THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

The Origins and Development of the Independent Labour Party in Manchester and Salford, 1880-1914

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by

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CONTAINS PULLOUTS

Frontispiece.
Robert Blatchford

Preface

The Independent Labour Party as an organization has received comparatively little attention from historians. All too frequently it has been regarded as a body which was founded by Keir Hardie in 1893, fulfilled its historic destiny in the formation of the Labour Party, and then dutifully faded away, leaving its offspring to replace the Liberals in the two-party system, and reap the whirlwind of the 1945 General Election. Such a view is both simplistic and misleading. Despite its name the ILP was not a 'labour' party but a socialist party, based solely upon the individual membership of committed socialists, and the only such party in Britain ever to achieve mass membership throughout the country, an extensive propaganda network, and success in both local and parliamentary elections. Even so, the ILP was not just a political party. Above it was a social movement, reflecting the needs and aspirations of two generations, and often imbued with the aura of a quasi-religious crusade. It is perhaps as a socialist propagandist movement and as a broader social movement that the ILP is most in need of reappraisal.

The ILP reached the peak of its influence in the pre-First World War era, before the outbreak of war re-cast it in the role of the 'peace party', and before the Labour Party's new constitution of 1918 undermined its grass roots base in the constituencies. It did in fact survive as a political party until 1975, thereafter transforming itself into a purely propagandist organization, Independent Labour Publishing.[1] However after its disaffiliation from the Labour Party in 1931 it ceased to wield power and influence on a national level. Yet even if one concentrates upon the pre-1914 era, the heyday of the ILP, a national study would be a major undertaking. The party was decentralized, local organizations were in many respects autonomous, and any account which extended beyond the affairs of its MPs and National Administrative Council would be obliged to consider the activities of numerous local branches throughout the country. Thus the initial need, not yet adequately fulfilled, is for extensive local studies. The following survey of Manchester and

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1. For the policies of this organization, see its own publications: Labour Leader, November 1977; Greater Manchester Labour Leader, No.2 July-September 1977, No.3 October-December 1977, and No.4 January-March 1978. The latter apparently ceased publication in 1978.

Salford ILP is presented as such a contribution.

However Manchester and Salford ILP was not simply an 'average' local party. Manchester was, after all, the industrial hub of Britain and the second city of the Empire. It may be described as the heart of nineteenth century capitalist society. In setting out to convert their fellow citizens and attain political power, the local socialists therefore faced a particularly formidable task. Manchester was also the provincial centre of the publishing industry, and for a party which placed its faith in the power of propaganda, it could hardly fail to become a focal point of activity. The foundation of Manchester and Salford ILP owed much to the local presence of the Workman's Times and Clarion. The city later became the home of the Manchester Labour Press Society and subsequently the National Labour Press. Both the Labour Leader and the ill-fated Daily Citizen were published locally in the years immediately before the First World War. Such activity drew into the Manchester area a large number of the ILP's leading figures, and together with local activists they form an impressive list: Robert Blatchford, Leonard Hall, T.D. Benson, R.C. Wallhead, 'Casey' (Walter Hampson), John and Katharine Bruce Glasier, Victor Grayson, J.R. Clynes, Ellen Wilkinson and J.T. Walton-Newbold. The area also provided the venue for a number of elections and conferences of particular significance in the history of the national party. Of the latter, perhaps the most crucial was the Socialist Unity Conference, held in Salford in 1911, which witnessed a split in the ILP and the formation of the British Socialist Party. Thus for the ILP Manchester and Salford was not a mere provincial backwater; throughout the period in question it was a focal point for events and activities of national significance.

An initial survey of Manchester and Salford ILP reveals that it was established some nine months before the celebrated Bradford Conference, and that many of its founders were already committed socialists who had been active in other movements. It thus becomes apparent that the factors which led to the party's formation were local rather than national, and that earlier socialist activity merits close consideration. In terms of the origins of the national ILP, the traditional emphasis has been upon the role of the labour movement, of Lib-Lab politics, ethical socialism, and the influence of Keir Hardie. Did Manchester and Salford fit into this pattern, or did other forces, such as secularism and Marxism, play a more important role than has generally been suggested? Much of the later history of the ILP was to

be shaped by a continuing conflict between socialism and labourism. It is therefore essential to assess the comparative influence of these doctrines upon the newly-established Manchester and Salford party; and of the three sections in this thesis, the first is devoted entirely to the origins and formation of Manchester and Salford ILP. The section ends with an examination of the 1893 Bradford Conference, and it is only in the light of the earlier development of the labour and socialist movements in Manchester and Salford that the attitude of local members towards the new national party can be interpreted.

To concentrate solely upon the ideological aspects of the ILP would distort the picture of what was essentially a social and propagandist movement. It is also necessary to consider the manner in which the party was organised in the various constituencies; the districts in which it displayed particular strength or weakness. The nature of its propaganda must be examined, as well as the social and economic background of its converts. To what extent was the ILP in fact a working class movement? The pre-1914 era also witnessed the upsurge of the feminist movement, and since the ILP was the first mass political party to recruit women on equal terms with men, the role of women within its ranks merits particular consideration; and in a local study it is also necessary to assess the place of the ILP in the wider community.

Source material for what is essentially a social survey of the pre-1914 era is not readily available. Many of the minute books, letters, documents and personal papers which must once have existed, are now destroyed. It has therefore been necessary to rely for much of the information upon the socialist press. Also, with the aim of studying the ILP as a collection of individual members, rather than as an amorphous mass, biographical information has been collated from the full range of sources, and has been summarised in Appendix II. Extensive reference is made to this data, in an attempt to reveal not only the social composition of the ILP, but also to illustrate the manner in which a wide spectrum of local movements were linked by the activity of individuals. An attempt was also made to trace surviving socialist activists and their families, and to tape-record their reminiscences. It is above all their contribution which transforms the picture of the ILP from an ordinary political party to a way of life for whole families.

The social nature of the ILP can be seen as providing it with a cohesion which its political activities sometimes lacked. In the third section, the interaction of labourism and socialism in the 1893-

1914 period is examined. The relationship of the ILP with the SDF, a subject which in the past has received little attention, is considered both on a local level and as it affected the attitude of Manchester and Salford ILPers towards the national campaign for a united socialist party. Yet many local ILPers were also trade unionists. How much influence could they exert in the trade union world? Did they have any real hope of converting trade unionists to socialism? It is from the viewpoint of these local ILPers that the foundation of the Labour Representation Committee and its role in the 1906 General Election will be examined. What part did they play in the formation of the Labour alliance, and how did they regard its progress? Was the advent of the Labour Party a triumph or a betrayal in their eyes? In 1911 the ILP split as a result of conflicting allegiances to the Labour alliance and the cause of socialist unity. Was the British Socialist Party founded in Salford simply because of geographical convenience, or because of the prominent part played by local socialists in its formation? Above all, did the forces of labourism and socialism prove compatible within the local ILP in the pre-1914 era? It is the analysis of these and other questions to which this present thesis is devoted, and their elaboration will, it is hoped, offer significant pointers to the general and national characteristics of the modern labour movement in Britain.

Acknowledgements

Initially I should like to thank Professor John Saville for encouraging me to embark upon this research and proving a constant source of information and advice in his capacity as supervisor. Much-needed financial assistance was provided by the Social Science Research Council, to whom I should like to express my gratitude. Dr. Joyce Bellamy has continued to provide advice and encouragement, as well as more specific help in the field of biographical research. As editors of the Dictionary of Labour Biography, Professor Saville and Dr. Bellamy have made available to me their extensive collection of data and assisted my own search for material. Some of the biographies appended to this thesis are based upon entries which I have prepared for forthcoming volumes of the Dictionary. The photographs used to illustrate this thesis are the work of my husband, David Reid, who has also shared in the tasks of proof-reading and photocopying. He has provided me with information from his own research into the career of Ellen C. Wilkinson, MP, and has also proved an invaluable source of assistance in his capacity as Senior Reference Librarian at Stockport Public Library.

My thanks are due to many librarians and archivists, including the staff of the Archives Department and Social Sciences Library in Manchester Public Library (particularly Miss Jean Ayton and Mr. M.J. Harkin); Salford Local History Library; the John Rylands University Library of Manchester; the Brynmor Jones Library, University of Hull; the British Library of Political and Economic Science; the Labour Party Library; the Marx Memorial Library; the Sydney Jones Library, University of Liverpool; and the International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam. Last, but by no means least, I owe a particular debt of gratitude to Mr. and Mrs. E. Frow, who have allowed me to consult material in the Working Class Movement Library, Manchester, and have also assisted my searches.

I have also been grateful for the help of Dr. Bill Williams of Manchester Studies (Manchester Polytechnic), who provided information as to the extent of Jewish involvement in the Manchester socialist movement, and made available to me both the results of his own research and the tape-recorded reminiscences of the late Leon Locker. Manchester Polytechnic Institute of Advanced Studies have also been kind enough to provide me with a transcript of an interview with Mrs. Elizabeth Dean by Dermott Healey, while Ms Linda Walker sent me details of her interview in Canada with Mrs. Nell Hall Humpherson. Professor Judith Fincher Laird

has deposited her notes and correspondence on members of the Clarion movement in the Department of Economic and Social History, University of Hull, and I have found this material particularly helpful. Mrs. Horrocks of Atherton has provided me with biographical information on her husband's great-grandfather, William Horrocks.

I owe a particular debt to all the people who have assisted me with their personal knowledge of the socialist movement in Manchester and Salford. From many former activists and their families I have received letters, the loan of pamphlets, documents and photographs, and above all their valuable reminiscences on tape. Their names, and the nature of their help, are recorded below in the bibliography and are too extensive to detail again here. However without their contribution a major section of this thesis could not have been written.

Finally I should like to thank Mrs. Sally Stelfox, who has undertaken most of the typing. Any errors which remain in the text are, however, my sole responsibility.

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ABBREVIATIONS

i) In text

ASE	Amalgamated Society of Engineers
ASRS	Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants
BSP	British Socialist Party
CCC	Clarion Cycling Club
CWS	Co-operative Wholesale Society
EC	Executive Committee
ETU	Electrical Trades Union
GRWU	General Railway Workers' Union
GW&GLU	Gas Workers' and General Labourers' Union
ILP	Independent Labour Party
IWMA	International Working Men's Association
L&YR	Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway
LEA	Labour Electoral Association
LP	Labour Party
LRC	Labour Representation Committee
NAC	National Administrative Council
N,BL&GLU	Navvies, Bricklayers' Labourers and General Labourers' Union
NILP	National Independent Labour Party
NSS	National Secular Society
NUT	National Union of Teachers
NUWSS	National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies
OSS	Openshaw Socialist Society
PLP	Parliamentary Labour Party
SDF	Social Democratic Federation
SDP	Social Democratic Party
SL	Socialist League
SLP	Socialist Labour Party
SPGB	Socialist Party of Great Britain
TC	Trades Council
TUC	Trades Union Congress
UDC	Union of Democratic Control
WLL	Women's Labour League
WSPU	Women's Social and Political Union

ii) In footnotes

C	Clarion
CFT	Cotton Factory Times
Com.	Commonweal
J	Justice
MG	Manchester Guardian
MSST	Manchester Statistical Society Transactions
NR	National Reformer
SC	Sunday Chronicle
WT	Workman's Times

PART 1

THE ORIGINS AND FOUNDATION OF MANCHESTER AND SALFORD INDEPENDENT LABOUR PARTY, 1880-1893.

Chapter 1

Mr. Gladstone's Modern Athens: a social survey of Manchester and Salford in the 1880s.

Few cities can claim to have been the source of inspiration for two major works of socialist literature. In 1844 Engels devoted a large portion of his Condition of the Working Class in England to a survey of Manchester, on the grounds that it was 'the classic type of a modern manufacturing town' and because he claimed to know it as intimately as his own native town, more intimately than did some of its residents.[1] According to Asa Briggs, 'if Engels had lived not in Manchester but in Birmingham, his conception of "class" and his theories of the role of class in history might have been very different'.[2] Almost half a century later, the same city witnessed Robert Blatchford's conversion to socialism. From a tour round the slums of Manchester with Joseph Waddington, and its description in the Sunday Chronicle, emerged the vision of Merrie England.[3] The two concepts of a socialist society, destined to conflict on many future occasions, did at least have a common origin as reactions against nineteenth century Manchester.

Yet despite the effect which the slums of Manchester undoubtedly had upon thinking observers, it should not be implied that they either produced, or were responsible for the conversion to socialism of, the majority of men and women who came to form the local Independent Labour Party. As Blatchford himself observed:

> To the ILP came women and men from the ranks of Tories, Liberals, Radicals, Nonconformists and Marxians. Many of these brought with them sectarian or party shibboleths which they had not outgrown. There were Free-Traders, Home Rulers, Local Optionists, Republicans, Roman Catholics, Salvationists, Church and Chapel-goers and believers in the cosmopolitan brotherhood of the workers.[4]

Thus before the political movements in the area can be examined, it is necessary to attempt a brief survey of society in Manchester and Salford as a whole; of the middle as well as the working class, of the religious and ethnic groups, of housing, health and educational facilities.

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1. F. Engels, 'The Condition of the Working-Class in England' in K. Marx and F. Engels, On Britain (German ed. 1845; English ed. reprinted Moscow, 1962) p.75.
2. A. Briggs, Victorian Cities (1963; Pelican ed., Harmondsworth, 1968) p.116.
3. L. Thompson, Robert Blatchford: Portrait of an Englishman (1951) pp. 56-63 passim. For biographical information on Waddington, see below, pp. 73, 82, 99-100, 111, 170-6.
4. R. Blatchford, My Eighty Years (1931) p.199

Perhaps the clearest general description of the urban area was that provided by T.R. Marr, in his survey of Housing Conditions in Manchester and Salford. Although written in 1904, it applies equally well to the 1880s:

> It will be seen that an irregular octupus-like figure covers the towns with arms reaching beyond the suburbs. The body part covers the central district surrounding Manchester Town Hall, which is given over almost entirely to shops, offices, warehouses, etc., and has a very small resident population. The arms represent the lines of communication and of transport which join the Manchester district to other places i.e. the railway lines and the canals. It will be seen that alongside these the industries and workshops are gathered and that the residential districts lie between the arms. Near the centre where the space between the arms is least, the residential population is most crowded, and only towards the outside of the town do we find frequent open spaces.[1]

Through this 'octupus-like figure' flowed the River Irwell, which formed most of the boundary between the city of Manchester and the borough of Salford. Asa Briggs, in his study of Manchester in Victorian Cities, mentions Salford only once.[2] This is perhaps a fair reflection of Salford's usual role as the 'poor relation'. For the manufacturer, who had his mill or ironworks in Salford, had offices in Manchester and transacted business in the Manchester Exchange. Salford therefore came to be regarded as a mainly working-class suburb of Manchester.[3]

'Salford' in the 1880s was in fact an amalgamation of three townships: Salford, Pendleton and Broughton. The municipal borough of Salford, incorporated on 16 April 1844, had originally comprised the township itself, together with a small portion of Broughton which lay south of the river. The parliamentary borough of Salford however included all three townships. When, in 1847, Broughton petitioned to be included within the municipal borough, a Bill was prepared for promotion in Parliament to include all the parliamentary borough in the municipal borough. This attempt provoked indignation among the inhabitants of Pendleton, and was therefore abandoned. When the Salford

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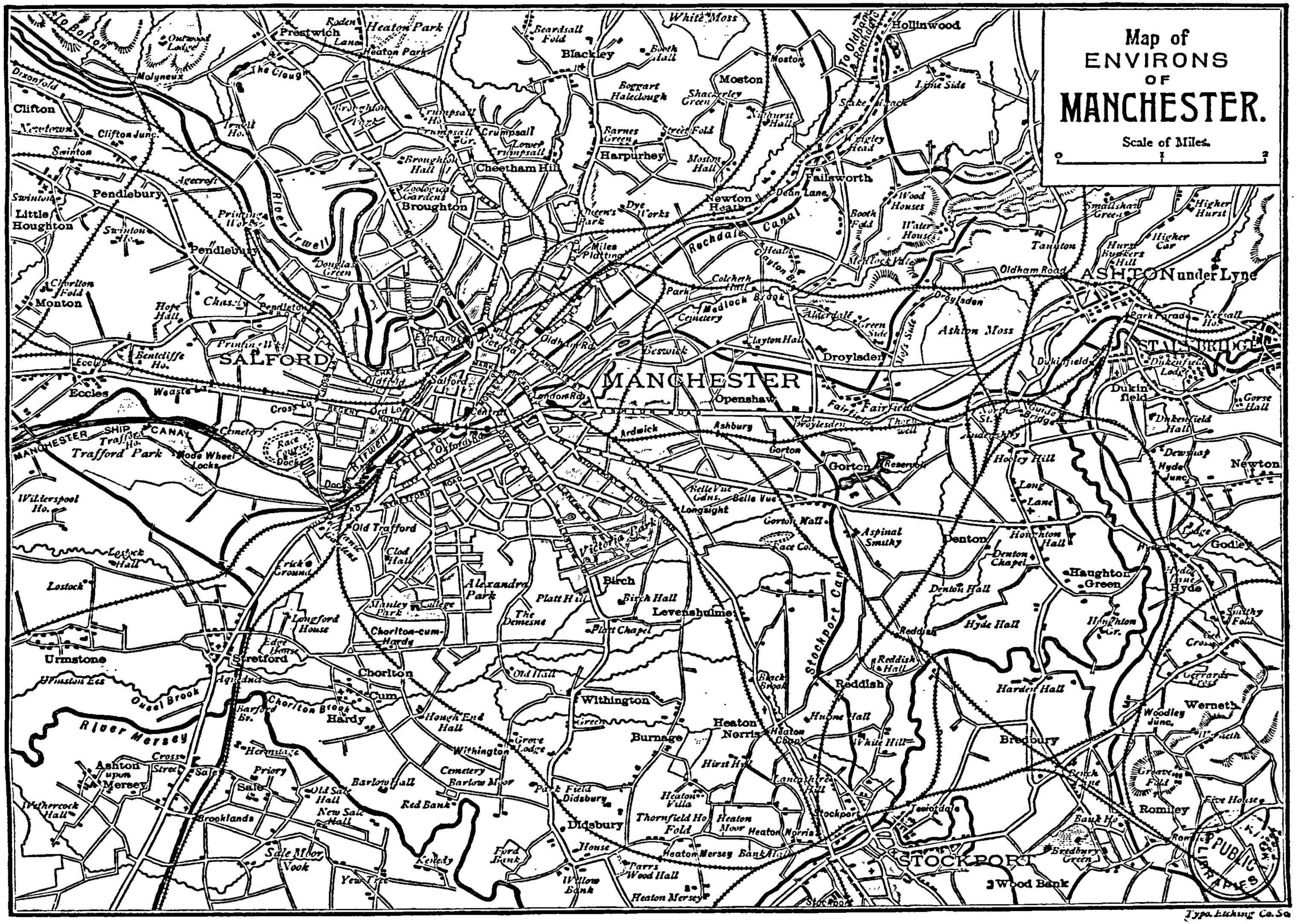
1. T.R. Marr, Housing Conditions in Manchester and Salford (Manchester, 1904) p.12. Marr became a member of Manchester and Salford ILP. Biographical notes on his career, and those of other members of the party between 1893 and 1914 are contained in Appendix II below. For the pattern of urban development, see Map 1.
2. A. Briggs, op.cit., pp.88-138 passim.
3. [Anon.], Manchester of To-day [1887?] p.41.



MAP 1. MAP OF THE ENVIRONS OF MANCHESTER.

Extension and Improvement Act was finally passed in 1853, committees of representatives from all the districts were established to control matters relating to the borough generally, but the management of highways and streets was vested in the district committees for each township. Each district committee was empowered to levy an improvement and highway rate for its district separately and independently, borrow money on the security of such a rate, and appoint and pay its own officers. The Town Council had no control over the internal arrangements of the districts, but was obliged to provide formal confirmation of the district committees' proceedings. This system, described as 'Trinity without Unity', survived until 1891, when all three districts were brought under a general system.[1]

In 1871 Salford[2] had a population of 124,801. This figure increased steadily, to 176,235 in 1881 and 198,139 in 1891. It was therefore created a county borough in April 1889, under the provisions of the 1888 Local Government Act. But although smaller than Manchester in population, Salford actually exceeded its neighbour in area by almost 1,000 acres, before the Manchester boundaries were extended in 1885.[3]

'Manchester' is in many ways more difficult to define. The census returns of 1871 and 1881 defined 'Manchester Township' as the four registration districts of Ancoats, Deansgate, Market Street and St. George. Of these, all but St. George showed a marked decline in population during the decade. This was a reflection not of the decline of Manchester as such, but of the movement of population away from the centre of the urban area.[4] This exodus had begun in the mid-nineteenth century, when the wealthier inhabitants developed a desire to live 'out in the open'. In the period from 1861 to 1871, the poorer element of the city centre's population was displaced by a combination of slum clearance and commercial encroachment. Cellar dwellings were closed down; the number of lock-up shops and offices increased, particularly in the Market Street area; and a large site in the London Road area was cleared by the Midland Railway Company, involving the demolition of about 600 small inhabited

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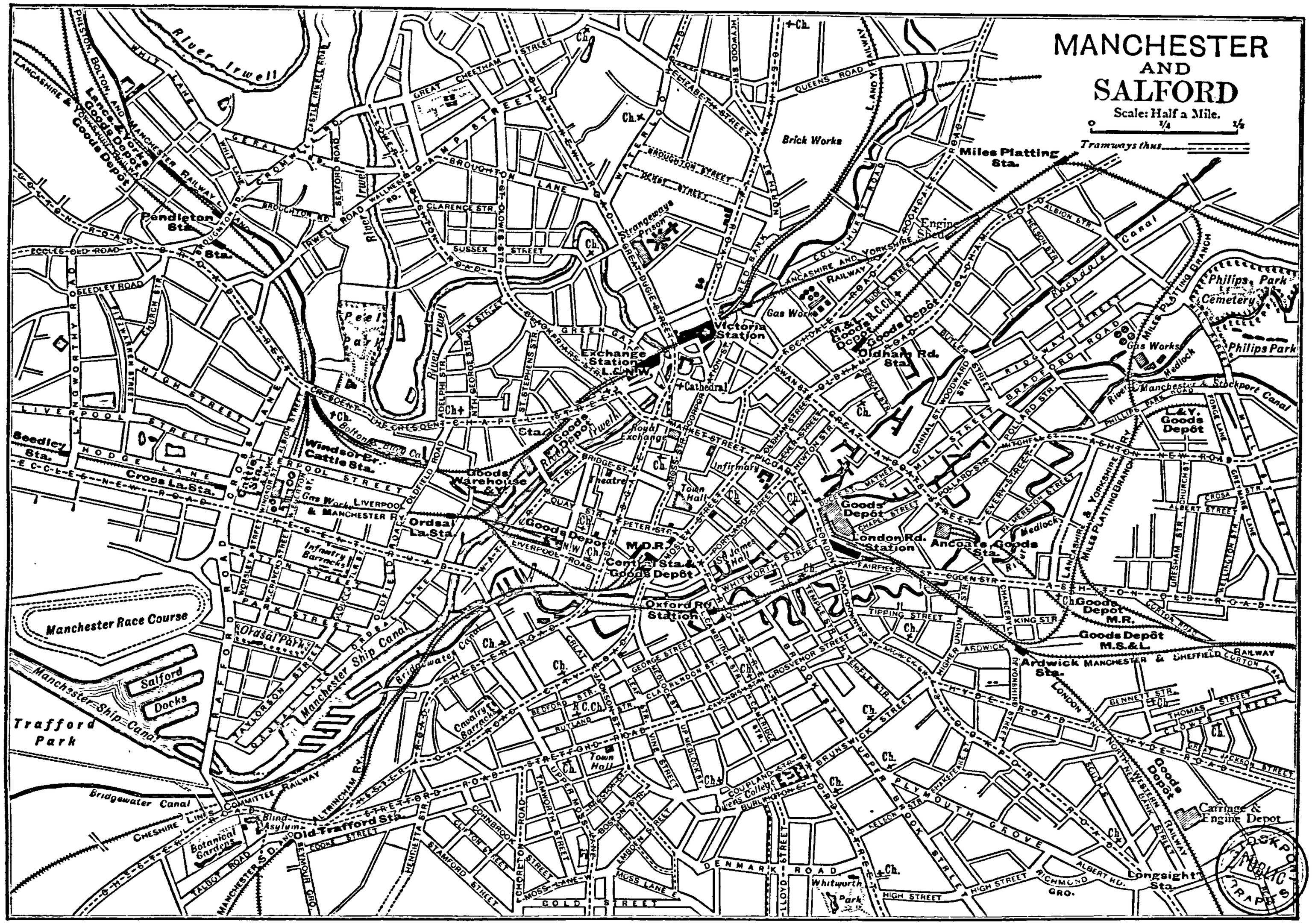
1. C.P. Hampson, Salford through the Ages (Salford?, 1930; reprinted Manchester, 1972) pp.276-9. For the districts of Salford, see Map 1.
2. The term 'Salford' will henceforth denote the three combined districts.
3. C.P. Hampson, op.cit., pp.279-80.
4. H. Baker, 'On the Growth of the Manchester Population. Extension of the Commercial Centre of the City, and Provision for Habitation, Census Period 1871-81', in Manchester Statistical Society Transactions (hereafter cited as MSST), Session 1881-2 (Manchester, 1882) pp.3-5, 27. See Map 2 for district locations. St. George was the area bounded by the Bridgewater Canal, Great Jackson St, Preston St, and Tamworth St.



MAP 2. MAP OF MANCHESTER AND SALFORD.

houses, and the rehousing of about 3,000 people.[1]

The commercial centre of Manchester continued to expand in the following decade, until the resident population of the old township shrank to little more than it had been in 1831.[2] By contrast the suburban areas were growing rapidly. The districts of Newton, Cheetham, Failsworth, Blackley, Prestwich, Didsbury, Ardwick, Worsley, Barton and Stretford all showed a rise in population over and above the natural increase.[3] There was also some movement of population from parts of Manchester into Salford. As a result of extensive street improvement and railway extension in the Deansgate district, a third of the dwellings standing in 1871 had been demolished by the end of the decade. Many of the displaced inhabitants moved into the Regent Road area of Salford.[4] If, when considering the population statistics, one adopts the modern concept of 'Greater Manchester', and includes not only the registration districts of Manchester Township and Salford, but also Prestwich, Chorlton and Barton-upon-Irwell, then the population rose from 643,801 in 1871 to 782,630 in 1881. Henry Baker, in his paper to the Manchester Statistical Society, estimated that of this increase of 138,829 or 21.6% in the population, 14% was natural increase and 7.6% the result of migration.[5]

The population of Manchester and Salford was still, in the 1880s, largely dependent upon the cotton trade. However within the city boundaries commercial activity was increasing in importance, at the expense of manufacturing. The central area from Cannon Street on the northern side to Peter Street in the south, and from Portland Street to Deansgate, contained massive warehouses, banks and insurance offices, as well as the city's public buildings.[6] Further afield were to be found spinning and weaving mills, the bleaching, dyeing and printing works, and associated trades, such as the manufacture of canvas, sacking and

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1. H. Baker, 'On the Growth of the Commercial Centre of Manchester, Movement of Population, and Pressure of Habitation. Census decennial 1861-71', in MSST, Session 1871-2 (Manchester, 1872) pp.89-95.
2. H. Baker, in MSST, Session 1881-2, p.7.
3. Ibid., Table V p.27. See also Map 1. Worsley, which is not marked, is located to the north west of Monton.
4. Ibid., p.21. See also Map 2.
5. Ibid., Table V p.27.
6. J. Mortimer, Mercantile Manchester, Past and Present (Manchester, 1896) pp.77-9. See also Map 3.

LOVE AND BARTON'S

PLAN OF THE PRINCIPAL STREETS IN MANCHESTER & SALFORD.

References:

No. on Plan.		No. of Circle
1	Post Office	i
2	(See ¶ opposite)	i

PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

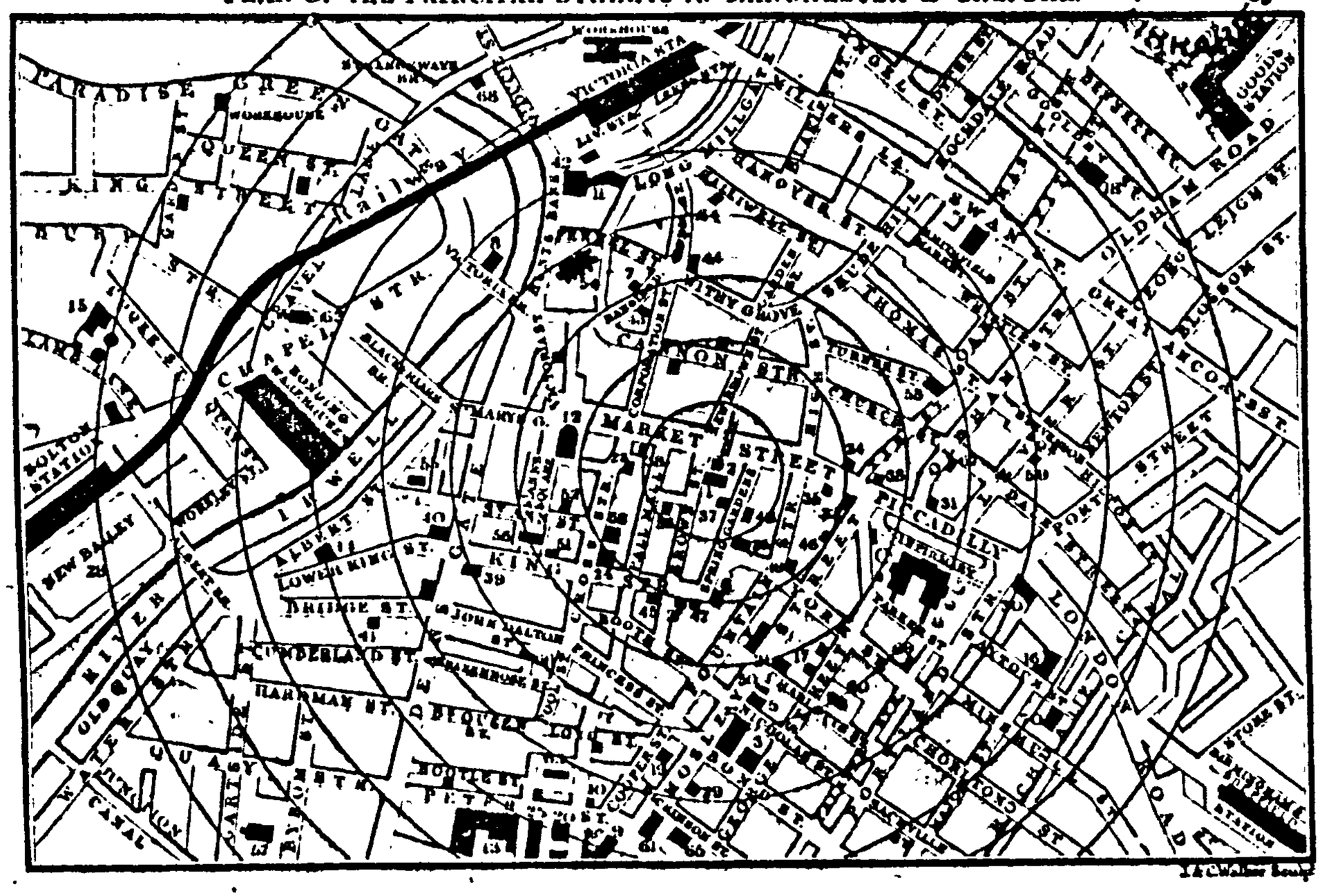
3	Athenæum	v
4	Assembly Rooms	iii
5	Club House	iv
6	Ditto	ii
7	Corn Exchange	iv
8	Cloth Hall	v
9	Concert Hall	vi
10	Excise Office	vi
11	Chetham College	v
12	Exchange	iii
13	Free Trade Hall	vii
14	Gas Works, Man.	vi
15	Gas Works, Salford	x
16	House of Recovery	vi
17	Lit. & Phil. Rooms	iv
18	Lancasterian School	viii
19	Mechanics' Inst.	v
20	Nat. His. Society	vi
21	Portico	iv
22	Royal Institution	iv
23	Stamp Office	ii
24	Town Hall	iii
25	Theatre Royal	vi
26	Theatre, Queen's	ii
27	Savings' Bank	iii
28	New Bailey	x
29	Custom House	v

HOTELS.

30	Queen's	v
31	Albion	iv
32	Royal	ii
33	Mosley Arms	iii
34	Angel	iii
35	Talbot	ii
37	Clarence	i
38	Thatched House	i
39	King's Arms	iv
40	Star	v
41	Hayward's	vi
42	Palatine	vi
43	Spread Eagle	iii
44	Boar's Head	iv

BANKS.

45	Br. Bank of England	iii
46	Man. and Salford	ii
47	Cunliffe, Brooks Co.	iii
48	District Bank	i
49	Union Bank	ii
50	National Provincial	iv
51	James Loyd & Co.	iii
52	Sir Benj. Heywood	iii
53	Scholes and Co.	i



CHURCHES AND CHAPELS

No. on Plan.		No. of Circle.
54	Cathedral	iv
55	St. Mary's	v
56	St. Ann's	iv
57	St. John's	ix
58	St. Paul's	iv
59	St. Clement's	v
60	St. James's	iv
61	St. Peter's	vi
62	Trinity Church	vii
63	Friends Mt. House	vi
64	Jews' Synagogue	v
65	Scotch Chapel	vi
66	Catholic Chapel	iv
67	Wesleyan Methdst.	iv
68	Unitarian	ii & vii
69	Baptist	v
70	Independent	vii

☞ Note.—*The Centre (see figure 1, on Plan,) is the Manchester Post Office.*

The Circles are about 100 yards asunder.

N. B.—For the convenience of Strangers, the situations of public buildings, &c., are indicated by a reference to the *No. of the Circle*, within or near to which, their localities can be found. The centre circle is counted the first. ☞ The particular circle cannot in all cases be stated accurately, as the buildings (or their corresponding *reference Nos.*) may be, in fact, partly in one and partly in another circle, but something like a clue to their exact positions will perhaps be found useful.

¶ MANCHESTER:
Published by
Love and Barton,
Stationers,
and Account-Book Makers,
70, Market-st.,
(for whose Establishment, see figure 3, within the first circle.) ¶

Map 3

hessian, sewing thread, twine and banding, quilts, towels and carpets.[1] Also supplying the cotton industry were the 'alkali works', which produced chemicals used in the bleaching, dyeing and printing of calico: soda ash, caustic soda, and hydrochloric and sulphuric acid. There were also a large number of soap works, soap being used by the calico printer for soaping cloths after printing and steaming or dyeing, also for 'clearing' and removing colour from white or undyed parts of the calico.[2]

Again associated with cotton manufacture was the iron and steel industry. Looms and engines were produced for the mills, together with boilers, railway locomotives, lathes, tools and pipes. Much of the heavy industry was concentrated in the Gorton/Openshaw and Salford areas.[3] In Salford, or more specifically Pendleton, were to be found Messrs. Knowles and Sons' collieries, while just outside the municipal boundary were the pits at Pendlebury and Agecroft.[4] Other leading manufacturing industries included the production of iron, brass and copper wire, paper, and rubber goods.[5] Together with this production of goods for the national and international markets were to be found manufacturing and service industries catering for the local population; building, the clothing trade, brewing, cabinet making and transport being among the chief activities.[6]

The railway system was still expanding during the 1880s. In 1884 the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway constructed its Liverpool express line. Street levels were lowered and huge viaducts built in the Salford area. The company did keep, to the letter, its promise to build the main terminal station within the Salford boundaries, but the siting of Exchange Station on the very extremity of the borough, with its main approach directly into Manchester, did not meet with great approval from the citizens of Salford.[7] The transport of goods between the warehouses

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1. W. Thomson, 'The Industries of Manchester and District' in British Association, Handbook of Manchester (Manchester, 1887) pp.88-102 passim, 109; Slater's Manchester, Salford and Suburban Directory (Manchester, 1886) 'Trades Directory of Manchester and Salford' passim.
2. W. Thomson, loc.cit., pp.102-5.
3. Ibid., p.107; Slater's Directory 1886, passim.
4. See Map 1.
5. W. Thomson, loc.cit., pp.107-9.
6. Slater's Directory 1886, passim.
7. C.P. Hampson, op.cit., p.289.

and principal stations, which also included Victoria, Central, London Road and the Midland Goods Station,[1] was by means of the 'lurry'.[2] The lurrymen with their assistants, boys known as 'nippers' whose duties included the care of the horse and collection of packages, were employed by the railway companies.[3]

Passenger transport within the towns was by means of the tramways. The first line was formally opened on 17 May 1887, when thirteen cars were placed on the line and travelled in procession from Pendleton to Grove Inn, Higher Broughton.[4] The system, operated by the local authorities, served the central areas of Manchester and Salford, extending also to Chorlton-upon-Medlock, Lower Broughton and Moss Side. Fares were considered to be good value over short distances, but beyond the 'penny stage' tended to increase rather steeply. It was not until 1904, a year after the system had been electrified, that workmen's cheap tickets were introduced.[5]

The most famous aspect of Manchester's transport system, the Ship Canal, was not opened until 1894.[6] Perhaps its main effect in the '80s was the employment of a vast army of unskilled labour. In November 1887, when 300 men had begun preparatory work at Eastham, the Cotton Factory Times was predicting that the first section of the canal in Cheshire would employ 2,500, while ultimately there would be work for 20,000 to 30,000. Already the Cheshire workhouses were full of men expecting to obtain employment.[7]

* * *

Apart from the Ship Canal navvies, the working class population of Manchester and Salford, particularly its unskilled section, tended to be concentrated within the central urban area. Employment in mills and engineering works, with their early start to the working day,

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1. Principal stations are shown most clearly on Map 2.
2. Since the term applies to a mode of transport no longer in existence, the original spelling will be adhered to.
3. J. Mortimer, op.cit., pp.115-19.
4. /Anon./, Old and New Manchester /Manchester, 1887/ p.56.
5. A. Redford, The History of Local Government in Manchester Vol.III (1940) pp.39-45.
6. J. Mortimer, op.cit., p.120. The preliminary opening took place in January 1894; the official opening by the Queen in the following May. For details of the engineering work, legislation and financial provision for the canal, see Manchester Faces and Places Vol. 1 No.6, 10 March 1890, pp.88-90 and Vol.5, 1894, pp.59-64. For the location of the canal in Salford, see Maps 1 and 2.
7. Cotton Factory Times (herafter cited as CFT), 18 November 1887.

obliged large numbers of people to live within easy access. The outdoor and casual workers, hardly knowing from one week to the next in which area of the town they might be employed, also sought accommodation in the city centre. Removal to the newer suburbs, entailing longer journeys to work and relatively expensive tram fares, was a privilege of the middle class, the clerks and warehousemen.[1] The effect which this had upon housing conditions will be considered later.[2] It is of more immediate note that the industrial activities of Manchester tended to produce an extremely stratified society.

This stratification was not manifested to the same degree in many other large cities. In Birmingham, 'work was carried on in small workshops rather than in large factories, and economic development throughout the century multiplied the number of producing units rather than added to the scale of existing enterprises...' There was a tradition of close, if not always good, relations between 'masters' and 'men', and of emphasis upon mutual dependence and common action. Since a large proportion of the Birmingham labour force tended to be skilled, there was considerable social mobility, the constant prospect for a workman that he might rise in the world to become a 'small master'.[3] Sheffield was also notable for its skilled workmen, many of them in fact independent contractors, its small units of production, and the close contact and mobility between masters and men. Many of the masters were members of the trade unions.[4] A large number of intermediate strata between the mass of the workers and the employers were also to be found in Leeds,[5] while London, with its relative lack of large factories, had a population which was often dispersed at considerable distance from its place of work.[6] There was perhaps less sense of local community in London than in any of the provincial cities.[7] The phenomenon of a

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1. G.T. Robinson, 'On Town Dwellings for the Working Classes' in MSST, Session 1871-2 (Manchester, 1872) p.68.
2. See below, p.10-13.
3. A. Briggs, op.cit., pp.186-7.
4. S. Pollard, Introduction to The Sheffield Outrages. Report presented to the Trades Unions Commissioners in 1867 (1867; reprinted Bath, 1971) pp.x-xi.
5. E.P. Thompson, 'Homage to Tom Maguire' in Essays in Labour History, ed. A. Briggs and J. Saville (1960) p.303.
6. P. Thompson, Socialists, Liberals and Labour: the Struggle for London 1885-1914 (1967) p.39.
7. Ibid., p.13.

large working class population, of rigid social divisions, of huge factories alternating with the employment of small groups of unskilled (and, from a trade union standpoint, unorganised) workers in sweated trades, transport and service industries, was essentially typical of Manchester, rather than of late Victorian cities in general.

This segregation of the working class as a whole from its employers did not, however, promote the formation of one cohesive working class society. Robert Roberts, who grew up in a general shop in Salford, 'an ideal position for viewing the English proletarian caste system in all its late flower', commented that:

> No view of the English working class in the first quarter of this century would be accurate if that class were shown merely as a great amalgam of artisan and labouring groups united by a common aim and culture. Life in reality was much more complex. Socially the unskilled workers and their families, who made up about 50 per cent of the population in our industrial cities, varied as much from the manual élite as did people in the middle station from the aristocracy... Inside the working class as a whole there existed, I believe, a stratified form of society whose implications and consequences have hardly yet been fully explored.[1]

The working class élite was composed mainly of shopkeepers, publicans and skilled tradesmen. Their social aspirations were often concentrated upon their children, whose employment as clerks or school-teachers might edge them into the lower middle class; they would, of course, still be far removed from the 'genuine middle class'. Semi-skilled workers in regular employment occupied the next rung down the social ladder, followed by the unskilled, then the casual workers and street sellers. Below then came the fire wood choppers and rag and boners. At the very base of the social pyramid were bookies' runners, idlers, part-time beggars, petty thieves, all those known to have been in prison, prostitutes and brothel keepers. Women's work in the textile industry was also graded, with weavers, the 'top' in their class, being followed by winders and drawers-in, then spinners. The last group lacked status not only because of lower wages but through its inclusion of a strong Irish Roman Catholic element and the mere fact that, in the extreme heat, spinners usually worked barefoot and scantily clad; this

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1. R. Roberts, The Classic Slum. Salford Life in the First Quarter of the Century (Manchester, 1971) p.1. Although this work does deal with a later period, there is no reason to suppose that working class society was any less stratified in the 1880s. Before the advent of the 'new trade unions' for the unskilled, the divisions are likely to have been even more pronounced. As the author himself commented (p.15), social concepts among the working class were extremely slow to change.

was not 'respectable'.[1] These social divisions tended to be perpetuated in the next generation. While the son of a skilled workman might, with ability and ambition, move into certain lower middle class occupations, it was difficult for an unskilled man to 'put his son to a trade'. Before 1914 apprenticeships of any kind were not generally open to children of the labouring poor. According to Robert Roberts, 'One had to be "spoke for" and usually tradesmen spoke only for the sons of tradesman'.[2] Thus the working class, if the term still retains any meaning, was itself rigidly divided according to its own social standards; 'the many looked upon social and economic inequality as the law of nature'.[3]

In most cases, these social divisions were a reflection of wage differentials. R. Montgomery, in his paper to the Manchester Statistical Society in 1884, considered the average wage of the time to be 28s per week. But within merely the working class occupations in a given industry there were great variations. Of the men employed in spinning mills, a cardroom overlooker could earn 36s, a spinner 37s 6d, while scutching room hands received 13s. In calico printing the wage for 'skilled ordinary labour working with machinery' was 45s; for outdoor manual labourers in that industry the pay was 17s 6d. The skilled men in the mechanical engineering industry, moulders, smiths, fitters and turners, were earning on average 34s to 36s, while labourers and hammermen received 19s and 19s 6d respectively. In glass manufacturing a workman could earn 48s for a 44 hour week; for joiners and bricklayers the average wage was 36s.[4] These were, however, men in regular employment, who were in most cases protected by a trade union. For their weaker

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1. Ibid., pp.5-9.
2. Ibid., p.125.
3. Ibid., p.5.
4. R. Montgomery, 'A Comparison of some of the Economic and Social Conditions of Manchester and the Surrounding District in 1834 and 1884' in MSST Session 1884-5 (Manchester 1885) pp.9-14 passim. This section of the paper comprises wage tables collected from private records. Throughout this thesis sums of money have been cited in the original pounds, shillings and pence (£ s d). Hourly wage rates and food prices in the 1880s might vary by as little as a farthing, and such sums cannot be expressed accurately in modern decimal currency. The significance of wages and prices cited lies in their relationship to one another, not in a comparison with post-decimalisation rates. However conversion tables are readily available, for example G. Tomalin, Metric-Imperial Tables (1971).

brethren wages might be both precarious and extremely low. Among the cloth cap and hat makers few men received as much as 20s;[1] ship canal navvies were paid at an hourly rate of 4½d to 4¾d,[2] while there were railwaymen working 100 hours for 10s or £1 per week.[3] Women's wages, an essential part of most family budgets, were extremely low. The tenter in a spinning mill, who might earn 16s per week,[4] was comparatively well paid beside her sisters in the cloth cap and hat trade, who took home 6s to 10s at the end of a 60 hour week.[5] The shirtmaker, paid at a rate of 8d to 1s 2d per dozen for boys' shirts, or 10d to 1s 11d for men's, might make an average of 4s 6d for a 60 hour week of piecework. In some factories, needles and thread had to be bought from this pittance.[6]

Beside such figures must be considered the cost of rent, on average 6s per week in 1884, and above all of food. Mr. Priestley, a Manchester surgeon and authority on diet, calculated that a balanced diet consisting of meat, bread, potatoes, other vegetables, milk, butter, sugar and salt, in the quantities needed by an 'average man doing average work', would cost 5s 10d per week. The diet provided at Manchester Workhouse would cost at the very least 2s 6d if bought by an individual.[7] When it is considered that the poorest element of the community did not 'shop around' or obtain dividend at the co-op., but purchased small quantities of food, often meal by meal, 'on tick' from the local corner shop,[8] then it is obvious that many families must have been existing at bare subsistence level.

The most obvious manifestation of these social divisions was perhaps to be found in the realms of housing. The movement of population from the city centre was, in fact, assisting in the process of social segregation. The new suburbs which were springing up were not generally available for the poorer classes:

> A large proportion of the middle class, the clerks, the warehousemen, and others, seize upon them, vacating their houses in town, which

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1. Workman's Times (hereafter cited as WT), 5 September 1890.
2. Ibid., 10 October 1890
3. CFT, 7 March 1890. This claim was made by John Kelly of Salford, speaking at a meeting convened in Oldham to form a branch of the Railway Workers' Union.
4. R. Montgomery, op.cit., p.9.
5. WT, 5 September 1890
6. Commonweal (hereafter cited as Com.), 24 July 1886. See 'Women's Labour in Manchester'.
7. F. Scott, 'The Condition and Occupations of the People of Manchester and Salford' in MSST Session 1888-9 (Manchester, 1889) pp.99-100.
8. R. Roberts, op.cit., pp.60-2.

> are most frequently absorbed for shop and business purposes,or, when this is not the case, the houses are sub-divided and sublet, until the dwelling which had served for one household contains as many families as it once did persons. What once was garden is built over with cottages, and what once was a healthy part of the town soon becomes an overcrowded pest place, spreading itself and its influence wider each year. Thus whilst healthy zones of new growth mark the annual expansion of the city, the rottenness at the core increases.[1]

G.T. Robinson, in his paper on 'Town Dwellings for the Working Classes', went on to comment that:

> ...one of the greatest evils of the social severance thus effected, is the destruction of that intimate admixture of the poor and the rich which aforetime existed. The poor are entirely left to themselves, all example and influence which before cheered them is removed, and the rich are now so far away that it is to be feared they quite forget the poor...[2]

The pattern of housing was essentially that described, in 1904, by T.R. Marr. In the vicinity of the Cathedral were older houses, eighteenth century and Jacobean, now converted into offices and workshops. Moving towards the outskirts of the town, the traveller next passed through the slum district built in the early nineteenth century, the first period of expansion. In this area were occasionally to be found good older buildings, once suburban or country houses, which had since had their gardens built over. On the outskirts of the town were streets of mean houses, apparently on the down-grade, but with sanitary conveniences and small yards. These marked the beginning of modern municipal life, when care was taken to ensure that houses reached a certain standard. In the suburban area were houses built according to modern bye-laws, some in monotonous streets but others with gardens. The latter signified the districts to which the relatively well-to-do members of the community escaped.[3]

Occasionally there were to be found in the slum areas blocks of flats, known as 'block' or 'barrack' dwellings, built by the corporations on sites formerly occupied by insanitary dwellings. They were not particularly popular with the tenants, who complained about the stairs and lack of privacy. Larger old houses, divided into tenements, were to be found mainly in St. Michael's Ward, between Shudehill, Victoria Station, Ludgate Hill and Rochdale Road. A family living in one room was not an uncommon phenomenon here. Back-to-back houses, although no

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1. G.T. Robinson, 'On Town Dwellings for the Working Classes' in MSST Session 1871-2 (Manchester, 1872) p.68.
2. Ibid., p.69.
3. T.R. Marr, op.cit., p.10. See also Map 2.

longer permitted to be built, continued to exist in large numbers. With closets often built into the block, adjoining the living rooms and under the bedrooms, and with water supplied from taps in the street (in one case, one tap serving for 26 houses), it is hardly surprising that the mortality rate was higher among the inhabitants of these back-to-back houses than among the occupants of 'through' houses. Even the latter type was, however, far from ideal. Built in long rows in narrow streets, and with little space between the backs, these cottages usually comprised only two bedrooms, with a kitchen-cum-living room and 'parlour' downstairs. Overcrowding was therefore the rule rather than the exception.[1]

The death rate was a fairly accurate guide to the social status of an area. In 1884 the death rate per 1,000 in Registration Sub-Districts of Manchester was as follows:[2]

Ancoats	25.7
St. George's	22.6
Central (Market St, London Rd, Deansgate)	22.0
Hulme	20.9
Beswick	20.8
Ardwick	19.6
Chorlton-upon-Medlock	18.5
Cheetham	17.8

Statistics alone do not, however, provide an adequate description of the scenes which shocked and horrified so many observers. Robert Blatchford, before describing his visit to Hulme, remarked 'That was forty years ago, and the impression it made upon my mind is still vivid and painful and grim.' He continued:

> I visited three 'houses'. In the first, a kind of damp kitchen, with a stone floor, I found a half-clothed woman and four hungry children. Husband, a bargeman, out of work. Set off the day before on tramp. Might get a job in Cheshire. No news yet. No money, no food, no fire...
>
> In the second house, a kind of damp kitchen with a stone floor, I found an old man and his old wife bedridden with rheumatism. No money, no fire, no food...
>
> The third English home was like the others only 'more so'. Darker, damper, the worn paper peeling off the walls. Here I found a thin shred of a woman, blue with cold. Husband out on tramp, looking for a job. No fire, no food, no hope. On the miserable bed was something which looked like a claret bottle wrapped in rags. The woman saw me looking at it and said 'Baby's none so well today..'
>
> The baby died. The husband did not find work. A friend of mine on one of the railways gave him a job. He had to walk four miles and start work at 6 a.m., and his wage was 16s. a week...[2]

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1. H. Whiley, 'Work and Cost of the Manchester Corporation Health Department' in MSST Session 1885-6 (Manchester, 1886) p.58. For the districts cited, see Map 1.
2. R. Blatchford, op.cit., pp.187-8.

That Blatchford was not indulging in journalistic exaggeration, or even in socialist propaganda, may be concluded from the description of a lodging house in the Charter Street/ Angel Meadow area, by Chief Detective Inspector Jerome Caminada of the Manchester Police:

> The passages are narrow, the plaster broken off the walls in many places, the stairs weak and yielding to our footsteps. The room we enter contains four dirty rickety beds - mere pallets - the threadbare and ragged covering of which fails to conceal the creaking bedspreads and dirty straw mattresses beneath. The boards of the floor seem to have had no contact with the scrubbing brush for years, and we note the absence of all arrangements for personal cleanliness. On those beds rest, or rather restlessly lie, men and women of various types and ages, from the frowning confirmed felon to the innocent bastard babe.[1]

Robert Roberts, with a more intimate knowledge of slum life than either Blatchford or Caminada, recalled:

> ...Women broken and aged with child bearing well before their own youth was done... the spoiled complexions, the mouths full of rotten teeth, the varicose veins, the ignorance of simple hygiene, the intelligence stifled and the endless battle to keep clean... What things the poor did own, most made gallant use of. The tragedy was that in the most opulent country in the world so many possessed so little.[2]

It is thus apparent that Manchester and Salford in the 1880s, while manifesting a division between the middle and working classes more pronounced than in many other industrial cities, was also noteworthy for the economic and geographical separation of the skilled from the unskilled workers. It remains to consider the effect of these divisions in the social, educational and cultural spheres.

* * *

The middle and working classes tended to inhabit different areas of the city. They were educated separately; the middle class either by means of private tuition or at selective institutions such as Manchester Grammar School[3] and the High School for Girls,[4] which

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1. J. Caminada, Twenty-Five Years of Detective Life (Manchester, 1895) pp.9, 11. The district described can be located on Map 2, between Victoria Station and Strangeways Prison.
2. R. Roberts, op.cit., pp.24-5.
3. Manchester of To-day, op.cit., pp.44-5.
4. E.S. Pankhurst, The Suffragette Movement (1931) p.121. Christabel and Sylvia Pankhurst attended the High School. Although Dr. Pankhurst was a prominent lawyer, the headmistress begged the Governors not to admit them, on the grounds that their father was a republican and atheist.

might be followed by study at Owens College[1] or one of the older universities. Socially the middle class inhabited a different world,[2] coming into contact with the working class simply as employees or, in some cases, as the objects of 'good works'. It is, however, the points of contact, rather than the vast areas of separation, which should be considered in a study of the origins of a political party which drew middle class, as well as working class, recruits into its ranks. Emmanuel Shinwell once asserted that:

> Middle class groups will always yield a rich supply of thoughtful people anxious to extricate themselves from a basically sedate and boring way of life. Some will consider self only and rise to the upper class as self-made men; a few will profit from their chances to study without undue economic restrictions and become intellectuals; still fewer will cast aside self and throw themselves into good works on behalf of the stomachs, minds, or souls of the class below them.[3]

Areas of social contact between the middle and working classes can be divided into two groups. Firstly the charitable activities which were one of the hallmarks of Victorian society. Secondly, and more relevant to this study although far less typical, the organizations which brought the two classes together through common interests, and on more or less equal terms.

One group of charitable organizations was active in the field of health. Nursing was undertaken by the Manchester Sick Poor and Private Nursing Institution, and by the Ladies' Branch of the Manchester and Salford Sanitary Association. Other medical charities included free dispensaries, free beds in eye and ear hospitals, in St. Mary's Maternity Hospital, or hospitals in Southport and Buxton for 'people in weak health' (usually synonymous with tuberculosis).[4] As might be expected, much of the charitable activity had religious associations. It ranged from the small doles of money, bread, coals

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1. Owens College was opened in 1851 and in 1880 received the Royal Charter as the first constituent college of the Victoria University. See Manchester of To-day, op.cit., pp.45-7.
2. For an example of the sheltered social life of the middle class, see the biographical passage relating to the early lives of Emmeline Pankhurst and her family, in E.S. Pankhurst, op.cit., passim.
3. E. Shinwell, The Labour Story (1963) pp. 34-5.
4. F. Scott, 'The Need for Better Organisation of Benevolent Effort in Manchester and Salford' in MSST Session 1884-5 (Manchester, 1885) p.147; Prof. W.S. Jevons, Inaugural Address 'On the Work of the Society in Connection with the Questions of the Day' in MSST 1869-70 Session (Manchester, 1870) pp.10-11; Manchester of To-day, op.cit., pp.62-4.

and blankets given out by the clergy, for example at Manchester Cathedral,[1] to the work of the Wood Street Mission.

The Mission had its origin in March 1869 when Alfred Alsop, a bookseller and stationer, determined to establish a Christian mission in the slums of Deansgate. He began by founding a school in Lombard Street, as well as a Home for Friendless and Homeless Boys in Great Jackson Street, Hulme. The Lombard Street building became a victim of redevelopment when the new Cheshire Lines railway cut its way through Deansgate. In May 1873 the Mission purchased a site in Wood Street, still in Deansgate, and the following December opened a new building which included a Boys' Home. The Mission expanded to establish a seaside home in Sefton Street, Southport, for convalescent cases and for boys found destitute after drifting to the seaside in search of odd jobs during the summer, and a Working and Little Boys' Home in Jackson Street. Some of the boys were eventually assisted to emigrate to Canada and the USA. For the local population there was a gymnasium (intended to keep men and boys from pubs and street corners) and annual trips to Southport and Blackpool for children of various ages. In 1887-8 the Mission provided meals for hungry children and men out of work; loaves, beef soup, coffee and tea to poor families; and clogs, blankets and clothes to the destitute. The provision of meals had been a feature of the Mission from the early 1870s, when it ran a Destitute Children's Dinner Society; from this beginning developed the soup kitchen in the 1890s.[2]

The Wood Street Mission may have nourished the bodies of some of Manchester's poor; whether it fulfilled the same function for their minds may be judged by the following extract from its Third Annual Report:

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1. W.S. Jevons, op.cit., p.13.
2. Manchester and Salford Wood Street Mission, Annual Reports. Titles of individual reports vary, but copies in Manchester Local History Library are bound in 2 vols under the above title. The information cited here is contained in successive reports, from 2nd Annual Report of the Working Men's Church and Ragged School, Lombard St., off Deansgate. March 1870 - March 1871 /Manchester, 1871/ to 26th Annual Report of the Manchester and Salford Street Children's Mission and Boys' Home, Wood Street, Deansgate, from March to March 1894-95 (Manchester, 1895). The Wood Street Mission may perhaps be seen as a forerunner of the Cinderella Clubs.

> An infidel, of 50 years' standing, came in an agony to the church one week night, during some special services, and declared himself lost;... Our schoolkeeper went the following morning, and helped to burn all his sceptical works - Tom Paine, Voltaire, Bradlaugh, and many others. Took some three hours to burn them. He is now on his way to heaven rejoicing...[1]

One of the chief critics of upper class philanthropists was a native of Ancoats, Charles Rowley. He disliked the type of person who 'went slumming', with the declared intention of 'doing something for the working classes' in areas like the East End of London or Ancoats; nine-tenths of them became tired of the whole exercise in three months or less, and probably did more harm than good.[2] In 1875 Rowley was elected from his native ward to Manchester City Council, after a campaign for 'Baths and Wash-Houses and Public Rooms for Ancoats'.[3] Having achieved a certain degree of success in this field, he was nevertheless conscious of the horror of his surroundings, and determined to improve the quality of life in Ancoats. He formed a committee, collected some money, and started a number of 'rousing things'; bands in two of the parks, exhibitions of pictures and workmanship, and flower shows.[4] The first exhibition of works of art and craft, held in 1880, influenced Canon Barnett in his work at Toynbee Hall. From such beginnings there developed a series of University Extension lectures and, in Autumn 1881, a series of Sunday afternoon meetings in the New Islington Hall, Ancoats. These meetings, with a speaker and musical entertainment, drew audiences of from 500 to 900 people, mostly men. Although a collection was taken, admission was free. In the spring of 1889 (the season of afternoon and extension lectures having ended in February), Rowley considered the means whereby the group of regular attenders could be kept together during the summer months. At a meeting in the New Islington Hall he suggested fortnightly gatherings for the discussion of social subjects, politics and religion. From this group sprang the rambling club, cycling club and, perhaps most important, the Ancoats Brotherhood.[5] The Ancoats Recreation Movement influenced not only individuals who

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1. Wood Street Mission, Third Annual Report. Its full title is: God's Dealings with his People in the Lombard Street Working Men's Church Mission Hall for the Poor, and Ragged School, Deansgate, being the Third Annual Report of the above School, 1872 /Manchester, 1872/ pp.6-7.
2. C. Rowley, Fifty Years of Ancoats, Loss and Gain (?Manchester, privately printed for the Ancoats Brotherhood, 1899) 15pp., p.14.
3. C. Rowley, Fifty Years of Work Without Wages /?1911; 2nd ed. n.d./ pp.196-7.
4. Ibid., pp.174, 198.
5. Ibid., pp.197-203.

became members of Manchester and Salford ILP, but also the social development of their party.

One of Rowley's main concerns was that anything educational should be done at the highest level[1]; there was to be no 'talking down' to the working class people of Ancoats. His views were made clear in the 1895 Programme of the Ancoats Recreation Committee:

> We have often been charged with setting 'class against class', as the cant phrase goes. We do not and never have recognised classes. We have pitched the note of our work so as to be helpful to all sensible, intelligent, and right minded men and women, and we trust them to be worthy of each other. This we think constitutes 'good society', and this we have tried to achieve. We make no platform, have no reserved seats, and we neither give nor receive patronage.[2]

Lecture subjects varied widely. The 1885-6 session included Alfred Darbyshire on 'Gothic Architecture in England', Professor Munro on 'A Visit to the Mint', Thomas Connolly on 'Electricity and Magnetism' (with experiments) and Mrs. Fawcett on 'John Wiclif [sic] and the Dawn of the Reformation in England'. Music was provided by 'Members of Mr. Charles Hallé's Band' and the Manchester Philharmonic String Band; there was entertainment by the Ohio Amateur Minstrels and even a singing class (at the cost of 1d per night) run by G.W. Lane, conductor of the Manchester Philharmonic Choral Society.[3] The University Extension Lectures for that winter, delivered by Michael E. Sadler of Trinity College, Oxford, were on 'Past, Present and Future of the Working Classes, and how to better their Condition...'[4]

The other important place in Manchester where working class and middle class men might mix socially was the County Forum. Whether this institution had its origin in 1812 or the early 1880s was still being debated during the Second World War.[5] However in 1881-2 the County Forum Restaurant was located in the basement of 105 Market

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1. Ibid., p.249.
2. Ancoats Recreation Committee, Programmes of the Autumn and Winter Work of the Ancoats Recreation Committee (Manchester, 1895) [pages are not numbered in the bound volume in Manchester Local History Library]
3. Ancoats Recreation Movement Programmes 1885-6 [bound vol. in Manchester Local History Library. No page nos.]
4. Ancoate Recreation, Syllabus of a Course of Lectures on 'Past, Present and Future of the Working Classes, and how to better their condition' by Michael E. Sadler, B.A., Trinity College, Oxford. To be given in the New Islington Hall, Ancoats, on Monday, Sept. 7th, and each Monday till Nov. 23rd, 1885, at 7.30. (Manchester, ?1885) 31pp.
5. Manchester Evening Chronicle, 20 September 1940.

Street, on the corner of Marsden Square.[1] More than simply a restaurant, it was a social and debating centre, and a training ground for many of Manchester's political speakers. The long, irregularly-shaped room was fitted all round with comfortable seats. It had a low ceiling, was dimly lit, and was often crowded, particularly on the days of set debates. The walls were 'decorated with maps of the localities from which emanate the latest war scares, and with coloured prints, mostly of political celebrities'. Just before the debate people dined, smoked, or played draughts and chess. Much coffee was consumed, but no alcohol; the Forum sold a drink called 'Three B's', which was supposed to look and taste like best Burton beer. For debates there was usually a properly constituted leader of the house and a chairman. The midday debates on Tuesdays and Fridays were considered to be of a higher order than the rest, with better speakers who could be 'certain of an intelligent audience'.[2]

Joe Toole, later a Labour MP for South Salford and Lord Mayor of Manchester, attended the County Forum as a young man in the early 1900s. His general comments on the institution do, however, hold true for the 1880s.

> There never was a wit-sharpening institution such as this. From Members of Parliament to secretaries of political and philanthropic societies, propagandists, special pleaders and cranks, and faddists of all kinds - all were welcome at the County Forum.[3]

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1. The exact location of the County Forum is at first instance confusing. W. Tomlinson, Bye-ways of Manchester Life (Manchester, 1887) p.219, described it as being in Market Street, situated in the crypt of 'a building devoted to the conservation of household goods'. An article in the Manchester Evening Chronicle, 20 September 1940, placed it 'on the corner of Marston's Square', while ibid, 10 September 1956, quoting an advertisement from the County Forum Gazette 1883, stated that the Forum was at 105 Market Street. Reports in Justice, 29 March and 16 May 1885 gave the Forum's address as 2, Marsden Square, Market Street. Slater's Directory (Manchester, 1920) revealed that Marsden Square was between 103 and 105 Market Street and that 105, then known as Marsden Chambers, was occupied by six different businesses. Marsden Square extended to Cannon Street, and the lowest numbers were at the Market Street end. The addresses 2 Marsden Square and 105 Market Street may therefore have referred to the same building. Market Street and Cannon Street are both shown on Map 3.
2. W. Tomlinson, op.cit., pp.219-26.
3. J. Toole, Fighting through Life (1935) p.106. For biographical notes on Toole, see Appendix II below.

> The County Forum was a great educational force. Apart from the long list of professional politicians, parsons, teachers, doctors and lawyers who gathered there on Tuesdays and Fridays, scores of commercial men came in from the Royal Exchange either to listen or make their contribution to the debates.[1]

During the 1880s the County Forum came to be used as a centre for the socialist movement. William Morris[2] and Edward Carpenter[3] lectured there, as did local socialists. Joseph Waddington, then of the SDF, delivered an address on 'Labour Representation', while L.D. Prince, as secretary of Hulme Radical Club, spoke on 'Egypt a Tory Legacy';[4] W.R. Bottomley, secretary of the Manchester Branch of the English Land Restoration League, defended nationalization in one of the regular debates.[5] The Manchester Branch of the International Working Men's Association,[6] the SDF[7] and the Socialist League[8] all met at the Forum. William Henry Chadwick, an old Chartist whose services as a lecturer were advertised in Justice, even gave 'County Forum, Manchester' as his address.[9]

These aspects of the socialist movement will be considered at a later stage. They are cited here to demonstrate that the County Forum was frequented by at least some working men, as well as by the middle class groups later described by Toole. The question arises, however, as to how many working men did in fact take part in activities of the Ancoats Recreation Movement and County Forum, and from which section of the working class they came. It has already been demonstrated that there was an economic and social division between the skilled and unskilled workers. Was there also a similar cultural division? The presence of an individual like Joseph Waddington at the County Forum proves nothing. Born in a Deansgate cellar, fatherless, and educated only until the age of nine at a Quaker charity school, he became a jobbing carpenter.[10] But he was also a leading member of the local SDF[11]

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1. Ibid., p.108.
2. Commonweal (hereafter cited as Com.), November 1885.
3. Ibid., October 1885. Carpenter spoke on 'Justice before Charity: a plea for Socialism'.
4. Justice (hereafter cited as J), 24 January 1885.
5. Ibid., 3 January 1885.
6. Ibid., 29 March 1884, 31 May 1884.
7. Ibid., 16 May 1885.
8. Com., October 1885.
9. J, 28 March 1885. For details of Chadwick's life see T.P. Newbould, Pages from a life of strife; being some recollections of William Henry Chadwick, last of the Manchester Chartists /1911/ passim.
10. L. Thompson, op.cit., pp.51, 88-9.
11. Waddington may indeed be described as the founder of Salford SDF; see J, 31 January, 7 February 1885.

and Socialist League,[1] as well as honorary sanitary officer of the Hulme Working Men's Sanitary Association.[2] He sold socialist literature[3] and wrote in the Workman's Times as 'Robin',[4] before becoming involved with the Clarion.[5] Waddington was thus an outstanding character, but hardly a typical product of the Deansgate slums.

* * *

In order to participate in the activities of the Ancoats Recreation Movement or the County Forum, and certainly in order to read the periodicals produced by the socialist movements of the 1880s, one required a reasonable standard of literacy. How 'literate' were, in fact, the working class of Manchester and Salford? Hard facts on this subject are difficult to obtain, for the term itself is open to varying interpretations. Certainly evidence based on a person's ability to sign his name is of little relevance, for many people could fulfil this task although unable to read or write anything else.[6] Moreover even the reading ability sufficient for everyday life in an unskilled job would hardly enable someone to appreciate the contents of Justice or Commonweal, with their complex articles on Marxist theory.

Before the 1870 Education Act, both school attendance and literacy in Manchester were exceedingly poor. In a paper produced by the Educational Aid Society of Manchester for the Social Science Congress of 1866, it was estimated that there were 104,000 children of school age (3 to 12 years), of whom 49,000 or 47% were not at school. These figures were for Manchester and Salford; in Manchester alone there were 75,667 children of school age, of whom less than half were at school and less than a quarter at work. Even assuming that some of the youngest children did not begin school as soon as possible, it appeared that some 20,000 children were simply roaming the streets. In the Manchester Education Aid Society report for 1867, it was stated that, of the young people between the ages of 12 and 20, half could not read or write.[7] These were the people who would be in their thirties during the 1880s, and

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1. Com., February 1885 and 25 September 1886.
2. WT, 28 November 1890.
3. J, 10 May 1884.
4. The first contribution from Robin appeared in WT, 19 December 1890.
5. L. Thompson, op.cit., p.89.
6. R. Roberts, op.cit., p.101.
7. J.A. Bremner, 'On the Principles of Compulsion in Primary Education', in MSST Session 1869-70 (Manchester, 1870) pp.37-40.

early forties at the time of the foundation of the ILP.

In theory, the 1870 Education Act provided for compulsory elementary education for all children beween 5 and 13, either in Board Schools or in those of the various religious denominations. This did not, however, mean that all the children in Manchester under the age of 13 actually attended school regularly. The bye-laws permitted half-time examption for children over the age of 10 who had passed, or were capable of passing, the 3rd Standard of the Education Department. Total exemption could be made for those passing the 4th Standard.[1] This provision was more likely to be utilized by the poorer families, where the child's income was necessary for mere subsistence, and where 'book learning' was not, in any case, held in very high regard. According to Rowland Kenney:

> It was generally taken for granted that the children of cotton operatives would go into the factories as half-timers on their tenth birthday. Then half the day would be spent at school and half in the factory, changing about for morning or afternoon school on alternate weeks. Morning factory started at six and ended at half-past twelve, with half an hour's break for breakfast, while afternoon factory hours were from half-past one to half-past five.[2]

Of his personal experience as a half-time learner, working for 6d a week pocket money, he recalled:

> ...It was awful. I loathed it. When on the morning turn I had to drag my miserable frame out of bed at five o'clock,... tramp over a mile to the factory and then keep on the run from six o'clock to half-past twelve at noon,...[3]

After a morning thus employed, it is likely that the half-timers spent their afternoons at school attempting to keep awake, rather than actually learning.

The half-time system was not, however, the only problem resulting from the Education Act. The fact that the School Board's jurisdiction was not co-extensive with the residential area of 'greater Manchester' meant that parents could escape the control of the School Board Officers by moving into particular districts, for example Newton Heath, which formed a wedge into the city.[4] In any case, attendance was

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1. Dr. J. Watts, 'The Work of the First Manchester School Board' in MSST, Session 1873-4 (Manchester, 1874) pp.2-8.
2. R. Kenney, Westering (1939) p.15. Rowland Kenney, brother of the suffragette Annie Kenney, lived at this time near Oldham. In adult life he became a member of the ILP and Manager of its Publications Department. He worked as labour editor, then editor, of the Daily Herald before becoming editor of Reynolds Newspaper. In 1920 he became a civil servant, in the Political Intelligence Department of the Foreign Office.
3. Ibid., pp.21-2.
4. H. Hughes, 'Notes on Elementary Education, with special reference to the city of Manchester' in MSST Session 1874-5 (Manchester, 1875) p.39.

not generally made compulsory until 1880.[1]

The 1870 Education Act did not lead to equality of educational opportunity even among working class children in Manchester and Salford. The charging of fees, coupled with the provisions for half-time education and early leaving, all militated against the children of the poorest section of the community.[2] For the intelligent offspring of ambitious and financially solvent parents, some wider opportunities did open up. By 1885 the number of children in the 6th, 7th and Ex 7th Standards had risen to 9% of the whole. A Central Higher Grade School in Deansgate was open, with 1,027 places. There were Whitworth and National Scholarships and Royal Exhibitions, worth £50, £60 or £100 per annum for three years, or Elementary School Scholarships for one year (worth £10) at the Higher Grade Board Schools. Of these last, 150 had been awarded in the three previous years. In addition, Grammar School or Science and Art Scholarships were available.[3] Such were the means by which the child of a relatively prosperous working class family might rise to the status of clerk or elementary school teacher.[4] Robert Roberts described Salford Technical Institute as being attended by the sons of under-managers, foremen and top-class mechanics. 'The poor looked upon it with awe, lacking the courage even to enter the building. It was not for "people like them".'[5]

To mention elementary education in this period without also mentioning the subject of religion may appear to be a distortion of the history of education. However, the aim at this stage is merely to emphasise the division which existed within the ranks of the working class population. The continuation of fee-paying and denominational education was to lead to a socialist demand for free, compulsory, secular and industrial education from the elementary to the higher stage, and one free meal per day for each child.[6] The School Boards, elected

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1. Dr. J. Watts, 'Elementary Education in Manchester' in MSST Session 1882-3 (Manchester, 1883) p.1.
2. It should be noted that at Manchester Free School the average attendance was between 97 and 98% of the possible, as against 74% of those on the registers and 85.7% of the actual attendants in Board Schools which charged fees. See Dr. J. Watts 'Fifteen Years of School Board Work in Manchester' in MSST Session 1885-6 (Manchester, 1886) p.114.
3. Ibid., pp.87-8.
4. See R. Roberts, op.cit., pp.104-5 for an examination of the social position of elementary school teachers.
5. Ibid., p.115.
6. See the programme of the SDF, Justice, 25 October 1884.

every three years and possessing considerable financial power, became the focus of attention not only of the various religious denominations, but also of the socialists.

The term 'education' should not, however, be applied merely to the school system. Many of the labour and socialist activists of this period were self-educated men, who had supplemented their few years of schooling by reading, attending lectures and debating. The County Forum and Ancoats Recreation Movement were obvious attractions for such men. Charles Rowley constantly received letters of appreciation. William Mellor, a foreman book-binder and Secretary of Manchester and Salford Trades Council in 1911, wrote to say that he had received his first intellectual stimulus at the Ancoats meetings. Abraham Flatters had, by 1911, achieved a world-wide connection with specialists in microscopical research; when he first attended the weekday lectures he had been earning a scanty living in Ancoats as a lamplighter.[1]

The most obvious venue for the self-educator was of course the Free Library. It was in Salford that the first Free Libraries act was written by Joseph Brotherton, and also in that town that a Museum and Library were opened in Peel Park in 1850.[2] Manchester adopted the Free Libraries Act two years later, opening a reference library on the upper floor, and lending department on the ground floor, of what was originally the Owenite Hall of Science in Campfield. During the years which followed branch libraries were established; at Stretford Road, Hulme, and Every Street, Ancoats, in 1857; Livesey Street in 1860; Rusholme Road in 1866 and Cheetham in 1872. In 1887 reading-rooms were opened at Bradford and Harpurhey. The popularity of the libraries became apparent during the cotton famine of 1861-2, when thousands of factory hands passed their days reading books or papers. The libraries were crowded, all the chairs occupied, and some youths even obliged to sit on the heating pipes. The building in Campfield became unsafe in 1877. Before its hasty demolition, the books were removed for storage in the Old Town Hall, recently vacated by the Corporation. In 1878 a Reference Library was opened on these premises. The move to a more central position in the city was apparently popular with the public; three times the

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1. C. Rowley, Fifty Years of Work Without Wages, op.cit., pp.220-4. For biographical notes on Mellor, see Appendix II below.
2. J.H. Leech, Salford: Past and Present /Manchester, 1900/ 34pp., p.5. See Map 2 for the location of Peel Park.

number of books were requested as in the latter years at Campfield. 1878 also saw the beginning of Sunday opening of libraries, and provision of the first boys' reading room, at the Ancoats branch. This latter scheme, intended to prevent inconvenience to adults through the presence of large numbers of boys in the newsrooms, was soon extended. By 1887 another five boys' rooms had been opened in the city. According to W.R. Credland, their clientele was..

> for the most part children of parents whose poverty draws them perilously near to the border land of crime, but they are still too young to have crossed that border themselves.[1]

However frequenting reading rooms and reading at home were two different matters for the children of the poor.

> In the houses of innumerable members of the lower working class one would not find a book of any sort. Indeed I have heard many men say that after leaving school they never opened a book again. Very many among the middle aged and elderly, continuing a veto of their own parents, forbade all books and periodicals on the grounds that they kept women and children from their proper tasks and developed lazy habits. As far as children were concerned, our local council /Salford/ seems to have concurred in this; from the opening of the public libraries half a century earlier until 1906, no one under fourteen years of age was allowed membership...[2]

Reading material in poorer working class homes was strictly limited. Old Moore's Almanack and Sunday newspapers were to be found most frequently; perhaps this factor explains something of the popularity of 'Nunquam' in the Sunday Chronicle. Otherwise there were local evening papers (with racing results) and periodicals such as Answers, containing easily assimilated, inconsequential facts and competitions with spectacular prizes. Women might enjoy a weekly diet of fiction in the form of Home Notes and Home Chat, while many children's reading was confined to Sunday School prizes or the information provided on cigarette cards.[3]

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1. W.R. Credland, 'The Free Library Movement in Manchester' in MSST Session 1887-8 (Manchester, 1888) pp.134-43. For locations cited, see Maps 1 and 2. The Town Hall is shown on Map 3. It should be noted that Bradford is a district of Manchester. Only in a few obvious instances in this work (for example the discussion of the ILP foundation conference) does the name refer to the Yorkshire town. The emphasis on the reading rooms being for boys rather than girls cannot be ignored, but the role of women in society in general, as well as in the socialist movement, is discussed at length in Part 2, Chapter 4.
2. R. Roberts, op.cit., pp.132-3.
3. Ibid., pp.129-30, 132, 134-5.

Of the other leisure activities available for the working class, those relating to the labour movement and organizations of a more political nature will be considered at a later stage. Apart from these stood the whole field of theatrical entertainment. The Comedy and Prince's Theatres, and the Theatre Royal, were all noted for their pantomimes. There was the Queen's Theatre, the Folly Theatre of Varieties in Peter Street, and Prince of Wales in Liverpool Street, Salford. The era of the music hall reached its zenith in the 1890s, and was well represented by the Folly Theatre of Varieties, the Tivoli, the People's Concert Hall in Lower Mosley Street and the Star Music Hall in Pollard Street, Ancoats, among others. Travelling circuses often frequented the wooden building known as Cooke's Circus in Mount Street, while there was a circus in Chepstow Street, off Oxford Street, and the Grand Circus in Peter Street. In the strictly musical field were preformances by the Hallé Orchestra and the various brass bands, which held their annual contest at Belle Vue.[1]

Enjoyment of such entertainment was not, however, an alternative to politics. It is likely that many of the political activists also frequented the theatres and music halls. When the first, eight page, edition of the Clarion appeared on 12 December 1891, one whole page was devoted to the theatre and another to sport.[2] Blatchford's own theatrical activities were an important element in his career.[3] John Pitt Hardacre, lessee of the Queen's Theatre, became a fervent supporter of the Ancoats Cinderella Club, and was stoutly defended by the Clarion some ten years later when the Watch Committee revoked his licence.[4] Theatrical personalities and amateur dramatics were to play an important role in the later development of the ILP.

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1. For details of these and other entertainments, see W.H. Shercliffe, It Happened round Manchester. Entertainments (1968) pp.20-42 passim; Manchester of To-day, op.cit., p.56. The Theatre Royal and Queen's Theatre are shown on Map 3 and Belle Vue on Map 1. For location of other places of entertainment, see Map 2.
2. C, 12 December 1891.
3. Blatchford wrote the libretto and lyrics for a comic opera In Summer Days. The music was by his cousin, Clarence C. Corri. He was involved with this in the autumn of 1891, while also writing for the Sunday Chronicle and acting as parliamentary candidate for East Bradford. The extent of his activities outside his work may well have been the reason for his dismissal by Edward Hulton (see L. Thompson, op.cit., pp.67,77)
4. For the career of John Pitt Hardacre, see Manchester Faces and Places, Vol.1 No.6, 10 March 1890, pp.94-6.

University Library Hull

A distinction has continually been made between the skilled artisans and the great mass of unskilled and casual workers. However in the eyes of even the poorest English slum dweller there were two groups of people far below him on the social ladder; the Roman Catholic Irish and the Jews. According to Robert Roberts, prejudice was deeply ingrained.

> People assured one another in the shop, I remember, that nearly all Roman Catholics were dirty and ignorant and even the cleaner ones could never be trusted...It was widely held that they went in dread of the priesthood, who had beaten obedience into them in childhood, and who now exploited their fear of death and mulcted them for the Church, no matter how deep their poverty... Working-class Roman Catholics, it was said loudly in pub and workshop, were forbidden by the Pope to discuss their faith or even touch a Bible; yet we suspected them all the time of seeking to make converts. Of all the sects Catholicism was undoubtedly the one most criticised and disliked...
> ...The Jews, twenty thousand strong, dwelt in an area adjacent to ours on the north side, some in a poverty so appalling that it shocked even us. Our own poor grew hostile. They sensed the menace of a horde of hungry foreigners seeking to share in charities which, they felt, as true-born Britons belonged to them alone. Odd Jews who strayed into the village were driven out at once.[1]

The actual number of Roman Catholics in Manchester and Salford is not easy to ascertain. The only Census of Religious Attendance was taken in 1851. This gave the attendance at Roman Catholic churches in Manchester as betwen 8.1 and 13.0% of the total, and in Salford between 4.1 and 8.0%.[2] In 1885 Dr. J. Watts, writing on the subject of education, stated that Roman Catholics formed 10% of the population of Manchester.[3] By 1888 there were 36 Roman Catholic churches in Manchester, as well as Salford Cathedral.[4] In these towns the terms 'Roman Catholic' and 'Irish' were largely synonymous. English Catholics in the North West of England tended to be found mainly in the rural areas, or around Preston,Chorley and Liverpool.[5] As immigrants, or descendants of immigrants, Roman Catholics tended to

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1. R. Roberts, op.cit., pp.36-7. By 'village' Roberts meant the Oldfield Road/Cross Lane area of Salford, which at the time was almost a self-contained community. Concerning the size of the Jewish population, it should be noted that his figure of twenty thousand applied to the early twentieth century. The main period of immigration was from 1883 to 1905, when the persecution of Jews in Russia reached its greatest intensity (see J.D. Gay, The Geography of Religion (1971) p.207.)
2. J.D. Gay, op.cit., pp. 92, 278-9 (Map 15).
3. Dr. J. Watts, 'Fifteen Years of School Board Work in Manchester' in MSST, 1885-6 Session (Manchester, 1886) p.106.
4. Slater's Directory 1888 (Manchester, 1888) pp.284-9.
5. J.D. Gay, op.cit., p.88.

group together, usually forming some of the poorest working class communities.[1] In Manchester their greatest concentration was in St. Michael's ward, the Rochdale Road/Oldham Road area in the north of the city.[2]

Before the 1880s there was an old-established Jewish community in Manchester. Its members were on the whole well-to-do, cultured and accepted in middle class Manchester society. They were the descendants of German and Spanish Jews, who were engaged in the export of Lancashire products.[3] The Russian pogroms of the 1880s saw the beginning of a new wave of poorer, sometimes destitute immigrants.[4] Many of them found work in the cabinet making and clothing industries.[5] There were also a large number of Jews employed in the boot and shoe trade. When, at the end of the 1870s, a cheaper range of boots began to be riveted instead of stitched, an opening was provided for unskilled workers. Many Polish and Lithuanian Jews entered the trade, working for a bare living.[6]

The Jewish immigrants were concentrated not only into a limited number of occupations (mainly the worst-paid 'sweated industries'), but also into a distinct geographical area, around Cheetham Hill. The main thoroughfare of the district was York Street, which linked Cheetham Hill to the city centre.[7] Along it were to be found the synagogues of British Jews, of the Sephardic community, and the Manchester New Synagogue and Beth Hanidrash (House of Learning). There was a separate Jewish Board of Guardians, with their office also in York Street.[8] In 1882 a Jewish Working Men's Club was established in a large room in Park Place, Cheetham. This moved into a rented house on the corner of York Street and Cheetham Hill Road, then into purpose-built premises in Exchange Street, which were opened in 1887 by Alderman John Mark, the first Lord Mayor of Manchester. Social activities ranged from dominoes to a minstrel troupe (cards were banned), while the Junior Debating Society promoted

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1. Ibid., pp.90-1
2. Manchester Guardian (hereafter cited as MG), 16 November 1888. See map and report on 'North Manchester'. See also Map 2.
3. For a detailed account of early Jewish immigration to Manchester, see B. Williams, The Making of Manchester Jewry, 1740-1875 (Manchester, 1976) passim.
4. J.D. Gay, op.cit., p.207.
5. CFT, 30 May 1890.
6. WT, 19 September 1890.
7. See Map 1. The entire length of this road, from Victoria Station, is now known as Cheetham Hill Road.
8. Manchester Faces and Places, Vol.1 No.12, 10 September 1890, pp.90-1.

more serious discussion. Because this was the only Jewish social centre in Manchester, it came to be used by both employers and employees.[1] The isolation of Manchester's Jewish community, coupled with the linguistic problems and nature of employment of many of its members, led to the development of a labour movement often distinct from that of the native inhabitants.[2]

How important a part did religion play in the lives of the rest of the population of Manchester and Salford? The second half of the nineteenth century witnessed a drift away from organised religion. Analysis of the 1851 Census of Church Attendance has shown that the rates of attendance were lower in large towns than elsewhere, 49.7% as opposed to 71.4% for rural areas and small towns. 'Large towns' in this instance comprised a group of 73 towns which had populations of over 10,000. Church attendance in Manchester and Salford was even below the average for this group.[3] The absentees from church in the latter half of the nineteenth century were generally recognised as being the working classes.[4] This was not the result of active hostility to religion;[5] Manchester did play an active part in the National Secular Society, but the numbers involved in or influenced by this body would be insignificant as a proportion of the total population of the two towns.[6] The general working class attitude towards religion may best be described as one of indifference.[7] But even in this aspect of social life there appears to have been some distinction between the more prosperous skilled workers and the poor:

> In the decade before 1914 whilst organised religion still kept a hold on some of the upper working class (the undermass had defected generations before) a drift towards secularism was already well on the way, though backsliders salved their conscience by strict insistence on their children's attending Sunday School. Very few people would, in fact, admit to not being Christians: one merely 'disliked' the Church, the parson or the congregation. In pub and workshop outright atheists were looked upon as tempters of Providence, very odd fish indeed...
>
> All in all, however, it seemed that by the early years of the twentieth century churches and chapels had little to offer that would attract much longer those from the lower multitudes who still stayed loyal.[8]

It will, at a later stage, be necessary to consider the religious activity, or lack of it, in the careers of Manchester and Salford's working class

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1. Jewish Telegraph, 4 September 1953. Yiddish was generally spoken in the club.
2. See below, pp.140-2
3. J.D. Gay, op.cit., pp.58-9, 237 n.36.
4. Ibid., p.58; S. Mayor, The Churches and the Labour Movement (1967) p.22.
5. S. Mayor, op.cit., p.21.
6. See below, pp.63-7
7. S. Mayor, op.cit., pp.21-3.
8. R. Roberts, op.cit., pp.138-9.

leaders. It is merely suggested here that, if religion no longer held much relevance for many working people, they may have been more receptive to a substitute philosophy of life.

* * *

The picture which emerges of Manchester and Salford in the 'eighties is one of an extremely stratified society. On the bottom rung of the social ladder was to be found the great mass of the population; unskilled or casual labourers and the unemployed, slum dwellers, survivors of one of the highest mortality rates in the country. They were poor, often illiterate, leading lives which consisted mainly of work and the struggle for survival.

> On the light evenings after a day's work many men, even if they had the desire, possessed no means of occupying body or mind. Ignorance and poverty combined to breed, for the most part, tedium, a dumb accidie of the back streets to which only brawling brought relief. Summer evening leisure for men without the few coppers to go into a tavern meant long, empty hours lounging between kitchen chair and threshold.[1]

The advent of new trade unions in the 'eighties did play its part in alleviating the conditions of the unskilled. Whether the actual organization was done by them, or merely for them, should be considered at a later stage. It did not, however, eradicate the vast gulf which continued to exist between them and the skilled artisans. The latter group was differentiated not only by its enjoyment of higher wages and shorter hours, obtained with the aid of established trade unions, but also by its pursuit of leisure-time activities. With some notable exceptions, it was from the ranks of the skilled artisans that there emerged what can only be described as the 'working class intelligentsia'.

