16 Jan. 1906, quoted by H. Pelling The Social Geography of British Elections (1967), p. 293.

2. Cf. ibid., pp. 291-2.

was clearly a wealthy and exclusive residential area and once more this was to last through the century to the present day.<sup>1</sup> One might assume that here is a cast-iron link between wealth and voting, yet at the other end of the scale North-East at times exhibited Conservative strength. As far as Headingley is concerned the political affiliation towards Conservatism reflects more the chronology of residential mobility than a connection between Conservatism and wealth. Headingley was the resort of those who had already made their way in the world and in order of sequence it was natural that those who moved out to Headingley first were those who had made money first. Since the wealthy elements of eighteenth century Leeds were mainly to be found among the merchant oligarchy it was not surprising that they and their early nineteenth century children should be found in larger numbers than the emergent Liberal elite which only made its way a generation later.

Thus though there is some correlation between wealth and politics in Leeds it is not a definite or clear one. When wards as different as Headingley and North-East could vote Tory in Parliamentary elections and return a stream of Tory Councillors, then one must beware of facile economic explanations for political action. A further examination of the relationship of politics and social class is embarked on in Table VI which analyses the voting habits of certain occupational groups. A and B were selected as easily identifiable professional men who could be found in most towns. C, D and E were taken to represent the three main industries of Leeds, wool, flax and engineering. Finally F and G were

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1. Cf. *ibid.* described as "villadom". Headingley Ward contained Headingley, Chapel Allerton and Potter Newton and so comprised much of the present day constituencies of Leeds N.E. and Leeds N.W., both of which normally vote Conservative.

TABLE VI

VOTING PATTERNS OF SELECTED OCCUPATIONAL GROUPSA. MEDICAL PROFESSION

Year	No. in Sample	% Proportion of Group Which			
		Voted Liberal	Voted Tory	Split	Abstained
1834	31	29	71	-	-
1837	44	25	61	7	7
1841	40	40	58	2	-
1852	24	25	75	-	-

B. LEGAL PROFESSION

	No.	% Proportion of Group Which			
		Liberal	Tory	Split	Abstained
1834	27	29	71	-	-
1837	45	31	60	-	9
1841	50	32	60	-	8
1852	37	38	62	-	-

C. WOOLSTAPLERS AND WOOL MERCHANTS.

	No.	% Proportion of Group Which			
		Liberal	Tory	Split	Abstained
1834	33	55	45	-	-
1837	69	45	25	2	28
1841	60	60	27	5	8
1852	36	83	17	-	-

D. FLAXSPINNERS.

	No.	% Proportion of Group Which			
		Liberal	Tory	Split	Abstained
1834	14	86	14	-	-
1837	30	60	27	-	13
1841	38	73	24	-	3
1852	20	75	25	-	-

E. MACHINE MAKERS.

<u>Year</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>% Liberal</u>	<u>% Tory</u>	<u>% Split</u>	<u>% Abstained</u>
1834(metal crafts)	129	62	38	-	-
1837	15	60	27	-	13
1841	30	77	20	-	3
1852	23	74	26	-	-

F. HATTERS.

<u>Year</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>% Liberal</u>	<u>% Tory</u>	<u>% Split</u>	<u>% Abstained</u>
1834(minor crafts)	117	60	40	-	-
1837	17	65	29	-	6
1841	17	53	47	-	-
1852	13	69	31	-	-

G. CURRIERS & LEATHER CUTTERS.

<u>Year</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>% Liberal</u>	<u>% Tory</u>	<u>% Split</u>	<u>% Abstained</u>
1834(Shoe makers)	35	77	23	-	-
1837	24	55	37	4	4
1841	25	64	36	-	-
1852	13	69	31	-	-

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selected as being representational elements of the craft/retail social category. Both involved a high degree of skill and often a retail outlet.

They all represent samples of the electorate and have been identified as homogeneous occupational groups from directories and then followed up in the poll books. Only people who could be positively identified (by forenames, residence, etc.) are included and all conclusions ~~xxx~~ based on these figures must be tempered with caution in view of the varying numbers of people who could not be positively identified in the poll book. In each case the figures for 1834 are computed from Dr. Vincent's survey<sup>1</sup> for the same or similar occupational group.

The professional men inclined significantly towards the Conservatives, with the tendency slightly more marked among the doctors than the lawyers. The Liberal share of these professions was of the order of a quarter to a third. In the manufacturing and commercial groups (C, D, E) one can see broadly a pattern whereby the Tories were receiving the support of a quarter only of these occupations. In the newer and related industries of flax and engineering this distribution was perhaps expected but Table VIC indicates also how the old Tory elite had been supplanted in what had earlier been a key point in the wool trade. Conservatives certainly did better among the hatters and curriers whose figures perhaps indicate a greater degree of political volatility than the others. It may be recalled that in the very significant figures produced earlier on the social composition of the parties on the Council the Tories did have a greater proportion than the Liberals in the craft/retail group.

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1. J.R.Vincent Poll Books (1967), pp.122-4.

Part of these figures are reproduced here as a comparison with Table VI. In 1840-41 when the parties were equally balanced on the Council the proportion of each party falling in each occupational group was as follows:

	<u>Liberal</u>	<u>Conservative</u>
Group I Gentry and Professional	34.3%	34.3%
Group II Merchants and Manufacturers	56.3%	40.7%
Group III Craft/Retail	3.1%	18.7%
Group IV Drink/Corn Interest	6.3%	6.3%

The important thing here is that broadly speaking there was little difference in the social composition of the parties except for a higher proportion of Liberals in Group II and of Conservatives in Group III. Table VI suggested a pattern of Tory strength in the professions, a greater Liberal strength in the manufacturing elements and a more marginal Liberal strength among the craft/retail group. As stated before, this conclusion must be treated with caution. The figures might be somewhat different had different social groups been taken or if less rigorous standards of identification had been employed.

The statistics must be balanced against the impression given from other sorts of evidence. While the Liberal strength in Group II is manifest, nevertheless it was not the case in Leeds that the Liberals monopolised this group as Tories did with Anglican clergymen. If one moves from the general to the particular one sees plenty of evidence of leading Conservatives represented in the advanced sections of the Leeds economy. Two things may be cited as a symbol of this. When county elections occurred the Whig candidate stayed overnight with Marshalls, the Conservative with Gotts, the former the leading flaxspinner, the latter

the leading cloth manufacturer of Leeds. In 1834 and 1835 Beckett, the Tory candidate at the Leeds election, was proposed on nomination day by John Gott and J.R. Atkinson who in the words of a contemporary toast were 'the representatives of the two great branches of the mercantile interest in this borough'. Conservative wool men like Gotts and Bramley matched Liberal wool men like Darnton Lupton and George Goodman. Tory flax mills like Hives and Atkinsons balanced the great Marshalls mill in Water Lane. The founders of great engineering concerns like Peter Fairbairn and James Kitson on the Liberal side were echoed by Conservatives like Samuel Lawson and George Beecroft (of Kirkstall Forge). It was certainly the impression of contemporaries that parties did not represent different social and economic interests and James Marshall told Fitzwilliam

'I should be sorry to see the Whigs entirely merged in the Conservatives. I do not like party divisions to run by classes and not by principles: all the aristocracy and landed gentry on one side, the democracy and town people on the other: or all church against all dissent. Our old party organisation was far better'.<sup>1</sup>

The key phrase is the last: politics as Marshall knew them in Leeds were not 'run by classes'.