The working man with a love of reading, a desire for self-improvement and, above all, a desire to improve society in general, was by no means a new phenomenon in the 1880s. The Corresponding Societies of the French Revolutionary era, the Radical movement which culminated in Peterloo, Chartism, trade unionism, the co-operative movement and many religious groups had all owed much of their progress to such men. It is, however, suggested that after the mid-'eighties the sheer size of this group began to show a marked increase. The products of the 1870 Education Act were leaving school with a basic grounding in the '3Rs', but in some cases with an unsatisfied thirst for further knowledge. They turned to the Public Libraries, the Museums, the Ancoats Recreation

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1. R. Roberts, op.cit., p.32.

Movement, and the County Forum, in their search for intellectual stimulus. Yet no matter how intelligent or well-read they might be, the majority were still trapped by the confines of the social system. A century later they would have found their way through the secondary and higher educational systems into professional occupations which utilized their talents; by doing so they would also have removed themselves from the working class. In the 'eighties they could hope only for employment in skilled trades, or perhaps elevation to the lower middle class ranks as clerks or elementary school teachers. None of these occupations required a very high level of intellectual ability. As Emmanuel Shinwell commented:

> One third of the fathers, and one half of the mothers, of the children going into the factories and offices of the eighties were illiterate, but their children were the New Generation, products of the compulsory education which affected every child on its fifth birthday after 1870.
>
> Never before or since has there been such a hunger for something to read. The angry young men of nineteenth-century literature caught the mood of the masses and fed the hunger of disquiet. Social problems, science and morality preoccupied them all.[1]

In the years which followed, the existence of a working class intelligentsia was readily acknowledged by contemporaries. C. Stella Davies spoke of the amount of 'innate ability' to be found within the ranks of the 'respectable working class' and commented that there were 'more brains about lower down the social scale' than in the modern era.[2] The phenomenon was perhaps best described by Robert Roberts:

> Before 1914 the proletariat contained, far more than it does today, many men and women of personality, character and high intelligence, who were chained socially and economically within their own society. Such people in a more equitable system would, of course, have found a place far more fitted to their abilities, but only a very few, aided by luck and determination, succeeded in breaking through their environment. The vast majority, half conscious often of talents wasted, felt a frustration they could hardly have explained...they were an integral part of the working community. They talked more, read more and possessed a much larger vocabulary than their neighbours in general. True, many of their words, having been picked up from print only, were mispronounced; but such error was a sign of intelligence struggling for self-expression.[3]

It is obvious that some of this group must have concentrated mainly upon 'getting on in the world'; others may have turned to religion and become lay preachers. But many directed their intellectual ability and social

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1. E. Shinwell, op.cit., p.32.
2. C. Stella Davies. Tape recorded interview by T.D.W. Reid, 30 October 1970.
3. R. Roberts, op.cit., pp.141-2.

conscience into the realms of trade unions and friendly societies, the co-operative movement, and party politics. It was from their activities, and sometimes disillusionment in these fields, that the demand for an independent labour party emerged.

Chapter 2

The Emergence of Labourism into Politics

In this study of the Independent Labour Party, and of the social and political movements which led to its foundation, the terms 'labourism' and 'socialism' must be employed frequently. Of the two, only 'socialism' is readily definable. Although manifested in a variety of forms and by several political bodies, socialism may be reduced to a number of tenets; the most important of them being, by the 1880s, a desire to replace the capitalist system by public control of the means of production, distribution and exchange. The differences between the schools of socialist thought, although they will be considered in detail at a later stage, are in this context less important than the fact that socialism was always a definable ideology; labourism was not.

Labourism has been described as:

> ...a theory and practice which accepted the possibility of social change within the existing framework of society; which rejected the revolutionary violence and action implicit in Chartist ideas of physical force, and which increasingly recognized the working of political democracy of the parliamentary variety as the practicable means of achieving its own aims and objectives. Labourism was the theory and practice of class collaboration; it was a tradition which in theory (always) and in practice (mostly) emphasized the unity of capital and labour, and the importance of conciliation and arbitration in industrial disputes.[1]

This would appear to suggest that labourism was a logical, consciously political movement. It is, however, suggested that labourism was essentially an intuitive response of the working class community to its environment; an expression of commonly held attitudes and aspirations which were opportunist, sometimes even illogical, and basically apolitical.

In The Uses of Literacy, Richard Hoggart described the tendency of working class people to concentrate upon matters concrete and personal:

> ...in general most working-people are non-political and non-metaphysical in their outlook. The important things in life, so far as they can see, are other things. They may appear to have views on general matters - on religion, on politics, and so on- but these views usually prove to be a bundle of largely unexamined and orally transmitted tags, enshrining generalizations, prejudices, and half-truths, and elevated by epigrammatic phrasing into the status of maxims.[2]

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1. J. Saville, 'The Ideology of Labourism' in R. Benewick, R.N. Berki and B. Parekh (ed.), Knowledge and Belief in Politics. The Problem of Ideology (1973) pp.215-16.
2. R. Hoggart, The Uses of Literacy (1957; Penguin ed. reprinted Harmondsworth, 1965) p.103.

Similarly:

> Working class people are only rarely interested in theories or movements. They do not usually think of their lives as leading to an improvement in status or to some financial goal. They are enormously interested in people.[1]

Labourism was essentially associated with such an outlook on life. It was a desire for a better life for self, family, friends and workmates. The concept of the better life was always within the realms of what might be possible and attainable in the near future: a more comfortable home, regular work, a few shillings more in the weekly pay packet, a shorter working day, the opportunity for an unskilled worker's son to obtain an apprenticeship, perhaps even simply to become 'respectable'.

It was from such a standpoint that working class institutions were viewed. Trade unions were a means of improving hours, conditions and wages, not a potential instrument for achieving political change. The co-operative society provided the thrifty housewife with good quality products, fair prices and dividend, not the vision of Owenite socialism. Similarly, the working men's club was a centre of social life, providing dominoes and beer (or the chance to adhere to one's temperance principles); it was not the place in which to plan social change.

In the field of politics, labourism embodied a general acceptance of the existing structure of society. Robert Roberts, describing the working class 'undermass' of Salford in the period before the First World War, commented:

> Like the working class as a whole they went on gazing up still to the ineffable reaches of the middle and upper orders and felt that there stood wealth, wisdom and an ordained capacity for command far beyond a simple man's knowing, and that leadership they would follow.[2]

A philosophy which embodied both such deference and a desire for the greater good of oneself and one's fellow workers was necessarily opportunist and, to more doctrinaire minds, illogical. Thus:

> ...whatever their quarrel with <u>local</u> employers, the ultra-patriotic mass remained intensely loyal to the nation and the system as a whole. One week a striking docker might hurl stones at the police and the next, assured of his daily bread, applaud the marching Territorials or cheer a passing prince to the skies. Oratory during strike time about 'direct action' and 'one big union' might sound

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1. Ibid., p.105.
2. R. Roberts, op.cit., p.148.

> fine, but in the day-to-day struggle to live it meant nothing at all.[1]

Labourists might therefore be found among the adherents of either the Conservative or Liberal party. What mattered was not Conservatism or Liberalism, but the prospect of what a local M.P. would do for his constituents, or the promised legislation which might benefit working people.

The change from general participation in the existing two party system to the emergence of an identifiable labourist political group was by no means a mass movement. It was rather a movement of that working class intelligentsia described in the preceding chapter. Even as late as 1914, the majority of working men in Salford at least still adhered to the old-established parties. To cite again Robert Roberts:

> Our district voted solidly Conservative except for once in the famous election of 1906, when a fear that the Tories' tariff reform policy might increase the price of food alarmed the humble voter. A Conservative victory, it was widely bruited, would mean the 'little loaf'; a Liberal win, the 'big loaf'. These were politics the poor could understand! ... The overwhelming majority of unskilled workers remained politically illiterate still. The less they had to conserve the more conservative in spirit they showed themselves... Many were genuinely grateful to an employer for being kind enough to use their services at all. Voting Conservative, they felt at one with him...[2]

> The Liberal-voting skilled worker, his demi-god Lloyd George, easily maintained ascendancy as the purveyor of progressive ideas, ideas in which there was, in fact, little place for true equality with those beneath him. Until 1914 the members of this élite generally, as far as class values were concerned, stayed almost as conformist and establishment-minded as their Tory counterparts. Together they stood, the great bulwark against revolution of any kind.[3]

The desire of working men to express the views and expedite the needs of labourism in Parliament, and on local elected bodies, was by no means new. But while the crowd at Peterloo, and the Chartists, were united in their demand for votes, after 1867 labourists in Manchester and Salford were divided by the exercise of this newly-obtained right. Working class leaders and organizations were split over party political issues and, as a corollary to this, neither party was prepared to take any far-reaching steps to accommodate itself to the

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1. Ibid., p.68.
2. Ibid., p.133.
3. Ibid., p.143.

demands of labour. The working class élite responded to this situation by an attempt to reunite labour, at first merely as a pressure group extending across existing party barriers, then outside their confines in the form of an independent labour party. By the time that the latter movement took place, however, labourism had entered into an alliance with socialism. The origins of this labour/socialist alliance will be considered in a later chapter. What must be attempted here is to demonstrate the division of working class institutions and leaders by party political barriers, and then the failure of both the Conservative and Liberal parties to absorb the labourist tradition. Finally the efforts made by local leaders to surmount the party barriers in the interests of labour must be described.

* * *

Labourist leaders and institutions do not develop political allegiances in a vacuum. It is therefore necessary to commence this survey by considering the support for the two parties which existed among the electorate of Manchester and Salford. To attempt any analysis of working class political attitudes raises many initial problems, the principal one being that, even after the Franchise Act of 1884, a large number of men, as well as all women, were still excluded from the parliamentary franchise. In the United Kingdom as a whole, less than 30% of the adult population was actually included in the electoral registers for 1885.[1] Qualifications for the franchise and the registration procedure were particularly complex. Most of the working men who qualified as voters did so as householders, as occupiers of tenements or unfurnished lodgings valued at £10 per annum, or as sub-tenants in houses let out by non-resident owners. Sons living with parents and domestic servants resident with employers were excluded, as was anyone receiving poor relief.[2]

The 1885 General Election saw Manchester divided into six constituencies; North West, North, North East, East, South and South West. Salford had its North, West and South constituencies, while large numbers of the 'greater Manchester' population found themselves to be part of the Stretford and Gorton divisions of South East Lancashire.

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1. N. Blewett, 'The Franchise in the United Kingdom 1885-1918' in Past and Present No.32, December 1965. p.27.
2. Ibid., pp.32-5; N. Ostrogorski, Democracy and the Organization of Political Parties Vol.I (1902; reprinted New York, 1970) pp.372-3.

Of the Manchester constituencies, the North West contained most of the business quarter of the city. Its voters included a large number of freeholders and men who, being qualified to vote in respect of both their places of business and dwelling-houses, had opted to exercise the former right. The other wealthy middle class constiuency was the South, which tended to be a residential district for professional and 'white-collar' workers. In the other four divisions of the city, working class influence was stronger.[1]

The results of the 1885 General Election are provided in Table 1 overleaf. The total population (in 1891) of each constituency is also shown, to indicate the relatively small size of the electorate and demonstrate the possibility that, even in a constituency with a large working class population, the size of the working class electorate might still not be sufficiently large to swing the result. It is, however, possible to look for general trends in the electoral behaviour of constituencies with some working class, as opposed to virtually all middle class, voters. Such analysis does not produce any obvious pattern. Of the two wealthiest divisions, North West returned a Conservative with a majority of 723, and South a Liberal with a majority of 670. All the constituencies with working class electorates returned Conservatives, but the biggest Conservative majority was not in the most predominantly working class constituency. North East Manchester produced a Conservative majority of 1,448, but of its 8,579 registered voters, 5,308 were from New Cross (Ancoats) and 3,271 from Newton, which comprised the working class area of Miles Platting together with the more affluent Newton Heath. On the other hand, South West Manchester, with its predominantly artisan majority, produced the smallest majority for a Conservative M.P., 567.[2]

By looking at the Manchester results, it is possible to suggest that working class electors tended to favour the Conservative party. However when the Salford and Gorton divisions are considered, even this tentative conclusion must be dismissed. Of the three Salford

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1. Maps and descriptions of all Manchester and Salford constituencies are contained in Part 2 Chapter 2 below. See pp. 349-51, 361-2, 369-70, 383, 390, 397-8, 409-12, 419, 425-6.
2. See Table 1 and MG, 19 and 20 November 1885.

Table 1

The 1885 General Election

Constituency	Total Population	Conservative Votes	Liberal Votes	Elected	Majority
MANCHESTER					
North West	67,650	5834	5111	Cons.	723
North	76,629	4093	3118	Cons.	975
North East	72,796	4341	2893	Cons.	1448
East	85,405	4536	3712	Cons.	824
South	80,061	3121	3791	Lib.	670
South West	71,968	3929	3362	Cons.	567
SALFORD					
North	61,520	3519	3343	Cons.	176
West	67,740	3481	3755	Lib.	274
South	68,879	3706	3761	Lib.	55
LANCS.(S.E.)					
Stretford	67,004	4676	4866*	Lib.	190
Gorton	77,690	3452	5300	Lib.	1848

* denotes Gladstonian Liberal candidate

compiled from J. Vincent and M. Stenton, McCalmont's Parliamentary Poll Book. British Election Results 1832-1918 (8th ed. with introduction and additional material. Brighton, 1971) pp.141, 164-6, 210-11.

constituencies, perhaps the one with the largest working class electorate was the South, while the other two constituencies contained more pronounced social divisions. If there had existed any overwhelming working class support for the Conservative party, then one might expect the Conservative vote to be larger in the industrial Salford South, than in the other two constituencies which contained large numbers of middle class voters. But in fact Salford South witnessed a Liberal victory, albeit with a majority of only 55. Salford West also returned a Liberal, but with a larger majority, of 274. It was only in the North that a Conservative was returned by a 176 vote majority.[1]

To confuse the picture still further, the two county divisions which in fact constituted part of 'greater Manchester', Stretford and Gorton, both returned Liberals. Stretford included all the freeholders of Manchester and Salford, together with residential voters from the districts of Stretford, Chorlton, Didsbury, Withington, Reddish, Old Trafford, Heaton Chapel and Heaton Norris. With the freeholders constituting a large proportion of the electorate, it was a predominantly middle class division.[2] The Gorton constituency, comprising the townships of Gorton, Openshaw, Denton and Haughton, was by contrast almost entirely industrial. Yet the Gorton division produced the greatest Liberal victory in the area, a majority of 1848, while in Stretford the Liberal majority was only 190.[3]

The Gorton result may partly be attributable to the personal popularity of the Liberal candidate, R. Peacock, who, according to the Manchester Guardian, had 'an excellent reputation as an employer of labour'. Apparently the Irish, who had been instructed by Parnell to vote Conservative, generally gave him their support.[4] The fact that the Irish, a relatively cohesive working class group, varied in their electoral behaviour, gives added weight to the argument that working

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1. See Table 1 and MG, 23, 24 and 25 November 1885.
2. MG, 3 December 1885; H. Pelling, Social Geography of British Elections 1885-1910 (1967) p.245. MG describes the freeholders as constituting a third of the electorate, while Pelling states that c.1910 they were about a sixth. For location of the districts, see Map 1.
3. MG, 5 December 1885; H. Pelling, op.cit., p.246. MG gives the number of Conservative votes cast in Gorton as 3,552. See also Table 1 above.
4. MG, 5 December 1885; H. Pelling, op.cit., p.246.

class allegiance in Manchester and Salford was divided. This was not the case in all cities. In Sheffield the working class electorate appears to have been firmly attached to the Radical wing of the Liberal party over national issues.[1] In London, although there existed a division between Radicalism and official Liberalism, there was no working class Conservative movement.[2]

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Associated with this division of the working class electorate as a whole were the differing party allegiances of the trade unions and Trades Council. During the early 1880s, before the advent of 'New Unionism' among the unskilled workers, none of these organisations could claim to be representative of mass working class opinion. They did, however, comprise most of the prominent and vocal advocates of labourism.

Among the older craft unions then in existence were the Friendly Society of Ironfounders, the United Society of Boilermakers, Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners, United Machine Workers' Society and Typographical Association. Also catered for were tailors, bookbinders, lithographic printers, housepainters, and workers in the building trades, such as bricklayers, stone masons, plasterers and plumbers.[3] In addition to these were the cotton unions, the most important being the Amalgamated Association of Operative Cotton Spinners and the Northern Counties Weavers' Association.[4] Miners in the area were catered for by the Lancashire and Cheshire Miners' Federation, which had been founded in Manchester in 1881, although some small unions still remained aloof from this organization.[5] Other trade unionists included the railwaymen, whose Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants had been founded in 1872, and some white collar workers, notably the Post Office telegraphists and the National Union of Elementary School Teachers.[6]

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1. S. Pollard, A History of Labour in Sheffield (Liverpool, 1959) p.120.
2. P. Thompson, op.cit., p.87.
3. H.A. Clegg, A. Fox and A.F. Thompson, A History of British Trade Unions since 1889. Vol.1 (Oxford, 1964) pp.2-3, 14; L. Bather, 'A History of Manchester and Salford Trades Council' (Manchester Ph.D., 1956) pp.16, 49, 70-4.
4. H.A. Clegg et al., op.cit., p.26. See also E. Hopwood, A History of the Lancashire Cotton Industry and the Amalgamated Weavers' Association (Manchester, 1969) p.53.
5. R. Challinor, The Lancashire and Cheshire Miners (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1972) pp.177-80.
6. H.A. Clegg et al., op.cit., pp.31-2.

When these unions are considered from the standpoint of working class politics, the most significant factor to observe is that none of them was in a position to influence a large proportion of the electorate in any given constituency. The sheer size of Manchester and Salford, the diversity of industries, and the general movement of population away from the city centre in the latter half of the nineteenth century, all led to the members of any given union being scattered through several constituencies. The miners, who elsewhere had managed to return Alexander Macdonald and Thomas Burt to Parliament[1], formed only a small section of the population of West Salford. The cotton unions, whose membership was far greater, might at first appear to have been in an influential position, until it is remembered that a high proportion of their members were women, with no votes.[2]

Had all the trade unionists been adherents of one political party, their influence might still have been considerable. However an examination of the political tendencies of unions again indicates division. Of the cotton unions, P.F. Clarke suggests that the weavers were predominantly Liberal, while the spinners were to a large degree Conservative.[3] F. Bealey and H. Pelling, in Labour and Politics 1900-1906, however write of 'the predominantly Conservative textile workers' in Lancashire and Cheshire.[4] Officially, at any rate, the cotton unions sought to avoid involvement in party politics;[5] an acknowledgement, perhaps, of the division which existed within their ranks. Miners have traditionally been associated with the return of Lib-Lab members to Parliament, but 'unlike other coalfields, Lancashire had large numbers of miners with strong Conservative convictions'.[6] The Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants tended, in its early days, to associate with the Liberal Party. Each of the four General Secretaries in the nineteenth century believed that members' interests might best be served by lobbying sympathetically-minded Liberal M.P.s, and supporting the Liberal candidates at election time. In 1894 its General Secretary,

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1. Ibid., p.51. Macdonald and Burt were elected, without Liberal opposition, in 1874.
2. F. Bealey and H. Pelling, Labour and Politics 1900-1906 (1958) pp.16-17.
3. P.F. Clarke, Lancashire and the New Liberalism (Cambridge, 1971) pp.84-5.
4. F. Bealey and H. Pelling, op.cit., p.16.
5. P.F. Clarke, op.cit., p.84.
6. R. Challinor, op.cit., p.201.

Edward Harford, was officially supported by the Liberals when standing as the Union's parliamentary candidate at Northampton. However objections were raised by Lancashire branches, on the grounds that many of their members voted Conservative.[1] It would seem likely that these Conservative sympathies already existed in the 1880s.

Manchester and Salford Trades Council, founded in 1866, included no mention of political activities in its rules. Its early leaders nevertheless manifested strong party political feelings; not all, however, for the same party. S.C. Nicholson, its president and also the treasurer of Manchester Typographical Society, was an enthusiastic Conservative, as also was W.H. Wood, secretary of both the Trades Council and Typographical Society. On the other hand, Malcolm Macleod of the A.S.E., Peter Shorrocks of the Tailors, Rice of the Housepainters and Henry Slatter of the Typographical Society were all Liberal/Radicals. During the 1880s, the majority of the Trades Council delegates were Liberals; most prominent of them being Shorrocks, Slatter, James Mawdsley of the Lancashire Cotton Spinners, G.D. Kelley of the Lithographic Printers' Society, and Matthew Arrandale of the United Machine Workers.[2] From the preceding surveys of the mass electorate and of the trade unions, it does not appear that this overwhelming support for Liberalism within the Trades Council was particularly representative.

Other working class institutions, such as the friendly societies and clubs, often tended to cater for existing party affiliations. The co-operative movement remained officially outside party politics until 1918 and was not, in any case, an organization whose members were necessarily committed to its wider ideals.[3]

Thus of political allegiances in the early 1880s, one can merely suggest that the working class of Manchester and Salford appear to have been more Conservative, and less Liberal, than their counterparts in many other areas, and were certainly divided in their loyalties. The

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1. P.S. Bagwell, The Railwaymen: The History of the National Union of Railwaymen (1963) pp.199,201.
2. L. Bather, op.cit., pp.49, 70-3; A.E. Musson, The Typographical Association. Origins and History up to 1949 (Oxford, 1954) pp. 299, 302-4. Although some leading members of the local Typographical Society had strong political views (again, not for the same party) the Association generally wanted to keep out of party politics.
3. P.F. Clarke, op.cit., p.36. The two principal friendly societies, the Foresters and the Manchester Unity, were non-political.

effect of this upon labour representation was clearly recognized at the time, and was perhaps best expressed in an article on 'Workmen's Representatives in Parliament', published in the Cotton Factory Times in May 1885.

> Taking a superficial glance over England an observer not intimately acquainted with the population would assume that Lancashire would par excellence be the locality from where working men would have the best chance of being sent to St. Stephen's. This may in the future be the case, but it is far from being applicable at the present time. This is due to a variety of causes, one of the most potent being that to a greater extent than any other working class population in the three kingdoms we are divided in politics. It used to be the fashion among would-be wits to sneer at the existence of the Conservative working man, and talk about putting him in a show case when found. To those well acquainted with the facts - as they exist in Lancashire especially - such remarks prove nothing but the ignorance of those who uttered them. He does exist, and in thousands; and it is this division of our ranks which is at present standing in the way of a proper understanding of our interests.
> ...Politically speaking the working class voter is petted by both political parties and told what a good fellow he is! This lasts exactly as long as he does what he is told and works obediently in harness. Let him just begin to show a spark of independence, and to suggest that after working for one or the other party for so many years it is time that people should do a little to help one of his sort, let him do this and the money bags at once hold up their hands in pious horror and tell him that in that case he will have to look after himself. These remarks apply with equal force to both political parties in the state. What then is to prevent us forming a party of our own? We have talked over political questions with all sorts of workmen, and, so far as they affect our interests, we never found any difference of opinion... if, as it seems likely, the toilers of any of our manufacturing constituencies bring out a candidate we recommend our readers not to trouble themselves by asking what party he belongs to but what are his opinions. First let us individually make up our minds as to what we want, amd then support the man who comes nearest to our standard.[1]

This article indicates one of the most significant features of labourism in Manchester and Salford: its emergence as a pressure group crossing the party barriers, rather than as an element within the ranks of Liberalism. Manchester and Salford were notable for their lack of a Lib-Lab. organization.[2] This factor may also help to explain why the

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1. CFT, 29 May 1885.
2. P. Whitaker, 'The Growth of Liberal Organisation in Manchester from the Eighteen Sixties to 1905' (Manchester Ph.D., 1963) p.209, comments 'No moves have come to light towards setting up a Lib-Lab coalition in Manchester.'

Independent Labour Party in this area was formed at a relatively early date.

As the Cotton Factory Times suggested, both parties were anxious to obtain the working man's vote, but neither was prepared to accede to his major demands. It is therefore necessary to examine the attempts of the established parties in Manchester and Salford to gain the allegiance of the working class electorate prior to the mid-1880s, before examining the extent to which these concessions fell short of labourist demands and, finally, tracing the development of a distinct labourist movement.

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The most obvious method by which either party might obtain working men's votes was simply by selecting a candidate of their choice. However this only appears to have happened at one parliamentary election, that of 1868. Prior to the election, a group of radicals formed the Trade Unionists' Political Association of Manchester. Under the presidency of William Macdonald (former secretary of the Manchester Operative House Painters' Alliance) they held weekly meetings at the Working Men's Reofrm Club in Market Street. In July 1867 a joint meeting took place with the Council of the Reform League, to consider the representation of Manchester if it received a third Member. It was decided that the working men should nominate at least one of the three Liberal candidates at the next General Election, the name suggested being Ernest Jones. The former Chartist leader did go to the poll, albeit unsuccessfully.[1] But if this action had conciliated working men already sympathetic towards Liberalism, it antagonised, rather than changed the allegiance of, their Conservative counterparts. A 'monster meeting' of working men was held at the Free Trade Hall, in support of the Conservative candidates Hoare and Birley. S.C. Nicholson, President of the Trades Council, denounced the Trade Unionists' Political Association and later, in the City News, objected to their attempt to transform the Trades Council into a medium for propagating their one-sided political views.[2]

By the 1880s Manchester Liberalism had become far less conciliatory to labourist opinion. The internal dissensions of the party and ascendancy of its imperialist Whig faction led, in 1883, to the resignation of Dr. Richard Marsden Pankhurst. Pankhurst, later to

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1. L. Bather, op.cit., pp.50, 52; P. Whitaker, op.cit., p.199; H.J. Hanham, Elections and Party Management. Politics in the time of Disraeli and Gladstone (1959) pp.93-4. See also J. Saville, Ernest Jones: Chartist (1952) p.81.
2. L. Bather, op.cit., pp.59-60.

become a prominent member of the local ILP, now announced his intention of standing as an Independent at the next General Election. His programme, which might be expected to gain considerable labourist support, included among other points the removal from the constitution of all non-representative elements; adult suffrage for both sexes; payment or indemnity of MPs for loss of time and expense incurred in public service; free compulsory elementary education; nationalization of the land; and Home Rule for Ireland. Two months after the publication of this programme, a Conservative MP's death necessitated a by-election and Pankhurst announced his candidature. The Liberal Association might at least have been expected to leave him to a clear fight with the Tory, but his erstwhile Whig opponents secured a decision of the Liberal Association, directing that members should not give him their votes, on the grounds that his candidature was subversive of Liberal discipline.[1] The outcome of Pankhurst's unsuccessful contest was the formation of Manchester Radical Association,[2] an organization which will be considered at a later stage. It is however significant that this Association and the other groups associated with Liberal Radicalism, namely the National Secular Society, the Home Rule Union for Manchester and District, and the Democratic League of Great Britain and Ireland, all gravitated either as organizations or via individual members towards socialism, as opposed to labourism.

After the 1868 election, Manchester and Salford were notable for their lack of Liberal/labour co-operation. In 1885 a controversy arose over the choice of a Liberal candidate for Gorton. A committee of Manchester Liberals, based on the Reform Club, chose the moderate Richard Peacock, as opposed to J.H. Crosfield, a Radical who was supported by the working class electorate.[3] By this time, however, the Manchester and Salford Labour Representation Association had been formed, to act as a pressure group on both parties.

While there does not appear to have been any Conservative/labourist negotiation over choice of candidates, Conservative candidates once selected did make appeals to their working class electorate. In

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1. E.S. Pankhurst, op.cit., pp.60-5. For Dr. Pankhurst's later career, see Appendix II.
2. Ibid., p.65. See below, p.71.
3. L. Bather, op.cit., p.201.

1876 Francis Sharp Powell published a leaflet reminding constituents how he had fought the battles of the poor when it was unpopular to do so, and had stood on the same platform as Shaftesbury, Fielden and Oastler.[1]

It would appear that both parties tended to rely for much of their working class support not upon negotiations made at election time, but upon long-term political influence, which might be exerted through the political clubs. The club organization tended to be stronger on the Conservative side. In 1867 the older Operative Conservative Societies were revived as Conservative Working Men's Associations, under the central direction of the National Union. Disraeli's objection to class-based societies within the party led to a shift of emphasis from the Working Men's Associations and clubs to ordinary Conservative Associations. Politically active working men were thus induced to join the latter, leaving clubs to provide drink and social facilities for those whose enthusiasm for the Conservative cause was exercised only on election day.[2]

By 1888 Manchester and Salford had forty Conservative Clubs. Of these the Manchester Conservative Club in Cross Street and the Manchester Carlton in Spring Gardens would appear to have catered for the middle class élite of the party, while the social composition of others must have depended largely upon area. Only the Chancery Lane Working Men's club in Ardwick made its clientele apparent, but clubs like the Greengate and St. Matthias' in Salford, or the New Cross in Ancoats, had overwhelmingly working class catchment areas, while the Didsbury club was situated in a middle class residential suburb. The Liberal clubs, headed by the Reform Club in King Street, were also to be found on a ward basis. Only two of their number, the Ardwick Working Men's and the St. George's Working Men's Reform Club specified their membership.[3]

But while clubs might keep the passive Liberal or Conservative voter content between elections, the working man with political enthusiasm and perhaps ambition, would desire greater participation in his party organization. To what extent were the two

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1. P.F. Clarke, op.cit., p.32.
2. H.J. Hanham, op.cit., pp.105-9. For general information on the role of clubs, see M. Ostrogorski, op.cit., pp.427-36.
3. Slater's Directory 1888, p.319.

parties prepared to accept him? Despite the absence of working class parliamentary candidates, some of the Trades Council members at least did rise to prominent positions via the Liberal party. Peter Shorrocks became a member of the Executive of Manchester Liberal Association in 1880 while Henry Slatter, a member of that Association's General Council, was elected to Manchester School Board in 1879 and became one of the city's magistrates in 1885. James Mawdsley stood as the Liberal candidate for Bradford Ward in the 1885 municipal elections, while other working men were candidates in the 1882 School Board elections.[1]

These men were, however, the exception rather than the rule. When the structure of party organizations is examined, it becomes clear that they were by no means democratic. At first sight the Manchester Liberal Association, based on the Birmingham 'caucus' system, appears to have involved a large number of adherents. In 1883 there were around 140 members of its Executive Committee and a total of 898 in its General Council.[2] However in practice the whole system tended towards oligarchy.[3] What counted above all else was money. Manchester Liberal Association was managed by wealthy men who might contribute between £400 and £800 a year in lump sums of £50, £100 or £200. Working class subscribers were relatively unimportant.[4] General elections cost vast sums of money, even after the 1883 Corrupt Practices Act.[5] The cost of electoral registration, together with items such as printing, advertising, rent for committee rooms and agents' fees were borne by the party, and the candidate himself faced great expense. Under an Act of 1875, returning officers' charges were to be divided equally among the candidates. In Manchester these fees amounted to £1,336 in 1868 and £1,861 in 1880. Having paid his share of such a sum, together with all the expenses incurred in 'nursing' a constituency, the successful candidate was then expected to pursue his parliamentary career without any financial aid from public funds, and indeed to contribute towards the maintenance of the local party

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1. L. Bather, op.cit., pp.70-1.
2. H.J. Hanham, op.cit., p.131.
3. M. Ostrogorski, op.cit., pp.330-7 passim; P. Whitaker, op.cit., p.67.
4. H.J. Hanham, op.cit., p.132.
5. For details of the Act, see M. Ostrogorski, op.cit., p.472; W.B. Gwyn, Democracy and the Cost of Politics in Britain (1962) pp.52-6.

organization. In 1885-6 the Conservatives did give some financial aid to candidates, in the form of grants of between £150 and £500, while the Liberals provided somewhat smaller sums. This made little difference to the type of candidate who could afford to stand. To quote W.B.Gwyn: 'While middle class persons without ample means found parliamentary careers a financial strain, small tradesmen and members of the working class were entirely unable to meet the cost of a seat in the House of Commons.'[1] Reform of the electoral system, in particular the payment of returning officers' fees and salaries for MPs from public funds, was thus one of the principal demands of labour activists.[2]

Such grievances relating to the electoral system and the restricted franchise were shared by politically-conscious working men throughout the country. However labourists in Manchester and Salford may parhaps have borne greater difficulties than their counterparts in many other areas. Politically they were divided, and neither party had, since 1868 at least, made any important concession to their needs. They were also divided occupationally; had one trade union held the allegiance of a large majority of labour activists, then it might through its own organization and funds been able to support a parliamentary candidate. Had the labour vote even been more concentrated into certain distinct constituencies, then the opportunity to pressurize the local constituency parties would have been greater. It was, above all, this division within labour ranks which led to the emergence of labourism as a force in politics, not as an offshoot of Liberalism, but as a cross-party pressure group.

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In the early 1880s, the 'official' spokesmen of labourism in Manchester and Salford were the established trade unions, representing mainly skilled workers, and the Trades Council. It is therefore necessary to examine the attempts, and failures, of these bodies to promote the cause of labour representation before considering, in the following chapter, the socialists' efforts in this direction.

The Trades Council showed little interest in the question

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1. W.B. Gwyn, op.cit., pp.26-7, 36, 57-8, 127.
2. CFT, 13 February 1885. These were the principal points raised in the manifesto issued on the instructions of the TUC Parliamentary Committee to the trades of Great Britain. See also ibid., 19 June 1885 for the platform of the Manchester and Salford Labour Representation Association.

of labour representation until the middle of the decade. It did not even involve itself in Henry Slatter's successful campaign for election to the Manchester School Board, as a 'non-Sectarian', in 1879. In November 1880 James Ashton, its newly-elected chairman, raised the subject of direct labour representation in the Commons, arguing that they should be concerned with neither Liberals nor Conservatives; they had 'tailed too long at the coat-tails of political parties'. The matter was merely deferred.[1]

Interest in labour representation revived in 1885. The Franchise Act and redistribution of seats are obvious reasons for the renewed enthusiasm, but it is also interesting to note that the formation of Manchester and Salford Labour Representation Association followed by a matter of days the establishment in Manchester of the Cotton Factory Times.[2] This may well have been coincidence, but there is also the likelihood that the cotton unions were beginning to feel their own lack of political influence as compared with that of the miners. On the formation of the Labour Representation Association, the Cotton Factory Times remarked:

> Labour must have its own representatives - men who have not only heard of our desirabilities, but who have felt them. None other can fully represent us, and a free sprinkling of cotton operative members in the House of Commons, men whose purity can be guaranteed, will be a boon to the Lancashire people.[3]

Perhaps because the Cotton Factory Times represented an industry whose members were politically divided, it never advocated a Lib-Lab. movement. In an article entitled 'Labour Representation in Parliament', three possible methods were suggested. The first was applicable to districts where the working class predominated, and their influence was sufficient to secure the return of Labour candidates: 'These districts should be contested upon a labour basis pure and simple, irrespective of political partisanship or religious creed'. Such a policy was suggested for Oldham, Blackburn, Preston and Bolton, not, it may be noticed, for any of the Manchester and Salford constituencies.

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1. L. Bather, op.cit., p.123.
2. The Cotton Factory Times was established after a meeting at the Atlantic Restaurant Rooms, Cross Street, Manchester, on 10 January 1885. The participants represented over 200,000 cotton operatives from Lancashire, Cheshire, Derbyshire and Yorkshire. The first edition appeared on 16 January 1885. On 22 January, the CFT published the circular addressed to the workmen of Manchester and Salford by the Labour Representation Association.
3. CFT, 30 January 1885.

In districts not strong enough to support a labour candidate, it was suggested that a list be drawn up of 'gentlemen' in fullest sympathy with the working class, who would place their time and means at the disposal of the labour interest. Finally, a programme of labour questions might be drawn up and submitted to each candidate irrespective of party. A promise might then be made to support the candidate who would pledge himself to such a programme.[1]

The last of these three methods was, in fact, that adopted by Manchester and Salford Labour Representation Association. With a membership drawn from both major parties and Henry Slatter, now a magistrate,[2] as its chairman, it was a moderate organization, with a platform 'no more forward than some advanced Liberals and a few Tories'.[3] This platform included:

1. The abolition of all property or rating qualifications for the election of local boards or Boards of Guardians.
2. Payment of returning officers' expenses out of the rates (as was done in municipal and school board elections).
3. Payment of MPs.
4. Aldermen in cities and boroughs to be periodically elected in the same manner as councillors.
5. Periodical readjustment of municipal representation in accordance with the population.
6. The employment of 'a sufficient number of practical men' as Inspectors of factories, workshops and mines, and the extension of legislation to cover conditions in retail shops.
7. The passing of the bill proposed by Thomas Burt, MP, to make the Employers' Liability Act compulsory.
8. Reform of the land laws.
9. Direct taxation and graduated income tax. The land tax to be adjusted to the present value of land.
10. Educational endowments to be applied to the purpose for which they were designed.[4]

However when a circular containing the Association's programme was issued to parliamentary candidates, certain points were

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1. Ibid., 13 March 1885.
2. Ibid., 15 May 1885. Thomas Birtwistle of the Amalgamated Weavers and James Fielding, secretary of the Bolton Spinners' Union, had also been offered seats on the Lancashire Bench.
3. CFT, 19 June 1885.
4. Ibid., 19 June 1885.

altered. The most significant change was that the clause relating to taxation was completely omitted, as was that dealing with the land laws. Instead were substituted a proposal to extend inspection, as it was then in force in factories and workshops, to all places where women and children were employed, and another for the codification of the criminal law.[1] It would appear that the Association was anxious not to offend middle class susceptibilities.

So moderate in fact were these proposals that few of the candidates actually objected to any of them. There is no correlation between candidates' agreement with the proposals and success at the polls. Two Liberals, John Slagg and R. Peacock, both merely acknowledged receipt of the circular; Slagg was defeated in North West Manchester and Peacock returned by a large majority in Gorton. In South West Manchester, one of the predominantly working class constituencies, Lord Frederick Hamilton, a Conservative who objected to all the first three points, defeated Jacob Bright. C.E. Schwann, who agreed that all the reforms were needed, was defeated in North Manchester.[2] It therefore seems unlikely that the Association had much influence over the working class members of the electorate.

The continuing domination of the Labour Representation Association by the trade union 'establishment' is illustrated by the Annual Meeting, held at the County Forum on 27 April 1886. Among those attending were Henry Slatter, now described as President; Connolly of the Engineers as Vice-President; Sharples, General Secretary of the Amalgamated Printers; Yates Franklin of the Amalgamated Carpenters and Joiners; and James Mawdsley of the Operative Spinners,[3] who at the Municipal Elections of the previous November had been the unsuccessful Liberal candidate for Bradford Ward.[4] Mawdsley did suggest a further reduction in the annual subscription of a shilling, and that existing organisations of workmen should be allowed to affiliate by a

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1. Ibid., 20 November 1885.
2. Compare the replies of candidates, as reported in ibid., 20 November 1885, with the election results given in J. Vincent and M. Stenton, op.cit., pp.141, 164-6, 210-11. See also Table 1 above.
3. CFT, 30 April 1886.
4. L. Bather, op.cit., p.125.

nominal payment, but no decision was taken on this, the meeting being adjourned for a week.[1]

By the mid-1880s the TUC was also concerning itself with labour representation. Early in 1885 a manifesto issued by Henry Broadhurst on behalf of the Parliamentary Committee of the TUC argued that the main obstacles to labour representation in Parliament were financial. The most urgent needs were a reduction in the cost of elections, one step towards which would be the payment of returning officers' charges from the rates, and the payment of MPs by the state. Representation on municipal bodies was easier to attain, and equally desirable. Large corporations were also large employers of labour; representation on these would thus give workmen a voice in framing the conditions under which labour was hired and employed.[2]

In 1886 the TUC founded its Labour Electoral Committee, which the following year developed into the Labour Electoral Association. The latter body described itself as 'the centre of the National Labour Party'.[3] The objects of the Association were defined in a resolution passed at the TUC in Hull; that while it was the duty of the state to provide for all official election expenses of parliamentary candidates and for reasonable payment of MPs, the Congress was of opinion that direct representation of labour in Parliament was necessary in the interests of the working class. Workmen throughout the country were therefore desired to form a fund, through the medium of Labour Electoral Associations, to enable industrial candidates to contest elections when vacancies occurred, and for their support in Parliament.[4]

Trade Union delegates therefore met at the Falstaff Hotel, Manchester, in April 1887, to consider the advisability of forming a Labour Electoral Association. With Matthew Arrandale[5] in the chair, the local Association was duly formed and an executive committee

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1. CFT, 30 April 1886.
2. Ibid., 13 February 1885.
3. H. Pelling, The Origins of the Labour Party 1880-1900 (1954; 2nd ed. Oxford, 1965) pp.57-8.
4. CFT, 29 April 1887.
5. The report of the meeting, in ibid., 29 April 1887, described Arrandale as being from the Metal Planers' Society. His biography 'Mr. Councillor M. Arrandale, J.P., in Manchester Faces and Places Vol.VII No.10, July 1896, described him as being at that time General Secretary of the United Machine Workers' Association. Whether Arrandale changed his allegiance simply to take up his post, or at an earlier date, is uncertain. After 1890 the two unions were associated in the Federation of Engineering and Shipbuilding Trades (see H.A. Clegg et al, op.cit., pp.128, 130.)

appointed: Arrandale, Sullivan (steam hammer men), Medwell (coachmakers), Lambert (bakers), Ward (boot and shoe rivetters), Green (saddlers), Slatter (typographers), Sharples (painters), Tetley and Conley (Amalgamated Society of Engineers).[1]

The Manchester and Salford Labour Electoral Association appears to have achieved very little. In April 1888 it met at the Cobden Cafe, Lever Street, Manchester, to discuss better representation for labour in local and national affairs. The tone of the speeches was far from inspiring. From the chair, C.H. Rowley said that some of them seemed to have no conception of the forces which were against them; if the Liberals or Tories heard what was being said, they would merely laugh. The Association needed to act in a practical manner. G.D. Kelley, secretary to the Association, stated that he did not think that in Manchester they were in a position to discuss the best means of sending labour representatives to the City Council.[2] The reasons for Kelley's lack of enthusiasm may be illustrated by his own conduct as a labour candidate in 1890, as described below. Another speaker at this meeting was a 'Mr. Hunter Watts'. In view of the fact that John Hunter Watts of the Social Democratic Federation was in Manchester at this time,[3] it seems likely that the socialists were taking an interest in the meeting. The proceedings were described as being 'somewhat noisy at times'.[4]

Kelley continued to play a leading role in the labourist movement. He took the chair at the 3rd Annual Conference of the Labour Electoral Association of Great Britain and Ireland, which met at Hanley in April 1890. In the course of the proceedings he was elected president of that body. Also representing the Manchester trades was a 'Mr. Jenkins',[5]

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1. CFT, 29 April 1887. The report did not provide the forenames of committee members. L. Bather, op.cit., p.127, stated: 'It is not known whether the Manchester and Salford Labour Representation Association maintained a continuous existence throughout the remainder of the eighties linking it with the Manchester and Salford District Labour Electoral Association which had been formed by 1890'. From the report in CFT it would appear that the Labour Representation Association merely reorganised itself in 1887, in accordance with the TUC resolution, changing its name accordingly.
2. CFT, 27 April 1888. There is no evidence to connect the 'C.H. Rowley' with Charles Rowley of the Ancoats Recreation Movement. For a biography of Kelley, see Dictionary of Labour Biography Vol.II, ed. J.M. Bellamy and J. Saville (1974) pp.211-14.
3. J, 28 April 1888 described Hunter Watts as taking part in the first meeting of a new SDF branch at Pendleton.
4. CFT, 27 April 1888.
5. Ibid., 11 April 1890, stated that Kelley was elected President of the LEA, but in Dictionary of Labour Biography Vol.II p.212 he was described as vice-president in 1888, '89 and '90.

presumably John Jenkins of the Bakers and Confectioners who, like Kelley, was a staunch Liberal.[1]

In October 1890 Kelley was one of the Executive of the LEA which issued a circular to the working men of Eccles. They had interviewed the two candidates in the Eccles by-election and, considering that the views of H.J. Roby, a Gladstonian Liberal, were more satisfactory on labour questions, urged support for him. They assured the electors that:

> If you show that you are prepared to vote for candidates who are pledged to further your interests in the House of Commons and throw aside all political feeling, the result of the present contest will convey such a lesson to political parties as will stimulate all those reforms necessary for the happiness and progress of the masses.[2]

Kelley's own inability to 'throw aside all political feelings' in the interests of labour also became apparent in October 1890. It was at first announced that he was likely to be a candidate in the municipal elections and then, a week later, that he had decided not to stand.[3] When the Trades Council met at the Falstaff Hotel it was merely announced, presumably by the Executive, that the Trades Council thought that the present time was unfavourable for Kelley's candidature but that in future it would take steps to secure, if possible, the representation of the labour party in the City Council. To this John Jenkins retorted that they had been betrayed; because the retiring member for St. George's Ward (Hulme) was a Liberal, it had been agreed that he should not be opposed.[4] This incident perhaps marked the beginning of Jenkins' own alienation from Liberalism. The following year he was to be found assisting Alfred Settle, the Social Democratic candidate for Ordsall Ward, Salford, in the municipal elections.[5]

Further comment upon Kelley's actions was provided in the

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1. L. Bather, op.cit., p.242 Appendix 6.
2. WT, 24 October 1890. For the Eccles candidates and election results, see J. Vincent and M. Stenton, op.cit., p.141.
3. WT, 17 October 1890.
4. Ibid., 24 October 1890. See also L. Bather, op.cit., pp.128-9.
5. WT, 23, 31 October 1891. Jenkins' role in the pre-1892 movement for independent labour representation will be considered at a later stage. His biographical notes are not included in Appendix II because there is no evidence of his involvement in the local socialist movement after 1892. However J, 9 August 1899, stated that he had joined the London-based Central Branch of the SDF and the general lack of local references to his activities suggests that he moved from the Manchester area in the early 1890s.

Workman's Times of 28 November 1890, by a correspondent from Hulme who signed himself 'Robin' and can be identified as Joseph Waddington. Having once been a supporter of G.D. Kelley, 'Robin' asserted that he would continue no longer, for 'the history of Mr. Kelley's feat of political conjuring is now common property'. A body of 'earnest working men' had subscribed money for Kelley's candidature in St. George's Ward, on the distinct understanding that he would keep his promise to stand as a labour candidate. Kelley had then withdrawn because he feared breaking up the strength of the Liberal party in the ward. He had thereby disfranchised the electors who were true to the cause of Labour representation. Commented 'Robin':

> We have now a chance of finding a labour candidate who, if not overburdened with immense physical strength will, we hope, have the moral courage to resist the gracious and patronising influence of any political party.[1]

The Manchester branch of the Labour Electoral Association does not appear to have survived long after this debacle. At a Trades Council meeting in November, a resolution was passed, 'That the Executive Committee be and is hereby instructed to take whatever steps they may deem necessary for the securing of labour representation upon all the public bodies in and around Manchester and in Parliament.'[2] This would imply that no other organization for promoting labour representation, and associated with the Trades Council, was still in existence. On December 26 1890 'Robin', now a regular contributor to the Workman's Times, asked what had happened to the Manchester branch of the Labour Electoral Assocation: 'Is there a life and vigour, or merely a dragging on of a weary existence?'[3]

The demise of the local Labour Electoral Association revealed its greatest weakness; the continued allegiance of its leading members to the Liberal Party. By 1890 the Trades Council was overwhelmingly Liberal in its composition, containing between thirty and forty active supporters of that party, as opposed to three or four Conservatives and about ten socialists.[4] Had the mass electorate and the rank and file

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1. WT, 28 November 1890. Another article in this issue, on the Hulme Working Men's Sanitary Association, gave Joseph Waddington's address as 4 Crown Street, Chester Road, Hulme.
2. Ibid., 21 November 1890. L. Bather, op.cit., p.198 stated that the Manchester branch broke up after Jenkins' denunciation of Kelley for selling the Labour Electoral Association to the Liberal Caucus.
3. WT, 26 December 1890.
4. L. Bather, op.cit., p.127.

membership of the trade unions also been ardent Liberals, this would not have been a disadvantage. But, as has been demonstrated above, allegiance even to the old-established parties was divided. Moreover by 1890 the whole working class movement had undergone a transformation. Socialist organizations had been established, and had achieved far more success in their election campaigns than had the Labour Electoral Association. Trade unionism had extended, often with socialist assistance, to the mass of unskilled workers, who were not represented on the Trades Council or the LEA. It had thus become clear that these bodies no longer represented the majority even of organized and vocal working men. The Trades Council was eventually to undergo a gradual transformation, by its admission of the unskilled workers' representatives. The Labour Electoral Association, whose leaders had proved unable to break their ties with the Liberal party, was to be succeeded by organizations whose demand was not simply for a labourist pressure group, but for an independent labour party. Much of the driving force behind these organizations came from the socialists who, free from allegiance to the traditional parties, had taken up the task of interpreting 'labourism' into political terms.

Chapter 3

The Evolution of a Socialist Leadership

In his Record of an Adventurous Life, H.M. Hyndman remarked upon the absence of an effective socialist movement in Britain in 1880. He recalled that public opinion was hostile,

> ...every Socialist was regarded as a bomb-thrower and an incendiary, and Socialism itself was constantly referred to as an Anarchist revolt against civilization, social organisation and humanity at large. Moreover there was no literature to refer to, no books in English which could be obtained and read, either by the educated class or by the workers. At most, a few ill-printed copies of the famous Communist Manifesto of 1847 by Marx and Engels done into English could be found by searching for them in the most advanced revolutionary circles.
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> It is not too much to say, indeed, that the whole movement was dead so far as Great Britain was concerned. The Socialist conceptions of the old Chartists, which Marx systematised, co-ordinated and put on a scientific basis, had quite died down and nothing had arisen to take their place: the very names of their leaders were forgotten. Even the few convinced Socialists then in England did not all know one another.[1]

By the end of the decade, however, most of the larger towns and cities had experienced a socialist revival, and could boast branches of Hyndman's Social Democratic Federation, the Socialist League,[2] or perhaps an independent local Socialist Society. Thus the upsurge of socialist activity in the mid- and late 1880s was not a phenomenon peculiar to Manchester and Salford. There were, however, two particularly significant features of the local socialist movement in the period; the range of apparently separate organizations which were linked by the common membership of a nucleus of activists, and the attempts by the socialists to create a mass movement. Both these developments were crucial to the emergence of Manchester and Salford ILP, and merit consideration in some detail. Therefore the present chapter will examine the evolution of this local leadership, while the manner in which the message of socialism was disseminated among the population at large must be considered in Chapter 4 below.

Although Manchester and Salford lacked a socialist movement in 1880, the area could boast a long socialist tradition,

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1. H.M. Hyndman, The Record of an Adventurous Life (1911) pp.223-4.
2. See the lists of local branches published by the SDF in Justice and by the Socialist League in Commonweal.

which had continued from Owenism, through the Chartist movement, and to the more recent doctrines of Marx and Engels. More than half a century earlier, Owenism had been preached in the Hall of Science at Campfield,[1] while Engels had lived in the city for two years prior to the publication of The Condition of the Working Class in England, and subsequently for the twenty years following his return in 1850. During Engels' residence his friends included Chartists (in particular Ernest Jones), labour leaders, and intellectuals such as Samuel Moore, Dr. Edward Gumpert, Wilhelm Wolff and Carl Schorlemmer who, in 1874, became Professor of Organic Chemistry at Owens College.[2]

Contact with Marxism had not been confined solely to personal friends and acquaintances of Marx and Engels, for Manchester played a not insignificant rôle in the First International. Much of the early contact with the International Working Men's Association was maintained by trade unions and the Trades Council. In August 1866 over seven hundred Manchester tailors were locked out after demands to regulate working hours and wage rates; the following month Marx informed a Central Council meeting that notice of the strike had been inserted in German democratic journals.[3] In January 1867 the Lancashire, Derbyshire, Yorkshire and Cheshire Block-Printers' Union, on forwarding its entrance fee and annual subscription for a thousand members, was accepted as an affiliated branch of the IWMA.[4] Two months later, on March 19th, George Odger announced to a General Council meeting that he was going to Manchester and 'would see what he could do for the bronze-workers with the Trades Council there...'[5]

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1. See above, p.23.
2. M. Jenkins, Frederick Engels in Manchester (Lancashire and Cheshire Communist Party, Manchester, 1951) 23pp. pp.4,6,16-17.
3. General Council of the 1st International, Documents of the First International 1866-1868 (Moscow, n.d.) p.29. Minutes of the Central Council meeting, 18 September 1866. Exactly why the tailors' strike was publicised in such journals is uncertain. It may have been an attempt to prevent blacklegging.
4. Ibid., p.93. Minutes of the General Council meeting, 29 January 1867.
5. Ibid., p.105. Minutes of the General Council meeting, 19 March 1867.

The IWMA appears to have been anxious for the support of Manchester and Salford Trades Council. In February 1868 Peter Shorrocks, one of the Council's founders and General Secretary of the Amalgamated Tailors' Society, who was also known in Manchester as a staunch Liberal, wrote that 'the workpeople in that town have little faith in London, but he will endeavour to get adhesion to the International and information for the report.'[1] The Trades Council, together with the Tailors' Society and the Reform Union in Manchester, received copies of the IWMA's 'Address on the War',[2] and 'Mr. Appleton of Manchester was so pleased with it that he was going to have it reprinted for circulation'.[3]

During 1870 Eugene Dupont, a French musical instrument maker who had taken part in the Paris uprising of 1848 and was now both a member of the IWMA's General Council and its Corresponding Secretary for France, went to live in Manchester. The exact date is uncertain, but appears to have been between July and September.[4] In November Dupont wrote to Marx, enclosing a letter he had received from the Secretary of Manchester and Salford Trades Council. Included in the letter was a resolution: 'That this Council entertains the opinion that we accord the International Working Men's Association our moral support in all its various undertakings throughout the whole industrial world'. The resolution had apparently been passed as a result of Dupont 'waiting on the Council'. He now requested documents, pamphlets and credentials to act as representative of the Association. 'Upon the proposition of Cit. Marx, seconded by Cit. Harris, credentials were voted to Cit. Dupont making him the representative of the Association in Manchester and the County of Lancaster.'[5] Thus by February 1871, Engels was able to

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1. Ibid., p.194. Minutes of the Council Meeting, 11 February 1868. Shorrocks' involvement raises the whole question as to local appreciation and acceptance of the ideology behind the International. One suspects, but cannot prove, that the majority of local men involved were concerned with trade union issues, and that political commitment was comparatively rare.
2. General Council of the 1st International, Documents of the First International 1870-71 (Moscow, n.d.) pp.36-7. Minutes of the Council Meeting, 26 July 1870.
3. Ibid., p.48. Minutes of the Council Meeting, 16 August 1870.
4. Dupont was also a friend and associate of Marx and Engels, and a particupant in all the Congresses (except Basle) and conferences of the International. See Documents of the First International 1868-70 (Moscow, n.d.) p.497 for biographical information on Dupont. Dupont was still resident in London on 5 July 1870, since he attended a Council meeting (ibid., p.258), but was absent for the meeting on 12 July (ibid., p.262) and on the 19th the Council read a letter from him (Documents of the 1st International 1870-71, p.30). On 27 September Marx told the Council that he had received a letter from Brest addressed to Dupont, 'which he had forwarded to Manchester'
5. Documents... 1870-71, p.90. Minutes of Council meeting 29 November 1870.

announce to the Spanish Federal Council of the IWMA: 'In England, the Trades Councils of Birmingham and Manchester have just affiliated directly to our Association, and, through them, the workers of the two most important manufacturing cities in the country.'[1]

The London conference of the International in September 1871 established a federal system of organization; thus the Manchester body was henceforth designated as a branch of the IWMA.[2] By December of that year the branch was increasing rapidly, and was confidently expected to become the most powerful organization in the city.[3] It continued to flourish during the following year. Harriet Law lectured in January for the benefit of the Communards.[4] Meetings were held regularly to discuss political programmes, including land policy (which found the Manchester men divided as to their desire for nationalization or redistribution to peasant proprietors).[5] In June the Manchester section was able to report that it had secured the adhesion of the Bricklayers' union (some four hundred members strong), would attempt to start an International club, and had already held a meeting in Ancoats with a view to forming a second section.[6] Regular open-air meetings were being held on Sundays, drawing crowds of four- or five hundred.[7]

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1. Ibid., p.481, gives the English translation. The original text, written by Engels in French, appears on p.349. The Birmingham Trades Council affiliated after that of Manchester, but their example was not apparently emulated by any other trades councils (see H. Collins and C. Abramsky, Karl Marx and the British Labour Movement. Years of the First International (1965) p.187).
2. Documents of the First International 1870-71. For resolutions of the London Conference, see pp.440-50 passim. For status of local branches and groups, see p.460.
3. Documents of the First International 1871-2 (Moscow, n.d.) p.50. Minutes of the Council meeting, 5 December 1871.
4. Ibid., p.533 n.65, citing a report in the Eastern Post, No.172, 14 January 1872.
5. H. Collins and C. Abramsky, op.cit., p.247.
6. Documents of the First International 1871-72, p.226. Minutes of meeting 18 June 1872; H. Collins, 'The English Branches of the First International' in Essays in Labour History ed. A. Briggs and J. Saville (1960; revised ed. 1967) p.259, stated that the adherence of the Bricklayers was later disputed, but the Shoemakers' No.1 Branch (with 150 members) affiliated.
7. H. Collins, loc.cit., p.259.

When the British Federal Council held its Congress at Nottingham in July 1872, Edward Jones, friend of Engels and Dupont's successor as Manchester secretary, moved that the time had arrived 'for the formation of a third political party in this country, based upon the claims of the labourer... The rule that they must keep in view was that laid down by the International Association, that the freedom of the working classes must be worked out by the working classes themselves.'[1] The intrigues surrounding this conferencee, concerning in particular John Hales,[2] are beyond the scope of this work. It is however interesting to note that, twenty years before the foundation of the local ILP, a delegate from Manchester was advocating the establishment of a third political party, with a socialist programme and a working class base.

After the Fifth Congress of the International, held in the Hague in September 1872, Manchester was designated a Federation. Apart from the original Central branch, there was a branch in Hulme and a Foreign Section,[3] formed in August of that year and composed largely of immigrant workers, many of whom were already members of the International. As the Foreign Section's address 'To all sections and members of the British Federation'[4] clearly demonstrates, its members were staunch supporters of Marx and Engels against their opponents on the British Federal Council.

When the British Federal Council eventually split into two bodies (each claiming the title and leadership of the International in England), the Central branch appears to have joined the Foreign Section in Marx's camp, while the Hulme branch followed John Hales.[5] After the national split, the local branches fell rapidly into decline. The Manchester Foreign Section fared best, continuing to hold fortnightly meetings of from twelve to fifteen members until after the Manchester Congress in June 1873, which it was largely responsible for organizing. It did, however, suffer as a result of the big turnover in Manchester's

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1. Ibid., p.262.
2. For details of the intrigues and disputes, see ibid., pp.261-3 and H. Collins and C. Abramsky, op.cit., pp.253-8.
3. H. Collins, loc.cit., p.265.
4. F. Engels, 'The Manchester Foreign Section. To all Sections and Members of the British Federation' in K. Marx and F. Engels, On Britain, op.cit., pp.497-502. This appeal was written by Engels at the request of the Section, and approved by the latter before its publication in leaflet form.
5. H. Collins, loc.cit., p.267; H. Collins and C. Abramsky, op.cit., pp.271-3.

foreign population. Regarding the Central branch, Edward Jones complained to Engels about the general apathy, commenting that: 'The unfortunate quarrel that you had in London had a very detrimental effect on our work in Manchester.' In Hulme, J.S. Murchie, having failed to build up a branch of the breakaway Federal Council, became concerned about the rival attraction of Republicanism for workers with Radical views, and complained in the Eastern Post that one of the former Manchester branches had actually been turned into a Republican club.[1] The exact date of the demise of the International in Manchester is uncertain, but can hardly have been later than 1874.[2]

Was socialism completely forgotten in Manchester for the remainder of the decade? Clearly personal memories must have survived; of the International, of Engels, and of Ernest Jones, who died in Manchester in January 1869.[3] Such memories were revealed by John Darbyshire, who in the early '80s was responsible for reviving the IWMA in Manchester.[4] In his capacity as the Association's secretary, he corresponded with the Socialist League, and these letters revealed his involvement with the First International and his personal acquaintance with Marx and Engels. In January 1885, when the Socialist League was

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1. H. Collins and C. Abramsky, op.cit., p.276. See also below, p.66.
2. Ibid., pp.279-81.
3. Documents of the First International 1868-70, p.63. Minutes of the Council meeting, 2 February 1869. When Jones was buried at Ardwick cemetery on 30 January 1869 the working men who followed on foot were refused entrance to the cemetery. Marx was informed of this by letter. Justice, 31 March 1885 included in its list of lecturers the old Chartist, William Henry Chadwick, who included in his topics 'Ernest Jones, His Life and Labour for the People'. For a biography of Chadwick see: T.P. Newbould, Pages from a Life of Strife: being some recollections of William Henry Chadwick, last of the Manchester Chartists /1911/ passim.
4. See below, pp.71-3. Unfortunately it has not proved possible to trace any biographical information on Darbyshire. At different times during 1885 he gave his address as 113, 114 and 116 Lower Broughton Road, Salford. Slater's Directory 1886 reveals that 113 was the home of Joseph A. Kay, a bookkeeper (and one of Darbyshire's associates), while 116 was a Liberal Club (of which Kay was Corresponding Secretary in 1885). It is therefore likely that Darbyshire lodged with Kay, and was also a member of the club.

formed as a result of the split in the SDF,[1] Darbyshire commented (apparently to J.L. Mahon):

> I shall write to Citizen Engels about it and obtain his views on the case. I know he will speak truthfully and advise us, if we desire. I remember the action of some in London belonging to the old International & can name them if wanted...
>
> Will you kindly inform me if E.M. Aveling is the daughter of the lamented Karl Marx. I remember her in 1872 when I was at her Father's house along with Dupont and many others. Should it be the case I will propose that we present her with a copy of her Fathers likeness. We sent one to Engels and several of our friends have them at their homes.[2]

On 24 February 1885 Darbyshire expressed the IWMA's support for the Socialist League:

> If Engels approves of your action, rest assured that you will have our aid in whatever way we can render you any. We intend commemorating the 'Paris Commune' on or about the 18th March and hope you in London will do the same ever since 1872 I and a few friends have always done so and on this occasion we shall make it public & strive to improve our society in getting more members.
>
> Don't fail to ascertain if E.M. Aveling is the daughter of the late Karl Marx, one of nature's noblemen, for if so we shall present her with a large signed photo of her father.[3]

It is a great pity that Darbyshire did not provide the names of his 'few friends' or reveal the extent of their political activity. Had they held annual reunions on the anniversary of the Commune for purely social and sentimental reasons, or did they continue at least to discuss socialist ideas? In 1893, in a letter to the Workman's Times, Darbyshire further revealed that:

> Twenty-one years ago I secured the Mechanics Institution for the delegates of Great Britain to sit and discuss social problems, & the papers denounced us as a set of thieves etc.[4]

Again Darbyshire did not provide details of the occasion. It is however possible that he was referring to the Manchester Congress of June 1873.[5]

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1. See below, p.80.
2. Letter: John Darbyshire, Secretary IWMA to [J.L. Mahon],15 January 1885 (1202/1. Socialist League Archives).
3. Letter: John Darbyshire, Secretary IWMA to [J.L. Mahon], 24 February 1885 (1202/1. Socialist League Archives).
4. WT, 22 July 1893.
5. See above, p.60.

Any political discussions between Darbyshire and his 'few friends' cannot, however, be described as constituting a socialist movement in Manchester. After the demise of the International, it seems that most of the 'advanced' political thinkers of Manchester and Salford gravitated towards radicalism, in particular to the National Secular Society which, although not itself committed to a socialist platform, brought together many of the ideas and personalities of that movement, past and future.

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In June 1875 the Manchester Secular Institute, already established at 123 Grosvenor Street, All Saints, resolved to join the National Secular Society. The local secretary was Nathaniel J. Ridgeway,[1] who subsequently served as a delegate to the NSS Annual Conference of 1883,[2] and was President of the Manchester branch at the time of his death in June 1887.[3] In his obituary in the National Reformer, Ridgeway was described as a strong supporter of Robert Owen, and one of the founders of the old Hall of Science in Campfield.[4] He delivered an address on 'Robert Owen's Socialism' at a Manchester Secular Society meeting in September 1885,[5] just over a year after the society had received a visit from Miss R. Dale Owen. She lectured on 'Robert Owen and his experiments at New Harmony' and 'Robert Dale Owen and Mary Robinson'.[6] Yet Ridgeway's concept of socialism does not appear to have been confined entirely to the Owenism of an age long past. In May 1881 the Democratic League of Great Britain and Ireland, then operating from provisional offices in George Street, Manchester, and later to be 'captured' by Hyndman's Democratic Federation, named as one of its vice-presidents 'J. Ridgeway'.[7] Memories of the First International were revived by a visit to the Secular Society from Harriet Law, who had spoken on behalf of the Communard refugees at one of the earliest meetings of the IWMA branch. Now editor of the Secular Chronicle in Birmingham,[8] she lectured at the Manchester Secular Institute in January 1875 and performed the

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1. National Reformer (hereafter cited as NR), 3 January 1875
2. Ibid., 20 May 1883.
3. Ibid., 12 June 1887.
4. Ibid., 12 June 1887.
5. Ibid., 6 September 1885.
6. Ibid., 28 September 1884.
7. Ibid., 8 May 1881. See also C. Tsuzuki, H.M. Hyndman and British Socialism (Oxford, 1961) p.48, and p.68 below.
8. H. Collins, loc. cit., p.252.

ceremony of naming the infant son of a Mr. and Mrs. Coates: Richard Carlile Coates.[1]

The National Secular Society in Manchester did not merely keep alive the memories of earlier socialist movements, it also brought into contact with these traditions, and with one another, many of the men who were to play a prominent role in the political activities of the late 1880s. Of the members of the Manchester NSS branch, George Payne, its President in 1881[2] and 1884[3] as well as its delegate to the NSS Annual Conference in 1883,[4] became a candidate in the Manchester School Board elections of 1885.[5] L.D. Prince, Financial Secretary of the NSS branch in 1883,[6] went on to become Secretary of Hulme Radical Club,[7] a prominent speaker for the Socialist League in 1885-6,[8] and subsequently joined (or perhaps re-joined) the SDF.[9] The librarian of the branch in 1884, named merely as 'Woosnam',[10] would appear to have been none other than Richard Woosnam, the founder and first Secretary of South Manchester Labour Electoral Association,[11] who also completed the declaration of adherence to a national Independent Labour Party which appeared in the Workman's Times.[12] John Oldman, whom the Manchester NSS described as 'a comrade from Oldham' when he lectured to their open-air meeting at Trafford Bridge in October 1886,[13] was an early member of the Socialist League, and also spoke for the SDF.[14] He may well have been a native of Norfolk, for on several occasions he spoke of his part in resisting the enclosure of Fakenham Common, and his subsequent imprisonment in Norwich Castle.[15] During his stay in Oldham he was successful in his attempt to

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1. NR, 24 January 1875. Naming ceremonies were to become a social custom of the Labour Church and ILP.
2. Ibid., 4 September 1881.
3. Ibid., 13 April 1884.
4. Ibid., 20 May 1883.
5. Ibid., 1 November 1885.
6. Ibid., 30 September 1883.
7. J, 24 January 1885.
8. Com., October, November, December 1885, February, 11 September, 16 October, 25 December 1886.
9. J, 15 September 1888.
10. NR, 13 April 1884.
11. WT, 9,16 April, 14 May 1892.
12. Ibid., 14 May 1892. For details of the WT scheme to found a national ILP, see below pp.
13. NR, 10 October 1886.
14. J, 14,21 February, 9,16 May 1885. See also Table 2, p.87 below.
15. J,16 May 1885, 6 February 1886.

form an SDF branch.[1] He later gravitated towards the anarchist element in the Socialist League; Commonweal in November 1890 reported a speech at Yarmouth by 'John Oldman, Apostle of Anarchy, from Manchester'.[2]

Of greater importance to the foundation of the ILP were, however, the leaders of the secularist movement in Salford. By February 1881 William Horrocks was already an established member of the National Secular Society.[3] On the 28th of that month he addressed a meeting opposite the Maypole Hotel in Pendleton, when a resolution was carried unanimously to form a Democratic League and branch of the Land Law Reform League.[4] Horrocks became President of Pendleton Democratic League[5] which, as a forerunner to the Democratic Federation and SDF will be considered at a later stage.[6] Horrocks did not moreover neglect his secularist activities; in September 1881 he requested freethinkers in the Salford, Pendleton, Pendlebury and Eccles area to contact him with a view to forming a NSS branch 'in a central position in this district'.[7] By April 1882 this Pendleton branch was holding regular meetings at Horrocks' home, 9 Hope Street.[8] Horrocks continued to be a leading member of the branch in 1883,[9] serving as its delegate to the NSS annual conference in May.[10] By August the branch had as its secretary Henry M. Reade.[11] Thus almost a decade before the advent of Manchester

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1. Ibid., 27 June, 17 October 1885.
2. Com., 15 November 1890.
3. NR, 13 March 1881. Horrocks' name appeared on the list of renewals of NSS membership. Horrocks was a native of Bolton, who was later described as 'the Chartist son of a Chartist father'. He was however too young to have played an active part in that movement, for it appears that he was born in the early 1840s (see obit., Salford Reporter, 4 May 1918). Nothing has been traced of his political activities prior to his membership of the NSS. For Horrocks' later career, see Appendix II below.
4. NR, 6 March 1881. The Land Law Reform League was Bradlaugh's organization. It was not mentioned in later reports of activities in Pendleton, and it is possible that local activists decided to concentrate upon the Democratic League.
5. Ibid., 13 March 1881
6. See below, p.69.
7. NR, 11 September 1881.
8. Ibid., 30 April 1882.
9. Ibid., 29 April, 15 and 29 July, 30 September 1883.
10. Ibid., 20 May 1883.
11. Ibid., 5 August 1883.

and Salford ILP, two of the men who played a leading rôle in its formation were already political associates.[1] It is indeed possible that Horrocks and Reade may have met even earlier, for in his autobiography, Christ or Socialism?, Reade described how he attended a republican club in Salford, then turned from this to Positivist philosophy before finally joining the National Secular Society and becoming a branch secretary in 1882.[2] If this undefined 'republican club', which gave lectures on Sundays and distributed The Republican,[3] was in fact the Democratic League, then the two men may have met through its activities.

The National Secular Society can thus be seen as a movement which brought into contact 'advanced' men of an older generation, and the future socialist leaders of the 'eighties and 'nineties. From the points of view of both personalities and ideology, it served as a link between two eras of socialist activity. Even apart from the influence of local men who had been, or were to become, active socialists, local members of the NSS were brought into contact with one of the movement's national speakers, Edward Aveling.[4] Although Aveling was neither a socialist in the 1870s,[5] nor associated with Eleanor Marx until after her father's death in 1883,[6] he did in the years which followed play a prominent rôle in the socialist movement, and attended the national foundation conference of the ILP.[7]

Yet the secularist movement itself suffered from a distinct lack of ideology. It attacked one faith without providing a new one which might replace it. H.M. Reade commented:

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1. There is no evidence that Horrocks ever joined the ILP, although he attended the foundation meeting of the Manchester party (see below, p. 248). He remained a member of the SDF.
2. H.M. Reade, Christ or Socialism? [Glasgow, 1923] pp.13-15. This work provided an account of his political activities during the period. See also Dictionary of Labour Biography Vol.3 (1976) pp.145-6. It has not been possible to find evidence of Reade's secretaryship in 1882 issues of the National Reformer.
3. H.M. Reade, op.cit., p.13. Reade must have been a member of the republican club between 1880 and 1882. Born in 1860, he was confirmed in the Church of England at the age of 20. It must therefore have been 1880 at the earliest when he stopped attending church, having decided instead to study doctrine and theology in the libraries, and subsequently gravitated towards French Revolutionary and republican literature (see also ibid., p.12.)
4. For Aveling's visits to Manchester, see NR, 4 January, 24 October 1880; 30 January, 15 and 22 May 1881; 8 October 1882; 17 June 1883; 13 April 1884.
5. Y. Kapp, Eleanor Marx, Vol.I. Family Life 1855-1883 (1972) p.270.
6. Ibid., pp.248, 285.
7. See WT, 21 January 1893 for the ILP conference report and Aveling's impressions of the proceedings.

> This incessant iconoclasm, with its continuous attack upon Christianity, soon palled upon my mental appetite; it was neither food for the mind nor inspiration for the life to be for ever kicking what I considered to be a dead horse. Surely there was something better to live for than a mere negation...

According to Reade, a considerable number of Bradlaugh's followers must have had similar thoughts. The Secular Society in Salford, of which he was secretary, became extinct and, still an atheist, he sought the companionship of 'advanced men' by joining a branch of the IWMA.[1] Reade appears to have retained his secularist opinions and, by steps which wil be described later, eventually moved into the Social Democratic Federation and so to the ILP. Atheists were in fact to play a leading role in the early ILP in Manchester and Salford; the Radical Nonconformity which has traditionally been linked with the ILP was in fact no more influential in these towns than it was in Bradford.[2]

The National Secular Society continued its activities in Manchester through the 1880s but, for a study of the socialist movement in the period, the careers of individual secularists are of more importance than the development of the Society itself. Of particular significance was the career of William Horrocks. The formation of a branch of the Democratic League in Pendleton has been mentioned above.[3] At the following meeting, this group adjourned to form a deputation to the Manchester Democratic League 'with powers of enquiry', and to form a Committee of Management. The committee, with Horrocks as President, Thomas Knowles as Corresponding Secretary, and J.B. Statham as Financial Secretary, met on Monday evenings at the home of Peel Yates: 30 Park Place, Cross Lane, Salford.[4] On 13 March Horrocks spoke on the aims and objects of the League, and several members were enrolled for the Pendleton branch.[5]

The exact platform of the Democratic League was not made clear by the reports in the National Reformer. Nor has subsequent

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1. H.M. Reade, op.cit., pp.15-16. This IWMA branch, a revival of the movement which had become extinct in the mid-'70s, is described below, pp.71-3.
2. For a discussion of the influence of Radical Nonconformity in Bradford, see E.P. Thompson, in Essays in Labour History (1960) op.cit., pp.289-92.
3. See above, p.65.
4. NR, 13 March 1881.
5. Ibid., 20 March 1881.

research thrown much light upon the organization. C. Tsuzuki in H.M. Hyndman and British Socialism, described efforts in various parts of the country to organise Radical opinion independently of the Liberals, and stated that a 'Democratic League of Great Britain and Ireland' was set up in Manchester in April 1881.[1] Although the organization was undoubtedly that referred to in the National Reformer, the date of its foundation given by Dr. Tsuzuki is questionable. If a deputation from Pendleton was sent to the Manchester Democratic League after a meeting on 7 March, then the latter organization can hardly have been founded later than the beginning of March 1881.[2] From reports of the Democratic League in the Manchester area, it would appear that it was part of the Radical/Liberal movement associated with Charles Bradlaugh. Bradlaugh was at this time asserting his right to sit in the House of Commons as the elected Member for Northampton, without taking a religious oath. The early lectures of the Pendleton Democratic League appear compatible with this campaign, having titles such as 'A few words on the British Constitution',[3] and 'Politics for the People'.[4] There was also a discussion on G.A. Dean's work, Political Rights of the British Nation.[5]

Perhaps the best guide to the politics of the organization was provided by the National Reformer of 8 May 1881. In this issue was given a list of the leading personnel of the 'Democratic League of Great Britain and Ireland'; President: R.D. Rusden; Vice-Presidents: Victor Hugo, G. Clemenceau, Chas. Bradlaugh, M.P., T. Chatelain (Paris), James Odgers, T.C. Thompson, M.P., C.S. Parnell, M.P., A.C. Yates, Miss Helen Taylor, T.P. O'Connor, M.P., A.F. Winks and J. Ridgeway; Hon. Sec.: George Mason.[6] It therefore seems likely that many of the Vice-Presidents were merely honorary, the position being accorded to leading radicals, republicans or freethinkers. Of the local men, who must presumably have done the actual work of organization, J. Ridgeway may have been, or at least have been a relation of, the N.J. Ridgeway named above as a prominent member of the NSS.[7] A.F. Winks was reported as having lectured to the Manchester Branch of the Land Law Reform League.[8] George

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1. C. Tsuzuki, op.cit., p.43.
2. See the report from the Pendleton Democratic League in NR, 13 March 1881.
3. Ibid., 20 March 1881.
4. Ibid., 27 March 1881.
5. Ibid., 27 March 1881.
6. Ibid., 8 May 1881.
7. See above, p.63.
8. NR, 8 May 1881. Winks lectured on 'The Irish Land Bill'.

Mason was associated with the NSS in 1882[1] and with the Manchester Radical Association after its foundation in 1883.[2] In 1886 he spoke to the North East Manchester branch of the latter organization on 'Socialism and the Working Classes'.[3] He may indeed have been the 'Mason' who spoke at Socialist League meetings in Manchester, Ashton and Middleton in the late '80s.[4]

At the beginning of May 1881, the Democratic League had provisional offices at 31 George Street, Manchester, and was holding regular Sunday meetings and lectures at its branches in Hulme, Collyhurst, Salford and Pendleton.[5] On the occasion of Bradlaugh's exclusion from the Commons, after his refusal to take the religious oath, all the branches called public meetings at which resolutions were passed, regretting the exclusion 'on grounds described as religious' of a duly elected Member, and calling upon local MPs to support the Ministerial Bill aimed at preventing 'any further interference with the liberty of election'.[6]

At this time the radicals of Manchester and Salford naturally concentrated their political activities upon Bradlaugh's campaign. The Manchester No.2 Branch of the NSS amalgamated with the Constitutional Rights Defence League. Bradlaugh came to Manchester to speak in the Assembly Rooms in Grosvenor Street and the Free Trade Hall, the chair on the latter occasion being taken by William Henry Chadwick.[7] In June 1881 the Pendleton branch of the Democratic League received a lecture on 'Charles Bradlaugh, the man required'. The speaker was a 'Mr. Parkinson'[8] who, from his later associations with the NSS in

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1. Ibid., 29 October 1882 reported that G. Mason of Manchester lectured on 'Salvation' to the Gorton Branch of the NSS.
2. Ibid., 16 December 1883.
3. Ibid., 17 January 1886.
4. See reports in Commonweal, 25 September 1886, 7, 21 and 28 September 1889. No initial is given in any of these reports.
5. NR, 8 May 1881. The meeting places were as follows: Hulme Branch, Temperance Hall, Blantyre St., Chester Rd.; Collyhurst Branch, Radical Association, 34 Richardson Street, Rochdale Rd.; Salford Branch, Temperance Hall, Ford St., Salford; Pendleton Branch, 'Town Hall Tavern', Pendleton. It is interesting to note that South Salford SDF later met in Ford St. Temperance Hall (see Justice, 21 January 1888).
6. NR, Special Extra Number [Vol. XXXVIII No.24 ?May 1881]
7. Ibid., 29 May 1881. See also above, p.61 n.3.
8. Ibid., 26 June 1881.

Pendleton and with the Manchester Radical Association, would appear to have been none other than E.H. Parkinson.[1] Parkinson later became a prominent speaker for South Salford SDF[2] and for the Socialist League.[3] Although there is no evidence that he actually joined the ILP, he did speak at some of its local meetings.[4]

Since Parkinson was sufficiently active in the Pendleton Democratic League Branch to participate in that organization's take-over attempt at an anti-Bradlaugh meeting at the Market Ground,[5] it would be surprising if he did not at this time come into contact with William Horrocks. Whether Parkinson joined the NSS branch with Horrocks was attempting to form in Pendleton, in September 1881,[6] has not however been recorded.

Reports of the Democratic League continued to appear in the National Reformer until the spring of 1882. Their later absence was explained by Dr. Tsuzuki, who stated that the Democratic League of Great Britain and Ireland, a 'Manchester group', was captured by the concerted effort of H.M. Hyndman, Herbert Burrows and Helen Taylor, and became affiliated to the Democratic Federation in May 1882. Manchester was one of the six provincial groups to be represented at the Democratic Federation's 1st Annual Conference, on 31 May 1882.[7] However the Democratic Federation does not appear to have had much impact upon the Manchester and Salford area, and no evidence of its local activities after the Conference can be traced. The reasons for this can only be guessed, but one may possibly have been that the Federation had as yet no distinctive ideology; it did not emerge as an obviously socialist organization until the beginning of 1883. The Federation was moreover London-orientated and largely middle class in its leadership.[8] The advanced radicals of Manchester and Salford may therefore have compared it to the Secular Society, and preferred to devote their energies to the latter, which was already firmly established in the locality.

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1. Ibid., 27 January, 6 April, 19 October 1884.
2. E.H. Parkinson's name appeared in the list of speakers given in almost every issue of Justice during 1885 and on 13 March and 3 April 1886; 18 June, 24 September and 19 November 1887; 14 and 28 January 1888.
3. Parkinson's lectures were recorded in Commonweal, October and November 1885; January, 8 May, 4 and 25 September 1886; 22 January 1887; and in almost every issue during the summer of 1889.
4. See Appendix II below.
5. NR, 31 July 1881
6. Ibid., 25 September 1881. See also p.65 above.
7. C. Tsuzuki, op.cit., p.48.
8. Ibid., p.48; E.P. Thompson, William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary (1955 Merlin Press ed. 1977) pp.295-6.

Horrocks at least appears to have concentrated his efforts upon the Pendleton NSS branch,[1] which opened a club at 17 Sligo Street and attempted to build up a library.[2] During the latter part of 1883 and beginning of 1884, Horrocks, H.M. Reade and E.H. Parkinson would appear to have been in contact with one another through the Pendleton NSS; Reade was the branch secretary,[3] while Horrocks[4] and Parkinson[5] both delivered lectures. The Manchester branch of the NSS, at its annual meeting in September 1883, appointed as its financial secretary L.D. Prince,[6] who was later secretary of Hulme Radical Club[7] and a member of the Socialist League.[8]

This group of men also played an active part in the Manchester Radical Association, which was formed after the by-election of October 1883, as a result of Dr. Richard Pankhurst's breach with the local Liberal party.[9] In Pendleton a branch of the Association was formed after a Secular Society meeting; the officers elected included William Horrocks as President and H.M. Reade as Secretary.[10] E.H. Parkinson attended a North Manchester branch meeting in April 1884, to speak on 'Republicanism versus Monarchy',[11] while in August the branch received a lecture from J. Darbyshire on 'The Work of the Radical Party'.[12] By this time, however, Darbyshire was already engaged in reviving the IWMA, and many of the leading local activists were about to make the transition from advanced radicalism to socialism.

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Exactly when the IWMA was revived is uncertain. Darbyshire's letters to the Socialist League[13] suggest that there may have been some

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1. See NR, 29 April 1883, for a report of Horrocks' lecture at the club and ibid., 20 May 1883, for his activities as Pendleton delegate to the NSS Annual Conference in Manchester.
2. Ibid., 23 July 1882.
3. Ibid., 5 August, 30 September 1883.
4. Ibid., 30 September 1883. Horrocks spoke on 'My Path to Freethought'.
5. Ibid., 27 January 1884.
6. Ibid., 30 September 1883.
7. J, 24 January 1885.
8. See Table 2 below, p.87.
9. See above, p.44.
10. NR, 4 November 1883.
11. Ibid., 6 April 1884.
12. Ibid., 31 August 1884.
13. See above, pp.61-3.

informal, personal links between the First International and the body which he revived in Manchester in the 1880s, but there is no proof of a continuing organization. On 17 February 1884 Darbyshire wrote to Engels, stating that he had been trying for several years to revive the International, and had succeeded in building up a committee in Manchester, 'of English, Irish, Welsh and Scots'. He asked Engels for the names of former members of the International, and promised him a specimen of the principles and objects of the new organization. Engels was not particularly helpful. Writing on Darbyshire's original letter, he replied that he could do nothing about this affair, and asked whether he should deliver the 'principles' to the Democratic Federation, Justice, or To-Day.[1]

The Manchester branch of the IWMA was certainly active by the end of March 1884, for members and friends met at the County Forum to hold their 'annual dinner' in commemoration of 'the efforts made by their brothers at Paris on 18 March 1871'. After this dinner, with 'Citizen Shillinglaw' in the chair, Darbyshire as Secretary read the Report of the Association, stating briefly its aims and objects: the amelioration of the condition of the working class and its emancipation from the dominance of capital. 'Citizen May', after proposing the adoption of the report, gave an address on the Commune of 1871, while 'Citizen Wrigley' spoke of the relation of labour to capital.[2] The fact that it was necessary to state the aims and objects of the Association suggests that it was newly formed. Darbyshire may well have read out the list of principles which he sent to Engels. The reference to an 'annual dinner' again suggests previous contact between some of the members.

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1. K. Marx and F. Engels, Werke Vol.36 (German ed.; Berlin, 1967). Darbyshire's letter is explained on p.765, fn.176: 'Am 17 Februar 1884 hatte John Darbyshire aus Manchester, 7, Marsden Square, Markett Street, Engels darüber informiert, daß er sich seit Jahren bemühe, die Internationale neu zu beleben, und es ihm gelungen sei, in Manchester ein Komitee aus Engländern, Iren, Wallisern und Schotten zu bilden. In diesem Zusammenhang bat er um Namen von ehemaligen Mitgliedern der Internationale und versprach Engels ein Exemplar der Prinzipien und Ziele der neuen Organisation. Engels schrieb die Stichpunkte für seine Antwort auf den Brief Darbyshires.' Engels' reply (ibid., p.113) read simply: 'Kann in dieser Sache gar nichts tun. Soll ich Ihre Prinzipien der Dem/ocratic/ Federation, "Justice" oder "To-Day" ubergeben?'
2. J, 29 March 1884. No other references to 'Citizen May' have been found. It is possible that the member concerned was in fact J.A. Kay (see below, p.73 n.4.

The IWMA continued to meet at the County Forum (2, Marsden Square, Market Street, Manchester) and in May 1884 Darbyshire forwarded to Justice a resolution approving the able manner in which H.M. Hyndman had conducted himself in a debate with Bradlaugh, on the subject of 'Will Socialism benefit the English People?'. The Association believed that Hyndman had obtained a complete victory over 'the advocate of capitalism and landlordism'.[1] Such a statement did not however indicate a complete breach between the emerging socialist movement and Radicalism. As will later be demonstrated, some socialists retained their links with the Radical Association and the NSS. Darbyshire himself lectured to the North Manchester branch of the Manchester Radical Association in August 1884.[2]

While the IWMA appears to have been based at the County Forum in central Manchester, a group of men in Salford were holding meetings in the Brunswick Hotel Debating Room, Union Street, Lower Broughton. Reports of their activities did not name their organization, but their appearance in Justice, rather than the National Reformer is significant. In July a debate on 'What shall we do with the House of Lords?' was opened by H.M. Reade, while other speakers included Joseph Waddington, Rogers and Thomas.[3] Later that month a 'Mr. Ray', who may in fact have been J.A. Kay, lectured to the group on 'International Socialism'. In the course of the evening he gave a brief review of the IWMA, and appealed to workers to combine and join this organization.[4]

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1. J, 31 May 1884.
2. NR, 31 August 1884.
3. J, 19 July 1884.
4. Ibid., 2 August 1884. The name of the speaker was reported as 'Mr. Ray', but again no other reference has been found to a person of that name. The date, venue of the Brunswick Debating Room, membership of the IWMA and lecture topic all point to the lecturer being in fact J.A. Kay. The names could easily be confused by anyone not acquainted with the man and merely in possession of a handwritten report. Joseph Waddington was born in a cellar in Grove Street, Deansgate, Manchester. He grew up fatherless and was educated only until the age of eight or nine at the (Friends') Free School on Jackson's Row, Deansgate. He held a variety of jobs, including stable boy and conjurer's assistant, but the only training he appears to have received was as a joiner. At the beginning of 1884 he was involved in the local unemployed movement. Waddington later became a newsvendor, acting as an agent for many socialist publications. He was a founder member of Manchester and Salford ILP (L. Thompson, op.cit., pp.88-9; WT, 30 January 1891; C, 11 March 1893. See also Appendix II and pp. 82,99-100,111 and 170-6.

The Salford group did turn towards distinct socialist beliefs by the end of 1884. On 9 November George Smart's lecture, on 'Will Socialism Benefit the English People?' was hailed in the columns of Justice as '..the first Socialist lecture delivered in Salford'. At its close Joseph Waddington proposed a motion of sympathy with the Scottish crofters in their resistance to the tyranny of their landlords.[1] The exact nature of these socialist doctrines became apparent by the beginning of December. In the issue of Justice published on the 6th of that month, a report was given of a lecture by 'Comrade Kay' on 'The Principles of Socialism' at the Free Methodist Schools in Mount Street. The comment was made that the audience had read some SDF literature, but 'in their opposition did not touch one of the principles laid down by the lecturer, but wandered into irrelevant subjects'. During the same week, 'Our Comrade Waddington' lectured at the Crescent Inn on 'Social Polarization', while at the 'Brown Cow' Darbyshire, 'in his usual impressive manner', spoke on the 'Conflict between Capital and Labour'. The SDF lecture diary in the same issue advertised, for 7 December, lectures by William Horrocks on 'The Principles of Socialism', J. Darbyshire on 'The Conflict between Labour and Capital', and G. Smart on 'Will Socialism Benefit the English People'. Clearly by the end of 1884 the group of progressive men from Salford was becoming associated with the SDF.[2]

How did these men actually turn to socialism? H.M. Reade's comment about secularism[3] suggests a desire to find a more positive philosophy of life. But although these early socialists appear to have been avid readers, even by 1884 there was not a great deal of socialist literature available. In many respects the situation was little better than that which Hyndman described in 1880.[4] Capital was available only in German and French editions until November 1886.[5] The most likely source of Marxist theory (although it was not acknowledged as such by the author) was H.M. Hyndman's England for All,[6] produced for the

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1. J, 22 November 1884.
2. Ibid., 6 December 1884. A year later George Smart stood as SDF candidate for Salford School Board. See below, pp.148-50.
3. See above, p.67.
4. See above, p.56.
5. K. Marx, Capital Vol.1. (Moscow, 1961 ed.) prefaces to English, German and French editions, pp.3-11, 21.
6. H.M. Hyndman, England for All: The Text-Book of Democracy (1881; reprinted Brighton, 1973, with introduction by C. Tsuzuki) passim.

inaugural conference of the Democratic Federation. Perhaps most important was the appearance in 1884 of the Democratic Federation's periodicals, Justice and To-Day.[1] Many of the early socialists did however continue to read and be influenced by the works of radicals, Carlyle and Ruskin,[2] and by Henry George's Progress and Poverty which, according to H.M. Reade, caused much ferment among radical thinkers.[3] The number of meetings and lectures in the Manchester and Salford area, when compared with the relative lack of socialist literature, does however suggest that many of the early socialists were converted through personal contacts. In this respect Darbyshire appears as a key figure, being the one identifiable link with Marx, Engels, and the First International.

Why did the Salford group turn to the socialism of the SDF, rather than to the IWMA which was already established in Manchester? Reade at least did join the IWMA, but soon came to doubt its prospects of success. The members, he recalled,

> ...were full of enthusiasm, and really believed that they would shortly establish a Commune in Manchester after the fashion of the one lately deceased in Paris, but their efforts to instil Communistic principles into the minds of the solid working men of Manchester were fruitless, and after many months of propaganda our numbers did not perceptibly increase.

Reade further recollected that, when the Democratic Federation Manifesto was published in London (June 1883),

> William Morris wrote to myself and others of the IWMA, urging us to join hands with them and show a united front; but the appeal to give up a purely socialistic organisation for one that outwardly seemed only democratic did not prevail until H.M. Hyndman came down to us in Manchester and explained that the new organisation was founded on Marxian principles, and upon the change of name to the Social Democratic Federation and the issue of a weekly newspaper, Justice, in January, 1884, and a monthly magazine, To-Day, I joined the Federation, being the first member from the North of England to accept this new economic religion. It did not take me long to convert some of my late Secularist comrades, and

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1. Justice appeared on 19 January 1884 and from the first declared its support for the socialist movement in Britain. To-Day was a monthly which Hyndman bought in 1884 (C. Tsuzuki, op.cit., pp.52, 61-2).
2. S. Pierson, Marxism and the Origins of British Socialism (Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 1973) pp.22-37 passim.
3. H.M. Reade, op.cit., p.17.

with this small nucleus I organised the Salford Branch of the Social Democratic Federation in 1884, and was its secretary for several years.[1]

The official foundation of SDF branches does, however, appear to have been delayed until the New Year. In January 1885 C. Fitzgerald lectured at the Crescent Inn, Salford, on the programme of the SDF. He was sympathetically received, and the local correspondent remarked that, 'His cultured and masterly style removed prejudices from those formerly opposed to Socialism. We intend to form a branch of the Social-Democratic Federation at Salford.' At the same time those desiring to form a 'Democratic Club' in the Hulme district were asked to contact Joseph Waddington, c/o the Crescent Inn. Manchester proved to be a more difficult area to organize, but on February 7th 1885 Justice acknowledged a communication from Salford, notifying the formation of a branch of the SDF.[2]

Thus the SDF was established in Manchester and Salford just at the time when the national organization underwent the schism which created the Socialist League. In the context of the local socialist movement it will, however, be more relevant to examine the membership and development of the SDF before considering the local foundation of the League, and the relations between the two groups. It will also be necessary to note the continuing involvement of members in the IWMA and radical movement, before turning to the later development of ethical socialism.

* * *

The SDF's programme embodied an essentially Marxist scheme for state socialism. It nevertheless included more immediately attainable palliative measures, which might appeal to the working man who was not versed in economics. The principal demands were for:

1. Equal, direct adult suffrage for all elections of officers or administrators, with election costs to be paid by the community.

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1. Ibid., pp.16-18. The Manifesto was adopted at the Federation's 2nd Annual Conference in June 1883, and the organization's name changed to Social Democratic Federation in August 1884 (see C. Tsuzuki, op. cit., pp.50, 58).
2. J, 6 December 1884; 24, 31 January and 7 February 1885. For the attempts to establish the SDF in Manchester, see below Chapter 4 pp.113-14. Presumably 'C. Fitzgerald' was the retired Army officer who was a London member of the SDF and later a founder of the breakaway Socialist Union (see C. Tsuzuki, op.cit., p.72).

2. No law to be abiding unless accepted by the majority of the people.
3. The abolition of a standing army and establishment of a 'national citizen force', with the people having the power to decide upon peace or war.
4. Education, from elementary to higher levels, to be free, compulsory, secular and industrial for all.
5. The administration of justice to be free for all.
6. Land, mines, railways and other means of transit, to be collective or common property.
7. Ireland and all other parts of the empire to have legislative independence.
8. The production of wealth to be regulated by society in the common interest of all its members.
9. The means of production, distribution and exchange to be declared and treated as collective or common property.

The second group, of palliative measures, included:

1. The compulsory construction of healthy dwellings for artisans and agricultural labourers.
2. Free compulsory education for all, and one meal per day in each school.
3. A normal working day of eight hours or less.
4. A cumulative tax on all incomes above a fixed minimum.
5. State appropriation of the railways - with or without compensation.
6. The rapid extinction of the national debt.
7. Nationalization of the land and organization of agricultural and industrial armies under state control, on co-operative principles.[1]

Thus the SDF's programme held an appeal both for men already converted to socialism, and for advanced radicals. It was secularist, uncompromising enough in its socialism for the IWMA, and placed sufficient emphasis on the land question to attract the converts of Henry George. Many of its principles were later absorbed by the ILP.

The importance of the SDF in the origins of Manchester and Salford ILP may best be illustrated by considering the leading personalities at the meeting on 17 May 1892, in the St. James' Hall,

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1. J, 25 October 1884.

Manchester, at which the ILP was founded. The names of eighteen speakers and/or members of the platform party can be ascertained, and of these eight can be shown to have been members of the SDF: Alfred Settle, George Evans, Leonard Hall, W.K. Hall, Joseph Waddington, William Horrocks, T. M. Purves, and H.M. Reade.[1] The South Salford branch of the SDF, which Reade claimed to have organised, had among its early members Waddington[2] and Horrocks,[3] as well as George Smart[4] and Henry Harry.[5]

By February 1885[6] this group had been joined by W.K. Hall. He was the son of a Buckinghamshire agricultural labourer, and had subsequently settled in Glasgow, where he worked as a labourer at Hyde Park Foundry. Hall attended night school and, in order to devote himself to study, managed to live on his savings for fifteen months. His funds exhausted, he sought work which involved shorter hours than at the foundry. He therefore moved, first to work at a coalpit in N. Staffordshire, then to Pendleton. By the time that he arrived in the latter district, he had already read some of the works of Louis Blanc, seen a copy of Justice, and heard about the Social Democrats. Thus he deliberately sought out the local activists.[7] The Clarion later claimed that:

> They made a Socialist of him, these men, and brought him out to speak in the open air. It was hard work, and they said he was a poor speaker. But he is a man who knows the value of industry, and they don't say he is a poor speaker now.[8]

George Evans and Alfred Settle also appear to have joined the South Salford SDF when they arrived as newcomers in the town during 1885. George Evans, like Hall, had spent much of his life in Scotland although he was a native of Kidderminster. When he arrived in Salford and found work as a house painter, he was still an active Liberal. However he came into contact with William Horrocks, and after long discussions was finally converted to socialism.[9] In 1891 he stood as Social Democratic candidate for Salford School Board,[10] and was Vice-

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1. See below, pp.248-9.
2. J, 24 and 31 January 1885.
3. Horrocks was first listed as a speaker at the Crescent Inn on 6 December 1884 and thereafter his name appeared almost weekly in Justice.
4. In 1885 George Smart successfully contested Salford School Board elections, as a Social Democrat (see below, pp.148-50). He was first recorded as lecturing in Salford in J, 22 November 1884.
5. Ibid., 3 January 1885.
6. Ibid., 21 February 1885 mentions that 'Comrade Hall' was speaking for the SDF.
7. For biographies of Hall see WT, 14 November 1891 and 2 July 1892; C, 9 April 1892. See also Appendix II below.
8. C, 9 April 1892.
9. WT, 14 November 1891; C, 8 April 1893.
10. WT, 22 May, 19 June, 10 July, 21 August, 14 November 1891.

President of Salford Labour Electoral Association[1] as well as President of South Salford SDF.[2] At the time of his death, in 1893, he was Treasurer of Manchester and Salford ILP.[3]

Alfred Settle came from a more prosperous background than his new comrades. He was born in Co. Kildare, Ireland, of English parentage. His father was manager of a flax mill. The family moved to Bolton, then Salford, while Settle was still a boy. At the age of thirteen he was apprenticed to copper plate engraving, and after serving his time he moved to London, in 1879. He then held strong Conservative views, but was attracted by the newly-developing socialist movement in London. Saturday afternoons and Sunday mornings would find him attending meetings in Hyde Park or at Tottenham High Cross. Initially he contested the views of the speakers, including John Burns. However by the time he moved back to Salford, in 1885, he had developed strong sympathies with socialism, although he had not as yet joined any movement. Soon after his arrival in Salford he helped to found a Working Men's Sanitary Association, and was appointed honorary secretary. This work not only developed his powers of organization and public speaking, but also brought him into contact with the socialists, who were among the most ardent supporters of the Association. Thus it was that '...thrown much into contact with such men as Evans, W.K. Hall, Horrocks and others, the work of conversion begun in London was consummated in Salford, and he joined the local branch of the Social Democratic Federation'.[4]

Thus of the eight SDF men previously mentioned as foundation members of the ILP, six were already political associates by the end of 1885. Of the other two, Thomas Morton Purves, a compositor by trade, was not recorded as being politically active before 1891.[5] After taking part in the foundation of the ILP,[6] he also took the chair at several Labour Church meetings,[7] and stood as SDF candidate for the newly-

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1. Ibid., 28 August 1891.
2. Ibid., 18 September 1891.
3. Ibid., 4 February 1893. See also Appendix II below.
4. Ibid., 23 October 1891. See also Appendix II below.
5. Ibid., 16 October 1891. Purves moved a resulution supporting the parliamentary candidature of Thomas Harris at a meeting in Salford Town Hall.
6. Ibid., 28 May 1892.
7. Ibid., 21 May, 6 August, 20 August 1892.

formed Trafford Ward in Salford. At the time of the election he was serving on the executive committee of Manchester and Salford ILP, and was chairman of the General Purposes Committee of the Labour Church.[1] However by the end of 1892 he had become SDF secretary for Lancashire,[2] and thereafter appears to have ceased his activities on behalf of the ILP. Leonard Hall did not join the SDF until 1890, after several years of activity on behalf of the Socialist League. Thus his political career may best be considered in the following chapter,[3] in the context of his propagandist work for the League.

What impact did the schism within the national SDF and the formation of the Socialist League have upon local activists? Details of the dispute among national leaders have been provided elsewhere,[4] and are not altogether relevant to a local study. The basic cause of the split was a dispute over methods. As has already been mentioned, the SDF while maintaining as its essential aim the establishment of a socialist society, was also prepared to work for more immediate palliative measures,[5] in some instances by taking part in the existing parliamentary and local electoral system. On 27 December 1884 the members of the SDF Council who opposed its methods resigned, despite the fact that they were in a majority, and three weeks later they established the Socialist League. The founders of the League included William Morris, Edward Aveling and Eleanor Marx Aveling.[6] Morris was certainly the national figure best known to local socialists. In January he had come to Manchester to lecture for the Ancoats Recreation Movement.[7] During the following September he returned to the city to open an art exhibition at Ancoats, in the course of which he delivered a lecture on 'Art and Labour'.[8] But if Morris' enthusiasm was obvious to the Mancunians, the same is not necessarily true of his doctrines. Charles Rowley, who presided at one of the lectures in January 1884,[9]

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1. Ibid., 29 October and 12 November 1892.
2. Ibid., 3 December 1892. See also Appendix II below.
3. See below, pp.120-2.
4. E.P. Thompson, op.cit., pp.331-65 passim.
5. See above, pp.76-7.
6. E.P. Thompson, op.cit., p.359.
7. J, 26 January 1884.
8. Ibid., 27 September 1884.
9. Ibid., 26 January 1884.

looked back in his autobiography to Morris' visits to Ancoats. He recalled enthusiastic audiences of nearly a thousand working men but added, 'I cannot say that they understood either his ideas or his way of putting them...'[1] Rowley's remark is perhaps the key to the whole affair, for what seems to have happened in Manchester and Salford was basically a compromise, arranged by local men whose ideological differences were much less pronounced than those of their national leaders.

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Initial interest in the League came from individuals rather than from existing organizations. On 15 January 1885 T. Ewing of 157, Rydal Mount, Cheetham Hill, Manchester, wrote to J.L. Mahon, asking him to recommend a good handbook of socialism, and inform him if the society had a branch in Manchester, as he wanted to become a member. He received a copy of the Manifesto, together with three pamphlets, and also paid a year's subscription to Commonweal. In his letter dated 19 January he assured Mahon, 'I will join League bye and bye'. Ewing did however purchase two dozen copies of Commonweal, hoping to persuade his friends to subscribe. On 25 January he commented, 'I hope, in the course of a few weeks to convert some of them to socialism. At present, they are trying to convert me from it'.[2] The following month Alfred Hutton of Cheetham heard a lecture by Ewing at a Literary Society meeting. This prompted him to write to the League, requesting a copy of the first issue of Commonweal. He added, 'Have you a list of works that you can recommend to a student of the question [i.e. socialism]? I am a working man anxious to improve both himself and his fellow men'.[3] John Oldman wrote from Oldham that, 'After carefully reading the League's Manifesto, I discover that I have been a Socialist - actively engaged in propagating Socialist principles - for upwards of twenty years and am still in earnest'.[4]

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1. C. Rowley, Fifty Years of Work Without Wages, op.cit., p.129. E.P. Thompson, op.cit., p.364, after describing the SDF split, commented that 'to the membership the whole thing appeared as a mystery. They knew nothing of the history of the dispute:...'
2. Letters: T. Ewing to J.L. Mahon, 15 and 19 January 1885; T. Ewing to [SL], 25 January 1885 (1374/1-2, 1376/1. Socialist League Archives).
3. Letter: Alfred Hutton to [SL], 12 February 1885 (1810. Socialist League Archives).
4. Letter: John Oldman to Secretary, Socialist League, 24 February 1885 (Socialist League Archives).

A new organisation was obviously attractive to the unattached, but it is perhaps more interesting to note that members of the newly-established Salford SDF were also initially sympathetic. Reade wrote to Mahon on 28 January 1885:

> I am pleased with the spirit of the 'Manifesto' and agree with every word. I can see the reason of the 'split' now and I understand it; that the S.D.F. is working on 'State Socialism' lines and you on 'Revolutionary Socialism' the end is the same but the method different, as for myself I am a 'Revolutionist' but when I see the Working Classes so Conservative it makes me think that they would receive 'State Socialism' better. it was this that prompted me to form a Branch of the SDF at Salford, but my earnest wishes for your success are with you & I would join you but I am only a 'poor clerk' & I am the Secy for the 'Land Restoration League' Manchester and the Secy for the 'Salford Working-Men's Electoral Assoc^n' also Secy for the Salford Branch of the SDF and all my time and money is spent on their service, I really cannot afford to subscribe to the 'League' but shall always be willing to do anything for you in our district.[1]

Joseph Waddington asked Mahon for copies of the League Manufesto, commenting:

> I for one regret there should be any division in our organisation yet at the same time this separation may eventually do good by spreading the forces of intelligence.[2]

Waddington stated that he was about to organise a branch of the League, 'consisting of 5 or 6 ardent workers in the cause'.[3] George Smart was already selling Commonweal when in March 1885 he advised:

> You want to form a Branch in Manchester write to T. Ewing 157 Rydal Mount Cheetham Hill Manchester & to W. Morley Crescent Inn Salford and ask them to form a Branch.....if there is any sign of a Branch being formed.../I/ will do what ever I can to help it.[4]

The request to establish a branch had already been made to Ewing in the first issue of Commonweal, when he was referred to Darbyshire for assistance in the venture.[4]

Reade did however add a note of caution. Although he was quite prepared to distribute the League's literature, he did not wish

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1. Letter: H.M. Reade to J.L. Mahon, 28 January 1885 (2521/1. Socialist League Archives).
2. Letter: J. Waddington to J.L. Mahon, 15 January 1885 (3095/1. Socialist League Archives).
3. Ibid.
4. Letter: George Smart to /SL/, /1 March 1885/ (2793/2. Socialist League Archives).

to see it form a branch in Salford. As he explained to Mahon:

> You keep asking me to form a branch of the Socialist League in Salford. Would not this be unwise? it would become a rival to our present one & I am sure there is not enough sound men to form another. We should cease to create dissensions. There are about 30 persons, members of the IWMA in Broughton & they do not help us, & I think the formation of another school of Socialism in Salford would not look well, nor work well, let us cease from jealousy & unite under the one banner of Socialism.[1]

The attitude of the Salford Social Democrats thus appears to have been eminently practical. They were not particularly concerned by the doctrinal differences between the League and the Federation; they simply wanted to see the spread of socialism. But having struggled to build up one group in Salford, they could see no justification in dividing socialist forces in the town. After all, there was the whole of Manchester for the League to organise. Had the Manchester activists simply decided to form a League branch, much of the early dissension between the two groups might have been avoided. As it happened, the Manchester recruits were somewhat divided, and their attempts to seek compromise had unfortunate consequences.

On 27 April 1885 Smart informed Mahon that he was about to attend a meeting at the County Forum 'of the Socialists of Manchester Salford Broughton & Pendleton to organise and form a Branch for Manchester'. According to the note which he added later, Ewing, Bourne, Peach and twenty-two others attended. Parkinson, seconded by Bourne, moved that a branch of the SDF be formed. However an amendment was moved by Ewing, and seconded by Peach, that they form a branch of the Socialist League. By way of compromise the meeting then decided to establish 'The Manchester and Salford Socialist Society', and affiliate to both national organizations.[2] By 5 May the name had been changed to the Socialist Union, and the intention was that the majority of members should decide upon its affiliation to a national movement.[3] Thereafter stalemate ensued. On 9 May Ewing explained to Morris that:

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1. Letter: H.M. Reade to J.L. Mahon, 2 March 1885 (2521/4. Socialist League Archives).
2. Letter: George Smart to J.L. Mahon, 27 April 1885 (2791/3. Socialist League Archives).
3. Letter: T. Ewing to [?J.L. Mahon], 5 May 1885 (1374/3. Socialist League Archives)

> The men attending our meeting of Wednesday last, were a mixed lot, consisting of representatives of the SDF, & of the IWMA in addition to those who were either in favour of forming a branch of the Socialist League, or of founding an independent organization. As a matter of course, each party was disposed to blow its own trumpet, & advocate its own cause, but little progress was made.[1]

It appears that the Salford Social Democrats were pressurized by their own national organization to oppose the League, and secure the affiliation of the Socialist Union. Ewing recounted that:

> The delegates of the Salford branch of the SDF produced and read a long document, somewhat after the style of a manifesto, in which they stated - That the SDF was desirous of forming branches in all districts of Manchester;and, as it was the only body of Socialists which had the interests of the working classes at heart, they could not allow us to become affiliated; nor could they lend us either sympathy or support, unless we consented to become one of their branches. They also attacked the Socialist League, asserting that that body was composed entirely of middle class men, who had no real interest in the workers; that they were not socialists at all, but anarchists & revolutionists; & that they were all at loggerheads with each other, & were only held together by the influence of William Morris.

He added, to Morris, '..I would not have mentioned it to you, had it not been for the fact that the style of the document led me to believe, that it had emanated from the office of Justice'.[2] To make the situation worse, Justice persisted in announcing that a branch of the SDF met on Wednesday evenings at the County Forum, when in fact the only organization using that venue was the Socialist Union. Bourne commented, '..Although I can't promise we shall join the League yet I can promise we shall not after this unwarrantable use of our name join the SDF'.[3] When Hyndman visited Manchester in June 1885 he remarked upon the divided socialist movement:

> Unfortunately the differences in our body which arose some months ago seem to have had greater effect in Manchester than they had in London or anywhere else. The formation of a Socialist Union seems to have been a well-meaning attempt to maintain a balance in the matter. Of course so long as Socialism is preached we know well that really earnest workers must sooner or later join the Social Democratic party;...[4]

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1. Letter: T. Ewing to W. Morris, 9 May 1885 (1375. Socialist League Archives).
2. Ibid.
3. Letter: J.E.D. Bourne to J.L. Mahon, received 12 May 1885 (894/1. Socialist League Archives). See also letter: Bourne to [SL], June 1885 (897/1-5).
4. J, 20 June 1885.

The advocates of the Socialist League were perhaps more subtle than the Social Democrats in their approach to Manchester Socialist Union. As Bourne remarked:

> The great majority are in favour of the League but for obvious reasons we don't wish to press the unwilling ones too much at present. When W. Morris has been then the motion I think will be carried without a single dissentient & this will be better than losing any by pushing the matter down their throats, besides it would not be Socialism as I understand it.[1]

The visit by William Morris, involving two lectures, was arranged for 20 June.[2] Morris later informed Andreas Scheu that:

> I met the members of the Socialist Union and had a long talk with them: the best men want to join us, but think they can make their body into a branch instead of a mere affiliated body: the difficulty with the doubters is the question of parliamentarianism.[3]

Even Morris' influence was not however decisive, for the Socialist Union took until 5 August to reach its decision. Then, at a special meeting, it officially dissolved itself, to form a branch of the Socialist League.[4]

The dissension generated over the affiliation of Manchester Socialist Union was not to prove typical of the relations between the SDF and Socialist League. However the progress of the two organizations may best be considered in the following chapter, in the light of their propagandist activities. What must be examined here is the membership of the Socialist League, and any effect which its formation had upon the SDF in the district.

Fortunately a list of local members has survived in the Socialist League Archives. Dated simply 'Aug. 21', it was signed 'R.U. Sec.' [Raymond Unwin]. There also survives a letter from Raymond Unwin to the Socialist League, dated 21 August 1885, in which he apologized for his delay in sending the list of names. According to this letter, Unwin had been appointed Secretary of the new League branch, W.W. Morley was Financial Secretary, Oldman Treasurer and Bourne Literature Secretary.[5]

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1. J.E.D. Bourne to [SL], June 1885 (897/1-5. Socialist League Archives).
2. J.E.D. Bourne to J.L. Mahon, [June 1885] (893/3. Socialist League Archives).
3. P. Henderson ed., The Letters of William Morris to his Family and Friends (1950) p.237.
4. Com., September 1885. Despite Morris' comment, the new organization was described as a branch.
5. Letter: R. Unwin to Secretary, Socialist League, 21 August 1885 (3032/1. Socialist League Archives). The list forms Table 2 (see below, p.87).

Unwin's list of members is shown in Table 2 overleaf, while another, undated, membership list forms Table 3. Tables 4 and 5 which follow comprise lists of names 'crossed off' the Manchester branch.

The first list is the most interesting, as it provides the occupations of members. An attempt has been made to trace, in Slater's Directory, the occupations of other Socialist League members included in Tables 3-5. In most cases this has proved unsuccessful, for the Directories tended to list only residents in the principal thoroughfares, and even then confined their attention to householders. However three additional members from Table 3 have been traced. W.F. Partington was a shopkeeper[1] and, according to a separate and undated note of 'New members of Manchester branch', J. Houghton was a mechanic and D.F. Ramsay was described as 'something in a bank'.[2] Slater's Directory in fact listed Ramsay as a secretary.[3]

Thus in its early days at least the Socialist League tended to be composed of white collar/professional men, together with a group of students and a few skilled workers. Addison, a labourer, and possible Oldman, a gardener, were the only representatives of the unskilled. Addison at least was far from typical of his social group, for before moving to Manchester he had been involved in Joseph Arch's National Agricultural Labourers' Union and had also founded a Workmen's Club in Brigg.[4]

The Socialist League members also tended to live in Manchester rather than Salford, and their branch meetings were also held in Manchester, at the City Cafe in Swan Street and the County Forum.[5] This geographical division, between the SDF in Salford and the Socialist League in Manchester will be considered in more detail in the following chapter. It was however of particular importance, both to

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1. Slater's Directory 1888
2. Handwritten note: 'New memb. of M/cr Branch' (3051. Socialist League Archives) The writing appears to be that of Raymond Unwin.
3. Slater's Directory 1888
4. See biography of Addison in Labour Annual, 1895. p.161.
5. Socialist League Rules. Printed matter with hand written name of branch, officers, remarks about meetings. 4pp. (604. Socialist League Archives) The venue of meetings was inserted in ink on the back page.

Table 2

'List of effective members of the Manchester branch of the Socialist League up to Date Aug. 21 /1885/ Signed R.U. Sec.'

(605. Socialist League Archives)

W. Addison	22 Carnarvon St. Newtown M.	Labourer
W.E. Atock	9 St. Bees St. Greenheys M.	Student
J.E.D. Bourne	10 Herbert St. Hightown M.	Press
J.T.W. Ball	45 Isaacs St. Salford	Warehouseman
T.S. Ewing	157 Rydal Mount Hightown M.	Press
S. Green	Cliff House Hyde M.	Cotton Waste dealer /deleted, 'Agent' subs./
G. Goodwin	Clapton St. City Road M.	Mechanic
O. Jones	27 Bickley St. Moss Side M.	Student
W.H. Jones	Parkfield Middleton near M.	Cotton spinner
R. Little	101 Lloyd St. Greenheys M.	Student
W.W. Morley	7 Marmions Bldgs Abbot St. Rochdale Rd. M.	Photographer
G.T.W. Donald	16 Sidney St. Chorlton-on-Medlock	Warehouseman?
J. Oldman	57 Landsdown Rd. Oldham	Gardner /sic/
E.H. Parkinson	Hulme M.	?
C.S. Peach	27 Bickley St. Moss Side M.	Student
L.D. Prince	33 Dorset St. Hulme M.	Foreign corresp.
J. Shaw	27 Stowel St. Weaste M.	Meteorologist
W. Uttley	Cathedral Gates M.	Student
R. Unwin	37 Queens Rd. M.	Draughtsman
J.W.D. Wade	The Yews Broughton M.	Accountant
J. Wainscott	Buckley Wells Bury	Traveller
W.D. Wright	101 Loyd /sic/ St. Greenheys	Student

This table, and the three which follow, adhere to the original manuscripts, although there are obvious inaccuracies in spellings and, in some instances, in geographical locations. For example, Broughton (Salford) and Hyde were both followed by 'M' /Manchester/.

Table 3

List of members of the Manchester branch of the Socialist League

(605. Socialist League Archives)

[This list has no heading or date. The compiler indicated simply 'new names underlined'.]

W. Addison	22 Carnarvon St. Dickens St. Queens Rd.
J.E.D. Bourne	10 Herbert St. Hightown
J.T.W. Ball	26 Doddington St. Salford
Thomas Carolon	76 Park St. Gt. Jackson St. Hulme
J. Davies	68 Dover St. Higher Crumpsall
T.S. Ewing	157 Rydal Mt Hightown
W. Fenton	24 Caroline St Lower Broughton
A. Goodwin	53 Clopton St. City Rd
J.E. Gumprecht	489 Rochdale Rd.
J. Houghton	3 Upper Tamworth St. Hulme
Fred Henderson	58 Wellington St. Moss Side
T. Kinaston	39 Charlotte St. Waterloo Rd.
J. Jackson	36 Primrose St. Oldham Rd.
R. Little	101 Lloyd St. Greenheys
Laurence McCoy	6 Alfred St. Rochdale Rd.
W.W. Morley	7 Mormions [sic] Buildings, Abbot St. Rochdale Rd.
T. McGrane	58 Barlow St Openshaw
J. Oldman	59 Landsdown Rd. Oldham
E.H. Parkinson	15 Stephen St. Hulme
C.S. Peach	27 Bickley St. Moss Side
L.D. Prince	33 Dorset St. Hulme
W.F. Partington	42 Carlyle St Beswick
D.F. Ramsay	28 Seymoor [sic]Rd. Crumpsall
Fred Snowdon	Booth St. W.
Heinrich Studt	157 Chester Gate Stockport
W. Utley	Cathedral Gates
R. Unwin	37 Queens Rd.
W.D. Wright	101 Loyd [sic] St. Greenheys

Why Unwin, the first branch secretary, should be classed as a new member is uncertain; the underlining of his name may have been an error. However he did resign in November 1886, prior to moving to Chesterfield (see Com., 13 November 1886), where he remained until after the demise of the League in Manchester. For Unwin's later career, see Appendix II below.

Table 4

'Names of Members crossed off the Manchester Branch' [n.d.]

(605. Socialist League Archives)

No.		
	W. Atock	9 St Bees St Greenheys
	T. Bohen	6 Rodney St Oldham Rd
	R. Cavanagh	23 Back hardman [sic] St Deansgate
	G. Crowther	87 Lees St Oldham Rd.
	John Freud	County Forum
	H. Fremment	Queens St. Salford
380	S. Green	Cliff House Hyde
	Grundy	
	R. Hefron	8 Johnsons Buildings Rochdale Rd
382	O. Jones	27 Bickley St Moss Side
383	W.H. Jones	Parkfield Middleton
386	G.J. McDonald	16 Sidney St. C on M
	G. Ridgway	5 Greek St. C on M
391	J. Shaw	27 Stowel St Weaste
	Hy Sweetman	
	J.W.D. Wade	The Yews Broughton
	J. Wainscott	Buckley Wells Bury

Table 5

'List of names crossed off from the Manchester Branch' [n.d.]
(605. Socialist League Archives)

J. Davies	68 Dover St. Higher Crumpsall
T.S. Ewing (left)	157 Rydal Mount Hightown
W. Fenton	24 Caroline St. Lower Broughton
A. Goodwin	54 Clopton St. City Rd.
F.E. Gumprecht	489 Rochdale Rd.
J. Houghton	3 Upper Tamworth St Hulme
Fred Henderson	58 Wellington St Moss Side
J. Kinaston	39 Charlotte St Waterloo Rd
L. McCoy	6 Alfred St Rochdale Rd
W.F. Partington	42 Carlyle St Beswick
W.D. Wright	101 Lloyd St. Greenheys
R. Little	101 Lloyd St. Greenheys

It is likely that this list was compiled at the beginning of 1886. Ewing was a regular speaker until the end of 1885, but thereafter his name was not listed in Commonweal. He may well have left the district, rather than simply withdrawn from the branch.

the two movements concerned and to the later development of the ILP. Once the allegiance of Manchester Socialist Union had been decided, the two organizations directed their propaganda towards different areas and had no real cause for dissension. Moreover the decline of the Socialist League into a small anarchist group at the end of the decade was to leave the ILP with a clear field for propagandist activity in Manchester, which enabled it in turn to co-exist in harmony with the SDF.

Unfortunately no SDF membership lists have been traced. However the leading activists in this period, on whom information is available, generally tended to be skilled workers. Men in unskilled or white collar occupations were the exception rather than the rule, and there is no indication of student membership. Thus Alfred Settle had served his seven years' apprenticeship as a copper plate engraver,[1] George Evans and George Smart were both painters,[2] Thomas Morton Purves was a compositor,[3] and Joseph Waddington a joiner turned newsvendor.[4] Henry Harry was described as a 'trade unionist'[5], which in the context of 1885 suggested a skilled trade. E.H. Parkinson, whose occupation was omitted from the Socialist League's list, is also likely to have been a skilled worker or at least an apprentice at this time, for after 1893 he represented the Union of Engravers to Calico Printers and Paper Stainers on the Trades Council.[6] Horrocks, who worked as a coal heaver, and W.K. Hall, who loaded coal boats were the only members who could be described as labourers, and in the case of Horrocks it has been suggested that he was a turner by trade, and had failed to obtain skilled work as a result of victimisation.[7] The only white collar worker among the early SDF members was H.M. Reade, who began his working life as a clerk in a counting house and then moved to the shipping department of Messrs. Rylands and Sons Ltd., Manchester merchants.[8] The difference in

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1. See above, p.79.
2. See C, 8 April 1893 and Apprndix II for Evans, and Manchester Examiner and Times, 6 November 1885 for Smart.
3. See above, p.79.
4. See above, p.73.
5. J, 7 February 1885.
6. See Appendix II below.
7. See above, pp.65 and 78, and Appendix II. E. and R. Frow, To Make That Future - Now! (Manchester, 1976) p.28, stated that Horrocks was a turner and member of the Salford Branch of the ASE. However their evidence was based on the oral reminiscences of Harry Brownjohn, former member of the ASE and now deceased. No documentary evidence has been traced.
8. H.M. Reade, op.cit., p.11.

social background was noticed by George Smart, who in March 1885 wrote to the Socialist League:

> It is me that sell the socialist papera and not Reade he is a clerk and is afraid to be seen and then it is not respectable to shout like a Newsboy through the streets. [sic][1]

Later recruits to the SDF whose occupations have been recorded also tended to fit this picture of skilled workmen. Thomas Foley, whom the Democratic and Republican electors of S.E. Manchester considered as a possible independent parliamentary candidate in 1885, was a master lathsplitter.[2] George Tabron, a moulder by trade, was returned unopposed as elective auditor for Salford in 1890 and '91. He was a member of the Trades Council, a founder of Salford Labour Electoral Association in August 1891, and apparently a member of the ILP by 1893.[3] John Ritson's political career was unusual in that he was active in the SDF from 1887-8, then in the Socialist League from 1889-90. He entered the ILP in September 1892, when the North-East and East Manchester Labour Electoral Association decided to affiliate, and he then stood for three consecutive years as ILP municipal candidate for New Cross Ward. In October 1893 the Clarion stated that Ritson was a member of the General Labourers' Union, but by 1894 he was running what Slater's Directory described as an 'eating house' on Oldham Road. The Clarion commented that he was a man 'whose politics are as sound as his pies'.[4] Leonard Hall, who joined in 1890 as the Socialist League became predominantly anarchist, came nearest to meriting the epithet of middle class, being the son of a well-known physician and lecturer, Dr. Spencer T. Hall, MA, Ph.D. Yet family troubles obliged Leonard Hall to begin work at the age of 13; a twelve hour day, seven day week for the weekly wage of 7s on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway. Having

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1. Letter: G. Smart to [SL], 1 March [1885] (2793/2. Socialist League Archives).
2. J, 13 June 1885.
3. Ibid., 19 July 1890; WT, 10 April, 16 October 1891. It appears that Tabron was a member of the ILP by 1893 as Clarion, 3 June 1893 advertised him as a speaker at an ILP open-air meeting at Wallness Bridge, Salford. In the case of such meetings, it was then the usual practice to name the organization to which any speaker from outside the ILP adhered.
4. For Ritson's activities in the SDF, see J, 13 October, 5,12,19 November, 10 December 1887; 21 January, 24 March, 12 May, 28 July, 4 & 18 August 1888. For the Socialist League, see Com., 20 April, 4 & 18 May, 1,8,15,22 June, 6,20 July, 31 August, 7, 21, 28 September, 26 October, 2 November 1889; 26 April 1890. For the LEA affiliation to the ILP, see WT, 3 September 1892. For Ritson's candidatures in New Cross, see WT, 3, 17 September, 15, 22 October, 12 November 1892; C, 7 October 1893, 30 June 1894. For his occupation, see C, 30 June 1894 and Slater's Directory...1893, p.467 (alphabetical section).

subsequently worked his way around America, the West Indies and the Continent, he returned to England and took up a variety of jobs, including journalism, before becoming an organiser of the Navvies, Bricklayers' Labourers and General Labourers' Union.[1] None of these activities really placed him in the traditional middle class niche.

Admittedly the Social Democrats whose occupations can be traced are inevitably the leaders, rather than the rank and file of the movement. But if the leaders were working class, then it is extremely unlikely that large numbers of middle class intellectuals were to be found among the rank and file. In any case Salford, the stronghold of the SDF, did not boast a large middle class population in its central districts.

From the time that the affiliation of Manchester Socialist Union was resolved, until the late '80s when the Socialist League came under the influence of anarchism, the SDF and the League generally co-existed in harmony. The two groups were engaged in spreading the message of socialism in different areas, and many activists were prepared to speak for both. It appears that some individuals, among them Joseph Waddington, joined both the SDF and the League.[2] E.H. Parkinson, listed in both Tables 2 and 3 above as a member of the League, was at the same time active in the SDF branch which he had helped to form. Throughout the summer of 1885 he was a regular speaker at the SDF's outdoor meetings,[3] and in October of that year, together with Charles Peach and John Oldman, he attempted to form a branch of the Federation in Oldham.[4] Parkinson's activities on behalf of the SDF were in fact to continue until after the turn of the century.[5] J.E.D. Bourne and G. Goodwin both served on the committee of a new SDF branch which was established in Manchester in December 1885.[6] W.W. Morley was speaking for the SDF in June 1885,[7] while W. Partington addressed a meeting at the Crescent Inn the following July.[8] In September 1888 L.D. Prince was to be found entertaining a French workers' delegation on behalf of Manchester and Salford SDF.[9]

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1. Navvy's and Laborer's Guide, March 1891.
2. See below, p111 n.1
3. See details of meetings, which appeared weekly in J during summer 1885.
4. J, 17 October 1885.
5. See Appendix II below.
6. J, 26 December 1885.
7. Ibid., 13 & 20 June 1885.
8. Ibid., 4 July 1885.
9. Ibid., 15 September 1888.

Locally both the SDF and League regarded themselves simply as propagandists of socialism, rather than as advocates of a distinctive doctrine. Thus when the Socialist League club in Gray Mare Lane found itself in difficulties in 1887, Frederick Cadle wrote:

> If we dissolve the Branch the SDF purpose starting one here and as we are not able to efficiently propaganda or hold meetings owing to having no speakers there been [sic] insufficient members to carry this Branch on otherwise we think it would be better for the cause for them to try it as they will be able to supply speakers from Salford Branch.[1]

On a national level the main difference between the League and the SDF was the former's opposition to electoral activity. Yet the SDF's nominees for electoral office were in fact some of the men who appeared most regularly on the League's platform. Henry Harry, who in October 1885 was described as the SDF's Labour candidate for Pendleton,[2] addressed a Socialist League meeting in January 1886.[3] In July 1886 George Smart, while still serving as a Social Democrat member of Salford School Board, spoke at two meetings for the Socialist League in Manchester.[4]

SDF and Socialist League members also came into contact with one another through the Hulme Radical Association, which was active in 1886. This organisation may well have been a continuation of the Manchester Radical Association, founded in 1883. On the occasion of two men, J.E. Williams and S. Mainwaring, being fined at Middlesex Sessions on a free speech issue, the Association's members drew up a protest. Signatories included L.D. Prince, Henry M. Reade, Raymond Unwin, Frederick Cadle and Willam Maben.[5] Prince, Unwin and Cadle were Socialist League members,[6] Reade a Social Democrat, and Maben was to become an election agent for the ILP in 1894, three years before winning a municipal election as a Social Democrat.[7]

Thus after the initial conflict had subsided, the SDF and Socialist League developed a <u>modus vivendi</u>, based partly upon geographical

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1. Letter: F. Cadle to [SL], 7 January 1887 (1002/3. Socialist League Archives)
2. <u>J</u>, 17 October 1885.
3. <u>Com</u>., January 1886
4. Ibid., 17 July 1886.
5. Hulme Radical Association, Protest against sentences passed upon J.E. Williams and S. Mainwaring. Manchester, 21 August 1886 (260. Socialist League Archives)
6. See above and Table 3.
7. <u>Labour Leader</u> (hereafter cited as <u>LL</u>), 22 September 1894, 6 November 1897. See also Appendix II below.

separation, but perhaps also reflecting the fact that ideological differences tended to be less in evidence among local members than among their national leaders. The Socialist League's stand against electoral activity was hardly detrimental to its good relations with the SDF, and the last, anarchist, phase of its existence may also be described as conducive to socialist unity in the area, since it transformed the League into a small and politically insignificant faction, while causing more moderate members, like Leonard Hall and John Ritson, to withdraw into the mainstream of the 'parliamentarian' socialist movement.

* * *

Although the Socialist League had by the early '90s evolved into a small anarchist group devoid of popular support, the SDF had established itself locally as a political party contending for electoral office. The question must therefore inevitably arise as to why there was any need for an ILP. The SDF was a socialist party, with working class adherents and local leaders who were in any case to be among the founders of the ILP. Why did this group not simply concentrate upon the SDF, and develop that organization into the mass party which the ILP was to become? This question was frequently raised in the early years of the ILP, on a national as well as a local level; George Bernard Shaw was even to assert that the idea of an ILP '..turns out to be nothing but an attempt to begin the SDF all over again'.[1] The whole subject is obviously one which must receive detailed examination at a later stage, but as regards the evolution of a local socialist leadership, one significant point does need to be made. The SDF was basically an organisation for the politically-minded; for enthusiastic activists who were prepared to dedicate themselves to the cause, to read books and pamphlets on politics and economics. The group of its leaders described above were obviously men of such inclination and character. Their organization did not however cater for what turned out to be a much larger section of society; the men and women from both working-and middle class backgrounds who were becoming increasingly aware of the ills and injustices both in their immediate environment and in society in general; who wanted something to be done about poverty, unemployment, bad housing and the vast morass of human misery which was constantly in evidence, but who did not accept, or perhaps even understand, a Marxist interpretation of the remedy. This was the school of thought which Professor Pierson has described as 'Ethical Socialism':

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1. WT, 8 October 1892. Letter G.B. Shaw to 'Autolycus'.

> Ethical socialism possessed little intellectual coherence. Its spokesmen emphasised a few basic ideas centring on the notion of the collectivization of wealth or the public ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange. But they addressed themselves mainly to moral and religious sentiments, preaching Socialism as a new way of life inspired by a higher social ethic.[1]

It was the adherence of the ethical socialists which created an ILP, as opposed to a reorganised SDF, and their evolution as a political force was undoubtedly the work of Robert Blatchford, A.M. Thompson and the Clarion, and also of the Labour Church established by John Trevor. The part played by Blatchford's writings in general, and by the Clarion in particular, in popularizing socialism, must form an important section of the following chapter, while both the Clarion movement and the Labour Church will later be examined as organisations associated with the foundation of the ILP. What will be attempted here is merely to trace the conversion to socialism of Thompson, Blatchford and Trevor, and the development of an 'Ethical Socialist' leadership in Manchester.

Such a survey may logically begin with a brief biography of Alexander Mattock Thompson who, although ten years younger than Blatchford and later inclined to follow his political leadership, was nevertheless responsible for the beginning of his friend's journalistic career. Thompson was born in Karlsruhe, Germany, in 1861. His father, who was described as a 'gentleman', made a living by speculating on the Stock Exchange. Thompson's childhood was, however, far from being conventional middle class. His brother, a Republican, was arrested for involvement in student riots in Paris, where the family lived during the Franco-Prussian war. After a brief spell in London, the Thompsons returned to Paris, three weeks before the establishment of the Commune. Alexander Thompson thus witnessed in full the sufferings of the people of Paris during the siege; he also acquired a degree of scepticism as to the benefits of revolutionary activity. The family had settled once again in London when Alexander's father became bankrupt and left home; a few days later his body was found in the River Dee at Chester. Obliged to earn his own living, Thompson became a junior clerk in the offices of the Manchester Examiner and Times. He was able to make the unusual transition from such a post to journalism mainly because of his knowledge of French and German.

Politically, Thompson was at this time a Liberal. He

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1. S. Pierson, op.cit., p.140.

joined a Liberal Club in Salford, and was later to comment upon its members that they '..were mostly of the working class, and their Radicalism would have passed a test cathecism in the socialist creed of any present-day Labour club'. He also became acquainted with Dr. Pankhurst, who occasionally contributed to the Examiner. Thompson's enthusiasm for the Liberal cause led him to volunteer to canvass in the Salford slums. He recalled:

> It was a devastating and humiliating experience, and one trial was all I asked. What I saw of the people whose votes I solicited set me wondering how my candidates' programme of Peace, Retrenchment, and Reform was going to clean up the augean filth in which the free and independent electors breathed and ate, slept and bred children.[1]

The result was not, however, instant conversion to socialism, for when Thompson moved to a new post on the Sporting Chronicle, his column contained frequent criticism of socialists.[2] It was during his time on this paper that Thompson became acquainted with Robert Blatchford.

Robert Peel Glanville Blatchford was born in Maidstone in 1851. Two years later his father died, leaving Louisa Blatchford to support, from the proceeds of her theatrical engagements, Robert and four year old Montagu ('Mont'). While the family was living in Halifax, Robert became apprenticed to brush-making and Mont, who was always considered by his mother to be the cleverer of the two, was apprenticed to lithographic printing. At the age of sixteen Robert (still apprenticed) ran away from home, made his way to London, and eventually joined the army. After leaving the army, he found a job as a time-keeper with the Weaver Navigation Company in Northwich, Cheshire.[3]

Blatchford had by this stage in his career published a story, 'The Militiaman', in the Yorkshireman, and was also earning a guinea a week by writing for the Leeds Toby.[4] One of Blatchford's old army friends, Joe Norris, was convinced of his journalistic talents. Thus when, after a short stay in Northwich, Norris found work in Manchester and met A.M. Thompson, he was soon telling Thompson of Blatchford's superior attainments.[5] Thompson and Blatchford were finally introduced by Norris in 1882, at Thompson's mother's house in Boston Street, Manchester. When Thompson married, and took a few days' holiday, he recommended Blatchford

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1. A.M. Thompson, Here I Lie. The Memorial of an old Journalist (1937) pp.3-36.
2. L. Thompson, op.cit., p.28.
3. Ibid., pp.2-21 passim.
4. A.N. Lyons, Robert Blatchford; a sketch of a personality: an estimate of some achievements (Clarion Press, 1910) pp.62, 70-1.
5. Ibid., pp.63-6.

to write his column in the Sporting Chronicle during his absence. Then Edward Hulton, proprietor of the Manchester Examiner and Times, bought Bell's Life in London, which he planned to turn into a daily newspaper, and Thompson suggested Blatchford for a post similar to his own. In March 1885 Blatchford was engaged, at a starting salary of £4 per week, to write a daily column of notes on the news, which he signed 'Nunquam Dormio'. It was while living in Barnes and working for Bell's Life that Blatchford met Edward Fay, later to become 'The Bounder' of the Clarion.

In August 1885 Hulton started the Sunday Chronicle in Manchester. The paper was essentially aimed at a new group of readers; the products of the elementary schools who might be attracted by scandals or racing tips.[2] Thompson became the new paper's dramatic critic[3] and Blatchford began writing its leading articles while still on the staff of Bell's Life. Bell's Life failed in 1886 and after remaining in London for a time, still as the Sunday Chronicle's leader writer, Blatchford moved to Manchester in 1887.[4] The Blatchford family's arrival in Princess Road, near Alexandra Park, brought the nucleus of the future Clarion staff together, for both Thompson and William Palmer were living in the neighbourhood.[5] Moreover Edward Fay, as London correspondent of the Chronicle, was a frequent visitor to Manchester.[6]

Where in this story of journalistic success, did conversion to socialism appear? While living in Northwich Blatchford had called himself a Liberal, though he does not seem to have shared Thompson's formal commitment to the party cause. Indeed just before the 1885 General Election his third leading article in the Sunday Chronicle

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1. Ibid., pp.66-75 passim; A.M. Thompson, op.cit., p.55.
2. L. Thompson, op.cit., p.48. The first issue of the Sunday Chronicle appeared on 23 August 1885. See /The Times/ Tercentenary Handlist of of English and Welsh Newspapers, Magazines and Reviews (1920; facsimile reprint 1966) p.279 c.1.
3. L. Thompson, op.cit., p.36.
4. The three sources of this information, R. Blatchford, My Eighty Years (1931) pp.180-1, A.N. Lyons, op.cit., p.85, and L. Thompson, op.cit., p.51 are not particularly clear as to exact dates. For example, R. Blatchford, op.cit., p.181, stated that the move to Manchester took place in the Autumn of 1887, while L. Thompson, op.cit., p.51, having just mentioned the date 6 March 1887, went on to state that 'A few weeks later Blatchford went to live in Manchester'. As a further example of inaccurate dating, A.N. Lyons, op.cit., p.85, stated that the Sunday Chronicle was started 'towards the end of 1886'.
5. L. Thompson, op.cit., p.51.
6. A.N. Lyons, op.cit., p.85.

called down 'a plague on both your parties', while advocating 'the forgotten cause of toleration and moderation'. Early in its existence the Sunday Chronicle recommended working men to run their own election candidates under the auspices of the trade unions, and to form their own third party, a Labour party. Blatchford was however more concerned that the working men should first realise what their goals were to be, so that instead of playing the old political game and being merely led, they could direct their representatives.[1] For socialism he had as yet little sympathy. After the procession of unemployed in London, in February 1886, and the arrest of Hyndman, John Burns, H.H. Champion and Jack Williams, Blatchford wrote in an article:

> ...down, all ye black-hearted, red-handed Communists and traitors; silence your lying, blasphemous howling; we will have none of the criminal lunacy which you call socialism! We want no riot, nor murder, nor sedition, but justice for the people of all classes through the Law; and so - Long live the constitution! and God save the QUEEN![2]

At least one socialist and unemployed agitator in Manchester took exception to this article, and duly called in at the Chronicle offices to express his opinion. He was Joseph Waddington. Thomas Harris, the Chronicle's editor, published an interview with Waddington while Thompson, moved rather by personal than political sympathy, found him some odd jobs to do in his house.[3] Waddington was not a particularly efficient carpenter, and in fact devoted much of his time to advocating socialism. Thompson later reminisced:

> Comrade Waddington did not convert me to Socialism, but he brought me to reconsider my previous conception of its meaning. I had been led to believe - as many good people still do - that the Socialist theory was a wild, whirling, insane or nefarious plot of revolution and rapine. Instead of which, my new teacher represented it as a reasoned and, he claimed, quite practical plan for the wiser and fairer distribution of wealth.
>
> He had at least excited my curiosity. Thus, did this unsuccessful and insignificant Nobody do his bit towards the making of History...[4]

The description of Waddington as a 'nobody' hardly did him justice. He may have been an unsuccessful carpenter, but he was already one of the more active local socialists. Nor did his influence upon the future Clarion staff end with his lectures to Thompson, for it seems that Waddington also made regular appearances (presumably to undertake odd

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1. L. Thompson, op.cit., pp.52-5.
2. Ibid., p.51.
3. Ibid., p.51.
4. A.M. Thompson, op.cit., pp.58-60.

jobs) at the homes of Blatchford and William Palmer.[1]

Just as Thompson had not yet been converted to socialism by Waddington's arguments, Blatchford was also sceptical. He advocated self-improvement for the working class, arguing that human nature was not yet sufficiently developed for a socialist society. In Blatchford's opinion, public gardens, public halls and libraries were far more important than politics. In connection with this last remark, in the Sunday Chronicle, a Liverpool reader sent a copy of Hyndman and Morris' Summary of the Principles of Socialism,[2] and an old lady from Manchester wrote to Blatchford. She supported herself and her daughter by needlework, and thought that she needed more immediate relief than a public garden. Blatchford visited her and, after about two years' residence in Manchester, saw its slums for the first time.[3] That someone living and working in the city, especially someone with the natural curiosity of a journalist, could have remained for so long ignorant of its housing conditions, does at first appear strange. But, whatever Blatchford's biographer might say about 'sooty little boxes',[4] Alexandra Park was at this time a desirable middle class residential area. It would be quite possible to travel from there into central Manchester and go about one's business without seeing the courts and alleys which lay behind the main roads.[5]

Blatchford and Palmer, complete with maps and camera, now set out to 'do' the Manchester slums for the Sunday Chronicle. They spent several months on the task before the articles appeared, and soon acquired a guide for their travels, in the person of Joseph Waddington. He insisted that, instead of merely inspecting the exteriors of the dwellings, the two journalists should meet the tenants.[6] The account of these interviews, and the effect which they had upon Blatchford, has already been considered.[7] The outcome of the journeys was a series of articles under the title of 'Modern Athens', which appeared in the Sunday Chronicle between 12 May and 23 June 1889. The immediate impact was undoubtedly made by Palmer's illustrations; large, bold drawings of

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1. L. Thompson, op.cit., p.51.
2. Ibid., p.55. The pamphlet, H.M. Hyndman and William Morris, A Summary of the Principles of Socialism. Written for the Democratic Federation (1884), provided essentially Marxist arguments.
3. L. Thompson, op.cit., pp.54-5.
4. Ibid., p.51.
5. See above, pp.10-11.
6. R. Blatchford, op.cit., pp.186-7.
7. See above, p.12.

slum courts and alleys, with plans of the buildings. The area described ranged from Hulme, Deansgate and Ancoats to London Road, Chorlton-on-Medlock, Ardwick and St. George's. Blatchford, who signed the articles with his usual pseudonym 'Nunquam', left no doubt as to his personal opinions:

> You Christian saints of England, who live at home at ease, when you have quite done helping the French workman and the Chinese peasant, the Hottentot and the Esquimaux and the Sandwich Islanders, perhaps you will cast an eye of brotherly affection upon the British workman living close by you under conditions of penury, filth and savagery that would degrade the Bosjesmen of Africa.

and:

> I should like to quarter the whole of our City Council in these courts, and compel them to live there for six months on a labourer's wages. It would be good fun to watch the city fathers waiting round the tap for their morning bath before going to work at six.[1]

These articles caused a considerable stir among the Sunday Chronicle readers. Their role, together with that of Blatchford's other writings, in influencing the ethical socialist movement, will be considered in the following chapter. Public comments ranged from that of the Dean of Manchester, who thought that much of the content of the articles should have been uttered from the pulpit of the Cathedral,[2] to the Manchester Courier's remark that:

> Excitable enthusiasts and meddling busybodies delight in preparing sickening stories of degredation and neglect, and in pushing under the noses of decent people all the filth which their curiosity and their imagination can collect.[3]

It was perhaps the realisation that, even though the evils of the Manchester slums had been brought to public notice, little was actually being done about them, which led Blatchford towards a re-consideration of the existing organisation of society. The outcome was the message of socialism set forth in a series of letters to a fictitious John Smith, a working man living in 'Modern Athens'. Published in the Sunday Chronicle between 4 August and 21 September, under the title 'Re the Affairs of John Smith and Co.',[4] they contained the core of the philosophy later expanded into Merrie England.

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1. Sunday Chronicle (hereafter cited as SC), 5 May and 9 June 1889. See also weekly issues between 12 May and 23 June 1889.
2. L. Thompson, op.cit., p.62.
3. Manchester Courier, cited in SC, 7 July 1889.
4. SC, 4 August to 21 September 1889 (weekly)

The slum articles, together with the letters to John Smith, established Blatchford as the local prophet of ethical socialism. It was however the Cinderella Club movement which brought him into personal contact with many of the adherents to his cause. On 6 October 1889, 'Nunquam's' article 'As You Like It' contained a recollection of how, almost a year previously, he had bought some matches from a small girl who told him that she was going to a party, in a Catholic school. 'Nunquam' remarked that the child would not have been so happy if she had been going to be 'regaled on chemistry, on mathematics or religion'; 'for it seems to me that what these young ones want is something to eat and something to wear and something to play with'.[1] Letters arrived at the Sunday Chronicle office, with offers of help to organize a supper and entertainment for such children, together with others offering subscriptions if 'Nunquam' would find a room.[2] Plans went ahead for weekly subscriptions and parties, and on 20 October the name 'Cinderella Club' appeared.[3] The first meeting of would-be helpers took place at the Crosby Hotel on 4 November,[4] and a party, for 100 children, was arranged for the 20th.[5]

The Cinderella Clubs were not necessarily organisations of socialists, ethical or otherwise. Membership was open to any person, 'irrespective of age, sex or politics', on payment of an entrance fee of not less than 6d.[6] Yet the clubs were perhaps the best example of the altruism which formed the basis of ethical socialism. The ultimate vision might be of a utopia, but if a good meal, party games and new clothes made a few children happy for a while, then it was the task of socialists to provide them, not merely to plan the millenium and ignore present suffering.

Blatchford's socialism appears to have much in common with the Christian ethic. He counted among his text-books Job, the Psalms, the Gospels and the Book of Common Prayer. In a latter to Thompson he explained that:

> For me Christianity is all embodied in the words 'I am the resurrection and the life'. 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart; and thy neighbour as thyself'. 'Do unto others as ye would that they should do unto thee'. These are the things I

1. Ibid., 6 October 1889.
2. Ibid., 13 October 1889.
3. Ibid., 13 and 20 October 1889.
4. Ibid., 10 November 1889.
5. Ibid., 17 November 1889.
6. Ibid., 10 November 1889.

> believe. Many professing Christians believe, to quote Junius, that 'praying is morality and that kneeling is religion'. Many of them praise God but forget that other clause about their fellow men. I seldom go to Church. I do not like parsons. I do not love Sunday Schools. I hate formality and I detest cant. But I like men and women and I love children.[1]

When the question of religion was raised by correspondents to the Sunday Chronicle, Blatchford, who described himself as 'an agnostic - or something like it',[2] asked the religious bodies of Manchester, 'Why do you preach Christ and worship Mammon?' He argued that:

> The religious bodies of Manchester are numerous and powerful and wealthy. If all the congregations of Manchester set to work; if all the preachers of Manchester spoke out bravely from their pulpits; if all the church and chapel coffers of Manchester were used for once in a practical and Christian work; if all the foreign missions were stopped until our native heathen had been saved, how long do you think these slums would stand to shock and grieve and shame us?[3]

In 1890 Blatchford found a kindred spirit within the ranks of the Manchester clergy; a Unitarian minister named John Trevor. Born in Liverpool, Trevor had lost both parents while still a boy, and had been brought up by his grandmother, a strict Unitarian who inculcated him with a continual fear of Hell. The anxieties aroused by such a faith drove Trevor to a breakdown. He subsequently took a sea voyage to Australia and, while still seeking a religious faith, studied at a Unitarian College in the United States. He spent a further year at another Unitarian college, in London, before becoming assistant minister to the Rev. Philip Wicksteed, who combined work among the poor with a knowledge of economic theory. In 1890, after eighteen months at this post, Trevor became minister of Upper Brook Street Chapel in Manchester. His questioning of his faith redoubled, and Trevor became increasingly aware of the 'helplessness of the Churches in facing the world's problems'. At this juncture he was influenced both by Blatchford, who shared his search for a new religion, and by the Socialist League. After attending one of the League's street corner meetings, Trevor decided to leave the church and go out into the world '..in my quest for a living God'. He turned to the idea of a church designed to meet the needs of the poor, a working-man's church. However one of his Socialist League contacts, 'an atheist, anarchist and revolutionist', persuaded him that such an institution would become as class-conscious

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1. L. Thompson, op.cit., p.44.
2. SC,15 December 1889
3. Ibid., 8 December 1889.

and dogmatic as any other. The Socialist Leaguer suggested instead a Labour Church, which might draw its congregation from all thos whom William Morris would class as 'labourers'.[1]

This quest for a new religion culminated in the new Labour Church, which held its first service on 4 October 1891, in Chorlton Town Hall. Music, prayers, poetry and a sermon from Trevor, all preached the message of ethical socialism. Trevor, having spoken of the lethargy of the traditional churches, pointed out the need for the working classes to have a religious movement of their own, 'which would allow them to live a righteous and godly life and yet secure the freedom for which they lived'. On the following Sunday, Blatchford delivered the sermon, and large crowds had to be turned away after seats, passages and staircases had all been packed by the congregation.[2]

The later development of the ethical socialist movement must be considered in the following chapters, both as a vital part of the formation of a mass movement, and as the immediate background to the foundation of the ILP. It is here necessary simply to consider the effect of the ethical socialist movement on the development of a local socialist leadership. The older tradition of socialism in Manchester and Salford was basically Marxist. Many of its leaders were working class, and had been associated for several years as members of various radical, secularist and socialist movements. Blatchford and Trevor, the leading figures in the new ethical socialist movement, were both engaged in what might be termed middle class occupations. They were also comparative newcomers to the area and, apart from Blatchford's encounters with Joseph Waddington and Trevor's with the almost defunct Socialist League, appear to have had little contact with the mainstream of the established socialist movement, by this time embodied in the SDF.

The initial gulf between the two groups is perhaps best illustrated by the writings of Blatchford and Waddington. Through his regular column as 'Robin' in the Workman's Times, Waddington emerged as

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1. J. Trevor, My Quest for God (Manchester, 1897; reprinted 1910) passim; L. Thompson, op.cit., pp.78-9; S. Pierson, op.cit., pp.229-31. Trevor did not mention Blatchford in his autobiography, and none of these sources reveals the name of the local Socialist League member.
2. Labour Prophet, January 1892; L. Thompson, op.cit., pp.79-80; S. Pierson, op.cit., p.231.

the most vocal critic of 'Nunquam', stating that:

> He has set up as a teacher to the democracy. I venture to criticise him because, I think, seriously, that he has 'set up' in business as a teacher before having passed a necessary examination as a student...
>
> Whilst setting himself up as a dictator and teacher to the democracy of labour, he keeps aloof from association with 'the man in the street', the workshop and the 'forum'. I venure to say more, that he moves in a narrow circle, wherein he hears that which does not develop the student.[1]

Blatchford, on the other hand, had little time for revolutionary socialism or street corner oratory. On the latter subject he wrote:

> I do not mix with street socialism for two or three reasons. I do not think it does any good. I should be quite useless as a street orator, and I have not the time to spare. I believe socialism to be a good thing and I do take an active part. I do my best with the weapon I can best use - the pen.[2]

Blatchford's attitude towards revolutionary activity was made clear by his writings in the Sunday Chronicle:

> ...Social reformers may be divided into 2 camps: the Revolutionary Party and the Fabian Party. I am for Fabianism.
>
> The party of revolution believe in violence. I don't. They talk of arms, of barricades, of bloodshed. I say these means are hateful, and wicked and cruel, and ineffective. Freedom gained by such means would be bought at a bitter price, and would not stay with us when bought.
>
> ...I believe that as soon as you can make the nation fit for Socialism and worthy of it, Socialism will accomplish itself, but until the nation is fit for Socialism, no violence can achieve it and no violence can maintain it.[3]

He later added:

> I think one of the greatest errors of the revolutionary socialist consists in supposing the people to be ripe for socialism. The people are not ripe for socialism. They do not understand it. They must first be taught what Socialism means, and then comes the hardest task of all - the task of persuading or educating them to

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1. WT, 2 January 1891. Waddington cannot be regarded as the spokesman of the local socialists. As his letters to the Socialist League revealed, he did tend to be resentful towards anyone preaching socialism and enjoying worldly success. He complained about H.M. Reade and J.E.D. Bourne selling Commonweal, and was extremely bitter that he was not made the official local agent (see letters J. Waddington to J.L. Mahon, 9 March and 5 July 1885, and to H.A. Barker, 15 June 1887 (3096/4, 3098/1 and 3091/5. Socialist League Archives). Waddington asserted that the League was interested only in the adherence of the prosperous. In one letter he signed himself 'a Poor Socialist, not a favoured Rich one', and in another he referred to 'the plutocratic or aristocratic too utterly business like General Council of "The" Socialist League' (letters: J. Waddington to J.L. Mahon, 13 March 1885, and to H.A. Barker, 15 June 1887 (3096/5 and 3091/5. Socialist League Archives). Bourne warned the League that Waddington 'drives customers from his place by telling his troubles' (letter: J.E.D. Bourne to [SL], June 1885 (896/2. Socialist League Archives). However even allowing for Waddington's apparently unfortunate manner, it was true that Blatchford did not at this stage involve himself in the local socialist movement, [represented by the SDF.
2. SC, 31 August 1890.
3. Ibid., 23 March 1890.

> the high moral standard which socialism demands.
> ...I do not mean that no advance towards Socialism can be made until the masses are intellectually and morally elevated to the due pitch for it. Let social legislation go on apace. Let us get all the Socialism we can by instalments. The best social education is socialism.[1]

The establishment of a political party which included among its leaders Blatchford and Trevor, as well as Waddington and his SDF comrades, was above all else an act of compromise. The compromise was not simply between the articulate leaders of local socialism, but had also to encompass the demands and aspirations of the mass working-class electorate. Before considering the events which led to the foundation of the local ILP, it is therefore necessary to examine the mass movement, and the extent to which it was influenced by socialism.

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1. Ibid., 5 October 1890.

Chapter 4

The Origins of a Mass Movement

In his description of his childhood environment in Salford, Robert Roberts reminisced:

> The first of our public buildings reared its dark bulk near the railway wall. Hyndman Hall, home of the Social Democratic Federation (S.D.F.), remained for us mysteriously aloof and through the years had, in fact, about as much impact on the neighbourhood as the near-by gasworks...[1]

He later commented that:

> The class struggle, as manual workers in general knew it, was apolitical and had place entirely within their own society. They looked upon it not in any way as a war against the employers but as a perpetual series of engagements in the battle of life itself...All in all it was a struggle against the fates, and each family fought it out as best it could. Marxist 'ranters' from the Hall, who paid fleeting visits to our street end insisted that we, the proletariat, stood locked in titanic struggle with some wicked master class. We were battling, they told us (from a vinegar barrel borrowed from our corner shop), to cast off our chains and win a whole world. Most people passed by; a few stood to listen, but not for long: the problems of the 'proletariat', they felt, had little to do with them. Before 1914 the great majority in the lower working class were ignorant of Socialist doctrine in any form, whether 'Christian' or Marxist. Generally, those who did come into contact with such ideas showed either indifference or, more often, hostility.[2]

For the student of the late-nineteenth century socialist movement, these passages contain a salutary warning. Information as to the week-by-week activities of local socialists is largely confined to the pages of their movements' journals. It is all too easy, in reading the reports provided by local enthusiasts, to visualise flourishing groups of activists, well-attended meetings, large open-air gatherings at which vast crowds received the message of socialism, and the eager and painstaking perusal of socialist literature. Clearly knowledge of, and support for, socialism did spread among the population of Manchester and Salford in the decade before the foundation of the ILP, but it must be emphasised that socialist supporters did constitute only a minority within the working class population as a whole.

It is also necessary to remember that the principal source of information for this survey, the socialist press, was in itself an element in the movement's propaganda campaign. Reports of enthusiastic meetings might indicate popular sympathy, but they might also indicate

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1. R. Roberts, op.cit., p.4.
2. Ibid., p.14.

an attempt to encourage recruitment by persuading potential adherents that they would not be taking up a 'lost cause', an attempt to keep up morale among the faithful, or simply a local correspondent swayed by his own belief in the approach of the millenium. In the absence of more objective information, such as records of membership, subscriptions, and attendance at meetings, such reports must stand alone, but it must constantly be remembered that the relative strength and influence of the various bodies was liable to be exaggerated.

Given that the sources of information are both limited and partisan, how can the progress of socialism be charted? Initially an attempt must be made to differentiate between the socialist creeds which were being promulgated in the area. In considering the development of a socialist leadership, a distinction has already been made between the Marxist tradition as embodied in the IWMA, SDF and pre-anarchist Socialist League, and the ethical socialism which was associated locally with Robert Blatchford, the Clarion, and the Labour Church movement. The foundation of the ILP was essentially a compromise between these two traditions. Thus as a preliminary to a study of that party, it is necessary to consider not merely the spread of socialism as such, but the relative influence of the two interpretations, and to suggest their strengths and weaknesses in terms of achieving popular support.

The structure and methods of the two broad movements differed considerably. The SDF and Socialist League were manifested locally as branches of a national movement, organized from London. Essentially their structure was that of a modern political party; with committees, subscriptions, and delegates to national conferences. Both relied heavily upon the outdoor public meeting as the medium of propaganda. By contrast the ethical socialist movement lacked a formal structure. Its essential aim was the conversion of individuals to socialist beliefs and a way of life; the 'making of socialists'. Its chief medium of propaganda was the press, in particular the writings of Robert Blatchford. Its adherents did not necessarily know or come into contact with one another. The organisations which stemmed from the Ethical Socialist movement, such as the Cinderella Clubs and the Labour Church, did not demand adherence to any detailed political platform. Because of these fundamental differences, the two broad socialist traditions will be considered separately.

The principal concern must be with the relative effectiveness of the Marxist and ethical traditions in creating a mass base. The importance of SDF members in the foundation of the local ILP has

already been suggested. To what extent was their prominence symptomatic of grass roots support? Much of the conflict which came about within the national ILP was the conflict between uncompromising socialist principles and the need to adopt expedient measures to remedy the immediate problems of the working class. This later conflict must be considered in the light of the manner in which the local rank and file first entered the socialist movement.

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Any examination of the popular support obtained by the Marxist-inspired socialist movement can be limited to the activities of the SDF and Socialist League. The IWMA, as revived by Darbyshire, did have an important influence upon the careers of some local activists, but made no apparent attempt to create a mass movement. The only record in Justice of an IWMA effort to recruit new members was a report of a meeting in June 1884, at the Brunswick Debating Room in Lower Broughton. After a lecture on 'International Socialism', 'Mr. Ray' [J.A. Kay?] gave a brief review of the IWMA and 'appealed to workers to combine and join this organization'.[1] Otherwise the IWMA's activities appear to have consisted mainly of Council meetings, which in August 1885 were being held at fortnightly intervals at the Brunswick Inn,[2] and the commemoration of the Paris Commune.[3] It appears that the latter event was confined to members and sympathetic acquaintances.

When considering the socialist propaganda carried out by the SDF and the Socialist League, it is possible to divide their activities into three major fields. It is necessary first to examine the organizations themselves, their branches, membership, meetings and publications, both in terms of the number of people with whom they might make contact, and the geographical areas in which their influence was manifested. Secondly, and of particular importance as a preliminary to a study of the ILP, the electoral activities of the earlier socialists must be considered. For ideological reasons, electioneering was confined to the SDF, but both the extent of support at the polls, and the areas in which the candidates stood, may provide some indication as to the public sympathy for socialism. The third aspect, namely the participation of socialists in the trade union and unemployed movements, as well as in

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1. J, 2 August 1884.
2. Ibid., 1 August 1885.
3. Ibid., 29 March 1884, 21 March 1885.

the campaigns for the immediate improvement of working class life, must be examined in a separate chapter. Such activities involved not only propaganda by Marxist and ethical socialists, but also brought the two groups into contact with one another, as well as with the labourist movement. This coalescing of the two main streams of socialist tradition with labourism was fundamental to the formation of the ILP. But in order to assess the relative strength of socialism or labourism, it is necessary to consider just how much impact socialism alone made upon the population of Manchester and Salford.

The circumstances surrounding the formation of Salford SDF and the Manchester Socialist Union, which transformed itself into a branch of the Socialist League, have already been described. It is however necessary to trace the later development of the organizations themselves as a preliminary to examining their propaganda activities. To consider firstly the SDF; its strength continued to be concentrated, even into the 1890s, in the area where it was first formed, South Salford. Whereas the Salford branch appears to have had a continuous existence, Manchester seems to have been more difficult to organize. Manchester branches were formed, often on the initiative of Salford activists, only to continue for a short period before fading into oblivion.

The Crescent Inn, which had been the centre for socialist debates and lectures in the months immediately preceding the formation of South Salford SDF became the initial hub of the new movement's organization. Lectures and discussions were held on Sunday evenings,[1] and on Thursday evenings business meetings took place at 8 o'clock.[2] During March and April 1885 the business meetings were followed, at 8.30, by 'Social Improvement Classes', a series of lessons on socialism by H.M. Reade. The subject for the first lesson was 'The Division of Labour'.[3] From its earliest days the branch held regular open-air meetings at Trafford Bridge and, particularly during the summer months, extended this activity to other parts of the town.[4] When a national Extraordinary Conference of the SDF was held on Easter Monday, 6 April 1885, the South Salford branch was in a sufficiently strong position to send a delegate.[5] At this juncture they even announced that: 'We are bringing out a labour candidate for Pendleton'.[6]

While the Salford SDF was in process of formation, an

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1. Details of these meetings appeared weekly in Justice during 1885. See also the list of SDF lectures, Appendix I below.
2. J, 7 March 1885
3. Ibid., 7,14,21 March, 4, 25 April 1885.
4. See below, p
5. J, 11 April 1885.
6. See below, pp. 147-9.

attempt was being made by Joseph Waddington to organize a 'Democratic Club' in Hulme, 'to discuss social and political questions'.[1] No report

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1. J, 24,31 January 1885. Waddington had already joined the Socialist League. On 17 January 1885 he wrote to Mahon asking to be enrolled in the League and promising 'a little toward subscription' the following week. On 27 January he ordered 2 quires of Commonweal and added, 'You will see by the reports of Manchester district in 'Justice' that I am asking for names and addresses of those desirous of forming a branch of the Democrats here'. (Letters:J. Waddington to J.L. Mahon, 17 and 27 January 1885 (3095/2-3. Socialist League Archives). Apparently Waddington saw no reason why he should not be an active member of both the League and the Federation. His desire to organize an SDF b anch in Manchester may not have been due entirely to political reasons. On 9 February he informed Mahon 'Smart and Myself have withdrawn from the Crescent on account of H.M. Reade, keeping secret all correspondence, and also trying to be boss of the show'. (Letter: J. Waddington to J.L. Mahon, 9 February 1885 (3095/5. Socialist League Archives). The following month he reported that 'Smart has deserted me & joined the Salford branch of the SDF' (Letter: J. Waddington to J.L. Mahon, 9 March 1885 (3096/4. Socialist League Archives). From the correspondence from Waddington to the League it appears that his chief ambition was to make a full-time living as an agent for socialist literature. His activities with regard to the SDF and the League appear to have been influenced more by this ambition than by any consideration of doctrinal differences. In February 1885 he requested financial assistance from the League (see below, p.143 n.2), announcing that he had 'withdrawn from the party in Salford', 'but as I get my bread by selling 'Justice' and other publications I am compelled to act with discretion in what I do' (J. Waddington to J.L. Mahon, 18 February 1885 (3096/3. Socialist League Archives). However in August Waddington signed himself as 'at present a member of the Social Democratic Federation' adding 'P.S. I having left the SDF have rejoined because tacitly I and others were refused membership in the Socialist League' (J. Waddington to Sec. 'Commonweal', 3 August 1885 (3101/1. Socialist League Archives). There is no evidence elsewhere of the League refusing membership to local men, and it seems likely that Waddington's financial requests were not well received. In January 1887 he again offered to help organize a League branch (Waddington to ?J. Burning, 7 January 1887 (3093. Socialist League Archives). However within six months he was again complaining about his treatment as an agent for Commonweal. Apparently he was not allowed credit and regarded this as an insult. (J. Waddington to L. Barker, 8, 15 and 19 July 1887 (3091/1,3 &5. Socialist League Archives). Waddington's changing loyalties cannot be regarded as typical, but his career does demonstrate how considerations unconnected with political ideology might affect the allegiance of local activists.

of the actual formation of a branch followed. During the existence of Manchester Socialist Union the national SDF did attempt to claim it as a branch,[1] but once the Socialist Union had made clear its preference for the League, the SDF was left without a foothold in the city. Then on 24 October 1885 Justice announced that several names had been given in to form a Central Manchester branch of the SDF. Applications for further particulars were to be made to H.M. Reade, who gave his address as the County Forum.[2] Despite the efforts which must have been made from Salford, it was not until mid-December that a Manchester organization came into existence. Then on Saturday 19 December a branch was formally opened, with William Burns as Secretary, A. Vicar as Treasurer, and a committee composed of Messrs. Derfel, Goodwin, Froude, Bourne, Nixon and Hughes.[3]

The Manchester SDF branch was still in existence in March 1886, when its members had their own platform at the unemployed demonstrations in Stevenson Square.[4] But beyond this there is a distinct lack of information about the Manchester Social Democrats, and the branch appears to have faded into oblivion. Then in June 1887 George Smart and Hunter Watts held a meeting at the corner of Chester Road on behalf of the Manchester branch of the SDF 'which is now in the course of formation'.[5] This new move must have been aided by the demise of the Socialist League branch,[6] and by the location of the SDF's Seventh Annual Conference in Manchester. When the Conference opened at the Memorial Hall in Albert Square on 1 August, Horrocks and Smart were the Salford delegates, with the latter also being elected chairman of the Conference.

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1. See above, p.84.
2. J, 24 October 1885.
3. Ibid., 26 December 1885. Bourne and Goodwin were apparently Socialist League members at this time (see above, Tables 2 and 3, pp.87-8) and one therefore suspects dual membership, as in the case of Waddington. Froude and Burns had been associated with the SDF in Salford (see J, 10,17 October 1885 for Froude and regular reports of meetings at Trafford Bridge in ibid. during the summer of 1885 for Burns). R.J. Derfel had had a political career which included active membership of the Reform League in 1867. On one occasion he had spoken in place of Bradlaugh (Ashton Reporter, 23 February 1867). From 1865 until at least 1888 he ran a business as publisher, printer, bookbinder, educational bookseller and manufacturing stationer (letter: R.J. Derfel to Commonweal office, 9 August 1888 (1268. Socialist League Archives). This was an order for literature, containing no indication of membership). When Derfel died in 1905, in his 82nd year, the Labour Leader described him as probably the oldest socialist in Manchester, but he 'did not mix much with the crowd' (LL, 22 December 1905)
4. J, 13 March, 3 April 1886.
5. Ibid., 11 June 1887.
6. See below, p.120.

The Secretary's Report on this occasion mentioned the propaganda work which had been carried out over the previous year by the Salford Social Democrats, and added that they had held several meetings in Manchester and Bury, where there was a prospect of good branches being formed.[1] In September the Manchester branch finally materialized, complete with its own clubroom at 20 Pilling Street, Rochdale Road.[2]

Together with the advantage of their own premises, the new Manchester branch also had the assistance of one of the movement's national leaders, John Hunter Watts. Watts was in Manchester for several weeks before the Conference,[3] and remained there after the delegates had dispersed, staying at 14 Southall Street, Strangeways.[4] Watts was a regular speaker at local meetings during the latter months of 1887,[5] and in January 1888 was described as the Honorary Treasurer of the Manchester branch.[6] By March however he had moved to Pendleton, again for the purpose of organizing an SDF branch,[7] and in April appeared at the Lancashire delegate meeting as representative of Blackburn.[8] Whether Hunter Watts then returned to Manchester on a permanent basis, or whether he remained merely in close contact with the branch, is uncertain, but his influence upon the local SDF was made clear in July 1888, in an article by Patrick Curran:

> As the Manchester men say themselves, it was a good thing for socialism when he went to stop down there, because on their authority he has spent time and means to make the movement a success. It is only to be hoped that he will not give up Manchester until he establishes an organisation worthy of the great cause to which it belongs.[9]

For a time it did appear that Hunter Watts' efforts had not been in vain. At the end of July, a maating was held on Chester Road, Hulme, and hopes were raised that there would shortly be a large branch in the district.[10] The club in Pilling Street continued throughout the year and, with H. Stockton as secretary, the branch held lectures on Sunday evenings, band practice on Tuesdays, and branch meetings on

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1. J, 25 June, 6 August 1887.
2. Ibid., 10 September 1887.
3. Ibid., 6 August 1887.
4. Ibid., 17 September 1887.
5. Ibid., 24 September, 13 October, 12 November, 10 and 17 December 1887.
6. Ibid., 28 January 1888.
7. Ibid., 24 March 1888.
8. Ibid., 7 April 1888. The meeting was described as 'the monthly delegate meeting of the Central Countil of the Lancashire Branches of the SDF'.
9. Ibid., 28 July 1888.
10. Ibid., 4 August 1888.

Wednesdays.[1] But the club received no mention in 1889, and when the Lancashire SDF and Yorkshire Socialist League branches held a joint meeting at Blackstone Edge, in May of that year, it was remarked that:

> Salford is doing wonders, though Manchester is, as of old, a difficulty, we have no doubt that out Salford comrades with their vigour and determination will soon organise at least two solid branches in that now rather backward and belated city.[2]

In August 1891 yet another appeal was to be found in the columns of Justice; for socialists in Lower Crumpsall and Harpurhey, who were favourable to forming branches of the SDF, to communicate with E.H. Parkinson at 54, Springfield, Crumpsall. An open-air meeting was held in Lower Crumpsall,[3] but there followed no mention of any branches being formed. There is thus no evidence of an SDF branch being in existence in Manchester between 1888 and the period after the foundation of the ILP.

Whereas the Manchester branch appears to have been dependent upon external efforts, either from Salford or by Hunter Watts, the South Salford SDF had a continuous existence until it merged into the BSP. Comments already quoted indicate that the branch was highly regarded in SDF circles, and similar praise was often forthcoming. At the Fifth Annual Conference of the SDF, the Executive Committee Report stated that:

> Through the earnestness and activity of our comrades of the Salford Branch of the Social-Democratic Federation and their fellow workers, the knowledge of the principles of socialism has become wide spread, and is exercising considerable influence over the workers of that part of Lancashire in their relations to the political parties.[4]

Almost eighteen months later, Hunter Watts in his letter, 'A Visit to Lancashire', commented upon:

> ...the great spread of Socialism in that district which has taken place during the current year, thanks to the indefatigable

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1. Ibid., 21 October 1888. After the summer of 1889 Stockton appears to have transferred his allegience to the Socialist League. He became one of their most active speakers, and was eventually imprisoned for anarchist activities. In 1893 he spoke at Gorton ILP on 'Why I am an Anarchist'. Stockton's name appeared regularly in Commonweal between 15 June 1889 and 25 October 1890. The fact that he had been imprisoned was mentioned in J, 20 January 1894. For his speech to Gorton ILP, see C, 1 July 1893.
2. J, 11 May 1889. It should however be noted that at the beginning of this year the size of Justice was reduced to 4pp, and there was little space available for reports of provincial meetings. Salford did however continue to receive publicity.
3. Ibid., 8 August 1891.
4. Ibid., 8 August 1885.

> exertions of our Salford comrades who have carried the red flag from town to town, have preached in market-places or at street corners in every one of the towns that cluster around Manchester the gospel of hope for the workers, and have inspired them with that enthusiasm in the cause with which London is now alive.[1]

On the occasion of Hyndman's visit to Salford, at the end of February 1892, the remark was made in Justice that:

> It is evident, however, that our South Salford comrades, to whom far more than to anyone else is due the marvellous spread of the principles of Social Democracy in Lancashire, are by no means weary of doing well.[2]

Much of the work which merited such praise was in fields which must be considered at a later stage: electoral candidatures, unemployment agitation, trade union organization, and campaigns against corrupt activities in the local Council. On the subject of organization it is necessary to consider both the SDF's activities in South Salford, and the attempts made by that branch to prosletyze the movement further afield. The list of lectures[3] provides perhaps the best picture of branch activities within Salford during 1885. Although the actual number of weekly meetings did diminish in later years, this was not a symptom of a declining organisation, but of the diversion of its efforts into the fields mentioned above. In 1886 regular meetings continued to be held at the Crescent Inn[4] and Trafford Bridge,[5] as well as at the outdoor locations shown on the map at the end of this chapter.[6] By June 1887 the regular indoor meetings had been transferred to Ford Street Temperance Hall,[7] and apparently continued to be held there until the following summer, when the branch acquired club rooms at 89, West Park Street, Ordsall.[8]

Two other SDF branches also developed in Salford. The first of these appears to have been the work of Hunter Watts, for in March 1888 a notice appeared in Justice to the effect that a Pendleton branch was in the course of formation, and that would-be members should contact Hunter Watts, its secretary pro tem., at 32 Ridsdale Street, Orchard Road, Pendleton. The Social Democrats of Pendleton had already acquired

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1. Ibid., 18 December 1886.
2. Ibid., 5 March 1892.
3. See Appendix I.
4. For examples, see Justice 6 February, 13 March, 3 April, 31 July, 18 September 1886.
5. Ibid., 23 January, 24 April, 29 May, 28 August 1886.
6. Following p.
7. J, 18 June 1887.
8. Ibid., 9 June 1888. The number is here given as 80, but in later issues appears as 89 (for example see ibid., 10 November 1888).

a club room, which was open every night.[1] The actual branch seems to have followed in the wake of the club, for its first meeting attended by, among others, Horrocks and Hunter Watts, was not reported until 28 April.[2] Apart from the fact that W.K. Hall became a member of this branch,[3] it received no further attention in the press and seems likely to have faded out of existence; for when North Salford branch was formed in August 1889, it was described by George Tabron as the second branch in the town.[4] North Salford SDF also began with its own club room, at 112 St. Stephen's Street[5] and after only four months' existence contested, albeit unsuccessfully, a seat on the Borough Council.[6] This branch survived into the era of the ILP. Like its counterpart in South Salford, it sent a delegate to the Federation's Tenth Annual Conference in August 1890,[7] and to the Lancashire SDF Annual Demonstration held in the following May.[8] When H.M. Hyndman visited Salford in March 1892, members from North and South attended his meeting in Ellesmere Street.[9] In February 1893 Salford still boasted two branches of the SDF.[10]

Despite the formation of these other two branches, the stronghold of the SDF continued to be South Salford. By September 1889 the West Park Street premises were no longer large enough for its needs, and the branch removed to 4, West Craven Street.[11] It subsequently transferred to club premises at 75 Ellesmere Street, Regent Road,[12] where it appears to have remained until its acquisition, in November 1892, of a one-time Conservative Club at 43 Trafford Road.[13]

A mere chronicle of the duration of branches and their locations is not a particularly significant aspect of most political movements. But for the SDF it illustrates perhaps the most vital fact: that the movement's strength was concentrated upon a relatively small area of South Salford. The significance of this for the socialist movement in the 'eighties and for the early development of the ILP has been indicated briefly in the previous chapter. At this juncture the

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1. Ibid., 24 March 1888.
2. Ibid., 28 April 1888.
3. Ibid., 19 May 1888.
4. Ibid., 31 August, 14 September 1889.
5. Ibid., 28 September 1889.
6. Ibid., 16 November 1889.
7. Ibid., 16 August 1889.
8. Ibid., 23 May 1891.
9. Ibid., 5 March 1892.
10. Ibid., 11 February 1893.
11. Ibid., 14, 28 September 1889.
12. WT, 16 January, 13 March 1891. This building was a Temperance Hall, used also by the Salford branch of the Navvies' and General Labourers' Union (see Navvies' and General Labourers' Guide, June 1891)
13. J, 19 November 1892.

obvious question must be posed; why South Salford? The initial reason for the SDF's strength in the area must obviously have been the fact that a group of socialists and advanced radicals was already in existence before the formation of the national SDF. But although the area had the advantage of an established leadership, the branch could not have continued to flourish without adequate grass-roots support, which was obviously lacking in other districts. Many of the reasons for this support become apparent merely through surveying South Salford itself. The parliamentary constituency of that name comprised the heart of the old borough. The works and factories were surrounded by the homes of a rapidly increasing population. Although the smallest in area of the three Salford constituencies, it contained the largest population, which had in fact undergone a 40% increase in the decade preceding the 1881 census. Apart from the shopkeepers, and the residents of a small area around the Crescent, it was solidly working class. Despite the small Liberal majority which it produced at the 1885 General Election, it had a reputation for Conservatism in municipal politics.[1] Faced with a choice between the established parties, Hyndman and the national SDF were also inclined towards Conservatism.[2] Perhaps more significant was the nature of employment available in the area. The constituency was intersected by railways and also contained the large goods station of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Company, which gave employment to 'a considerable number of railway servants'. Surrounded by railway lines and the two cattle stations (Windsor Bridge and the London and North Western) were situated the corporation gasworks.[3] Furthermore, on the eastern side of the roughly triangular constituency, flowed the River Irwell. It was during this period that the river was transformed into the Manchester Ship Canal, through the labours of the navvies.[4] The railway servants, gas workers and navvies were all among the leading participants in the formation of 'new unions' during the late 1880s. Of particular importance was the Navvies' Union, under the local

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1. MG, 24 November 1885.
2. S. Pierson, op.cit., p.65; C. Tsuzuki, op.cit., p.109.
3. MG, 24 November 1885; Kelly's Map of Manchester and Salford (1903)
4. For details of the progress made in the construction of the Ship Canal, see 'The Manchester Ship Canal' in Manchester Faces and Places Vol.1 No.6, 10 March 1890.

leadership of Leonard Hall. The connection between these unions and the SDF will be considered at a later stage, but it must here be noted that the class and occupational structure of South Salford was extremely favourable to the SDF.