The background to political divisions in Leeds enable us to examine the validity of the model of political activity suggested by Dr. Nossiter recently.<sup>2</sup> He argued from his studies of the North-east that there were three sorts of political forces at work that produced particular election results. These were the politics of influence, of the market and of "agitation" or persuasion and public opinion. The evidence cited in this

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1. Marshall to Fitzwilliam, 29 Nov. 1848: Wentworth Woodhouse MSS. G 7(d).
  2. T.J. Nossiter Elections . . . in Durham and Newcastle, Oxford D.Phil. Thesis 1968, Chapter 12.

study suggests that in Leeds the first two played very little part.

The influence that could be exerted over voters was, in the period between the first two Reform Acts, considered the natural appendance to wealth and status. There existed in Baines's words 'that influence in society . . . which rank and station and honourable place bring with them'.<sup>1</sup> Men would naturally defer to the opinions of their social superiors and thus would be reinforced by the nexus of tenancy or employment.<sup>2</sup> The capitalist-employee relationship was not, as Dr. Vincent has shown<sup>3</sup>, a significant feature in influencing voting in the mid-nineteenth century and in Leeds the composition of both the labour force and the electorate made this an unlikely element. The factory operatives whom Dod assumed were under the influence of the great masters of Leeds were largely women and children and in any case the number of working men in the electorate was estimated as somewhere between 5% and 7%. With a large proportion of the electorate of Leeds small traders, craftsmen and shopkeepers the cash nexus of employment was not a significant determinant of political action.

The influence of land ownership certainly did exist in some parts of the borough but the structure of land ownership mitigated against this also being a decisive factor. The Tithe Award Map of 1847<sup>4</sup> indicates the fragmented nature of land ownership in Leeds. There was not, as with the Ramsdens in Huddersfield, one dominant landowner.<sup>5</sup> Only in the

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1. Leeds Mercury, 21 Oct. 1848.

2. Cf. D.C. Moore "The Other Face of Reform" in Victorian Studies (V), 1961 pp. 7-34 and "Social Structure, Political Structure and Public Opinion in Mid-Victorian England" in Robson (ed.) Ideas and Institutions of Victorian Britain (1967), pp. 20-57.

3. Vincent op.cit., pp. 1-50.

4. In the City Archives, Cf. also D. Ward The Urban Plan of Leeds, M.A. Thesis Leeds 1960, esp. Atlas, Maps 5C, 6C, 7C, 12C; 1D, 5D, 6D.

5. R. Brook The Story of Huddersfield (1968).

out-townships, particularly Headingley, were there large estates which might bring political influence. In Headingley the Becketts and the Earl of Cardigan dominated, while in the eastern part of Headingley ward, in Chapel Allerton and Potter Newton, there was a tripartite division between the Earl of Mexborough, Lord Cowper and the Brown family. No doubt this pattern of landownership accounts for the frequent accusation that landlordism explained the Tory character of Headingley Ward. In Farnley it was reported that the two great proprietors, Cardigan and the Armitage family, owned about 1,000 acres each and sent their agents to influence voters.<sup>1</sup> These landlords could bring in Conservative votes but the key question is how many? Perhaps 50 in Farnley, perhaps 200 in Headingley and this on an electorate of 5,000. The size of the town put it out of the reach of landlord influence. A landed estate in the out-townships could carry 50 votes; over 2,000 were needed to win an election. This is what made great cities strongholds of Liberalism:

'it is only in considerable towns where you find Liberal opinions prevalent because in small towns as in villages the influence of the landed proprietor is generally overpowering'<sup>2</sup>

The size of Leeds also mitigated against market forces influencing voting habits. Accusations were made especially after election defeat of the influence of bribery but to my knowledge no proven cases are to be found.<sup>3</sup> Venality was apparently the great evil at Bradford<sup>4</sup> (including treating, drinking, etc.) but the historian would be well advised to recall the politician's eternal willingness to ascribe election defeat

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1. Leeds Mercury, 21 Nov. 1840. Cf. Pawson's remark in giving this information to the Council 'I don't say this is intimidation, I merely state it as a fact'.
  2. Ibid., 12 Dec. 1840.
  3. Cf. the great fuss over a charge of bribery in 1834 in Chapter III.
  4. D.G. Wright, op.cit.



to anything other than the genuine will of the electorate. It is impossible to follow through the influences bearing on shopkeepers from favoured customers and as always the line between hospitality and undue influence through treating is blurred. What the Times had to say about the West Riding might equally apply to many large cities like Leeds:

'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 and the mind of man. No threats, no frowns, no quarter day, no Christmas bills, no money or money's worth can avail to corrupt so vast and various a legislative army. Here if anywhere is a free election'.<sup>1</sup>

In Leeds indeed it was the influence over 'the conscience and mind of man' which was decisive. Politics in Leeds depended on opinions. Here was a large, politically sophisticated electorate, nurtured by a lively and combative Press. Influence certainly accounted for the seating of Brougham in the county in 1830 and Macaulay in the borough in 1832 and the divisive education issue in 1847. It was not the influence of station or wealth but of the Press over public opinion. The clarion call to political action in Leeds was not the nod of the agent or the smile of the beerseller but the election broadsheet, the placard, the squib, the party propaganda. The enormous volume of election literature which was pumped out in 1831 and 1832 was not presumably being addressed to a non-existent audience. Politics in Leeds was fought out on issues and party feeling was strong because issues could be seen in terms of party ideology.

What made a man a Liberal or a Conservative, what placed him to the left or right within his own party were his beliefs on the political is-

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1. Quoted by Leeds Mercury, 7 Feb. 1846.

sues of the day. These beliefs he derived partly from his family background for there were in urban politics, as in the county, family interests, in the Namierite sense. Just as no social or economic distinction distinguished Harewood House from Wentworth House, so there was no social difference between the family dynasties which the parties were evolving in Leeds. Gotts, Atkinsons, Halls, Becketts and Heys were among the many Conservative families who were giving a political as well as an economic and social heritage to their children. On the other side Marshalls, Benyons, Luptons, Stansfelds and Baineses were doing the same. Political opinions might thus be inherited, as Tottie once explained 'I have derived that name by heritage, my forefathers were Whigs . . . long before Reform was generally talked of' or as William West, a Leeds chemist and Fellow of the Royal Society, put it 'circumstances of family life and personal history made me in early life a high aristocratical Whig'.<sup>1</sup>

\* Religion too was often imbibed with mother's milk and this played some part in determining political affiliation. [ This study has revealed a certain connection between religion and politics. All Dissenters were Liberals and Radicals and most Methodists were so. Most Anglicans were Tory and most Tories were Anglicans. ] The minority of Liberal Anglicans, men like Robert Baker, Matthew Gaunt, John Hope Shaw, even the Marshalls and Tottie later on, indicate that religion was only part of the answer. Even religion itself was of course an intellectual exercise, though by no means solely this and political commitment in Leeds tended to be an intellectual exercise also.

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1. Leeds Mercury, 4 Feb. 1846, 31 July 1847.

Once committed by family heritage, religion and opinion to a political point of view, tergiversation was rare, at least among the identifiable political leaders of Leeds. The relatively low swings in elections (especially in the 1832 - 1841 period) and the low cross party voting indicate a high degree of party loyalty and discipline. Very few well documented cases can be found of an important permanent switch from one party to another. Two interesting cases are Radford Potts and Anthony Titley Junior. Potts was a wool merchant and manufacturer who first emerged in Leeds as a Baptist and hence a Liberal in the 1820's. He was a churchwarden at South Parade Chapel in 1825<sup>1</sup> yet 12 years later he entered the Council as Tory member for Mill Hill and in his three years as Councillor he was one of the most virulent critics of the Liberals at a time of great political tension in Municipal affairs. It was remarked at the time that apostates tend to be the most single-minded partisans. Titley was the son of the Anthony Titley Senior of the flax-spinning firm of Titley, Tatham and Walker. Titley Senior was the last assistant appointed by the old Corporation six months before its demise and was entrusted (along with Robert Hall) with the protest to Russell about the Conservative exclusion from the bench in 1836. He was a well respected member of the Tory connection yet his son, Titley Junior, was on the committee of the Leeds Association in 1832, voted Liberal in Parliamentary elections and entered the Council as Liberal member for Mill Hill in 1846, to be re-elected in 1849 and 1852.