Perhaps because the SDF developed in Salford from an established nucleus of activists, the Socialist League seems to have concentrated its efforts upon Manchester. As has previously been described, the Socialist Union held its branch meetings at the County Forum, and conducted open-air propaganda at the New Cross on Oldham Road.[1] When this body dissolved itself, to form a branch of the Socialist League,[2] it retained these meeting places, while also inaugurating weekly lectures at the City Cafe in Swan Street, and further open-air meetings at the Viaduct, Chester Road, Hulme.[3] During the following year the League attempted to extend its influence into the Bradford/Openshaw area, by holding open-air meetings at Grey Mare Corner, Ashton Old Road, and the Lamp, Gorton. At both these locations they were subject to interference from the police, and threatened with prosecution for obstruction.[4] At this juncture Raymond Unwin, the branch secretary, commented: 'There seems to be much sympathy with Socialistic teaching amongst the workers in this district. If we can find a room there is little doubt but that we shall make members'. Throughout June the pressing need continued to be for premises;[5] Unwin claimed that the League had a promise of fifteen members in the district as soon as they could get a room to meet in.[6] Whether the offer made by a local landlord, of the use of a room in his inn,[7] was ever taken up is uncertain, for by the

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1. See above, p.86 and Com., May 1885. For all locations mentioned, see Map 4, following p. 133.
2. Com., September 1885.
3. Ibid., October and November 1885. Monthly report [Manchester Branch, Socialist League] October 1885 by Raymond Unwin (606. Socialist League Archives) The reports for October 1885 to March 1886 were printed blanks, completed and with remarks by Unwin, Branch Secretary.
4. Com., 1,8,22,29 May; 5,12 June 1886; Letters: R. Unwin to Socialist League, 13 April, 30 May and [June] 1886 (3040/5, 3041/5, 3042/2. Socialist League Archives)
5. Com., 22 May and 12 June 1886; Letters: R. Unwin to [Socialist League], May 1886 and 27 June [1886] (3042/1 and 5. Socialist League Archives).
6. Com., 3 July 1886.
7. Ibid.

end of July the Manchester Socialist League had established itself at 145 Gray Mare Lane.[1] The building was a private house,[2] and the League proceeded to appeal for contributions of books, pictures and money, in order to convert it into a club and reading room.[3] By August the club and reading room were open every evening (except Sunday) from 6-10 p.m.,[4] and Unwin commented shortly afterwards that: 'Things look more hopeful altogether, the advantage of having even a small room is beginning to be evident.[5]

In October 1886 Unwin published an article in Commonweal, entitled 'Socialism in Manchester'. It is worth quoting at length, not only for his comments upon the progress of the movement, but also as a description of the way in which a small socialist group, apparently lacking financial resources, could acquire its own premises:

> One of our comrades took a house with a decent sized front room, in the district where we had been holding open-air meetings, for which he pays 5s a-week rent. We got a couple of forms with backs and a couple of deal tables made, which cost about 30s.; these, with about half a dozen chairs, make up the furniture. We have a few games, such as draughts, cards, etc, and sell herb beer and pop. The society pays 2s. a week for rent of room, cleaning etc. There is a small lending library of books relating to our subject, which is of much use as an educational agent. It is open every evening from six, and on Saturday afternoons.
>
> We now have a good number of members and sympathisers scattered about the town, besides our local members who chiefly use the club. There can no longer be any doubt that Socialism is making its way steadily here, and will continue to do so whether our organization flourishes or not. A branch of the SDF is doing good work in Salford and the Salford end of Manchester, and a Radical Club in Hulme, of which one of our comrades is secretary, forms a good centre of thought and discussion for that district. Then there is the County Forum in Market Street, where we are always made welcome to hold any meetings, and where one or two Socialists may almost always be found. On the whole I think we must consider we are making good progress, though it is not at all likely that Manchester will play a very leading part in the Socialist agitation for some time to come.[6]

The onset of winter led to the outdoor meetings being discontinued, but the Socialist League still held lectures and discussions, as well as weekly business meetings, at the club room.[7] Beyond these

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1. Ibid., 31 July 1886.
2. Ibid., 9 October 1886.
3. Ibid., 31 July 1886; Letter: R. Unwin to H.H. Sparling, 21 July 1886 (3034/2. Socialist League Archives).
4. Com., 14 August 1886.
5. Ibid., 4 September 1886.
6. Ibid., 9 October 1886. For Hulme Radical Club, see above p.94.
7. Ibid., 18 December 1886.

gatherings the movement appears to have achieved little. When J.L. Mahon arrived in Manchester in February, as part of his provincial propaganda tour, he commented that his meetings in the city were not as successful as might have been expected, 'chiefly for want of proper organization'.[1] Leonard Hall (then resident in Lancaster) came to speak for the branch in March,[2] but thereafter the Manchester Socialist League appears to have fallen into decline. During the latter half of March, Commonweal contained no reference to Manchester apart from the standard notice of the business meeting at Gray Mare Lane.[3] On 16 March F.H. Cadle informed the League:

> As our Branch is practically defunct we are not able to take any Commonweals so please do not send any more.

The branch owed payment for literature, which Cadle promised it would try to send upon any further sales,

> 'but as only about four of our members take any interest in the affairs of the Society it is impossible to pay more.[4]

The branch was unrepresented at the League's annual conference and all the indications are that it lapsed.[5]

Manchester received no further attention in Commonweal until March 1889.[6] It then seems that W. Wess came from London to re-organize the League in Manchester. A notice appeared in Commonweal addressed 'To Manchester Friends', urging all who wished to see the cause of socialism advanced, and who were willing to help in spreading revolutionary literature or assisting in a 'paste-pot' brigade, to meet Wess at the International Working-men's Club (122 Corporation Street) or to communicate with him at 31 Brompton Street, Cheetham. Sympathizers in the city who could not risk doing active work were asked to assist through subscriptions towards a leaflet distribution fund.[7] A meeting was later arranged for 16 April at the International Working Men's

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1. Ibid., 12 February 1887. It is perhaps significant that Raymond Unwin, who had acted as secretary since the formation of the branch, moved from the district early in 1887. In April of that year he was living in Buxton, and by September he had again moved, to Chesterfield. (See postcerds: R. Unwin to Socialist League Secretary, 28 April and 28 September 1887 (3029/1and 5. Socialist League Archives).)
2. Com. 12 March 1887.
3. Ibid., 19 and 26 March 1887.
4. Letter: F.H. Cadle to [Socialist League], 16 March 1887 (1003/2. Socialist League Archives).
5. Report of 3rd Annual Conference of the Socialist League.... 29 May 1887. 15pp. (B 20a. Socialist League Archives) This report contained no reference to a Manchester branch or delegate.
6. Com., 23 March 1889.
7. Ibid., 23 March 1889. Wess was apparently unemployed at the time. On 14 April the Socialist League in London held a concert for his benefit (ibid., 13 April 1889).

Club, to form a branch of the Socialist League.[1]

The new Manchester branch immediately took up the work of open-air propaganda, with meetings at Stevenson Square and the Viaduct.[2] They also participated in the 'great annual Socialist Demonstration' at Blackstone Edge, near Rochdale.[3] Leonard Hall and Frank Kitz (of London) both appeared as visiting speakers,[4] while regular open-air meeting places were established at Holt Town, Harpurhey and Queen's Road.[5] During the summer of 1889 propaganda was also extended to the outlying towns,[6] and high hopes were raised among the Socialist Leaguers.[7]

The Manchester branch which was formed in 1889 does appear to have been more effective than its predecessors. It may not have been larger in terms of actual members,[8] but was simply able to overcome to a greater extent the basic problem for all Socialist League branches, finding suitable activities for its members. Both the SDF and Socialist League concentrated much of their energy upon public speaking and the sale of literature, but neither of these occupations produced much in the way of tangible results. From 1885 the SDF had, with some success, sought local elected offices for its candidates, and there can be little doubt that the election campaigns had played a major part in maintaining the enthusiasm of its adherents. But the Socialist League, for ideological reasons, remained apart from such activity. However in the latter half of 1889 and 1890 Socialist League members became actively involved in the organization of trade unions for the unskilled workers.[9]

Yet despite this chronicle of stability and progress in the field of socialist propaganda, there was by the summer of 1890 clear evidence that the conflict which had been raging within the national movement was affecting the Socialist League's branch in Manchester. The conflict between anarchism and reformism had been inherent in the League from its foundation, but had for a time been contained. However

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1. Ibid., 13 April 1889.
2. Ibid., 13, 20 April 1889.
3. Ibid., 27 April 1889.
4. Ibid., 15 June, 20 July 1889. Hall was living in Eccles at this time (see below, p.194). For biographical information on Frank Kitz, see E.P. Thompson, op.cit., pp.281-2.
5. Com., 8,15 and 22 June, 6 July 1889.
6. See below, pp.130-1
7. Com., 15 June 1889. See article 'Socialism in Lancashire and Yorkshire' by John McCormack.
8. Unfortunately neither reports in Com. nor the Socialist League Archives provided any membership figures, but it seems likely that numbers were fairly small.
9. See below, pp.192-3,197-9,201.

during 1888 and 1889 the anarchist element gained control both of the national body and of Commonweal. Manchester at this stage appears to have been under the influence of the reformist faction.[1] However by the summer of 1890 it was clear that the anarchist group was emerging as an influential force within the Manchester branch. A conflict arose between Leonard Hall (who had by this time transferred his allegiance to the SDF) and John Marshall of the Socialist League. From the letters produced by the protagonists it would appear that Marshall had, at least from June 1889, been critical of the amicable relations which existed locally between the League and the SDF. He had then described the SDF as a body of men seeking their own ends by the betrayal of the working class. Marshall's attack on Hall, when the latter spoke on the League's platform in Manchester, had led to a melée between Marshall and some of his League comrades who objected to his behaviour. Hall stated that prior to this occasion he had known no ill-will between the League proper and the SDF; he had great respect for William Morris and many of the League members. However he remarked of the latter organization that: 'certain unspeakable vermin have tried to cloak themselves beneath an honoured banner'.[2] Little indication of dating was provided by Hall in his account of the controversy, but T.H. Sutton, Secretary of South Salford SDF, wrote in July 1890 that no speakers from the League had appeared on SDF platforms for the past four months, with the exception of the May Day demonstration. Marshall, he claimed, had been debarred for some time from speaking on the League platform.[3] It would thus appear that the anarchists, although increasingly vocal within the local Socialist League, had not completely taken over the branch. According to Hall, the local branches of the SDF had already got rid of the anarchists within their own ranks, and disclaimed any connection with them.[4]

The increasing influence of anarchists within the Manchester Socialist League, and the resultant growth of antagonism between the League and SDF, became more apparent as the summer progressed. The Socialist League frequently came into contact with the police, who asserted that their open-air meetings were causing an obstruction.[5] The campaign for free speech in Manchester was to continue into the era of the ILP, and culminate in the controversy over Boggart Hole Clough;[6]

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1. S. Pierson, op.cit., pp.81-2; E.P. Thompson, op.cit., p.560.
2. J, 16 August 1890.
3. Ibid.,26 July 1890.
4. Ibid., 5 July 1890
5. Com., 9 August 1890.
6. See below, pp.469-79.

it was not in itself any indication of anarchism. However the comments made by the Socialist League correspondents concerning these meetings revealed the change of attitude. Alfred Barton, having described the events which led to his court appearance, added: '..we trust that it will not be long before law, magistrates and police have vanished, and a free life will be possible for all men'.[1] The Salford Social Democrats were apparently sympathetic towards the free speech campaign, but when they failed to appear, as promised, at a meeting, Commonweal asserted that: 'Free Speech for Social Democrats is their cry, but down with Anarchists is their action'.[2] This appears to have been the first occasion on which the Manchester Socialist League so described its own members.

Thereafter there could be little doubt as to the political complexion of the League. In November the first of the regular discussion groups, on 'Revolutionary Warfare', demonstrated that all members were agreed in supporting the revolutionary policy of Commonweal.[3] Peter Kropotkin visited the branch,[4] as did Andrew Hall of Sheffield, who launched into 'fervid revolutionary oratory'.[5] Meanwhile John Oldman was undertaking speaking engagements in Norfolk, where he was described as the 'Apostle of Anarchy, from Manchester'.[6]

In its anarchist tendencies the Manchester branch was merely following the direction of the national Socialist League. Commonweal, which had once been subtitled 'The Official Journal of the Socialist League', was by December 1890 describing itself as 'A Journal of Revolutionary Socialism', and in May 1891 as 'A revolutionary journal of Anarchism Communism'.[7] This last description of the movement was quickly taken up by the Manchester men. In August Alfred Barton reported that the local Leaguers had taken advantage of indoor meetings held by the Fabian Society and various church organizations, 'to propagate the principles of Anarchist Communism'.[8]

Despite the fact that South Salford SDF sent in a six shilling contribution to the Walsall Anarchists Defence Fund,[9] the local co-operation between the SDF and Socialist League virtually ended when the Leaguers began to assert their anarchist beliefs. The Leonard Hall/

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1. Com., 9 August 1890. For Barton's later career, see Appendix II.
2. Ibid., 30 August 1890.
3. Ibid., 15 November 1890.
4. Ibid., 15 November 1890.
5. Ibid., 25 October 1890.
6. Ibid., 15 November 1890.
7. For examples of subtitles, see ibid., 29 November and 6 December 1890, 5 May 1891.
8. Ibid., 1 August 1891.
9. Ibid., 2 April 1892.

John Marshall dispute marked the beginning of this end. The League branch, which had by August 1891 transferred its activities to the International Club at 25, Bury New Road, Strangeways,[1] became increasingly part of the national and international anarchist movement, as opposed to the local working class movement. The energy which had once been expended upon trade union organization was now diverted to the sale of Freedom and Chicago Speeches,[2] celebrations in memory of the Chicago anarchists,[3] and protests against 'the brutal sentences on the victims of the police plot at Walsall'.[4]

The local anarchists appear to have become completely alienated from the 'respectable' artisans of Manchester. At best the anarchists' open-air meetings, particularly the free speech campaign at Ardwick Green during 1893-4,[5] were regarded as an interesting and entertaining spectacle. By this stage the socialists were probably more antagonistic towards the anarchists than were the rest of the working class, for reasons best explained by Robert Blatchford. After the 'Walsall bomb plot', Blatchford commented in the Clarion:

> But of all classes in the community there is none with so good a cause for anger against the dynamitard as the Socialist. Socialism has been too much misrepresented, vilified, and defiled by ignorant or venemous opponents... we find the Walsall case already doing service against the Socialist cause, and the hireling scribblers of the Party Press already engaged in explaining that all Socialists, whether they deny it or not, have a secret penchant for murder and arson and promiscuous petty larceny.

Elsewhere in the same issue he added:

> I don't like this because I happen to be a Socialist, and even a vice-president of a Fabian Society; but we don't wear red caps, or carry flaming torches up our waistcoats, nor do we hatch felonious conspiracies at the social board, nor explode dynamite bombs on the social hearthstone. The law has provided us with a sufficiently powerful weapon - namely, a vote - with which we shall be able to work the harmless wonders we dream of, as soon as we have persuaded a majority of our peaceful fellow-citizens to use their reasoning faculties...[6]

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1. Ibid., 15 August 1891.
2. Ibid., 5 December 1891.
3. Ibid., 28 November, 5 December 1891.
4. Ibid., 9 April 1892. For further details concerning the 'Walsall Conspiracy', see S. Pierson, op.cit., pp.218-9.
5. J. Caminada, Twenty-Five Years of Detective Life (Manchester, 1925). See the chapter on 'Manchester Anarchists at Work', pp.326-48 passim. Caminada, the Chief Detective Inspector of the Manchester Police, attended many of the Ardwick Green meetings in his official capacity.
6. C, 16 January 1892.

Thus the old Socialist League, as inspired by William Morris, had already changed its complexion before the advent of the ILP, and at first glance its somewhat chequered history may seem to bear little relevance to the present study. Yet if one examines the development of the SDF and the League together, the pattern which emerges is of vital importance to the ILP. The SDF had, from the mid-'eighties, been firmly established in South Salford, in what was in fact the principal working class residential area of the town. Led by skilled artisans, many of them with long political experience, it entered into the local political arena with a considerable degree of success. Unlike the picture which has been painted of the SDF nationally, the Salford branch appears to have been closely in tune with the ideas and aspirations of the local working class. Its leaders, without renouncing this allegiance, were to be the largest single group among the founders of the ILP. Salford thus had a local socialist organization for almost six years before the emergence of the ILP and, even after 1892, South Salford remained a stronghold of the SDF. The Socialist League, on the other hand, concentrated its activities almost exclusively on Manchester. But these activities, like the very existence of the branch itself, were spasmodic.

The reasons for the weakness of the League are not difficult to pinpoint. The fundamental problem of the Socialist League generally, its antipathy towards electoral activity, has already been mentioned. Manchester itself was moreover a far more complex area than Salford for any political body to organise. The South Salford constituency was in effect the town centre, the nucleus of a working class community. As has previously been described, Manchester was a commercial hub from which radiated arterial roads, all separating the many residential centres. 'Manchester', from the point of view of a working class political organization, was not one district, but Ancoats, Bradford, Hulme, Gorton, Openshaw, Moss Side, Miles Platting, Ardwick and All Saints. It was possible to be born, live, work and die within one of these smaller communities without venturing beyond its bounds. For the complex political machine which the ILP was to become, organizing these local communities was not a particularly difficult task, but for the Socialist League, which was not inclined to think in terms of wards, constituencies and federations, it was an insurmountable obstacle.

The absence in Manchester of any socialist organization comparable to the SDF in Salford, may be seen as leaving a clear field for ethical socialism, and subsequently for the ILP. However it also meant that, when the ILP was founded, there was no established socialist

party in Manchester whose members might act as a counterbalance to the influence of the Salford Social Democrats. This may at first appear a strange assertion, since Manchester's ethical socialist leaders, Blatchford and Trevor, were nationally-known figures. Yet the inspirer of a movement is not necessarily the most capable organiser of its day-to-day activities, or the most experienced planner of its detailed political platform. The difference between the socialist traditions of Manchester and Salford must constantly be borne in mind when the early ILP is considered. Did the strength of the Salford SDF lead to the emergence of a more distinctly socialist, as opposed to labourist, ILP? Were there signs that the early ILP branches were weaker in Salford, where they were in effect latecomers upon the socialist scene, than in Manchester?

* * *

From this basic outline of organization, it is necessary to turn to a more elusive aspect of the socialist movement; the actual number of people who became involved in it. Involvement was of course on several different levels. The leaders of the movement have been described in Chapter 3 above, but together with them must be considered the other paid-up members who attended business meetings, occasionally spoke in public and, in the SDF, undertook election work. Beyond this relatively small nucleus was a large number of supporters. Many of them might well have been unknown, both to the leaders of the movement and to one another. To be labelled as a socialist in the '80s was not 'respectable', nor was it safe. Several prominent socialists were dismissed from their jobs when their politics became known to employers.[1] A sympathiser might stand and listen to an open-air lecture, he might buy a pamphlet or periodical, but the only time when he could really be counted was on the occasion of an election, by secret ballot, with a socialist candidate in the field. Apart from the actual sympathisers with the socialist movement were innumerable men and women who merely happened to acquire some smattering of information about socialism, usually by hearing a speaker. In some working class circles, particularly among those who did not attend church, it was an accepted social custom to go for a walk on a Sunday, and listen to whoever might be speaking at any of the usual places in the locality.[2] One might hear a socialist one Sunday, and the Salvation Army the next. For many people this was the only available

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1. For example, Joseph Nuttall (see Appendix II below).
2. Fred Flood. Tape recorded interview, 4 October 1975.

form of entertainment, and was often simply treated as such. It did however mean that some basic notions of socialist ideology might spread to the otherwise apolitical.

The actual paid-up members of South Salford SDF were relatively few in number. In July 1890, just after the branch had been re-organized, its secretary T.H. Sutton reported the total number of members to be forty. Although not large in numbers they were, he claimed, 'strong in discipline'.[1] By October the total had risen to 44, but not all these members appear to have attended meetings regularly. The quarterly report, published during that month, stated that the average attendance at branch meetings had been 18, as opposed to 11 during the previous quarter.[2] Perhaps the chief tasks of the active member were propaganda and recruitment. In January 1886 H.M. Reade published an article in Justice on 'How to organise'. Intended to promote the spread of social-democracy on a national scale, it suggested that a small group of acquaintances might meet to talk about socialism and Labour questions. After making regular additions to their numbers, they could then form a branch, connected with the National Executive. While maintaining the branch, each individual member should then make himself the starting point or nucleus of another 'group', consisting of people in his neighbourhood or those associated with him at work. A thread of communication should be maintained with the first group, which would continue to meet and submit its report to the Executive.[3]

The extent to which this method was applied within Salford is impossible to ascertain, but it was basically the technique employed by the SDF in its attempts to start new branches outside the town. During the summer of 1885 speakers were regularly sent out to Eccles,[4] and after a colliery disaster in Pendlebury, Horrocks, Hall and Smart were all despatched to the village, where they spoke to a large crowd of colliers and navvies on 'What Socialists Want'.[5] The Salford Social Democrats continued to hold meetings, sell Justice, and distribute pamphlets in Pendlebury. Then, after a meeting in the Market Place on 13 September, thirteen names were given in to form a branch. Plans were made to hire a hall, and for Salford socialists to continue their assistance

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1. J, 19 July 1890.
2. Ibid., 18 October 1890.
3. Ibid., 30 January 1886.
4. Ibid., 27 June, 4 and 11 July 1885.
5. Ibid,, 22 August 1885.

until a strong branch had been established. The branch finally emerged at the end of October, and was still in existence in 1891.[1] By mid-October 1885, the majority of workers in Oldham had been out on strike for ten weeks, and the South Salford SDF again sent its leading members. Horrocks, Harry, Parkinson, Oldman, and Rev. Charles Peach, accompanied by Hunter Watts, held meetings with the aim of starting an SDF branch.[2] In succeeding years speakers were despatched to Stockport, Blackburn, Darwen, Bury and Whaley Bridge.[3] Eight members of Salford SDF went to Bolton in September 1886, and managed to form a local branch of 30 members.[4]

However most of the work of dedicated Social Democrats concerned attempts to recruit individual members to existing branches, rather than to new ones. The meetings were one of the chief sources of new members. During February 1885 the newly-established SDF branch was holding regular Sunday evening lectures at the Crescent Inn. After the meeting on the 8th of that month, two new members joined, 'both able speakers and educated Socialists'. The following month's lecture brought in 4 more members, and those on the 22nd and 29th two each.[5] In April 1885, 9 new members enrolled at the Crescent Inn.[6] Generally these recruits may be assumed to be individuals, but occasionally a small group from another organization transferred its allegiance to the SDF. Thus in April 1885 the Salford SDF announced that '..several members of the Liberal Association declared their intention of resigning and joining us'.[7] During the following August the SDF enrolled eight members in Openshaw and also held a large meeting in Gorton. Of the latter district they commented that, 'A branch of the secularist party recently broke up and several of the late members have joined up and are now helping us in our propaganda'.[8] Although it is uncertain how many recruits they actually produced, the miners often proved to be sympathetic audiences for the SDF. In July 1885 Smart, Hall and Horrocks, on arrival at Frederick Street, Pendleton, 'were received by a number of colliers who came especially to hear us'. A meeting at Irlam's o' th' Height produced another 'sympathetic audience of colliers'.[9] Fear of the colliery

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1. Ibid., 29 August, 12,19 and 26 September, 24 and 31 October 1885, 24 January 1891.
2. Ibid., 17 October 1885.
3. Ibid., 29 May 1886, 6 August 1887, 5 and 19 May 1889.
4. Ibid., 11 September 1886.
5. Ibid., 14, 21 and 28 February, 7 March 1885.
6. Ibid., 18 April 1885.
7. Ibid., 4 April 1885.
8. Ibid., 22 August 1885.
9. Ibid., 18 July, 1 August 1885.

proprietors may, however, have prevented many miners who wished to do so, from actually joining the SDF.[1]

In the early months of Manchester Socialist League branch, its membership was recorded in the reports submitted by Raymond Unwin. He provided the following figures:[2]

	No. of members reported last month	No. now in good standing	Gain or loss
Oct. 1885	33	41	+8
Nov. 1885	41	43	+2
Dec. 1885	43	40	-3
Jan. 1886	[blank]	32	-'about 6 or 8'
Feb. 1886	28	28	'none'
March 1886	28	[blank]	[blank]

However after March 1886 Unwin ceased to complete the details of the branch on printed forms, and his letters seldom gave details as to membership figures. At the time of the League's Annual Conference in June 1886 he provided a report which gave the number of members on the books as 14, while another 9 had promised to join when a room was obtained in the Openshaw district.[3] Shortly afterwards he confided that most of the old members were 'not much good' and that the two or three who were had 'gone head first into the election'. However he had now received a total of fifteen members for the proposed new branch in Openshaw.[4] This suggests that the Openshaw branch when founded had a core of established members, but a mainly new rank and file.

Later accessions of new members were all in single figures. Four members were enrolled after a meeting at Gray Mare Lane Corner in July 1886,[5] and five on the occasion of Edward Carpenter's visit during the following month.[6] On 13 September 1886 Unwin reported that the branch had about 18 'good members', but no speakers.[7] The rules of the Socialist League stated that a branch could be formed by 7 or more members, but if the number fell below 6 the branch could become extinct.[8] The latter

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1. This factor was commented upon by Salford Social Democrats in their report of a meeting in Pendlebury, in J, 19 September 1885. For a detailed discussion of the relations between the Lancashire miners and the SDF, see R. Challinor, The Lancashire and Cheshire Miners (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1972) pp.217-8.
2. [Socialist League, Manchester branch] Monthly reports, printed blanks, filled up by and remarks of R. Unwin, October 1885 - March 1886 (606. Socialist League Archives)
3. Socialist League, Manchester Branch, 8 June 1886. Report for Annual Conference to be held 13 June 1886. (3042/3. Socialist League Archives).
4. Letter: R. Unwin to [Socialist League], 27 June 1886 (3042/2. Socialist League Archives).
5. Com., 10 July 1886.
6. Ibid., 28 August 1886.
7. Letter: R. Unwin to H.H. Sparling, 13 September [1886] (3034/5. Socialist League Archives)
8. Com., Aug. & Sept. 1885.

appears to have been the case in the spring of 1887. How many members revived the branch in 1889 is uncertain, but at the League's first attempt to hold a meeting in Harpurhey, on 30 June 1889, there were four new recruits.[1] Of the League's adherents during its anarchist phase, perhaps the best picture is presented by a report of the outing and social gathering at Matlock, on August Bank Holiday, 1891. Taking part were socialists from Leicester, Derby, Walsall, Sheffield, Chesterfield, Nottingham and Manchester, of whom the 'Jewish and Manchester comrades' formed 'the most numerous contingent'. But the total number of participants was only just over 60, which hardly suggests a large group, even from Manchester.[2]

For both the SDF and Socialist League the indications are of a small number of actual members who were, however, extremely active and enthusiastic. To join was to commit a large proportion of one's spare time and energy, rather than merely pay a subscription. Like the Social Democrats, the League members saw their main task to be socialist propaganda. Although lacking a stable base comparable with that which the SDF had established in South Salford, the Leaguers nevertheless set out to prosletyze beyond their home town. The Manchester Socialist Union had hardly begun its own operations before it despatched John Oldman to establish a branch in Oldham.[3] Members also went to speak at Bury and Stockport.[4] In 1887 the League turned its attention to Ashton and Hyde. After a large meeting at Ashton, the Manchester socialists considered that a League branch would soon be formed there, while at Hyde enough names were taken to form a branch, and the work of starting it handed over to 'an energetic comrade' who had just come to live there.[5] It may be remarked that the Manchester branch itself faded from existence shortly afterwards.[6] In May 1889, barely a month after the Manchester Socialist League had been resurreöted, its members were again embarking upon 'weekly visits to outlying towns'. The first visit was to Middleton, where a meeting in the Market Square attracted about 600 working men. The proceedings began with a song, after which Bailie

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1. Ibid., 6 July 1889.
2. Ibid., 5 September 1891.
3. Letters: J.E.D. Bourne to [Socialist League], ?June, 23 June and [n.d.- ans. 9 July 1885] (2522/1. Socialist League Archives); Com., July 1886; J, 6 June 1885. See also p.93 above.
4. Letter: H.M. Reade to J.L. Mahon, rec. 4 May [1885], 2522/1.
5. Com., 12 February 1887.
6. See above, p.120.

lectured on 'The Class War, its latest phase'.[1] It appears that the Manchester socialists returned regularly to Middleton throughout that summer.[2] During August forays were also made to Heywood, and a report was sent to Commonweal that 'there is a desire by some sympathizers here to form a branch, which may herafter be done'.[3] Three members visited Oldham during September, and managed to organize 'an enthusiastic meeting', despite some opposition from a local secularist. They were moreover able to announce that a branch was about to be formed in the town.[4] In the summer of 1890, Manchester Socialist Leaguers again set out to Middleton, as well as to Bolton, Rochdale, Blackley, Heywood, Crumpsall, Hyde and district.[5]

The emphasis upon socialist propaganda in outlying districts, rather than simply upon the establishment of a firm city centre base, was encouraged by the national Socialist League. In June 1889 a plan for propaganda in manufacturing and rural districts was formulated, whereby speakers should be sent to centres such as Manchester, Leicester, Leeds, Newcastle, Birmingham and Oxford, 'from which surrounding districts can be worked with the aid of our friends in these large towns'. There was also a call for subscriptions to a Provincial Propaganda Fund, which would finance this work,[6] although it seems doubtful whether much assistance from a central fund ever reached the Manchester lecturers. Admittedly the local members seemed enthusiastic enough about their 'missionary work', if one can judge from the letter to Commonweal by 'E.H.P.' [E.H. Parkinson?], entitled 'How to win Lancashire'.[7]

The desire to spread the message of socialism further afield was largely a sign of sheer enthusiasm, but it did have one advantage for speakers. In addressing a meeting in some outlying town, rather than in Manchester or Salford, a socialist did run less risk of his employer discovering his activities. For the organizations as such,

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1. Com., 25 May 1889.
2. Ibid., 1,8,22 June; 6,20, 27 July, 3, 31 August; 7,14,28 September 1889.
3. Ibid., 31 August 1889.
4. Ibid., 14 September 1889.
5. Ibid., 24 May, 9 August 1890.
6. Ibid., 29 June 1889.
7. Ibid., 14 June 1890.

however, the tendency was perhaps unfortunate, for both the SDF and Socialist League might have been strengthened by concentrating their efforts upon building up a close network of branches within the Manchester and Salford area. When considering the development of the ILP it is moreover worth posing the question, as to whether their earlier reception of socialism from Manchester and Salford rendered the neighbouring small towns any more inclined to follow their political leadership.

Despite their journeys to deliver lectures, most of the members of the SDF and Socialist League concentrated on local activities; the public meetings in Manchester and Salford, as well as the SDF's electioneering. Both organizations recognised the importance of educating their own members, especially for their vital role as public speakers. During 1890 the South Salford SDF ran a reading and speaking class, as well as a debating class.[1] Education in socialist theory was an early feature of the branch activities; H.M. Reade's 'lessons on socialism' have already been mentioned.[2] At the end of 1888 Manchester SDF met on Sunday evenings for 'papers and discussions on current topics'.[3] For its part, the Socialist League established a library at its Gray Mare Lane club,[4] and subsequently a library and reading room in Grosvenor Street.[5]

The open-air meetings were undoubtedly the pivot around which both the SDF and the Socialist League revolved. Not only did these activities consume a major portion of the time and energy of dedicated members, but they were also the principal means of obtaining further recruits and sympathisers. The first aspect of these meetings which must be considered is simply their location. While converts to the cause may have been prepared to travel long distances to meetings, it is likely that the majority of the audience would be only a short distance away from their homes. New recruits and sympathisers were likely to be won at meetings within their own local areas. The chances of any particular inhabitant of Manchester and Salford hearing a socialist speaker at all were thus largely governed by where he lived. Area was also the principal determining factor as to whether he would be likely to hear an SDF or Socialist League speaker. Map 4 below[6] shows the locations of meetings held by the SDF and the Manchester Socialist Union/

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1. J, 19 July, 18 October 1890. The South Salford SDF quarterly report in the latter issue stated that a debating class had been formed, but at the time was temporarily discontinued.
2. Ibid., 7 March 1885.
3. Ibid., 8 December 1888.
4. See above, p.119.
5. Com., 15 February 1890.
6. Following p.133.

Socialist League in the period from 1885 to 1892. Initially the most obvious factor which emerges is the Salford/Manchester division between the two organizations. There were no Socialist League meetings at all in Salford, whereas the SDF's activities were to a great extent concentrated upon that town. The only incursions of the SDF into Manchester were chiefly to established meeting places which were also used by the Socialist League and other groups; the County Forum on Market Street and the outdoor locations of Stevenson Square, the Viaduct on Chester Road, Hulme and New Cross, Oldham Road. Hulme was really the only Manchester area where SDF propaganda was at all consistent. Of the other SDF meeting places in Manchester, the house in Pilling Street was used for meetings only because a member happened to live there, and the Deansgate, Beswick and Bradford open-air pitches were not used for long periods. Basically, whether the casual listener happened to hear an SDF or Socialist League speaker depended mainly upon whether he lived in Manchester or Salford.

Further examination of the map reveals obvious gaps in the propaganda network. While it is unlikely that incursions into middle class suburbia were considered worthwhile, there were many obviously working class areas which received little or no attention from the Socialists: the southern part of Hulme (bordering on Old Trafford and Moss Side), Ardwick, Ancoats, and Miles Platting. The map also reveals more clearly the extent to which the SDF meetings were concentrated into a relatively small area, chiefly the working class districts of Salford, while the Socialist League spread its activities over a much wider geographical area. For a larger and more organized body, this latter tendency might have appeared to be a sign of growth, but in the Socialist League it was merely a symptom of its weakness.

Many of the open-air meeting places shown on the map were far from being the sole preserve of the socialists; indeed it was often a case of 'first come, first served'. Thus in July 1886 Raymond Unwin of the Socialist League reported:

> Some Apostolic Christians had forestalled us at the Viaduct in the evening and kept up their meeting until after ten o'clock, in spite of our request to be allowed some share of the evening. If they will not manage to share the station with us, we shall be obliged to go early and keep them out altogether.[1]

In May 1889 a meeting which the Socialist League had planned to hold in Stevenson Square was delayed by the earlier arrival of the British Anti-Mormon Society, complete with brass band.[2] Shortly afterwards, the

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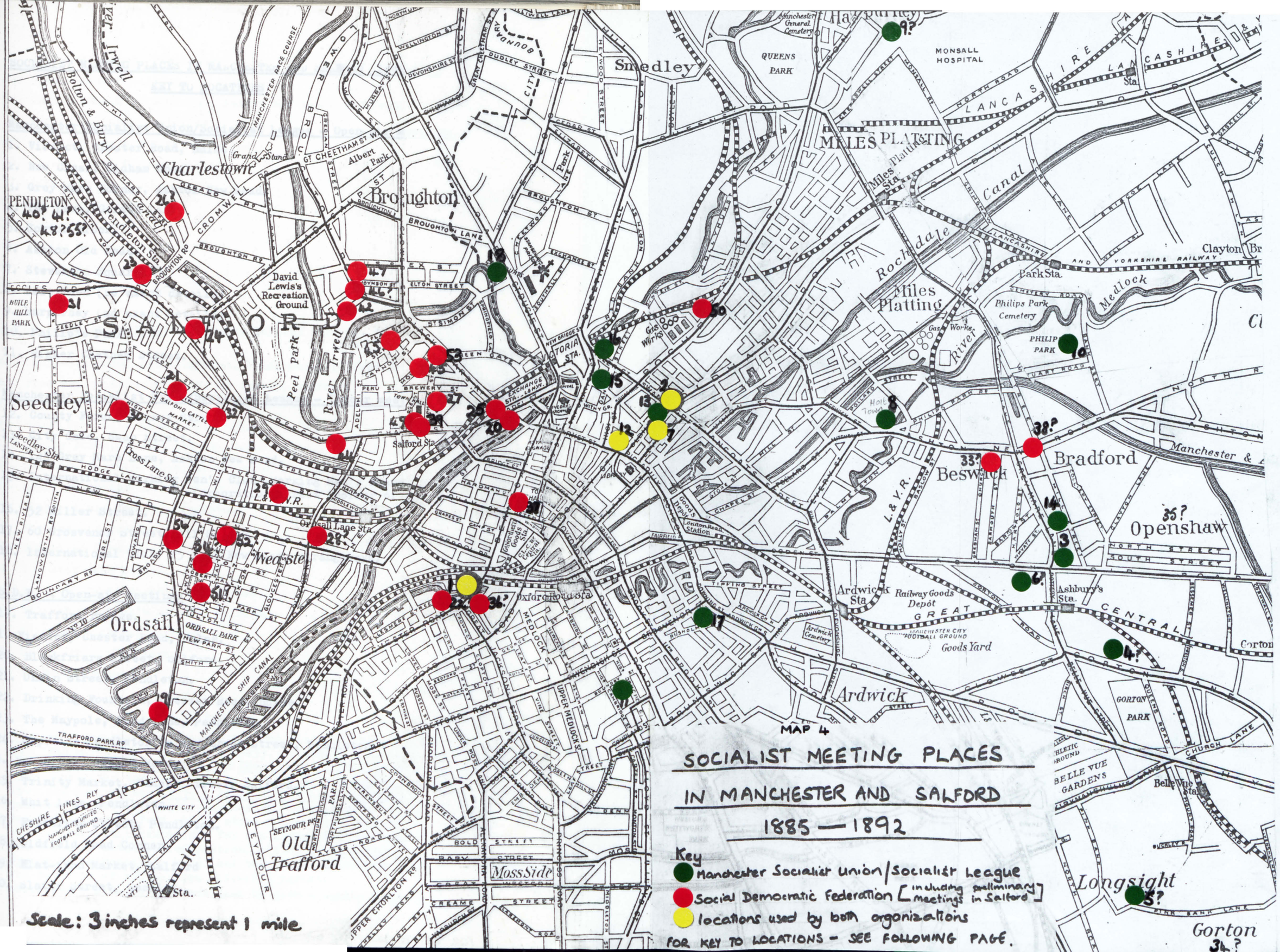
1. Com., 3 July 1886.
2. Ibid., 18 May 1889.


MAP 4
SOCIALIST MEETING PLACES
IN MANCHESTER AND SALFORD
1885 — 1892
Key
Manchester Socialist Union/Socialist League
Social Democratic Federation [including preliminary meetings in Salford]
locations used by both organizations
FOR KEY TO LOCATIONS - SEE FOLLOWING PAGE.
Scale: 3 inches represent 1 mile
Smedley
Charlestown
Broughton
Salford
Seedley
Pendleton
Ordsall
Weaste
Ardwick
Miles Platting
Beswick
Bradford
Openshaw
Longsight
Gorton
Old Trafford
Moss Side
Queens Park
Monsall Hospital
Philips Park Cemetery
Philip Park
Peel Park
David Lewis's Recreation Ground
Albert Park
Belle Vue Gardens
Gorton Park
Ardwick Cemetery
Manchester City Football Ground
Manchester United Football Ground
Salford Sta.
Oxford Road Sta.
Victoria Sta.
Ardwick Sta.
Ashbury's Sta.
Miles Platting Sta.
Park Sta.
Belle Vue Sta.
Pendleton Sta.
Cross Lane Sta.
Ordsall Lane Sta.
Manchester Ship Canal
River Irwell
River Medlock
Rochdale Canal
Manchester & Ashton New Road
Great Central
Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway
L. & Y. R.
Manchester Race Course
Bolton & Bury
Cheshire Lines Rly
Gas Works
Railway Goods Depot
Goods Yard
Hollytown
Clayton Br.
Cl

SOCIALIST MEETING PLACES IN MANCHESTER AND SALFORD 1885-1892

KEY TO LOCATIONS

Manchester Socialist Union/Socialist League - Open-air meetings.

1. Viaduct, Chester Road, Hulme.
2. New Cross, Oldham Road.
3. Grey Mare Corner, Ashton New Road.
4. The Lamp, Gorton Lane.
5. Gorton Brook.
6. Ashton Old Road.
7. Stevenson Square.
8. Holt Town (no exact details)
9. Harpurhey (no exact details)
10. Philip's Park
11. Higher Chatham Street.

Manchester Socialist Union/Socialist League - Indoor meetings

12. County Forum, Market Street.
13. City Cafe, Swan Street.
14. 145 Grey Mare Lane, Ashton New Road.
15. International Working Men's Club/ Working Men's Educational Club, 122 Corporation Street (corner of Hanover Street).
16. 52 Miller Street.
17. 60 Grosvenor Street, All Saints.
18. International Club, 25 Bury New Road, Strangeways.

S.D.F. - Open-air meetings

19. Trafford Bridge.
1. Viaduct, Chester Road, Hulme.
20. Blackfriars Street, Salford.
21. Unwin Street, Pendleton.
22. Drinking Fountain, Chester Road, Hulme.
23. The Maypole, Ford Lane, Pendleton.
24. Opposite Pendleton Baths, Broad Street, Pendleton.
2. New Cross, Oldham Road.
25. Trinity Market, Chapel Street, Salford.
26. Whit Lane, Pendleton.
27. Frederick Street, Pendleton.
28. Oldfield Road Corner.
29. Flat-iron Market, Salford
30. Slater Street, Seedley.

31. Langworthy Road, Pendleton.

32. Cross Lane, Pendleton.

33. Christ Church Fair Ground, Ashton New Road, Bradford, Manchester.

34. Gorton (no exact details)

35. Openshaw (no exact details)

36. Chester Road Corner, Hulme.

37. Jackson's Row, Deansgate.

7. Stevenson Square.

38. Ashton New Road.

39. Bexley Square, Salford.

40. Pendleton Fair Ground.

41. The Priory, Pendleton.

S.D.F. - Indoor meetings (including earlier meetings by the Salford group which founded the local S.D.F.)

42. Brunswick Hotal Debating Room, Union Street, Lower Broughton.

43. Free Methodist Schools, Mount Street, Salford.

44. Crescent Inn, Salford.

45. Brown Cow, Silk Street, Salford.

12. County Forum, Market Street, Manchester.

46. Bee Hive Debating Room, Lower Broughton Road.

47. Lower Broughton Liberal Club, 116 Lower Broughton Road.

48. Elephant and Castle, Pendleton

49. Ford Street Temperance Hall.

50. 20Pilling Street, Rochdale Road.

51. 89, West Park Street, Ordsall.

52. 4, West Craven Street, Regent Road.

53. 112, St. Stephen's Street, Salford.

54. Ellesmere Street, Salford.

55. Co-op. Hall, Pendleton.

56. 43 Trafford Road.

NOTES TO MAP

1. Sources. The map itself is taken from Slater's, Manchester, Salford and Suburban Directory (Manchester 1915). Information as to places of meeting has been taken from Justice and Commonweal. Initially meeting places have been located on the map with the aid of Kelly's Map of Manchester and Salford 1903 and Geographers' A to Z Atlas of the Manchester Area /?1967/ (The latter, produced before the recent large-scale demolition of property in central Manchester and Salford, still shows a basically 19th century street plan, and has been utilized mainly for its index) For location of street numbers, and for more detailed information, Slater's, Manchester, Salford and Suburban Directory (Manchester, 1893) has been used. R.Roberts, op.cit., p.39, provides the location of the Salford Flat-iron Market.
2. While every attempt has been made to give accurate locations, in some

instances insufficient detail is provided in newspaper reports. In these cases a question mark has been placed after the number on the map. A particular problem was encountered through the socialists use of areas of waste land in town centres. Although contemporary inhabitants needed little direction, they are almost impossible to identify today.

location of a Socialist League meeting at Middleton had to be changed when speakers arrived in that town to find the annual wakes fair in full swing.[1] Not that the League was always the loser in the competition for meeting places. New Cross, where the anarchists met in 1891, had originally been the stronghold of teetotalism, and their first meetings ended in wild disorder fomented (or so the League claimed) by 'excited advocates of Temperance'. Subsequently the League managed to get many of the Teetotalers' former audience.[2]

Although the largest proportion of the audience must have been composed of casual passers-by, and interested listeners who returned each week to a regular location, both the SDF and Socialist League made some efforts to advertise their meetings beyond the confines of their own journals. Both bodies organized 'Paste-pot Brigades' to undertake fly-posting.[3] The SDF also employed more direct methods of attracting an audience. In August 1885, when they began to hold meetings in Slater Street, Seedley, a sympathiser promised the loan of a handbell to ring up people in the various streets.[4] Banners were also a useful means of drawing attention . When Harry and Waddington of the SDF planned to address the pitmen of Bradford and Clayton Collieries behind St. Philip's Park on 10 May 1885, the notice in Justice concluded: 'We earnestly request all socialists and friends to rally round the Black Flag which will be displayed for the first time'.[5] However later references were usually to a 'banner' being displayed at meetings. In August 1885 the SDF assembled in Broad Street, and marched to their meeting in Frederick Street, Pendleton, with their banner.[6] On 4 November 1885 Raymond Unwin informed the Socialist League that the branch had resolved to have a Red Flag, bearing the words 'Socialist League. Manchester Branch. Liberty, Equality and Fraternity' in white.[7]

The topics dealt with by socialist lecturers are best illustrated by the list of SDF meetings in Appendix I. The year 1885 probably represented the high-water mark of that body's actual lecturing activities. In later years a much higher proportion of meetings was concerned with immediate campaigns: unemployment agitation, trade union

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1. Ibid., 31 August 1889.
2. Ibid., 1 August 1891.
3. J, 28 March 1885; Com., 23 March 1889. See also p.120 above.
4. J, 1 August 1885.
5. Ibid., 9 May 1885.
6. Ibid., 27 June, 11 July, 5 September 1885.
7. Letter: R. Unwin to [Socialist League], 4 November 1885 (3037/4. Socialist League Archives).

organization, and protests against the activities of Salford Corporation, all of which will be considered in the following chapter. Unfortunately the Socialist League did not provide full details of its meetings, but lecture topics, where recorded, were very similar to those of the SDF, at least until the end of the decade. Thus January 1886 found Parkinson speaking on 'The Gospel of Discontent', Harry on 'Capitalism a Curse; a plea for Socialism', Morley on 'The County Elections and what they teach Socialists', and Peach on 'Liberty, Equality and Fraternity'.[1] Like the SDF, the League speakers ranged from the historical to immediate issues and campaigns, and so to visions of a socialist future.

Most of the SDF speakers were local men, and some of their number had definite topics which they expounded, with slight variations, at each meeting they addressed. As the list shows, W. Morley concentrated upon the conditions of agricultural labourers and Daniel Gauley upon Ireland, while J.A. Kay frequently spoke of the problems of the Scottish crofters. The majority of the lectures dealt with socialist doctrine as it related to one aspect of the economic system; capital, work and wages, trade, the land, education, or the whole question of poverty. More theoretical in their nature were the discussion of Henry George's The Land for the People, and Smart and Burns' attempt to explain Marx's theory of surplus value. Socialism was placed in its historical context by lectures such as Oldman's 'England, Past, Present and Future' or William Burns' 'The Commune of Paris'. How socialism might be achieved was one of the more frequent subjects; titles such as 'The Coming Struggle' and 'The Coming Revolution' can have left the audience in little doubt, Immediate local issues were often raised; George Smart's candidature for the School Board, the building of the Ship Canal, and the attempt by the Council to stop the sale of Sunday newspapers. National and international politics came in for criticism; 'Mr. Gladstone's manifesto' and 'The Egyptian Policy' were both discussed.[2]

There was obviously a good deal of repetition of subjects, but this can hardly be criticised when it is remembered that the bulk of the audience would be different on each occasion. When one considers the list of lectures, perhaps the most outstanding feature is the sheer

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1. Com., January 1886.
2. See Appendix I below.

extent of activity undertaken by the SDF; on some days there were six or even seven meetings held in the area, and it was not uncommon for one man to speak several times in the course of a day.

The organization of meetings was principally the task of the local branches, although the SDF did organize a system of visiting lecturers. A list of speakers and their subjects was printed in Justice during March 1885. Applications for lectures were then to be made by letter, stating the subject required and containing a post-card for reply, and addressed to the lecturer c/o the SDF Secretary at Palace Chambers, Westminster. Both W. Morley of Salford SDF and former Chartist William Henry Chadwick were included in the list.[1]

When one turns to the question of actual numbers attending these meetings, hard facts become more difficult to ascertain. If the SDF's branch meetings are any indication,[2] then indoor meetings were probably fairly small. Certainly the Socialist League's Club Room in Grey Mare Lane would not accomodate a vast audience.[3] The size of working class open-air gatherings has however proved a constant source of debate since the era of Peterloo at least; so much depends upon the subjective judgement of observers. Usually reporters confined their remarks to vague statements like 'a good audience' or 'a large crowd'. In 1886 the Socialist League did however claim that, at a 'good meeting' at Grey Mare Corner, Parkinson, Snowdon and Unwin addressed 'an attentive audience of about 300'.[4] When Frank Kitz arrived in Manchester during July 1889 and spoke in Stevenson Square on 'Why the Workers Live in Slums', Commonweal reported an audience of nearly 2,000.[5]

The importance of public meetings lay not only in the actual speeches delivered, but also in the opportunity which they provided for the distribution of literature. At most meetings, members confined themselves to the sale of Justice or Commonweal, but the SDF did provide some free literature for its audience. Thus in January 1885 a parcel of SDF Manifestoes was distributed among the crowd at Trafford Bridge, who were eager to obtain copies.[6] A fortnight later, both the Manifesto and old copies of Justice were given away.[7] During the following

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1. J, 28 March 1885.
2. See above, p.127.
3. See above, p.119.
4. Com., 8 May 1886.
5. Ibid., 20 July 1889.
6. J, 24 January 1885.
7. Ibid., 7 February 1885.

summer, SDF members were to be found at meetings selling Socialist Catechisms, Land Nationalisation leaflets, and Federation programmes.[1] Concerning the League's sales of Commonweal, in 1886 Unwin generally ordered 3 quires (presumably 3 bundles of 24 copies) at a cost of 1s 4d per quire.[2] How many were actually sold is of course another matter. Accounting was never the branch's outstanding talent. Unsold Commonweals, which should have been returned, were often given away for propaganda purposes. Thus H.M. Reade informed Mahon in May 1885:

> I had your bill in my mind, but did not think it as 'pressing' as some others we have to pay so I presumed your indulgence. I did not sell half the 'C' but gave away judiciously, so do not think I was keeping back the payment.[3]

Much of the correspondence between the branch and the League headquarters concerned literature orders, and clearly some of the material was intended from the beginning to be given away. Thus on 25 October 1885 Addison ordered a total of 13 quires of Commonweal. He added: 'We shall not return any this month, but give them away at our meetings. Send on 100 of Manifestos by Bax and Morris. You have not sent on yet the 2,000 leaflets'.[4] During the summer and autumn of 1889 the number of Commonweals sold at meetings varied considerably, and is best illustrated by the table overleaf.[5]

The period covered by this table is probably that in which Commonweal sales at public meetings reached their peak, for the newly reorganized Manchester branch was undertaking regular meetings outside the city, particularly at Middleton, as well as participating in trade union activity. Thus the meeting on 20 October in Stevenson Square, at which 52 Commonweal were sold, was in fact composed of gas workers and addressed by Ritson and Horrocks, who was then local organiser of the Gas Workers' and General Labourers' Union.[6] The meeting at Stevenson Square on 4 August, at which 40 Commonweal were sold, had been called in connection with the Manchester tram strike.[7] During November, 2 quires of Commonweal were sold at a strike meeting of pipe makers, also held in Stevenson Square.[8] In a survey of the spread of socialist propaganda as

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1. Ibid., 2 May, 22 August 1885.
2. Weekly statements of Commonweals disposed of, sold, and returned. 1 May 1886 - 5 February 1887 (481-2. Socialist League Archives). On two occasions, 22 July and 19 August 1886 the number rose to 4 quires. After 18 December 1886 it declined to 2 quires plus 13 single copies.
3. Letter: H.M. Reade to J.L. Mahon, rec. 4 May [1885] (2522/1. Socialist League Archives).
4. Letter: W. Addison to [Commonweal office], 25 October 1885 (661/4. Socialist League Archives).
5. See Table 6. 6. Com., 26 October 1889. 7. Ibid., 10 August 1889.
8. Ibid., 23 November 1889.

Table 6

Commonweal sales at meetings, May-October 1889

(Source: reports of meetings in Commonweal)

Date	Meeting Place	No. of Commonweal sold
25 May	Middleton	27
1 June	Middleton	28
2 June	Chester Rd.	20
8-10 June	Stevenson Square Chester Rd. Holt Town	72
29 June	Middleton	18
30 June	Stevenson Square	28
30 June	Harpurhey	9
13 July	Middleton	31
20 July	Middleton	42
27 July	Middleton	22
28 July	Stevenson Square	21
3 August	Middleton	20
4 August	Stevenson Square	40
11 August	Heywood	24
11 August	Stevenson Square	24
1 September	Middleton	21
3 September	Philips Park gates	27
15 September	Philips Park Stevenson Square Chester Rd. Oldham Heywood	over 100
22 September	Philips Park	35
22 September	Stevenson Square	20
20 October	Stevenson Square	52

a preliminary to the foundation of the ILP, perhaps the most significant factor is not the number of Commonweals sold, but the fact that many of them must have been bought by members of the new trade unions, rather than by casual passers-by.

The attempts by socialists to prosletyze their faith among trade unionists must be considered at a later stage. It is here necessary to discuss two less obvious groups whose sympathies they tried to attract; the Irish and the Jews. Sympathy with the Irish cause had been part of the original platform of the Democratic Federation;[1] in England For All Hyndman argued the case for legislative independence for Ireland.[2] Lectures given by Salford SDF reflected this policy, for at the Crescent Inn during March 1885 William Burns argued that Ireland should be separated from England if it so desired, and Horrocks, Turton and Hanna all spoke in favour of local self-government for Ireland on federal lines.[3] Later lectures on the subject included Burns' 'A Plea for Irish Independence',[4] Daniel Gauley's 'Orange Ulster: a Sham',[5] and Higgins' 'The Irish Question and Tory Brutality'.[6] Admittedly these lectures were delivered to SDF, rather than Irish, audiences, but in June 1885 Henry Harry, then campaigning as labour candidate for Pendleton, visited the 'Thomas Brennan' branch of the Irish National League in Salford. He addressed the Irish electors, and stated his views on the Irish question. On this occasion Harry 'was received with acclamation as he eloquently showed his deep sympathy with the Irish people'. The vote of confidence was unanimous.[7] Unfortunately Harry did not eventually go to the poll, so this confidence was never put to the test. When Michael Davitt arrived in Manchester during December 1887, the SDF attended his meeting in the Free Trade Hall. A speaker named Warn addressed an overflow meeting, informing his audience that the SDF had been advocating Home Rule for five or six years, '..and after the Irish nation had got it, the Democracy of England, Scotland, and Wales would want it, and would agitate until they got it'.[8] During the following summer the SDF protested against the Coercion Bill and its administration in Ireland, as well as

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1. S. Pierson, op.cit., p.65.
2. H.M. Hyndman, England for All, p.130.
3. J, 14 March 1885.
4. Ibid., 12 December 1885.
5. Ibid., 19 December 1885.
6. Ibid., 3 March 1888.
7. Ibid., 20 June 1885.
8. Ibid., 24 December 1887.

against the 'cruel and unlawful treatment of Irish political prisoners'.[1]

But if the SDF's policy drew the support of some Irish nationalists, it should not be inferred that the mass of the working class Irish immigrants in the area were sympathetic. The chief, and virtually unsurmountable, obstacle to any widespread rapport between the two groups was religion; the Roman Catholicism of the Irish and the atheism of the Marxist socialists. This factor is perhaps best illustrated by an incident which occurred during Alfred Settle's election campaign in Ordsall Ward, Salford, in November 1891. The Liberals had noticed an extract in the 27 June issue of Justice, which was entitled 'War to the Catholic Church'. They now covered the walls of the constituency with posters announcing that the socialists had declared war against the Roman Catholic Church.[2] Paul Thompson, in surveying the SDF in London, has remarked that its chief stronghold outside the capital was Lancashire, 'where Catholicism provided the same kind of preparation for doctrinal Marxist socialism as did secularism in London'.[3] There is however no evidence that this applied to Manchester and Salford, where the SDF activists had emerged from a background of secularism, and where Irish nationalist supporters of that movement were but few in number when compared with the mass of poor and uneducated immigrant Roman Catholics, who lived in fear and awe of their church.

Of the minority groups in Manchester and Salford, the Jews were more strongly attracted towards socialism than were the Irish. Indeed there was a Jewish platform at the 1892 May Day demonstration. The initial contact between the socialists and Jewish population of Manchester appears to have been a result of the 'new unionism',[4] for the poorer immigrants

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1. Ibid., 18 August 1888.
2. Ibid., 7 November 1891.
3. P. Thompson, op.cit., p.114.
4. Jewish involvement in the labour and socialist movements in Manchester is a subject upon which little information is at present available. Hopefully this situation will be remedied by the publication of the sequel to Bill Williams, The Making of Manchester Jewry. I am greatly indebted to Dr. Williams for placing his current research at my disposal and discussing with me his findings. At the time of this discussion (April 1978) Dr. Williams had been unable to trace any distinctly Jewish socialist movement, such as existed in London and Leeds. Nor was there any local Yiddish press. Dr. Williams attributed this to the existence, before the main wave of immigration from Eastern Europe, of a wealthy middle class Jewish establishment. This group apparently used its influence within the community against any 'subversive' activity. Jews appear to have become involved in the socialist and labour movement of the '80s either as individuals or through the 'new' unions. There was no local counterpart to the East End's Arbeiter Freind and Berners Street Club (see P. Thompson, op.cit., p.30).

tended to be concentrated in the 'sweated trades'. During the summer of 1888, the SDF staged an anti-sweating campaign, and on 21 July the Manchester branch reported:

> Several of our members went down among the Jews and distributed our manifesto. We are in the midst of the sweating dens, and are trying hard to get the Jews to our meeting on Sunday next.[1]

The phraseology is unfortunate but nevertheless, when the Anti-Sweating Demonstration was held in Stevenson Square on the 22nd, a large number of Jews took part. On this occasion Hunter Watts announced the names of firms, including some of the largest in the city, which employed sweaters.[2] The meeting was chaired by John Marshall, who appears at this time to have been a member of the SDF.[3] A year later, having transferred his allegiance to the Socialist League, he played an active part in the tailors' strike, upon which he reported to Commonweal.[4] In November 1889, when the Jewish machinists, tailors and pressers met to consider co-operation with the Amalgamated Society of Tailors, Marshall was again a prominent speaker.[5] The extent of the Socialist League's influence among the Jewish workers is best illustrated by the machinists', tailors' and pressers' strike in April 1890. Marshall, still in the League, was then the Union's secretary, and there were some socialists among the members; 'facts which the sweaters' defenders quoted to indicate the dangerous nature of the movement'. Many of the speeches at the strike demonstrations had been 'distinctly socialist in character'. The Jewish tailors and Socialist League proceeded to hold a joint meeting in Stevenson Square on April 20th, when the speakers included Marshall and John Ritson of the League, and Lewis Lyons from London.[6]

Jewish involvement in the Socialist League was not solely confined to the affairs of the tailors' union. On 7 November 1889 a public meeting to commemorate the 'Chicago martyrs' was held at the League's club. Revolutionary songs were sung, and 'several comrades spoke in English and Yiddish'.[7] The actual number of Jews associated

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1. J, 21 July 1888.
2. Ibid., 4 August 1888.
3. Ibid., 28 April 1888, stated that Marshall attended the first meeting of Pendleton SDF, as a member of the Pilling Street, Manchester, branch.
4. Com., 21 September 1889.
5. Ibid., 9 November 1889.
6. Ibid., 26 April 1890. For further details of the Jewish tailors' union, see H.A. Clegg et al., op.cit., pp.181-2.
7. Ibid., 16 November 1889.

with the socialist movement was undoubtedly small in relation to the total Jewish population of Manchester, but the contact is certainly worthy of note. The attraction of the socialist movement for Jewish immigrants is not difficult to surmise. Many had been the victims of political and religious persecution in their countries of origin. As voteless aliens in Britain they had no traditional allegiances to existing political parties, and thus might well have been drawn towards the anarchism which was then becoming predominant in the local Socialist League. The question as to whether the religious training of Judaeism cultivated an instinct for socialist doctrine, is beyond the scope of the present survey.[1]

While socialist propaganda among the minority religious groups was undoubtedly significant, there can be little doubt that most of the movement's sympathisers were obtained through public meetings and the sale of literature. Although these two activities have been considered in conjunction, it must be emphasised that socialist literature could be obtained without the purchaser having any contact with an organisation. In an era when to be identified with the socialist movement sould cost a man his job, this fact was particularly important. 'Unattached socialists' so frequently commented upon - and criticised- by the ILP, were not necessarily a product of the Clarion era. Both Justice and Commonweal, as well as other publications, were obtainable from local newsagents, most prominent among them being Joseph Waddington. Waddington was first named as an agent for Justice in the issue of 10 May 1884. Two addresses were given, 63 River Street, Hulme, and 309 Deansgate, of which the former seems more likely to have been his house.[2] Still continuing his activities, he removed during the year to 103 Oldfield Road, Salford, then 51 Queen Street, Hulme.[3] When the Socialist League was founded Waddington, then living at 14 Butterworth's Square, offered to take 4 quires of Commonweal and sell them in the streets.[4] Waddington's ambitions as a newsvendor and changeable political allegiances have already been considered.[5] Not surprisingly, the League never appointed

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1. P. Thompson, op.cit., pp.30-1.
2. J, 10 May 1884.
3. Ibid., 19 June, 23 August 1884.
4. Letter: J. Waddington to J.L. Mahon, 17 January 1885 (3095/2. Socialist League Archives).
5. See above, p.111.

him its official agent for Commonweal. In February 1885 he moved to a shop near Manchester city centre, at 37 Travis Street, London Road, which he described as Manchester Democratic Publishing Agency. Here he planned to supply socialist literature on both a wholesale and retail basis.[1] It was at this juncture that he sought assistance from the League, both to purchase a wagon from which to sell newspapers, and to provide him with a weekly wage of 5s to act as agent for Commonweal. Neither request found favour.[2] By the summer of 1885 he had a bookstall in Parker Street, behind the Royal Infirmary, and also sold socialist publications from the cellar of 52a London Road, Manchester.[3] He placed large orders for League literature. In August 1885 he requested 5 quires of Commonweal, 100 Manifestos, 50 of Morris' Chants for Socialists, 50 Address to Trade Unions, 50 Useful Work versus Useless Toil, and 1,000 leaflets for distribution, together with 12 contents bills for Commonweal. How many he sold - or even how many the League was prepared to send him is however uncertain, for he was clearly unable to send payment regularly.[4] Waddington made further attempts to establish himself as a socialist newsagent at the end of 1886 and beginning of 1887, when he was in fact working as a jobbing joiner.[5] He again sent in a large order for literature, but the League, obviously doubtful of his ability to sell and pay, refused him credit, which Waddington considered 'a contemptuous snubbing'.[6] This marked the end of his association with Commonweal. In December 1890 Waddington began selling the Workman's Times. He was then living at 4 Crown Street, Chester Road, Hulme,[7] but during February 1891 acquired a new shop at 79 Chester Road. Here he sold, wholesale and retail, labour and socialist literature from all parts of the world,[8] including Leonard Hall's new Navvy's and Laborer's Guide.[9]

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1. Letter: J. Waddington to J.L. Mahon, 10 February 1885 (3096/1. Socialist League Archives).
2. Letters: J. Waddington to J.L. Mahon, 10, 13 and 18 February 1885 (3096/1-3. Socialist League Archives).
3. J, 11 July, 8 August 1885.
4. Letters: J. Waddington to Secretary, Commonweal, 3 August 1885, and to C.W. Mowbray, 17 August 1885 (3101/1 and 3100. Socialist League Archives).
5. Letters: J. Waddington to Secretary, Socialist League, 23 December 1886, 7 January and 24 February 1887 (3101/2, 3093 and 3099/1. Socialist League Archives).
6. Letters: J. Waddington to H.A. Barker, 2 and 19 June 1887 (3091/1 and 3092/1. Socialist League Archives).
7. WT, 28 November 1890, 6 February and 6 March 1891.
8. Ibid., 27 February 1891.
9. Navvy's and Laborer's Guide, March 1891.

By the end of the year he was to achieve more lasting fame as 'Clarion Joe'.

Waddington was by no means the only local vendor of socialist literature. Justice also advertised at various times Abel Heywood and Son, 56-8 Oldham Street; Swinburn, 137 Lower Broughton Road; Jas. Holdfield of 241 Deansgate; G. Walker, 210 Clowes Street, West Gorton.[1] Commonweal, together with other publications of the Socialist League, was available during 1885 from the wholesale agents, J.E.D. Bourne, 10 Herbert Street, Hightown, Cheetham,[2] and W. Addison, 22 Carnarvon Street, Newtown.[3] In 1886 and '87 the wholesalers were Raymond Unwin of 37 Queen's Street, Queen's Road,[4] and F.H. Cadle, then the occupant of the Grey Mare Lane club premises.[5] Retail outlets were to be found in the Oxford Road area, Deansgate, Bradford, Oldham Street and Hulme Radical Club.[6]

If one can judge from the comment made by H.W. Lee, then Manchester and Salford were fortunate in their number of agents for socialist publications. Writing about the early days of Justice, he stated:

> Its greatest 'snag' was distribution. Wholesale agents would scarcely look at it. It had mainly to rely upon sales at meetings. Those who could manage it took copies to newsagents one week, and collected the unsold copies and the money due - when there was any- the following week...It was not every newsagent who would take on the sale of the paper, even when it was brought to him, and some soon dropped it like hot cakes, when they found that it had to do more with revolution than with law![7]

The obvious problem was, of course, how to encourage people, who were not already committed socialists, to read these publications. In April 1890 Commonweal provided a few hints. It suggested that readers, instead of simply buying their own copy, might occasionally purchase two, leaving one in a public place or giving it to a friend. They could ask the newsagent to show it in his window, or display a contents bill. It was also possible to have six sample copies sent post free to six different people for 7d, or three consecutive numbers to the same

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1. J, 22 March, 10 and 24 May 1884.
2. Com., August 1885. Waddington was extremely annoyed about Bourne's appointment as agent, and at one stage refused to do any business with him (Letter: J. Waddington to Secretary, Commonweal, 3 August 1885 (3101/1. Socialist League Archives).
3. Bourne resigned as wholesale agent and Addison took over in September 1885 (Letter: W. Addison to [Commonweal office], 22 September 1885 (661/5. Socialist League Archives)).
4. Com., April 1886.
5. Ibid., 12 March 1887.
6. Ibid., 1 January and 12 March 1887.
7. H.W. Lee and E. Archbold, Social-Democracy in Britain (1935) p.58. Part 1, from which this quotation was taken, was by H.W. Lee.

address for 4d. Discussion with friends, or the sending of a copy to the local newspaper were also advocated.[1]

Anyone purchasing the journal of one of the socialist groups could, if he wished to remain unattached, begin to acquire socialist literature through its advertisements. Publications advertised in Justice ranged from the second volume of Capital to American Socialist Labour Party pamphlets.[2] It was even possible to write, enquiring for details of literature. In February 1886 L.D. Prince was given the office addresses and prices of Revista Social in Madrid and Le Socialiste of Paris.[3]

How attractive were the socialist periodicals to readers not already dedicated to the cause? As has already been indicated, articles assumed some basic knowledge of socialist theory and the contemporary socialist movement, and their style and vocabulary hardly fitted them for casual reading by the average product of the elementary school. Leonard Hall informed the Socialist League Secretary that:

> ...however splendidly our journal may be fulfilling its ostensible purpose of the educator amongst those who are already living the life with the new hope or who are sufficiently informed to understand thoughtful composition yet to those of us and not of us who toil and spin so much that there is no room in their existences to learn or know, the Weal is Grecian classics and undecipherable hieroglyphics. This much without one particle of exaggeration!

He suggested that:

> ...at least one page (the first) be devoted to terse, pithy paragraphs touching, casually, on current occurrences, tho' not necessarily, but invariably reeking with crude Socialism, the more monosyllabic the better. Some of them might be perennial quotations.[4]

Hall was soon to attempt to put his ideas into practice in the Navvy's Guide.

* * *

How much sympathy was there in fact for the SDF and Socialist League? Without some indications, it is impossible to begin to assess the effectiveness of Robert Blatchford and ethical socialism in the creation of the ILP. The Socialist League provided very little evidence from which to judge, but in its latter days of anarchism, it was hardly an effective contestant for working class allegiance. The SDF

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1. Com., 12 April 1890.
2. J, 15 August 1885, 3 March 1888.
3. Ibid., 27 February 1886.
4. Letter: Leonard Hall to Secretary, Socialist League [n.d.] (1637. Socialist League Archives).

however took to the hustings almost from its inception, and the votes which its candidates obtained provide the nearest approach to actual numbers of sympathisers. Obviously it must be remembered that the SDF might obtain votes which were simply a protest against another party or candidate, but when this factor is weighed against the restricted franchise, then its sympathisers were likely to have been more, rather than less, than the number of votes cast.

The list overleaf, showing election results achieved by the SDF between 1885 and 1890, illustrates that movement's concentration upon its stronghold of Salford; not a single contest was undertaken in Manchester. In the case of elections for the School Board and for Elective Auditors, Salford was undivided. Thus at the 1885 School Board elections every voter in the town had to select fifteen from the eventual list of sixteen candidates. The municipal elections do, however, provide a more detailed indication of the areas in which support for the SDF could be found. During the period under consideration, St. Thomas', Seedley and St. Matthias' wards were each contested once, and Ordsall Ward twice. The SDF came nearest to success in Ordsall Ward; in 1888 William Horrocks lost by only 15 votes. Alfred Settle, contesting the ward in 1890 polled 1,112, against the Independent candidate's 1,688. The relative strength of the SDF in Ordsall Ward was hardly surprising. The ward comprised the southernmost tip of the South Salford parliamentary constituency, roughly the area between the River Irwell/Ship Canal, Trafford Road and Eccles New Road. A comparison with the map of meeting places[1] will illustrate the fact that this was the district in which the SDF held many of its indoor meetings, and was also the area from which many of the crowds at the Trafford Bridge gatherings would be drawn. It should be added that in 1885 the ward was considered a Conservative stronghold.[2] Of the other three wards contested, St. Matthias' was roughly the district between the Irwell, Chapel Street and Blackfriars Road, which again contained the locations of many public meetings. It too was working class, and was considered predominantly Conservative.[3] The lower polls for socialists in St. Thomas' and Seedley wards, which represented the central and northern districts of the West Salford constituency, are understandable, for both wards contained a higher proportion of more

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1. See Map 4 for all locations.
2. MG, 24 November 1885.
3. Ibid., 23 November 1885.

Table 7

Elections contested by the SDF, 1885-90

1885 November — Salford School Board

16 candidates contested 15 seats.
7th - George Smart (SDF) - 5,369 votes elected

1887 November — Salford Municipal Elections

St. Thomas' Ward

Hewitt (Lib.)	1169	elected
Meakin (Lib.)	1141	elected
Fletcher (Con.)	1041	
Bullesworth (Con.)	946	
W. Horrocks (SDF)	197	

Seedley Ward

Russell (Lib.)	1674	elected
Johnson (Lib.)	1447	elected
Bullesworth (Con.)	1084	
Hibbert (Con.)	1080	
G. Smart (SDF)	149	

1888 November — Salford Municipal Elections

Ordsall Ward

C. Redman (Con.)	887	elected
W. Horrocks (SDF)	872	

Salford School Board

20 candidates contested 15 seats

17th - George Smart	(Ind.)	-8,939
19th - W. Horrocks	(Ind.)	-7,465
20th- Thompson	(Ind.)	-4,443

1889 April — Salford Elective Auditors

Harrison (Con.)	614	elected
C. Skewes (SDF)	332	elected
Sims (Lib.)	93	

November — Salford Municipal Elections

St. Matthias' Ward

H. Linsley (Con.)	765	elected
John Thompson (SDF)	335	

1890 ?April — Salford Elective Auditor

George Tabron (SDF) returned unopposed.

November — Salford Municipal Elections

Ordsall Ward

Hamblett (Ind.)	1,688	elected
A. Settle (SDF)	1,112	

prosperous middle class inhabitants.[1] Undoubtedly the most significant factor must be that, in the period from 1888 to 1890, between 872 and 1,112 of the electors of Ordsall Ward actually cast their votes for an SDF candidate. In terms of the total poll, the SDF obtained over 49% of the votes cast in 1888, and over 39% in 1890. Since this was one of the chief areas of their propaganda activities, the figures are also some indication of the effectiveness of regular public meetings.

Of all the elections fought, perhaps George Smart's victory in the 1885 School Board contest was the most outstanding. Although a social democrat might be likely to gain some votes from electors who were merely advocates of free secular education, as opposed to committed supporters of the SDF's platform, the fact nevertheless remains that over five thousand of the votes cast went to an avowed socialist. This election, the first contested by the local SDF, aroused considerable interest in the town, and is therefore worth examining more closely. In October 1885 South Salford SDF nominated two candidates for the local School Board; George Smart, described as a painter, and William Horrocks, currently employed as a 'coalheaver'. The fact that these candidatures, described in the Manchester Examiner and Times as 'Independent', would actually necessitate an election at all, was in itself a cause of concern for the local establishment. There had not been a School Board contest in Salford since 1873.[2] The Manchester Examiner and Times delicately explained the usual procedure:

> The three bodies which have hitherto taken the chief part in School Board metters - the Churchmen, the Unsectarians, and the Roman Catholics - have, by common consent, limited their nominations to the number of representatives they have on the present board, so that, but for the action of those persons who have made independent nominations there would have been no need to appeal to the ratepayers. Indeed, it is by no means certain that even now a poll will be necessitated, for, if there be not sufficient withdrawals to avoid a contest, it is not improbable that, as has been done on similar occasions heretofore, a meeting of the candidates and their friends will be held to try and arrange the matter.[3]

Further comment was made on the affair by Jesse Bryant, Chairman of the Committee of the Non-Sectarian Party. He registered surprise that three independent candidates had been nominated, 'two of whom profess to represent the working class in some special sense'. Bryant then went on to describe the negotiations which had been aimed

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1. MG, 25 November 1885.
2. Manchester Examiner and Times, 6 November 1885.
3. Ibid., 26 October 1885.

at avoiding an election. Rev. James Clark had publicly offered to withdraw if either of the 'labour candidates' would show they really possessed any representative character. Moreover,

> In private conference every possible attempt was made to elicit some evidence that the candidates had the sanction and support of any labour organisation, or were supported by anyone except the two candidates and their nominators. The reply was that unless the non-sectarian party would withdraw one of their candidates, a contest would be forced upon an unwilling community.

Bryant went on to assert that George Smart and his friends were inflicting a fine of £700 [the cost of an election] upon the ratepayers of Salford. Furthermore,

> Mr. Smart is absolutely without experience in educational matters,... if Mr. Smart were elected he would not be able to give the time for attendance at the meetings of the Board and its committees.[1]

The claim that Smart did not represent any organisation seems strange, for neither he nor Horrocks had made any secret of their SDF membership. Even the assertion that Smart and Horrocks had forced an election was hardly justified for, as 'An Independent Voter' pointed out, the Independents had actually withdrawn two of their three nominations (including Horrocks'), so if the Church and Unsectarian parties wanted to avoid a poll, why did one of them not withdraw a candidate?[2]

Smart continued to campaign on the SDF platform; free, compulsory, secular, and industrial education, with one free meal per day for each child. The local press, in its turn, continued to campaign against Smart.[3] However when the result of the poll was announced, he had been elected as the seventh of fifteen successful candidates. At the bottom of the poll, and moreover losing the seat he had previously held, was Alderman Husband, a Church candidate, ex-Mayor of Salford, and one of the most vehement attackers of the Social Democrats.[4]

Once the victory celebrations were over,[5] Smart assiduously applied himself to his duties. In December he described his work to a large crowd of his constituents at Trafford Bridge. He told how he was the only member of the Board who protested against excessive and extravagant charges, and described how easily large accounts were passed without going into details. Smart concluded by urging the ratepayers to send more working men to the School Board and Board of Guardians, 'to stop this wholesale plunder in such times of depression as we are now in'.[6]

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1. Ibid., 4 November 1885.
2. Ibid., 4 November 1885.
3. J, 31 October, 7 and 14 November 1885.
4. Ibid., 14 November 1885.
5. Ibid., 21 November 1885. A 'banquet' to celebrate the election victory was held at the Crescent Inn.
6. Ibid, 19 December 1885.

In the course of his duties Smart visited an Industrial School. He described how the pupils, apparently children of poor parents who attended daily, were given three hours schooling and three hours scrubbing and cleaning each day, instead of industrial training. Although the dietary scale included meat and fish on alternate days, the boys were fed on suet pudding for six days a week. Smart brought forward a motion at a Board meeting, condemning this disgraceful situation, but not one member rose to second it. 'One member said he thought suet pudding very good food. Smart turned and asked him if he would feed his children on it, and he replied that was another thing'.[1]

By the spring of 1886, Smart was campaigning for the establishment of a school in the centre of the borough, at which fees should not exceed a penny for all standards, and all books should be free. The SDF prepared petition sheets in support of his motion, and collected signatures during meetings at Trafford Bridge and Whit Lane, Pendleton.[2] In January 1887, when the problems of unemployement were increasing, Smart turned his attention to school meals. He obtained permission to collect funds, with which to provide free meals in one of the Board Schools. He also got a resolution passed, to the effect that all teachers in Board Schools should report how many children went to school inadequately fed.[3] It was perhaps in recognition of such public work that George Smart was elected Chairman of the SDF National Conference, held in Manchester in 1887.[4]

The other field in which the SDF proved successful was in the return of Elective Auditors; Charles Skewes in 1889 and George Tabron the following year. The office may not have held great appeal for the leading members of the established parties, since it lacked the executive powers associated with other offices, but for the socialists it held two main attractions. There was more prospect of success and, once elected, the auditor would have access to all the financial transactions of the Corporation. Thus George Tabron while in office wrote a series of newspaper articles, showing the extravagant expenditure of different committees on such items as picnics, cigars, champagne and cab fares.[5]

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1. Ibid., 23 January 1886.
2. Ibid., 29 May 1886.
3. Ibid., 22 January 1887.
4. Ibid., 13 August 1887.
5. WT, 10 April 1891.

Elections were a demonstration of the extent of local sympathy and support for the SDF; they were also a means of advertising the existence of that organisation to a wider public. Both the SDF and Socialist League made an effort to publicise their platform beyond the confines of their own press and meetings. Like their Chartist predecessors, the socialists were in the habit of attending meetings organized by other bodies, in order to voice their opinions. Thus in January 1885 Waddington, Smart and Parkinson all attended a meeting at the Liberal Club on Stretford Road, Hulme, at which Councillor Gibson gave a paper on 'Capital and Wages'. The speaker blamed drunkenness and the unthrifty conduct of the working class for poverty, at which juncture the Social Democrats made a vigorous attack on the capitalists and 'monopoly classes'.[1] Smart and Waddington also voiced their opinions at a meeting of the Salford Presbyterian Church Mutual Improvement Society, when a paper was read on 'The Housing of the Poor'. During the same week they also attempted to sell socialist literature in the Islington Hall, Ancoats, at a lecture by Joseph Forster of London. The meeting was held under the auspices of the North Manchester Branch of the Manchester Radical Association, and its committee prevented them from carrying out their plan.[2]

Similar tactics were employed by the Socialist League. During 1889 some of its members attended a series of weekly discussions on 'Present Day Social Problems' in Ancoats. Whatever the lecture began with, the Leaguers raised the subject of socialism. Commonweal reported that 'a professor of political economy had a rather hot night of it on Wednesday from our speakers, who lose no opportunity of driving home their principles'.[3] The Socialist League returned to Ancoats in January 1890, when threee lectures on 'The Beginnings of Modern Socialism' were given by an Oxford Extension Lecturer. During discussions the Leaguers took the opportunity 'to explain the principles of revolutionary socialism and upset the lecturer's economic fallacies and criticisms of socialism'.[4] Whether such activities brought any further recruits to the cause is uncertain; they were however a further indication of the socialists' determination to proselyise their faith.

When the sheer extent of the propaganda work by the SDF and Socialist League is considered, it seems likely that a large section of the local population, particularly in the South Salford area,

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1. J, 24 January 1885.
2. Ibid., 14 February 1885.
3. Com., 26 October 1885.
4. Ibid., 18 January 1890.

had by the end of the decade become aware of the basic concepts of socialism. Socialist activity in connection with the trade union movement, which will be considered below, also played an extremely important part in spreading the message. Of the numbers who actually sympathised with the movement, there is little concrete evidence beyond the election results achieved by the SDF. These show that, in Salford at least, socialist sympathisers numbered not merely a few 'wild young men', but thousands of respectable, rate-paying citizens.

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It is in the light of the not inconsiderable achievements of the SDF, and to a lesser extent of the Socialist League, that the ethical socialist movement must be considered. While the popular appeal of this philosophy, particularly as it was manifested in Blatchford's writings, must not be underestimated, the fact remains that a great deal of socialist propaganda had been carried out long before his famous articles in the Sunday Chronicle. Thus when the Labour Church congregations of the Clarion's readership are considered, it is at least worth asking how many of these people had previously heard an SDF or Socialist League speaker, bought a copy of Justice, or even voted for a socialist in a local election.

Ethical socialism only emerged locally as a recognizable movement in the era of 'Nunquam' and the Labour Church. The basic tenets of the philosophy can, however, be traced back for centuries. It is therefore necessary to consider whether there were, in the Manchester and Salford of the 'eighties, and organizations or individuals advocating moral sentiments which bore a marked similarity to the 'ethical' creed. Charles Rowley and his Ancoats Recreation Movement have already been described,[1] but must to some extent be reconsidered in this context. Although Rowley's political affiliation was at this time to the Liberal Party, much of his work and basic philosophy was consistent with ethical socialism. In a pamphlet entitled Social Politics, published in 1885, he concentrated mainly upon the land question, and expressed his opposition to ownership by landlords. People were, he asserted, blind to the glaring injustices regarding capital and labour.

> It does not seem to strike us, in Manchester, that when one man gets profusely rich it is at the expense of somebody else who is condemned to comparative poverty.

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1. See above, pp.16-17.

Perhaps the most significant sentences in the pamphlet are those which contain Rowley's affirmation of his faith:

> The Socialist ideal is noble, for it is Christian - it means live for others, not for yourself. Christ, I believe, was a Socialist, and would be now if he came to a world which uses His name freely, but resolutely declines to act up to his plainest precepts.

How else can such a philosophy be described, but as 'ethical socialism'? He went on to describe the conditions of life in Manchester, concluding with the statement, 'Socialism says that man is made by his surroundings'.[1]

Rowley was a friend of William Morris, and also welcomed Kropotkin, Shaw, Hyndman and Stepniak as speakers to Ancoats.[2] However his links with the labour and socialist movements extended still further. In 1887 he visited the headquarters of the American Knights of Labor in Philadelphia.[3] In Manchester, during February 1892, he took the chair at a meeting of the Alliance Association of Cabinet and Chair Makers, one of the 'new unions' composed largely of Jewish workers.[4] The following month, when one of the Manchester newspapers claimed that W.K. Hall, then Labour candidate for South Salford, was unknown beyond the ranks of the local SDF, Rowley sprang to his defence.[5]

How many converts to socialism in its ethical form were made through the influence of Rowley and the Ancoats Recreation Movement is impossible even to suggest, but certainly it was an important avenue by which an individual might arrive at a personal socialist faith, without affirming allegiance to one of the established Marxist-orientated groups. The same possibilities would apply to the County Forum,[6] where without joining an organization or participating in any activity which could be labelled as distinctly socialist, the listener could be influenced by a socialist speaker.

Another organization which, although not itself distinctly socialist, must be associated with the origins of the ethical movement, is the Manchester Positivist Society. Royden Harrison has described the Positivists as 'secular religionists', who sought to bring about an alliance of the philosopher and proletarian. In pursuit of this aim, they became involved in early schemes to form a third political party; a

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1. C. Rowley, Social Politics (Manchester, 1885) 20pp. passim.
2. M. Morris, William Morris; Artist, Writer, Socialist (Oxford, 1936) pp.184-5, 204.
3. J.A. Fincher, 'The Clarion Movement: a study of a socialist attempt to implement the Co-operative Commonwealth in England, 1891-1914' (Manchester M.A., 1971) p.52.
4. WT, 13 February 1892.
5. Ibid., 19 March 1892.
6. See above, pp.17-19.

Labour Party based on trade unions and independent of existing parties, without being socialist. Professor Harrison has suggested that the Positivist tradition may have influenced the Labour Church, and certainly the statement issued by the Manchester Positivist Society shows a certain affinity both with that organization and with ethical socialism in general. Preceding a list of the Society's lectures delivered in 1884/5 was the statement:

> The practical work of Positivism has therefore two aims. On the one hand it has, like the Church, to be an organ of knowledge, to mould opinion, to transform the intellectual creed of our time into the shape in which it will become a powerful ally, and, as it were, the executant of the social sympathies; to discuss the current questions of the day, in the light of principles which the provincialism of party and sect, and the struggle for power, have absolutely no place. On the other hand, it has, again like the Church, to do what is perhaps still more difficult than this, - to be an organ of motive: to keep the social sympathies themselves vigorously alive, by a common cult, by common labour in teaching and preaching; to provide a rallying place for those to whom the ideal of an unselfish and austere life has detached itself from any definite theological creed, - a place sacred in the highest sense, where they may attain for themselves, and help others to attain, the complete subordination to Humanity, which is at once the death of self, and the starting point of its truest life.[1]

This concept of an individual's decision to subordinate self to the cause of humanity had much in common with ethical socialism, although the 'austere life' may have found little support among the Clarion board.

The Manchester Positivist Society appears to have commenced its activities shortly before November 1884. Its leaflet, published in October 1885, stated that:

> Last year a few Positivists who preferred to risk absolute failure in a good work, rather than leave it longer unattempted, opened a room in Manchester. It is not for them to measure results the most important of which are necessarily impalpable. But they have some confidence, from the sustained attendance, averaging 30, at their Sunday morning meetings, that the considerable labour and cost, borne by a very few persons, of providing for these meetings, have not been thrown away.

Meetings held during the winter and spring of 1884/5 included an inaugural address by Frederic Harrison, Professor Beesly on 'Positivism and Industry' and a series of lectures each by James Odgers and [Edward?] Herford. Herford dealt with 'Comte's Life and Work', while Odgers lectured on 'The Industrial Situation', 'Trade Unions and

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1. [Handbill] The Manchester Positivist Society (1885) (Filed in newspaper cuttings collection, Manchester Local History Library).