These two cases are very much isolated examples in a sea of party loyalty and perhaps expectedly the electorate at large was a little more

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1. Elliott, op.cit., p.163.

## TABLE VII

VOTING CONSISTENCY 1832-1841.(A) RANDOM SAMPLE : 100 VOTERS SPREAD THROUGHOUT BOROUGH

Year	Voted Liberal	Voted Tory	Split	Abstained	Died, Removed or Not on List
1832	39	28	7	10	16
1834	41	43	-	8	8
1835	45	47	6	2	-
1835 (Municipal)	40	43	13	4	-
1837	31	39	-	14	16
1841	29	38	1	3	29

(B) ANALYSIS OF VOTING HABITS.

	<u>Liberal</u>	<u>Tory</u>
Voted same way 6 times	12	17
Voted same way when on list	13	14
Voted same way except Abstentions	9	6
Total Party Voters	<u>34</u>	<u>37</u>
Voted 1 party abd split	8	6
Voted 1 party and changed sides	8	1
Changed sides and returned to first party	3	2
Neutral		2

(C) SOCIAL COMPOSITION OF SAMPLE.

Gentry and Professional	11
Manufacturing and Merchant	26
Craft	26
Retail	14
Drink Interest	10
Corn/Farming interest	8
Others	5

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politically mobile than the leaders. Table VII examines the voting habits of 100 voters at six elections between 1832 and 1841, and uses the same sample as that for Table II. Table VIIA computes the overall result at each election and VIIB examines the actual votes of each elector. Fourteen per cent were inclined to go half way towards a revolt against their own party and a further 14% did change sides. Of these, however, 5% returned to their original party and it should be further noted that 4% of those who changed sides did so only at the Municipal elections. So taking Parliamentary elections alone, there were 10% who were politically mobile enough to switch parties.

Something of equal importance which emerged from the preparation of Table VII was that only 56% of the sample were on the list continuously over a 10-year period. Eight per cent of the voters were struck off the list and subsequently returned, one of them twice. In other words almost as many votes were lost via the revision of the register as via voters who changed party so that party organisation for registration was as important as political persuasion in winning an election. This, the result of the Reform Act itself, reduced somewhat the area of efficiency of electoral influence since as Baines explained:

'The time has been when a grand excitement at an Election would do all that was needful by putting Reformers on their mettle. It is quite otherwise now. The system of Registration has changed it all. Regular persevering systematic effort is the thing wanted under the Reform Act. A plodding shopkeeper on a Committee who sees that the Registration is attended to does more good than a dozen wealthy squires who reserve all their energy for the Election itself.'

Even the greatest in the land could be laid low if the proper planting

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1. Leeds Mercury, 26 Nov. 1836.

had not taken place at the revision court and, for instance, Tottie was forced to admit in 1843 the weakness of the Fitzwilliam interest because Thomas Flint 'is unfortunately in possession as deputy Secretary of all our electioneering machinery'. Flint and his friends were hostile to Fitzwilliam but they were essential cogs in the wheels of local politics since 'these men are however the working men in elections here'.<sup>1</sup>

That this essential registration activity was in the province of humble men may be illustrated by quoting from one of the very few documents of party machinery to survive. A notebook inscribed in a cramped untutored hand throws some light on the party worker responsible for searching out objections in Wortley in 1838 and on the sort of objections which could successfully be lodged:

'John Brook . . in Self not been Long nuf.  
 Benjamin Davidson . . in Self he as none freehold but is  
 Brothers  
 Thomas Goodworth . . prentis Boy not Upper Wortley but more  
 Side and not had it Long in nuf.  
 David Greenwood . . he as none freehold but what he oc-  
 cupyes  
 Joseph Hirst . . Wife ses he hase freehold houses but only  
 one house.  
 John Naylor . . not his but is mothers.  
 William Atkinson . . Onley paise 9 - 0 - 0 rent.  
 Wm. Burnell . . made assinment to Crediters and gave Possesan.  
 James Milner . . dus not pay ten pounds onley 9 - 15  
 Thos Goodworth . . Lets one Roome of '12

If the poor spelling indicates indifferent education and humble status this does not detract from the invaluable local knowledge revealed. It was this sort of information which was essential to a successful revision and a successful revision was the harbinger of electoral victory.

It was on men such as the unknown compiler of this notebook that the

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1. Tottie to Fitzwilliam 30 Oct. 1843, Wentworth Woodhouse MSS. G 7(d).
  2. MS. Notebook in Thoresby Society Library, Wortley 37A.

party agents depended for accurate canvass returns. These were essential to know whether an election was worth fighting and on at least one occasion (1841) there were widespread accusations that the party leaders had fought an election with deficient information. There was a built-in "exaggeration factor" for as Cobden once remarked 'I never yet knew an instance in which the agent didn't assert the perfection of his work'.<sup>1</sup> Once more the paucity of material which has survived makes it difficult to assess the reliability of canvass returns in these years. Table VIII examines what there is. The random sample was taken from Leeds township and an exhaustive analysis was made for Wortley in 1832 and 1847.<sup>2</sup> On

TABLE VIII ACCURACY OF CANVASS RETURNS

Sample	No.	% Correct	% Half-Correct	% Wrong
Random Sample Leeds Township 1832	142	73	10	17
Complete Analysis Wortley 1832	137	64	20	16
Complete Analysis Wortley 1847	156	38	27	35

the limited evidence here provided it would seem that canvassing had got less efficient between 1832 and 1847 for the proportion completely wrong in 1847 was more than double that for 1832 and the proportion correct well down also. What made the 1847 canvass less accurate was that it was completed before the pact between Marshall and Beckett was agreed and

1. Cobden to Baines, 19 Oct. 1844, B.M. Add.MSS. 43664 f 164. Cf. Macaulay to Marshall (?), 23 Nov. 1832, 'I have no doubt that as you suspect some of our canvassers have been too sanguine' (Thoresby Society).
2. The 1832 Canvass is in the Brotherton Library, that for Wortley 1847 is in Thoresby Society Library, 37A.

so many Conservatives were marked down as expected Tory plumpers who actually split.

The 1847 election brings us back to the crucial importance of opinions in Leeds politics. Even the strong party loyalties already mentioned could not hold men to vote against their conscience. In an unprecedented situation Conservatives were found splitting with Liberals, and lifelong Liberals with yesterday's enemy the Tories. At the same time other Liberals who had always argued for the monopoly of both seats were plumping for Sturge and thus sacrificing the seat in a martyrdom to the sanctity of political views.\* Nothing illustrates better the central importance of belief than the relative positions of Hamer Stansfeld and Edward Baines Junior during the 1840's. At the beginning of the decade Stansfeld was well to the left of Baines, launching the "new move" for an extension of the suffrage which Baines opposed. By 1847 Baines was well to the left of Stansfeld, as an extreme advocate of Voluntaryism and Stansfeld voted for Beckett and Marshall in the election. What was the difference? The men were of the same social and economic status throughout the decade. What determined their political position was their political viewpoint at a particular time. One comes to the less than profound conclusion that in Leeds politics was based on politics.

Given this situation it was not surprising to find that the fourth area of study, political agitation, was a crowded field to survey. Scarcely a year passed which was not marked by some new movement attempting to attract support. Thomas Flint commented in 1850 in a somewhat self-congratulatory manner

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\*. All of Marshall's supposed influence in Holbeck could not prevent him coming third in that ward in 1847.

'Leeds had always been the leading town in these great movements and what great movement was there that had not had its strongest support in Leeds? It had been foremost for 90 years in all works of charity enlightenment and right legislation'.<sup>1</sup>

In all the meetings, petitions, conferences and dinners which ran well into three figures in the two decades studied three issues do stand out as those which concerned Leeds most. The three questions were the suffrage, religion and economic reform. Our period opened and closed with the question of Parliamentary reform, in 1830 with the enfranchisement of Leeds in 1852 with moves for a further extension of the suffrage. This issue produced the Radical associations of the 1830's and the abortive "new move" of Stansfeld, Marshall and Smiles. It produced Chartism with its own hybrid Leeds variations and from 1848 there were signs of growing sympathy from the middle-class reformers.

Religion perhaps gave Leeds its distinctive badge for it was regarded because of Baines as the great seat of Voluntaryism. The movement against slavery, the struggle against Church rates and the Tory-Anglican-Church-in-danger moves of the later 1830's were all emanations of religious zeal of Leeds citizens. During the 1840's the movement widened into disestablishment and the Anti-State Church associations based on the many Dissenting Chapels. Of greatest importance politically was the manifestation of the religious feeling on the education issue which affected the whole political spectrum in Leeds. The somewhat anomalous Operative Conservatives were perhaps in their own way a response to the Church versus Dissent disputes.

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1. Leeds Mercury, 3 Aug. 1850.



Under the head of economic reform one could class the two great movements of the Anti-Corn Law League and the Factory Question, although they were each movements for social reform as well. On questions such as these Leeds was giving voice to the sort of policies it believed right for the urban manufacturing interest of England. Meetings in favour of economy in public expenditure, of taxation reform and for free trade were all part of the same feeling. The movements on all three important questions, suffrage, religion and economic policy have all been fully discussed and their effects analysed in the appropriate chapters.

This thesis has attempted to make an exhaustive study of political activity in Leeds during what Professor Gash has called a period of reaction and reconstruction. The full range of politics has been explored from the petty issues of street sweeping right up to the great questions of the political direction of the nation. The four-fold model utilised - (a) Township and Parochial administration, (b) Municipal Government, (c) Parliamentary elections, (d) political movements - has revealed a political system both virile and all-embracing. In Leeds politics mattered and were fought out with righteous zeal and concentrated intensity. Further studies of this scope are required on other cities to find out how distinctive Leeds was. If Leeds was often more interested in the pursuit of power than the efficient exercise of it this has only made the story more fascinating. Perhaps I may borrow as a last word the plaintive verse used by Edward Thompson

'My reed and harness are worn out,  
 My wheel won't turn a quill about,  
 My shuttle's broke, my glass is run,  
 My droplee's shot - my cane is done!'<sup>1</sup>

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1. Ed. Thompson Making of the English Working Class (1963), p.836.

BRIEF BIOGRAPHIES

Outline biographical details are given below of those most frequently mentioned in the thesis.

1. William ALDAM Jr. (1813-1890): son of William Pease (1779-1855) and nephew of Thomas Benson Pease (1782-1846) both Leeds cloth merchants. His father changed his name to Aldam on receiving estates from his wife's family. Aldam Junior was a barrister but rarely practised and lived the life of a leisured gentleman. Liberal M.P. for Leeds 1841-1847, aroused little enthusiasm from his supporters yet strong opposition from Dissenters because of his views on education.
2. John ATKINSON (d. 1855): son of John Atkinson (1765-1833), brother-in-law of William Hey Junior. A very able Tory solicitor of the firm Atkinson Dibb & Bolland who was one of the leaders of the Tory revival in the later 1830's. Councillor for Mill Hill 1838-1841, 1842-1845 and a frequent speaker in Council debates.
3. Joseph Robert ATKINSON (d. 1855): leading Tory flaxspinner in Leeds whose firm Hives & Atkinson was originally an offshoot of Marshalls. A strongly committed political figure who was suspected of opposing Sadler, the factory reformer in 1834. Paul, the founder of the Operative Conservatives was employed in his mill and he encouraged this movement. Councillor for East Ward 1841-1844, created a magistrate in 1842.
4. Edward BAINES Senior (1774-1848): Outsider who via his newspaper, the Leeds Mercury, established an unrivalled control over Liberal opinion in Leeds. Joined the paper in 1802 and made it the leading provincial Liberal Journal in the country. Keen Dissenter (Independent) who played a great part in the Parochial politics of Leeds c1820 - c1835. Baines was largely responsible for Brougham becoming M.P. for the county in 1830 and Macaulay for the borough in 1832. M.P. for Leeds 1834, 1835-7, 1837-41.

5. Edward BAINES Junior (1800-1890): Second son of Baines and followed in his father's footsteps in running the Mercury. Closely involved in all aspects of Leeds politics for over 50 years. Keen free trader and even keener voluntaryist who was largely responsible for the splits over education 1847-8. Followed his father and brother to become M.P. for Leeds from 1859 to 1874.
6. Matthew Talbot BAINES (1799-1860): eldest son of Baines who made a successful career at the bar. Was nominated as Recorder of Leeds in 1837 but became Recorder of Hull 1837-1841. M.P. for Hull 1847-1852, for Leeds 1852-57, 1857-59. President of the Poor Law Board 1849-1852, 1852-1855, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (in Cabinet) 1855-1858.
7. Robert BAKER (1803-1880): Anglican, Liberal doctor who did more than any other to stimulate interest in public health in Leeds. Sub-inspector of factories 1834-1858, then Inspector for Midland Counties. Wrote the 1833 Cholera report for the Leeds Board of Health, the 1839 Statistical Enquiry for the Town Council, the 1842 report on Leeds for the Chadwick Report and reported to a conference in 1858. Councillor for North East 1835-6, 1836-39 and for South Ward 1840-1843. Earned some unpopularity among his constituents for his support of the 1842 Improvement Act.
8. Joseph BATESON (d. 1867): Anglican Liberal Woollen merchant who tried as a churchwarden to take the church question out of politics. Important figure in Liberal politics throughout the period. Councillor for west ward 1835-38, elected Alderman 1838, 1844 and 1850. Occasionally involved in wrangles in the Council (e.g. with Hobson over Plug Plot). Expected to be Mayor 1847-8 but was defeated by Carbutt because of his views on education in the 1847 election. When he did finally become Mayor in 1849-50, he gave the most splendid Leeds ball in living memory.
9. Sir John BECKETT (1775-1847) eldest son of Sir John Beckett (1743-1826) first baronet and brother of William Beckett. Barrister and head of the great banking firm of Becketts, married into the Lowther family. First entered politics in 1806; Judge Advocate General 1828-30, 1834-5.

Unsuccessful Tory candidate Leeds 1834, M.P. for Leeds 1835-1837, defeated at 1837 election.

10. William BECKETT (1784-1863): fifth son of Sir John Beckett, first baronet and far more involved with the banking business than his brother John. Unlike John he lived in Leeds (Headingley), played a great part in Leeds politics and reinforced his local connection by marrying the sister of Ingram of Temple Newsom. Conservative M.P. for Leeds 1841-47. Having followed Peel in 1846 it was expected that he would lose his seat at the next election but the education dispute enabled him to return as Leeds M.P. 1847-52. M.P. for Ripon 1852-1857. Councillor for Kirkgate 1835-38 but only attended six times.