Conciliation', 'Co-operation and Profit-sharing' and 'The Positive Re-organisation of Industry'. The last lecture of the series, also by Odgers, was entitled 'Devotion to Humanity'.[1]

The Society, with its headquarters still at the Memorial Hall, Albert Square, planned a similar series of lectures and meetings to commence on 11 October 1885.[2] In October 1886 they announced another winter programme which included more information as to the nature of their Sunday meetings:

> The proceedings, which last about an hour, consist of an Address, introduced by a short service of Readings, and instrumental Music, composed chiefly from the works of those who, in whatever age or country, have best uttered, in speech or song, the religion which lies behind and beyond theology; which is independent of it, and which will survive it.[3]

The similarity between these positivist meetings and the Labour Church services can hardly be ignored, even though John Trevor himself made no mention of the Positivists.[4] How long the Manchester Society continued is, however, uncertain, for no further handbills appear to have survived.

In an attempt to trace possible paths by which an individual might encounter the ethical ideal of socialism, it is also necessary to consider the working men's clubs. After the formation of the SDF, and the demise of the debating societies which were its forerunners, Manchester and Salford appear to have lacked any working class socialist clubs comparable with those to be found in London.[5] Apart from the distinctly Conservative or Liberal organizations, the majority of working men's clubs in the area appear to have been those affiliated to the Working Men's Club and Institute Union. The Manchester Working Men's Clubs Association was a District Union within this national body, the only provincial branch which was in fact to survive for long.[6] The objects of the Association were non-political:

> To help Working Men to establish and maintain Clubs and Institutes, where thay can meet for conversation, business, and mental improvement, and find recreation and refreshment, without being dependent for these purposes upon the public-house,...[7]

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1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.
3. [Handbill] The Manchester Positivist Society (1886)(Filed in newspaper cuttings collection, Manchester Local History Library).
4. J. Trevor, op.cit., passim.
5. For details of the London clubs, see S. Shipley, Club Life and Socialism in Mid-Victorian London (Ruskin College, Oxford, History Workshop pamphlets. No.5, ?1971) passim.
6. K.T.S. Dockray, The Manchester and District Branch of the Working Men's Club and Institute Union, Ltd...A Survey (?Manchester, 1927) p.7.
7. Working Men's Clubs Association...Manchester, Ist Annual Report 1877-78 (Manchester, ?1878) 22 pp., p.1.

In April 1885 the Association made arrangements to extend its scheme of lectures to the working class during the next winter, 'somewhat on the lines of the London Social and Political Education League'. Thus lecturers might visit not only clubs in the Union, but also Conservative and Liberal Working Men's Clubs, Co-operative Societies (including Ardwick, Droylesden, Failsworth and Pendleton) and Trade Societies.[1] Among the lecturers involved in the scheme was Dr. Pankhurst, whose topics included 'Internationalism' and 'The Land and the Nation'. Professor Munro of Owens College offered lectures on 'Socialism', 'Land Reform' and 'Wages', while Henry William Holder would speak on 'Communism' and 'Some Causes of Poverty among the Working Classes'.[2] While it is not suggested that these lecturers converted large numbers of their audiences to socialism, it is possible that, through their speeches, some basic knowledge of that philosophy may have been imparted to men who would not have associated themselves with the SDF or Socialist League.

It is obvious that none of these other organizations, under whose auspices socialism might be discussed or advocated, was as active as the SDF. It was only at the stage of 'Nunquam's' confession of faith in the Sunday Chronicle that non-Marxist socialism reached a wide audience, or that a rallying point was found for those who were already moving towards such beliefs. Any comparison between the following which Blatchford acquired as a result of his journalism, and the supporters of the SDF, is virtually impossible; the two groups were not necessarily even distinct from one another. Moreover Blatchford's political activities, the formation of Manchester Fabian Society,his parliamentary candidature in Bradford, the Labour Electoral Associations, and the 1892 May Day demonstration, were so essentially part of the formation of the ILP that they must be considered in that context at a later stage. What must be examined here is simply the appeal of his journalism as a means of 'making socialists', together with any indications as to the extent of his following.

The two outstanding series of articles in the Sunday Chronicle, 'Modern Athens' and 'Re the Affairs of John Smith and Co.',

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1. Working Men's Clubs Association, Manchester, Address by the Rt. Hon. Geo. J. Goschen, M.P., delivered at the Owens College, April 18th, 1885 (Manchester, ?1885) 12pp. pp3-4.
2. Working Men's Clubs Association, List of Lecturers and Lectures offered to Working Men's Clubs, and other Unions and Societies, etc., 1885-6 (Manchester, ?1885) 15pp, pp.9,11, 12.

have already been mentioned, as have the activities which led to the formation of the Cinderella Clubs.[1] Other contributions to the Sunday Chronicle do, however, shed some light upon his popular appeal. Blatchford was careful to present himself as 'one of the people', rather than as a middle-class journalist imparting knowledge to the masses. Thus in April 1889, in 'As I Lay a Thynkynge', he wrote:

> I come from the people; I know the people; I am of the people. I know their weakness and their strength; I know their trials and their travail; I know the terrible conditions in which too many of them are born and live and perish; I have had their friendship; I have had their help; I have groaned like them, under the burden, and have shared their hopes, their labours and their grief; I know their charity, their gentleness, their patience, their ready wit, their sterling honesty of purpose and feeling; and I will not hear them condemned as dissolute or drunken, or idle by any man while I have power to deny the slander.[2]

While frequently employing the term 'Socialism', he gave it an aura of respectability, which the creed of the SDF and Socialist League definitely lacked, by equating it with basic Christianity:

> I always thought that the principle of Christianity was 'Do as you'd be done by'. But that is the principle of Socialism. I always regarded Christ as a Socialist, and the father of Socialism. It was not his fault that the Church which professed to obey him became what it did.
> ...is not Socialism a part of Christianity, a system of society founded upon the principles that Christ taught.[3]

Coupled with this sentiment was his denunciation of 'The Revolutionary Party', and emphasis upon the educational process as a means of achieving socialism.[4]

Having thus broken down the barrier of non-respectability, he made a positive appeal to personal sympathy. Much of this appeal was in fact associated with the Cinderella movement. In December 1889 he mentioned three small children from Ancoats who had attended a Cinderella Club:

> ...good old Dangle and I left our work the next morning and went to see the three little mites. They live in one of the worst courts in Manchester. They have no father. Their mother earns what she can by charing, and Dangle put his hand in his pocket...[5]

Socialism was not being equated with an economic system which few readers

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1. See above, pp.100-2.
2. SC, 7 April 1889.
3. Ibid., 3 November 1889.
4. Ibid., 23 March 1890. See also above, pp.105-6.
5. Ibid., 8 December 1889.

could fully understand, but simply with a world in which 'three little mites' would no longer live in poverty. In a similar manner, the shop assistants' campaign for shorter hours was described, not in terms of the evils of the capitalist system, but as a story of human suffering. Having described their hours and conditions of work, Blatchford wrote:

> ...these folks are neither noisy, nor resolute, nor united. They have little money, less courage, and no sense. They are poor and helpless, and have a plentiful lack of friends.[1]

The impact of 'Nunquam' was perhaps easier to assess in Bradford than in Manchester and Salford. When asked to stand as Labour candidate in East Bradford, he sought some evidence of popular support. A requisition was drawn up, and signatures collected by the Labour Union. It secretary wrote:

> Nunquam is a name to conjure with. It acts like magic. Not a quarter of the division has been covered, yet we have in less than 3 weeks got a thousand names, and you know what that means in a working class constituency.[2]

Writing in the Workman's Times, the Manchester correspondent 'Fidus Achates' (Giles Horsfall) commented that he had heard many people say, 'I wish we had him in Salford' and 'I wish he was standing for Manchester'.[3]

Perhaps the only true indication of the impact made by the Sunday Chronicle articles is to be found in the reminiscences of readers. Rowland Kenney, in later life editor of the Daily Herald, recalled his childhood in the West Riding:

> After morning Sunday School I had to read to my old Grannie a two-column front page article in the Sunday Chronicle, signed 'Nunquam'. Those articles were a revelation to me. Mere child as I was, I was uplifted by those Sunday morning readings, and my old Granny was moved and uplifted also. They brought to both of us a sense of beauty and betterment.[4]

Memories of 'Nunquam's' articles were certainly long-lived. In March 1939 Harry Pollitt received a letter from his mother which ran:

> Blatchford's success as a writer was due to his simple way of putting his case. One would have to be a real dunderhead not to have understood. I always remember the first article of his in the Sunday Chronicle... One of his critics had written to him and signed himself 'Humanitas'. After Blatchford had said a few words to him, he said, 'And, Humanitas, I'll tell thee why'. He then went on to explain the capitalist system, and I saw the light of day; it was all made plain and simple.[5]

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1. Ibid., 13 July 1890.
2. Ibid., 5 July 1891.
3. WT, 19 June 1891.
4. R. Kenney, op.cit., p.20.
5. H. Pollitt, Serving my Time (1940, reprinted 1961) p.13.

Despite his career in the Manchester Fabian Society and his brief period as a parliamentary candidate, Blatchford did not become a public speaker in the socialist cause. Whether he had sufficient ability in this field is a debatable point, but certainly he lacked the inclination.[1] His appearances on public platforms in Manchester and Salford were not a means by which his reputation was enhanced, but something which he was persuaded to do in order to draw his readers to a meeting. In September 1891 a meeting was held in South Salford, to present a requisition asking Thomas Harris of the Sunday Chronicle to become Labour candidate for the constituency. Blatchford and A.M. Thompson were both on the platform as working men promised donations to the election fund; 'one who said he was only a labourer promising 10s.,and another promising 5s. for a look at 'Nunquam'.[2] Fabian Society membership also appears to have benefitted from Blatchford's personal following. On 9 October 1891, the Workman's Times claimed that 'By one word in an article of his, more than 80 members joined the Society. Such is his influence upon those who delight to read his productions'.[3]

Also in October 1891, Blatchford attended a meeting of the Electrical Trades Union in Manchester. The chairman referred to his Sunday Chronicle articles, after which (according to the Workman's Times):

> He said - 'Well, you won't see them there any more. I am one of the unemployed.' Mr. Hulton, the proprietor of the Sunday Chronicle had thought fit to tell him that he must not write any more socialism, and so rather than sacrifice his independence and his principles he would leave. This announcement was received with great cheering and shouts of 'Start another paper,' whereupon Mr. Blatchford announced that he had already got a paper, and that in future he should write his articles for the Workman's Times.[4]

The information was received with cheering, and there is no doubt that this version of events enhanced Blatchford's reputation. The accuracy of this story is however debatable. Considering that Blatchford was spending time both as a parliamentary candidate for Bradford, and as stage manager of a professional comic opera, Hulton did have a grievance which was not entirely political.[5]

The foundation of the Labour Church has already been described, and its later development must be cinsudered separately. However its second meeting, at which Blatchford delivered the address, does provide another example of his personal following. The meeting was

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1. L. Thompson, op.cit., p.75.
2. WT, 18 September 1891.
3. Ibid., 9 October 1891.
4. Ibid., 9 October 1891.
5. L. Thompson, op.cit., p.77.

held at Chorlton Town Hall, which was able to seat 400.[1] According to the Workman's Times:

> Those who have the management of this affair didn't seem to have any idea of the man who was coming amongst them, as they did not seem to have made any arrangement for the contingency if a great crowd came, which was the case, more than a thousand people, I should say, being unable to get into the room...[2]

Blatchford began his brief career on the Workman's Times with a series entitled 'Socialism: Introductory',[3] and later revived his Sunday Chronicle theme, 'As I Lay A-Thynkynge'.[4] The Workman's Times was by no means as popular in Manchester as was the Sunday Chronicle. How much difference the appearance of Blatchford among its contributors made is uncertain, but in the week ending 3 April 1891, orders for the Workman's Times in Manchester totalled only 558.[5] That Blatchford did not fade from public notice was largely due to two factors; the short period for which he remained on that paper, and his participation in local politics, notably Alfred Settle's election campaign in Ordsall Ward, Salford, and the foundation of the North Manchester Labour Electoral Association.[6] In December 1891 Blatchford left the Workman's Times to become the founder and editor of the Clarion.

A great deal has been written about the Clarion as a newspaper, and about the whole range of organisations to which it gave birth.[7] What is relevant here is merely to consider the Clarion in the period before the foundation of Manchester ILP, both as an organ of propaganda for the ethical socialist movement, and as a link between the local adherents of the cause. Initially it is necessary to examine the political aims of its founders, Robert and Montagu Blatchford, A.M. Thompson, and Edward Fay. Perhaps the best description was provided by Thompson:

> The bond of union between us four men was a common sentiment of altruistic idealism, of pity for the weak and suffering, of angry resentment against all forms of oppression. We were all 'pregnant of our cause' and very much in earnest. None of us had studied Karl Marx, but we had guiding texts which sufficed for our simple needs. One was 'Love thy neighbour as thyself', which we extended to Walt

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1. Labour Prophet, January 1892.
2. WT, 16 October 1891.
3. Ibid., 16 October 1891.
4. Ibid., 5 December 1891.
5. Ibid., 10 April 1891.
6. Ibid., 31 October, 14 November 1892.
7. In particular see J.A. Fincher, op.cit., passim.

Whitman's 'felon, the diseased, the illiterate person' - and even the capitalist. We did not hate any of them but only wanted to do them good by altering the system which thwarted and cramped and distorted us all.

We knew the conditions of life in what Chas. Booth [sic] called 'the submerged tenth'. We all of us believed that want, squalor, sweating dens, the broken and degraded men and women, the starved and ragged children, the sties in which they pined or died or - even more miserably - qualified for Dartmoor or the gallows, were products of a chaotic scramble for wealth and power which tended to develop selfish and predatory instincts in the less favoured types of mankind; and that even as we have brought modern traffic to comparative security by the appointment of the policeman on point duty, we could, by substituting rational co-operation for mad competition, increase the well-being and happiness not only of those who are now poor but of all sections of people.[1]

'Altruistic idealism' does not, however, sell a newspaper and Blatchford, who was first and foremost a journalist, realised this. In April 1892 he explained to his readers how the editorial policy of the Clarion had been formulated:

> We knew that if we started a Socialist paper we should be ruined. We knew that if we started a labour paper we should be ruined. We had some reputation as writers, and we decided to run a literary paper strictly in accordance with Socialistic principles, and make it as lively and as varied as we could under such conditions.[2]

Perhaps the success of the Clarion lay in the fact that, while its message of ethical socialism could not fail to reach anyone who read further than the sports page, the paper attracted rather than deterred the first-time reader who was not already committed to the cause. Justice and Commonweal both proclaimed their socialist allegiance, and contained little of interest to anyone but the activist or potential convert. The Workman's Times was also committed, but to the broader labour and trade union interest. However the Clarion could, and undoubtedly did, provide interesting and entertaining reading matter for Liberals, Conservatives, and apolitical purchasers, as well as for socialists. On reading the paper carefully, one would however find a socialist moral drawn in conclusion to a not apparently political story, or a socialistic homily inserted among short paragraphs of gossip. Intermingled with this were sport and theatre features, fiction, and miscellaneous items of national and international news.

But despite the fact that the Clarion undoubtedly had more popular appeal than any of the distinctly socialist papers, it should

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1. A.M. Thompson, op.cit., p.83. 'The submerged tenth' was in fact described by William Booth.
2. C, 2 April 1892.

not be assumed that it attracted a vast working class readership. Because he was a professional journalist rather than a professional socialist, Blatchford suffered under no illusions on this score. In June 1892 he stated that the Clarion was a Labour paper,

> But Labour does not support it. More than half our readers are not working men at all. And if we make the mistake which other Labour papers have made, and devoted our columns entirely to Labour questions, we should be ruined in three months.
>
> The Labouring Classes will not buy Labour papers. I write these words in sorrow, and not in anger. The people don't know any better. They are too ignorant to desire knowledge...[1]

What section of the population did then buy the Clarion? If one can judge from the later adherents of the Clarion movement, they were the working class intelligentsia, who have previously been described, together with white-collar workers such as clerks and commercial travellers. Many of them had probably acquired more education than was commensurate with their jobs, and also tastes and aspirations out of line with their actual living conditions.[2] The 'Clarionettes', as they later became known, were in fact the group which was to form the backbone of the ILP.

Perhaps because of its strong appeal to this group, the Clarion did not manage to take over the mass readership of the Sunday Chronicle. Its circulation soon levelled out at around 30,000, and the paper actually made a loss of £53 on the first quarter.[3] It seems likely that in the early months more copies of the Clarion were sold in Manchester than in any other town or city. To advertise the first issue, posting bills were displayed in most of the towns in the North and Midlands, as well as in Edinburgh, Cardiff and Bristol. The potential importance of the Manchester readership was acknowledged in the advertising agents' proposal for 500 bills to be posted in Manchester. Of the remaining towns and cities, Birmingham and Liverpool were to have 100 each, and the rest less than 50 each.[4] Clearly the initial aim was to concentrate the Clarion's circulation upon Manchester.

Much of the material in the early Clarions was essentially local. Articles dealt with the Ship Canal;[5] poverty in Manchester;[6] working hours of railwaymen employed by the Lancashire and Yorkshire, and Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire, companies;[7] the controversy

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1. Ibid., 11 June 1892.
2. J.A. Fincher, op.cit., p.83.
3. L. Thompson, op.cit., p.83.
4. MS. Letter to Mr. Wilkinson from Pratt & Co., Ducie Chambers, 57, Market Street, Manchester. 28 November 1891.(Filed in Clarion Accounts etc., Manchester Public Library Archives Dept.)
5. C, 12, 19 December 1891; 23 April 1892.
6. Ibid., 26 December 1891.
7. Ibid., 2 January 1892.

between the Navvies' Union and Leonard Hall;[1] meals for poor children in Salford;[2] Manchester tramways;[3] and the working conditions of local shirt-makers.[4] The Clarion also advertised meetings of bodies such as the Reddish and Gorton Fabian Societies,[5] and the North Manchester Labour Electoral Association.[6] It campaigned for W.K. Hall as Labour parliamentary candidate for South Salford,[7] and provided much of the publicity for the May Day demonstration[8] which was to lead to the formation of the local ILP. Thus the Clarion was not simply a mouthpiece of ethical socialism, it was also a means of contact between the individual adherents of that cause in Manchester.

As a means of gathering together large numbers of the initially isolated ethical socialists, the Labour Church was unsurpassed. After the meeting addressed by Blatchford in October 1891, it became obvious that Chorlton Town Hall was far too small. The Labour Church removed forthwith to the People's Concert Hall, which had a seating capacity of nearly 2,000.[9] Like the Clarion and the ethical movement in general, the Labour Church could accommodate a wide spectrum of opinion. In February 1892 the Labour Prophet published the list of principles on which the Labour Church was based. They stated that:

1. The Labour movement was a religious movement.
2. The religion of the Labour movement was not a class movement, but united members of all classes in working for the abolition of commercial slavery.
3. The religion of the labour movement was not sectarian or dogmatic, but a 'Free Religion', 'leaving each man free to develop his own relations with the power that brought him into being'.
4. The emancipation of labour could only be realised so far as men learnt both 'the Economic and Moral Laws of God' and endeavoured to obey them.
5. The development of personal character and improvement of social conditions were essential to man's emancipation from moral and social bondage.[10]

Such principles could be accepted by members (or lapsed members) of any Christian denomination, as well as by agnostics,[11] although a confirmed atheist with strong allegiance to the National Secular Society might

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1. Ibid., 9 January 1892.
2. Ibid., 5 March 1892.
3. Ibid., 12 March 1892.
4. Ibid., 23 April 1892.
5. Ibid., 30 January, 19 March 1892.
6. Ibid., 16, 23 April 1892.
7. Ibid., 2, 9 April 1892.
8. Ibid., 16, 30 April 1892.
9. Labour Prophet, January 1892.
10. Ibid., February 1892.
11. S. Pierson, op.cit., pp.231-7 passim.

have some reservations. Certainly the Labour Church catered more than adequately for the working class élite who had ceased to attend church, but still retained some qualms as to whether absence from a 'place of worship' was entirely respectable. It may also be remarked that there was in fact very little social activity for working people on a Victorian Sunday, if they did not attend a religious gathering.

The Labour Church would seem to have appealed to the same social and political group as did the Clarion. Prominent Labour and socialist figures gave the address at services. Ben Tillett on 1 November 1891 spoke on 'The Ethics of Government'. In the New Year, Tom Mann spoke on 'The Future of Trade Unionism'[1] and 'The Representation of Labour',[2] while Edward Carpenter depicted 'The Future Society'.[3] The Labour Prophet in its early months contained an article by Keir Hardie on the forthcoming general election,[4] as well as W.K. Hall's 'The Representation of Labour' and 'An Eight Hours Day'.[5]

At the close of 1891 the Labour Church began to formalise its membership. In November membership forms were issued, and the first meeting for members was called on 9 December. By that time 60 people had enrolled, with a further 25 joining by the end of the month. Business meetings and members' conferences were held monthly, at the Royal Oak Cafe, 230 Deansgate. There were also plans for social evenings.[6]

The Labour Church, like the Clarion, helped both to create and to bring together ethical socialists. It should not however be assumed that they were antagonistic towards Marxists. When the Labour Church planned to hold an open-air meeting at Trafford Bridge on 10 January, John Trevor wrote:

> There is no pulpit in the land more sacred than Trafford Bridge, where, for years past, a growing band of Salford socialists have proclaimed their message, in season and out of season, and have thus done a great deal towards making the organisation of a Labour Church possible. Comrades they call each other, and brave comrades they are; God's pioneers doing the rough work of clearing the tangled forest of social wrong, and earning the scorn of a foolish world.[7]

Whether the SDF were particularly pleased to be labelled 'God's pioneers' has never been recorded. But undoubtedly the tribute was sincerely meant. Moreover Blatchford, who had once scorned 'street socialism', was now campaigning on behalf of one of its earliest exponents, W.K. Hall.

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1. Labour Prophet, January 1892.
2. Ibid., March 1892.
3. Ibid., February 1892.
4. Ibid., March 1892.
5. Ibid., April, May 1892.
6. Ibid., January 1892.
7. Ibid., January 1892.

Manchester and Salford ILP was to bring socialists from these two widely differing backgrounds into an alliance with labourists. While the philosophies of both labourism and ethical socialism were relatively flexible, the socialism of the SDF was not. Moreover, while many of its leading members also joined the ILP, the SDF continued as as a separate movement. Much of the later history of the local ILP was to be influenced by the fact that, outside its ranks, but still retaining the allegiance of some of its adherents, was an older-established body which claimed to represent true socialism, unadulterated by labourist or even Liberal influence. Within the ILP itself the strength of these two socialist traditions was to hinge upon the role of the other group which that party could accommodate, the labourists. It is therefore to the development of the local labour movement, and to the rôle of socialists within its ranks, that we must now turn.

Chapter 5

The Impact of Socialism upon the Labour Movement

The socialist and labourist movements in Manchester and Salford have hitherto been considered separately, not simply for the sake of convenience, but because there was in fact very little contact or common ground between them. The organised labour movement of the early and mid-'eighties, as represented by the old-established trade unions, Trades Council and labour electoral campaign, was generally the preserve of relatively well-paid, skilled workers. This group contained not only a larger proportion of voters than the rest of the working class, but was also more committed ideologically to the existing two-party system. Obviously there were important exceptions to this rule; many of the socialist leaders were themselves skilled men. But while the small minority sought to end the capitalist system, the majority of trade unionists were perfectly content with it, and some of their leaders even ranked among its most ardent advocates. At the Industrial Remuneration Conference in 1885, James Mawdsley of the Amalgamated Cotton Spinners outlined four broad systems in which a man might sell his labour. Of the third method, that which he understood 'to be formulated by the Socialistic party', Mawdsley said:

> I find them proposing to take over the trading, banking, shipping, railway, and all manufacturing and other enterprises, which are to be managed by the people, who will appoint their own overseers and superintendents, etc., and in which everybody has to be found full employment, under what it is assumed will be satisfactory conditions. This is a glowing picture, but I have not yet seen their proposals for dealing with the idle, the thriftless, and the vicious. Were it possible at one stroke to adopt the system universally throughout the world, without inflicting injury upon anyone by the change, we should in a generation be precisely where we are to-day. The strong-bodies, the strong-willed, and the intelligent portion of the community, backed up by the steady-going members of the rank and file, would occupy the influential and, as a consequence, remunerative posts, while the idle, thriftless, and vicious classes would, as at present, fill our gaols and poorhouses. Were it adopted in one country alone, say Great Britain, we should soon be in the position of being a nation of shopkeepers without customers, on account of the immensely increased cost of production. The idea could only be a success when the highest possible ideal of human nature was universally prevelant. It is scarcely necessary to say that the present generation need not make any arrangements which may be required when that time arrives.[1]

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1. Industrial Remuneration Conference /1885/, The Report of Proceedings and Papers (1885; reprinted New York, 1968, with introduction by J. Saville) p.156. Mawdsley was at this time a delegate to Manchester and Salford Trades Council, and also a prominent Liberal.

Mawdsley's speech epitomised the laisser-faire attitude; property and influence were seen as the rewards of virtue, thrift and industry, while poverty and unemployment represented the natural consequences of their absence in the individual worker.

Socialists had traditionally regarded the organized labour movement as one of the chief instruments through which the transformation of society might be achieved. It was perhaps because of the antipathy towards their doctrines among the working class 'establishment', that the socialists first attempted to extend their influence further down in the social echelons of labour, among the unemployed and unskilled, who compensated for in sheer numbers what they lacked in voting power and status. Much of this survey must therefore concern the efforts made by the socialists to organize unemployed demonstrations, and to participate in the formation of 'New Unions' for the unskilled.

But the extension of socialist influence cannot be measured simply in terms of the number of demonstrations, or even of trade unions, organized by the SDF, Socialist League and ethical socialists. While such activities are of undoubted importance in the progress of these bodies, and in the careers of their individual members, they do not in themselves help to explain the emergence of the ILP. Less tangible, but of greater significance, was the socialists' emphasis upon the need for a political remedy for poverty and unemployment. They may not have converted large numbers of trade unionists to the SDF or Socialist League, but they did refute the laisser-faire creed manifested by Mawdsley, and gain sympathy for the idea of state and municipal intervention in labour affairs; the legislative enforcement of the eight hour day, or municipal provision for the unemployed. The impact of their propaganda is impossible to assess accurately, but is best indicated by the number of trade unionists, particularly skilled workers, who were soon to forsake their traditional party loyalties for the ILP.

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Organised agitation on behalf of the unemployed began before the foundation of any distinctly socialist movement in the area. The Manchester Examiner and Times of 10 January 1884 printed a long report of Henry George's address at St. James's Hall, on 'Progress and Poverty'.[1] Perhaps by coincidence, but perhaps through a growing

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1. Manchester Examiner and Times, 10 January 1884.

awareness of social problems, it also printed, less than a month later, a letter whose author merely signed himself 'Willing to Work, but can't get it'. He asserted that:

> ...in Manchester alone there are thousands of operatives unemployed and in a starving condition. Let anyone visit the Free Libraries and note the crowds of unemployed men to be seen day after day, month after month, whose pinched faces denote the bare cupboard, whose sad-looking eyes tell you how many times their appeal for work has been met with that never-ending denial. See the rush that is made to get a glimpse of the 'Wanted' columns in the papers at the libraries. Let them note the crowds round the advertisement boards at the Examiner and Guardian offices. Let them note the crowds of pinched faces at the foundry gates, the factory, and the builders' yards. Let them notice the artisan enjoying that glorious dinner of viewing the procession of tramcars as he sits on the Infirmary seats, cheating his stomach by feeding his eyes on the passing traffic, afraid to go home to meet his crying children and wife, or the bailiff seizing his goods for rent. Let them note all this and say that we are better off than ever we were. The shipowner, the coalmaster, the cotton master, the merchant, the professions, the brewer and publican, all these have friends to watch their interests in the Legislature, but the poor man has few friends outside his own energy and perseverance. It is time the working man spoke for himself and told his own tale in plain language.[1]

Had the writer of this letter continued to remain anonymous, it would still have remained worthy of note, simply for its assertion that working class representation in Parliament was the basic step towards a remedy for unemployment. In fact the writer was later identified as Joseph Waddington,[2] and the letter marked the beginning of his long campaign on behalf of the unemployed. This campaign not only continued into the era of organized socialism, but appears to have been the means whereby Waddington was recruited to that movement.

Before examining the campaign and its socialist participants, it is however necessary to seek more detailed evidence than Waddington provided, as to the extent of unemployment. Accurate figures are impossible to obtain; it is in itself an example of the prevailing laisser-faire attitude, that no national or municipal bodies were expected to keep such records. Lord Beveridge[3] described three possible sources for unemployment figures; trade union records of unemployment benefits paid, applications to Distress Committees, and applications to Boards of Guardians. Of the first, he commented that: 'as a measure of the

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1. Ibid., 8 February 1884.
2. Ibid., 15 February 1884.
3. W.H. Beveridge, Unemployment. A Problem of Industry (1909 and 1930; 1930 ed.) pp.16-26.

volume of unemployed the trade union returns must be disregarded or used only with careful limitation to specific trades'. At a time when trade unions catered mainly for skilled workers, such figures would virtually ignore the unskilled and casual labourers, among whom the percentage of unemployed was likely to be even higher. The last two sources present their own problems. Application for some form of poor relief tended to be a last resort and, particularly in the Manchester area, where a high proportion of women were employed in the textile industry, an unemployed man might be supported by his wife, or even children, and thus saved from the stigma of poor relief.

Even from such limited sources, local figures are unavailable, and the cyclical fluctuation of unemployment can be examined only as a national phenomenon. From Beveridge's table of trade union unemployed percentages[1] and the details of the annual rise and decline in the number of able-bodied poor relieved, which were provided by Chapman and Hallsworth,[2] it is possible to draw some general conclusions. The level of unemployment rose sharply in 1879, then declined until 1882. 1883 witnesses a slight rise, but in the following year a steep increase took place. Thereafter unemployment continued to rise, reaching a peak in 1886. By 1889, it had fallen to its lowest point for over a decade, after which it again rose steadily until the mid '90s. During the mid '80s, trade union unemployment was particularly high in the shipbuilding, engineering and metal trades. It should, however, be added that the figures given in these tables were mean average percentages. In many trades there were regular busy and slack seasons within the year; for example the building trade was slack during the winter, while the printers obtained most work in the period just before Christmas.[3]

Local social surveys, which might give a clearer indication of the relevance of these figures to Manchester and Salford, are not readily available. Inspired by the example of Charles Booth's inquiry into the life and labour of the people in the East End of London,[4]

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1. Ibid., p.39 Table VIII.
2. S.J. Chapman and H.M. Hallsworth, Unemployment. The Results of an Investigation made in Lancashire and an Examination of the Report of the Poor Law Commissioners (Manchester, 1909) pp.100-2. Chapman was an ILP member (see Appendix II below).
3. W.H. Beveridge, op.cit., p.13.
4. C. Booth, Labour and Life of the People (1st ed., 2 vols. 1889-91) [reissued in greatly enlarged form as Life and Labour in London, 17 vols].

F. Scott carried out a survey on 'The Condition and Occupations of the People of Manchester and Salford'. The results were presented as a paper to the Manchester Statistical Society, during the 1888-9 session. Unlike Booth, Scott did not find assistance from the local School Board inspectors forthcoming, and was obliged to rely mainly upon data collected by the Mission Women of the Ladies' Branch of the Manchester and Salford Sanitary Association. The enquiry was concentrated upon two areas, Ancoats and Salford. In Ancoats, out of 2,528 people whose occupations were stated, only 59 were unemployed; in Salford the unemployed figure was 33 out of 1912.[1]

These figures may serve as local evidence of the low, and still declining, unemployment levels to be found in 1888. However the real importance of this survey lies not in such statistics, but in the fact that such an enquiry was undertaken at all. The desire to follow the example of Booth, the enquiry into occupations, standards of living, rent, diet and cleanliness, indicate a movement towards wider public concern over such issues. The climate of opinion in which such a survey was carried out may well have been influenced by the agitation commenced in 1884 by Joseph Waddington.[2]

In a second letter to the Manchester Examiner and Times, published on 15 February 1884, Waddington first suggested preliminary steps which might be taken towards remedying the problem of unemployment:

> That a few of the present unemployed men form a committee and take steps to call a public meeting, with a view to forming a labour bureau, where the unemployed could meet in a room daily where their services could be employed by those who have occasional employment to give or otherwise, and also to obtain the aggregate number of those unemployed of all grades: to lay a statement before the borough members with a view to obtaining a commission of inquiry into the state of trade and the labour market, and to prevent the unemployed from being reduced to abject pauperism.

Waddington also stated that a 'gentleman' had promised help if other assistance could also be found. He therefore asked for the names of those willing to form a committee, to be sent to 38A River Street, Medlock Street, Hulme.

This letter must have been written several days before

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1. F. Scott, 'The Condition and Occupations of the People of Manchester and Salford' in MSST, Session 1888-9 (Manchester, 1889) pp.93-113 passim.
2. It has not been possible to trace any previous attempt to organise the unemployed. Indeed the unemployment rate only began to rise steeply in 1884. Waddington himself later claimed to have begun the movement. In January 1885 he wrote to J.L. Mahon, 'You will remember the Unemployed agitation which I started here in Manchester last year, it was a failure because I did not know socialism at that time'. (Letter: J. Waddington to J.L. Mahon, 15 January 1885 (3095/1. Socialist League Archives).

its actual publication,[1] for on 14 February an unemployed meeting was held in Albert Square. The participants, described by Justice as being of the 'respectable artisan class', together with a proportion of unskilled labourers, complained that they found it impossible to find work, had exhausted their savings, but did not wish to go to the workhouse or relieving officer. They appealed to the wealthy and benevolent for assistance and, in keeping with this attitude, the chairman and speakers all urged that there should be no violence in speech or act, which might give the authorities ground for complaint. One speaker asserted that no fewer than 40,000 people in Manchester were willing to work but unemployed. It was at this meeting that the committee, advocated by Waddington, was formed.[2]

Although Joseph Waddington was later stated by the Manchester Examiner and Times to have been the chairman of this meeting,[3] none of the speakers was named in the report in Justice. This fact, together with the social attitude of the speakers, suggests that none of the unemployed leaders was as yet connected with the socialist movement.[4] When the first accusations of political motivation came to be levelled at the unemployed agitation, they did not allude to socialism. Waddington continued to act as chairman, at a two thousand-strong meeting at the Pomona Palace,[5] and at the demonstration in Albert Square, which preceded a second gathering at the Pomona Palace.[6] He also led a deputation of the unemployed to the Mayor of Manchester,[7] to present a memorial containing 800 signatures.[8]

At this juncture, attempts were made from several quarters to cast a slur upon the unemployed movement. The Mayor instituted a 'searching investigation' into the genuineness of the signatures to the memorial, and 'into the cases of destitution which they were supposed to represent'. As a result of this, it was apparently discovered that the memorial was an imposter and the agitation 'spurious from first to last'. The grounds for these conclusions were not, however, published.[9] The

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1. Manchester Examiner and Times, 15 February 1884.
2. J, 23 February 1884.
3. Manchester Examiner and Times, 19 February 1884.
4. Waddington joined the SDF in April 1884 (see below, p.175)
5. Manchester Examiner and Times, 19 February 1884.
6. Ibid., 26 February 1884.
7. Ibid., 22 February 1884.
8. Ibid., 7 March 1884.
9. Ibid., 7 March 1884.

Examiner and Times of 7 March asserted that, 'The relief returns presented to the Manchester Board of Guardians yesterday show that there was no extraordinary distress existing at the present time.'[1] At a conference on unemployment, held at Manchester Town Hall, J. Smith, agent to the District Provident Society, also claimed that there was no exceptional distress among 'the working class proper in Manchester'. He even went on to cast aspersions upon Waddington's integrity, stating that the latter had, on 29 January 1880, made a personal application for relief to the Provident Society, giving the name of Joseph Richardson. (To this Waddington was obliged to reply that he had, since that date, become aware of his own illegitimacy, and had reverted to his mother's maiden name).[2]

This 'official' estimation of the gravity of unemployment may largely be due to faith in the accuracy of the Guardians' returns. It may not have been realised that unemployed working men would go to great lengths to avoid the stigma of application for relief. However, there does also appear to have been some political bias in this hostility towards the unemployed movement. The Examiner and Times (which, it need hardly be added, was a Liberal paper) saw the agitation as a Tory plot. Waddington and Cassidy, the movement's treasurer, were seen as being politically motivated. Waddington was reported as having declared that he would not stop until 'he saw the Government of Mr. GLADSTONE kicked out of power', and that 'if a Tory Government had been in power the working man would not now have been crying for bread'. Further comment was added, to the effect that:

> It is likely that if the bubble had not burst MR. WADDINGTON would soon have become an important man in the Conservative camp. Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL had already begun to find his account in the movement, referring with much pathos to the 40,000 persons who were out of work in Manchester.[3]

To confuse the issue still further, Waddington, who took the chair at a further meeting at the Pomona Palace, charged Cassidy with endeavouring to turn the meeting to political ends. The meeting sympathised with Waddington, and Cassidy left the room. Thereafter Waddington is reported as having attacked everyone, 'singling out the Mayor for special abuse'.

The consequences of this last action can be traced fairly

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1. Ibid., 7 March 1884.
2. Ibid., 27 February 1884.
3. Ibid., 7 March 1884.

accurately; the motivation behind it is more elusive. Waddington tendered his resignation to the Committee of the Unemployed, on the grounds that 'my remarks on the Mayor of Manchester have produced ill feelings in the eyes of the public towards the Committee and its cause...' He also composed an apology to the Mayor, which was forwarded by the Committee.[1] A few days later the Examiner and Times printed a letter from Waddington, who gave his address as 'c/o Mr. J.R. Bottomley, Brighouse, Yorks.' He steted that he was ill, and had left his native city to start a new life. Concerning the unemployed movement, Waddington asserted that its committee was 'honestly composed', and that he had never advised men to vote for the Tories:

> ...I would not vote for either Tory, Liberal, Radical, or a Republic. I am not a disciple of Mr. Lowther, but I am a disciple or humble follower of David Urquhart, the late member for Stafford, the founder of the Foreign Affairs Committees in this country.[2]

This statement by Waddington, coupled with the press campaign against the Unemployed Committee, shows the unemployed movement in a new light. The demonstrations were now being widely regarded, not simply as an appeal by the 'lower orders' for charitable assistance, but as an actual, or at least potential, political instrument. Waddington's knowledge of the Foreign Affairs Committees, which had been established thirty years previously, suggests rather more interest in politics than was common among the local unemployed.

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1. Ibid., 7 March 1884.
2. Ibid. 10 March 1884. David Urquhart, although a Tory, was associated with Chartists such as George Julian Harney and Isaac Ironside. Although Marx's relations with the Urquhartites were somewhat complex, he did contribute lengthy articles to the Free Press in 1855. Since the Urquhartite movement came to prominence during the Crimean War and was most in evidence in Sheffield and Newcastle, rather than in Manchester, it is doubtful whether Waddington was actually involved. It is more likely that he had read about, and supported, the scheme for Foreign Affairs Committees. These Committees, including a particularly active one in Sheffield under the leadership of Ironside, set out to act as pressure groups, rooting out scandals in administration, publishing findings, organizing meetings and petitioning parliament (see: J. Salt, 'Local Manifestations of the Urquhartite Movement' in International Review of Social History Vol. XIII, Pt. 3 1968,passim). It seems likely that Waddington envisaged the Manchester Unemployed Committee as taking on such a role. Although Waddington's later relations with the SDF and Socialist League, as well as with some of his local comrades, were not altogether harmonious, and his business ventures often encountered financial problems, his letters to the Socialist League do suggest that he was well-read. His style, grammar and vocabulary were far better than those of most other Manchester correspondents (see letters from Waddington to the Socialist League in Socialist League Archives).

On 11 March 1884, only a matter of days after the letter from Brighouse must have been written, Waddington appeared on the platform at an unemployed meeting at the Pomona Gardens. Beside him was John Hunter Watts. The former's appearance was explained by the chairman, Thomas Hamer, who said that after the last meeting Waddington (who was ill) had been visited by a gentleman, who offered him the means to go away from Manchester to recover. This offer, apparently accepted, had turned out to be an attempt to bribe Waddington 'to get him out of the way'. No further details were provided in the press, but the indications are again that the political potential of the unemployed movement was being realised locally. That such a potential was also recognised further afield is proved by Hunter Watts' statement, that he 'had been sent down by the Fabian Society in London not so much to speak to them as to judge of the movement which was now afoot in Manchester'. His message was clear; the unemployed had little to hope for from any political party.

> The cutting of the Ship Canal would help them for a time but ultimately the capitalist class would gain all the advantages of the increased rents and increased values of the land. The people would gain no benefit in the end from any charitable society or from construction of public works, their only hope was in self-help and organisation. The doctrines of socialism could alone banish the terrible system of selfishness and competition.[1]

This deliberate attempt to permeate the unemployed movement with socialist doctrine seems to have occurred at a particularly early stage. The London Fabian Society had only been founded in January 1884,[2] and socialist involvement in the unemployed movement in London appears to date from the SDF's activities in the winter of 1885-6.[3] Whether Hunter Watts was already a member of the SDF in March 1884 is uncertain. The appearance of a report of his speech in Justice, coupled with his description as 'a delegate of the Labour Society' (as opposed to 'Fabian Society') suggest a connection.[4]

At the close of the proceedings at the Pomona Gardens, 'the meeting received with loud cheers an intimation that Mr. Waddington was

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1. Manchester Examiner and Times, 12 March 1884; Justice, 22 March 1884.
2. E.R. Pease, The History of the Fabian Society (1916; 3rd ed. 1963) pp.33-4.
3. C. Tsuzuki, op.cit., p.73. P. Thompson, passim, does not refer to any socialist involvement in unemployed demonstrations at such an early date.
4. J, 22 March 1884.

going to London with Mr. Watts to recover his health'.[1] His departure was not immediate. On 17 March the Manchester Examiner and Times published a letter from him, bearing the address 38A River Street, Hulme. Waddington stated that he had resigned his connection with the committee of unemployed, 'As a sceptic I do this so that no discredit may be cast on the movement...My future plan is, as soon as I have regained my health, to work at my trade six days in the week, and to educate myself early morning and night.'[2] The letter is difficult to explain other than as a sign of ill-health and temporary disillusionment (to which Waddington was prone). The following month Waddington did go to London, where he was introduced to William Morris, and was proposed by him as a member of the SDF.[3]

Although initial contact had been made between socialism and the unemployed agitation, the link does not seem to have been maintained. It is most likely that Waddington and the other founders of the local socialist movement concentrated their efforts first upon developing their own organization. On 15 January 1885 Waddington informed J.L. Mahon that he expected in a few weeks to see another unemployed agitation started 'with some Trade's Unionists at its head'.[4] Two days later he wrote:

> I had an interview with a delegate of the Bricklayers' Union here who tells me that 500 Bricklayers are out of employment. We are considering the best steps to take in raising a strong agitation of all the unemployed in Manchester.[5]

However there is no evidence that Waddington or any other socialists managed to launch such an agitation. Indeed references in the Socialist press about unemployment were comparatively rare. In March 1885 William Horrocks, lecturing at the Crescent Inn, stated that 'it was presumptuous in any person to come before the working-men of Pendleton and talk about Free-Trade when the people were without work and starving'.[6] When

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1. Manchester Examiner and Times, 12 March 1884.
2. Ibid., 17 March 1884.
3. Letter: J. Waddington to J.L. Mahon, 15 January 1885 (3095/1. Socialist League Archives).
4. Ibid.
5. Letter: J. Waddington to J.L. Mahon, 17 January 1885 (3095/2. Socialist League Archives).
6. J, 7 March 1885.

William Morris came to speak in Manchester the following October, Commonweal remarked that, 'The workers, large numbers of whom are unemployed, are coming to see that we have to offer them the only hope of a better condition'.[1] The latter statement may suggest the basic reason for the lack of a socialist unemployed campaign; the socialists may well have believed that the remedy for unemployment was only to be found in a socialist state, rather than within the existing social order.

The renewed contact between the socialists and unemployed in March 1886, occurring as it did three weeks after the London West End riot on 'Black Monday',[2] suggests that the local SDF had been influenced by their London leaders. The realisation that unemployment was not simply a problem to be solved after the revolution, but one of its potential causes, was indicated in a speech by Henry Harry in Stevenson Square. He urged the unemployed, '...to band themselves together by means of the Federation, and so supplement and aid the trade unions, so that ultimately they might be able to bring about a different state of things to that which now existed.'[3]

The first unemployed meeting organized by the local SDF took place on 1 March 1886 at New Cross, Manchester. Waddington, now one of its most prominent members, took his place on the platform. The chair was taken by J.H. Hall, who proposed a resolution expressing indignation at Government delay in starting public works at fair rates of wages, refusal to authorize the construction of artizans' dwellings by municipalities and county boards, and neglect to organize more reasonable administration of outdoor relief. Manual tasks at starvation level were, he asserted, being set to honest men and women as a test of their pauperism by the poor law authorities. The meeting proceeded to demand that the Government adopt the proposals of the SDF to organise useful public works and bring forward a measure for the compulsory reduction of hours of labour in all factories, workshops and Government establishments, to eight per day. These proposals, seconded by William Burns and supported by Thomson and Gauley,[4] were essentially those carried at the Trafalgar Square meeting.[5]

Like the Trafalgar Square meeting, that at New Cross brought violence in its wake. The SDF's meeting concluded during the morning, but in the afternoon a crowd of between fifteen- and twenty

1. Com., November 1885.
2. C. Tsuzuki, op.cit., p.73.
3. J, 13 March 1886.
4. Ibid., 6 March 1886; Manchester Weekly Times, 6 March 1886.
5. C. Tsuzuki, op.cit., p.73.

thousand gathered, although no organization had actually convened a meeting, and no speakers had been appointed. Justice asserted that, '...all would have passed along quietly but for the officiousness of the police'. The mounted police who appeared on the scene and, according to Justice, charged the crowd, were pelted with refuse and 'a few stones'. Two policemen were thrown into the fountains and several shop windows were smashed. Stones were freely thrown at the police, who attacked the crowd with their staffs.[1]

Whatever the facts of the matter, there is little doubt that the Manchester authorities considered the SDF to blame for the violence. When, on the following Sunday, the Manchester and Salford branches combined to hold an unemployed demonstration in Stevenson Square, the police appeared in force. Strong companies guarded the approaches to the Square, while the Chief Constable and his mounted attaché patrolled around the outskirts of the meeting, taking notes and sending dispatches to the Mayor at the Town Hall. Eight thousand handbills had been distributed, calling the meeting for 11 o'clock, but before 10 the Square 'seemed literally alive with people, the rowdy element being conspicuous by its absence. Everybody seemed to be there for a definite purpose,and meant business'. Each branch had a lorry to serve as its platform. Horrocks took the chair for the Salford contingent, being supported by Hall, Smart and Harry, while the Manchester spokesmen were J.H. Hall, William Burns and E.H. Parkinson. While both platforms advocated public works, performed for a living wage, and the eight hour day, as immediate remedies for unemployment, the long-term political solution was emphasized by George Smart and Henry Harry. The former asserted that:

> ...it was time that working men stood together as brothers and fought the battles of their class. They were neither Liberals nor Tories. The men who now controlled Manchester and all the country were hangers-on of the two political parties. They, as workers, wanted working men, not only in Parliament, but in all the municipal bodies.

From the Manchester platform, E.H. Parkinson advised the workers to boycott capitalist papers, such as the Guardian, Courier and Examiner, and read instead Justice, Reynolds, Commonweal and The Republican.[2]

Meetings continued into the spring, but encountered problems

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1. J, 6 March 1886.
2. Ibid., 13 March 1886.

in the shape of the police. Thus a demonstration at the end of March was interrupted before an Inspector finally told the crowd that meetings would be allowed to proceed.[1] The meeting at Pomona Gardens on 7 May was followed by a procession, as a result of which eight men were charged with begging and obstruction. Among them were Waddington and Thompson.[2]

While it was generally accepted by Social-Democrats that unemployment was a symptom of the ills of capitalist society, which could be solved only under a socialist system, and until then merely ameliorated, the relative importance of their social and political campaigns was less clear-cut. Was unemployment agitation simply a means of obtaining recruits and supporters for the SDF, who would subsequently vote for its electoral candidates, or were these marches and demonstrations intended to escalate, eventually to culminate in the anticipated revolution? In January 1887, Hyndman advocated the latter course:

> Let us only recognise that political action is after all quite secondary; and, if I may say so without fear of misconstruction, more in the interests of the possessing classes - as likely to save them from attempts at violent revenge - than of the proletariat. We are in a vicious circle. Political measures will take long to mature politically, and will probably not bring about the social changes which are needed; the social changes can only be peacefully brought about through political action. I say, therefore, that though we should never lose a chance of running a candidate, and should endeavour even to get men into the House of Commons for the sake of spreading our opinions, we ought to see clearly that we have much more chance of getting revolutionary political change through vehement social agitation, than we have of obtaining any great social change through mere political agitation.[3]

It does however seem that the Manchester and Salford socialists were more inclined towards constitutional political activities. They were prepared both to make use of the electoral system, and to confine their demands on behalf of the unemployed to reforms which could be implemented without any previous fundamental changes in society, and which might also gain the support of many people who were not socialists. While taking an active part in the unemployed meetings, George Smart retained his seat on Salford School Board and attempted to draw attention to the effects which unemployment might have upon children.[4]

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1. Ibid., 3 April 1886.
2. Manchester Weekly Times, 8 May 1886.
3. Justice, 1 January 1887.
4. See above, p.150.

In November 1887 William Horrocks campaigned both as a regular speaker at unemployed meetings, and as municipal candidate for St. Thomas' ward, Salford.[1]

The unemployed agitation, which the Social-Democrats undoubtedly led, was essentially peaceful and law-abiding. At the beginning of 1887, they considered their own efforts to have been responsible for the Health Department's decision to employ more men, for one or two days, at removing snow from the streets. The wages were, admittedly, only 4d per hour, but the principle of municipal employment was always worth reinforcing.[2] On 19 January a meeting of about 300 unemployed was held at the corner of Oldfield Road, from which Smart was delegated to appeal to the Mayor for assistance. On finding that the Mayor and Town Clerk had departed to London, a meeting was arranged for the following day. The Mayor merely asked for a list of those in distress, promising that the cases would be investigated and adding that the Board of Guardians was the proper quarter from which to seek relief. About 200 men subsequently marched to the Workhouse, where the Clerk of the Guardians told them to lay their cases before the relieving officers (who were not at the time available). When the unemployed did manage to find the relieving officers, they were told to leave their names and addresses, and appear before the Guardians on the following Friday. Guarded by police, the unemployed marched to the workhouse, leaving Smart to speak to the Guardians. The outcome was that all the single men, and married men without families, were offered an 'order for inside', while those with families were offered 1s 8d per day. At this stage in the agitation the Social-Democrats also asked the Mayor to form a committee of gentlemen to assist the unemployed. Smart himself wrote to a dozen prominent men connected with the borough, including its MPs.[3]

During the winter of 1887-8 the Social-Democrats were again active in the unemployed movement.[4] But while at their own meetings revolutionary socialism was preached, and lectures dealt with 'the way the poor are ground down by the capitalist classes', or 'the coming struggle

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1. J, 5 November 1887.
2. Ibid., 22 January 1887.
3. Ibid., 22 January 1887.
4. Ibid., 13 October, 5, 12 and 19 November 1887.

of the unemployed',[1] at the unemployed demonstrations they were prepared to appeal to a wider political spectrum. Thus on Sunday 4 December, the SDF met at their club in Pilling Street and marched in procession, with flags and banners, to the drill ground attached to Albert Square. There was a crowd of between six- and seven thousand people gathered, which proceeded to pass unanimously the resolutions moved and supported by leading Social-Democrats. These two resolutions are worth quoting in full, as the local SDF's proposals for the immediate relief of unemployment:

> That this meeting of unemployed and employed workers of Manchester and Salford calls upon the municipal and other authorities to organise the labour of the unemployed upon useful and productive work, at fair rates of wages, by carrying out necessary local improvements, such as the construction of baths at Cheetham Hill, the levelling of Moston Tip, the construction of a playground and gymnasium on St. Michael's Flags, as well as the acquirement and demolition of the unhealthy dwellings in that vicinity and in Silver Street, King Street, Charlotte Street, Back Parker Street, Rochdale Road, and Potts Street, Ancoats, under the provisions of the Artisans' Dwelling Acts, and the construction, without the intervention of a contractor, of healthy artisans' dwellings, to be let at the cost of construction and maintenance alone. It also calls upon the Poor-law Guardians to relax the severity of outdoor relief tests for able-bodied men unable to get work.

The next resolution stated:

> That this meeting strongly censures the repressive measures adopted by the Government in dealing with the unemployed, and calls upon it to afford them the opportunity to work, instead of aggravating their misery by wreaking upon them the brutality of the police. This meeting also calls upon the Government to reduce the hours of work in all Government employments to eight a day; to give no contracts whatever to firms who pay less than trade union rates of wages; to introduce a bill compulsorily shortening the hours of labour of all employees of railway, tramway, and omnibus companies to eight hours a day; to establish relations with the Governments on the Continent, with a view to international labour legislation for establishing a reduced working day in all trades and occupations.[2]

While the resolutions placed responsibility for dealing with unemployment firmly upon local and national government, neither mentioned the term 'socialism', and both provided schemes which could be implemented without any previous major change in the social system. While the eight hour day and public works formed part of the SDF's proposed 'palliative' reforms, both measures drew supporters from beyond

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1. Ibid., 19 November 1887.
2. Ibid., 10 December 1887.

the ranks of the Social-Democrats. The eight hour day had been advocated at the 1883 TUC, as a means of absorbing the unemployed. It had again been proposed at the 1885 Congress by James Threlfall, secretary of the Labour Electoral Association. William Mather, Liberal MP for South Salford in 1885-6, and for Gorton 1889-95, adopted an exproimental eight hour day at his Salford Ironworks in 1891. It might be added that he found no decrease in production. While the concept of public works was not apparently popular with the Mayor of Salford, in February and March 1886 it had gained considerable support in Parliament from Liberal, Conservative and Nationalist back-benchers.[1]

This agitation, and even the carefully considered scheme for local improvements, does not appear to have yielded any concrete results. In reply to the SDF's letter, which embodied the resolutions of 4 December, the Mayor of Manchester replied that he had no power to commence public works, and referred them to the Chairman of the Improvement Committee. While Hunter Watts asserted that the Mayor was, in fact, ex-officio Chairman of all Committees, the Social Democrats nevertheless decided to follow up his suggestion, rather than simply allow the matter to drop.[2] But at the same time in the following year, the SDF was again to be found organising a meeting at New Cross, and calling upon the Corporation to organise the labour of the unemployed 'in useful and productive work' at fair rates of pay. Again a copy of the resolution was sent to the Mayor, only to receive the reply that, 'as it is not within the province of municipalities to organise labour he could not take any steps in the matter'.[3] By this time unemployment was declining. Although in January 1891 the Workman's Times was to draw attention to the plight of the Manchester unemployed, it was not until the following year that a particularly steep increase in their numbers took place, and even then the problem was not as serious as it had been in the mid-'eighties.[4]

Unemployment agitation had begun as something akin to the hunger movements of the first half of the century. Through the efforts of Waddington and Hunter Watts, the socialists had established themselves as its organisers and spokesmen. Yet at the same time they had resisted any temptation to resort to violence or insurrection as a short-cut to the social revolution, which they believed to be the ultimate solution to

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1. J. Harris, Unemployment and Politics. A Study in English Social Policy 1886-1914 (Oxford, 1972) pp.59,68, 73-5.
2. J, 17 December 1887.
3. Ibid., 22 December 1888.
4. See W.H. Beveridge, op.cit., p.39 Table VIII.

the problem. Instead they had attempted to use the electoral system, to submit their proposals through the recognised channels, and to concentrate upon schemes which, while they were considered palliatives by the SDF, could gain widespread support. The eight hour day and municipal work schemes were certainly not incompatible with the ultimate vision of a socialist society, yet they were perhaps more in keeping with the socialism later preached by the ILP, than with the revolutionary doctrines advocated by some of the national leaders of the SDF.[1]

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The close connection on a national level between the 'New Unionism' of the late 1880s and the rise of the ILP, has been emphasised by writers of various political complexions, from contemporary times up to the present day. In their classic History of British Trade Unionism, the Webbs commented that: 'With the defection of the New Unionists, revolutionary Socialism ceased to grow; and the rival propaganda of constitutional action became the characteristic of the British Socialist Movement'.[2] ILP speakers themselves were advised to emphasise the connection between their party and New Unionism. In the first of the ILP's Study Courses (complete with notes for Lecturers and Class Leaders), J. Ramsay MacDonald provided the following notes on 'The I.L.P. up to 1900':

> The new Party leaned heavily upon Trade Unionism, especially the New Unionism, the leaders of which with a rare exception were members. The discussion on the New v. the Old Unionism. Socialism created the former, and the I.L.P. guided.[3]

More recently Henry Pelling stated that:

> The strength of the Socialists in 1893 and 1894 [in the TUC] was due in large part to the foundation and rapid growth of the Independent Labour Party (I.L.P.), which was the product of the growth of Socialism among sections of the working class. This in turn was one of the results of 'new unionism' and the part that Socialists had played in forming the new unions.[4]

However when one turns to detailed analyses of this evolution, there emerges little information of assistance to the student of local history. The most famous struggles of the new unions, those of Bryant and May's match girls, the South Metropolitan Gas workers and the London dockers, all took place in a city which was to be far from prominent in the early annals of the ILP.[5] The most famous of the New

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1. In particular James Blackwell, A.P. Hazell and possibly Harry Quelch (see C. Tsuzuki, op.cit., p.80).
2. S. and B. Webb, The History of Trade Unionism (1894; new impression 1950) p.412.
3. J. Ramsay MacDonald, The History of the I.L.P., with Notes for Lecturers and Class Leaders (?1922) 24pp. p.7.
4. H. Pelling, A History of British Trade Unionism (1963) p.105.
5. P. Thompson, op.cit., pp.104-5.

Union leaders, Tom Mann, John Burns, Will Thorne and Ben Tillett, were again based in London. Another factor which has received great emphasis, the increasing influence of socialists within the TUC, was again crucial to the advent of the national ILP, but hardly explains the prior emergence of a local body. The SDF, which has already been shown to have played a vital role in mass socialist propaganda in Manchester and Salford, has generally been castigated by historians of the national movement. While the work of individual (London) members in organizing New Unions has been acclaimed, the Federation itself has received little credit and much disapproval. Perhaps the most extreme was Alan Hutt's comment, upon the SDF's criticism of the 'old unions':

> ...it was negative, dogmatic and sectarian, reflecting the middle-class outlook of the Federation's pseudo-Marxist and dictatorial leader H.M. Hyndman, and so 'antagonised trade unionists without drawing over any considerable percentage to the socialist position'.

He later added that:

> ...it was a major disaster that there was a divorce between the New Unionism and Socialism (that is, revolutionary Socialism). For this the main responsibility fell to the sectarian S.D.F., which had misunderstood and attacked the New Unionism from the start;...[1]

Thus any attempt to analyse the relationship between socialism and the trade unions in Manchester and Salford cannot simply relate national events to the local area. Yet at the same time, news of issues such as the London Dock strike must obviously have had its effect upon local public opinion. The aim in the following section will therefore be to deal with two broad aspects. First, the concrete; the actual contacts between socialists and trade unions. It will be necessary to examine the previous trade union affiliations of the socialist leaders, and the part which they played in the formation and later activities of the new unions. Secondly, some attempt must be made to trace the swing from the idea of trade unions merely as instruments of collective bargaining, to the concept of a 'labour party'. This latter survey must necessarily be somewhat vague, but by way of conclusion an examination will be made of trade union participation in the 1892 May Day demonstration, which resolved to form an Independent Labour Party. The role of individual trade unionists in the foundation of that party will be considered in the following chapter.

When considering the local socialist leadership in the context of trade unionism, perhaps the most striking fact is simply that hardly any of the prominent socialists were actually engaged in

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1. A. Hutt, British Trade Unionism. A Short History (1941; 6th ed., 1975) pp.36, 42. Hutt quotes from Tom Mann's Memoirs, p.57.

the unskilled and casual occupations for which the new unions were formed. The leading members of the SDF have already been described as skilled workmen, and the Socialist League tended to contain an even higher proportion of middle class men.[1] Thus on the whole socialists did not emerge as organizers of new unions simply in the role of able and energetic men who saw a need for organization in their own trades. The unemployed movement had been commenced by men personally involved, for social rather than political motives. Socialism had then been introduced into an already-established campaign. The prominence in new unionism of committed socialists, who had no personal experience of the occupations which they organised, suggests some political aim at the very beginning. The need for unions among underpaid and exploited workers was obvious, their emergence at a time of declining unemployment not surprising, but in the origins of their actual organization one should perhaps look to the socialists rather than to spontaneous industrial movements.

Much of the history of trade unionism has demonstrated that a few individuals in key positions, although their political attitudes may differ considerably from those of the rank and file, can exert an influence out of all proportion to their numbers. This is particularly true of a period in which decisions were taken by a show of hands, without even recourse to secret ballot over key issues. It is even more true of the 'new' unions than of the 'old', for while skilled workmen might be expected to have at least a basic, elementary school grounding in the '3Rs', literacy was by no means universal among unskilled and casual labourers. To quote Henry Pelling, 'men and women who could write and keep accounts had a scarcity value'.[2] Thus a man from outside the occupation in question, who was relatively well-educated and a good public speaker, who understood the problems of the workers and was prepared to exert a great deal of time and energy in the formation of a new trade union, could soon emerge as its local leader. He could moreover do so without the rank and file having any basic understanding of, or even sympathy with, the socialist doctrines which had motivated him. Obviously some socialist converts were made from the new unions

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1. See above, pp.86-93.
2. H. Pelling, Origins of the Labour Party, pp.79-80.

but not, it will be demonstrated, particularly large numbers by comparison with those from the skilled workers and lower middle class. What did permeate more widely among the rank and file was support for state intervention in relation to wages and working conditions, in particular for the eight hour day.[1]

The rise of new unions for the unskilled workers has traditionally been dated from the upsurge in London of 1888-9, during which time the match girls, gas workers, and dockers were organised.[2] More recently the origins of new unions have been traced back into the early 'eighties and even 1870s; the Hull Labourers' and Dockside Labourers', and Grocers' Assistants' Unions were founded in 1871-2, while in 1881 the reorganisation of the local Trades Council led to the attainment of key positions by members of the unskilled unions.[3] In Manchester and Salford the new unions emerged only in the late '80s. Part of the reason for this lies in the employment situation, which has previously been considered. It was only when unemployment declined from the high levels of the mid '80s that the unskilled or casual worker had any hope of improving his lot. But beside the obvious economic factor, one can also see the continuing desire of the socialists to create a mass base. From organizing the unemployed in support of state and municipal intervention to create public works, and the eight hour day, they moved, at a stage of declining unemployment, to organise the unskilled and casual labourers in support of not dissimilar objectives.

The concept of a general union for the unskilled was well-publicized in the local area during the mid-eighties. The American Knights of Labor held their Universal Convention at St. Helens in 1884 and 1886; in 1883 or '84 a branch of the Order was formed among the dock labourers at Bootle.[4] During 1886-7 the Cotton Factory Times contained almost weekly references to the Knights,[5] although some of its comments were far from sympathetic. Representing as it did the views of the old established unions, it considered that the Knights of Labor organisation:

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1. J. Saville, 'Trade Unions and Free Labour: The Background to the Taff Vale Decision' in Essays in Labour History, op.cit., p.320.
2. For example, see S. and B. Webb, op.cit., pp.401-5; H.M. Lynd, England in the Eighteen-Eighties. Towards a Social Basis for Freedom (O.U.P. New York, 1945) pp.276-7.
3. R. Brown, Waterfront Organization in Hull 1870-1900. University of Hull Occasional Papers in Economic and Social History, No.5 (Hull, 1972) pp.17,33.
4. H. Pelling, 'The Knights of Labor in Britain, 1886-1901' in Economic History Review, 2nd series, 9 (December 1956) pp.315-16, 320.
5. CFT, 26 March, 16 and 23 April, 25 June, 17 and 24 September, 1 and 29 October, 24 December 1886; 20 May, 3 and 24 June, 1 and 8 July 1887.

> ...is essentially of a kind suited for new ground, where people wish to belong to a society at a cheap rate. Whether it be clothing, furniture, or benefits in a society which people wish to purchase, it is generally found that those who have no experience, and have little education to guide them, take the cheapest... We have grown out of it, having found by experience that in nothing does the expression 'cheap and nasty' apply so well as to cheap trade unions. There are sections of English workmen who have not yet found this out, and amongst these the Knights of Labor may for a time meet with some success.[1]

Clearly the leadership of the cotton unions had little sympathy with the idea of a general union.

While there is no evidence of any branch of the Knights being established in the Manchester district, there were some strong connections. Charles Rowley visited the headquarters of the Knights in Philadelphia. The Manchester co-operative movement received extensive coverage in the Journal of the Order. William Johnston, latterly of the National Union of Shop Assistants and Manchester ILP, had been a Knights of Labor representative in a textile mill in Atlanta, Georgia. It is also possible that Leonard Hall had some contact with the movement.[2] More significant, however, was the influence of the Knights upon the Manchester Labour Union. On 17 July 1886, Raymond Unwin reported from the local Socialist League branch that, 'Thompson spoke on the Labour Union which is being formed here'.[3] A fortnight later he and Frederick Cadle took part in a meeting of this organization,

> ...which is being formed here to organise the labour of the unemployed instead of making paupers of then; it also aims at giving the labourer the advantages of a trades union without the disadvantages of a narrow aim and selfish exclusiveness which are too common in present unions. It is somewhat on the lines of the Knights of Labor of America, and will do good if they keep in view the fact that complete emancipation of labour will only come when the workers take into their own hands the management of the means of production. The present leaders seem to see the necessity of this as the ultimate aim.[4]

The Labour Union only lasted for a few months, but provides an illustration both of the influence of the Knights of Labor and, more important, of the growing awareness among local socialists of the need for a mass base within the labour movement.[5]

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1. Ibid., 3 June 1887.
2. J.A. Fincher, op.cit., pp.52-3; H. Pelling, loc.cit., p.330.
3. Com., 17 July 1886. Unfortunately the letters from Unwin to the Socialist League which survive in the League archives contain no reference to the Labour Union.
4. Ibid., 31 July 1886.
5. The Socialist, September 1886. See also G.C. Goldberg, 'The Socialist and Political Labour Movement in Manchester and Salford, 1884-1914' (Manchester M.A., 1975) p.25.

During this period the Social-Democrats were being exhorted by their national leaders to become involved in industrial struggles. In January 1886 Justice remarked that 'almost every industrial centre in Lancashire is the scene of a strike'. Having cited examples of Chorley, Haslington, Burnley and Preston, it continued: 'We hope our energetic Manchester and Salford Comrades will take note of this and try to start branches of the Social-Democratic Federation in these towns'.[1] In his article, 'The Decay of Trade Unions', published in June 1887, Hyndman stated that:

> Many of the ablest Trade Unionists have already joined the Social-Democratic Federation, because they see - as John Burnett, Thomas Burt and others also see, but do not like plainly to state - that the day has gone by for the efforts of isolated trades, and that nothing is to be gained for the workers as a class without the complete organisation of labourers of all grades, skilled and unskilled, under the banner of Social-Democracy.[2]

It appears that the South Salford SDF first became interested in events concerning the local corporation gasworks when news of its mismanagement became public, and the manager was imprisoned for robbery, forgery and perjury. As an example of the faults of the governing political parties, the 'gas scandal' merited a series of SDF meetings in February 1887, and provided a lecture topic for H. Mills in the following September, when he supported William Horrocks' candidature for St. Thomas' ward.[3] When, in the autumn of 1888, the gas stokers came out on strike, the Salford Social-Democrats immediately involved themselves in the struggle. They asserted that, in order to recoup the stolen money (while still paying the manager the salary of £300 a year, and making a profit of £4,000), the Gas Committee had required the stokers to perform nearly half as much work again as usual. After a fortnight the men struck, and although a compromise was later effected, fourteen of the stokers refused to accept it. The SDF organised meetings near the gas works, took collections for the strikers, and revealed how the Gas Committee had attempted to defeat the men by employing 'knobsticks', for whom they provided bread, cheese, pickles and ale, presumably from the ratepayers' money. At a meeting held on a common behind the gas works, Horrocks, Thompson, and W.K. Hall of the local SDF shared the platform

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1. J, 30 January 1886.
2. Ibid., 18 June 1887.
3. Ibid., 19 February, 1 October 1887; 3 October 1888.

with a visiting speaker, Tom Mann.[1] Mann, then resident in Bolton, was at this stage one of the most ardent advocates of SDF involvement in the trade union movement.[2]

In October 1888 South Salford SDF decided to contest Ordsall Ward in the approaching municipal election, and announced that they were doing so 'in the interest of the gas stokers and other corporation workers who are being done to death by the slavery imposed upon them'. Horrocks' candidature was again unsuccessful,[3] but his popularity with the gas stokers was established. The gas workers were still at this stage without any trade union organization, but in August the Salford men determined to remedy this situation. According to an article by A.S. Headingley in Justice, published during February 1890:

> Last August the gas workers of Salford, recognizing that the Social-Democratic Federation was the only really reliable organised body to which they could appeal, without danger of being used to forward some Tory or Liberal intrigue, sent a deputation to wait on our Salford branch. They asked the members of the Federation to help them organise a trade union, and our comrades readily gave all possible assistance.

With the aid of Horrocks, Evans and Neil, among others, the Salford branch of the Gas Workers' Union was duly formed.[4] The organization of Manchester and the surrounding districts followed shortly afterwards. On Sunday 8 September, the Union convened two meetings in Manchester, at which Will Thorne spoke. Their object was the organization of the gasmen employed by Manchester Corporation. At these meetings the Socialist League was in evidence, and copies of Commonweal on sale.[5] This was, in all probability, not a reflection of the politics of the gasmen, but of the division of spheres of influence by the socialists; the SDF have previously been shown to have predominated in Salford, and the Socialist League in Manchester. Clearly the gasworkers realised themselves to be part of a wider struggle, for £1 11s 6d was collected 'for the dockers', presumably the London dockers then on strike.[6]

Early in October 1889 the Manchester and Salford branches of the Gasworkers' Union demanded an eight hour day, together with an increase in wages in some departments of work. On the eve of the municipal

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1. Ibid., 29 September, 3 October 1888.
2. D. Torr, Tom Manm and his Times Vol.1 1856-1890 (1956) pp.207-8, 251; T. Mann, Tom Mann's Memoirs (1920; 1967 ed. with preface by K. Coates) p.49.
3. J, 10 November 1888.
4. Ibid., 2 February 1890. The National Union of Gasworkers and General Labourers was launched in London the previous March, by Will Thorne. (see H.A. Clegg et al., op.cit., p.57; G. and L. Radice, Will Thorne, Constructive Militant (1974) p.30.
5. J, 2 February 1890. Thorne was a member of the SDF.
6. For London contacts between the gasworkers and dockers, see H.A. Clegg et al., op.cit., p.59.

elections, these demands were granted. In the course of the agitation, Horrocks was elected organising secretary for the gas stokers of Lancashire.[1] So far the newly-established union had been extremely successful, but before the end of the year a strike took place, which not only proved unsuccessful, but also led to recriminations within the socialist ranks. The strike originated in Manchester, partly because of the Corporation's failure to carry out an agreement, to have a machine for weighing the coals installed in the Bradford Road station, but chiefly over the issue of a closed shop.[2] The latter issue was obviously vital to the easily replaceable seasonal workers; even the Cotton Factory Times, which was hardly sympathetic towards new unions, explained that the unionists among the gas workers expected that, when a considerable proportion of their number were discharged in the spring and summer, the non-unionists would be retained and reinforced by other non-unionists the following winter. It was feared that, in this manner, the union would be squeezed out of existence.[3] The union wanted Manchester Corporation to compel six men, who remained outside the union ranks, to join. Upon the Corporation's refusal, the Manchester gasworkers gave in their fortnight's notices, and their example was quickly followed by their Salford counterparts who believed, wrongly as it happened, that in the event of a strike Manchester could be supplied with gas from Salford. The Corporations refused any further negotiations and brought in blackleg labour to supplant the strikers. Adequate Strike funds were not forthcoming from the union's national funds. Only £200 was provided for the 2,000 men involved. The result, not surprisingly, was a disaster for the local branch of the G.W.& G.L.U.

But if the strike itself was a failure, the recriminations which followed must have proved even more detrimental to the internal relations of the SDF and the gasworkers. Will Thorne denied having any part in calling the strike, placing the responsibility upon Horrocks. He claimed that neither he nor the Executive knew anything about the affair until six days after the Manchester men had given in their notices. On receipt of a telegram, on Saturday 30 November, he had then left Nottingham for Manchester, arriving on the following day. He said that he had advised the men to withdraw their notices and had attempted to

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1. J, 2 February 1890.
2. Royal Commission on Labour (1893) Minutes of Evidence CIII. Evidence of W. Thorne. Qs 25,047-9.
3. CFT, 13 December 1889.

negotiate with the Corporations, who proved unwilling to do so. Thorne stated that he told the Mayor of Manchester that the local secretary had no power to call a strike. He also informed the district secretary and a delegate meeting that the strike was unofficial:

> I told them that they would not get any strike pay, and I told them that they had done wrong. They came down on me like a thousand of bricks, and said that I was showing the white feather.

Thorne remained in Manchester until a few days after the strike had commenced, apparently leaving for London on Thursday 12 December. He departed promising to send some money for the strikers, but

> ...there was a report sent that Mr. Horrocks was going about drunk and squandering the money, and when the Executive heard that they said that no money was to go there till they further investigated the matter, and they immediately sent two inspectors down to investigate it, and they came back after three or four days, and the result was that 250l. or 200l. was sent.

Thorne later stated that the sum was £200, and reaffirmed that the accusations against Horrocks were groundless.[1]

Thorne's attitude is open to criticism on several grounds. The closed shop was, after all, part of the union's policy, and while it does seem certain that the strike was not officially endorsed, the Manchester men were in line with national policy. Even admitting the unofficial nature of the strike, for a union's national leader to inform the management (in the person of the Mayor of Manchester) that the head office condemned the men's action, was hardly a show of solidarity. This information was never conveyed to the union's rank and file; Thorne spoke at a meeting in Stevenson Square on Sunday 1 December, at which a resolution was carried unanimously, pledging the public to support the gas men.[2] Will Thorne's attitude towards the Manchester strike must be contrasted with his activities in London, during the South Metropolitan dispute which followed in its wake. He did not know that the London gasworkers had handed in their notices until three or four days after his arrival in Manchester, but stated that, had he been in London, he would have done his utmost to prevent the strike. When asked if the London strike was authorised, he stated, 'Undoubtedly it was - by a delegate

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1. Royal Commission on Labour (1893) Minutes of Evidence CIII. Evidence of W. Thorne. Qs 24,550-24,613, 25,047-25,074 passim.
2. Com., 7 December 1889.

meeting; but I may say that many of the delegates protested against the strike, but they were overruled.'[1] One is left to wonder why a strike in Manchester needed the sanction of the Executive, while one in London could be called after a far from unanimous delegate meeting.

Relations between the Manchester and London gasworkers must have deteriorated during the latter strike, since some of the Manchester and Salford gasworkers, including John William Higgins, went down to London to take up jobs vacated by the South Metropolitan strikers.[2] The local version of events tended moreover to differ from Thorne's. According to A.S. Headingley's article in Justice, on 'The Salford Blacklegs Scandal', Horrocks had actually been away in Bury when the Manchester branch, without consulting him, sent in its strike notice. The SDF's enemies were said to be responsible for blaming the failure of the strike upon Horrocks and the socialists. Headingley added that a gas stoker had absconded with £30 belonging to a local branch, and libellous rumours were then circulated to spread the idea that the money was taken by a prominent socialist; in fact the thief was in no way connected with the socialists.[3] Nevertheless, Horrocks was subsequently deposed from his position of organising secretary by the union Executive. Will Thorne, giving evidence to the Royal Commission on Labour, concurred with the suggestion that the Executive 'considered that his action was so ill-advised that he was not a trustworthy man to be your district secretary'.[4] South Salford SDF did not apparently share the Gasworkers' Executive's estimation of Horrocks. He continued to be one of their most prominent members and public speakers, and he subsequently became a member of the Executive Committee of Salford Labour Electoral Association,[5] SDF candidate for St. Paul's ward, Salford, in the 1893 Municipal Elections,[6] and for Pendleton Township in the Guardians elections of 1894.[7]

New unionism, in so far as the gasworkers were concerned, was hardly a demonstration of socialist unity. There is a possibility that the differences which arose between Thorne and Horrocks over the gas strike may have served to widen the division between the Salford

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1. Royal Commission on Labour (1893) Minutes of Evidence CIII. Evidence of W. Thorne. Qs 24,614 - 24,623.
2. Ibid., Evidence of W. Thorne. Qs. 25,285-6; Evidence of J.W. Higgins. Qs 24,355-24,370.
3. J, 2 February 1890.
4. Royal Commission on Labour (1893) Minutes of Evidence CIII. Evidence of W. Thorne. Qs. 25,258-61.
5. WT, 28 August 1891
6. J, 17 June 1891
7. Ibid., 8 December 1894

and London Social-Democrats. Locally however Horrocks and the gasworkers gained sympathy from far beyond the ranks of their own traditional allies. Charles Skewes, the nominee of South Salford SDF, had been returned as County Borough Auditor, and through his position was able to reveal the large sums of money which Salford Corporation had expended upon the blackleg workers.[1] Since the money involved was eventually destined to come from the ratepayers' pockets, the Gasworkers' Union might hope for general public sympathy. In the Sunday Chronicle, 'Nunquam' gave his support to the 'closed shop' principle.[2] The Dean of Manchester remarked that 'the tricks were with the Corporation and the honours with the men',[3] while a Roman Catholic priest, Father Lynch, issued an appeal during the strike, for working men to send him contributions towards the feeding of gasworkers' starving chikdren.[4] The gasworkers' support from such diverse local quarters, and denunciation by their London leaders, can perhaps be viewed as one of the pointers towards the political realignments which were to culminate in the foundation of an essentially provincial ILP.

While the SDF played a major role in organising the gas stokers, other groups which came to form part of the G.W. & G.L.U. were influenced initially by the Socialist League. At the end of October 1889 a dispute took place at Berry's Blacking Works. The men 'who lap up the packages' were at the time being paid 1d per gross, and 1¼d for all over 140 gross per week. Those who weighed the blacking received half this amount. There was no union among the men, but as a result of agitation by some members of the Socialist League who worked there, they demanded a basic payment of 1¼d per gross. Mr. Berry refused, and the men struck. They subsequently met in a mission room and, after hearing an address by Bailie of the Socialist League, formed a branch of the G.W. & G.L.U. After a four day struggle, Berry surrendered unconditionally, and the men received what amounted to a 3s per week increase in wages. At the same time, the Socialist League was turning its attention towards the employees of Manchester Corporation Health Department. Ritson, Bailie and Barton organized a meeting in Stevenson Square on 27 October, which was eventually

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1. Ibid., 2 February 1890.
2. SC, 8 December 1889.
3. J, 2 February 1890.
4. SC, 15 December 1889.

adjourned until the following week. By the time that Barton and Bailie, together with Horrocks, took the platform on 3 November, the men had been organized under the banner of the G.W. & G.L.U., in support of an advance of wages and less work.[1] Although socialist influence in the Gasworkers' Union was undoubtedly diminished by the removal of Horrocks, the new leadership was active in the movement for independent labour representation. When the May Day demonstration was being planned in 1892, one of the three joint secretaries of the venture was George Rogerson of the Gasworkers' and General Labourers' Union.[2]

Perhaps the new union which bore the strongest imprint of the SDF was the Navvies' and General Labourers' Union. As in the case of the gasworkers, the influence appears to have been through the prominence of individual socialists, rather than the spread of socialist beliefs among the rank and file. The conditions of work which prevailed among the Manchester Ship Canal navvies were first commented upon in the press by the Social-Democrat who was to become the founder of the union, John Ward. In April 1888 he arrived to speak for the SDF in Manchester, and composed a letter to the Editor of Justice, concerning the Ship Canal. Ward had once worked for the firm who were now contractors for the canal, but whereas he had been paid 6d per hour for labouring on the London Underground, the Ship Canal rate was 4½d. He remarked:

> I wish there was a Labourers' Society, so that the great reductions in wages which have taken place in this industry during the last eight years could be tabulated, so as to show to the skilled trade unionists the terrible misery that their fellow workers suffer.

Ward went on to describe how labour-saving machinery was being utilized while half-starved men were crowding round the gates, hoping for work. He also remarked upon the steep increase in cottage rents in the vicinity; the local landlords' response to the increased demand from the navvies.[3] Less than two months later Ward contributed to Justice two articles on the life of a navvy. In both he drew examples from the conditions prevailing on the Manchester Ship Canal.[4] It was however in London, at the Sydney Hall, Battersea, that Ward and his associates met to form the 'Amalgamated Society of General Labourers', on 31 July 1888.[5]

In 1889 the navvies in the Eccles area agitated, albeit unsuccessfully, for a pay increase of ½d per hour. During February 1890 a strike, again over the pay question, took place on the Barton section.

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1. Com., 2and 9 November 1889.
2. C, 2 April 1892; WT, 9 April 1892.
3. J, 21 April 1888.
4. Ibid., 16 and 23 June 1888.
5. Ibid., 11 August 1888.

As the movement spread, mass meetings were held in Runcorn and Manchester, addressed by, among others, John Ward and Leonard Hall.[1] It has previously been suggested that Hall transferred his allegiance from the Socialist League to the SDF during the summer of 1890.[2] It was therefore as an active Social-Democrat that Hall took part in the local organization of the union. Branches of what was now termed the 'Navvies', Bricklayers' Labourers' and General Labourers' Union' had been formed at Salford, as well as at Eccles, Cadishead and Warrington by September 1890. About 300 of the Ship Canal men had joined.[3] A further meeting, to organise the Salford navvies, took place at the beginning of October. About 600 men walked behind a brass band from Patricroft to Trafford Bridge, where they held a meeting addressed by J. Price and John Ward from London.[4]

During this period Leonard Hall was involved with the Navvies' Union simply as a socialist who was prepared to speak and write on its behalf. By occupation he was a journalist, having in 1890 become editor of the Eccles Advertiser.[5] A biography of Hall, later published in the Workman's Times, stated that he was employed on the local press for a brief time, being dismissed through his advocacy of the cause of the Ship Canal navvies.[6] When this dismissal actually took place is not stated, but in January 1891 there appeared the first issue of The Navvy's Guide and General Laborer's Own Paper. Published in Eccles, it was edited by Leonard Hall.[7]

Much of the material published in the Navvy's Guide, before its demise the following June, must be considered at a later stage. Not only was this the only local newspaper of a new union, it was also an important example of the manner in which the ideology of new unionism was broadened into the concept of an independent labour party. At this juncture, it is necessary only to consider the influence which already active socialists had upon the paper. The first issue of the Navvy's Guide bore a strong imprint of socialism, not only in Hall's editorial, but also in the article 'The Way Out', by D. Frank English. English

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1. J.B. Smethurst, 'Leonard William Hall, Journalist Extraordinary' (Eccles and District History Society Lectures 1972-3. Presidential Address) p.1:4.
2. See above, p.92.
3. WT, 12 September 1890.
4. Ibid., 10 October 1890.
5. J.B. Smethurst, op.cit., p.1:3.
6. WT, 25 September 1891.
7. The Navvy's Guide and General Laborer's Own Paper, 1 January 1891. This paper was published monthly from January to April 1891. There were then 2 issues in May and the last issue was dated simply 'June 1891'. In February 1891 its title became The Navvy's and Laborer's Guide, and in May The Navvy's and General Laborer's Guide. Cited hereafter as Navvy's Guide,

appears at this time to have been a member of both South Salford SDF and the Manchester Fabian Society.[1] Meetings of the Salford branch of the Navvies' Union were advertised as taking place at Salford Temperance Hall, 75 Ellesmere Street. This was in fact the same venue as the SDF meetings.[2] Later editions of the Navvy's Guide carried news of 'Manchester Fabian Socialist Society',[3] as well as the information that the Guide was available from Joseph Waddington.[4]

The union itself continued to expand, by enrolling men from the Ship Canal and sewage works.[5] In February 1891 a mass meeting under the auspices of the Eccles and Salford branches was organised in front of the new docks at Trafford Road, Salford. Among the advertised speakers were Ward and Hall.[6] Shortly afterwards the union itself was reorganized. As a result of a spontaneous local movement, a meeting was held in Warrington and a district council formed. Before the beginning of March, Hall had been elected by the Lancashire, Yorkshire and Cheshire District Council as its organising secretary.[7]

Socialists from outside the ranks of the Navvies' Union came to take an interest in its activities, largely as a result of two major issues. The first concerned the Ship Canal itself. In April 1891 Salford Corporation held a ratepayers' meeting, with the intention of obtaining permission to assist the Ship Canal Company from the borough rates. Salford working men attended in a strong force to object, as the Workman's Times phrased it, 'to assisting the private Capitalist with the ratepayers' money'. The spokesman of this group was Alfred Settle who, despite a 'long and masterly speech', failed to carry his amendment. Not surprisingly, when a meeting was held at Trafford Bridge on the following Sunday, to carry on the organization of the Ship Canal navvies, George Evans was among the speakers.[8]

The conditions of work and high accident rate among the navvies also attracted the attention of the ethical socialists. As early as March 1889 the Sunday Chronicle contained an article on 'Making the

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1. J, 8 November 1890 printed a letter from English, from the Social-Democratic Club, Salford. WT, 23 January 1891, described him as being a member of Manchester Fabian Society, who had taken part in a debate at the County Forum.
2. See above, Map 4.
3. Navvy's Guide, 1 May 1891.
4. Ibid., 1 February 1891.
5. WT, 13 February 1891.
6. Ibid., 27 February 1891.
7. Navvy's Guide, March 1891; WT, 6 March 1891.
8. WT, 17 April 1891.

Ship Canal' by 'Our Special Commissioner'.[1] The 'Special Commissioner' was in fact the paper's editor, Thomas Harris, a Fabian who was to be nominated as parliamentary candidate for South Salford, with the backing of Fabians, Social-Democrats, and the Salford Labour Electoral Association.[2] Early numbers of the Clarion gave accounts of official mismanagement of the building of the canal, while also publishing information from Leonard Hall concerning the number of navvies killed or crippled during the course of the venture.[3] Not, it should be added, that the ethical socialists were the only group concerned with such issues. In July 1891 Justice published an article by John Ward on 'The Systematic Slaughter of Navvies on the Manchester Ship Canal'.[4]

On 3 May 1891 Labour Day was apparently ignored by the trade union 'establishment' of Manchester and Salford, and celebrated in Bolton by the Lancashire branches of the SDF. It was however celebrated in Salford by the Salford, Eccles and Cadishead branches of the Navvies' Union. Meeting in Eccles, they marched to Salford and held a meeting opposite the Ship Canal Docks, at which Hall, Ward and A. Williams, chairman of the Eccles branch, all spoke.[5] The Workman's Times commented that: 'It was left in this district to those who have the strength and fire of youth on their side, and who have everything to gain and precious little to lose, to sound the war cry and strike for a little more freedom.'[6] Perhaps this was the key to the prominence of the Navvies' Union in the movement towards independent labour representation. Its members certainly had nothing to lose in supporting what amounted to increased state regulation of their working conditions. Not surprisingly, the London members of the union were to be found on May Day heading the Legal Eight Hours demonstration to Hyde Park.[7] However perhaps the most significant fact relating to the local May Day was that, while Hall and Ward were both SDF members, they had not apparently attempted to associate themselves or the union with the 'official' SDF demonstration. Before any of the demonstrations even took place, the Manifesto of the Navvies' Union had predicted that: '...the Labor Unions are the cradle of that great

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1. SC, 31 March 1889.
2. WT, 21 August, 4 September 1891, 16 January 1892. Harris resigned the candidature in March 1892, on grounds of ill-health, and died in the following November (ibid., 5 March, 19 November 1892).
3. C, 12,19 December 1891, 23 April 1892.
4. J, 25 July 1891.
5. WT, 1,8 May 1891; Navvy's Guide, 15 May 1891.
6. WT, 8 May 1891.
7. Navvy's Guide, 15 May 1891.