11. John BECKWITH (1805-1856): Reporter for the Leeds Intelligencer for about 20 years from c1825. Strong Tory advocate at Vestry meetings especially as a second to Perring. An expert on Poor Law Administration he was the obvious choice as Clerk to the Guardians when the Tories won control in 1845. He was at the centre of the controversy over Poor Law elections at the enquiry in 1852. Unsuccessful candidate for Councillor 1844 and 1845.

12. Geoffrey Martin BINGLEY was for the Leeds Times what Beckwith was for the Intelligencer. Served under four editors Parsons, Nicoll, Hooton and Smiles. Became Registrar of births, marriages and deaths under the Poor Law in 1840 and was one of those dismissed on political grounds when the Tories regained power in 1845. Likely that he returned to work on the Times under its editor in the later 1840's W.S. Bingley, probably his brother.

13. Joshua BOWER (1773-1855) a radical Wesleyan self made glass manufacturer from Hunslet who retained in his coarse speech and his bluff manner the signs of his humble origins. Perhaps the most popular political leader with the crowds. President of the Leeds Political Union, unsuccessful radical candidate in the 1834 election. Councillor for Hunslet 1835-1837, 1837-40, 1841-44. Alderman 1844 and 1850. His background perhaps

accounted for the long apprenticeship as Councillor before he was elected to Alderman. His income as a toll farmer and mine owner contributed to his estate of £100,000 on his death.

14. Richard BRAMLEY, a Tory Anglican woollen merchant who successfully bridged the gap between old and new Corporations. An Alderman before 1835 reappointed a Magistrate in 1842. A keen partisan in Tory politics he was a fierce combatant and on no less than three occasions gained a seat in the Council following disputed elections. Councillor for West Ward 1837-39, 1839-42, 1843-45, 1846-49. A frequent Tory speaker in the Council.

15. John Armitage BUTTREY a Liberal Anglican woolstapler who was a key figure in the Church wardens/rates issue. Elected Senior Churchwarden 1828-1836 he reduced Church expenditure drastically. Councillor for East Ward 1835-1838, 1838-1841. An early example of a railway commuter, he moved to Low Hall Horsforth and travelled in to Leeds to his business in Bank Street by train from Calverley Bridge.

16. Francis CARBUTT (1792-1874) Liberal, Unitarian Woollen Merchant, sometime partner of Hamer Stansfeld who spent nearly thirty years c1812-c1839 living on the Continent as an agent for Leeds firms. Was first cousin to George Goodman and this family connection probably earned him his election as Alderman in 1844 and 1850. Second to Baines in the education dispute of 1847 he deserted most of his Unitarian friends as an extreme Voluntaryist. Because of this he gained control of the Leeds and West Riding Reform Registration Society which he ran from 1847-1858. Was suggested as a candidate for the 1852 election but was replaced by Goodman by popular acclaim. His temperance views made it a dry year for entertainments while he was Mayor 1847-8.



17. John CAWOOD (1777-1846) Tory Anglican, sometime flaxspinner later iron founder. Was the type of participant on which the unpaid volunteer English system of local administration worked. Was at various times an Overseer of the poor, a Churchwarden, a Councillor, an Improvement Commissioner and was at the time of his death first Chairman of the Leeds Board of Guardians. Councillor East Ward 1839-42, 1842-45. A widely respected figure in Tory political circles.

18. Martin CAWOOD (d. 1867) son of John Cawood, his career fluctuated following bankruptcy in 1848. Was Tory Councillor for East Ward 1840-1843, 1845-48 and for three years he and his father led the Tory attack in the Council. Had an almost "feudal" control over East Ward where the family business was situated but a £9,000 debt to Becketts brought to an end his political career. Thereafter he was appointed as secretary to various bodies. Was involved with the Great Exhibition in 1851 and became secretary to the Leeds Chamber of Commerce. Found drowned in the Aire in unexplained circumstances.

19. John CLAPHAM (1778-1861): A Liberal Dissenter who was one of the earliest of his political and religious view to make good as a Leeds woollen merchant. A very important figure in the early part of the century who according to John Marshall expected to have his own way in local politics. Active participant in the early and mid 1830's but largely disappeared thereafter. Alderman 1835-1838, elected Alderman 1838 but declined.

20. Edwin EDDISON (1806-1867): Quaker Liberal solicitor of the firm of Payne Eddison and Ford. He aided Richardson in the Liberal registration work and was rewarded with the job of Town Clerk which he held from 1836 to 1843. He resigned on the grounds of ill health but returned to the Council as Councillor for Mill Hill 1847-1850. He was a very keen advocate of public health legislation and introduced motions in the Council for the purchase of the gas and water companies. Very much a member of the "Improvement Party" of Leeds.

21. John ELY (1793-1847) Independent Minister at East Parade Chapel, close friend of the Baines family. With Scales and Hamilton made up the trio of great Leeds Independent preachers. First came to Leeds from Rochdale in 1833 to join Salem Chapel, Succeeded at East Parade by Henry Robert Reynolds who married one of Baines' sisters.
22. Peter FAIRBAIRN (1799-1861) Self made Scot who established the leading engineering firm in Leeds. First came to Leeds 1828 and produced textile machinery mostly for Marshalls. Later he branched into machine tools and armaments and became nationally renowned as a creative and successful engineer. A Liberal Anglican he first emerged politically as a Churchwarden in the early 1830's. He was Councillor for West Ward 1835-6, 1836-39 and 1841-42; he paid the fine and resigned in 1842 on account of the pressure of business and was not really politically active again until the 1847 election when he supported Sturge. He was made an Alderman in 1854 and was Mayor during the Queen's visit to open the Town Hall, for which he received a Knighthood. He was the first Mayor to be voted a salary, because of the expense of entertaining Queen Victoria.
23. Matthew GAUNT a Liberal Anglican solicitor who was on the reformed Council continuously from 1835 to 1850. He emerged politically over his handling of the Chancery Suit during which he made the celebrated accusation that the members of the Old Corporation were Turpins. His elevation to Alderman just before the 1839 election was also a matter of controversy since there was some doubt as to his re-election in his own ward. Councillor for North West Ward 1835-6, 1836-39, elected Alderman 1839 and 1844.
24. John Eustace GILES (1805-1875): Baptist Minister at South Parade Chapel 1836-1845. He was the most politically involved on the Dissenting ministers of Leeds. Very active in Church rates, education, anti-state Church and suffrage movements. Involved in a prolonged verbal battle with Joshua Hobson over Socialism. Left Leeds 1845 for Bristol.

25. George GOODMAN (1792-1859): Baptist Liberal wool stapler son of Benjamin Goodman (1763-1848) who established the family business in Hunslet Lane. A very popular political leader, four times Mayor, the first time as first Mayor of the reformed Corporation and Knighted in 1852. Associated with all the political movements of his day and very active in the Great Exhibition of 1851. Alderman 1835, 1841 left Council 1847 and returned as Alderman in 1850. M.P. for Leeds 1852-1857.
26. John GOTT (1791-1867): Conservative cloth manufacturer, son of the famous Benjamin Gott who established the most well known Leeds woollen firm. John Gott was a staunch Conservative leader in Leeds and was especially active at election times. He was asked to serve as M.P. several times but refused to stand. In his will he left over £350,000.
27. Henry HALL (1773-1859): Tory Anglican wool merchant and the most respected of the "old school" of the merchant oligarchy of Leeds. Was an Alderman and twice Mayor under the Old Corporation and was one of the four Tory Aldermen elected in 1835. He was not re-elected in 1838 though he did serve for a week as an Alderman just before the 1841 election. He was a key member of the Tory political societies of the period and was equally active in Anglican affairs, being instrumental in bringing Hook to Leeds.
28. Robert HALL (1801-1857), Tory barrister, only son of Henry Hall and a very able political partisan. His continual theme to Leeds Toryism was the need for political organisation. Left Leeds in 1835 to practise in London but returned as unsuccessful candidate in the 1852 election. M.P. for Leeds 1857. His injuries in a railway crash near Doncaster in 1855 clearly shortened his life.
29. Richard Winter HAMILTON 1794-1848: Independent minister at Belgrave Chapel. Came to Leeds in 1815 to preach at Albion Chapel and in 1836 he launched Belgrave in a "missionary" attempt to capture the masses in a developing and unfashionable suburb. He was very active in the Anti-State Church movement. He was succeeded at Belgrave by George William Conder.