Labor Party of future English politics'.[1] It is in such a light that many of the political pronouncements which emanated from the union must later be considered.

The 'sweated trades' formed another group of workers who, without necessarily understanding socialist ideology, might welcome both politically experienced organisers from outside their own ranks, as well as the prospect of future state regulation of their working conditions. It might be added that a considerable proportion of these men and women were Jewish immigrants, who received even less sympathy from the trade union 'establishment' than did unskilled British workers, and who in many cases were also hampered by a language problem.

On 22 July 1888 the SDF held Anti-Sweating Demonstrations in both Manchester and Salford. At Oldfield Road corner, Salford, George Evans took the chair and introduced W.K. Hall, who proceeded to denounce the land and mine owners as the worst of the sweaters. Horrocks, Thomson and Mills, a Radical, followed; Thomson detailed the fall in prices for shirt making, while Mills spoke on the recent Bryant and May's matchgirls' strike. That evening the Salford SDF went to hold a similar meeting at Eccles Cross. The Manchester demonstration, in Stevenson Square, was not as well attended as had been expected, but did attract a large number of Jews. With John Marshall in the chair, Hunter Watts revealed the names of local firms which employed sweaters, including some of the largest in the city.[2]

The later involvement of the Socialist League with the Jewish Machinists', Tailors' and Pressers' Union has already been described, as has the career of John Marshall as its secretary.[3] However the strike which the union organized in April 1890 merits further consideration, since it provides illustrations both of why the members had so readily accepted the Socialist League's assistance in the past, and of the union's later movement away from its influence. According to the Sunday Chronicle, the conditions of the tailors were 'nearer to absolute slavery than you would have believed to be possible in free England'. Most of the men had fled from persecution in Russia and Poland, and could speak no English. They had landed in England destitute, and had been supported by friends until they found work. However they were then obliged by middlemen to bind themselves for 7, 10 or 12 months. To eke out

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1. Ibid., 1 May 1891.
2. J, 4 August 1888.
3. See above, p.141.

a bare existence they had to work from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m., a 90-96 hour week in ill-ventilated rooms. In such circumstances offers from socialists to assist with trade union organization were hardly likely to be refused, or considered from an ideological standpoint. The actual demands of the strikers were hardly revolutionary; they wanted an 8a.m. to 8p.m. working day, with 1 hour for dinner and half an hour for tea, a week's notice on either side, and increased payments for piecework. Thus they were not even asking for an eight hour day.

The lengthy report on the strike by Thomas Harris, the 'Special Commissioner',[1] signified a widening interest in the tailors' conditions. In the course of his survey, he also revealed that the tailors were being supported by the Trades Council.[2] When the union held a meeting in September 1890, at the Cotton Waste Dealers' Exchange in Manchester, the chair was taken by G.D. Kelley of the Trades Council, who reported that a large number of men in the industry had slipped back to the pre-strike position.[3] Shortly after the strike, Marshall openly avowed the pronciples of anarchy, and by April 1891 had been replaced as secretary by William L. Dillon, a newsagent,[4] who does not appear to have had any connection with the SDF or Socialist League. The organization of the 1892 May Day demonstration, at which a platform was provided for Jewish organizations,[5] suggests that Socialist League influence among the tailors was a thing of the past.

Of the other sweated trades, the Socialist League attempted to form a union for the cap-makers. In August 1889, Bailie and Strange spoke at two meetings, 'urgung on them the necessity of organization and showing them how to do so'. They added that '..the work is now progressing favourably'.[6] However in September 1890 the Workman's Times reported that a society of cloth cap and hat makers was then in the course of formation. It would therefore appear that the earlier organization had not materialized. Moreover on this occasion the chair was taken not by a Socialist Leaguer, but by G.D. Kelley.[7] The shirt makers formed a union in October 1889, but although the fact was recorded in Commonweal,[8] the Socialist League did

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1. SC, 20 April 1890.
2. The Trades Council, like the socialists, was not entirely altruistic in its support for the Jewish tailors. Obviously the products of their sweated labour were undercutting the market for the established tailors' union.
3. WT, 12 September 1890.
4. Ibid., 10 April 1891; Slater's Manchester, Salford and Suburban Directory (Manchester, 1893) p.154 (alphabetical directory), p.20 (street directory).
5. WT, 30 April 1892.
6. Com., 10 August 1889.
7. WT, 5 September 1890.
8. Com, 2November 1889

not claim to have organized it. Perhaps the best publicity for the plight of the shirt makers came from 'Nunquam' in the Clarion.[1]

One other sweated trade must be considered in detail, not because of its size, but because of the role played in its organization by the Labour Church. There were in fact only about fifty mat makers in Manchester. In March 1892 they struck for higher pay, and appealed for assistance to the Mat and Matting Trade Society, which had its headquarters in London. The society sent £6, 'all we were able to give them'. John Trevor, of the Labour Church, not only formed a trade union for the strikers, but actually kept ten strikers for a fortnight at his own expense. Trevor in the Labour Prophet, and Blatchford in the Clarion, both appealed for funds to assist the mat makers. Their appeals, together with money from other unions and the proceeds of a lotters, raised £300, which was used to establish a co-operative society. The co-operative began with a small amount of plant, and six or seven hands. The men who had been receiving 15s per week before the strike now earned 26s, although the women in many cases received only half the amount. The society was managed by Allan Parkes, a member of the Labour Church.[2]

The ethical socialists also appear to have been most influential in the organization of the shop assistants. In July 1890 'Nunquam' in the Sunday Chronicle announced the formation of a National Shop Assistants' Union, and its demand for a uniform closing time for all shops, coupled with either a reduction in daily hours, or a half-holiday once a week.[3] The shop assistants were considered to be 'white-collar' workers, but the practice of 'living-in' and the long hours which they worked, caused their conditions to resemble more closely those of the unskilled workers than of the 'labour aristocracy'. After the publication of his article, 'Nunquam' received a letter from the Chairman of the Salford Branch of the National Shop Assistants' Union, who stated that the employers in the town had agreed to close for a half-holiday.[4] Manchester was slow to follow the Salford example,[5] and the union was still agitating there for a general half-holiday in May 1891. At this time thirty or forty shop assistants visited a shopkeeper who refused to

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1. C, 23 April 1892.
2. Royal Commission on Labour (1893) Minutes of Evidence CIII. Evidence of James Adams. Qs. 31,874-31,886; C, 2 April 1892; Labour Prophet, April 1892.
3. SC, 13 July 1890; J. Edwards (ed.) The Labour Annual, 1895 (Manchester, ?1894) provided a biography of William Johnson, which stated that he joined the National Union of Shop Assistants in 1889 (see p.177).
4. SC, 20 July 1890.
5. Ibid., 20 July 1890.

close, put up the shutters and posted them, and the goods inside the shop, with bills advocating early closing. As a result William Johnson and one of his colleagues were bound over to keep the peace by the local magistrates, while two others were fined 5s each plus costs.[1] Johnson was at this time General Secretary of the Union, which had its national head office in Manchester.[2] His previous connection with the American Knights of Labor has been mentioned above, but he was also prominent in the Fabian Society and the North Manchester Labour Electoral Association, before becoming a founder member of the ILP.[3]

The other principal group of new unions in the area catered for the transport workers. The first group to organize appear to have been the tramway employees, who were spurred on as a result of management action. The Manchester Tramway Company put up notices in the cars, offering a reward of £10 to anyone giving information leading to the conviction of any person defrauding them. The guards on the Harpurhey tram route objected, both because the notice insinuated that they were dishonest and because they feared that passengers might conspire to prove them so, in order to obtain the reward. About twenty men came out on strike, and their places were at once filled. They had at this stage no organization, but after the strike had occurred thetramway employees as a whole held a meeting, to urge a boycott of the tram company unless the men were better treated. When the movement came near to collapse, the League held a large socialist demonstration in Stevenson Square. However within a short time the directors of the company agreed to remove the notices.[4]

The union expanded rapidly, and within six months had nearly all the tram and bus men within its ranks. Contact with the Socialist League does not appear to have been maintained largely, one suspects, because the tramway employees did not wish to be associated with its political doctrines. In January 1890 Commonweal stated that the union had gone round JPs, MPs, baronets and other 'gentlemen' to obtain patronage, while the secretary, a tram guard, had stated that the association was not antagonistic to the directors' or employers' interests. He had, moreover, disclaimed any sympathy of the union with the gasmen.[5]

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1. WT, 15 May 1891
2. Royal Commission on Labour (1893) Minutes of Evidence CIII. Evidence of William Johnson. Qs 30,669-71.
3. See above, p.186 and WT, 2 October, 14 November 1891, 28 May 1892.
4. CFT, 2 August 1889; Com., 10 August 1889.
5. Com., 4 January 1889.

However the rank and file members had more cause for satisfaction than had the Socialist League; by October 1890 the union had obtained a fortnightly half-holiday for the men, and had caused Manchester to become a licensed city.[1] In April 1891 the union attempted to obtain a further reduction in hours. A deputation was appointed,'...from some of the most prominent gentlemen in Manchester consisting of members of the town council and magistrates, and along with them Professor Munro, who approached the directors of the Manchester Carriage and Tramways Company, and asked them if they could see their way to reduce the hours to 12 per day'. The directors asked for time to receive also a deputation from the men. The Carriage Company consequently found a few men who were prepared to state that they did not want a reduction of hours, and as a result the company refused to grant the demand.[2]

By March 1892 the Northern Counties Amalgamated Association of Tramway and Hackney Carriage Employees had managed to achieve one full day's holiday per week and a wage increase. It was at this juncture that 'Nunquam', in the Clarion, pointed out the advantages which might be obtained as a result of the tramways system being taken over by the Corporation.[3] Such a proposal might be expected to appeal to the union's secretary, George T. Jackson. In August 1891 he became a founder member and treasurer of Salford Labour Electoral Association.[4]

A similar example of initial Socialist League influence, which was rapidly shed, is to be found in the carters' and lorrymen's union. Early in November 1889 the Socialist League held a meeting to organize the carters and lorrymen of all the railway companies.[5] What exactly happened was never recorded by the League. Although by the autumn of 1890 14,700 men were employed as lorry drivers in the area within a seven mile radius of Manchester Exchange, few of them had by this time joined unions. Those who had were in fact divided among several societies. Some of the lorrymen employed by the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway had affiliated to the Liverpool-based Mersey Quay and Dock Labourers' Union. Those of other great railway companies had joined the General Railway Workers' Union. An amalgamation was therefore planned, in the form of a Manchester and Salford Lorrymen and Carters' Union. This was to cater for all lorrymen and carters outside those employed solely in railway and canal labour.[6]

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1. WT, 17 October 1890. Manchester Carriage and Tramways Company had opposed the licensing of cabmen for many years.
2. Royal Commission on Labour (1893) Minutes of Evidence BIII. Evidence of G.T. Jackson. Q.17,893.
3. C, 12 March 1892.
4. WT, 21 and 28 August 1891
5. Com., 16 November 1889.
6. WT, 14 November 1890.

By 1892 the union had around 1,400 members, mainly coal carters and brewers' draymen. The cab, bus and tramway men had their own union, previously described, and the two organizations had a working agreement to assist each other if necessary.[1] The history of the carters' and lorrymen's union appears to have been one of steady expansion, rather than disputes. Prominent members of the Trades Council appeared at its meetings. In January 1891, at a public meeting in the People's Concert Hall, Henry Slatter, G.D. Kelley, and Councillors W. Davies and W. Yearnshaw (of Salford) were all on the platform beside the union's secretary, John Kelly.[2] At a special meeting of the union's Executive Committee, held at Ordsall Temperance Hall in the following September, it was decided to take steps to affiliate to the Trades Council.[3]

One of the union's chief complaints concerned the system whereby firms employed one man to do the work of two, with two horses and carts. The shafts of the second cart were chained to the first, while a yoke strap or chain attached the second horse to the first cart. Kelly told the Royal Commission on Labour that the system was both cruel to the horses, and reduced the number of men employed. He also believed that some fifteen members of Manchester City Council were shareholders in one of the colliery firms which carried on the system. This, according to Kelly, was the reason why the Watch Committee had ignored a petition with 2,400 signatures, against the two-cart system. At the 1891 Municipal Election the Lorrymen tried to sway public opinion against the system. It was made a test question in every district; but while all but one or two candidates agreed that the system was bad, and should be abolished, when the question came before the Watch Committee they were either absent or voted in the opposite direction.[4] Here was an obvious motive for the union to involve itself in local politics. Kelly's early participation in the independent labour representation movement, and subsequent municipal candidature with Liberal backing, must however be considered at a later stage.[5]

Other new unions for transport workers appear to have been established in the area without any initial socialist assistance.

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1. Royal Commission on Labour (1893) Minutes of Evidence BIII. Evidence of John Kelly. Qs 18,548-50, 18,592.
2. WT, 16 January 1891.
3. Ibid., 11 September 1891.
4. Royal Commission on Labour (1893) Minutes of Evidence BIII. Evidence of John Kelly. Qs 18,554 - 18,583.
5. See below, pp. 219-22.

The General Railway Workers' Union was founded in London under the inspiration of a group of socialists, including H.H. Champion.[1] The Manchester and Salford branch was active over questions of wages and hours, but when it invited speakers from outside its ranks to address public meetings, they tended to be the leaders of other unions and members of the Trades Council who were later to be prominent in the movement for independent labour representation; John Jenkins of the Bakers and J. Quinn of the Manchester branch of the Amalgamated Society of Tailors and the Trades Council.[2] The Upper Mersey Watermen and Porters' Association also appears to have been outside the socialist sphere of influence, being organised by Joseph Billam, a shoemaker by trade who also acted as an insurance agent and secretary to three large friendly societies.[3] There is no record in the SDF or Socialist League press of him participating in these movements.

The new unions described above were by no means all the societies formed in Manchester and Salford, merely some of the more important. However the chief question to be considered is not merely the development of the unions, but their relationship to the foundation of the ILP. On this issue perhaps the first observation to be made is that, while the socialists were active in organizing the new unions which began in the late 'eighties, by the beginning of the new decade there were in fact few SDF or Socialist League members among the union leaders. Horrocks had been replaced as secretary of the Gasworkers, Marshall as secretary of the Machinists, Tailors and Pressers. Only Leonard Hall stands out as a prominent Marxist socialist leading a new union. Why, despite the assistance which socialists had given to many unions at the time of their formation, had they ceased to exert much influence? In the case of the Socialist League, the answer must obviously be that the League had changed its own tactics, and had moved from participation in a wider labour movement to anarchism. The reason for the apparent lack of SDF influence is not so easy to ascertain on a local as on a national level. The Salford SDF members were, after all, working men concerned with local issues, not middle class intellectuals

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1. H.A. Clegg et al., op.cit., p.230.
2. WT, 31 July 1891. Quinn was in fact a Social-Democrat, but seems to have been invited as a trade unionist, rather than a socialist speaker.
3. Ibid., 27 February, 20 March 1891; Royal Commission on Labour (1893) Minutes of Evidence BII. Evidence of Joseph Billam. Qs 15,329 - 15,335.

out of touch with the masses. Perhaps the basic reason may be found, not in the histories of 'new unionism', but in Robert Roberts' description of the local unskilled workers of the era.[1] While at the time of the unions' foundation they welcomed the assistance of men who were capable of public speaking, organization and book-keeping, in some cases simply of men who were even literate, they were themselves basically apolitical. Marxist socialists were accepted so long as they concerned themselves with organization, but it is extremely doubtful whether many of the rank and file understood or wished to become involved in the ultimate goals of the SDF. However, increased state or municipal control over their industries might bring to many new unionists certain obvious and easily-understandable benefits; the eight hour day, improved working conditions, higher wages. Perhaps for this reason some of the leaders of new unions in the early '90s, who were not at this juncture socialists, were to number among the early members of the ILP; George Rogerson, William Johnson, George T. Jackson. For outside assistance in their campaigns during the early '90s, the new unions turned more readily to the Trades Council or to 'Nunquam' and the Labour Church, rather than to the SDF.

If the Marxism of the SDF did not hold much appeal for the new unions, the idea of independent labour representation certainly found wider support. Several unions had their own individual reasons for backing such a campaign. Municipal employees, such as the gasworkers and some tramway guards and drivers would, through direct labour representation on local councils, be enabled to exert some influence over their own employers. A similar consideration might hold sway in the case of the navvies, for large sums of Salford ratepayers' money were being expended upon the Ship Canal. And if the rank-and-file member did not necessarily realise such implications, they can hardly have escaped the unions' leadership.

Because it was in the unique position of having a locally-published newspaper, the Navvies' Union provided many of the expressions of a new union's desire for an independent labour party, based on socialist ideals. Thus in the first number, of January 1891, one finds the following exhortation, probably from Leonard Hall:

> Brain and brawn, skilled and unskilled, trades-unionist and tramp, must recognise a common cause and shake hands IN FACE OF A COMMON ENEMY. The Class War leaves no room for invidious distinctions, craft jealousies, or unrecognised faces. The workers of each and

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1. See above, p.107.

every occupation must combine or starve, and the trade-unions must all federate or die... It is only by the best interests of all our friends that we can hope to live to see and help in bringing about a complete change in the balance of interests in this country - when no longer shall we see the pitiable spectacle of working men shouting themselves hoarse with unaccountable enthusiasm over the meaningless SCRAPPING BETWEEN TORY AND LIBERAL, the only difference between whom, from the viewpoint of the Labor Party, is but as that 'twixt tweedledum and tweedledee - as to which shall have the biggest share of what both take from labor![1]

In the same issue was to be found an article entitled 'The Way Out, by D. Frank English:[2]

> It is only by making the labor unions levers for the permanent furtherance, AS EMBODIED BY THE LAW, of the social, political, and industrial interests of the whole wage-earning population that any abiding good will come of the new Labor movement. The new unions must therefore use themselves to force the Powers-that-be to concede measures like the Eight Hours Day, the organising of town workshops and country farms under Public Control and ownership, and the taking over and managing by the social authorities of all public works,...[3]

In a similar vein, the May 1891 Navvy's and General Laborer's Guide published 'Our Manifesto! Why you should join the union'. Among the reasons were:

> ...because the Labor Unions are the cradle of that great Labour Party of future English politics which will, by massing its organised vote at every election (both Local and Parliamentary), at the back of our BREAD-AND-BUTTER, WORK-AND-WAGES, SHORTER-HOURS, PROGRAMME - the main planks of which will be the replacing of the present private monopolies and cannibal competition, by Public Service, the Co-operative Commonwealth, and Social Equality and Freedom for all-eventually abolish the wage-slave system itself, secure to the workers the FULL FRUITS OF THEIR WORK, and bring instead of the Class War of to-day that peace on earth and goodwill between men which can only be attained by, and must never be permitted till, industrial JUSTICE has been won, as it only can be won, BY the workers for the workers.[4]

The Navvies' was not the only union which saw its role as being wider than the mere protection of members' interests. John Kelly, of the Lorrymen and Carters' Union, when giving evidence to the Royal Commission on Labour, stated: 'I believe that as a people, intending to do what we can for the working people of the country, have a right to bring into occupation as fully as possible the unemployed of it,...'[5]

It should not, however, be assumed that even a majority of the new unions were prepared to play an active part in the independent labour representation movement, or that the older unions were all

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1. Navvy's Guide, 1 January 1891
2. See above, pp.194-5.
3. Navvy's Guide, 1 January 1891
4. Ibid., 1 May 1891.
5. Royal Commission on Labour (1893) Minutes of Evidence BIII. Evidence of John Kelly, Q. 18557.

outside its ranks. In April 1892 a committee was formed, chiefly through the leadership of the Clarion, to organize a May Day demonstration. The platform which it formulated included an eight hour day, shorter parliaments, adult suffrage, 'the formation of an independent labour party, and direct labour representation', and nationalization of the land and means of production. The trade unions represented on this committee included the Spindle and Flyer-makers' Union, United Carters' Association, Dressers, Dyers and Finishers' Association (Manchester branch), Tailors, Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, General Railway Workers' Union, Shop Assistants Union, and Amalgamated Union of Operative Bakers and Confectioners.[1] The procession itself was planned to include contingents also from the Shirt and Jacket Makers, Horsehair and Fibre Workers, Enginemen and Cranemen, and Navvies' Union.[2]

Thus while new unions predominated, the Bakers, Tailors and ASRS were all old-established societies. However their representation may well have been due to factors other than national policy. The Bakers and Tailors were both led by prominent advocates of independent labour representation. John Jenkins, national General Secretary of the Amalgamated Union of Bakers and Confectioners, was a member of the Trades Council, Executive member of Salford Labour Electoral Association, and president of the Trades Council's Labour Electoral Association. He had also stood as a Trades Council nominee in the local School Board Elections. On May Day he served as Chief Marshall.[3] He was later to advocate the municipalization of bread supply, when a witness to the Royal Commission on Labour.[4] J.F. Quinn, of the Amalgamated Society of Tailors, was a Social-Democrat, a delegate to the Trades Council, and a member of Salford Labour Electoral Association's Executive. As secretary of the May Day Committee, he headed the procession.[5] While these two unions would appear to have been influenced by their local leaders, the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants had, at this time, good reason to support Robert Blatchford. During January 1892 'Nunquam' in the Clarion had described the conditions of the guards and signalmen employed by the Manchester, Sheffield and

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1. WT, 23 April 1892.
2. C, 30 April 1892.
3. WT, 5 September 1890; 28 August, 9 October, 14 November 1891; 7 May 1892.
4. Royal Commission on Labour (1893) Minutes of Evidence CIII. Evidence of John Jenkins. Qs. 29,540-58.
5. WT, 31 July, 28 August 1891; 9 April, 7 May 1892. For his SDF membership, see L. Bather, op.cit., p.242.

Lincolnshire Railway Company. The revelations had brought a libel action from the company, but letters and resolutions of thanks from several local branches of the ASRS.[1]

However if the new unions were more in evidence at the May Day demonstration than were their older-established counterparts, this did not necessarily mean that the ILP was to draw a large membership from rank-and-file 'new unionists'. The survey in the following chapter, of the leading participants in the labour electoral movements and foundation of the ILP, will reveal the great majority of their number to have been skilled workers. The years of socialist involvement first in the unemployed, then in the new union movements, had not converted large numbers of the poorest section of the population to socialism, or even to the cause of labour independence. They had however won sympathy for the unemployed and unskilled among more vocal and influential sections of the population. They had also created organizations in which the rank and file, while they did not necessarily understand or personally advocate socialism, could see potential advantages in certain parts of the socialist platform, and were prepared to follow the leadership of some of the most prominent local advocates of independent labour representation. But most important of all their campaigns had emphasised that low wages, bad working conditions, and all the other ills of contemporary industrial society, were not simply the just deserts of individual indolence or improvidence, but were related to the political system, and therefore capable of a political solution. The solution which achieved the widest support was that variously advocated by the Clarion and Workman's Times, the Labour Church, the Labour Electoral Associations and some of the trade unions themselves; independent labour representation in both national and local government, in accordance with a socialist platform.

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1. C, 2,9 and 16 January, 27 February 1892.

Chapter 6

The Formation of Manchester and Salford ILP, 1890-1892.

To the observer of the Manchester political scene in the summer of 1890, there were no obvious signs that within the next two years there would emerge a new political party, dedicated to the advancement of socialism and the interests of labour. On the socialist front, the swing towards anarchism by the Socialist League had left the SDF as the only organized movement, although admittedly its influence tended to be confined to Salford. Robert Blatchford, writing as 'Nunquam' in the Sunday Chronicle, had many enthusiastic readers, but was as yet associated with no organized group. Members of the older-established trade unions who showed any interest in the question, still looked to the Trades Council for a lead towards labour representation. Among the new unions, the influence of organized socialism was perhaps less in evidence than it had been in the late '80s, although several of the more prominent unions were led by men who combined a desire for independent labour representation with a belief in state and municipal intervention.

Thus in mid-1890 the emergence of a local independent labour party seemed by no means inevitable. Admittedly the extent of working class Conservatism militated against a strong Lib-Lab or Progressive movement, which in other areas proved an alternative attraction. But even so, the SDF, the labourists, and the readers of 'Nunquam' might well have been expected to continue along their own, largely separate paths. Until the formation of the national ILP in January 1893, there was to occur no major external event which might oblige the labourists and socialists of Manchester and Salford to re-think their political alignments.

The simple fact that Manchester and Salford ILP was founded in May 1892, eight months before the national party, indicates that developments within the local area, rather than any external influence, were responsible for its advent. The chapter which follows is therefore an attempt to examine the ways in which the hitherto separate labourist and socialist organizations came to achieve such a degree of unity. In the first instance the movements themselves will be considered, but it will then be necessary to examine the roles of many of their individual adherents. The organizations concerned were by no means mutually exclusive, and alliances between bodies as dissimilar as the SDF,

Labour Church and Fabian Society, which appear somewhat strange when viewed from a national standpoint, seem almost inevitable when it is realised that locally they had several leading advocates in common.

The sources of information for such a survey are extremely limited. No documentary material has survived from the Labour Electoral Associations, and for many of the movements in question newspaper reports provide the only clues. In practice most of these reports emanate from the Workman's Times, simply because it was, for the 1890-2 period, the principal advocate of independent labour representation. An attempt was even made, through this paper, to found a national Independent Labour Party. Beyond the columns of the Workman's Times, coverage is extremely thin. Because this chapter concerns a political movement in the making, rather than the progress of one already established, many of the events in question escaped the notice of all but the local, unpaid reporters of the Workman's Times, who were themselves in many cases leading participants. The more famous Clarion did not commence publication until December 1891, and only began to provide detailed coverage of the local labour movement when plans were formulated for a May Day demonstration the following year. It has however been attempted to piece together, from these reports and from biographical information of an equally limited nature, the interaction of movements and personalities which brought into being the Manchester and Salford ILP.

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It might, in that summer of 1890, have been possible to distinguish three broad trends in labour politics. First, and oldest, was the basic campaign for labour representation. This was the aim simply to see working men elected to local and national legislatures, under any party label. The emphasis was merely upon the presence of spokesmen for 'labour'. More ambitious was the second movement, to promote working men as electoral candidates independent of either established political party. The final and not, in 1890, the most dominant demand, was for independent labour representation combined with a socialist platform. But while these trends will be considered separately, in an attempt to interpret the proliferation of movements which sprang up in the next two years, the emphasis must constantly be upon factors which tended towards unity rather than disparity.

The campaign for labour representation, unaccompanied by demands for either independence or socialism, was in 1890 centred upon Manchester and Salford Trades Council. In all but name it was a Lib-Lab movement, for whereas the Trades Council comprised between 30

and 40 active Liberals in the early '90s, it could boast only three or four Conservatives, who did not even number among its most prominent personalities. Although the number of socialist delegates was to show a continual increase, in 1890 J.F. Quinn of the Tailors' Society and SDF stood alone.[1] As an indication of the prevailing Lib-Lab philosophy, it is worth considering briefly the views of the Trades Council's Secretary, George D. Kelley. Shortly after the Trades Council's affiliation to the Labour Electoral Association of Great Britain and Ireland,[2] Kelley presided at the latter organization's third Annual Conference, in Hanley. Here he asserted that the Association desired no class legislation, but the presence in the House of Commons of men with a thorough knowledge of the wants of the masses, together with working men representatives on town and county councils, boards of guardians, local and school boards. Such limited objectives were in complete accordance with the Association's policy, and Kelley left Hanley as its newly-elected President.[3] Six months later, in October 1890, the Trades Council considered running Kelley as its candidate for St. George's Ward in the Manchester Municipal Elections. But within the space of about a week came the news of his withdrawal, on the grounds that the time was unfavourable. To both John Jenkins of the Bakers, and the Workman's Times correspondent 'Robin' [Joseph Waddington], the withdrawal represented a betrayal of the working men, and the Trades Council's desire to avoid any conflict with the Liberal Party.[4]

In February 1891, Kelley was returned unopposed for St. Clement's Ward, Manchester. His election address was, however, hardly an expression of working class militancy, including such sentiments as:

> I am in favour of providing some means by which the conflicts that occur between Capital and Labour, and often with such disastrous results, may be avoided... I claim for my connection with, and long experience of, the Working Classes of the country, to have a fair knowledge of their wants and aspirations; these, I believe, would be better realised by peaceful and constitutional means than by hasty, rash or misguided action. The Direct Representation of Labour would prove an advantage to the general commercial interests of the City...[5]

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1. L. Bather, op.cit., pp.127-8.
2. Ibid., p.128.
3. CFT, 11 April 1890.
4. WT, 17 and 24 October, 28 November 1890.
5. Anon., 'Mr. Councillor Kelley' in Manchester Faces and Places, Vol.II No.6, 10 March 1891, p.93.

His role as a 'labour' councillor did not, however, serve to weaken Kelley's party allegiance, as his interview for an article in Manchester Faces and Places revealed:

> 'As members of that Association [the LEA] we don't belong to any political party', said Mr. Kelley, 'though there may be a national leaning to the Liberals. I myself am a Liberal. I stood as a Liberal candidate under Liberal auspices. I am prepared on party questions to go with the Liberals; but on any Trade question I hold myself free to take what action I consider best for my own people. I claim, as I stated in my address, to be specially identified with working class interests!'[1]

Less than a month later, in March 1891, Matthew Arrandale, Chairman of the Trades Council and General Secretary of the United Machine Workers Association, stood as 'labour' candidate for Ardwick Ward, Manchester.[2] On 20 March 'Bradawl' reported in the Workmen's Times that Arrandale was hard at work holding meetings, but the placards which had appeared on the walls were 'funny for a labour candidate', for the speakers were generally 'men of culture' rather than working men.[3] Much the same view was expressed by another contributor to the Workman's Times, 'Fidus Achates', otherwise known as Giles S. Horsfall, of Salford.[4] Arrandale's failure to win the seat was, he asserted, 'a defeat richly deserved. He has hob-nobbed with party politicians, and either they have 'sold' him or he has been guilty of inconsistency, for on Wednesday or Thursday a card bearing his portrait was issued from a non-union office.' Arrandale's opponents had, not unnaturally, plastered the walls with placards announcing this fact. 'Fidus Achates' went on to remark:

> It appears to me that the only consistent Labour party we have in these parts is the South Salford Branch of the Social Democratic Federation...whatever may be said against the Social Democrats they are at least earnest, sincere and consistent on the great Labour question, and refuse to have any truck whatever with either political faction.[5]

The assertion that Arrandale had 'hob-nobbed' with party politicians was an understatement. To cite a biographical sketch of that candidate, published in 1896:

> In politics Mr. Arrandale is an earnest and active Liberal, and for many years has given strenuous support to the party...When the Gorton Division of Lancashire was formed, he was then president of one of the sub-districts of the division, and took an active part in

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1. Ibid., p.94.
2. WT, 13 March 1891.
3. Ibid., 20 March 1891. 'Bradawl', like several other local WT correspondents, is not readily identifiable.
4. See Appendix II below.
5. WT, 27 March 1891

> furthering the return of the late Mr. Richard Peacock on two occasions, he then acting as chairman of the Central District. He has also given his services as member of several ward committees in the city...[1]

Arrandale was hardly just another rank and file Liberal sympathiser.

Criticism of the Trades Council's subservience to the Liberal interest can hardly have been confined to newspaper correspondents. For although the delegates themselves were predominantly Liberals, it has already been shown that a large proportion of working class electors, not to mention non-electors, were Conservatives.[2] The solution to this problem, by independent labour representation, appeared all the more obvious as news emerged from Bradford of the formation of a Labour Union, which in May 1891 became the Independent Labour Party.[3] Manchester and Salford Trades Council was, at this juncture, considering the best means to secure the election of three Labour representatives to the next Salford School Board. To 'Fidus Achates' the answer seemed obvious:

> ...why should not the executive of the [Trades] Council take in hand the organisation of all the forces of Labour in this district? If they only commenced operations at once on the lines of the party now forming in Bradford, I venture to say that when a general election is sprung upon us, we should be able to return more than one Labour representative to the House of Commons from this district, provided they were run entirely independent of any political party.[4]

Such comments do not appear to have fallen on completely deaf ears. By the beginning of August 1891, a sub-committee of the Trades Council had prepared a scheme for the formation of a distinct Labour Electoral Association. Certain clauses within that scheme, all of which were adopted by the Trades Council, attempted to deal with the whole question of independence:

> Objects: The objects of this association shall be to place bona fide representatives of Labour upon all public bodies that are entrusted with local government or in the Imperial parliament.
> Constitution: This association shall consist of all persons or Labour organisations who by subscriptions shall assist in furthering the objects of the association...
> Other associations: This association shall not render any support to any candidate who is the nominee of any political party, but confine its operations to furthering the candidature of bona fide Labour candidates, who shall be workmen or representatives of Labour

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1. Anon., 'Mr. Councillor M. Arrandale, J.P.' in Manchester Faces and Places, Vol.VII No.10, July 1896, p.147. The two elections in which R. Peacock was returned as Liberal MP for Gorton were December 1885 and July 1886 (see J. Voncent and M. Stenton, op.cit., p.141).
2. See above, pp.36-9.
3. For the formation of Bradford ILP, see F. Brockway, Socialism over Sixty Years. The Life of Jowett of Bradford (1864-1944) pp.36-8.
4. WT, 12 June 1891.

organizations, selected by a meeting of delegates affiliated with this association and called for the purpose of the selection of a candidate or candidates for such vacancies as may arise in the various public bodies before mentioned.
Holding of office: The holding of office in any of the recognised political associations shall disqualify such person from holding any office in this association.

In the discussion which followed these proposals, certain clauses were further defined. It was agreed that the 'other associations' referred to meant Liberal and Conservative bodies, as opposed to Fabian or Socialist societies. It was also proposed that, where the association had no candidate, it should support the one who declared himself most in accordance with its views. This was unanimously rejected by the Council. Further, R.W. Watters, delegate of the Typographical Association and a Liberal, asked if the new association would be prepared to provide political organizations with candidates, if requested. To this the Chairman, Matthew Arrandale, replied that such a step would be 'cloaking a political purpose', something which Arrandale now seemed anxious to avoid.[1]

Thus in theory the Trades Council had agreed to establish an independent labour representation organization. In practice, however, that independence depended largely upon the interpretation of individual members, and upon the relative strength of their loyalties. The only bar to the political activities of members was against office-holding in both the LEA and one of the established parties. Any man with political ambitions would obviously be prepared to resign a party office, while still retaining ordinary membership, if the chance arose to become an LEA candidate. The option to retain existing party allegiance still remained open. Had large numbers of the LEA's delegates been prepared to forgo that option, and give their undivided loyalty to the LEA, the history of the local ILP might have been very different. It was as a result of the Trades Council's continued attachment to Liberalism that the demand arose for another, truly independent, organization. It is also likely that the proven hazard of permitting continued attachment to an established party led to Manchester and Salford ILP being much more strict on this matter than were many of its local counterparts. The celebrated 'Manchester Fourth Clause' was the outcome of past experience rather than of dogmatic beliefs.

While the scheme for the LEA was being prepared and submitted, and before the new body had been convened, the Trades Council was negotiating with the Liberals over the School Board elections. The

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1. Ibid., 7 August 1891. For information concerning R.W. Watters, see L. Bather, op.cit., Appendix 6, p.242.

Trades Council had submitted to the Manchester School Board Liberal Candidates' Committee the names of four men willing to be nominated as Labour candidates. Only one of them had been selected: G.D. Kelley. Kelley had then been instructed by the Executive Committee [of the TC] to write, expressing its dissatisfaction, and ask if a deputation would be received. After a delay of seven weeks, the Liberals then asked Kelley to call on Benjamin Green. No mention was made of a deputation. When this letter was submitted to the Executive, the opinion was that the Trades Council had been discourteously treated, and should have nothing further to do with the election in conjunction with the Liberal Party. The Liberals, however, appeared anxious to reach some agreement, for when the Executive, after further communication, decided to abide by its decision, the Liberal Candidates' Committee wrote to announce that it had resolved to change the name to the 'Free Board School Party', thereby presenting 'a clear and definite issue before the electors'. Moreover, '...a strong desire was expressed that the Labour party represented by the Trades Council should be incorporated with the main body'. The Liberals hoped to secure the co-operation of the Wesleyans as well as the Trades Council, suggesting that the former nominate one candidate, and the latter two of the eight required.

The fact that the Trades Council declined to depart from its previous decision, and agreed to nominate Labour candidates for the School Board election, might at first appear to stem from a desire for labour independence. It is, however, suggested that the attitude among the Liberal Trades Council delegates was rather one of annoyance, that the Liberals had not been prepared to support a sufficiently large proportion of their candidates, coupled with a belief that some hard bargaining on this occasion would lead to favourable terms at future elections. G.D. Kelley announced that 'he had felt the slight from the Liberal Candidates Committee so keenly that he had declined to be nominated as a candidate for the Labour party',[1] which was hardly a demand for independence. After the Trades Council had finally appointed its School Board candidates, 'Pardo' in the Workman's Times asked:'...Do the men who are supposed to represent the Labour party mean to advocate the principles of the party, or do they not?' He added:

> Unless we draw a clear and distinct line to completely sever the Labour party from the decaying political parties whether it be the

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1. WT, 28 August 1891.

aristocracy or the moneyocracy, there will be no real progress, nor will the leaders receive that undivided confidence from the people which is essential for success.[1]

The Trades Council nominated three School Board candidates: Kelley, John Jenkins of the Amalgamated Union of Balers and Confectioners, and H.R. Slatter, General Secretary of the Typographical Association. Despite the assistance of the newly-formed Labour Electoral Association,[2] all were defeated. In Salford, R.W. Watters fought in the School Board election, but was kept from the bottom of the poll by two Social Democrats. According to 'Fidus Achates', Watters was run as one of seven Liberal candidates simply as 'a nice sop for the workers'. The Liberals had 'placed him in the most unlikely ward for getting in. They don't want any working men, call them by what name you will, in the select circles of educational administration'.[3]

While the School Board candidates were still being selected, there occurred a vacancy on Manchester City Council, for Openshaw ward. According to the Workman's Times, John Jenkins had been suggested as a Trades Council candidate, 'but in consultation with the Liberal party it was not deemed advisable to nominate him this time'. After the nomination day had passed, Jenkins at a Trades Council meeting 'repudiated the suggestion that they had been got at by the Liberal party and persuaded to retire'. But another delegate, Mr. Cowan, 'could not understand how it was that all suggestions from that Council were settled at Liberal meetings'.[4]

If the Trades Council was still attached to an established political party, its Labour Electoral Association was composed largely of delegates from established trade unions. By mid-September 1891, unions which had decided to join included Manchester branches of the Millers' National Union, the Amalgamated Society of Upholsterers, the Union of Upholsterers, the Bookbinders, Saddlers, Calico Printers, Engravers, French Polishers and Tinplate Workers. Together with these were the Salford branch of the ASRS, the Openshaw branch of Coachbuilders, and the Spindle and Flyer Makers. A large number of unions had not replied to the LEA's circular and it was therefore decided to send another circular, asking

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1. Ibid., 4 September 1891.
2. At the foundation of the LEA, Mr. Heaviside asked whether the three Labour candidates for Manchester School Board would be run by the Trades Council or the new Association. Kelley, as Secretary, replied that they would avail themselves of the machinery of the new Association, but the candidates would be the nominees of the Trades Council, which would bear financial responsibility (ibid., 25 September 1891)
3. Ibid., 21 November 1891.
4. Ibid., 28 August 1891.

for a decision by 1 October, when the first meeting of the new Association was planned. By 9 October 16 societies had joined and officers had been elected, distinct from those of the Trades Council. John Jenkins was President, Henry Preston (of the General Union of Tinplate Workers) Treasurer, and Edward Roberts (of the Bookbinders and Machine Rulers' Consolidated Union) Secretary. The end of January 1892 saw more than thirty unions affiliated to the LEA.[1]

Despite the admittance of some 'new unions' to its ranks, the Trades Council remained dominated by the predominantly Liberal representatives of the trade union 'establishment'. In 1892 it was to decide against participation in the May Day demonstration, and retain its affiliation to the Labour Electoral Association of Great Britain and Ireland, as opposed to merging with the new local Independent Labour Party. The Trades Council LEA did, in December 1891, propose a scheme for federating the various Labour Associations in the city. Jenkins, Roberts and Preston formed a deputation to the North Manchester Labour Electoral Association, but nothing appears to have been arranged as a result.[2] Such an outcome was hardly surprising, when it is considered that the North Manchester LEA had been founded by the local Fabian Society, and was committed to the cause of independent action, so frequently ignored by the Trades Council body.

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Of the local, independent, Labour Electoral Associations, the first to emerge was that in Salford, and its inspiration seems to have come from the Bradford Labour Union. At the end of July 1891 a meeting was held in the Trafford Hotel, 'to take into consideration the formation of a Labour party for Salford'.[3] The leading participants came from a variety of political backgrounds. In the chair was a Salford councillor, W.F. Cottrell, who was also president of the Amalgamated Association of Tramway Employees. Cottrell acknowledged that his return to the Council the previous November had been largely through the trade union vote, and stated his belief that the time had come for a direct Labour party to be formed.[4] Of prominent trade unionists there were present George T. Jackson, also of the Tramway Employees,[5] George Rogerson, then a member of the

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3. Ibid., 7 August 1891.
4. Ibid., 26 September 1890, 7 August 1891.
5. Ibid., 7 August 1891 gave the name as J.G. Jackson of the Tramway Employees, but the report of the adjourned meeting, in ibid., 21 August 1891, gave G.T. Jackson.

1. Ibid., 25 September, 9 October 1891; 30 January 1892
2. Ibid., 12 December 1891

Carpenters and Joiners but who, by May Day 1892, had changed his allegiance to the GW&GLU,[1] and John Kelly, General Secretary of the Manchester, Salford and District Carters' and Lorrymen's Union.[2] R.W. Watters attended in his capacity as vice-president of the Trades Council, while from the SDF came George Evans and Alfred Settle, then Social-Democratic candidate for Ordsal Ward. Who had actually organised the meeting is uncertain, but it is unlikely to have been the SDF, for the Workman's Times commented that '...the promoters had no programme whatever to lay before the meeting, and thus no definite method of business was followed'. Whatever their other failings, the socialists could usually be relied upon to plan business meetings. The visiting speaker was James Bartley, treasurer of Bradford Labour Union, who detailed the working of his organization and produced a copy of its constitution, which was duly read out by the Chairman. Kelly and Rogerson were both anxious that a similar Labour Union be formed for Salford, but the socialists and Watters hesitated to commit themselves. Watters explained that the Trades Council was about to consider the same subject on the following evening, while Settle, although he sympathised with the object of the meeting, announced that the constitution of the Bradford Union was 'not sufficiently definite to meet his views'.[3]

The meeting was adjourned for a fortnight, during which time the Trades Council took its decision to form a Labour Electoral Association. But as George Rogerson pointed out from the chair, there were thousands of voters outside the pale of trade unionism...

> He did not wish to say anything unkindly of the Trades Council, but he did wish to remark that he considered its legitimate duty was to look after the interests of its members and their trades. If they did that he thought the Council would have quite sufficient to do without multiplying its duties by taking up Labour questions.

After the decision had been taken upon the new organization's title, 'The Salford Labour Electoral Association', the rules drawn up by the promoters of the meeting were read. The chief critic of these rules was Alfred Settle, who argued that there was no underlying principle behind them.

> If he joined the association he should endeavour to make it subservient to his Socialistic instincts, and would try to get it worked on the lines he advocated; but if he found it went contrary to his opinions he would not support it. Were the Liberals and Conservatives present prepared to take the same standpoint?

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1. Ibid., 7 August 1891, 9 April 1892.
2. Ibid., 7 August 1891, 17 April 1891.
3. Ibid., 7 August 1891.

Settle further pointed out that one rule referred to by Bartley at the previous meeting, that debarring officials of any political party from membership of the association, had not been included in their programme.

> It was a singular and significant omission that there was no mention made of any restriction being placed on the organization to prevent it being flooded by Tory and Liberal officials.

Probably as a result of Settle's argument, J. Field proposed that the object of the society should be 'to obtain absolute labour representation in Parliament and in the Council by and through working men...' This was seconded by George Tabron and carried unanimously. Tabron then moved 'that the association should not render any support to any candidate who was the nominee of any political party, but should confine its operations to the furtherance of the candidature of working men'. Alfred Settle now acted as seconder, and again support for the motion was unanimous. The meeting was subsequently adjourned until the following week, when members were to be enrolled and officers elected.[1]

Unfortunately the complete constitutions of the Salford LEA, and of the Trades Council LEA, are not available. It is however doubtful, judging from the information in the press, whether the Salford body was on paper any more independent than that of the Trades Council. The real difference between the two lay not in constitutions but in membership. While the Trades Council LEA was composed of delegates drawn chiefly from the older-established unions, the Salford Association was essentially a group of individuals who were generally either socialists or members of new unions, without strong allegiances to existing parties. The terms of membership, a 3d entrance fee and 1d per week subscription, were hardly exclusive. It seems likely that any Liberals who attended the initial meetings of Salford LEA soon withdrew. When Alfred Settle announced that the SDF had, without the knowledge of the promoters of the LEA, arranged a candidate for South Salford, Councillor Yearnshaw felt compelled to withdraw from the meeting. He was an active worker for the Liberal candidate in the constituency.[2] The Salford LEA itself drew forth sneers from the local Liberal press.[3]

Before the end of August 1891, 40 members had been enrolled in the Salford LEA, and its executive elected. Rogerson became president, Kelly and Evans vice-presidents, and Jackson treasurer. The secretary

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1. Ibid., 21 August 1891.
2. Ibid., 21 August 1891.
3. Ibid., 28 August 1891.

was R. Derry,[1] who appears to have been a manager by occupation. He was not otherwise prominent in local affairs during the early '90s.[2] The Executive Committee, which had power to add to its numbers, initially comprised 20 members. Of these it has been possible to trace only eight. A. Settle, W.H. Quinn and W. Horrocks were all Social-Democrats. J. Field was later to appear on Fabian and ILP platforms. G.S. Horsfall ('Fidus Achates' of the Workman's Times) also emerged as a local ILPer, as did Ben Bilcliffe. In Bilcliffe's case, his election to the LEA Executive appears to have been the beginning of his political career. He was to become a founder member and secretary of Manchester and Salford ILP, its national conference delegate, secretary of both the Lancashire Federation and ILP co-operative society, and municipal election candidate. In 1893 he was described as being a prominent member of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners. A. Ross is likely to have been a member of South Salford SDF, while the 'Jenkins' named may have been either John Jenkins of the Amalgamated Bakers, or M. Jenkins, who was to be one of the chairmen at the 1892 May Day demonstration. The other twelve members have been impossible to identify: J.H. Williams, G.R. Johnson, T.F. Eunion, H. Collins, W.R. Shelmerdine, J. Howard, J.L. Livesey, F. Eullam, S. Ivill, A. Booth, T. Parker and C. Appleton.[3]

At this stage in the year, the most immediate consideration for the new LEA was obviously the municipal elections. The SDF candidature in South Salford, to which Alfred Settle had referred, was in fact his own fight for Ordsall Ward. Settle's candidature was already public knowledge by mid-July 1891, before the formation of the LEA, and was obviously not deemed inconsistent with his position on the LEA Executive. Indeed, as will later be demonstrated, Settle was one of the individuals who forged a link between several of the contemporary labour and socialist movements. However at an SDF meeting at Trafford Bridge, in mid-July 1891, E.H. Parkinson referred to a document, which had been sent by the Liberals of Ordsall Ward to the Trades Council, asking for a candidate to oppose Settle. On the same day Settle was sharing a platform with John

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1. Ibid., 28 August 1891.
2. Ibid., 7 August 1891 gave Derry's address as 4 Meyer View, Newall St., Eccles New Rd., Salford. Slater's Directory 1893, p.151 (alphabetical section) gave 'Derry, Robert. manager. 5 Newall St., Eccles New Rd., Salford'. Derry's name appeared only in WT during August and September 1891 as Secretary of the Salford LEA. There is no evidence of further activities.
2. For the list of officers, see WT, 28 August 1891. For Bilcliffe see in particular ibid., 4 June 1892, 14 January, 4 February 1893; C,7,14,28 October, 16 December 1893. For Ross see J, 18 October 1890 and for M. Jenkins, see WT, 7 May 1892. See also Appendix II below.

Kelly, at a Carters' Union meeting. Kelly here announced that 'one of the political factions' had asked him to oppose Settle for the Town Council, but that he had refused, asserting his intention to assist Settle.[1] The exact connection between the two statements is not completely clear. Had the Trades Council passed on the Liberal request, or had a separate, personal approach been made to Kelly? What is, however, clearly demonstrated, is that the Liberals still considered the Trades Council to be sympathetic towards them, rather than towards the cause of independent labour.

In September a special EC meeting of the Manchester, Salford and District Lorrymen and Carters' Union gave sanction to John Kelly, as its general secretary, to contest a ward in the next Salford election, 'in the Labour interest'. It was generally expected that he would oppose Thomas Jackson, the Conservative member for Crescent Ward.[2] When Salford LEA's Selection Committee met to consider the forthcoming elections, it decided not to interfere with candidates who were now among its members, but whose contests had been arranged before its formation. (These appear to have been Settle, together with School Board candidates W.K. Hall and George Evans). In Regent Ward, where there was as yet no labour candidate, it was decided to run George Rogerson. Kelly thereupon announced his intention to stand for Crescent Ward, but did not explain under whose auspices. The LEA obviously could not prevent Kelly's candidature, but pointed out that anyone running under the auspices of the Association must be selected by its members; 'we have nothing to do with self-nominated candidates'.

Had John Kelly merely stood as his union's candidate in Crescent Ward, the matter might not have been particularly serious, but shortly after the EC meeting Kelly emerged not only as a Liberal candidate, but also as one of Settle's opponents in Ordsall Ward.[3] Perhaps more than any other single local event, the debacle in Ordsall Ward made obvious the gulf between Lib-Labism and the independent labour/socialist movement. Among 'labour' men feelings ran high, and loyalties were put to the test. 'Fidus Achates' described Kelly as 'a traitor to the Labour cause',[4] while in a letter to the Workman's Times, James

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1. WT, 17 July 1891.
2. Ibid., 11 September 1891.
3. Ibid., 23 October 1891.
4. Ibid., 23 October 1891.

Kirkbride of Ardwick asserted that:

> Mr. Settle is not the working men's candidate, but the candidate of the Socialists, which is a very different thing, while Mr. Kelly's record as a gemine Labour representative is not one of promises only, but of work done, successfully done: of facts accomplished and advantages gained for an immense number of working men.

On the bills announcing one of Kelly's meetings, there appeared the names of two prominent Trades Council members, Jenkins and Watters. Watters apparently knew nothing of this, prior to seeing the bills, and Jenkins stated that he had agreed to attend, hear Kelly's address, and support him if he felt able. After hearing the address, Jenkins felt satisfied that Kelly was not worthy of support. Two days later Henry Slatter, G.D. Kelley, John Jenkins and Robert Blatchford, all appeared to assist Settle's meeting.[1]

The Liberals covered the walls of Ordsall Ward with posters, announcing that the Socialists had declared war against the Roman Catholic Church.[2] 'Fidus Achates' commented that:

> Their full strength has been brought to bear on the Ordsall Ward, and practically the power of the Liberal party in the Parliamentary division of South Salford. The cause of it is not far to seek. The workmen have ventures to bring forward a Parliamentary candidate in the person of Mr. Harris, and the Liberal party cannot forgive this.[3]

Despite such efforts, Kelly emerged at the bottom of the poll, 281 votes below Settle, while the victory fell to a Conservative publican.[4] Of Rogerson's contest in Regent Ward, 'Fidus Achates' reported on 31 October that: 'Already the great Liberal party have gone almost on their bended knees, and offered to pay all expenses incurred if the Labour man will withdraw'. The Liberals had moreover attempted to damage Rogerson's reputation; one bill asked, 'Is it a fact that he [Rogerson] worked knobstick at Leeds?' The reference was to a joiners' strike in Leeds, at the close of which Rogerson had in fact been their delegate to the TUC.[5] How much effect such allegations actually had can never be certain, but Rogerson emerged unsuccessful, with only 506 votes.[6]

For the Salford LEA, the most important result of the 1891 election was not simply a matter of votes cast. The activities of Kelly, and of the Liberals in general, virtually ensured the organization's

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1. Ibid., 31 October 1891.
2. J, 7 November 1891.
3. WT, 7 November 1891.
4. The results were: Rudman (C) 1,335, Settle (SD) 876, Kelly (L) 595 (see J, 7 November 1891)
5. WT, 31 October 1891.
6. Ibid., 7 November 1891.

continued stand for labour independence. It had been forced to make a choice between the Lib-Lab and independent labour/socialist movements. Not surprisingly, for an organization based in the SDF's stronghold, it had opted for the latter. In January 1892 the Salford Labour Electoral Association decided to support the parliamentary candidature of Thomas Harris.[1] This campaign, promoted by the SDF and Fabians, was one of the principal means by which the various advocates of labour independence were welded into the local ILP.

The Labour electoral movements in Manchester followed closely in the wake of their counterpart in Salford. With the exception of one organization, whose development was somewhat obscure, they were based upon local areas, rather than intended to cater for Manchester as a whole, and were all initially inspired by different groups. During September 1891, while the Fabians were working to organize the North Manchester LEA, a meeting of Corporation workmen was held in the Assembly Room, St. James's Hall. From this gathering emerged the resolution:

> That this meeting of workmen employed by the Manchester Corporation, in all departments, and representing all grades of skilled and unskilled labour, do hereby take immediate steps to form a fund to support in a respectable manner one or two reliable men, selected from our midst, to represent our interests directly and independently on the City Council,...

This proposal was supported by John Kelly, who advised the workmen to promote a candidate in a ward where their own vote was strong, and then concentrate upon going, in groups of two or three, to visit people in their homes. On this occasion Kelly criticised the Trades Council LEA, who seemed to think that they should be the only candidates selected. Kelly 'advised his hearers to be colour-blind when the elections came round, because neither political party 'cared three-ha'porth of common gin' whether they lived or died.' Before this meeting closed, a decision had been taken to sppoint three reliable men from each of the leading departments, to regulate the funds to be raised, and with the power to select two candidates to contest a ward. Funds were intended to come from penny-a-week contributions by corporation workmen.[2]

What actually happened as a result of this meeting is uncertain. There does not appear to have emerged any formal electoral organization promoted by corporation workmen as such. Of the participants reported in the Workman's Times, only John Kelly is readily identifiable. It is possible that the whole scheme may have been formulated in order to

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1. Ibid., 16 January 1892.
2. Ibid., 18 September 1891.

further his own political ambitions. In view of his position as union leader of many corporation workmen, and of his actions at the November municipal elections, it seems unlikely that any such organization would have survived the Ordsall Ward debacle as a united body.

The other organization planned in September 1891, and which did survive to merge with the ILP, was the North Manchester Labour Electoral Association. The promoters of this venture were the North Manchester Fabian group, and it is likely that the first Secretary of this LEA, Robert J. Fovargue, was already an active Fabian.[1] At the inaugural meetings, held in the Carlton Street Mission Room, Collyhurst, there appeared Rogerson, Davey and T. Higgins of the Salford LEA.[2] Unfortunately the details of the North Manchester constitution are even more obscure than those of its Salford counterpart. Possibly because of Fabian influence, its early plans provided for the reading of papers and discussions on the topics of the day, to be supplemented by occasional lectures from labour leaders. By the end of October North Manchester LEA had gained 75 members, and had planned its first major lecture, to be delivered on 6 November by W.S. De Mattos,[3] a member of the Fabian Society Executive and its lecture secretary.[4]

De Mattos' lecture, at Churnett Street Hall, drew an audience of nearly 500. The chair was taken by Robert Blatchford, and the platform party included Alex. Thompson and H.M. Reade, as well as the officers of the North Manchester LEA: Sam Lee, President; Fovargue, Secretary; Samuel Ramsden, Vice-President; and Harry Henshall, Treasurer. Of this committee, Lee was perhaps the most obscure. Having stated at the outset that he would resign when the Association was established, he proceeded to do so in February 1892, apparently fading from the political scene. Fovargue, whose Fabian contacts have already been mentioned, went on to become a prominent local ILPer. He served as North Manchester representative on the local Executive in 1893, and delegate to the Bradford conference. He was also to be one of the promoters of the Manchester Labour Press Society.[5] Samuel Ramsden was to become the leading advocate of a Central Executive Council for all the local LEAs, but in August 1892 was to be found at a joint Fabian/ILP meeting.[6] The

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1. Ibid., 4 September 1891. Fovargue was recorded as having attended a Fabian lecture by De Mattos in October 1891, and in January 1893 acted as chairman of a conference of Fabian Societies in Lancashire and Cheshire. He was then a member of the N. Manchester Fabian Society (see ibid., 2 October 1891; C, 18 February 1893.)
2. WT, 11 September 1891.
3. Ibid., 31 October 1891.
4. E.R. Pease, op.cit., pp.93,105, 286.
5. WT, 21 January, 4 February 1893; C, 11 February 1893.
6. WT, 3 April, 20 August 1892.

committee member with the widest political experience was perhaps Harry Henshall. Henshall, a compositor, had been working at a printing house in London during the 1889 dock strike. He had not only witnessed something of the strike, but had become closely acquainted with John Burns, Tom Mann and Ben Tillett. Other contacts had included William Morris, H.M. Hyndman and Harry Quelch, as well as Charles Bradlaugh and Annie Besant. After returning to Manchester, and enduring a spell of unemployment, Henshall became a convert to socialism. Inspired principally by Blatchford's articles in the Sunday Chronicle, he subsequently acted as corresponding secretary of the North Manchester Fabian Society, which presumably led to his participation in the LEA. He was to be one of the secretaries of the 1892 May Day demonstration committee, and in the following year became financial secretary of Manchester and Salford ILP, as well as manager of Manchester Labour Press Society.[1]

In many respects the personalities involved in the North Manchester and Salford LEAs were more significant than the actual platforms of these organizations. In theory the Trades Council LEA was just as independent as its two contemporaries, but in practice many Trades Council members were swayed by Liberal sympathies, while among the Salford and North Manchester LEA members socialism played a far more important role. There does not, however, appear to have been any concerted effort to promote a socialist platform for the LEAs. When Blatchford took the chair at De Mattos' meeting, he simply...

> ...showed how the workers' interests would be best served by having a party of their own, for as soon as they made their power manifest in the House of Commons, the more advanced of the Liberal party together with the Democratic Conservatives would join in with them, and so equalise the balance of power between them as workmen, and the landed interest, and the capitalist.[2]

While not itself responsible for any electoral condidates in 1891, the North Manchester LEA did elect a deputation to interview the three Labour candidates for the School Board. The relatively low Labour poll at this election led to a discussion within the LEA as to how better results might be achieved in future. As 'Nemo' reported, 'A resolution was ultimately passed, that the secretary ask the Manchester

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1. For general biographical information on Henshall, see Stockport Express, 6 May 1937, 26 December 1946 (obit.). See also WT, 9 April 1892, 4 February 1893; C, 2 April, 17 December 1892, 11 February, 10 June 1893; See also Appendix II below.
2. WT, 14 November 1891.

and Salford Labour Association for a deputation to meet the members and explain the system which they have of federating the various sections together.[1] The Association here mentioned was in fact the Trades Council LEA, and its system was basically the extension of its own organisation to include individuals or Labour organisations who, by means of subscriptions, 'shall assist in furthering the objects of the association'.[2]

The desire to unite the still-fragmented forces of 'labour' must have been widespread, but the dangers of merger within the Trades Council's organization were also apparent. Another correspondent to the Workman's Times, known only as 'Hopeful', commented:

> Above all it is to be hoped that they [the North Manchester LEA] will see their way to insert the word 'Independent', so that it may read 'Independent Labour Electoral Association', and stick hard and fast to the rules laid down in your article of the other week, namely, 'The duty of the hour: No compact with party politicians',... It is to be hoped that before long we shall see Manchester with a Labour Institute, with branches spread over all parts of the town.[3]

It was not until February 1892 that the North Manchester LEA delegates gave their report concerning possible federation with the Trades Council's organization. The delegates, who were not identified in the press, appear to have favoured the scheme, but their views seem to have been received with some reservation. The principal fear was that North Manchester would soon become an appendage to the other association, losing some of its right of self-government.[4] Before the end of the month, North Manchester LEA had voted against federation.[5] The desire for a united labour electoral movement still remained, but the North Manchester men now turned, not to the Liberal-dominated Trades Council organization, but to the other local, independent LEA which had been formed for East and North-East Manchester.[6]

At the end of November 1891 a public meeting was held in the Temperance Hall, Canning Street, under the auspices of the National Flint Glass Makers' Society, to consider the advisability of forming an Electoral Association for North-East and East Manchester. Why the Flint Glass Makers should be responsible for such a move is uncertain; one can merely suppose that some local members, who were themselves keen advocates of independent labour representation, had influenced their union branch. It appears that William Turton, who spoke at the inaugural meeting, was

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1. Ibid., 28 November 1891.
2. Ibid., 21 November 1891.
3. Ibid., 5 December 1891.
4. Ibid., 20 February 1891.
5. Ibid., 5 March 1892.
6. Ibid., 19 March 1892.

a glass cutter by trade.[1] It is therefore possible that he forged the link. No connection with the Flint Glass Makers can be discovered for any of the other leading participants. J.H. Walker, who was to become President of the new Association had by October 1894 removed to West Salford, where he was employed as an insurance agent.[2] J.J. Rudge, the Corresponding Secretary, was a fent dealer.[3] Other members named, J. Pearce the Financial Secretary, E. Southall the Treasurer, and J. Smeaton, cannot be identified.[4]

The North-East and East Manchester LEA commenced its activities with 30 members, 'with the object of promoting Labour representation on the County Council, School Board, all local governing bodies, and the Imperial Parliament'.[5] There is no evidence of any socialist influence within the ranks of this Association. For geographical reasons, this was hardly surprising; the SDF had a stronghold in Salford, the Fabian Society had actually promoted the North Manchester LEA, but in the East and North-East there was no locally-established socialist movement. The socialist meetings held there in 1891 were in support of the Socialist League's 'Anarchist Communism', and were more likely to alienate working men than inspire them.[6]

In March 1892 the North Manchester LEA, which was already taking part in plans for a May Day demonstration, attempted to forge still closer links within the labour movement. A meeting was thus arranged with the North-East and East Manchester LEA, 'with a view to forming a Central Labour Electoral Executive Council'.[7] This proposal was welcomed by 'Dracleets' of the Workman's Times, who commented:

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1. Ibid., 5 December 1891, simply named the speaker as W. Turton. C, 8 October 1892, recorded W. Turton as being chairman of New Cross Ward ILP. Slater's Directory 1893, p.545 (alphabetical section) gave: 'Turton, William. glass cutter, 98 Bradford Road'. Geographically the three references are compatible; the address in Bradford Road would place the occupant within New Cross Ward, in the NE Manchester parliamentary division.
2. WT, 5 December 1891, gave the name as J.H. Walker, although ibid., 30 January 1892 printed 'J.A. Walker'. C, 13 October 1894 reported the ILP divisional organiser for the W. Salford School Board elections as J.H. Walker, of 12 Didsbury St., Eccles New Rd. Slater's Directory 1893 p.574 (alphabetical section) gave: Walker, Jas.H. Insurance agent. 12 Didsbury St., Eccles New Rd., Salford.
3. WT, 5 December 1891 gave Rudge's address as 203 Ashton New Rd. Slater's Directory 1893, p.482 (alphabetical section) gave 'Rudge, Joseph James, fent dealer, 203 Ashton New Rd., Beswick'.
4. WT, 5 December 1891, 30 January 1892.
5. Ibid., 5 December 1891.
6. See above, p.123.
7. WT, 19 March 1892.

> Granted such a Council the various Labour electoral bodies in Manchester and Salford would be able to work together for the inspiration of Labour, and the emancipation of Labour. This is the avowed purpose of the Labour Church, the Manchester and Salford Trades Council Labour Electoral Association, Salford, Hulme, North East and East, and the North Manchester Associations. Then, why not take council together for the purpose of speedily obtaining that which is so desirable for all.

At the same time he warned that the North Manchester LEA 'must stand out apart from any Association tainted, however remotely, by the unhealthy atmosphere of either Liberalism or Toryism'.[1] Another correspondent, 'Nemo', recommended that the embryo 'Labor party' should have some definite, immediate purpose. He recommended that the various associations should elect a committee, to consider how best the total strength of their movements might be concentrated in support of W.K. Hall, parliamentary candidate for South Salford.[2]

While plans for the Central Council were still being formulated, another LEA was formed, in South Manchester. Its organiser was Richard Woosnam, of Moss Side. Described in Slater's Directory as a 'townsman', his background would seem to have been middle- rather than working class. He may well have been the 'Woosnam' who, in 1884, acted as Librarian to the National Secular Society.[3] Certainly he did not lack organizational skill, for initially he concentrated his efforts upon one distinct area, All Saints' Ward, which was a large working class constituency.[4]

By the time that the Central Executive Council had arranged its first meeting, to be held at the County Forum on 14 May, the North Manchester LEA had decided to run a parliamentary candidate in its constituency at the next general election. This appears to have been a reprisal against the Liberals, for their opposition to W.K. Hall.[5] The County Forum meeting brought together delegates of the three local LEAs, the Shop Assistants, Fabians, Labour Church and Trades Council. But although these bodies had all been invited because of their general desire for independent labour representation, the common ground between them had diminished since the meeting was first proposed. From the Trades Council, D. Howarth submitted a scheme, 'which was a generous offer by the Trades Council to place their funds and their existing machinery at the disposal of the delegates and the association which they represented, and if its

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1. Ibid., 3 April 1892. The Hulme organisation here referred to must presumably have been another independent LEA, but no other reference to it has been traced.
2. Ibid., 9 April 1892.
3. Ibid., 9 April 1892; Slater's Directory 1893, p.619 (alphabetical section) NR, 13 April 1884. See also p.64 above.
4. WT, 16 April 1892.
5. C, 23 April 1892; WT, 30 April 1892.

present constitution was unsuitable to allow it to be re-modelled to suit the wishes of the various affiliated bodies.' But also at this meeting John Trevor explained the aims and constitution of the new Independent Labour Party.[1] With the allegiance of some of their members, but outside the framework of the LEAs, this new movement had been created. It now remained with the LEAs to opt for continuation as a separate organization, affiliation to the Trades Council LEA, or participation in the new, avowedly socialist ILP.

The concept of independent labour representation, without a distinctly socialist platform, was not merely confined to the local LEAs of Manchester and Salford. The Workman's Times, which so faithfully reported their week-by-week activities, was in its own right one of the principal national advocates of an 'Independent Labour Party'.[2] On 30 April 1892 its leading article contained details of a draft constitution for such a body, which had been submitted by George Gerrie of Aberdeen, Vice-President of the Scottish Labour Party. The scheme would, it was admitted, require amendment and expansion, but might be useful as a foundation; 'The only vital and indispensable feature in the plan is its non-party or independent character'.

Membership of this proposed 'Independent Labour Party of Great Britain and Ireland' was to be open to all men and women who signed a declaration of belief, that the interests of labour were paramount to, and must take precedence over, all other interests, and that the advancement of such interests must be sought by political and constitutional action. Its declared object was the emancipation of workers from 'present economic slavery', by political and constitutional action only. Thus there was nothing particularly socialistic in the scheme. The basis of the national organization was to be the district councils, each of which might represent a city, town, county or parliamentary division, according to local circumstances. Where practicable, local Trades Councils were envisaged as functioning as District Councils. These District Councils, which were to appoint their own officers and conduct local affairs, were also to be responsible for selecting municipal representatives and delegates to the General Council. This latter body, in which was to be vested the 'government, direction and control' of the ILP, was to be based in London. Independence was assured by the provision that representatives 'shall not

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1. WT, 21 May 1892.
2. For examples see ibid., 30 January, 6 March 1891, 16 January 1892.

be members of any other political party, of its clubs, associations, or organisations of any kind whatever, nor have any transactions with any member or agent of the same without the express permission of their Councils'. Below this detailed constitution appeared a form, a 'Declaration of Adherence' to the Independent Labour Party, which was to be completed with the name and address of a sympathiser, and duly posted.[1]

Thus before the Manchester and Salford ILP was formed, yet another option presented itself to the local advocates of labour independence. Between 14 May and 12 November 1892, the Workman's Times published the names of people who had completed the declarations; fifty-eight of them came from Manchester and Salford. Details of these men, and of other labour and socialist activists during the 1890-2 period, are included in Appendix III below. The majority of supporters of the Workman's Times scheme were not involved with any of the local movements then in progress, but there were some important exceptions to this general rule, most notably John Jenkins, Willam Johnson and H.M. Reade. Reade's name appeared among the list of signatories in the Workman's Times on 14 May 1892, and Johnson's the following week. On 20 August was published the name of John Jenkins.[2] The role which these men played in linking together the various labour and socialist movements must be considered at a later stage. It is, however, worthy of note that both Reade and Johnson were among the men who met in the Clarion office to draft a constitution for the proposed Manchester and Salford ILP.[3] Since this meeting took place before even Reade's name appeared in the Workman's Times list, it is obvious that none of these men felt Burgess' national scheme to be incompatible with the avowedly socialist Manchester and Salford organization.[4]

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Developments within the realms of labour representation, which occurred in Manchester and Salford during May 1892, must be considered separately. Indeed only a chronological survey can really place in perspective the day-to-day events which led from the May Day demonstration to the foundation of the ILP. The question which needs to be raised here is basically why the body then founded was a socialist as opposed to simply an 'independent labour' party. By May 1892 there was in existence the machinery to create a 'labour party' pure and simple. Even if the Trades

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1. Ibid., 30 April 1892.
2. WT, 14 and 21 May, 20 August 1892.
3. See below, p
4. The constitution of the proposed Manchester and Salford ILP was published in the Clarion on 14 May 1892.

Council LEA did not merit the title 'independent', there were local LEAs in Manchester and Salford, as well as an embryonic national organization. Perhaps the basic reason why a socialist, and not just a 'labour' party emerged in this area, was the strength of the former movement, rather than the weakness of the latter. Socialist influence within the local LEAs has already been noted. But at the same time co-operation between the various socialist bodies was increasing, as was the influence of a number of men within several branches of that movement.

By May Day the socialist movements of Manchester and Salford had been welded together to an extent which may well have been unsurpassed elsewhere. In examining this process, it is initially necessary to consider the individual organizations; the SDF, Fabians, Labour Church and, although not strictly an 'organization', the Clarion. What will be emphasised are the links between them, rather than their internal development. It will then be necessary to turn to the local campaigns which served as 'umbrellas', the parliamentary candidature in South Salford and the May Day demonstration of 1892. After tracing the events which led from this latter occasion to the foundation of the ILP, the role of individuals across the broad spectrum of labour and socialist movements must be considered.

The SDF has already been examined in detail; the picture it presents is not of a middle-class, sectarian body so frequently described in national surveys, but of a group, composed mainly of skilled working men, deeply involved in local politics. In 1891 the SDF was planning to extend its activities from its base in South Salford into Manchester.[1] In April of that year George Tabron was returned unopposed to serve his second term as elective auditor,[2] while in November Alfred Settle contested Ordsall Ward at the municipal elections. Both men were founder members of Salford LEA.[3] Settle was also the organizer and honorary secretary of a Working Men's Sanitary Association in Salford,[4] as well as a member of Manchester Fabian Society.[5] During his municipal contest the Workman's Times published a request for 'his Fabian friends and others who are willing to render any assistance' to meet at the Democratic Club Room.[6] When Settle entered the municipal contests the

1. See above, p.114.
2. WT, 10 April 1891.
3. See above, pp.218-21.
4. WT, 23 October 1891 provided a biography of Settle.
5. Settle was lecturing for Manchester and District Fabian Society in September 1891.(See ibid., 11 September 1891).
6. Ibid., 16 October 1891.

following year, it was to be as nominee of both Manchester and Salford ILP and the North Manchester Fabians.[1]

Settle's career, and indeed the activities of the local Fabians and Social Democrats in general, provided a sharp contrast to the picture painted of the national movement. Turning to Edward Pease's account of the Fabian Society, the impression emerges of the Fabians and SDF being divided by a gulf both social and ideological. In Manchester and Salford, the local Fabian Society served as a link between various socialist and labour electoral movements. Also in evidence upon Fabian platforms were the SDF's other two contestants for electoral office in 1891, W.K. Hall and George Evans.[3] Both men were politically active outside the SDF. Evans was associated with John Trevor in the formation of the Labour Church;[4] by the autumn of 1891 he was also managing to combine the offices of Vice-President of Salford LEA, and President of South Salford SDF.[5] W.K. Hall was well-known in connection with the Salford Sanitary Association, the Ancoats Recreation Movement, and the Labour Church.[6] As Labour parliamentary candidate for South Salford in 1892, he was to unite in his support many of the diverse groups which merged into the ILP.

The SDF did not confine itself merely to electioneering. Justice played its part in exposing the conditions of work along the Ship Canal.[7] The SDF also led the local attack on the Royal Commission on Labour. In July 1891, assisted by visiting speaker Harry Quelch, meetings were held which unanimously repudiated the evidence given before the Commission, 'as a gross misrepresentation of the actual condition of Lancashire Workpeople...'[8]

The activities of Salford Social Democrats in other branches of the socialist and labour movements were not simply a sign of their desire to infiltrate. There seems to have been a genuine rapport between the SDF and the uncontested leader of local ethical socialism, Robert Blatchford. Immediately after the foundation of the Clarion, Justice announced that: 'Mr. R. Blatchford is probably the most popular man in Lancashire. He has earned his popularity amongst the people by the manner in which he wrote about Socialism in the Sunday Chronicle...'[9]

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1. Ibid., 20 August 1892.
2. See below, p
3. WT, 14 August, 14 November 1891
4. L. Thompson, op.cit., pp.87-8.
5. WT, 28 August, 18 September 1891.
6. Ibid., 14 November 1891, 20 February and 2 July 1892.
7. J, 25 July 1891. See John Ward, 'The Systematic Slaughter of Navvies on the Manchester Ship Canal'.
8. Ibid., 25 July 1891.
9. Ibid., 26 December 1891.

Further praise was forthcoming the following March:

> 'Nunquam's articles, first in the Sunday Chronicle and now in the Clarion, have produced an extraordinary effect on thousands and tens of thousands of people who could be reached in no other way. 'Nunquam' himself is a thorough-going anti-political-factionist, and we believe that no-one would be better placed than he if his articles helped the final establishment of an out-and-out Revolutionary Social-Democratic Labour Party in Lancashire and Yorkshire.[1]

When one considers Blatchford's later attitude towards socialist unity, through the fusion of the SDF and ILP,[2] it seems unlikely that the sympathy was entirely one-sided.

If the South Salford SDF managed to avoid the pitfalls of sectarianism, the Manchester and District Fabian Society was perhaps the most successful organization in bringing together socialists of all persuasions. Indeed the local Fabian Society bore a much closer resemblance to the ILP, which it was to play a major role in founding, than to the London Fabian Society. In January 1893 Blatchford, reporting the foundation conference of the national ILP for the Clarion, turned to consider the attitude of that gathering towards the London Fabians. He then mentioned that, 'several years before the formation of Bradford Labour Union', W.S. De Mattos had come to see him in Manchester, and asked him to do what he could to organise a national party. Blatchford recollected: 'I declined to do that, because I did not want to lay myself open to the charge of trying to make myself a leader'.[3] This approach appears to have been a personal one by De Mattos, rather than a formal request from the London Fabians.[4]

Contact by local individuals with the London Fabian Society long preceded the foundation of the Manchester group. Dr. Pankhurst delivered a paper at the Fabian Conference of 1886.[5] H.M. Reade, already an established member of the SDF, joined the Fabian Society at the time when 'Nunquam's' articles were appearing in the Sunday Chronicle. Reade later commented that: 'His /Nunquam's/ sermons to the working class lacked definiteness, and so we judiciously plied him with Fabian tracts, and in a few weeks had the great satisfaction of beholding the conversion of 'Nunquam' to Socialism'.[6] Blatchford seems likely to have joined the Fabian Society before its organization spread to Manchester; exactly when is uncertain. However his sympathies were obvious to all readers of the Sunday Chronicle. On 23 March 1890, he wrote: 'For all practical purposes

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1. Ibid., 5 March 1891.
2. See below, Part II passim.
3. C, 21 January 1893. Bradford Labour Union was founded in May 1891 (see E.P. Thompson, loc.cit., p.302.
4. L. Thompson, op.cit., p.73 fn.
5. E.R. Pease, op.cit., p.56.
6. H.M. Reade, op.cit., p.19.

social reformers may be divided into two camps: the Revolutionary Party and the Fabian Party. I am for Fabianism'.[1] H.M. Reade, who in 1891 had emerged as both secretary of the local Fabian Society,[2] and Fabius of the Workman's Times,[3] then described Blatchford as the founder of Manchester and District Fabian Society.[4]

The Manchester Fabian Society owed its foundation chiefly to the 'Lancashire Campaign' undertaken by the London society in 1890, and financed by Henry Hutchinson. Between 22 September and 27 October speakers including Sidney Webb, George Bernard Shaw, Hubert Bland and Graham Wallas held meetings in many districts of Manchester and Salford.[5] The Manchester Fabian Society was then formed in November 1890,[6] and drew its recruits from a wide spectrum of political movements. H.M. Reade and D. Frank English,[7] together with Leonard Hall, who had joined by September 1891,[8] were all members of South Salford SDF. Trade Unionism was represented by William Johnson, secretary of the Shop Assistants,[9] and Thomas Brennan, secretary of the Manchester branch of the Electrical Trades Union.[10] Johnson was also active in North Manchester LEA,[11] which was organized by another Fabian, R.J. Fovargue.[12] Other local Fabians included Thomas Harris, editor of the Sunday Chronicle, who stood under joint Fabian/SDF auspices as parliamentary candidate for South Salford;[13] John Trevor of the Labour Church;[14] and Dr. R.M. Pankhurst, at this time still a radical within the Liberal fold.[15] Together with Blatchford, these figures represented the main trends in local socialism. Other Fabians appear to have concentrated their efforts on that society; William Carson, the yarn agent who became Fabian secretary in February 1892,[16] and W. Vickers, who was to play a

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1. SC, 23 March 1890.
2. H.M. Reade, op.cit., p.19.
3. Labour Annual, 1895, pp.184-5.
4. WT, 9 October 1891.
5. Ibid., 19 September 1890.
6. Fabian Society, Annual Reports I 1889/90 - 1917-18 (reprinted 1973, Kraus Reprints, Nendeln, Liechtenstein). See 'The Ninth Annual Report on the Work of the Fabian Society for the year ended 21st March, 1892', p.21.
7. J, 8 November 1890, printed a letter from English, from the Social-Democratic Club, Salford. See WT, 23 January 1891, for his participation in the Fabian Society.
8. WT, 4 September 1891.
9. Ibid., 2 October 1891, 16 January and 13 February 1892.
10. Ibid., 5 June and 2 October 1891.
11. Ibid., 14 November 1891.
12. See above, p.223.
13. WT, 21 August, 4 September 1891.
14. Ibid., 5 December 1891.
15. E.S. Pankhurst, The Suffragette Movement (1931) p.119.
16. WT, 13 February 1892; Slater's Directory 1893, p.98 (alphabetical section).

leading role in the local Fabian Society.[1]

Although Manchester did receive some visiting lecturers from London, after the Lancashire Campaign had ended,[2] many of the speakers at Fabian Society meetings were in fact local Social-Democrats. Thus Alfred Settle lectured on 'Why are the Many Poor?' in August 1891,[3] and W.K. Hall on 'Trades Unionism and Socialism' the following November.[4] In December 1891, the North West Manchester group heard Settle on 'What Socialism is', while at the Manchester and District Fabian Society's monthly meeting, E.H. Parkinson described 'The Labour Struggle in Europe and America'.[5] George Evans travelled to Hyde in August 1891, to speak for the local Society.[6]

Although the members and speakers who attended Manchester Fabian Society bore little political resemblance to their London counterparts, the organization itself did at first appear to be consistent with its name. By January 1892, 124 members had been enrolled. For propaganda purposes they were divided into 9 district groups, each representing a parliamentary constituency of Manchester and Salford. Leaflets and tracts were distributed under the auspices of the Fabian Home Mission.[7] In the electoral field, the Manchester Society initially adopted tactics which were typically Fabian. At a monthly meeting, held at the County Forum in August 1891, it was decided that 'where there are no Labour candidates standing for constituencies, the opinions of the Conservative and Liberal candidates should be ascertained on all the most pressing labour and social questions,...' The Society had printed a form with a number of questions, and a margin for the candidate's reply. These forms were to be filled in with the elector's name and address, and forwarded to the candidates for their answers.[8] In the same year, the Fabians took a prominent part in the North-East Manchester by-election, which was a straight fight between the Liberal, C.P. Scott, and Sir J. Fergusson, Conservative,[9] as well as in the Salford municipal elections.[10]

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1. WT, 11 September 1891, 28 May 1892.
2. For example, Hubert Bland and De Mattos (WT, 23 January, 2 October 1891).
3. Ibid., 4 September 1891.
4. Ibid., 14 November 1891.
5. Ibid., 12 December 1891.
6. Ibid., 14 August 1891.
7. Ibid., 16 January 1892. 'The Ninth Annual Report on the Work of the Fabian Society...', p.21, gave the total membership as 120.
8. WT, 4 September 1890. This scheme was formulated in Fabian Society Tracts between 1891 and 1894. (See M. Cole, The Story of Fabian Socialism (1961) pp.39-41.
9. 'The Ninth Annual Report on the Work of the Fabian Society...', p.21.
10. Ibid., p.21.

Fabian Societies were formed in Hyde and Oldham as a result of the efforts of the Manchester body.[1]

The steps by which Manchester Fabian Society transformed itself from an umbrella organization for leading local socialists into an embryo ILP, can in fact be dated from January 1892. At a meeting, again at the County Forum, William Johnston proposed 'that no candidate for membership in this society shall be accepted who is an official of either the Liberal or Conservative party'.[2] This proposal was designed to negate the very concept of Fabianism, and begin the transformation of the local society into an independent labour party. It was held over for discussion until the monthly meeting on 3 February, and then passed, to be forwarded to the London Fabian Society Conference. In his report to the Workman's Times, 'Egeus' commented, 'I think... that it is better for us to fight under our own flag as Fabian Socialists, instead of hiding our opinions under a cloak of political shoddy'.[3] Edward Pease, in his History of the Fabian Society, admitted that 'the local Fabian Societies, with rare exceptions, of which Liverpool was the chief, were from the first ILP in personnel and policy, and were Fabian only in name'.[4] His description certainly applied to the Manchester Society. In March 1892 it set out to organize the May Day demonstration, which led directly to the foundation of the ILP. Of the local Fabians described above, Blatchford, Thompson, Trevor, Hall, Johnston and Vickers were all founder members of the ILP, soon to be joined by Fovargue and Dr. Pankhurst.

* * *

In the case of the SDF and Fabian Society, it has been possible to suggest ways in which both the policies of the local organizations, and the activities of their members, caused them to foreshadow the ILP, rather than to bear close resemblance to their own national movements. The other two local socialist 'movements' named above, the Clarion and the Labour Church, must now be considered, not in the light of any formal organization to which they gave rise, but as instruments of mass propaganda for an ILP. It is not the intention here to repeat what has already been written concerning the spread of ethical socialism, critical as this was in creating a favourable climate of opinion. The aim is rather to consider the speeches at the Labour Church,

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1. WT, 4 September 1891.
2. Ibid., 16 January 1892.
3. Ibid., 13 February 1892.
4. E.R. Pease, op.cit., p.102.

and articles in the Clarion and Labour Prophet, which advocated the formation of an independent labour party, together with the roles of Blatchford and Trevor.

When the first issue of the Clarion made its appearance on 12 December 1891, Blatchford was not only its editor, but also prospective independent labour candidate for East Bradford. While admittedly the latter role had been accepted reluctantly, and was shortly to be abandoned, the reason lay not in Blatchford's lack of commitment to the cause of labour independence, but to his personal unsuitability for the political platform. Blatchford reiterated his views on labour independence in a Clarion article on 20 February 1892. Commenting on Manchester Fabian Society's resolution, to debar from membership any official of the established parties, and the Fabian Conference's rejection of this proposal, he wrote:

> A Fabian is, or should be, a Socialist. A Socialist is the avowed enemy of Capitalism, commercialism, landlordism, and competition.
> The Liberals, the Unionists, the Tories, and the Nationalists are the avowed champions of capitalism, of commercialism, of landlordism, and of competition. Profit-making is their religion, capital is their God, and their gospel is the law of supply and demand... What business has any kind of Socialist in the ranks of any of those political parties; and what business has any member of those parties in the ranks of any Socialist body?[1]

The Clarion in general, and Blatchford in particular, were to lend the weight of their considerable local influence to the South Salford parliamentary election campaign, and to play a major role in the immediate preparations for May Day and the foundation meeting of the ILP. These aspects must be considered separately. What must be emphasised at this stage is the unique position in which Blatchford was placed.He had already, as a journalist, achieved a wide readership for his advocacy of ethical socialism, and was one of the proprietors of a paper commited to this cause. His candidature at Bradford had brought him into contact with the leaders of the independent labour movement there, while in Manchester he was chairman of a Fabian Society which bore more resemblance to an independent labour party than to its parent body in London. His appearance at public meetings was much in demand, although it is likely that his name and journalistic reputation actually drew the crowds more than did his powers of oratory. But whatever the reason, he did participate in the affairs of almost every local independent labour and socialist

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1. C, 20 February 1892.

movement, including the Labour Church, North Manchester LEA, and the SDF.[1]

In fact all that the socialist campaign by Blatchford and the Clarion lacked was an organization, to bring its adherents into personal contact with one another. In part this deficiency was remedied by the other major branch of the ethical socialist movement, the Labour Church. Speakers to that body dealt with issues relating to political organization, not simply to ethics or theology. Thus John Trevor lectured on 'Labour Candidates' and on 'The Coming Election - an appeal to Labour'.[2] In connection with the Labour Church Mission, W.K. Hall spoke at the Pendlebury Institute on 'The First Step Towards the Emancipation of Labour'.[3] In March 1892, after publishing an article in the Labour Prophet by the Rev. Harold Rylett, who stated that 'the cause of Labour may be best served by the co-operation of its friends with the Liberal party', Trevor made his own position clear:

> Our only possible course appears to be to assist in the formation of AN INDEPENDENT LABOUR PARTY. The vast number of toilers, the great issue between them and Land and Capital, the mighty consummation to which the movement among them is leading, indicate a very real demand for self-reliant action... We therefore unhesitatingly welcome the formation of an Independent Labour Party, which is actually taking place. We gladly throw in our lot with the party...[4]

The columns of the Labour Prophet were open to all the leading advocates of Labour independence. In March 1892, Keir Hardie contributed an article, 'The Eve of the Battle', in which he put forward the programme of the Scottish Labour party and expressed his desire to unite 'advanced men' from all over the country behind such a policy. The following month's issue contained a contribution from W.K. Hall, now Harris' successsor in the South Salford campaign. He wrote:

> As a working man, I cannot see that the workers have anything to expect from parties controlled by capitalistic influence, and I rejoice to see that they are beginning to distrust both political parties.
>
> ... To my mind it is clear we have reached a point in politics in which OLD PARTIES MUST BE DISSOLVED, and a new one formed. If the workers are to carry out the measures which they deem needful into effect, they must organise themselves on a platform representing their principles. What is wanted is a Labour Party.[5]

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1. Blatchford took the chair at Hobart's meetings in Burnley (J, 26 December 1891). In May 1892 the South Salford SDF planned to propose him for membership (ibid., 28 May 1892).
2. Labour Prophet, January and March 1892.
3. WT, 20 February 1892.
4. Labour Prophet, March 1892.
5. Ibid., April 1892.

This was not simply a case of the Labour Prophet providing column space for Hall's personal views. That Trevor in particular, and the Labour Church in general, fully concurred with his stand, was made clear in the June issue. Contained in the correspondence column was to be found an editorial note which stated simply:

> The Labour Church stands for the development of an independent Labour Party, and the near approach of the General Election makes it the more necessary that we should declare this with no uncertain voice. It is no mere political question with us; it is a religious question. The Soul of the Labour Movement can only be developed for the tremendous work that lies before it by nurturing itself in sturdy independence.

In support of this view, Labour Church Tract No.2 was entitled, An Independent Labour Party.[1]

It is thus apparent that the labour representation movements in Manchester and Salford at the beginning of the '90s exhibited both a desire for independence from established political parties, and a marked socialist influence within their ranks. At the same time, the socialist organizations, which had already extended their influence into the labour movement, were now moving not only into closer contact with one another, but towards the concept of a new, independent, labour party. That the labour and socialist movements could actually work together in harmony was proved by their efforts on behalf of the South Salford candidacy, and the organization of May Day 1892.

* * *

The idea of running a labour parliamentary candidate in South Salford appears to have originated with the local SDF in general, and with William Horrocks in particular. Yet with a lack of sectarianism, not usually attributed to Social-Democrats, they chose as candidate not one of their own adherents, but a Fabian, Thomas Harris of the Sunday Chronicle. As 'Mont-Thomas' and 'Special Commissioner' of the Chronicle, Harris had proved himself a staunch advocate of the cause of Labour. His articles on the chain makers of Cradley Heath and the Staffordshire potters had received particular notice. Moreover his status as a middle class journalist seemed likely to appeal to a section of the electorate which might have hesitated to support a working class member of the SDF. Harris initially appeared more doubtful of his prospects than did his would-be campaigners. He agreed to stand only if a thousand voters were prepared to

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1. Ibid., June 1892.

sign a requisition. The Fabians and Social-Democrats, together with various independent assistants, promptly began to visit the electors.[1]

The extent of support which existed in South Salford was revealed by the fact that, having prepared their requisition on a Saturday afternoon, the band of workers managed to collect 400 signatures in two hours. By Monday evening they had obtained just over 500, a figure short of their target largely because the weather had proved unfavourable.[2] The thousand signatures were obtained by the beginning of September 1891. As 'Fidus Achates' commented, 'It has been rather a difficult task, having to work from an old list, the canvassers in some cases going to six or seven houses in succession to find that the parties bearing the names on the list had removed...' Canvassing was indeed to be one of the weak points in the electoral machinery of the future ILP. The supporters finally obtained appear to have been a fairly representative section of the local electorate. Horsfall said that he had taken the names of railway engine drivers, mechanics, engineers, 'labourers of almost every degree' and 'even people in a small way of business'.[3]

Horsfall himself acted as treasurer of the election fund[4] and at the meeting arranged to present the requisition there appeared on the platform Blatchford, Thompson, H.M. Reade (in his capacity as Fabian Society Secretary), and George Rogerson and R. Day of Salford LEA. The Social-Democrats, whose clubroom provided the veme for the meeting, were represented by the chairman, George Evans, Alfred Settle, W.K. Hall and William Horrocks. Harris' acceptance of the requisition was immediately followed by promises of contributions to the election fund; £10 each from Blatchford and Thompspn, £1 donations from several working men; 'one who said he was only a labourer promising 10s, and another promising 5s for a look at "Nunquam"'. By 18 September £57 had been received.[5]

Apart from William Mather's term as MP in the early 1880s, South Salford had been a Conservative stronghold, its serving member since that time being Sir H.H. Howarth.[6] Many of the Conservative working

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1. WT, 21, 28 August 1891, 23 September 1893.
2. Ibid., 28 August 1891.
3. Ibid., 4 September 1891.
4. Ibid., 21 August 1891.
5. Ibid., 18 September 1891.
6. Ibid., 23 September 1893. See also J. Vincent and M. Stenton, op.cit., p.211.

men were now expressing their dissatisfaction with their present MP, and announcing their intention to vote for a genuine Labour candidate, while the Liberals were already accusing Harris and his associates of 'splitting the vote'. Despite his Fabian and SDF backing, Harris' appeal was by no means limited to men who considered themselves to be socialists (of any complexion). 'Fidus Achates' in the Workman's Times quoted a letter from 'one of our local prints', which summarised the philosophy of the potential labour voter:

> As one of the vast army of working men who form the constituency of South Salford, I am delighted to see that there is a prospect of this part of the borough being represented in parliament by one who is now a Labour candidate. I am not a Socialist, nor am I likely to be one, but I shall both vote and work for Mr. Harris if he is the recognised champion of the Labour party.[1]

Harris was duly introduced to the electorate at a meeting in Salford Town Hall in October,[2] and campaigning began towards an anticipated three-cornered fight, the Liberal candidate being J. Emmott Barlow. By January 1892 however Barlow had withdrawn, on the grounds that his prospects of success were slight. A withdrawal in itself would have been the cause of great political excitement, but Barlow had gone so far as to advise the Liberals not to oppose Harris, and even to adopt him as their own candidate. This advice was not generally acceptable, for the Liberals subsequently 'approached several gentlemen with a view to getting them to fall into the breach'. According to the Workman's Times, Liberal opinion was divided, with 'one section wanting a new candidate, another section are prepared to support Mr. Harris, and the other will go for the sitting Tory member,...' Another rumour, that Harris was himself considering withdrawal, was hastily refuted.

The prospect of a straight fight with a Conservative, rather than a three-cornered contest, was not received with particular enthusiasm by the Labour men. Apparently 'their past experience in municipal matters has shown them that when there is no Liberal candidate in the field the party of progress (as they are pleased to style themselves) will go almpst in a body against the working man, and the same thing will occur to some extent in the Parliamentary election'.[3]

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1. WT, 16 October 1891.
2. Ibid., 16 October 1891.
3. Ibid., 9 January 1892.

Rumours of Harris' impending retirement were again renewed when it was announced that Blatchford had asked to be released from his East Bradford candidature. But further denials followed; appeals for finance were reiterated, and Harris continued to appear at political functions, such as the meeting in the Prince of Wales Theatre, on behalf of the Bromsgrove nailers.[1] Early in March however the rumour was confirmed. Harris, who had been unwell for some time, was now suffering from a 'haemmorrhage of the lungs' (?tuberculosis) and the doctor had warned him against continuing his political activities.[2] His successor as Labour candidate was W.K. Hall.

The election campaign, which had begun in support of a middle-class Fabian journalist, now had as its candidate a self-educated labourer, who for the past seven years had been one of the leading figures in South Salford SDF. The acceptance of, and support for Hall as a parliamentary candidate is perhaps another indication of the growing unity between the various organizations, which was shortly to produce a socialist independent labour party. The national SDF appointed Hall organizing secretary for Lancashire,[3] which was the usual method in labour and socialist circles of providing a man with both a living wage, and sufficiently flexible working hours for him to pursue an election campaign. An SDF propaganda campaign in Lancashire was also planned, with the principal aim of winning support for Hall.[4] Locally the SDF was obliged to concentrate on immediate bread-and-butter issues; books of tickets were produced to raise funds. Each containing 60 tickets, for sale at 2d each, they were despatched to all SDF branch secretaries whose addresses were obtainable.[5] There are no indications that the change of candidate affected the local campaign machinery, or the support from the Clarion and Workman's Times. Expressions of sympathy and funds also came from outside the local area; a 'Labour man' from Middlesborough promised a donation, while 'A Berkshire Boy' promised 2s each from himself and his elder son, and 1s from his younger son.[6] Cunninghame Graham appeared at the Prince of Wales Theatre, at an election meeting chaired by Blatchford. To the vote of confidence in Hall was added a collection of £8.[7]

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1. Ibid., 16,23 January 1892.
2. Ibid., 5 March 1892.
3. J, 5 March 1892.
4. Ibid., 30 April 1892.
5. Ibid., 14 May 1892.
6. WT, 16 April 1892.
7. C, 9 April 1892.

Although the support of the Labour campaigners had been unaffected by the change of candidate, the attitude of the Liberals changed dramatically. While some of their members had been prepared to support, or at least unwilling to oppose, a 'respectable' newspaper editor, a Social-Democrat labourer was rather a different matter. As Hall himself later commented, 'I was a worker pure and simple, and a thorough Socialist'. The Liberals therefore adopted a candidate of their own, Alexander Forrest. At this time the Liberals were apparently in financial difficulties, but the Labour campaign had no debts, a few pounds in hand, and money coming in 'fairly well'.[1]

By the time that Hall actually went to the poll, in July 1892, he had the backing of the newly-founded Manchester and Salford ILP. But during the whole of the South Salford campaign there had existed a 'Labour Party' in practice, if not in name or formal constitution. All the constituent elements of the future ILP had been represented: Fabians, Social-Democrats, Salford LEA, the Clarion, and the Labour Church.[2] All the most prominent founders of the ILP had also participated: Blatchford, Thompson, Trever, Johnston, Settle, Evans, W.K. Hall, G.S. Horsfall, Horrocks and Reade were all to be present in St. James's Hall on 17 May, at the foundation meeting of the ILP.[3]

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In view of the demand from so many quarters for an independent labour party, it is hardly surprising that the party in Manchester was established before, and without the aid of, a national movement. What is of particular interest is the actual timing of the ILP's foundation. Of the organizations which were to play a leading role in its origin, only the SDF and Manchester Fabian Society were in existence before the end of 1890. Then the latter half of 1891 witnessed a ferment of activity: Salford LEA was founded in August 1891, in September a parliamentary candidate was brought forward for Salford, and North Manchester LEA was formed. October witnessed the advent of the Labour Church, November the NE and E Manchester LEA, and December the appearance of the Clarion. Thus by the beginning of 1892 the question was not as to whether a local ILP would be formed, but when this event would actually take place.

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1. WT, 16 April 1892.
2. Trevor declared the Labour Church's support for Hall and appealed for election funds in Labour Prophet, May 1892.
3. For names of those present at this meeting, see L. Thompson, Robert Blatchford, pp.87-9; WT, 20 May 1892; C, 21 May 1892.

The occasion which undoubtedly set the machinery in motion was May Day 1892. As early as March 12, 'Fidus Achates' wrote in the Workman's Times:

> I have had several enquiries as to whether the Trades Council are intending organising a demonstration for Labour Day. I am not in the confidence of the Trades Council, so cannot say. I believe the Manchester groups of the Fabian Society are making efforts to get up a demonstration for that day, and think it would be a good thing for them to join hands and let us have a monstre [sic].[1]

As the initiative was not being taken by the Trades Council, the Fabian Society convened a meeting at the County Forum, of representatives of the various labour organisations. They unanimously resolved to co-operate in a demonstration, and elected a committee to carry out the arrangements. The committee, which represented 'nearly all the trades in the district', viewed its role as co-operating with, rather than supplanting, the Trades Council. A deputation of four was sent to wait on the Trades Council, and on 19 March the Workman's Times announced that 'by the time this appears I expect the Trades Council will have done the necessary thing to cement together the whole of the Labour movement in Manchester and Salford...'[2]

The deputation was late in being admitted to the Trades Council, and the success of the mission seemed doubtful when 'one gallant reoresentative of somebody jumped to his feet and said he didn't see what right the Fabian Society had to initiate such a thing, and then spring a mine upon the Trades Council'. The matter was adjourned to a special meeting, a week later, which by a majority of 7 decided to take up the demonstration. However the President (Matthew Arrandale, the 'earnest and active Liberal')[3] 'thought it was too small a majority to take on such a big thing, and so got them to reverse their vote'. Commented the Workman's Times, 'If there is a demonstration - and I rather think there will be - the Trades Council will not be to blame for it'.[4]

The breach between the Lib-Lab Trades Council and the independent labour men, was to become from this juncture a wide gulf. Individual trade unionists and Trades Councillors however played a leading part in the May Day Committee; its three joint secretaries being Quinn

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1. WT, 12 March 1892.
2. Ibid., 19 March 1892.
3. 'Mr. Councillor M. Arrandale, J.P.' in Manchester Faces and Places, Vol. VII No.10, July 1896, p.147.
4. WT, 3 April 1892.

(of the Tailors' Society, Trades Council and SDF), Henshall (of the Manchester Typographical Association, Fabians and North Manchester LEA), and Rogerson (of the GW&GLU, and also president of Salford LEA).[1] When the Labour Day demonstration committee held a general meeting at the County Forum, delegates appeared from the Spindle and Flyer-Makers' Union; United Carters' Association; Dressers, Dyers and Finishers' Association (Manchester Branch); Tailors; ASRS; General Railway Workers' Union; Shop Assistants; Amalgamated Union of Operative Bakers and Confectioners; Oldham and Gorton Fabian Societies; North Manchester LEA; and the Lancashire branches of the SDF.[2] The SDF and Labour Church planned activities of their own, which would nevertheless enable them to participate in the combined demonstration. The SDF arranged morning meetings at Trafford Bridge and Pendleton Co-op. Hall, after which they intended to march through Salford, headed by the Excelsior Temperance Band, to join the general procession in Albert Square. For the evening, they had arranged another meeting in Pendleton.[3] The Labour church had, before the scheme for a combined May Day was formulated, arranged for Cunninghame Graham to act as their visiting speaker.[4] However they now proposed that their members should meet near the Palace of Varieties to join in the procession, and that Cunninghame Graham should be one of the principal speakers.[5] While such plans were still being formulated, J.R. Clynes (then of the GW&GLU and Oldham Trades Council, but eventually to be that division's first Labour MP) visited North East Manchester LEA, to deliver a lecture on 'Politics and Labour'. On this occasion he outlined the steps which the workers should take in the formation of an Independent Labour Party.[6]

After the planned SDF meetings had taken place on the morning of May Day, the various organizations assembled in Stevenson Square[7] and proceeded thence to Alexandra Park, accompanied by bands. Heading the procession was John Jenkins as chief marshall, with J.F. Quinn on his right and Alfred Settle on his left. They were escorted by three mounted

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1. C, 2 April 1892; WT, 9 April 1892.
2. WT, 23 April 1892.
3. Ibid., 30 April 1892.
4. Ibid., 9 April 1892.
5. Ibid., 30 April 1892.
6. Ibid., 30 April 1892.
7. For unions involved in the demonstration, see above p.206 and C, 30 April 1892.

police into the park, where six platforms had been arranged. The organizations and personalities involved represented the constituent elements of what was, in all but name, an independent Labour Party:

Platforms: 1. Chairman: Robert Blatchford
Speakers: W. Johnson, P. Docherty, J.H. Quinn, R. Anderson.
2. 'devoted to the railway interest'
Chairman: S. Hurd (ASRS)
Speakers: James Kelly (GRWU), A.Mears, J. Bedford (London), H. Harrison.
3. Labour Church
Chairman: John Trevor
Speakers: Cunninghame Graham, Tom McCarthy, R.Anderson (Glasgow), Hugh Sinclair.
4. SDF
Chairman: George Evans
Speakers: R.D. Shallard (London), Henry Sharples and J. Shufflebotham (Bolton School Board)
5. Fabians
Chairman: M. Jenkins
Speakers: Sidney Webb, W. Vickers, S. Broadbent, W.V. Johnson.
6. Jewish section
Chairman: R. Abrahams
Speakers: Wess (London) and others.
(speeches in Yiddish and English).

At each platform were proposed resolutions in favour of a legal eight hour day, adult suffrage, shorter parliaments, payment of MPs, nationalization of the land and means of production, and the formation of an Independent Labour Party, with direct labour representation. They were passed by a crowd of between sixty- and a hundred thousand people, with little or no opposition.[1]

The demonstration was a success by all standards; as Blatchford described it: 'There was a fine day, and a large crowd, and a lot of enthusiasm; and we decided for an eight hours day and socialism'.[2] That evening the Labour Church held its meeting as planned, with addresses being delivered by Cunninghame Graham, Tom McCarthy and R. Anderson. It was on this occasion that John Trevor urged that the enthusiasm displayed at the demonstration should not be lost. He suggested an Independent Labour Party should be formed for Manchester and Salford, with Robert Blatchford as its leader, 'believing that by this means the whole Labour party in the district could be united in one strong and powerful body'.[3] With this purpose in view, a meeting was arranged in the Clarion office between seven men, who proceeded to draw up a constitution.

Who these founders actually were is not easy to discover, for

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1. C, 30 April 1892; WT, 7 May 1892; Labour Prophet, May 1892; L. Thompson, Robert Blatchford, pp.85-9; A. Woollerton, The Labour Movement in Manchester and Salford (City of Manchester ILP Branch Pamphlets, No.1; Manchester, 1907) 22pp., p.7.
2. C, 7 May 1892.
3. WT, 7 May 1892.

neither the Workman's Times not the Clarion provided names. Reminiscences of contemporary political activists were also somewhat vague. A.M. Thompson wrote: 'In May 1892, seven men met in our one-room office to form an independent Labour Party. Three of those present were correspondents of the Workman's Times.[1] H.M. Reade commented:

> The immense gathering at Alexandra Park was a great surprise to us all. We wondered what it all meant. Blatchford said significantly, 'It is the Social Revolution!' I said, 'Yes, it wants organising'; and next day I received an invitation to attend the Clarion office and was one of the seven men who formed the Independent Labour Party.[2]

Least helpful of all was Blatchford himself, who devoted very little of his My Eighty Years to his activities in the ILP: 'The ILP was founded, or started, by seven men. I believe I was one of the seven; but I am not sure and it does not matter.'[3] The Labour Annual of 1895 stated that William Johnson was one of the seven, thus providing a list of Blatchford, Johnson and H.M. Reade, who as 'Fabius' presumably ranked among the three Workman's Times correspondents. For the other two representatives of the Workman's Times, possibilities were G.S. Horsfall ('Fidus Achates') and Joe Waddington ('Robin'). Other likely participants included Trevor, Bilcliffe, Settle, Evans and Thompson (whose knowledge of events seems more likely to have been obtained at first hand, than at a later date from Blatchford).[4]

John Trevor made clear his belief that Blatchford was the man 'who would be able to weld together in one solid mass the different sections of advanced men among the workers'.[5] Whether Blatchford's enthusiasm for his own role was as great as his desire for the establishment of an ILP was another matter.[6] The Clarion, however, was ideally suited to be the medium of communication with potential adherents. On 14 May it referred to the drawing up of the constitution, and detailed immediate arrangements for the foundation of the new party:

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1. A.M. Thompson, op.cit., p.88.
2. H.M. Reade, op.cit., p.21.
3. R. Blatchford, My Eighty Years (1931) p.199.
4. See A.M. Thompson, op.cit., pp.88-9. G.C. Goldberg, op.cit., p.50, gave the names of those present as Blatchford, Johnson, Reade, Trevor, Evans, Purves and Settle. E. and R. Frow, 'All for the Cause - Aspects of Labour History in Manchester and Salford. Socialism' (unpublished typescript. no pagination) listed Blatchford, Settle, Leonard Hall, Reade, Bilcliffe, Trevor and Johnson. Their book, All for the Cause..., op. cit., provided no details of the meeting. The exact sources of both lists are uncertain.
5. WT, 28 May 1892.
6. L. Thompson, op.cit., p.87, wrote of 'Blatchford, who against his will became president of the new party, because he was told that without him there would be no party at all'.

As a preliminary step a public meeting will be held at St. James's Hall, on Tuesday next, the 17th inst., when the chair will be taken by Mr. R. Blatchford, Editor of the Clarion.

At this meeting tickets will be issued to all those who wish to take part in the formation of an Independent Labour Party, and a meeting of ticket-holders will be arranged for and duly advertised in the Clarion.

It is hoped by these means to secure the co-operation of the various local Labour Electoral Associations, and thus band together in one strong and compact federation all the various forces of the Labour Army in Manchester and Salford.

For this purpose the proprietors of the Clarion are prepared to lend the use of their columns. A good meeting is sure to assemble on Tuesday next, and all the friends of the great Labour cause are hereby earnestly invited. Members of any of the Labour Unions who wish to speak are requested to send their names to the Secretary, Labour Party, Clarion Office.

The Constitution upon which the representatives of the Fabians, Social Democrats, Labour Church, and others agreed is as follows:-

1. That the programme of the party be 'the nationalisation of the land and other instruments of production'.
2. That the party shall devote itself to securing the election of members of all representative bodies for the purpose of realising the programme of the party.
3. That no member of any organisation connected with the Liberal, Liberal-Unionist, or Conservative parties, be eligible for membership in this party.
4. That all members of this party pledge themselves to abstain from voting for any candidate for election to any representative body who is in any way a nominee of the Liberal, Liberal-Unionist, or Conservative parties.

The objects, programme, and methods of the party will be fully explained. Those wishful to aid in the establishment of an Independent Labour Party are earnestly requested to attend. Those unable to be present, but who are desirous of joining the party, may send in their adhesion to the Secretary, Clarion Office, Corporation-street, Manchester.

The chair will be taken at eight o'clock.[1]

The proposed constitution was unlikely, as a result of its first three clauses, to arouse much controversy. Independent labour representation, for the promotion of a broad socialist programme, was an aim generally accepted by the participants in May Day. What was to raise a controversy for years to come, was the fourth clause of the constitution, soon to be known nationwide as the 'Manchester Fourth Clause'. The arguments for and against this clause were to be continued in local and national parties, in the press, and at successive ILP Conferences, until

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1. C, 14 May 1892.

its final abandonment by Manchester and Salford ILP in December 1898.[1] Detailed discussion of its implications must therefore be reserved until a later stage. What should be considered here are its origins, and the manner in which it was generally accepted by the new party.

Lawrence Thompson, in his biography of Blatchford, stated that although the Fourth Clause was generally associated with Blatchford, it was not invented by him; 'It came from the Social Democratic Federation, some of whose South Salford members were active in the new party; and the Social Democrats had inherited it from a section of the Chartists'.[2] The author's father, whose information was more immediate, if not first-hand, claimed that:

> To make sure that the new party should be independent in fact as well as in name, and immune from the intrigues by which Liberal wire-pullers had 'nobbled' previous attempts of the same sort, he [Blatchford] proposed that the Constitution of the party should include a clause which came to be known as 'the Manchester Fourth Clause,...
>
> During his brief candidature at Bradford, Blatchford had found the Labour organization a spider's web of what I disrespectfully called 'Lib-Lab fly catchers'. To gain Liberal support or even neutrality in his own constituency, he had been pressed to pledge the party to support Liberal candidates in a score of others, and to give his individual support, if elected, to the Liberal Party in Parliament...
>
> We were convinced that no genuine or lasting independence for the working masses could be secured on these terms. Hence Blatchford's insistence on the Fourth Clause.[3]

But if Blatchford was influenced by affairs in Bradford, it seems likely that his attitude was shared by many men with experience of electoral campaigns in Manchester and Salford. Local events like John Kelly's Liberal candidature, in opposition to Alfred Settle, can hardly have been forgotten so quickly.

The gathering at St. James's Hall on 17 May witnessed the foundation of Manchester and Salford ILP. Of the leading local personalities reported as having participated,[4] half were members of the SDF; Settle, Evans, Leonard Hall, W.K. Hall, Waddington, Quinn, Horrocks, Purves and Reade. In the chair was Blatchford, supported by Thompson, Trevor, William Johnson and G.S. Horsfall. Less well-known at this stage

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1. Ibid., 31 December 1898.
2. L. Thompson, Robert Blatchford, p.90.
3. A.M. Thompson, op.cit., pp.88-9.
4. Descriptions of the meeting appeared in L. Thompson, op.cit., pp.87-9; WT, 20 May 1892; C, 21 May 1892. From a combination of these three, the names of eighteen speakers or members of the platform party are ascertainable.

were Samuel Washington ('Elihu'), soon to be the leading pamphleteer of the new party; Leeming, future founder of the Manchester ILP Wheelers; Vickers of Hyde Fabians; and Howarth of North Manchester LEA. Despite Howarth's presence, the LEAs had not hitherto been involved in the proceedings. Horsfall reported that:

> Some little hitch has taken place with the various Labour Electoral Associations through not being invited to take part in the preliminary conference. Mr. Blatchford took the responsibility for this upon himself, stating that he had invited all that he could think of, and apologised for overlooking these gentlemen, and then asked them if they were in earnest in the work and had no personal end to serve to throw in their lot with the ILP.[1]

The constitution was formally proposed by Blatchford, being supported by Trevor, W.K. Hall, Settle and Johnson.[2] Reade, who had seconded Blatchford's proposal for the 4th Clause at the Clarion office, did not on this occasion speak in its defence.[3] Chief critics of the clause were Leonard Hall and Howarth, 'who, although averse to permeation, were in favour of using the vote to gain strategical advantages, as was done in the Home Rule struggles by the Irish Party'.[4] Arguments in favour of the clause must have been extremely convincing. Certainly they managed to sway G.S. Horsfall, who later commented:

> I don't wonder at exception being taken to this clause, for I must confess that at first sight it seemed too much for me to swallow. But after full consideration I can see that it is the only course to adopt to hold an ILP solidly together. I can see plainly that if a very large ILP was formed without this clause in its constitution at every election that took place there would always be a great danger of a split, for if it was decided in any particular case to vote Tory, those leaning to the Liberal view would be offended and vice versa; whilst if they abstain from voting either way the solidity of the ILP is maintained, and it will be to its advantage to obey the scriptural injunction and 'avoid all appearance of evil'.[5]

The Fourth Clause eventually received overwhelming support,[6] although it is impossible even to guess at the number who considered the matter as carefully as did Horsfall, as opposed to those who were simply prepared to accept a scheme proposed by Blatchford.

On entering the room, each individual was presented with a ticket, on which to give his name and address if he was willing to join the

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1. WT, 28 May 1892.
2. Ibid., 28 May 1892.
3. H.M. Reade, op.cit., p.21.
4. C, 21 May 1892.
5. WT, 28 May 1892.
6. C, 21 May 1892.

ILP. Over 700 of these tickets were subsequently handed in, including a few from women.[1] The next meeting, to be confined to members only, was arranged for Tuesday 24 May, at Chorlton-on-Medlock Town Hall. Its chief business was the election of officers and executive committee.[2] Not surprisingly Blatchford emerged from the meeting as President of the ILP, with W.K. Hall and Leonard Hall as Vice-Presidents. The Treasurer was John Trevor, while the two secretaries, Alfred Settle and Ben Bilcliffe, were to deal respectively with correspondence and finance.[3]

The officers elected were truly representative of the origins of the party; there were Blatchford and Trevor as the leaders of the two main streams of ethical socialism; three Social-Democrats, all from Salford; and Ben Bilcliffe as representative of Salford LEA. Enthusiasm for the new venture ran high, not least in the columns of the Clarion. In his editorial on 28 May, Blatchford prophesied:

> For this labour party is something more than a mere Labour Electoral Club. It is something more than a mere Socialist Society. It is an organisation formed to rouse, to educate, and to unite the vast inert masses of the workers, and to give the strength of sympathy and cohesion to the scattered companies and isolated forlorn hopes of Social Reformers.[4]

Yet enthusiasm alone could not obliterate the fact that the ILP was at this stage simply one of several socialist and labour electoral movements in existence. The Workman's Times was still pursuing its campaign for a national independent labour party without, it should be added, the 'Fourth Clause' of its Manchester counterpart. Locally the LEAs were engaged in forming their Central Executive, and must at this stage have appeared to rival the ILP. In Salford the SDF maintained its established predominance; its members, who had played so vital a role in the formation of the ILP, still retained their original loyalty to a movement which displayed no desire for alliance. On 21 May there appeared in the Clarion a letter from J. Neill, secretary pro tem of S. Salford SDF. On behalf of that branch committee, he wished to correct a statement 'that representatives of the Social Democrats had agreed to assist in forming an independent labour party, and to ask you to state in the Clarion that the so-called representatives only represented themselves'.[5] For the

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1. WT, 28 May 1892.
2. C, 21 May 1892.
3. Ibid., 28 May 1892; WT, 4 June 1892.
4. C, 28 May 1892.
5. Ibid., 21 May 1892.

less independently-minded working men of Manchester and Salford, there remained the further alternative of allegiance to the Trades Council LEA, affiliated in its turn to the Labour Electoral Association of Great Britain and Ireland.

* * *

Although the ILP was not the only movement in the field, it certainly obtained the allegiance of the most prominent labourists and socialists in the area. While its origins have hitherto been examined largely in terms of movements, it has frequently been remarked that many of the links between these bodies arose out of common membership, rather than simply as a result of formal contacts. It is at this stage necessary to consider in greater detail the extent of this common membership, and any indications as to the social background from which these advocates of socialism and labour independence emerged. Appendix III below lists 187 men from the Manchester and Salford area who, between 1890 and the end of 1892, were recorded in the press as having participated in the local socialist and labour representation movements. Most of the movements as listed are self-explanatory; it should, however, be noted that the 'South Salford Election campaign' refers to the movement in support of both Harris and Hall, while '<u>WT</u> list' comprises all the local men who were recorded in that paper as having completed the declaration of adherence to the proposed national independent labour party. In the case of the ILP, several men who were active in other movements during the period in question were not recorded as participating in ILP activities until 1893 or '4. Because the source of information is limited to newspaper reports, which concerned themselves with officers and speakers at meetings, as opposed simply to rank-and-file members, this allegiance has been recorded, together with dates, on the grounds that actual membership is likely to have preceded the reports. There is however one exception; in the case of Dr. Pankhurst the date 1894 marked his transfer of allegiance from Liberalism to the ILP.

Of the 187 men listed, it has been possible to trace the occupation or trade union membership of 66. They are by no means likely to be a cross section of the whole. The chief method of tracing occupations from addresses provided in the press, has been by means of Slater's <u>Directory</u>. This work however confined its attention chiefly to middle class and professional men and skilled tradesmen, also to householders resident in the principal streets of the area. Men who were not householders, or whose

homes were in the more obscure back streets and courts, generally tended to be excluded. Yet even allowing for the likelihood that most of the middle class and skilled workers have been traced, while those remaining are likely to have been semi- and unskilled men, the fact remains that about a third of these advocates of labour representation came from the former group. The occupations of these 66 men are classified in Table 8 below.[1] Apart from the overall picture of skilled workmen, the table shows a particularly large number of men from the printing trades. Much smaller in number, but ranking next in importance, were the professional journalists, followed closely by the railwaymen and shopkeepers.

To consider initially the printing trades; the majority of these men were involved in either the Trades Council LEA or the Workman's Times scheme, and were not recorded as having been active in any of the other movements listed. In the Trades Council LEA were to be found G.D. Kelley, General Secretary of the Amalgamated Society of Lithographic Printers, Henry Slatter, General Secretary of the Typographical Association, and R.W. Watters, a compositor and President of Manchester Typographical Association. Among the men who completed the Workman's Times declaration were the printers Charles Chorlton, George Darlington and A.T. Fletcher; David E. Williams and William Hargreaves, compositors; and Charles Elliger, a litho artist. Three men from the printing trades were however to play a major role in several organizations. Harry Henshall was a compositor and active member of Manchester Typographical Association. He was a Fabian and active member of North Manchester LEA, as well as being a participant in the May Day demonstration and early ILP. Thomas Morton Purves, also a compositor, was active in the SDF, Salford LEA and the Labour Church, before becoming a member of the ILP. Most important of the three was undoubtedly Alfred Settle. He had long since completed his seven years' apprenticeship as a copper plate engraver, and by 1893 appears to have been a partner in a firm of engravers.[2] Settle played a leading role in many of the movements of the early '90s; he was SDF municipal candidate in

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1. See overleaf, p.253.
2. Slater's Directory 1893, p.496 (alphabetical section) listed 'Settle, Alfred, engraver (Maver and Settle) 12, George Henry St., Salford'. In the trades section, p.103, one finds under 'Engravers', 'Maver and Settle, 25 Exchange buildings, St. Mary's Gate'. The Manchester address suggests more than a little back-street business, Exchange Buildings had as its other occupants solicitors, engineers, merchants, agents and accountants.

Table 8

Occupations of 66 leading advocates of labour representation, 1890-2

Agents	2
Bakers and confectioners	1
Barristers	1
Bookbinders	1
Carpenters and joiners	3
Clerks	2
Dealers	1
Dentists	1
Electrical trades	1
Employees of socialist organizations (full-time)	3
Gas workers	1
Goods sorters	1
Journalists (professional)	5
Managers	1
Mamufacturers	1
Mechanics	1
Ministers of religion	1
Moulders	1
Owen's College - staff/ students	1
Painters	2
Pattern makers	1
Porters	1
Printing trades	12
Railwaymen	4
Saddlers	1
Shop assistants	1
Shopkeepers	4
Tailors	1
Tinplate workers	1
Transport workers (road)	3
Turners	1
Upholsterers	1
Others	3

William Horrocks has been classified here as a turner, although this can be substantiated only by oral evidence (see above, p.91).

1890 and '91[1] and Executive member of Salford LEA.[2] He was also prominent in the activities of North Manchester Fabian Society[3] and in the South Salford parliamentary campaign.[4] As President of the May Day Committee, he headed the procession,[5] and shortly afterwards became a founder member and Corresponding Secretary of the ILP.[6]

The importance of men from the printing trades generally is hardly surprising. Manchester was, after all, an important centre for printing and publishing. Members of these trades were generally highly-skilled and well-paid. Moreover while many working men involved in labour and socialist politics lived in constant fear of dismissal, lest their activities be discovered by employers, the printing trades generally were in a strong strategic position. As A.E. Musson pointed out in his history of the Typographical Association, newspapers were particularly vulnerable to threats of exposure should their employees be unfairly treated.[7] A man dismissed because of his political activities could very easily lead to extensive coverage of the whole affair in a rival newspaper.

This freedom to express publicly one's political allegiance was manifested above all by the second largest group listed above, the journalists. Into this category have been placed only the full-time professional journalists; Blatchford, Palmer and Thompson of the Clarion, Harris of the Sunday Chronicle, and Leonard Hall. Had the unpaid local correspondents of the Workman's Times, or even Trevor in his capacity as editor of the Labour Prophet been included, the number would have been far greater. Manchester must have been unique among provincial cities in having, at various times during the 1890-2 period, four socialist newspaper editors; Leonard Hall of the Navvy's Guide, Blatchford, Trevor and Harris. The importance of the press to the labour and socialist movement in Manchester has already been remarked upon, in connection with these newspapers. It can hardly be over-emphasised. The Clarion and Labour Prophet were not only propaganda organs, but the means of organizing local socialist converts in the area, where their editors and journalists were themselves politically active.

The remainder of the 66 men considered were drawn mainly

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1. J, 8 November 1890, 7 November 1891.
2. WT, 28 August 1891.
3. Ibid., 30 July, 20 August, 3 September 1892.
4. Ibid., 8 September, 16 October 1891.
5. Ibid., 7 May 1892.
6. Ibid., 28 May 1892; C, 28 May 1892.
7. A.E. Musson, op.cit., p.305.

from a wide spectrum of skilled working class occupations, with the addition of a few unskilled or semi-skilled men (a porter, a goods sorter, and a gasworker) and a group who might be described as middle class: Dr. Pankhurst, the barrister; John Trevor in his capacity as a Minister of Religion; Henry Wall the glove manufacturer; and S.J. Chapman of Owen's College. Of more uncertain status between the upper echelons of the working class and the lower-middle class were the clerks, shopkeepers and the insurance agent, James H. Walker. Most prominent among the clerks was H.M. Reade, whose background was far from proletarian.[1]

Although the labour and socialist activists have hitherto been considered merely in terms of their trades, it is worth noting that many of their number were officials, as opposed to rank-and-file members, of their unions. Some of these men were involved in the labour electoral movement simply as a result of their union activities: T. Green, General Secretary of the Saddler's Association; Kelly, General Secretary of the Lithographic Printers, and Slatter and Watters of the Typographical Association, were all involved in the Trades Council LEA and nothing else. There were, however, many union officers who were involved, in their personal capacities, in a wide range of organizations. From craft societies came John Jenkins, General Secretary of the Amalgamated Union of Bakers and Confectioners, who was the only man in the group to participate both in the Trades Council LEA and in one of the local, independent, LEAs; Stephen Buckley, President of the Amalgamated Union of Upholsterers; and Thomas Brennan, Secretary of the Electrical Trades Union. Of the 'new unionists', some leading figures must be categorised with caution, for their own backgrounds and earlier occupations were sometimes dissimilar from those of the rank and file members whom they represented. Thus Leonard Hall, although he has been classed under his profession of journalist, was also Lancashire district secretary of the Navvies' Union. John Harker, who organised the Shirt Cutters' Society, had actually studied for the dissenting ministry before his employment in the clothing trade.[2] Nevertheless there were several prominent 'new union' leaders active in these movements; William Johnson, secretary of the National Union of Shop

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1. H.M. Reade, op.cit., pp.9-11.
2. Labour Annual 1897, pp.227-8.

Assistants; John Kelly, General Secretary of Manchester, Salford and District Lorrymen's and Carters' Union; George T. Jackson, Secretary of the Hackney Carriage Employees Association. Added to their number were P. Connor, district secretary of the GW&GLU and a member of the ILP in 1893, and J.H. Shuttlesworth, chairman of No.2 branch GRWU, who completed a declaration of adherence for the Workman's Times.

Thus although certain officials of new unions played a vital role in the events leading to the formation of the ILP, some of the men involved were by no means representative of the occupations or social class for which their unions catered. If the labour representation and socialist movements of the period are considered in terms of the social background of their adherents, then most prominent were the skilled working men, accompanied by a not insignificant group from the middle class. It must at a later stage be considered whether this pattern was repeated in the later history of the ILP in the area.[1]

The ILP therefore began its existence with a capable, dedicated and politically-experienced leadership. However it also had some fundamental pitfalls to avoid. Skilled working men who have diligently pursued the paths of self-education and self-improvement, and whose lives have become immersed in politics, are not always the most aware of the apathy and ignorance which constitute the 'opinions' of many of their fellow workers. In attempting to combine the abstract doctrine of socialism with the championship of the more immediate needs and wants of 'labour', the ILP had taken upon itself a task requiring an extremely delicate precision of judgement. In the years which followed, its most basic and most difficult task was to maintain a balance between the ultimate vision of socialism, and the immediate demands of labour.

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1. See below, Part 2 Chapter 4. For a survey of the national ILP, see D. Hopkin, 'The Membership of the Independent Labour Party, 1904-10: A Spatial and Occupational Analysis' in International Review of Social History Vol.XX Pt.2. 1975.

Chapter 7

From 'Nunquam's' party to Hardie's, 1892-3

When Robert Blatchford addressed the Labour Church service at Chorlton Town Hall on 11 October 1891, all four hundred seats in that building were occupied, and more than a thousand people were unable even to get into the room.[1] In March 1892 Keir Hardie arrived to speak at a service in the Free Trade Hall. On this occasion the hall was far from being filled, the congregation numbering about three hundred. 'Fidus Achates' commented: 'It was rather a big venture to take the Free Trade Hall for a man who has not yet made a name in Manchester, and I am sorry to say that John Trevor and his co-workers will sustain a loss of about £5, the collection being a very small one for the number of people present'.[2] The progress of the Labour Church is not, in this context, the vital issue. What is important is the relative size of the gatherings, and the description of Hardie as 'a man who has not yet made a name in Manchester'. Much that has been written about the foundation of the national ILP has portrayed Hardie as the source of leadership and inspiration of the new party. Admittedly most estimates do fall short of Ramsay MacDonald's description of Hardie as the man 'who will stand out for ever as the Moses who led the children of labour in this country out of bondage...'[3] Not only did Hardie himself lack personal support among the early members of Manchester and Salford ILP, but that body was strongly influenced by two forces antagonistic to his policy and attitudes; Robert Blatchford and the SDF.

In the months before the celebrated Bradford conference of 1893, Manchester and Salford ILP developed the organization necessary to sustain propaganda work and also to fight both general and municipal elections. Had it merely concentrated upon building up this structure, which in turn was capable of being absorbed into a new national party, there would have been no problem. However it was apparent long before the Bradford Conference that Manchester and Salford ILP, with Blatchford as its president, did not regard itself as just another local ILP, whose future lay simply in absorption by a national movement. There are clear

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1. Labour Prophet, January 1892; WT, 16 October 1891.
2. WT, 26 March 1892.
3. J. Ramsay MacDonald, 'Introduction' to W. Stewart, J. Keir Hardie (1921; new ed. 1925) p.xxi. In similar vein, K.O. Morgan, Keir Hardie; Radical and Socialist (1975) stated of Hardie, 'From the start the new party was regarded as his personal creation. He was its symbol and its prophet' (p.65).

indications, not least in the events surrounding the conference, that the Manchester party intended to mould a national ILP in its own image, or even under its own leadership. During the first months of its existence, it maintained close contacts, both personal and official, with the local SDF, while at the same time taking little part in the Workman's Times scheme for a national ILP. The Manchester delegates arrived at Bradford intent upon the creation of a national party which, while distinctly socialist and independent, would preserve their local autonomy. Socialism and local autonomy were to find general favour at the conference, but the independence enshrined in the Fourth Clause was rejected by a large majority. Had the defeat occurred over some other point of procedure or organization, no doubt Manchester ILPers would have allowed the matter to be forgotten. But the Fourth Clause issue was crucial to the party itself; it raised not only the issue of socialist unity and possible electoral agreements with established parties, but also the basic question as to how socialism might ultimately be achieved. Thus while the following chapter is concerned primarily with Manchester and Salford in the period before the formation of the National ILP, it also served to illustrate some of the problems which that party faced at the outset, and indeed never quite managed to solve.

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While there can be little doubt that Manchester and Salford ILP received attention within the national movement as the party of 'Nunquam' and the Clarion, it did merit a position of prominence in its own right, being both large and well-organized. The local ILP executive, elected at the party's first business meeting on 24 May 1892, undertook as its immediate tasks the South Salford election campaign, and the establishment of local organizations within the various divisions.[1] It appears that each week a meeting was arranged in one of the parliamantary divisions by the Executive. Members of the Manchester and Salford party living in the division in question were duly notified by circular. From their ranks a district chairman, deputy-chairman, corresponding and financial secretaries, and a treasurer, were then elected. A 'complete set of books' was supplied to the new organization, and the conduct of the meeting handed over to the divisional chairman.[2] Thus at a meeting on

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1. C, 28 May 1892; WT, 4 June 1892.
2. C, 30 July, 6 August 1892.

28 July the North Manchester division was organized;[1] Gorton followed on 3 August,[2] and by 27 August local groups had also been established in South-West Manchester and both North and South Salford. A meeting for North-East Manchester was planned for the ensuing week, with other divisions to follow in due course, 'until the whole of Manchester and Salford is roped in with a network of really efficient divisional organisations'. Before the end of August, North and South-West Manchester, and Gorton, were all planning to run candidates in the November municipal elections.[3] North-East Manchester, undoubtedly strengthened by the affiliation of the local LEA, decided at its first meeting to run John Ritson for New Cross ward. It might be added that Ritson was in fact a nominee of the LEA.[4]

From September 1892, local organization and propaganda work were both firmly established. North Manchester division held its weekly meetings on Thursday evenings at the Charlton Street Temperance Hall, off Rochdale Road. On 23 October it also organized open-air meetings at the Fair Ground on Thornton Street (also near Rochdale Road), which were addressed by Katharine St. John Conway and J.R. Clynes. At the beginning of 1893 the division made sufficient progress to establish a Labour Club, which was opened with a Ball on 14 January.[5] In North-West Manchester a meeting was arranged for Tuesday 11 October, at the Cheetham Hill Institute, 490 Cheetham Hill Road. G. Crowe, the secretary pro tem., announced through the columns of the Clarion that the election of divisional officers would then take place.[6] With the initial impetus provided by the adherence of the LEA, and by John Ritson's candidature, North-East Manchester appears to have become one of the most flourishing local groups. Regular members' meetings were held at Hayes St. Hall,[7] with Ritson as president, William Turton chairman,[8] Arthur Brittain as secretary and J. Lowe as corresponding

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1. Ibid., 30 July 1892.
2. Ibid., 6 August 1892.
3. Ibid., 27 August 1892.
4. Ibid., 3 September 1892.
5. Ibid., 22 October, 24 December 1892. Katharine St. John Conway (who subsequently married John Bruce Glasier) was at this time billed as a 'Fabian, late of Newnham College, Cambridge', and Clynes as organiser of the Gas Workers' and General Labourers' Union for Lancashire. In 1906 he was to become Labour MP for N.E. Manchester (see J.R. Clynes, Memoirs 1869-1924 Vol.1 (1937) pp.63, 105).
6. C, 8 October 1892.
7. Ibid., 13 October 1892.
8. Ibid., 8 October 1892. For all locations of meeting places, see maps in Part II, Chapter 2 below.

secretary.[1] On 23 December 1892, the division organised its first Annual Tea Party and Ball at the New Islington Hall, Ancoats. Guests invited included Keir Hardie, W.K. Hall, Alfred Settle, Leonard Hall and John Ritson.[2]

The Hulme area, which formed the South-West Manchester division, had been the venue of much socialist propaganda before the foundation of the ILP. Now members' meetings were held in St. Mark's School, River Street,[3] with F.W. Lawler as secretary and Richard Anderson president.[4] Speakers here included two London Fabians, W.H. Uttley and H. Russell Smart.[5] Open air gatherings, on the vacant ground at the corner of Barrack Street and Queen Street, were addressed by Ritson, Leonard Hall, S.J. Chapman, Alfred Settle, E.H. Parkinson and Jesse Brogden.[6] This division was also one of the first to acquire its own premises; in January 1893 meetings transferred to the Labour Hall in Elvington Street, off Medlock Street.[7]

South Manchester ILP branch attracted between 30 and 40 members to its inaugural meeting in September 1892. On this occasion, A.B. Shephard was elected secretary, and William Johnson chairman.[8] This branch quickly realised the advantages to recruitment and propaganda that a social club might bring. At the third members' meeting, held on 11 October at the Victoria Club for Working Girls, Oxford Street, the debate concerned 'the policy of introducing intoxicating liquor in the social clubs of the ILP'.[9] The decision of the meeting has not been recorded, but by mid-November the branch had acuired rooms at 27 Nelson Street, Chorlton-on-Medlock, which were opened every evening as a social club.[10] A concert

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1. C, 21 September, 8 October 1892.
2. Ibid., 17 December 1892; WT, 24 December 1892.
3. C, 21 September 1892.
4. Ibid., 22 October 1892; WT, 29 October 1892. For biographical information on Lawler and Anderson, as well as on many of the other ILPers mentioned in this chapter, see Appendix II below.
5. C, 1 and 22 October 1892.
6. WT, 3 and 24 September 1892; C, 1 October 1892. 'Parkinson's' initials are variously given as 'T.H.', 'T.E.' and 'J.E.' (WT, 3 and 24 September, 8 October 1892). But in C, 14 October 1893, the speaker at South West Manchester ILP was again reported as 'E.H. Parkinson'. It seems likely that the references were all in fact to the same man.
7. C, 21 January 1893.
8. Ibid., 21 September 1892.
9. Ibid., 15 October 1892.
10. Ibid., 19 November 1892.

was also arranged for December, in the Secular Hall.[1]

The ILP branch in East Manchester began its existence in October, with a meeting in the Temperance Hall, Tipping Street, Ardwick.[2] Leonard Hall was billed to lecture at the same venue on the 27th of that month, and by November the division, like its counterpart in the South, was considering the question of a social club.[3] Whether the club materialized at this stage has not been recorded. Much of the activity for the following months centred round the lectures, by [?William] Metcalf, Katharine St. John Conway, and J.R. Clynes.[4]

In the adjoining parliamentary division of Gorton, the branch which had been organised as the beginning of August continued to hold regular meetings at Thompson Street Hall, described as being 'behind Hayes' corn shop', Gorton Lane, West Gorton.[5] There was also an open air meeting, on 11 September, in Belle Vue Street.[6] Advertised speakers included W.K. Hall, Allen Parkes (of the Fabians and Mat Makers' Society), R. Anderson, H. Boardman, Joseph Waddington, Ben Bilcliffe, and G.H. Higgs.[7]

Of all the local ILP branches, South Salford was unique in that the parliamentary election machinery preceded the party organization. The post-election ILP began its indoor meetings in the Temperance Hall, Ordsall Lane,[8] later removing to a permanent club room over the Co-op. Stores in Chapel Street.[9] Open air propaganda took place on the vacant ground in Liverpool Street, and adjacent to the London and North Western Hotel on Cross Lane.[10] The branch secretary, W. Wood,[11] does not appear to have been prominent in any previous labour and socialist activity, and it seems likely that the branch was, from its very foundation, overshadowed by the existence of the SDF in the vicinity. In many of the years which followed, the ILP was not even able to maintain a branch in

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1. Ibid., 17 December 1892.
2. Ibid., 8 October 1892.
3. Ibid., 22 and 29 October 1892.
4. Ibid., 10 December 1892; 28 January, 11 February 1893. The first speaker was billed simply as 'Comrade Metcalf', but is likely to have been the William Metcalf of 49 Bedson St., Beswick, E. Manchester, who completed a Workman's Times declaration of adherence to an ILP (see WT, 14 May 1892).
5. C, 6 August 1892.
6. Ibid., 10 September 1892.
7. Ibid., 1 October, 19 November, 17 December, 24 December 1892; 21 January 1893. R. Anderson is likely to have been Richard Anderson.
8. Ibid., 21 September, 15 October 1892.
9. WT, 12 November 1892; C, 26 November 1892.
10. C, 21 September 1892.
11. Ibid., 15 October 1892.

that stronghold of Social-Democracy.

North Salford, by contrast, was destined to flourish. By mid-September it had already acquired its Labour Hall, at 53 Duke Street, Lower Broughton, and was organizing a concert to raise funds for furnishing the premises. The chair at that event was taken by Alfred Settle.[1] During October public lectures were delivered by Leonard Hall, on 'Socialism', and by William Johnson on 'The Labour Party'.[2] By the end of the year leacures were being held regularly on Wednesday evenings, with business meetings on Fridays.[3]

The ILP in West Salford commenced its activities from Highfield Hall, Highfield Street, off Seedley Road. Speakers at meetings here included Ben Bilcliffe, J.E. Leake, 'Comrade Townley' and Alfred Settle.[4] At the end of January 1893 a new Labour Club was opened by the branch, at the corner of Broad Street and Booth Street, Pendleton. The opening ceremony was performed by Councillor Beever of Halifax.[5] Early meetings in these premises were addressed by 'Comrade Solly', 'Comrade Hudson', and J.R. Clynes.[6] Thus months before the national ILP was founded, Manchester and Salford had established a framework of active branches in all the divisions, linked together by an Executive Committee and by conferences of the divisional committees.[7] As will later be described, many of these branches fought seats in the November municipal elections, but at this stage their most important function was undoubtedly propaganda and recruitment.

Viewed in the light of the development of the national ILP, Manchester and Salford's early organization was vital for several reasons. Most obvious was the sheer size of the delegation which it was thereby enebled to send to the Bradford Conference. Before the end of August 1892 the Manchester and Salford party membership had already passed the 2,000 mark.[8] The divisional organization undoubtedly facilitated the further

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1. Ibid., 21 September, 1 October 1892.
2. Ibid., 1 and 8 October 1892.
3. Ibid., 26 November 1892.
4. Ibid., 8 October, 19 November, 26 November, 10 December 1892.
5. Ibid., 21 January 1893.
6. Ibid., 11, 18, 25 February 1893. 'Solly' is likely to have been the J. Solley of the General Railway Workers' Union, who also lectured to Gorton ILP in March (ibid., 11 March 1893). 'Hudson' may well have been J.B. Hudson of S.W. Manchester branch (ibid., 26 August 1893, 21 April 1894).
7. WT, 15 October 1892 recorded a conference of divisional committees at the Labour Church Institute on 8 October, with Robert Blatchford in the chair.
8. WT, 27 August 1892.

increase of this number, but also provided a basis by which the area might achieve relatively more delegates. In October 1892 the circular, produced by the Arrangements Committee for the proposed conference of a National Independent Labour Party, stated that parliamentary divisions where there existed bona fide organizations, pledged to the promotion of independent labour representation, could send one delegate to the conference for each 500 members or fraction thereof.[1] On the eve of the conference, William Johnson announced that 'we are entitled to send ten delegates',[2] and when the gathering finally took place, the local representatives from the executive committee, divisions (including Gorton) and Labour Church, actually numbered 13.[3] Thus after Bradford and London, the Manchester contingent was the next largest present, and duly attempted to wield an influence compatible with its size. The extent of Manchester's organization prior to January 1893 can also be seen as a factor contributing to its desire for continued local autonomy.

* * *

The Manchester and Salford party thus represented at Bradford was not, in certain respects, entirely in tune with many of its counterparts, being both more independent, and more closely associated with the SDF. The origins of the policy of rigid independence undoubtedly lay in the traditions of local electoral behaviour. As has previously been described, there was in Manchester and Salford, as in many other Lancashire towns, a strong tradition of working class Conservatism. The Trades Council, which was the most important bastion of Liberalism in working class circles, had remained aloof from the ILP, and those individual members who had become involved in the party's formation (for example, J.F. Quinn) hailed from the non-Liberal minority. Moreover recent events such as John Kelly's defection,[4] served only to support existing views. During the period under consideration there were no signs of divergence from the strict policy of independence enshrined in the Fourth Clause. Indeed that policy was further vindicated by many of the events surrounding the South Salford parliamentary election.

Despite the fact that South Salford was a three-cornered contest, all the organized opposition to Hall appears to have come from the Liberals. In the weeks before the election, the Liberals consistently

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1. Ibid., 15 October 1892.
2. Ibid., 14 January 1893.
3. ILP, Report of the First General Conference. List of delegates and organizations inside front cover.
4. See above, pp.219-22.

attempted to break up socialist meetings, and not simply by means of heckling. On 5 June police ordered Hurley, a Social-Democrat from Burnley, to stop his lecture in Bexley Square, Salford. Initially the socialists regarded the issue simply as one of free speeech. On 11 June the Clarion announced that, on the following day, Hall and George Evans would go to Bexley Square and test the right of meeting. As expected, shortly after Evans had commenced the meeting, a police inspector said that he would give him ten minutes to clear the square. The meeting however continued, with speeches from Hall and W. Vickers (of Hyde Fabians).

The suspicion that this affair was not due solely to police officiousness, was revealed in the following week's Justice:

> It seems that the Radicals, who are opposing us with a capitalist, who was once a workman, are in a very poor way for fight when they get the wife of a Liberal Guardian of the Poor to make a complaint of annoyance so that they might be able to stifle our propaganda and the influence which we have upon the workers.[1]

Later in June, Forrest, the Liberal candidate, held a meeting at Ordsall Fair Ground, to discuss 'Socialism'. Such a tactic was not an uncommon election ploy, and hardly merited condemnation. What was to cause far more trouble was the support given to Forrest by two speakers on his platform, Dr. Moir and Morrison Davidson.[2] Morrison Davidson has been described as an old republican journalist, who once 'ghosted' speeches for Joseph Chamberlain,[3] and was not perhaps an unlikely supporter. But Dr. John Moir was in fact Keir Hardie's treasurer at South West Ham.[4] The incident was still further complicated by the repercussions of a meeting in London, on 17 June, between Moir and W.H. Ward, assistant secretary of the Gasworkers' and General Labourers' Union. Moir had said that he was going to Manchester to speak for Forrest, and had asked Ward to write 'a line or two' which he might hand to that candidate. Ward had subsequently produced (on paper bearing the official letterhead of the union) a lithographed letter stating that, having lived in Salford and Manchester for nearly 21 years, he was convinced that Alderman Forrest was a fit and proper person to represent the division in Parliament, and hoped that the workers would return Forrest at the head of the poll. This letter was

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1. C, 11 June 1892; J, 18 June 1892.
2. J, 25 June 1892.
3. L. Thompson, The Enthusiasts. A Biography of John and Katharine Bruce Glasier (1971) p.80.
4. L. Thompson, Robert Blatchford, p.93; WT, 30 July 1892, simply stated that Moir was 'acting as an important official for Keir Hardie'.

circulated in the Salford gasworks, and meetings were held at the works gates. One copy came into the hands of G.S. Horsfall, who forwarded it to Will Thorne, with a request for explaination. Horsfall subsequently received a letter from Ward, who expressed regret that he had not, before writing the letter, ascertained in which division Forrest was standing. If, stated Ward, he has realised that Forrest was opposing Hall, not only would he not have recommended him, but 'I would go to some expense to oppose him'. Ward then went on to describe his meeting with Dr. Moir. However whereas Ward subsequently regretted his action, this view was not shared by Moir. Indeed the latter stated that if Forrest stood again, he would spend a month supporting him.[1]

Initially the attitude of a man who was actually Keir Hardie's treasurer seems surprising. It does however draw attention to the fact that Hardie himself was at this stage both less independent and less socialist in his inclinations than were the Manchester and Salford men. Hardie's election address at South West Ham, while declaring his independence of party control, also illustrated his basic agreement with Liberal principles; 'I have all my life given an independent support to the Liberal Party, but my first concern is the moral and material welfare of the working classes,... Generally speaking, I am in agreement with tne present programme of the Liberal Party so far as it goes,...'[2] Many of the Liberals in South West Ham actually supported Hardie,[3] and certainly the situation there was a far cry from the bitter hostility predominant in South Salford. The contrasting treatment which Hardie and the Manchester and Salford ILP men received from their local Liberal parties must, to some extent, be held responsible for the differing attitudes which they were to display at Bradford. It is hardly surprising that the Fourth Clause failed to appeal to a man who was both in agreement with the Newcastle Programme and was receiving support from local Liberals.[4] To Hardie, Liberalism was clearly more attractive than Social-Democracy.

In Salford, the Liberals continued to organize opposition to Hall's meetings, and on nomination day nearly succeeded in getting their

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1. WT, 16, 23, 30 July 1892.
2. W. Stewart, op.cit., p.71.
3. I. McLean, Keir Hardie (1975) p.37. K.O. Morgan, op.cit., pp.51,56, referred to Hardie's 'broad radical appeal' and stated that in August 1892 Hardie could still be located within the Liberal coalition.
4. I. McLean, op.cit., p.37.

opponent disqualified. Forrest had eight nomination papers completed in the same way as Hall's (albeit by a lawyer) but somehow found out that they were incorrect. Before the time expired, he was therefore able to submit two new nomination papers. On entering the Mayor's room, Forrest declared that he 'would raise no frivolous objection', but just over an hour later, he lodged an objection. This was subsequently overruled, and Horsfall at least felt that Forrest's conduct had won votes for Labour.[1] The Liberal press boycotted Hall's speeches and misrepresented his meetings.[2] Word was passed from door to door that Hall had no chance, and that a vote for him would be a vote wasted.[3]

The election result itself vindicated the Liberals' worst fears. It is doubtful whether even the most ardent Labour supporter ever really believed that Hall would actually win the seat. In fact he obtained 552 votes. But heading the poll was the Conservative, Sir H.H. Howarth, who with 3,406 votes had a majority of only 37 over Forrest.[4] Despite the fact that Howarth had been MP since 1886, the Liberals believed that Hall's candidature had lost them a seat. Accusations to this effect stemmed from both Mr. Gladstone and the Manchester Guardian.[5] Local Liberals threatened Labour workers with personal retribution,[6] and accused Hall of having received 'Tory gold'. Scores of letters were received at the Clarion office, asserting that Hall had received a cheque for £200 from Howarth, towards his expenses. In the issue of 16 July, Blatchford firmly denied this. The total amount received by Hall's committee did not exceed £120, and of this £60 had come from the Clarion office, while the bulk of the balance had been obtained from the sale of subscription tickets - in coppers. Postal orders had also been sent in, in sums ranging from 6d to 40s. Blatchford added: 'It is no doubt true that many Conservative working men did subscribe small sums, and did also vote for Mr. Hall, just as they did for Mr. Tillett. But I know of my own knowledge that two thirds of Mr. Hall's election fund was given by Socialists.'[7]

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1. WT, 9 July 1892.
2. C, 2 July 1892.
3. WT, 16 July 1892.
4. J. Vincent and M. Stenton, op.cit., p.211.
5. WT, 9 and 16 July 1892.
6. Ibid., 16 July 1892.
7. C, 16 July 1892.

The saga of accusations and counter-accusations which was the South Salford parliamentary election campaign may, on the surface, appear somewhat trivial. But such are the incidents which can influence local activists to a far greater extent than is always realised by national party leaders. For the Manchester and Salford ILPers, the events surrounding the election were regarded as proof that there could be no compromise with Liberalism, and that adherence to the Fourth Clause had been vindicated. Perhaps the best exposition of such beliefs was to be found in the editorials of the Clarion, immediately after the election. On 9 July Blatchford wrote:

> The Independent Labour Party consider the defeat of HALL a thing to regret, and the folly of the working-class dupes of the Liberals and Tories a thing to deplore; but they are in no wise concerned about the return of a Tory for South Salford... Most of them, indeed, would prefer to see an obstinate but candid Tory in the seat rather than endure the shame of being represented by such a spineless, nerveless trimmer as Alderman Forrest, who described Socialism as theft in his first speech, and within a few weeks described himself as a Socialist.
> ...In the present state of affairs every seat lost to the Liberals is a distinct gain to Labour... Had the Liberals got in with a majority of 150, it would have been a disaster to the people. But the flowing tide seems to flow but weakly. Everything points to a narrow majority, be the Government whom it may;...
> ...a Liberal check means a Labour victory; a Liberal rout would mean a Labour triumph. Once let us get the Liberals broken, and we shall be able to make short work of the Tories.[1]

This belief that the ILP would eventually achieve national power at the expense of the Liberals, was further expounded in the following week's issue. At that time, Gladstone had a majority of 2 and would, considered Blatchford, be fortunate if he finished with a majority of 40.

> The one hope for Labour lay in a Liberal reverse. Hence the much-dreaded fourth clause of the Independent Labour Party's constitution, which forbids its members to vote for any nominee of any party except the Labour Party.
> That clause has been much execrated. We have been charged with 'disfranchising' our members. It is now time frankly and clearly to state the objects of the clause. They were chiefly (1) To form a solid Labour Party and prevent that party from being merged in the other parties; and (2) to withdraw votes from the Liberals.
> ...The Liberals, being beaten, must have given fifty safe seats to Labour. Fifty safe seats to Labour would mean the capture of the Parliamentary position by Labour, and the carrying of a substantial part of the Labour programme in a single session.[2]

The uncompromising independence of Manchester and Salford ILP stemmed not only from antipathy towards the Liberal party, but also

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1. Ibid., 9 July 1892.
2. Ibid., 16 July 1892.

from the influence of socialists, as opposed to simply labourists, within its ranks. In the municipal elections, all the ILP candidates had long records as socialist activists. Alfred Settle, who fought Harpurhey ward under the auspices of the ILP and North Manchester Fabians had, at two previous elections, contested Ordsall Ward, Salford, for the SDF.[1] In New Cross Ward, John Ritson, now president of North-East Manchester ILP, had been a prominent speaker for both the SDF and Socialist League.[2]

By mid-October, when the campaigns of both Ritson and Settle were well under way, there were as yet no Labour candidates in Salford. 'Fidus Achates' told his readers that this was due to the fact that, although the SDF had quite a number of men able and willing to fight, they were all workers and could not obtain a livelihood if returned. The implication here was that although the ILP now had branches established in all three divisions of Salford, election contests were the preserve of the SDF. However before the end of October the wards in Salford were re-arranged and a new Trafford Ward created, to comprise the portion of the borough adjoining the Ship Canal docks. The area obviously appeared promising in terms of Labour votes, and on 29 October 'Fidus Achates' announced that the SDF had decided to contest it, with Thomas Morton Purves as candidate. However Purves was not only Lancashire District Secretary of the SDF. He was also on the executive committee of Manchester and Salford ILP, and chairman of the General Purposes Committee of the Labour Church. He had been dismissed from his job as a compositor just after the general election (presumably because of his support for W.K. Hall), and had been out of work practically ever since. Now the ILP had made arrangements whereby he could both gain a livelihood and attend to his duties as a councillor, if elected.[3] The Trafford Ward contest thus serves as an illustration, not only of the relatively common phenomenon of joint SDF/ILP membership, but also of the extent to which the local parties were prepared to co-operate.

One of the earliest members of the local SDF, Joseph Waddington, also took part in the 1892 municipal elections. On 29 October

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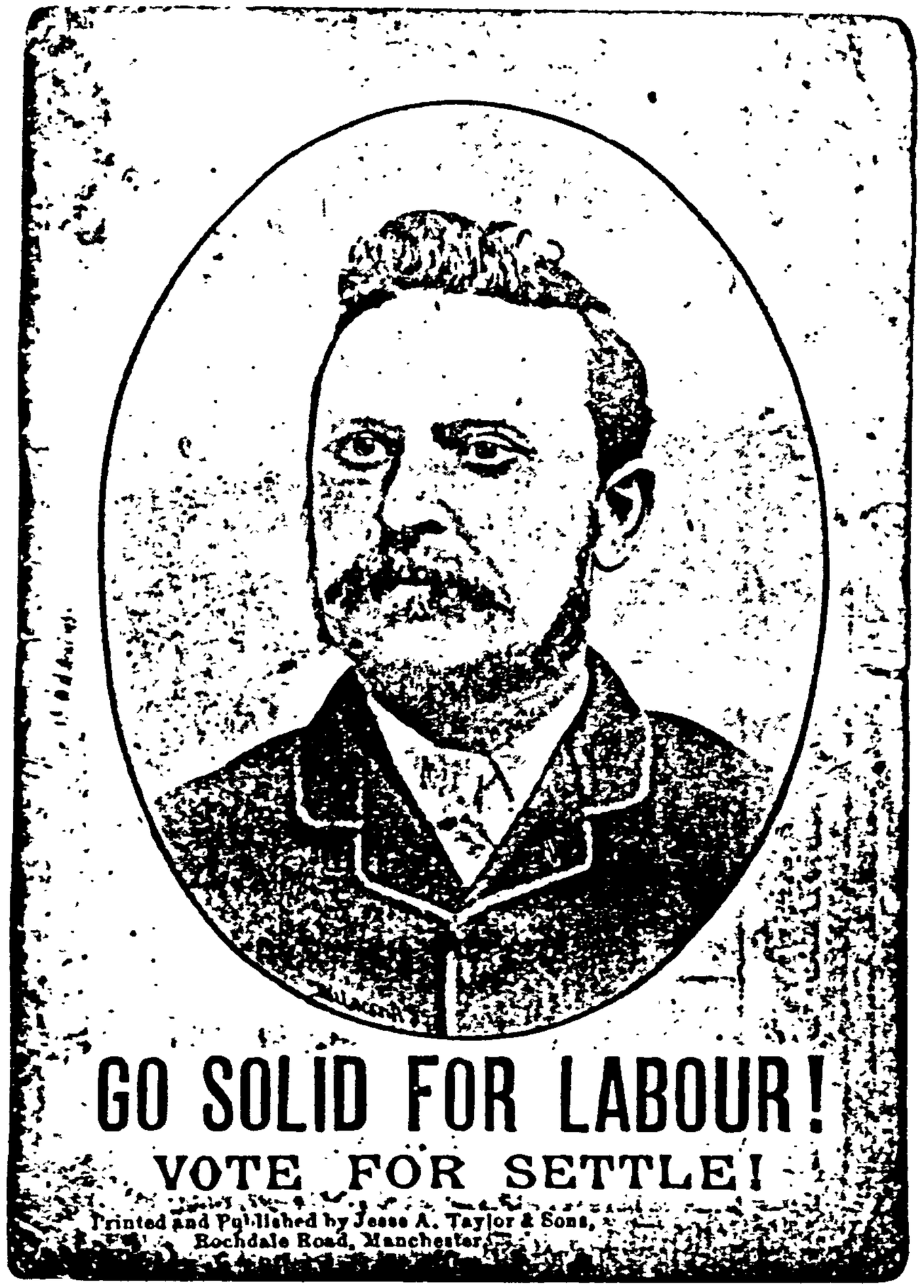
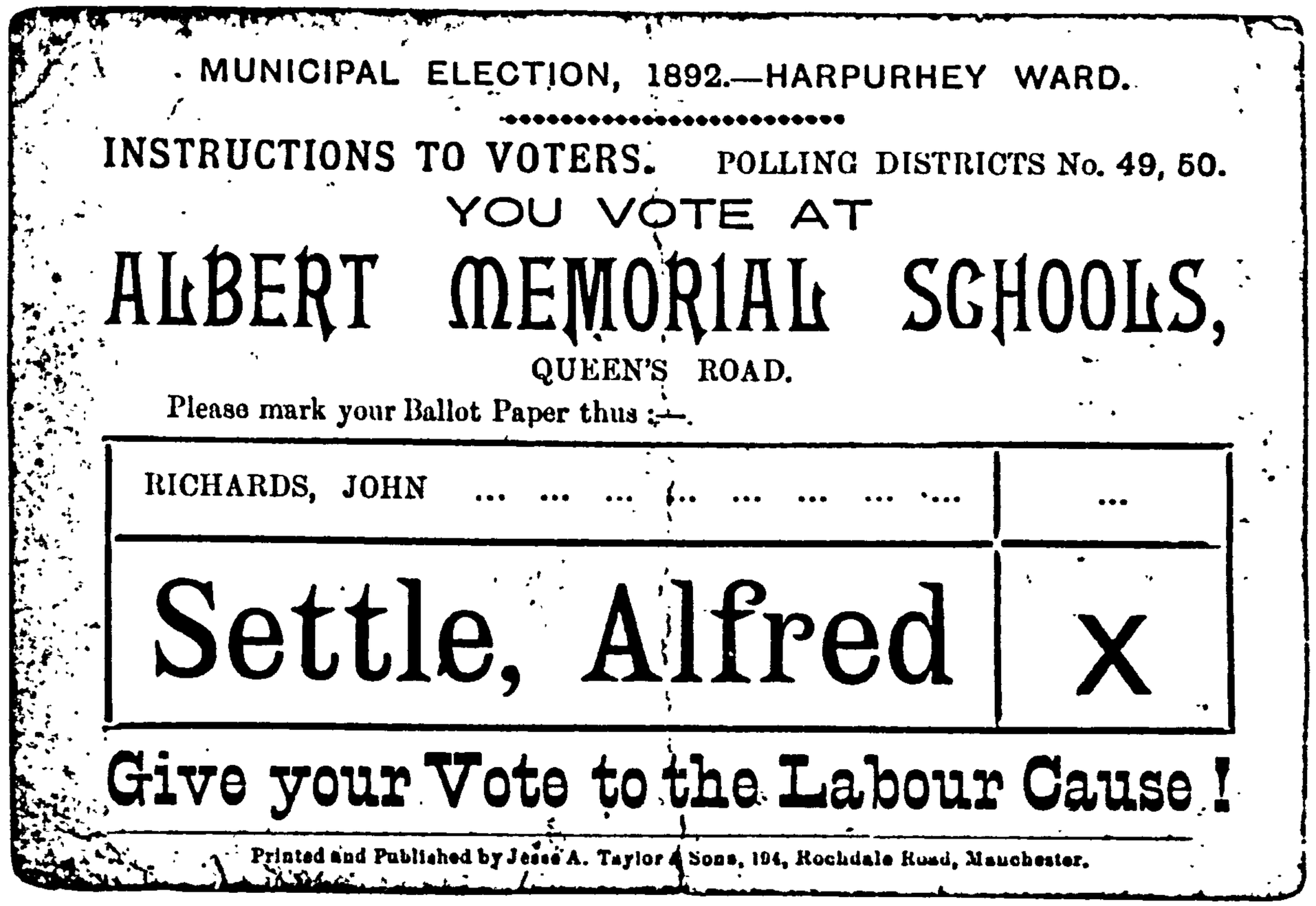
1. J, 8 November 1890; WT, 9 and 23 October 1891, 15 October 1892. For Settle's 1892 election literature, see Illustration 1.
2. Ritson's SDF activities were reported regularly in J, between 13 October 1887 and 18 August 1888. Com., 20 April 1889 to 2 November 1889 recorded him as speaking at Socialist League meetings, although after 21 September most of the gatherings appear to have been associated with new unionism. He spoke at a Jewish tailors' meeting in April 1890 (Com., 26 April 1890) and thereafter received no attention from the socialist press until September 1892. WT, 3 September 1892, then recorded NE and E Manchester LEA, upon deciding to affiliate to the ILP, submitting his name as a possible municipal candidate for New Cross. It seems likely that Ritson found the later anarchist phase of the League unacceptable.
3. WT, 29 October 1892; 3 December 1892.





MUNICIPAL ELECTION, 1892.—HARPURHEY WARD.

INSTRUCTIONS TO VOTERS. POLLING DISTRICTS No. 49, 50.

YOU VOTE AT

ALBERT MEMORIAL SCHOOLS,

QUEEN'S ROAD.

Please mark your Ballot Paper thus :—

RICHARDS, JOHN	...
Settle, Alfred	X

Give your Vote to the Labour Cause!

Printed and Published by Jesse A. Taylor & Sons, 194, Rochdale Road, Manchester.

Illustration 1

Alfred Settle's Election Literature, 1892

he stated in the Clarion that he had been asked to stand in St. George's Ward as an Independent candidate, and as the advocate 'for the granting of a dramatic licence to the proprietor of the Palace of Varieties'. Apparently the local authorities had refused the licence, and Waddington considered this to be an interference with public liberty. However his concern was not primarily with the theatrical aspect of the issue. In a letter to the Clarion he announced that: 'If the workers in Hulme want a workers' advocate on the City Council, I am ready to do service on their behalf'. There are no indications that Waddington was an official candidate of either the SDF of the ILP. In the Clarion on 29 October he asked for assistance with canvassing and distributing literature,[1] and it therefore appears that his campaign had the backing of the paper.

The impression which one gains from reports of the 1892 municipal elections is that socialists and independent labour men were prepared to support one another regardless of party labels or, in the case of Waddington, the lack of them. Candidates with any allegiance to the established parties however received little sympathy. At this election G.D. Kelley was defending his seat in St. Clement's Ward. He claimed to have been returned to the council the previous year as a Labour representative, under the auspices of the Liberal party. In the Workman's Times 'Autolycus' (Joseph Burgess) warned ILP men 'to steer clear of supporting candidates like Kelley who confessed to being political party men'.[2]

But while the elections demonstrated the extent of unity which existed among socialist organizations and their adherents, they also revealed the difficulties which faced them. The working class electors were not easily detached from their existing party allegiances. None of the socialists managed to win a seat, although Ritson and Settle both polled over 1000 votes. Waddington, who admitted that 'I fought a forlorn hope against the combined forces of bigotry and party', polled 421 and Purves only 189 of the 1,100 recorded, 'in a ward where there is scarcely a middle-class man...'[3]

The matter of joint membership of the various socialist and independent labour organizations has already been considered. It is simply necessary here to emphasise the extent to which men from the older

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1. C, 29 October 1892.
2. WT, 29 October 1892.
3. C, 5 November 1892; WT, 12 November 1892.

socialist movements dominated the ILP during its first year of existence. The elections to Manchester and Salford ILP Executive, in January 1893, may generally be taken as a guide to the most active and popular members of the party. Of the officers, Blarchford remained President and W.K. Hall one of the Vice-Presidents, now accompanied by Trevor. Bilcliffe retained his post as Honorary Secretary, while George Evans (of the SDF and Labour Church) became Treasurer, and the Fabian, Harry Henshall, Financial Secretary. The Executive was dominated by Fabians and Social-Democrats; Alfred Settle, Leonard Hall and H.M. Reade were members of both these organizations, while Allen Parks, Richard Anderson, Samuel Washington ('Elihu') and William Johnson were all Fabians. The last named, like Fred Brocklehurst, was active in the Labour Church. Among the representatives from the divisions were Ritson and the Fabian, R. Fovargue.[1]

During the 1892-3 period, both the SDF and the Fabian Society in the area attempted to strengthen their own organization, but from newspaper reports of their activities at least, there emerges no hint of any rivalry, let alone antipathy, between them and the newly-formed ILP. There was at this stage no reason why co-operation and joint membership should not continue, for locally there existed no major ideological differences. The North Manchester Fabian Society, having rejected the permeation policy of its parent body even before the ILP was founded, raised no fears of compromised independence, while the SDF continued to avoid the twin pitfalls of middle class domination and sectarianism. It therefore raised no comment that Thomas Purves, a member of the ILP Executive, should preside at meetings of both the Labour Church and the SDF on the same Sunday,[2] or that Alfred Settle, when secretary of the ILP, should take the chair when Hyndman addressed the SDF, appear on the platform during Keir Hardie's visit to North Manchester Fabians, and speak at the Labour Church.[3] Something of a precedent in the realms of socialist unity had already been set by Blatchford. Before the end of May 1892 he was combining the roles of editor of the Clarion, President of Manchester and Salford ILP, President of North Manchester Fabian Society and membership of South Salford SDF (not to mention the fact that he had proved the most popular speaker at

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1. For a complete list of representatives, see WT, 4 February 1893. For the SDF/Fabian/Labour Church contacts of members, see Appendix III below.
2. WT, 6 August 1892.
3. Ibid., 4 June, 30 July, 3 and 24 September 1892.

the Labour Church).[1]

The SDF, aided by the ILPers within its own ranks, continued to extend its activities during the latter half of 1892. On 24 July Hyndman arrived in Salford to address three meetings, at Trafford Bridge, Pendleton Co-op. Hall and the Prince of Wales Theatre. They were chaired by three founders of the ILP; Settle, Horrocks and Evans. At the Pendleton meeting, 20 names were handed in to form a new SDF branch, and other new branches were then already in the process of formation, at Pendlebury, South-West and North-East Manchester.[2] In November of that year, the South Salford branch took over former Conservative premises, at 43 Trafford Road, which were duly opened as a new club by 'Comrade Blatchford'.[3] In Salford at least the SDF continued to represent local working class interests. When the Mayor convened a meeting at the Town Hall, to sanction the loan of £1 million to the Ship Canal Company, a large number of working men protested against ratepayers' money being used to assist a private company. This opposition, led by Horrocks and his SDF comrades, resulted in the defeat of the resolution, and left the Mayor demanding a poll of ratepayers.[4]

Within the Lancashire district organization of the SDF, two Executive members of Manchester and Salford ILP held the most influential posts. W.K. Hall, Vice-President of the ILP, who had been appointed organizing secretary for the Lancashire SDF branches just before the General Election, continued in this capacity after his defeat at the polls. At the quarterly meeting of Lancashire SDF branches, held at Rochdale on 26 November 1892, agreement was reached upon a 6d per member levy, to be forwarded on a regular basis to the district secretary for payment of Hall's wages.[5] The district secretary at the time was Thomas Morton Purves, also a member of the ILP Executive and Labour Church general purposes committee.[6]

Even from the limited source of newspaper reports, there emerges a picture of a group of socialists who were active in several, or even all, of the local sections of that movement. The foundation of the ILP did not bring in its wake any conflict of ideologies or even loyalties; it was simply another outlet for socialist enthusiasm. Only Liberals and Tories were regarded as hostile. As the local ILP divisions were established they did attract many apparent newcomers to socialist politics; of the divisional representatives elected to the EC in January 1893, only Ritson and Fovargue

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1. Labour Prophet, January 1892; J, 28 May 1892; C, 20 February, 28 May 1892,
2. J, 30 July 1892.
3. Ibid., 19 November 1892.
4. WT, 26 November 1892.
5. Ibid., 14 May 1892; J, 10 December 1892.
6. WT, 29 October, 3 and 10 December 1892.

are identifiable as members of earlier socialist organizations.[1] But at this stage in the ILP's development, these 'joint members' were the most prominent and influential.

This factor of joint membership has been discussed at length as a reflection of local attitudes. 'Socialist unity', an issue destined to tear the national ILP asunder, already existed in Manchester and Salford, in practice if not in theory. But Manchester and Salford ILP had never envisaged itself as remaining an isolated body; indeed its own activists had been advocating a national Labour Party long before its very foundation. The major issue at this stage was not so much the actual formation of a national party, but the extent to which the Manchester and Salford men could mould it in their own image of socialism and rigid independence.

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The scheme for a national Independent Labour Party, as formulated in the Workman's Times,[2] and the constitution of the Manchester and Salford party, differed on two vital issues. The former movement was not committed to a distinctly socialist objective, merely to the emencipation of the working class from its 'present economic slavery' by political and constitutional action. Nor was the party envisaged by the Workman's Times to be as strict over the question of independence as the Manchester and Salford body. Ordinary membership was to be open to all men and women who signed the declaration of belief, 'that the interests of Labour are paramount to and must take precedence of all other interests, and that the advancement of those interests (of labour) must be sought by political and constitutional action'. Only members of the proposed district and general councils, together with municipal and parliamentary representatives of the party, were actually restricted with regard to other political activities. The constitution stipulated that they should 'not be members of any other political party, of its clubs, associations, or organisations of any kind whatever, nor have any transactions with any member or agent of the same without the express permission of their Councils'.

Since the constitution for a national party had already been published before that of Manchester and Salford ILP was actually drawn up, it is obvious that the local men were not prepared for their

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1. Ibid., 4 February 1893.
2. Ibid., 30 April 1892.

own party to become just another branch of the National Independent Labour Party. While socialism and independence were obviously key issues, local feeling was also vital. The Workman's Times was published in London, and the idea of being organised from London never held great appeal for Mancunians. When the Executive of the 'London district of the National ILP' met on 31 October 1892, a long conversation was held with an unnamed member of the Manchester and Salford Executive, who was in London on business. Joseph Burgess wrote: 'I venture to think that when our Manchester friends have heard his report they will cease to look upon Londoners with the suspicion and distrust they at present evince'.[1] Furthermore Manchester was the home of Blatchford and the Clarion, both with national reputations. And even if Blatchford did not, as he claimed, wish to be a leader,[2] he showed little desire to be led.

However from newspaper reports emanating from Manchester and Salford during the latter half of 1892, there emerges a picture not simply of a lack of enthusiasm for the Workman's Times scheme, but of an attempt by the local ILP to play the leading role in the formation of a national party. The plans and preparations which culminated in the Bradford Conference, revolving as they did around Hardie, Burgess and the Bradford ILP, have frequently been described.[3] The quest for supremacy by the Manchester movement seems largely to have been ignored.[4] Yet the demands which the Manchester challenge represented, demands for strict independence and for a distinctly socialist as opposed to labourist platform, were to be reiterated at intervals throughout the history of the ILP. The account which follows is not therefore intended to be a general description of the foundation of the national ILP. It is rather an account of attempts to influence that foundation by a local party; a party dominated moreover by many of the elements which were destined to cause dissension during the later years of the ILP: Blatchford, the Clarion, the Fourth Clause and the Social Democrats.

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1. Ibid., 5 November 1892. As late as 1912 Alfred Settle, then living in London, wrote to the Labour Leader to refute Burgess's suggestion that Manchester and Salford ILP had been formed as a result of the latter's scheme in the Workman's Times of 30 April 1892 (see LL, 5 April 1912).
2. L. Thompson, Robert Blatchford, p.84.
3. For example, F. Brockway, Socialism over Sixty Years, Chapter 1 passim; E.P. Thompson, loc. cit., passim; I. McLean, op.cit., pp.49-50; W. Stewart, op.cit., pp.75-7; H. Pelling, Origins of the Labour Party..., pp.99-115.
4. J.A. Fincher, op.cit., p.78, stated that the Bradford Conference dashed the Clarion's hopes of being the leading spirit at this stage of the ILP's development. K.O. Morgan, op.cit., pp.63-5, did not discern any challenge to Hardie's leadership by the Manchester contingent.

When Manchester and Salford ILP was officially inaugurated at the St. James's Hall meeting on 17 May, the Workman's Times scheme had been operative for almost three weeks. The first list of adherents to the scheme, published on 14 May, included 19 names from Manchester and Salford; a further 10 followed on 21 May.[1] When it is considered that seven hundred people completed tickets at the St. James's Hall meeting, to signify their willingness to join the local ILP, then the relative levels of enthusiasm are obvious. Undoubtedly the majority of individuals are more likely to be inspired to join a cause at a mass public meeting, rather than when simply sitting at home and reading a printed constitution. Nevertheless seven hundred had accepted a platform including 'nationalization of the land and other instruments of production', together with the Fourth Clause, while only 29 had responded to the Workman's Times appeal. The latter group did include Reade and Johnson, who were already committed to the Manchester programme, but the remaining men did not number among the leading political activists. Thus there was in no sense an alternative local leadership among the adherents of the Workman's Times scheme.

Names and addresses of another 20 men from Manchester and Salford appeared in the Workman's Times on 28 May, but thereafter such enthusiasm as had existed showed a marked decline. Only two names appeared in the fourth list, on 4 June, and none in the following week's issue. The next adherents from Manchester, John Jenkins of the Bakers together with 4 others, did not emerge until 20 August.[2] It should be added that by this time membership of the Manchester and Salford ILP had passed the two thousand mark.[3] From the Workman's Times, up to and including the 12 November issue, only 58 local names finally emerged. The lack of response was not confined solely to Manchester. In the 'Notes by the Provincial Secretary', Burgess remarked that he had asked people why many men who were heartily in favour of an Independent Labour Party did not send in their names. He concluded: 'I gather from the replies to my inquiries that this effort is looked upon as a newspaper dodge'.[4] In Manchester and Salford however the poor response was simply the result of activists concentrating all their efforts on the local party. On 28 May 'Fidus Achates' commented

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1. WT, 14 and 21 May 1892.
2. Ibid., 28 May, 4 June, 20 August 1892.
3. Ibid., 27 August 1892.
4. Ibid., 21 May 1892.

in the Workman's Times that readers might be surprised to see so few names from Manchester and Salford in the ILP list. By way of explanation he described the events of May Day, and the preliminary arrangements for the local party, adding: 'It being known that this matter was in progress, and that a strong ILP was likely to be formed, there seemed to be no necessity to enter the Workman's Times list, at any rate not until we saw what course of action was likely to be adopted.'[1]

Also in the Workman's Times on 28 May, Burgess suggested that meetings of National ILP adherents should be arranged in districts where their numbers had reached double figures. Apparently picking the first name listed for each town, he suggested that these individuals should call meetings for their respective districts. In Manchester the convener selected was Charles Thorp, of 44 Newburgh Street, Manchester. Burgess further suggested that the meetings should appoint local officials, and discuss amendments they wished to be made in the proposed constitution. For purposes of discussion, he then published three programmes which he had recently received: those of London Trades Council Labour Representation League, Manchester and Salford ILP, and Swinton and Pendlebury Independent Labour Union. While in theory Burgess' scheme for the arrangement of local meetings was perfectly sound, his attempt to adhere to it in the case of Manchester and Salford does show a lack of appreciation of local conditions.[2]

Not surprisingly, Thorp was quick to point out the difficulties of his situation. On 4 June Burgess wrote:

> Mr. Thorp (No.30) says I have put him in a fix by asking him to convene a meeting, as since he signed the list a strong local organization has been formed with 'Nunquam' as its president, but if I think it advisable that a meeting should be called he will meet the gentlemen who have sent their names from Manchester and Salford at the address given below. I do think it is advisable a meeting should be called, so that all the Manchester and Salford adherents may have an opportunity of deciding what steps to take. It will not be regarded as a grievance if they decide to merge themselves in the Manchester and Salford ILP, as it is very probable that is what I should do myself if I was a resident in Manchester or Salford.

The venue for this local meeting was to be the White Hart Hotel, Great Ancoats Street, on Saturday 4 June.[3]

Whether the meeting at the White Hart actually took place was not reported in the Workman's Times. Thereafter appeared no reference

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1. Ibid., 28 May 1892.
2. Ibid., 28 May 1892.
3. Ibid., 4 June 1892.

to any separate organization associated with Burgess' scheme, and the most likely outcome is that those adherents who were prepared to accept both the socialist platform and the Fourth Clause simply joined the local ILP. Despite their failure to follow the path mapped out by Burgess, the Manchester and Salford ILPers looked forward to the advent of a national movement. It also became clear that they would not be prepared to compromise their own principles in pursuit of this goal. Thus Horsfall assured Workman's Times readers:

> Of course, I know that the fourth clause in the constitution of the Manchester and Salford ILP is a stumbling block to many, but by the members of that body it is considered as their foundation stone... I do know for a fact that loyalty to the clause prevented the Liberals winning two seats in Manchester and Salford at the late election without causing any friction whatever in the ILP. That the different ILPs will be closely cemented together in the course of time is my earnest wish,...[1]

One can hardly fail to note the distinction between a national party formed as a result of centralized planning, and 'different ILPs closely cemented together in the course of time'.

When one turns from the Workman's Times to the Clarion, however, another aspect of the situation emerges. It becomes apparent that the Manchester and Salford ILP saw itself as the focal point around which a national party might be established. The comparatively early date at which Manchester and Salford ILP was founded obviously meant that its constitution was among those to be considered for adoption by other local parties. Thus in August 1892 Pendlebury Labour Union, by an 'overwhelming majority', declared itself in favour of the Fourth Clause.[2] On 15 October there came an announcement from Hyde, of a Labour demonstration 'and formation of a Labour Party (4th Clause)', to take place on the 18th of that month, in the Wesleyan Jubilee Schools. W.K. Hall, Leonard Hall, Settle Johnson and Henshall were to number among the speakers, the chairman being Vickers of Hyde Fabian Society.[3] During December came news that an ILP had been formed in Accrington, on the lines of the Manchester Association.[4]

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1. Ibid., 14 August 1892.
2. C, 27 August 1892.
3. Ibid., 15 October 1892.
4. Ibid., 17 December 1892.