30. William HEY III (d.1875), Tory Anglican doctor from the most respected medical family in Leeds. Son of William Hey II (1771-1844) and grandson of William Hey I (1736-1819) both eminent Leeds doctors. Councillor for Mill Hill 1838-1841 and with his brother-in-law John Atkinson was defeated by one vote in the council 1841 election which witnessed the end of the Tory Municipal revival.

31. William HEYWOOD Tory pawnbroker with a very chequered career. 1836-1837 was Chief Constable of Leeds replacing Read the former Chief Constable. Never was made clear why he replaced Read nor why in 1837 Read in turn replaced him. His treatment left him with a strong sense of grievance against the Liberal majority on the Council and he became a violent Conservative partisan, even flirting with Chartism in the 1840's. Councillor for North East Ward 1844-47 and for East 1847-50. (Not to be confused with George Hayward agent in Headingley for the Earl of Cardigan who sat as Councillor for Headingley 1836-39, 1839-42).

32. Frederick HOBSON (1800-1863). An efficient behind the scenes supporter of the Liberal cause. Proprietor of the Leeds Times which he bought from its original founders Fenton Roebuck and Bingley. Left his many editors to pursue an independent editorial policy.

33. Joshua HOBSON (1810-1876): Chartist printer, publisher and for a time editor of the Northern Star. Associated with all the working-class Radical movements in the West Riding for over 40 years. One of the Chartist Councillors and very keen on making the Improvement Act of 1842 the province of mass meetings in the Vestry. Councillor for Holbeck 1843-6; he did not attend at all Nov 1845-Nov 1846 by which time he had moved to Huddersfield.

34. James HOLDFORTH (1778-1861) Roman Catholic Liberal silk spinner with a factory in East Ward. An important Liberal supporter in the 1830's he had emerged politically during the Catholic Emancipation crisis 1828-9. Alderman 1835-41. Mayor 1838-39 (claimed locally that he was the first Catholic Mayor since the Reformation).

35. Walter Farquhar HOOK (1798-1875). The most celebrated of all Leeds clergymen, he was Vicar of Leeds 1837-1859. He rebuilt the Parish Church 1840-41, reorganised the Parish of Leeds in 1844 and was largely responsible for the Anglican revival in Leeds during the 1840's. He accepted the status quo on Church rates and after protracted negotiations he concluded an agreement with the Council on the burial question. He compromised on the education issue and recognised the rights of all parties in his letters of 1846.
36. John HOWARD 1789-1848. Wesleyan Conservative with a carpet factory at Burley Mills. He worshipped at Oxford Place and was an important Conservative supporter in the years from 1835. Councillor for Mill Hill 1837-1840, 1840-43. His election in 1840 was by 1 vote and the dispute over his colleague Radford Potts defeat dragged on for seven years.
37. Adam HUNTER (1794-1843). Tory doctor, physician to the Leeds General Infirmary and the Dispensary. Very much the scourge of the Liberals on the Council in the later 1830's. Councillor for West Ward 1837-1840, 1840-43. In fact owing to illness he did not attend after November 1841. It was a symbolic withdrawal for the Tory challenge withered away after that date.
38. John Arthur IKIN (1809-1860). Liberal solicitor with strong county connections. Liberal agent for the West Riding and first secretary of the Ridings Registration Association, succeeded by Newman Fitzwilliams Barnsley solicitor. He resigned his party political work to become Leeds Town Clerk (1843-1860) in succession to Eddison, many saw this as belated reward for his political services.
39. Christopher KEMPLAY (1804-1872): proprietor of the Leeds Intelligencer during its last quarter of a century. Joined W.T. Bolland in May 1842 when Perring left the paper, having edited the Yorkshire Gazette until 1839. He was a far calmer editor than Perring and supported Toryism in a much milder way so that the Intelligencer v Mercury war mellowed somewhat. From 1848 until its demise in 1866 Kemplay was sole proprietor of the Intelligencer.



40. John Darnton LUCCOCK (1808-1884) Unitarian Liberal wool merchant, brother of Darnton Lupton's first wife, married the daughter of Francis Carbutt, after a celebrated breach of promise case involving a singer. Elected Alderman 1841 and 1847, Mayor in 1845-6. An important Liberal political supporter.
41. Darnton LUPTON (1806-1873) Liberal Unitarian Woollen Merchant of the firm of William Lupton & Sons. He was the eldest of six sons of William and Ann Lupton and went into the family business at an early age because of the death of his father. He was an important political and philanthropic figure for over 40 years. Councillor for North Ward 1835-37 elected Alderman 1841 and 1847. Was named a magistrate in 1836 on the advice of Edward Baines. Family home in Potter Newton was a centre political planning in the 1840's. Mayor 1844-5.
42. Charles Gascoigne MacCLEA (1793-1864) Liberal engineer of the firm of Maclea & March in Dewsbury Road; son-in-law of Matthew Murray the famous Leeds engineer. Maclea retired from business in 1843. Councillor for Holbeck 1835-36, 1836-39 elected Alderman 1842 and 1847. Was elected Mayor 1846 but had to give up owing to illness.
43. Ralph MARKLAND (1789-1860) Tory Anglican corn merchant of the firm of John Scott & Co., brother-in-law of Griffith Wright (early 19th century proprietor of the Intelligencer). Like Richard Bramley was a leading political figure of both old and new Corporations. He was Mayor in 1828 and reappointed magistrate in 1842. Councillor for North West 1838-1841 and defeated candidate in 1837, 1841 and 1842. A strong Conservative supporter.
44. John MARSHALL Junior (1797-1836) second son of John Marshall (1765-1845) founder of the great flaxspinning concern. Marshall junior earned a place in Leeds politics by heredity rather than talent. An obvious choice as a candidate in the first election and M.P. for Leeds 1832-1835.

45. James Garth MARSHALL (1802-1873) 3rd son of Marshall and the most able politician in the family. Had very Radical political views and was a key figure in the "new move" of 1840 on the suffrage and a consistent supporter of free trade. His candidature in the 1847 election split the Liberals on the education issue and he became M.P. for Leeds 1847-1852 only with Conservative support.

46. Henry Cowper MARSHALL (1808-1884): 4th son of Marshall and the only one to become involved in Leeds Municipal politics. He was the only Mayor in these years to be elected from the ranks of the Councillors. Councillor for Holbeck 1841-1844, Alderman 1844-1850. Played a great part in public health debates and was especially concerned with the sewerage scheme. Like his brother James he married a daughter of Lord Monteagle.

47. Sir William MOLESWORTH (1810-1855): Cornwall country gentleman of very Radical views who was elected for East Cornwall in 1832 and 1835 but whose opinions made him unpopular with his constituents. M.P. for Leeds 1837-1841 but imposed on the Leeds Whigs against their will by the Radical elements. Later became M.P. for Southwark and a Cabinet Minister 1853-1855.

48. Robert NICOLL (1814-1837): talented Scottish editor of the Leeds Times 1836-37. Helped to establish the paper as middle and working class Radical journal. His weak constitution was sapped by his efforts to seat Molesworth in the 1837 election.

49. Robert PERRING (1787-1869): vociferous and active editor of the Leeds Intelligencer 1829-1842. Came to Leeds having been a journalist in Carlisle where he returned in 1848 after a six year stay in London. A very combative spirit and a fierce political loyalty brought him into conflict with the "Bainesocracy" in a written and spoken war of words. Very active in vestry meetings during the 1830's. Left the Intelligencer in 1842 after some private quarrel and launched his own Leeds Conservative Journal which only survived from May to September 1842.

50. Thomas PLINT (1797-1857): A cloth merchant turned accountant and an Independent from Salem Chapel. He was a political agent in Leeds and the West Riding and was especially active in the free trade movement. A frequent speaker at Liberal political meetings.
51. James RICHARDSON (1787-1861) a Baptist Liberal solicitor who acted for the Liberals in the revision court during the early 1830's. Despite outstanding debts (which were repaid by 1850) Richardson got the post of Clerk of the Peace in 1836 which he retained until his death, whereupon his son J.W. Hamilton Richardson succeeded him in the post. Closely associated with all the political and religious movements of his day, very much a local echo of Joseph Sturge.
52. Michael Thomas SADLER (1780-1835) Anglican linen merchant and member of the old Corporation. First entered Parliament as an opponent of Catholic Emancipation but once inside took up the cause of the Irish poor, the agricultural labourers and the factory children. M.P. for Newark 1829, 1830, for Aldborough 1831 and unsuccessful Tory candidate at the first election. His candidature made Leeds the centre of interest for the 10 hours movement in 1832.
53. Thomas SCALES (1786-1860) Independent Minister at Queen Street Chapel. First came to Leeds in 1819 to preach at the White Chapel which moved to Queen Street in the 1820's. He was very involved in the slavery question and helped to get Brougham elected in 1830. Later he was a keen supporter of the Anti-State Church movement. Left Leeds at the end of 1849.
54. John Hope SHAW (1792-1864) Liberal Anglican solicitor widely respected for his unbiassed actions as revising assessor in the Municipal revision court. Entered the Council as Alderman in June 1844 following the death of James Musgrave. Re-elected Alderman 1844 and 1850. Mayor 1848-9, 1852, 1852-3. Piloted the water scheme through the Council in 1852 and a keen "improver". Tried hard to introduce a less partisan division of Corporation honours in the 1840's.

55. Samuel SMILES (1812-1904) well known exponent of Mid-Victorian social philosophy but Leeds knew him as a Baptist Radical doctor and editor of the Leeds Times from 1839-1842, (perhaps even longer). Very involved in two great questions, suffrage and education. Helped to launch the "new move" in 1840 and was active in the education controversy 1847-1850.
56. William SMITH (1776-1850): Wesleyan Liberal woollen merchant of the firm of Smith, Dickinson and Co. An important Liberal supporter and Mayor for two consecutive years 1839-1841. Councillor West Ward 1835-38 Alderman 1838-1844.
57. Hamer STANSFELD (1797-1865) Unitarian Liberal Woollen Merchant who went bankrupt in 1826 but re-established himself in business. One of the leading Liberal politicians both inside and outside the Council, he was especially active from 1837-1847. Very active on the suffrage, free trade, and education he was in open dispute with Baines in 1840-1 on the "new move" and in 1847 on education. Elected Alderman 1835 and 1841, Mayor 1843-4. His failure in the Aldermanic election of 1847 because of the education controversy led to his withdrawal from politics and his last major appearance was in the education dispute of 1850. On that occasion he caught a severe cold which impaired his health permanently.
58. Anthony TITLEY (1780-1845) Tory Anglican flaxspinner with a business in Holbeck in partnership with two Quakers Edward Tatham and Benjamin Walker. Titley was a member of the Old Corporation but failed to get elected to the Council despite five attempts in Holbeck between 1835 and 1841. His son, Anthony Titley Jun., retained the religion of his father but became a Liberal in politics and was Liberal Councillor for Mill Hill 1846-1849, 1849-52, 1852-1855.
59. Thomas William TOTTIE (1773-1860), Unitarian Whig solicitor very well connected in the county and agent for the Fitzwilliams. Emerged politically in the monumental election contest of 1807 as agent to Lord Milton. Retained a deferential attitude to the Whig county squires

which by the mid 19th century many Leeds Liberals found old fashioned and unnecessary (Cf 1848 election). Tried to reduce the political temperature on the Council and was therefore termed a Tory-Whig by the more Radical elements. Shaw another solicitor pursued a similar line later on. Tottie was elected Alderman in 1835, 1841 and 1847 but declined to serve on the last occasion and retired from the Council in 1847. He was an influential figure at Mill Hill chapel and like his fellow congregants, the Marshalls, ended his days as an Anglican. Mayor 1837-8.

60. Charles WICKSTEED (1810-1885) Unitarian Minister at Mill Hill 1835-1854. Married into the Lupton family, an important Unitarian connection in Leeds. His efforts led to the building of the present Mill Hill chapel in 1847. Involved politically in the free trade and education movements.

61. James WILLIAMSON, (1797-1845): Liberal Independent, doctor, senior physician to the Leeds General Infirmary. His political career was cut short by illness and his retirement to Cheshire. Alderman 1835-1841 and second Mayor of the reformed Corporation 1836-7.

62. John YEWDALL (1797-1848) Wesleyan, Liberal tea dealer of Briggate, at various times overseer of the poor, trustee of the workhouse and Councillor. Not in the first rank politically but typical of a common 19th century phenomenon. In the 1820's in the Vestry and in the 1840's on the Council he emerged as a leading "economist" advocating retrenchment in the spending of public money. Councillor for Kirkgate Ward 1843-1846.



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MAP I  
THE TOWNSHIPS OF  
LEEDS

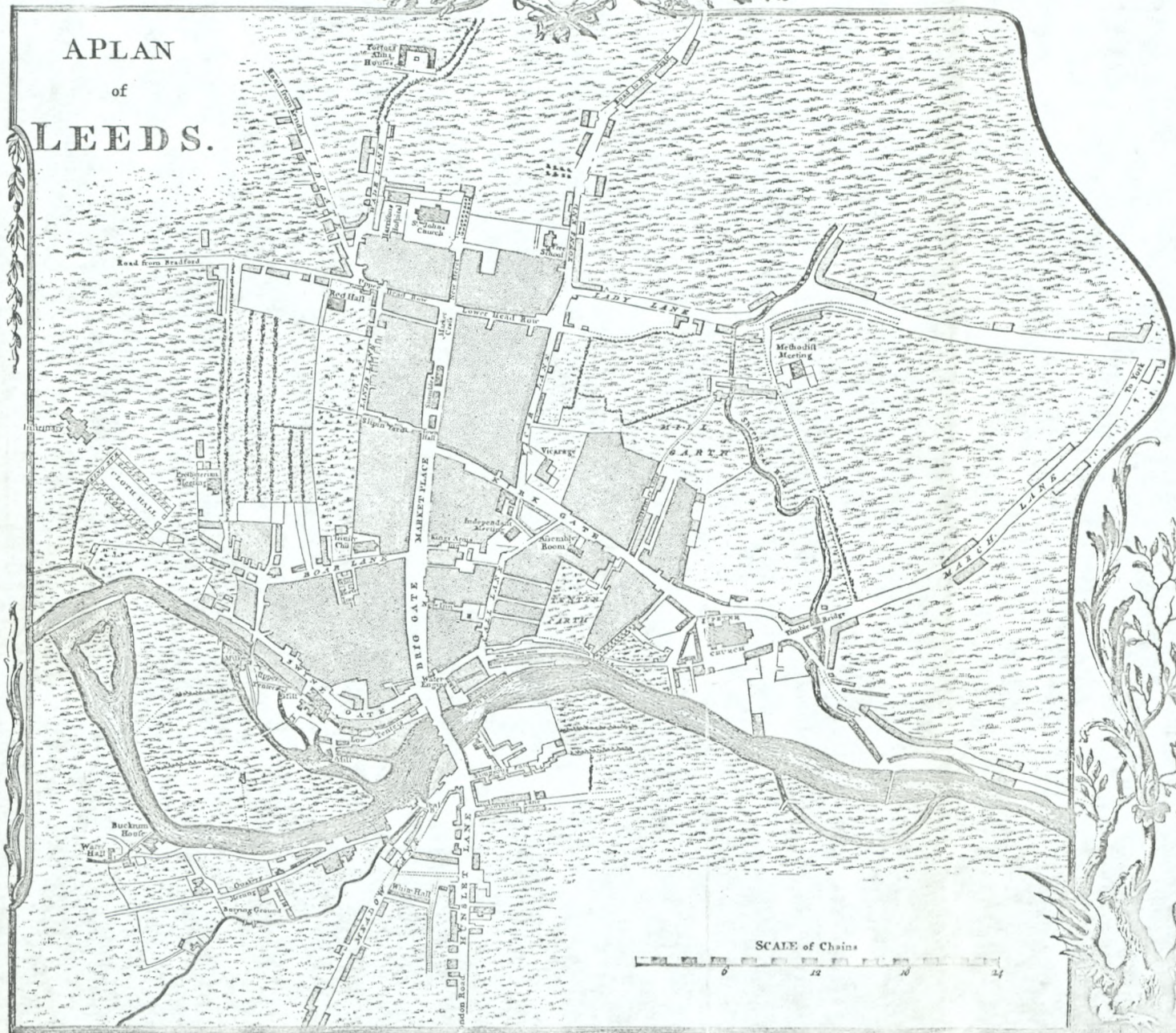








APLAN  
of  
LEEDS.



SCALE of Chains  
0 10 20 30











MAP V.

Explan

Proposed Boundary of the Borough  
Boundaries of Parishes or Townships

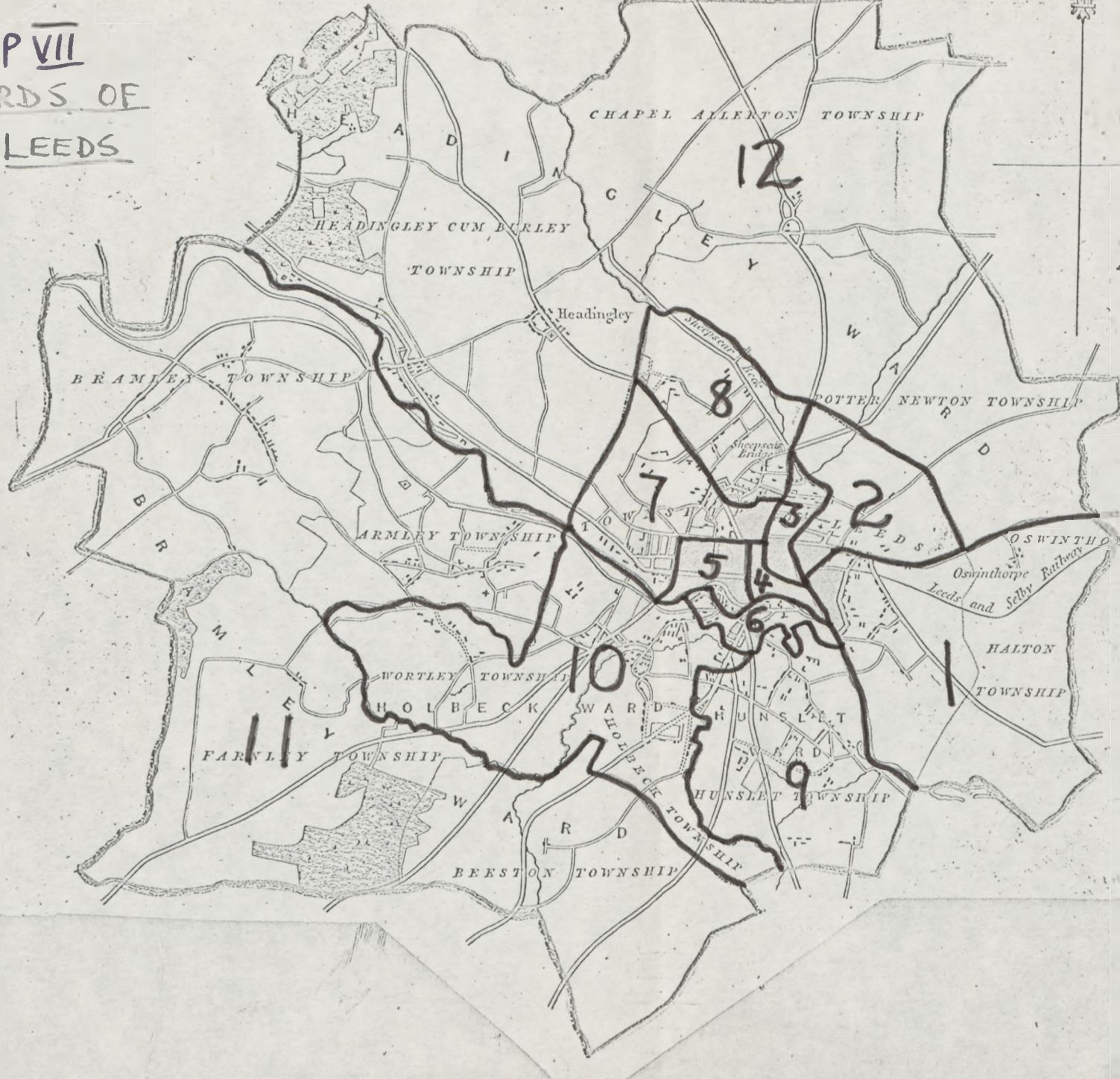


# MAP VI





# MAP VII WARDS OF LEEDS



## KEY

- 1 EAST
- 2 NORTH EAST
- 3 NORTH
- 4 KIRKGATE
- 5 MILL HILL
- 6 SOUTH
- 7 WEST
- 8 NORTH WEST
- 9 HUNSLET
- 10 HOLBECK
- 11 BRAMLEY
- 12 HEADINGLEY



REFERENCE

Boundary of Parliamentary & Old Municipal Borough Red Line  
Proposed Municipal Boundary Purple  
Boundaries of Parishes & Townships

REFERENCE

KIRKGATE	4	<input type="checkbox"/>
SOUTH	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
HUNSLET	9	<input type="checkbox"/>
HOLBECK	10	<input type="checkbox"/>
BRAMLEY		<input type="checkbox"/>
HEADINGLEY		<input type="checkbox"/>

WARDS

MILL HILL	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
WEST	7	<input type="checkbox"/>
NORTH WEST	8	<input type="checkbox"/>
NORTH	3	<input type="checkbox"/>
NORTH EAST	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
EAST	1	<input type="checkbox"/>

R. H. Dawson L.R.E.



Scale 1/4 Inches to a Mile

1/4 Mile

MAP VIII

CENTRAL WARDS OF LEEDS

W. H. G. 1901