From Droylesden, E. Wadsworth announced that he had been trying to find a few local Clarion readers, with a view to starting an ILP on the same lines as Manchester and Salford.[1]

The adoption of the Manchester constitution by other local ILPs can not in itself be regarded as an attempt by the Manchester and Salford men to exert influence on a national scale. It did, however, suggest that upon the advent of a national party, the socialist policy and strict independence which that constitution embodied, would achieve more widespread support. But from the columns of the Clarion it also appears that Manchester and Salford ILP envisaged itself as the nucleus of a national party. On 27 August, after detailing the divisional organization within Manchester, the Clarion announced 'encouraging reports from outlying districts', notably Bolton. Here membership was advancing rapidly, and a delegate from the town attending meetings of the Executive in Manchester.[2] Clearly the scope of the 'local' Executive was expanding. Then on 21 September, again in the Clarion, a notice appeared under the heading 'The Independent Labour Party. Central Office, 3 St. John's Parade, Byrom Street, Manchester'. All members of the party who were unable to join a division or group in any district throughout the kingdom, were requested to pay their subscriptions through the post, to the Financial Secretary of the Party at the Central Office. This provision was envisaged as affecting members who lived too far away to attend any division or group, a body of members in any Parliamentary division which was not organised, or members who could not possibly attend group meetings, for reasons such as night work. Anyone wanting to join and affected by such circumstances could sign and return a Declaration form to the Central Office (the form being obtainable by sending a stamped, addressed envelope). The notice continued by stating that the rules of the ILP were drafted, 'but cannot be printed until ratified by a General Council representing the whole of the members'. When printed, they would be supplied to members affected by the notice. It was moreover emphasised that the notice was operative throughout the kingdom. The signature was that of 'B. Billcliffe [sic] - Honorary Financial Secretary'.[3]

Unfortunately there is no evidence concerning the response to this notice. What is clear, however, is that the Manchester and Salford party was attempting to extend its sphere of influence to individuals,

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1. Ibid., 24 December 1892.
2. Ibid., 27 August 1892.
3. Ibid., 21 September 1892.

and even groups of adherents, throughout the country. Even more significant was the timing of the notice; a fortnight earlier Labour representatives and delegates attending the TUC in Glasgow had already set in motion the machinery for a national independent labour conference. The Glasgow meeting, and the arrangements which emanated from it, owed much to the initiative of Hardie and Burgess.[1] One cannot help but see in the Manchester notice an attempt by Blatchford and the Clarion to rival their growing influence.

Despite its own activities in the field of national organization, Manchester and Salford ILP was represented in the activities which Glasgow. A committee was appointed to arrange a delegate conference for representatives of all independent labour parties. It comprised W.H. Drew of Bradford Labour Party, J. Macdonald and P. Curran from 'London District National Independent Labour Party', George Carson of the Scottish ILP, Katherine St. John Conway from Bristol, and William Johnson from Manchester. Bradford, Manchester and Carlisle were all nominated as suitable places for the proposed conference, and parties prepared to send delegates were asked to specify which town they preferred. At this stage the proposal was that one delegate should represent a thousand members or fraction thereof.[2] (This figure was later reduced to five hundred members.)[3]

In the weeks preceding the conference, there was a marked difference in the coverage accorded to the preparations by the Workman's Times and the Clarion. The latter, while providing details about local ILP events in Manchester and Salford, paid scant attention to the coming conference. On 21 September came a brief reference to the fact that the Glasgow meeting had taken place, and to the resolution passed there.[4] On 3 December readers were simply informed that there was to be a conference on labour representation in Bradford on 13 January; societies intending to send delegates were asked to forward their resolutions to George Carson in Glasgow before 9 January.[5] The Workman's Times, by contrast, gave pride of place to the emergent national movement. It also suffered as a result of its commitment to the scheme; on 5 November Burgess announced that the reduction in size had been necessary because he had estimated expenditure on the basis of a much larger circulation than he had been able to secure.

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1. I. McLean, op.cit., p.50; K.O. Morgan, op.cit., p.61.
2. WT, 17 September 1892.
3. Ibid., 15 October 1892.
4. C, 21 September 1892.
5. Ibid., 3 December 1892.

The National Independent Labour Party was, he claimed, responsible for the present position, and should therefore come to the aid of the paper. The independent stand taken by the Workman's Times had not apparently been popular among many readers; more 'old friends' had been lost than new ones made.[1] While it is likely that many of the lost readers were those of Lib-Lab persuasion, there is also a suspicion that, in the Manchester area at least, the Clarion was proving too strong a rival for the Workman's Times.

The Workman's Times continued to print regular reports from Manchester and Salford, particularly those from 'Fidus Achates'. But although divisional ILP meetings, the Labour Church, municipal elections, and even the activities of the local SDF were well covered, on the subject of the National ILP Manchester correspondents were strangely reticent. On 8 October, Burgess stated that the 'Manchester and Salford Labour Party' had re-named itself the 'Manchester and Salford District of the Independent Labour Party'. But although this form was used by London organizations,[2] it has been impossible, either in the Workman's Times or the Clarion, to find such a description of the local ILP. The following week, after printing an article by Hardie on 'The Coming Conference', Burgess invited secretaries of ILPs to voice the opinion of their members on the subject. A list of 15 branches was compiled (with Manchester and Salford being placed eleventh), the plan being that three such articles should be published each week.[3] Despite the conversation between the London District Executive and the member of Manchester and Salford EC,[4] the 'suspicion and distrust' Burgess had noted among the Manchester men appears to have remained. Other branches named in the list duly submitted their comments, but by the end of the year there had still been no communication on the subject from Manchester and Salford. Then, on 14 January, appeared two letters, both obviously written just before the Bradford Conference actually met on the 13th. Although comparatively lengthy, the letters merit quotation in full. Not only did they detail the resolutions which the Manchester and Salford ILP planned to move at the Conference, they also

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1. WT, 5 November 1892.
2. Ibid., 8 October 1892.
3. Ibid., 15 October 1892.
4. See above, p.273.

serve as an illustration of the attitude of the party to the national movement. In reading these letters, one is struck not simply by the contents, but by the general tone. The Manchester and Salford ILP had, it would appear, made its own decisions concerning future policies, and while it would accept that other parties within a national movement might differ with regard to certain issues, it was not prepared to make compromises. 'Nunquam's' party would, one gathers, join the national ILP only on its own terms.

The first letter, from Ben Bilcliffe in his capacity as Honorary Financial Secretary of Manchester and Salford ILP, ran:

> We are now on the eve of the Bradford Conference; in fact before this issue reaches some of your readers, the delegates will have got to business. I cannot say whether any of my Manchester comrades will send any communication to you, but whether or no there will be no harm in (in a sense) introducing Manchester to your readers' notice.
>
> You have not, sir, had any communications from the Manchester people, and no official communication, but I can assure you, sir, we are earnest people up here, and have waited patiently for this development. We have our delegates elected, and we shall be there, pleased to take our part in the deliberations of the first Labour (political) congress.
>
> The delegates and the E.C. have had a joint meeting, and have discussed pro and con the likely business that will be before the conference. We have, at the same time, 'a few little items' of our own we shall probably introduce to the delegates' notice. I may say here that I see from the Workman's Times that some of the London branches go with us, or we go with them in several matters.
>
> I will not, sir, trouble you with the various resolutions that we shall introduce, but it will doubtless interest your readers to know that it is not our intention to foist the fourth clause on to the Labour party. We believe in that clause to a man, but we do not ask other people to take it on; they will probably do that themselves when they discover the man who promises most does the least. I refer, of course, to Liberal and Tory promises.
>
> I can see, sir, that we (I am appointed a delegate) shall have to be very careful in the manner we conduct our business at the Conference. We shall have to be careful in our selection of proposals we reject; we shall have to be careful as to whose money we accept; we shall have to be very careful in our selection of secretary and Executive Committee, for on them rests the proper navigation of the labour craft until the next Conference; in fact you will agree with me, sir, that at this our first Conference we cannot be too careful.
>
> It is the opinion of the Manchester people that this first Conference must be on a rather broader basis than eventually, simply contenting ourselves by licking our scattered forces into something like review order.

There is something of an air of detachment in Bilcliffe's tone; the local ILP had kept its own counsel and made its own decisions regarding policy, and such decisions were to be presented to the conference as a fait accompli. The national movement as a whole might accept them or not - but within Manchester and Salford they would remain inviolate. The Fourth

Clause might not be acceptable elsewhere, but there is no hint whatsoever that the local party would be prepared to abandon it to fall in line with national policy.

While Bilcliffe's letter merely indicated the attitude of the local ILP, that from William Johnson detailed the major points of policy which its delegates planned to advocate. He announced that:

> The Manchester and Salford ILP will be represented at the Bradford Conference by Comrades R. Blatchford (Nunquam), A. Settle, W. Johnson, Fovargue, Harker, Scott, Brittain, W. Billcliffe [sic], and probably two others, as we are entitled to send ten delegates. The following resolutions have already been sent to Comrade Carson:-
> 1. That all members of the N.I.L.P. shall pledge themselves to abstain from voting for any candidate for election to any representative body who is in any way a nominee of the Liberal, Liberal-Unionist, or Conservative Party.
> (This, of course, is the famous 4th clause)
> 2. That each section of the N.I.L.P. shall have local autonomy, giving full control over policy and finance.
> 3. That the conference shall elect a national administrative council consisting of 13 members from each of the following divisions on the basis specified:
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> | | | | |
> |---|---|---|---|
> | Three | members | from | Scotland |
> | Four | " | " | six northern counties |
> | Two | " | " | midland and eastern counties |
> | Two | " | " | Wales and western counties |
> | Four | " | " | London and southern counties |
>
> The said council shall not have the power to initiate any policy, but shall confine itself to instructions given to it at the annual or special conference of delegates from each section of the party.
> 4. That the National Administrative Council shall meet in each of the foregoing divisions in consecutive order, at such times as may be agreed upon. That the conference do not elect any president or permanent chairman of the party, and the National Administrative Council shall elect its own chairman at each of its meetings.
>
> We have considered most of the points which are likely to create discussion at the conference, and our delegates have received clear and definite instructions what to do.
>
> The foregoing is an official statement, and now for a few personal remarks.
>
> It appears to me the great question at the coming conference will be the question of finance. I am satisfied in my own mind that the Manchester and Salford party will not favour any proposition authorizing the N.I.L.P. to accept financial aid outside its own ranks. The resources of the workers have proved amply sufficient for the trades union movement, and if the N.I.L.P. assumes a distinctly independent attitude there need be no fears on the question of finance. In my opinion the greatest calamity which can befall this party would arise out of donations accepted from those who are not directly concerned in the present struggle.
>
> Neither do I think that Bradford should be accorded the right of electing the chairman of the conference. It is our business to elect the most capable man the conference will produce. I suppose we may conclude that all those who attend this conference tacitly admit their acceptance of an independent Labour Party.[1]

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1. WT, 14 January 1893.

In the plans of the Manchester and Salford ILP, the national party was to be nothing more than a loose federation. The National Administrative Council was envisaged simply as an instrument by which the decisions of delegate conferences might be implemented; it was to have no authority in the fields of either policy or finance. Nor was it to have any permanent meeting place or recognised leaders. Local parties were to reign supreme, and if the Manchester and Salford party had, as it claimed, no intention of foisting the Fourth Clause on the national movement, then its first resolution was strangely worded. For although local sections might otherwise be autonomous regarding policy, the Fourth Clause was to be embodied in a pledge made by each individual member of the national party. The provisions for a perambulatory executive, and for the election of a chairman at each meeting, are reminiscent of the Chartist movement, but it seems likely that Manchester and Salford ILP was more concerned with future influence than with historical precedent. Johnson's objection to the choice of chairman being vested in the Bradford party may also be viewed as political engineering. Whether at this juncture Blatchford had already refused nomination for the post is uncertain, but the sheer size of the Manchester delegation would give it an obvious advantage in any election actually held at the conference. Bilcliffe's emphasis on the subject of finance may have been related simply to the general attack upon Hardie, who at Mid-Lanark had been financed partly by H.H. Champion, and at South West Ham had accepted donations from a variety of non-labour sources. Ian McLean, in his biography of Hardie, has listed a £100 donation, nominally from the Workman's Times but in fact raised by Champion, £100 from Andrew Carnegie, and smaller sums from some radical MPs. The contrast between this situation and local efforts to finance the South Salford election undoubtedly left local ILPers more suspicious than ever of outside influence.[1]

Katharine St. John Conway (who, incidentally, helped to prepare the Bradford Labour Institute for the Conference) recorded that:

> On January 13th, 1893, the Independent Labour Party sprang into being, and, as a child of the spirit of Liberty, claims every song that she has sung - in whatever land - as a glorious heritage. Life, love, liberty, and labour make liquid music. The Labour party is in league with life, and works for liberty that men might live...[2]

By contrast with her quasi-religious fervour, Friedrich Engels, in his comments upon the Bradford conference to Friedrich Sorge, concentrated upon

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1. L. Thompson, Robert Blatchford, p.94; I.McLean, op.cit., pp.38-9.
2. Quoted in L. Thompson, The Enthusiasts, p.75.

upon the underlying power struggle. Having considered the machinations of the SDF and Fabian Society, he commented:

> The fact that here too people like Hardie, Shaw Maxwell and others are pursuing all sorts of secondary aims of personal ambition is of course obvious. But the danger arising from this lessens as the party itself becomes stronger and acquires more of a mass character, and it is already diminished by the necessity of not giving the competing sects any loopholes to attack. Socialism has penetrated the masses in the industrial districts enormously in the last few years and I am counting on these masses to keep the leaders in hand. Of course there will be stupidities enough, and cliques of every kind, too; if only it were possible to keep them within decent limits.[1]

Engels' letter does help to provide an overall perspective for the account which follows. For while the emphasis here must necessarily be upon the attempts by Blatchford and the Manchester delegation to influence the new party, they were by no means the only group so motivated. The 'official' SDF remained aloof from the events at Bradford. Some six months previously Hyndman, in an article entitled 'A Labour Party. What does it mean?', had stated categorically that 'a Social-Democratic Party is the only party which can possible benefit the workers of Great Britain'.[2] Although Harry Quelch had later conceded the possibility that the SDF might in future become merged in 'a great people's party', that party would have to be 'definitely Social-Democratic'.[3] Despite this policy of 'benevolent neutrality' by the SDF, its branches at Colne, Nelson, Rochdale, Heywood and Padiham did send delegates to Bradford. A resolution pledging the new party to work for collectivism was proposed by the Heywood delegate. While it was clearly stated that SDF branches would not join the ILP, the presence of these representatives together with Social Democrats now acting as official delegates of other movements, was an obvious source of support for a distinctly socialist platform.[4]

As local Social Democrats participated in the foundation of the ILP without the blessing of their national leaders, so the same situation appears to have arisen among the Fabians. Members of provincial Fabian Societies could be found at Bradford as loyal delegates of other organizations; of the Manchester ILPers present, Blatchford, Settle, Fovargue, Harker and Johnson were all, technically, 'Fabians'. The

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1. Letter: F. Engels to F.A. Sorge. London, 18 January 1893, in K. Marx and F. Engels, op.cit., pp.577-80.
2. J, 9 July 1892.
3. Ibid., 6 August 1892.
4. C. Tsuzuki, op.cit., pp.94-5. It seems unlikely that the Manchester and Salford ILP delegation was the only one whose members held joint membership.

London Fabians, on the other hand, viewed the emergence of the ILP with mixed feelings. Opinions differed as to whether Fabian efforts should be concentrated on the continued alliance with the Liberals, disassociation from all political groups coupled with an emphasis on education, or upon influencing the new party. George Bernard Shaw, who appeared as a Fabian delegate at Bradford, had, as recently as October 1892, scorned the concept of an Independent Labour Party as 'nothing but an attempt to begin the S.D.F. all over again'. He asked: 'Would it not be shorter to take over a going concern? There is nothing against the SDF except that its political managers have proved hopeless duffers. But it would be easy to remove them if the I.L.P. brought a sufficient voting contingent into the ranks.'[1] By the following January he appears to have regarded the emergent ILP both as inevitable, and as another potential vehicle for Fabian influence.[2] Not surprisingly, he was to be one of the most prominent opponents of the Manchester Fourth Clause.[3]

At the time of the Bradford Conference other individuals were widely believed to be trying to exert influence upon the ILP; H.H. Champion and Maltman Barry in the interests of the Conservative party, and John Burns in the hope that the ILP would emerge as the left wing of the Liberal party.[4] But while such individuals might entertain designs upon the emergent ILP, obtaining actual support for their schemes at a delegate conference was another matter. The most vital issues at stake at Bradford were not so much Fabian permeation or Conservative influence, but the extent to which the ILP would commit itself to independence and socialism, and moreover the extent to which the executive body of the national party would be enabled to impose such policy decisions upon the local branches.

Manchester and Salford ILP had already reached its decision upon these issues, and within the Bradford Labour Institute the Manchester delegation was exceeded in size only by those of Bradford and London. It is also highly unlikely that the Londoners formed such a united group. Present at Bradford on 13 January were W.H. Griffiths of Gorton; Alfred Settle of the Manchester Executive; James Scott, North Salford; H.C.D. Scott and Ben Bilcliffe of West Salford; Arthur Brittain, N.E. Manchester; R.J. Fovargue, N.W. Manchester; Charles E. Carr, S. Salford; John Harker,

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1. WT, 8 October 1892; S. Pierson, op.cit., pp.133-5.
2. S. Pierson, op.cit., p.135; C, 21 January 1893.
3. L. Thompson, Robert Blatchford, p.95.
4. A.E.P. Duffy, 'Differing Policies and Personal Rivalries in the Origins of the Independent Labour Party' in Victorian Studies VI (September 1962) pp.46-8.

N. Manchester; Robert Blatchford, S.W. Manchester; William Johnson, S. Manchester; and John Trevor and Fred Brocklehurst of the Labour Church. In crude terms they represented about 10% of the voting power.[1]

Over the issues of the socialist platform and local autonomy, the Manchester delegates appear to have been in tune with the vast majority of the conference. Blatchford, while personally favouring the inclusion of 'Socialist' in the party's title, as well as in its platform, was prepared to carry out his mandate and vote for the name 'Independent Labour Party' as being likely to hold a wider appeal.[2] The proposal in favour of 'collective ownership of the land and all means of production, distribution, and exchange', was carried almost unanimously.[3] The remainder of the party's programme was equally well-received. Other social policies included the abolition of overtime, piece-work and child labour; an eight hour day with 48 hour working week; provision for the sick, disabled, aged, widows and orphans, to be financed by a tax on unearned income. To these items, originally formulated by a committee, were later added free, unsectarian education up to university level, and properly remunerated work for the unemployed. Political demands included adult suffrage; a second ballot (which the ILP itself employed in its internal elections); payment of election expenses from the rates; payment of all members on all representative bodies; shorter parliaments; the abolition of monarchy and the House of Lords; and the referendum. The last section, comprising fiscal measures, called for the abolition of indirect taxation, and the taxation, to extinction, of unearned incomes, coupled with a graduated income tax.[4]

The platform of the ILP was thus at once socialist yet sufficiently flexible to attract radicals and trade unionists who were not at the outset committed socialists. The general appeal of the Bradford programme to radicals elsewhere has been attributed to Hardie's flexibility.[5] It would perhaps be more accurate to say that it reflected a general

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1. ILP, Report of the First General Conference..., list of delegates and organizations inside front cover.
2. L. Thompson, Robert Blatchford, pp.94-5. Blatchford later regretted his acquiescence, and at the time of the 2nd Annual Conference asserted that the omission of 'Socialist' from the party's name had been a mistake. In the Clarion, 27 January 1894, he wrote 'The party would have been larger and stronger today if they had taken the field under their true colours'.
3. ILP, Report of the First General Conference..., p.10.
4. Ibid., pp.10-12.
5. K.O. Morgan, op.cit., p.64.

consensus of opinion; some of the demands had been reiterated at intervals for almost a century; they had been embodied in speeches at Peterloo and included in the People's Charter. The ILP was rather taking up the mantle of working class radical tradition, than submitting to the leadership of any one individual or group. This factor has been recognised by A.M. McBriar in his study of Fabianism.[1]

The organization of the national ILP was another field in which general agreement rather than the influence of faction or individual predominated. Like the Manchester and Salford ILP, other bodies represented at Bradford were also jealous of their own autonomy. The majority of the participants hailed from Lancashire, Yorkshire and Scotland, and had no desire to be organised by an executive in London. Thus it was agreed that each section of the party was to have full control over its policy and finance within the constitution. The National Administrative Council, to be elected by the conference, was to comprise 15 members; 3 from Scotland, 5 from the six Northern counties, 3 from the Midlands and East, and 4 from London and the South. Alfred Settle and William Johnson were subsequently elected as Northern Counties members. The National Administrative Council (or NAC as it was subsequently known) lacked both a permanent chairman and fixed meeting place; each meeting was to be held in a different locality. Beyond the 3d per member affiliation fees from the branches, and the proposed Central Election Fund, it was to have little financial power. Moreover it was stipulated that the NAC might not interfere with the internal affairs of any local organization, being empowered merely to report to the Annual Conference 'any breach or principle on the part of any organisation seeking representation at the said Conference'. Power was thus firmly vested in the Annual Conference, which elected the party secretary as well as the NAC, and formulated policy.[2]

Thus of the four resolutions previously detailed by William Johnson, the last three had been readily accepted into the constitution of the ILP.[3] This is not, however, to suggest that the Manchester delegates exerted any exceptional influence over these issues. The broadly-based platform, the local autonomy, and the weak central executive body were both proposed and seconded by many other organizations. In order to gauge the effect of the local ILP upon the conference, it is therefore

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1. A.M. McBriar, Fabian Socialism and English Politics 1884-1918 (Cambridge, 1962) pp.280-6 passim.
2. ILP, Report of the First General Conference..., pp.15-16; H. Pelling, Origins of the Labour Party, p.120; R.E. Dowse, Left in the Centre: the Independent Labour Party 1893-1940 (1966) pp.5-6.
3. See above, p.281; WT, 14 January 1893.

necessary to turn to questions over which such unanimity did not prevail. The first issue which found Manchester at variance with the majority of the conference was, according to John Trevor, unintentional. Early in the proceedings, William Johnson was nominated as party secretary in opposition to J. Shaw Maxwell, and received 28 votes against the latter's 66.[1] Trevor later claimed that the Manchester and Salford ILP had never intended that Johnson should compete against Maxwell, who had already served on the Executive of the Scottish Labour Party.[2] Johnson's nomination had not come from a Manchester delegate, and as he was not present in the hall at the time, there was no opportunity for him to withdraw.[3]

The real breach between the Manchester delegates and the majority of the conference was, however, no accident. After the programme of the new party had been considered, Johnson, on behalf of Manchester and Salford ILP, rose to move the Manchester Fourth Clause. The official conference report showed his speech to be at once uncompromising and provocative. He said:

> ...if the party was to secure the confidence and adherence of the workers, they must place its independence bayond dispute, which had not yet been done. In Newcastle the Labour Party had promoted the candidature of a Liberal Unionist, and in Bradford an instance occurred of their promoting the candidature of a Liberal... How could the Labour party stultify itself more than by an arrangement of that kind? He wished the party to assert from this time it had severed its connection in any conceivable circumstances from the orthodox political parties. The history of the Labour Electoral Association had been one of failures and disasters... He wanted a pure democracy... His connection with American politics had convinced him that where intrigues and wire-pullers were permitted to dominate there would be a corrupt democracy. No country had a more corrupt democracy than had the United States of America today. Although the apostles of the despicable policy of permeation and expediency - (cries of 'Oh') - might advance the most insidious reasoning, they could show no desirable results...

The attack on the 'despicable policy of permeation and expediency', coming as it did from a leading member of the North Manchester Fabian Society, obviously caused something of a stir in the Labour Institute. The motion was seconded by another, unnamed, Manchester delegate, who described how, at the last municipal elections in Manchester, Liberals and Tories had combined in several wards to defeat the Independent Labour candidates. After a speech in support of the motion, by Fred Burgess

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1. ILP, Report of the First General Conference..., p.10.
2. W. Stewart, op.cit., pp.46,78; I. McLean, op.cit., pp.34,54.
3. WT, 21 January 1893.

of Deptford, Blatchford rose to defend the Fourth Clause. While Johnson's views had been just as definite, he lacked the personal standing within the national movement which Blatchford had achieved. Blatchford's statement now brought into the open the controversy which was to continue between the Clarion and Hardie factions of the ILP for years to come. He said that:

> Manchester people had no desire to thrust their resolution down the throats of the delegates. They simply wanted to elicit an opinion on a proposal on which there had been a great amount of difference all over the country. He would tell the Conference why he stood by the resolution, and would leave the Manchester organisation if it disavowed the principle. He regarded Liberals and Tories as the enemies of the people. When he said a man was his enemy he meant he hated him, and would fight him to the death. He could not understand why one should take such a man's hand. He considered it a stain on the Labour Party to have any dealings with the Liberals. He would as soon have dealings with the devil.

Thus regardless of any decision to be reached at the conference, Blatchford was not prepared to compromise his position. Had any resolution been passed which prohibited local branches from adhering to the Fourth Clause, then there is little doubt that Blatchford and many of his Manchester colleagues would not have entered the national ILP. Because the whole emphasis of the conference was upon retaining local autonomy, the issue was never brought to a head. The Bradford amendment, carried by 62 votes to 37, stated: 'That in cases of election where no Independent Labour candidate shall be brought forward, the members of the Party in that constituency shall act as directed by the local branch.'[1] The Manchester and Salford party was therefore left with its Fourth Clause intact, and other branches could adhere to it or ignore it as they thought fit. The voting figures do however indicate that the Manchester resolution had the support of about a third of the delegates. When it is considered that this

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1. ILP, Report of the First General Conference..., pp.13-14. K.O. Morgan, op.cit., p.64, stated that at this conference '...Hardie also argued successfully against the demands made by the Manchester Socialists, headed by his friend Dr. Richard Pankhurst, in favour of the 'Fourth Clause''. The source of this somewhat surprising statement is not cited, but Dr. Pankhurst was not in fact among the Manchester delegates at Bradford (see ILP, Report of the First General Conference..., list of delegates). Moreover he did not join the ILP until September 1894 at the earliest. LL, 16 June 1894, reported that the Liberals had tried to persuade Dr. Pankhurst to contest North East Manchester against Leonard Hall and remarked that 'This the sturdy Radical declined to do'. Ibid., 15 September 1894, then stated that 'Dr. Pankhurst has promised to join the South Manchester Branch of the ILP'. This dating of his transition from Liberalism to socialism was substantiated in E.S. Pankhurst, op.cit., p.119. Sylvia Pankhurst did however state that Hardie was known to her parents before the foundation of the ILP; they had seen him at the International Labour Conference in London in 1888 and at the Paris International Socialist Congress, 1889.

number had voted for the universal acceptence of the Fourth Clause against an alternative of local preference, and not simply against a complete ban on the clause, then it is apparent that many other local branches held equally strong views which they were determined to uphold.

Had such a division occurred over some routine question of organization, it is likely that the matter would have been dropped after the conference, and defeat conceded at least until next year. However the Fourth Clause was seen by Blatchford and his Manchester colleagues as fundamental to the whole concept of a truly independent Labour Party. On leaving Bradford they once again prepared to take up their crusade. Hardie, for his part, seems to have hardened his opposition to the Fourth Clause. Long before the conference met, in October 1892, Hardie had argued against the acceptance of a constitution binding upon all branches of a future ILP. As an example of the way in which the movement was already developing upon lines suited to the requirements of the different localities, he cited the Fourth Clause, commenting: 'This has been found to work admirably in Manchester, and is, according to the leaders of the movement of the party there, necessary to its continued existence'.[1] After the conference vote however, Hardie appears to have moved away from this acceptance of local differences, towards complete opposition to the Fourth Clause. At a Bradford Labour Church meeting he referred to the clause, expressing his hope that the Manchester party would not persist in adhering to it. Shortly afterwards, he made a speech to the same effect in Colne. Shaw's remark at the conference, that the men of Manchester lacked 'political intelligence', also rankled with Blatchford.

Thus in the next issue of the Clarion, Blatchford again took up the debate:

> We are not orators here, but we have enough political intelligence to find our way about our own city by daylight, and it is just possible that we may be right and that Keir Hardie may be wrong.
> First - Understand that the Manchester Party is 'Independent'. That is to say that the members manage their own affairs and that the President never interferes with them, nor makes the least attempt to lead or to persuade them...
> The fourth clause is very dear to me. I believe it to be imperatively necessary to the maintenance of the independence of the Party.
> But it is only valuable as a means to an end. The end is the end so dear to us all,...

In conclusion he added:

> I think it is the duty of the Manchester regiment to impress upon the others with all its power the value of Independence.
> I think that if, after we have done that, the majority of the army are still against us, it is our duty to give way.[2]

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1. WT, 15 October 1892.
2. C, 21 January 1893.

Blatchford, while determined to continue his Fourth Clause campaign, did appear to accept the prospect that local differences might continue to prevail. But in the Clarion Hardie argued: 'Now... that there is an Independent Labour Party for Britain, it becomes necessary to boldly face every difficulty which threatens to impede the progress by interrupting the harmony of the movement. The Fourth Clause falls within this category...' His case was based upon the acceptance of Parnellite tactics; the national ILP must be free to support an old-established party if expedient, or it might wish to punish one of the parties for 'some act of more than usual treachery to the working classes...' Either decision would involve swinging the total ILP voting power in a given direction. The Fourth Clause would, he claimed, oblige massive abstention at the next General Election for, even if the ILP did well, it would be unable to contest about four hundred constituencies; 'I am opposed to such wholesale disfranchisement, nor do I believe an order to this effect would be obeyed'. It was stated that a man would not vote against the party he had previously supported, on the recommendation of the ILP, but, argued Hardie, such a man would not long continue to abstain voting for his own party, and would be lost to the ILP. The logical conclusion of the Fourth Clause was seen by Hardie as a situation in which ILP Members of Parliament would not be able to vote for any measures not introduced by their own number. He concluded:

> ...the Manchester men would do well to so modify their famous clause as to leave them free to act with the rest of the country. That is all I ask; for I do not believe it possible to get such a clause inserted in the constitution of the party, as being applicable to all branches, nor do I deem it desirable even were it possible.[1]

The possibility of a national conference deciding upon a concerted General Election policy had already been considered by William Johnson. In the Workman's Times on 21 January he wrote: 'Under such circumstances I do not think the Manchester Fourth Clause would be allowed to stand in the way of united action'.[2] Blatchford, in his reply to Hardie's article,[3] also reiterated the opinion that branches of the national party should accept and loyally support the policy decided upon by the majority. He foresaw no risk of the Fourth Clause disrupting the party, only of its absence endangering the ILP's independence. The argument about the voting

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1. Ibid., 4 February 1893.
2. WT, 21 January 1893.
3. C, 11 February 1893.

freedom of Labour MPs, he dismissed as far-fetched. It was over Hardie's advocacy of Parnellite tactics, however, that Blatchford really took him to task. From Blatchford's argument on this issue, it becomes apparent that his ultimate aims for the ILP were fundamentally different from those of Hardie. To Blatchford, both the older parties were enemies, with whom there could be no electoral arrangements. Hardie argued that the Fourth Clause disfranchised socialists but, wrote Blatchford, 'Is a man enfranchised when he has Hobson's choice between two enemies?' As for the argument that ILPers would be throwing away the franchise for which their fathers had fought, Blatchford commented:

> They fought to win working class representation. But they did not win it. They won instead the right to vote for men selected by a caucus of a few capitalists and party leaders...
> ... It seems to me that the moral effect of withdrawing ourselves from the whole dirty business of intrigue would be tremendous.

According to Blatchford, Hardie and other opponents of the Fourth Clause were bound by Parliamentary methods. They wished to get as many members as possible into Parliament, and then proceed along the lines followed by Parnell. In other words, the initially small ILP group in Parliament would, simply because it held the balance of power between the two major parties, be able to oblige them to carry out some of its policies. Apart from his objection to 'intriguing' with enemies, Blatchford felt that Parnell's tactics had been dependent upon his leadership; however 'The Independent Labour Party is a democratic body, and should work on democratic lines. We want no leaders, and should be ill-advised to tolerate any'.

Although Blatchford did suggest running Labour candidates in constituencies where there was a narrow Liberal majority, and withholding Labour votes in other areas, to inflict a defeat upon the Liberals, elections were not his main concern. Getting men into Parliament was not, asserted Blatchford, the chief end of the party. At present the bulk of public opinion was against socialism. Even if a hundred seats were won for socialists, they could do little, because they were in advance of public opinion. The essential task was therefore to educate public opinion. On this vital question of extra-Parliamentary methods, Blatchford wrote:

> I want to see a new Parliament formed outside the walls of the old, and I believe that such a Parliament will gain for us what we want more rapidly than a number of Labour members acting as shuttlecock between the Tory and Liberal battledores of St. Stephen's.
> Imagine a great Fourth Clause Labour Party in this country, with an annual or half-yearly Congress, debating and deciding upon questions of import to Labour. Do you not think that such a Congress would be a great moral force? But add to that fact that the bulk of

> the workers treated the old Parliament with contempt, and turned their backs on the candidates of the old Parties, and you will see at once that the result must be decisive.

The Liberal Party would, asserted Blatchford, be shut out of power, and would disintegrate, with the capitalist portion going over to the Tories and the rest to the Labour Party. The battle would be virtually won, 'For then the Labour men could swoop down upon the old Parliament and use it for the only purpose for which it is fitted - the embodiment in statutes of the will of the People'.[1]

Blatchford's vision, while somewhat over-optimistic, and putting too great a faith in working class acceptance of socialism, did raise a fundamental dilemma for the ILP. Was its function to act as another political party, albeit with a socialist platform, and concentrate upon elections to, and the passing of measures in, Parliament and local government bodies? Or should it rather concentrate upon the 'making of socialists', achieving influence as a rank-and-file movement? The debate over the Fourth Clause continued in the Clarion until the end of March, with W.S. De Mattos[2] and Edward Aveling[3] presenting their views against it, and William Johnson rising to its defence.[4] None of them managed, or even attempted, to resolve the basic argument.

The difference which had emerged over the Fourth Clause did not stem simply from a clash of personalities between Hardie and Blatchford (although that element was undoubtedly present), nor were they merely the result of offended local pride. Hardie and Blatchford, in debating the Fourth Clause, had revealed the basic divergence of labourism and socialism; the alternative paths towards social reforms being enacted by a Parliamentary Labour Party, or towards a socialist society created by a mass movement of individual converts - the 'Co-operative Commonwealth'.[5] Much of the later history of the ILP was to be the outcome of its attempts, and ultimate failure, to reconcile these two philosophies.

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1. Ibid., 11 February 1893.
2. Ibid., 18 February 1893.
3. Ibid., 18 March 1893.
4. Ibid., 25 March 1893.
5. For a detailed discussion of Blatchford's views and of Clarion socialism, sss J.A. Fincher, op.cit., passim.

PART 2

THE MAKING OF SOCIALISTS, 1893-1914

Chapter 1

The Organisation of the ILP

The national ILP, as founded at the Bradford Conference, was by no means predestined to longevity. Indeed, if one examines solely the political conflicts within the national movement, it may appear somewhat surprising that the party survived even its first decade. The fact that it did survive and flourish may be attributed partly to the 'umbrella' nature of the movement, which was capable of accommodating a wide spectrum of political opinions, but also to the fact that the ILP was not just a political party. To its rank and file members in the localities, it represented not only a means of engaging in political affairs, but also an alternative way of life, which might be enjoyed in the present, while still striving to attain the ultimate goal of socialism. Nor did that way of life merely involve participation in activities under the heading of ILP. Other campaigns directed towards socialism, social justice, or simply the enrichment of life in general, might be acclaimed with equal enthusiasm by the ILPers. There were, of course, members who in later years looked back with critical eyes upon such an all-embracing movement. In May 1913, on the occasion of the ILP's Coming-of-Age Campaign, Alfred Settle wrote to the Labour Leader:-

> During my long connection with the ILP few things have impressed me so much as the tendency of our movement to spread its energies over too wide a field. Every cult advanced or field of thought struggling for wider recognition seems to look upon the ILP as a happy hunting ground. The Suffrage Movement, Esperanto, P.R. [Proportional Representation?], Press Freedom, Indian Grievances, Military Injustices, and a legion of other worthy subjects seem to occupy our minds and the time of our branch meetings to the danger of excluding our real and primary work of making socialists and directing, as far as may be, the organised working-class vote in the direction of independent

political action.[1]

Settle, however, begs a fundamental question. Could anyone truly be a socialist and ignore issues like women's suffrage or the freedom of the press?

The ILP, as an organisation, has received comparatively little attention from historians, and what attention it has received has been directed almost exclusively towards its political activities. Yet if one looks beyond the affairs of the NAC and Parliamentary party, and outside the 'official' ILP publications, the whole emphasis shifts. Former rank-and-file members of the ILP when asked about that movement, seldom refer to branch meetings or election campaigns. The recurring theme of their reminiscences is, quite simply, that the ILP was a total life style. Political campaigns and political education played their part, but intermingled with a multitude of social activities, the Clarion movement, the women's suffrage campaign, and the anti-war movement, together with almost every conceivable 'cause' which might draw sympathy from advanced thinkers of the day. Elections might be fought, and annual conferences attended, but the ILPers did not regard them as the 'be all and end all' of existence. With a creed which approximated more closely to Merrie England and the visions of William Morris, than to any concept of 'scientific socialism', they were prepared to acknowledge that many other campaigns, besides those of a political nature which emanated from their own party, might bring nearer the ultimate goal of socialism.

Robert Blatchford wrote, in Merrie England:

> ... The first thing to do is to educate the people in

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1 LL, 22 May 1913. Settle was by this time living in London, his address being 97 Forest Lane, Forest Gate, E.

Socialism. Let us once get the people to understand and desire Socialism, and I am sure we may very safely leave them to secure it.

The most useful work which Socialists can do at present is the work of education and organisation. Socialism will not come by means of a sudden coup. It will grow up naturally and by degrees. But its growth and its development may be materially hastened.[1]

Admittedly, Blatchford cannot be regarded as the spokesman of the ILP throughout the pre-First World War era; indeed by 1914 he had played a leading role in splitting the party. Yet even his activities concerning the creation of the BSP were but another manifestation of his basic philosophy: that the crucial task was the conversion of the mass of the people to socialism, rather than simply the placing in positions of political power of individuals, who must then attempt to impose socialism from above.

This section has been entitled 'The Making of Socialists' simply because this was the fundamental aim of the ILP. Certainly the pursuit of parliamentary and municipal power took up an increasing amount of energy and enthusiasm, particularly after the turn of the century. But the ILP, particularly on a local level, never ceased to be a propagandist organisation, concerned with spreading the message of socialism, and drawing new recruits to its ranks. Thus the aim here is to examine in detail the means by which converts were made and organised, further to proselytise their faith, and also to examine the social background from which these socialists emerged. This chapter will deal with the structure of local organisation, and those which follow with the development of individual branches, propaganda, social life, and the membership of the ILP, as well as the contribution of ILPers to local community life.

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1 R. Blatchford, Merrie England, p. 46

This is not intended to reflect the priority in which the members themselves might have placed the functions of their party. Indeed the sheer mechanics of organisation were never regarded with great enthusiasm, and the filling-in of forms for Head Office was frequently viewed with considerable distaste. However, much of the propaganda work, as well as the social activity, did revolve around the local branches, rather than the central Manchester and Salford ILP. It is only in the light of their location, membership and facilities, not to mention financial solvency, that much of the work of the ILP can be examined. Having considered these fundamental aspects relating to the very existence of the ILP, Section III will then examine aspects of the political life of the party during the same period.

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While the aim in this chapter is to consider the basic structure of the local ILP, it is by no means suggested that the question of organisation was totally divorced from political issues. The division between the Clarion and Hardie factions became only too apparent in the controversy as to whether the local party should retain its presidency, or in the attempt to introduce the initiative and referendum.[1] The Lancashire and Cheshire Federation of the '90s may also be interpreted as an attempt to counterbalance the NAC.[2] But although the political implications of such issues must be considered, they will here be viewed primarily in the light of their effects upon organisation.

The local ILP in fact operated on several different levels. Throughout

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1 LL, 29 January 1898; C, 12 February 1898

2 For the attitude of Blatchford and the Clarion socialists towards the County Federation, see J.A. Fincher, op. cit., pp. 234-40.

the period in question the basic unit took the form of a mass party or federation for Manchester and Salford as a whole. Under its aegis were generally to be found local branches, which were occasionally subdivided into ward groups. The exception to this pattern occured around the turn of the century, when an attempt was made to centralise the local party. At various stages there was also in existence a county federation, poised between the Manchester and Salford party and the NAC in the national ILP structure. These tiers of the party machine will be examined in turn, in order to illuminate the framework within which the multifarious activities of the ILP were pursued.

The local ILP as founded in 1892, had comprised a 'Manchester and Salford' party, with an elected executive, together with local groups in each of the constituencies and, in some instances, in individual wards. The Bradford Conference, in providing for local autonomy, brought about no changes in the local system, while the second Annual Conference, held in the Free Trade Hall in February 1894, provided only a general recommendation: 'In order to secure a due balance between localised and centralised efforts, the NAC desire to urge upon all members and branches, the desirability of conforming as far as possible to one system of organisation throughout the country'. It had, continued the report, been found necessary to have Branches, District Councils, County Federations and the NAC. The district councils (which included within their number the Labour Unions in Huddersfield and Colne Valley and the District Executive in Manchester and Salford) were described as bodies formed by elected delegates from branches in the neighbourhood. Their function was seen to be that of endorsing and carrying out common policy, as opposed to leaving the branches to pursue completely individual activities. The County Federations, which were also composed of delegates

from the branches, were deemed necessary for education and organisational work. The suggestion made at this conference, that the County Federations might at a later stage be formed instead by delegates from the District Councils, may be seen as politically motivated.[1]

The mass Manchester and Salford ILP did not fit into the scheme propounded at the 1894 Conference, but nevertheless continued its existence. It provided a more democratic element in what was otherwise a pyramidal structure, but was somewhat unwieldy. Until the major re-organisation of 1898, meetings of the full Manchester and Salford party were held at six-monthly intervals, with an annual meeting in January and a half-yearly meeting in July, held at the Lesser St. James's Hall.[2] Admission was by membership card only.[3] At the annual meetings, the Executive Committee officers were elected from members nominated by the branches, reports from the secretary and treasurer read, and resolutions debated. These mass party gatherings were by no means hasty affairs; the half-yearly meeting in July 1893 lasted for over four hours.[4] It was however in this Manchester and Salford party, and not in its Executive Committee, that control of major policy lay.

The mass party not only elected the EC officers (the rest of EC comprising delegates from the constituency parties); it also controlled the EC and regulated its powers. Thus the Annual General Meeting on 19 January 1896 determined that no member of the party might be nominated to any public office, or official position on the EC unless

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1 ILP, Minutes of the Second Annual Conference, 1894, p. 15

2 WT, 3 August 1893; LL, 12 January 1895; C, 25 January 1896

3 C, 5 January 1895

4 WT, 5 August 1893; LL, 12 January 1896

he had been a financial member of a branch for twelve months prior to the time of nomination.[1] As a result of the resolution, moved by North Manchester, the half-yearly meeting on 28 July 1896 extended the powers of the EC to cater for matters of urgency and the granting of loans to the branches.[2] Although the EC was actually financed by payments from the branches, overall control of financial arrangements was vested in the Manchester and Salford ILP. Branch payments were not always readily forthcoming. Thus at the AGM in January 1897, the group arrears to the EC amounted to £7. 4s. 6d. In order to remedy this situation, a resolution was passed rearranging payments by groups to the EC 'on a more equitable and just basis'. By way of a threat to the defaulters, it was also resolved:

> That in future groups not giving financial support to the district party in accordance with any scheme which may be accepted by the party, shall have no representation on the Executive Council, or any control of the secretary or other officials of the party.[3]

The 1898 AGM still found the group payments to the EC in arrears,[4] and in the following July it was necessary to call for every member to subscribe a shilling to EC funds.[5] Before the close of that year, however, the Manchester and Salford party had reorganised itself on a centralised basis.[6]

The general Manchester and Salford ILP also maintained control

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1 LL, 25 January 1896

2 Ibid., 1 August 1896

3 Ibid., 30 January 1897

4 C, 12 February 1898

5 Ibid., 30 July 1898

6 Ibid., 31 December 1898

over constitutional matters, within the limits ascribed by the national party. The roles of the Manchester and Salford ILP and its EC are perhaps most clearly revealed in relation to the issue of the local presidency. Blatchford, in the Clarion, had criticised not only Hardie as President of the ILP, but had also questioned the desirability of the office itself. Moreover he went on to write of an apathetic rank and file within the Manchester ILP, and to assert that a few men were doing the work of the whole party.[1] Leonard Hall apparently took to heart his colleague's criticism of 'figure-head offices', and in November 1894 resigned his presidency of Manchester and Salford ILP.[2] The EC initially resolved not to accept his resignation, but to ask Hall to retain office until the annual meeting took place in six weeks' time; Hall had originally been elected by the general body of members, and they should choose his successor. Meanwhile the EC issued a statement, regretting the agitation in favour of abolishing presidents and vice-presidents, and providing their reasons for wishing to see the continuation of these offices.[3] Nevertheless four branches, South Manchester, Gorton, Hightown and Duke Street, tabled resolutions for the abolition of the presidency, while Gorton also proposed that the EC be dissolved, and replaced by a District Committee.[4] However, after a long discussion, the AGM held in January 1895 resolved to continue the office of president. Only four dissenting votes were recorded,[5] presumably

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1 Ibid., 27 October 1894

2 Ibid., 24 November 1894

3 Ibid., 1 December 1894

4 LL, 12 January 1895

5 Ibid., 19 January 1895; C, 19 January 1895

from the delegates of the above-named branches. The EC also survived the meeting. Two years later, however, a resolution that the offices of president and vice-president be abolished, was finally passed. At this stage the local party did have a full-time, paid secretary,[1] upon whom much of the work of these erstwhile officials must have devolved.

Much of the motivation behind this campaign was political rather than purely constitutional. The fundamental question was not simply whether a paid secretary was more effective as an organiser than were the president and vice-president, but the extent to which the ILP should institute grass-roots democracy. Such political reasoning was also behind another issue, the inclusion of the principle of 'Referendum and Initiative' in the local party constitution in January 1898.[2] The political struggle between the Clarion and Hardie camps must be relegated to a later stage. It is here necessary to emphasise only that within Manchester and Salford at this time, the mass party rather than the EC maintained power over constitutional issues.

The Manchester and Salford ILP also acted as a final arbiter in all matters affecting election policy. The principal constitutional guide-line to such policy was undoubtedly the Fourth Clause, which was periodically brought up for re-consideration. At the half-yearly meeting on 25 July 1896, North-East Manchester (New Cross Ward) proposed that the Fourth Clause be dropped. The matter was left until the next meeting, at which a resolution was moved that the Fourth Clause be abolished and replaced by the provision 'That all members of the party

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1 LL, 30 January 1897

2 Ibid., 29 January 1898; C, 12 February 1898

shall vote as a majority of the party decide'. According to the report in the Labour Leader, the voting revealed 'a firm determination to retain the clause, which was held to have been the secret of the party's strength today'.[1] But despite the overwhelming support for the Fourth Clause at this time, it remained in operation only for another two years.

Decisions to contest elections were also made by the full Manchester and Salford party. In the summer of 1898 plans were being made to contest three divisions at the next General Election; Gorton, South-West Manchester and North Salford. The NAC believed that the resources of the party should be concentrated upon a limited number of seats, evenly distributed among the areas of widespread ILP support. Thus while Gorton and South-West Manchester met with their approval, the NAC believed that the local party should confine its activities to these two contests, rather than attempt also to fight North Salford.[2] On 23 January, when the half-yearly meeting of Manchester, Salford and District ILP was held, Bruce Glasier and John Penny attended as a deputation from the NAC, to ask the district party to reconsider its decision to contest three divisions. After a lengthy discussion, their recommendation was finally adopted.[3] The decision had, however, rested finally with the mass party. The policy of contesting the 1898 Poor Law Guardians elections also emanated from Manchester and Salford ILP.

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1 Ibid., 30 January 1897

2 ILP, NAC Minute Book 3. Minutes of NAC meeting, ILP Club, Keighley 1-2 July 1898; ILP News, July 1898

3 C, 30 July 1898; LL, 30 July 1898; ILP, NAC Minute Book 3. Minutes of NAC Meeting, 70 Brunswick Street, Glasgow, 1 October 1898, recorded that a letter was read from the Manchester Secretary, stating that a conference of Manchester members had agreed to the NAC's recommendation to run two candidates only.

Although the mass party might make all fundamental decisions regarding party policy, it was obviously too unwieldy a body to undertake detailed arrangements or negotiations. Such functions were delegated either to the Executive, or to committees formed for a specific purpose. Thus in May 1895, a general meeting decided to appoint a Central Parliamentary Committee, comprising two delegates from each branch, to work with and assist local committees in divisions where Parliamentary candidates were being run.[1] Much of the role of the Executive Committee involved the work of organisation and co-ordination, in accordance with the policy of the Manchester and Salford party. Perhaps the best indication as to its functions was provided by the EC report, read by Ben Bilcliffe at the half-yearly meeting in July 1893. He reported that the Executive had met on 24 occasions (presumably within the past six months), with a very good average attendance. They had, in conjunction with the Labour Church, organised a mass meeting in the Free Trade Hall to mark the NAC meeting in Manchester. The EC had also taken the initiative in organising a May Day demonstration, and initially approached the Trades Council on the subject. When that body indicated its unwillingness to participate, the EC went on to invite co-operation from individual unions. The outcome was one of the largest demonstrations ever held in the district. In the social and financial field, the EC had established a Trading Department, and also appointed a sub-committee to organise a 'monster picnic' on Whit Friday, to Morecambe. A political committee had encouraged the work of the divisional committees, and drawn up a municipal programme. The complaint had nevertheless been voiced, that the divisions lacked contact with the Executive (despite the fact

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1 LL, 1 June 1895

that each division was represented there by a delegate). To remedy this grievance, it was decided that a member of the EC would visit each division on its second business meeting of each month, to commence in August. It was, concluded Bilcliffe, impossible to give in a report an adequate idea of the work done by EC members, in attending sub-committees, lectures, and divisional meetings. He added, 'It is no unusual occurrence for a member to have the whole of the evenings in the week occupied'. Not content with promoting the ILP in Manchester and Salford alone, the EC had also assisted the formation of parties in other districts.[1]

Initially the ILP Executive was based at the Labour Church Institute, at 3, St. John's Parade, Byrom Street, Deansgate.[2] This reliance upon shared accommodation and a part-time, unpaid secretary continued until September 1895, when the course of events, rather than an initial policy decision, led to a change. Joseph Nuttall had by this juncture been elected as a Labour member of Salford School Board. This role, together with his activities during an industrial dispute as secretary of the Amalgamated Society of Block, Roller and Stamp-Cutters, had rendered it practically impossible for him to obtain work in Manchester and Salford.[3] It therefore seemed likely that Nuttall would have to move out of the district in order to find work, and that his services on the School Board would be lost. The Manchester and Salford Executive had for some months considered the possibility of appointing an organiser and

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1 WT, 5 August 1893. For information concerning the trading department, see below, p.738.

2 Ibid., 10 June 1893 gave the ILP Executive's address. For the establishment of the Labour Church Institute, see Labour Prophet, June 1892

3 C, 14 September 1895; LL, 14 September 1895. Both reports refer to Nuttall simply as 'secretary of his trade union'. The actual union was named in C, 14 October 1893; LL, 2 April 1898, 4 February 1899

registration agent, but the matter had been shelved. Now the decision was made to appoint Nuttall to this post, 'thus avoiding the loss of a useful and energetic Labour representative on the Salford School Board'. The branches had agreed to provide weekly subscriptions to a wage fund, which was intended to remain separate from the general party fund. All 'pure Labour representatives', not just Nuttall, were to be reimbursed from it for out-of-pocket expenses and loss of time entailed in attending public duties. Subscriptions were invited, not only from ILP members, but from all sections of people, especially trade unionists, who were willing to support direct Labour representation.[1]

Within a month, Manchester, Salford and District ILP also acquired a central office, at 8 York Street, Spring Gardens. These furnished offices were placed at the disposal of the party, without payment, by T.D. Benson.[2] Although it seems likely that he was not, at this stage, a member of the ILP, Benson was well known as a 'generous supporter' of the party, as a member of the Parliamentary Finance Committee, and as the founder of a Socialist Society among the members of the New Church.[3] The offices in question presumably comprised those listed in Slater's Directory under the firm of George Benson and Son, estate brokers.[4]

Nuttall commenced his duties with an attempt to initiate a uniform system of organisation for the branches or ward groups.[5] When Brodie,

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1 C, 14 September 1895; LL, 14 September 1895

2 LL, 19 October 1895, 25 January 1896

3 Ibid., 12 October 1895

4 Slater's Directory, 1893, p. 312 (Street Directory)

5 LL, 26 October 1895

then secretary of Manchester and Salford ILP resigned his post in October 1895, Nuttall was appointed to replace him until the AGM.[1] January 1896 saw his re-election as secretary and organiser, and he continued in office through the abolition of the party presidency and the reorganisation which took place in December 1898.[2] The one paid official had by this juncture become the lynch-pin of the local ILP.

The mid-'90s represented perhaps the high-water mark of the Clarion-inspired movement for grass-roots democracy within the party, which was perhaps at its strongest in Manchester. But at the same time there was a growing awareness of the role of the ILP as an election machine, and for the need to co-ordinate branch activities to that end. During the 1896-8 period, the more politically active ILP members became concerned by the prevailing tone of apathy, and the tendency of branches to devote themselves to social events, coupled only with some propaganda. In January 1896, a complaint was expressed in the Clarion that, for the past few weeks, '... except for socials and other assemblies of that ilk, the existence of the party would scarcely have been noticed. Branches were relying upon these social gatherings to pay off their debts but:

> Herein lies a great danger, for branches are not able, or not willing, to make the necessary sacrifice to take that active part in the politics of the hour which is absolutely essential for the growth of the movement, apart from mere propaganda'.[3]

In September 1898, the ILP News announced that the Manchester branches and groups were considering a scheme for re-organising the District Party. If adopted, it would consolidate the forces into 8 strong branches,

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1 Ibid., 26 October 1895

2 Ibid., 25 January 1896, 30 January 1897, 29 January 1898

3 C, 11 January 1896

in place of the numerous weak groups at present in existence. By way of warning, the report ended: 'Club life will also have to receive less attention from the members, and the old fighting spirit of the movement revived'.[1]

The chief motivation behind re-organisation appears to have been a desire to mould the ILP into a body more suited to electoral, as well as to propaganda work. The extensive powers of individual branches had, particularly over election issues, provided difficulties for the local Executive. Perhaps the best example of this occurred in October 1894, when the Executive Committee drew up a set of rules for ILP candidates. These provided that no candidate should stand in the name of the party unless he would pledge to report periodically on his work, would leave a signed resignation of his seat in the hands of the party, and would submit his election address for endorsement before issuing it. The candidate himself had, moreover, to be approved by the EC. Fifteen of the sixteen branches then in existence accepted the rules, but St. George's stood out, on the point that the members' meeting alone possessed the power to make such rules. According to the Labour Leader, the rules had in fact been submitted to the members through the branches, and met with the approval of the vast majority of members. Hardie argued that the new rules provided safeguards 'to keep any one branch from giving away the whole Party by some oversight or mistake, and to ensure that the general public should have some account of its affairs given by its delegates'. However, even he conceded that the resignation clause was unduly severe, appearing to 'indicate a want of confidence in the honour of candidates.[2]

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1 ILP News, September 1898

2 LL, 20 October 1894

Whether the rules were later modified is not certain, for the Clarion on 27 October provided a statement from the EC, which gave the rules simply as that the ILP elected representative should be required to report to his Division or Ward branch after each General Council or Board meeting, and that he should bring forward on these bodies any resolution passed by the branch to which he belonged, or by the EC. It also stated that the rules had received the assent of 16 out of 17 candidates. What is, however, clear, is that St. George's Ward and its candidate, R. Anderson, refused to accept the ruling of the EC. The executive thereupon refused to endorse Anderson's candidature unless he gave his assent to the rules, before noon on 22 October. Instead of Anderson's assent, however, the EC received 'a long discursive communication from the Branch Secretary declining to allow the candidate to subscribe to such conditions'.

At this stage the EC merely refused to endorse the candidate, but the NAC appears to have encouraged further disciplinary measures. Tom Mann wrote:

> If anyone is run against the wishes and properly expressed disapproval of the District Executive, then that body should publish their disclaimer, and take such action as they deem expedient to insist upon the branch responsible for the candidate complying with disciplinary instructions. The NAC will for a certainty sustain district action.[1]

When the EC met again on 26 October, it proceeded to suspend St. George's branch from the district party, and refer the whole matter to the NAC

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1 C, 27 October 1894

for decision.[1] As promised, the NAC confirmed the action of the Manchester and Salford EC and declared the branch dissolved and abolished. All 'loyal members' of the party residing in St. George's district were invited to join the nearby Medlock St. branch. In fact the members refused to dissolve their organisation and instead became a branch of the SDF.[2]

The whole question of the status of branches vis a vis the NAC may be viewed from two differed angles. On the one hand, the desire for grass-roots democracy, the abolition of the presidency, and the institution of Initiative and Referendum were associated with the Clarion movement, and with Blatchford's concept of a co-operative commonwealth, as opposed to Hardie's of a parliamentary Labour party. On the other hand, an ultra-democratic decentralised party was more vulnerable to attempts by the Liberals (or for that matter, the Tories) to suborn and disrupt via the local branches. Thus when Manchester and Salford ILP did consider re-organisation on a more centralised basis, it cannot be assumed that the move was supported only by the labourist, parliamentarian element within its ranks. The possibilities of Liberal infiltration were, on balance, liable to be more worrying to the Clarion Socialists. The mid-'90s period does, however, represent the high-watermark of decentralisation in the ILP. In part it was the legacy of the very manner in which the party was formed; in part a result of the influence of

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1 Ibid., 3 November 1894; ILP, NAC Minute Book 1, Minutes of Election and Constitution Sub-Committee Meeting, 53 Fleet St., London, E.C., 17 November 1894. This meeting agreed that the decision of the Manchester and Salford Executive was within the constitution, and that failure to comply could only be considered by the NAC as a breach of discipline. This decision was not sent at the time, as the secretary received documents from St. George's Ward, to be placed before the full NAC. The Sub-Committee's decision was endorsed on 4 December (See ibid., Adjourned meeting of NAC, 66 Brunswick Street, Glasgow, 4 December 1894).

2 C, 22 December 1894. See also below, p.721.

Blatchford. By the end of 1898 the Clarion was no longer based in Manchester. Its circulation was falling, and Blatchford, somewhat disheartened, had turned his attention from political affairs to the book reviews.[1] Within Manchester, memories of the national party's complete failure in the 1895 General Election, coupled with the current climate of apathy among the branches, rendered the leadership increasingly conscious of a need for change. Most necessary appeared to be a broadening of the basis of the ILP, and a more centralised system of organisation, which might revive local activity, prepare for the next General Election campaign, and also avoid damaging internecine feuds like the St. George's ward affair.

On 22 October 1898, the Clarion gave notice of a District meeting, to be held that night in St. James' Schoolroom, Major Street. The scheme of reorganisation then adopted dealt chiefly with party influence. Every member of the district party was now to pay a minimum subscription of sixpence per month to the Central Office in York Street, which would cover his or her dues to the NAC and also provide a free copy of the ILP News each month. Collectors of subscriptions were to be appointed by the EC. The existing system of branch and group payments to the EC were to cease at the end of October, and the new scheme to commence with the November subscriptions. In both the Clarion and the Labour Leader, the local ILP expressed its hope that re-organisation might bring into the fold a large number of hitherto unattached socialists. It also believed that there were 'many persons in this district who, while sympathising with our aims and projects, are unable, from various reasons, to openly identify themselves with us as members, but who we feel sure would gladly

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1 L. Thompson, Robert Blatchford, pp. 145, 151

render financial assistance towards propagating the principles of socialism.'[1] These provisions had, presumably, been put into effect by the time that a meeting on 17 December adopted still more far-reaching changes for the local ILP. Most important was the replacement of the Fourth Clause by a declaration: 'I hereby declare myself a Socialist, pledge myself to sever all connection with any other political party, and to abstain from supporting, either on the platform or otherwise, any candidate for public office unless the candidate has the approval of the party in general meeting assembled'.[2] The avenue was thus opened for the Parnellite tactics advocated by Hardie, and once decried by the Manchester socialists. The controversy surrounding the Fourth Clause in the preceding years must be considered elsewhere. It may be viewed here as part of an attempt to broaden the base of the party. The report of the meeting, duplicated in the Clarion and Labour Leader, ended by emphasising this hope: 'Unattached Socialists, who have held aloof from our organisation on account of the Fourth Clause and objections to club life, have no longer these reasons to urge, and the secretary is expecting to be deluged with applications for membership from these comrades.'[3]

As was so often the case within the ILP, a decision from 'above' did not necessarily mean that the rank and file of the movement immediately complied. In February 1899, the ILP News reported the

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1 C, 29 October 1898; LL, 29 October 1898. It was only at its meeting in Leicester, on 28 January 1899, that the NAC formally granted the application from Manchester, to recognise the unification of the local party.

2 C, 31 December 1898; LL, 31 December 1898

3 C, 31 December 1898; LL, 31 December 1898. Reorganisation also entailed the abolition of the branch system. Now members who desired (particularly teetotallers) could avoid contact with the clubs, which had become a feature of some branches. (See also p. 312 below).

election of officers and a new EC for the current year; their first first task was to bring into line branches which had not adopted the central organisation scheme. In a more hopeful tone, it was noted that the scheme was becoming more generally accepted as it was better understood, and that a large number of members who stood aloof at first had come in during January.[1] By March, there were still large numbers of unattached Socialists outside the ranks of the ILP, although the scheme 'continued to grow'.[2] Recalcitrant branches were, moreover, still to be found as late as June 1899. That month's edition of Manchester announced that the North Manchester ILP had now joined the Manchester and Salford party, but the Openshaw, Bradford and West Salford branches still remained outside the central organisation.[3] By August, Bradford branch had complied, still leaving two recalcitrants.[4]

Within the constituencies, branches had now officially been replaced by District Committees, which lacked both the power and status of their predecessors. Permitted merely to engage in propaganda activities under their own aegis, these bodies were generally subject to the 'direction and supervision' of the EC. The 'direction' does not, however, appear to have been forthcoming. In an article on education, published in Manchester in August 1899, William Hunt remarked upon the need for a campaign for free education to be pursued in each Board School area. He commented that: 'Our District Committees, which are languishing for something to do, are just the thing that are wanted ...'. They could

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1 ILP News, February 1899

2 C, 11 March 1899; LL, 11 March 1899

3 Manchester, June 1899

4 Ibid., August 1899

canvass the parents of Board School children within their areas, in cases where fees were paid, and obtain signatures to demand free places. Apparently, the EC had also realised the need to find suitable activity for the District Committees. It now asked them to report upon the feasibility of dividing their districts into sections, which could be worked by one or two members, for the purpose of collecting subscriptions and distributing literature.[1]

Centralisation brought within its wake other problems to the Manchester and Salford ILP. Not least was the increased burden of work upon the secretary. It was presumably under such pressure that Joseph Nuttall resigned his post in December 1899.[2] Initially Fred Brocklehurst was appointed Honorary Secretary, but from the outset he made it clear that he could not fulfil the multifarious tasks hitherto performed by Nuttall. Admittedly Brocklehurst was also serving on both the City Council and School Board, and acting as prospective Parliamentary candidate for South-west Manchester.[3] However, he did expect a wide-spread reorganisation of the local party administration to be carried out, in order to comply with his needs. The EC work was to be reorganised, to relieve the secretary of many duties which Nuttall had performed; sub-committees were to be formed for Literature, Propaganda, and Finance; special committees were also to be formed when necessary. Brocklehurst visualised himself as undertaking 'general supervision', assisted by a clerk. Moreover, in return for his services to the Party, he was also to receive clerical assistance in connection with his municipal and

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1 Ibid., August 1899

2 LL, 23 December 1899

3 See biography, 'Councillor F. Brocklehurst' in Manchester, Nov. 1900

other work, as well as a 'small honorarium' to cover his additional personal expense. Brocklehurst stated, in a letter to Manchester, that Nuttall had carried the entire organisation and, 'In view of my many public and other duties, it is impossible for me to attempt such a task'. His scheme would, asserted Brocklehurst, enable the ILP to maintain its central office, and carry on its work at less cost than before.[1]

Not surprisingly, such proposals drew forth criticism, in particular from the members of the South Manchester District Committee. Ostensibly their complaints were on purely organisational grounds. The new scheme might, they admitted, produce a saving in costs, but would be dangerous to efficiency. The solution which they suggested, in Manchester, was not for the abolition of the secretaryship, but for Nuttall's place to be filled by someone who could continue to undertake all his tasks, and devote himself wholly to the work of organising secretary. The Committee proceeded to nominate for this post T.H. Gunning, then secretary of the South Manchester District Committee, who had also, before centralisation, served as South Manchester branch secretary. Gunning had moreover been connected with the party for some six years, and had also served on the EC for a considerable time.[2]

While the arguments presented by the South Manchester District Committee were tenable purely on the grounds of party efficiency, one always gains the impression that within the ILP there was a general distrust of any individual who tried to mould the party according to

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1 Manchester, December 1899

2 Ibid., January 1900. The criticism was not confined to South Manchester District Committee. LL, 27 January 1900 stated that there had been a 'strong protest' against Brocklehurst's proposals.

his own designs. For the ILP to create a key post such as secretary/organiser, and then elect a member to that office was one thing; for a member to undertake duties within the ILP, and proceed forthwith to re-organise its administrative machinery to suit his own needs, was quite another. It is doubtful whether the ILP would have accepted such proposals from anyone, but Brocklehurst was at this time particularly unpopular, as a result of his attitude towards the Boer War.[1] When, in May 1900, Brocklehurst was called to the Bar, the Labour Leader, having listed his public offices, remarked, 'People in Manchester are thinking he is trying to do too much'.[2]

Further controversy was saved by Nuttall, who after re-considering the situation, decided that he could place three days per week at the disposal of the party. He therefore offered himself for re-election, on condition that he received the assistance of a youth in the office. This rather more modest request was accepted by the annual meeting on 28 January 1900, and Nuttall returned forthwith to his post.[3] In March of that year, the ILP offices removed from York Street to 116 Portland Street.[4] Nuttall was not, however, to continue to work for long in the new premises. In August he became Organiser and Secretary to the SW Manchester Parliamentary Election Committee, and Gunning was instructed to act as secretary in the meantime.[5] At the next Quarterly Meeting,

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1 LL, 24 March 1900

2 Ibid., 19 May 1900. For the controversy concerning Brocklehurst's South African War stand, see below, pp.746-8.

3 LL, 3 February 1900

4 C, 31 March 1900

5 Manchester, August 1900

held at the Piccadilly Restaurant on 17 October, Gunning was duly appointed to replace Nuttall as secretary, at a salary of £2 per week.[1]

Thomas Gunning had taken up the reins of the local party at a far from easy time. In the August ILP News, Nuttall commented upon '... the general apathy of the people to interest themselves in social questions, due largely to the absorbing interested manifested in the unjustifiable war in South Africa'. While it is not the intention here to consider at length the ILP's attitude towards colonial policy, it is obvious that the general 'pro-Boer' stand did have a deleterious effect upon recruitment to its ranks.[2] It is, however, arguable whether, even apart from the South African issue, the ILP would have continued to expand. Also in August 1900, Gunning commented:

> The wave of enthusiasm which ushered the ILP into existence some few years ago, and which carried us along so far on its crest, has spent itself out, as we might have expected, and as all similar outbursts do sooner or later ...
>
> We are told that it is apathy on the part of the members that the party is suffering from - lack of enthusiasm, etc. But let us not be unreasonable. No set of men or women can remain always at a white heat pitch of enthusiasm..... The society that merely relies upon enthusiasm must necessarily be often in great straits, because sufficient momentum is not always engendered by one periodical outburst to carry it forward to the next ...

His solution, like the title of the article, was 'Organisation'.[3]

There was much to commend the schemes for rejuvenating the ILP, which were formulated in 1900. Gunning concentrated upon electoral organisation, suggesting for example that polling districts should be

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1 Ibid., November 1900

2 ILP News, August 1900

3 Manchester, August 1900

divided into 'blocks' of not more than 100 houses, to facilitate election work. There was also, in December, a plan whereby each member of Manchester and Salford ILP was to make him or herself responsible for recruiting one new member. There were, it was claimed in Manchester, at least a thousand lapsed members in the area, 'good socialists, whose sympathies are still with us, but who have been allowed to drift away from the Party for no earthly reason, except perhaps it may be from want of attention on our part, or possibly from lack of the necessary machinery of organisation that would have held them to us'.[1]

The extent to which the Boer War and the system of organisation were responsible for the somewhat disheartening state of the ILP cannot be estimated with any great accuracy. In part they were interrelated, for at a time when its 'pro-Boer' attitude led to a decrease in its ranks, the ILP might in any case have found it difficult to maintain the branch and ward group system which had existed in the mid-'90s. It was however clear that centralisation must not render the party completely divorced from the localities. Consequently, at the EC meeting on 26 February 1901, plans were formulated for monthly fellowship meetings, to be held in the various districts of Manchester in turns. They were to take the form of a visit of the EC, with a short business meeting or conference to be followed by a social function. By this time, the centralised system was already breaking down. North Salford division was pressing for recognition by the NAC as a separate branch, and the Gorton district seeking local autonomy with regard to the forthcoming District Council elections.[2]

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1 Ibid., December 1900

2 Ibid., March 1901. See also NAC Minutes, Vol. 4, NAC meetings 28 July, 29 October 1900

Thus in August 1901 the ILP News and Labour Leader both announced that the Manchester and Salford party had resolved to revert to the branch system, which had been given up some three years ago. When a referendum of the entire membership was subsequently taken on the question, the vote was overwhelmingly in favour of returning to the local branch system.[1] During the autumn of 1901, branches were duly resurrected. The Social Reformer for September of that year contained references to North Manchester and Gorton branches, which had recently been re-formed, and to activities by branches in Openshaw, North and West Salford. In addition it was announced that members in the Newton Heath area would inaugurate the re-formation of their local branch by a picnic, in wagonettes, to Alderley Edge, on 15 September.[2] The ILP News for the following month listed among the 'New Branches' not only Gorton, North Manchester and Newton Heath, but also a New Cross and Miles Platting branch.[3] In October there also emerged a Chorlton-on-Medlock branch.[4]

For the succeeding year there is available very little information concerning the organisation of Manchester and Salford ILP. It seems likely that, having made way for separate branches in the localities, the unified Manchester and Salford party dissolved itself without providing for any co-ordinating body for the district as a whole. This would explain the identical notices which appeared in the Clarion and

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1 ILP News, August 1901; LL, 17 August 1901

2 The Social Reformer, September 1901; NAC Minutes, Vol. 4. NAC meeting, 29 October 1900

3 ILP News, September 1901

4 Ibid., October 1901

Labour Leader, on 13 and 21 June respectively:

> TO ORGANISE MANCHESTER. A meeting will be held in the Coal Exchange, Market Street, on Saturday, June 21st, at 7 p.m. The NAC will be represented by J. Bruce Glasier, Philip Snowden and John Penny. All present and past members of the ILP, and sympathisers therewith in the district are cordially invited to attend.

It was signed by John Penny, the national secretary.[1]

This meeting, convened by the NAC, brought into being the Manchester ILP Council. The objects of this body were: 'To assist the branches of the Party, to co-ordinate their work, and generally to advance the cause of Socialism'. As the NAC had intended, Manchester now had a system of management similar to that already at work in Glasgow, Birmingham and London. Since the Council was to be appointed by members at general meetings and was not a delegate body, there was no income from the branches. For this reason, an appeal for funds was issued by the secretary, Y. Pickles, on 31 July.[2] On 19 July the Labour Leader had announced that the first task of the new Council was to be the formation of a city branch, 'by means of which it is hoped to organise the (at present) unorganised and unattached ILPers in Manchester not belonging to any of the existing branches'.[3] According to plan, Manchester Central Branch was duly inaugurated at a meeting on 19 August, at 9 Albert Square.[4]

The new Council was however to be short-lived. In March 1903, branches were already being asked for their opinions as to the advisability

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1 C, 13 June 1902; LL, 21 June 1902

2 Printed circular letter from Manchester Independent Labour Party Council, 20 Every Street, Manchester, 31 July 1902. Signed Y. Pickles, Secretary; LL, 5 July 1902

3 LL, 19 June 1902

4 Manchester Central Branch ILP, Minutes of meeting, 19 August 1902

of continuing its existence. The two questions submitted by the Council secretary were: '1. Are you in favour of retaining the Council as at present constituted? 2. If so, are you willing to contribute towards its maintenance: also, how much are you prepared to pay?'. Central Branch resolved that the continuation of the Council was necessary, but that it should in future be formed of delegates from the branches. For its part, the branch guaranteed a quarterly payment of five shillings towards the maintenance of the Council, with the promise of an additional five shillings per quarter for every increment of 25 members above the present strength of the branch.[1] Clearly the Central Branch members were not expecting great enthusiasm for the Council to be manifested by the membership in general. Central Branch was in fact renting its room from the Council and, in March 1903, Tom Cook offered it the use of 44 Victoria Buildings, 'in the event of the Council's demise'.[2] At a General Meeting of the Central Branch on 26 May (held in Victoria Buildings) it was resolved to notify the Secretary of the Council concerning the discontinued tenancy.[3] This minute is the last reference to be found concerning the Council. At a general meeting of Central Branch, on 11 August, the Secretary raised the question of the desirability of bringing greater cohesion between ILP branches in

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1 Ibid., 24 March 1903. Lack of support for the Council may not have been related solely to organisational considerations. The Council's provisional EC comprised T.R. Marr, James Johnston and Y. Pickles. All were involved with the Ancoats University Settlement, which had just rendered itself unpopular in ILP circles, having decided to support municipal candidates irrespective of party, who would give special attention to sanitary and other reforms in working class districts (see LL, 5 July 1902). Johnston was, moreover, considered to be manifesting Liberal sympathies (ibid., 22 November 1902).

2 Manchester Central Branch ILP, Minutes of meeting, 31 March 1903

3 Ibid., 26 May 1903

Manchester. He argued that some form of central organisation was needed, while 'deprecating the hostility of certain branches to the maintenance of a Central Council'. The branch agreed to his suggestion that an association of secretaries should be formed, which might meet regularly to exchange notes and collate information. From this body, a central organisation might grow.[1]

Manchester and Salford ILP had thus returned to the position of having local branches without any central co-ordinating agency. To some extent this deficiency was remedied in Salford before the end of another year. The Labour Leader of 5 March 1904 reported the annual meeting of Salford ILP Council, a body which acted in an advisory and consultative capacity, and dealt with matters affecting the whole borough.[2] But by this juncture yet another re-organisation of the whole district was being considered. As Joseph Nuttall wrote, in a letter to the Labour Leader published on 23 April 1904, the non-existence of a central body had resulted in a lack of cohesion among the branches, and an inability to voice opinions of the party as a whole. A special committee was duly appointed to devise a scheme for the revival of a central body, and produced its report at a general meeting held in Lockhart's Cafe on 20 February. Their plan was for a Manchester and Salford Central Council, to comprise every public representative of the party in the area, together with the secretary and two other representatives from each of the branches. This would, they believed, create a body fully representative of the opinions of the party on all public questions. This Council should have a part-time secretary, who would receive £1 per week. Funds

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1 Ibid., 11 August 1903

2 LL, 5 March 1904

to carry on the work of the Council would have to be provided by individual subscriptions from members and friends. A central fund was therefore opened, to which monthly, quarterly, and half-yearly or even yearly subscriptions were invited. It was remarked that if members would subscribe according to their ability, from a minimum rate of a shilling per quarter, and if contributions were also forthcoming from unattached socialists and sympathisers, the funds would prove adequate.[1]

Although a further meeting to consider the scheme was arranged for 23 April,[2] it was not until 9 September that a new Central Council was actually elected. Its initial task was to consider, among other matters, the Clarion winter scheme of lectures, the City Auditor election, and the unemployed question. On 18 November the Labour Leader commented that 'The recently-formed Manchester and Salford ILP Council had more than justified its existence by the work accomplished during so short a time'.[3] It should, at this juncture, be added that the Manchester and Salford ILP, as a mass movement, still continued to hold quarterly members' meetings. It was at such a gathering on 17 December 1904, that Councillor Joseph Nuttall reported upon the work of the Central Council.[4] Moreover the Salford ILP Council, whose advisory and consultative functions would not, presumably, conflict with the new scheme, continued to meet until at least October 1904.[5]

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1 C, 12 February 1904; LL, 13 February, 16, 23 April 1904.

2 LL, 23 April 1904

3 Ibid., 16 September, 18 November 1904. By the end of October the Council had actually organised the Clarion Van propaganda scheme and also, in conjunction with the Trades Council and SDF, convened a conference on unemployment (see LL, 28 October 1904; C, 28 October 1904)

4 C, 23 December 1904; LL, 23 December 1904

5 For meetings of the Salford ILP Council, see LL, 6 May, 9 September, 7 October 1904

In October 1905, the ILP Council began to consider the possibility of acquiring a paid secretary again.[1] The matter however appears to have been shelved for almost a year, probably because of the General Election which found Joseph Nuttall, himself a municipal councillor, acting as agent for G.D. Kelley and J.R. Clynes.[2] During February 1906, the Manchester and Salford district then received the assistance of Theresa Billington as ILP organiser.[3] It was the following August when branches were asked about the extent to which they would provide financial support for an organising secretary,[4] but even then promises of funds cannot have been forthcoming, for only in June 1907 were definite proposals formulated. The entire scheme, taking into account not only the secretary's salary, but also items such as rent, gas and stationery, was estimates at a cost of £183 p.a. This amount might be raised by means of a penny per member per month (which was expected to produce £60), private subscriptions (also anticipated at £60) and a grant from the NAC (expected to be £50). These, together with Branch affiliation fees to the Council, were calculated to produce an annual income of £188. Central Branch, at least, pointed out that the scheme for raising money would have to be altered, but decided to lend its support.[5]

The question of a paid organiser was discussed at the Quarterly Meeting of Manchester and Salford ILP, at St. James's School Rooms,

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1 Ibid., 6 October 1905

2 Ibid., 5 January 1906

3 For Theresa Billington's reports, see ibid., 16 February, 2 March 1906

4 Manchester Central Branch ILP. Minutes of meeting, 21 August 1906

5 Ibid., Minutes of Special Meeting, 18 June 1907

Major Street, on 20 July 1907.[1] It would appear that the scheme detailed above was accepted, for Manchester Central Branch at its meeting on 3 September received a request for the first levy of 1d. per member. Like so many other requests for funds, the matter was deferred.[2] It was not until 6 March 1908 that the Clarion carried a notice, that the Manchester and Salford ILP was open to receive applications for the position of secretary and organiser for twelve months. The salary was to be 'not less than 45s. per week'.[3] The appointment was duly discussed at a special meeting of the party on 21st of that month, in the Packers' Hall.[4] By May 1908 John MacLaren had taken up the post,[5] to which he was subsequently re-appointed in April 1909.[6]

As MacLaren commenced his duties in Manchester, so the NAC agreed to a general scheme of organisation for the national party. The ILP was to be divided into branches, which might represent the whole or part of a constituency; federations, formed by a group of branches arranged for geographical convenience; and Divisional Councils, which covered one divisional area. For the purposes of organisation, a Divisional Council was to comprise one delegate from each recognised Federation, with the divisional NAC member to act as chairman. The

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1 LL, 12 July 1907

2 Manchester Central Branch ILP, Minutes of meeting, 3 September 1907

3 C, 6 March 1908

4 LL, 13 March 1908

5 Ibid., 8 May 1908. The ILP press provided no information about MacLaren before this date. In August 1908 he joined Central Branch, and the following month was also acting as Secretary of the Manchester and Salford Right to Work Demonstration Committee (see Manchester Central Branch ILP Minutes of meetings, 19 August and 2 September 1908).

6 LL, 9 April 1909

Divisional Council was to allocate organisers and national speakers within the areas, and collect quarterly reports of branches through the Federations.[1] On the surface, the scheme made no real difference to the local ILP, for the branches and a Federation (in the shape of the Manchester and Salford ILP Council) were already in existence, and this two-tier system continued up to the outbreak of war. What was, however, important was the attempt by the ILP to become a truly national political party; to move from local autonomy to a more centralised system of organisation. To examine this shift in the centre of gravity within the ILP, it is necessary to turn from the Manchester and Salford party itself to examine the development of the county organisation.

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The idea of a Lancashire Federation was first mooted by Leonard Hall; and for political, rather than organisation motives. Six months after the national ILP's foundation conference at Bradford, there appeared in the Clarion an article by Hall, entitled 'A Lancashire Federation'. He argued that:

> The 'note' of the current non-political (trade union) movement is that of amalgamation and federation, and Labour's political future depends upon successfully striking the same key in the movement's legislative phase.
>
> And whilst recent experiences have shown the grave difficulties in the way of a sound and vigorous national formation - owing to local differences of policy and to personal jealousies of 'leaders' (?) - yet there is nothing to prevent the effective union of the various groups of Socialists and ILP men in this quarter of the country into a practical and successful whole.

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1 Ibid., 22 May 1908

> If the scattered divisional parties and local societies were united under some title, such as 'The Federation of ILPs and affiliated societies for Lancashire and District', much greater achievements than can now be hoped for might, with perseverance and disinterestedness, be brought to speedy fruition.[1]

By mid-July a Federation Committee had been formed, comprising Hall, R. Anderson, Ben Bilcliffe, Fred Brocklehurst, and A.H. Edmonds. Their plan was for a preliminary delegate conference to be held in Manchester, not later than mid-September, when a constitution might be adopted, and officers and committees appointed. As a basis for discussion, the committee formulated a scheme of organisation and management:

> NAME - Lancashire and District Federation of Independent Labour Parties and Socialist Bodies.
>
> OBJECT - To consolidate and develop the Socialist Labour Movement in Lancashire and District as by (1) The promotion of Independent Labour Representatives on all local and national governing bodies; (2) The creation and administration of a central election fund for the district; (3) By organising a district lecture list, production and distribution of propagandist literature etc; (4) Organising fresh branches and strengthening existing ditto.
>
> CONSTITUTION - The Federation to consist of any group or society which accepts the principles and rules of the Federation. In the case of an ILP being composed of various Parliamentary divisions the divisions themselves shall elect their own delegates, and the executive committee of such an ILP shall not be regarded as in itself a branch.

It was proposed that there should be a General Council, comprising delegates from each branch of not fewer than 25 financial members, who must be of more than five weeks standing. One delegate was to represent each 100 financial members, or fraction thereof. Each branch was to have one vote for every financial member on the books. The Council, in which was to be vested the supreme management of the Federation, was to meet quarterly. Half the delegates were considered to form a quorum. An

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1 C, 1 July 1893

Executive Committee was also proposed, but would be subject to the veto of the general council. The financial resources of the Federation were to be provided by branch payments of 5s. quarterly in advance, together with subscriptions of 1d. per week per member to the election fund. The secretary was envisaged as receiving £20 per annum from the general fund, until such time as a full-time secretary might be appointed.[1]

While it is certainly true that the movement towards amalgamation and federation was currently predominant in the trade union field, the scheme for a Lancashire Federation was undoubtedly political in its motivation. As has already been stated, the national ILP as established at Bradford had failed to fulfil the hopes of many of the Manchester members, lacking both the ultra-independence which would have been assured by the Fourth Clause, and the emphasis upon grass-roots democracy and propagandist activity so staunchly advocated by the Clarion. Leonard Hall, at least, felt that the Bradford scheme had already proved a failure by July 1893. Giving his report from the Lancashire Federation committee to the half-yearly meeting of Manchester and Salford Federation, he advocated, 'the commencement of county federations all over the country, which would ultimately fuse and become a stronger national party than we at present had'.[2] Clearly his intention was not for the county federations to form simply an intermediate tier in the national party/branch organisation, but to replace the unified party by a federal structure. Nor was Hall alone in his designs. On 26 August 'Autolycus' commented in the Workman's Times: 'I am strongly in favour of this federation

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1 Ibid., 15 July 1893

2 WT, 5 August 1893

idea. It is building from the bottom upwards. I am afraid sometimes that at the Bradford Conference we built too much from the top downwards'.[1]

The initial Lancashire and district delegate meeting took place at 3, St. John's Parade, Manchester, on Saturday 30 September. Apart from the members of the Federation Committee, there were 32 delegates, including 7 from Manchester and Salford branches (including Gorton), and three from the Fabian Societies of Blackpool, Fleetwood and Tyldesley. The scheme of organisation mooted by the Federation Committee was accepted with certain minor alterations. The title of the organisation was now to be the 'Lancashire and District Independent Labour Federation'. It was to administer a central fund for propaganda as well as election purposes, with 50% of the total going to the election fund, and 50% to the management and propaganda fund. The EC was to have the right to withhold financial assistance to any election candidate whose candidature had not been endorsed. At the meeting, the original Federation Committee members were elected as officers pro tem: Hall as President; Anderson, Vice-President; Edmonds, Treasurer; and Bilcliffe, Secretary. The remaining 5 members of the EC were now Joseph Burgess (N. Salford), W. Vickers (Hyde), J. Barlow (Blackpool), H. Lee (Hollinwood) and either Fox of Stalybridge or C. Gregory of Gorton.[2]

On 11 November a further meeting was held at the Labour Church Institute to receive delegate reports concerning the views of the branches on the constitution, and to make modifications where necessary.[3] Few amendments

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1 Ibid., 26 August 1893

2 C, 23 September, 7 October 1893; WT, 7 October 1893. Concerning the fifth EC member, C, 7 October 1893 gives the name as Gregory, while WT, 7 October 1893 gives Fox. As these members held office only for a matter of weeks, it is impossible to check.

3 WT, 7 October 1893

were actually made, but these tended further to democratise the Federation. Thirty, as opposed to fifty, per cent of the funds was to go towards the Parliamentary Fund (thereby increasing the resources for organisation and propaganda). Nominations for officers and committee would now be made by branches from their members, not necessarily from delegates to the annual conference. Officers and committee were elected for the ensuing year, with Walter Vickers of Hyde now replacing Anderson as Vice-President, and the EC being composed of Gregory, Lee, Fox, Wilde (Denton) and Swindlehurst (Preston).[1] The Federation was still dominated by its Manchester contingent.

Once firmly established, the Lancashire Federation proclaimed its political designs upon the ILP. On 18 November the Clarion announced that Yorkshire was following the Lancashire example, and affirmed the belief '... that it will be through county federation all round that we shall arrive at a national party that will stand on its legs instead of its head'.[2] More detailed planning was revealed by Walter Vickers, in a letter to the Workman's Times:

> ... As the existence of the National Administrative Council during the past twelve months has been one of inevitable inactivity, owing to its necessarily feeble hold and knowledge of the various branches, its cumbersome character, and its (for its size) slender purse, the federation method of escape from this, our first year's very pardonable blundering, seems to come gratifyingly timely.

He suggested that the branches should affiliate with one of the federal sections,

> ... And be prepared at the Annual Conference to support the federal ticket, each section or federation, appointing one or two, (as the case may be) of the Executive. By this method, the

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1 Ibid., 18 November 1893

2 C, 18 November 1893

National Executive will be in constant touch with its constituents.[1]

At this stage, the Lancashire Federation concentrated upon its plans for the forthcoming national ILP Conference. At the December meeting, its proposals were formulated for what amounted to the transformation of the ILP. Blatchford was to be asked to accept nomination as Chairman of the Conference; if he refused, Hall was the alternative choice. It was decided that the Federation delegate should propose that the headquarters of the ILP be in Manchester, and that the NAC should consist of 9 members, including the secretary and treasurer, to be elected irrespective of geographical areas. The Federation's president (Leonard Hall), vice-president (W. Vickers), treasurer (A.H. Edwards), and secretary (Ben Bilcliffe) should all be nominated and supported as members of the NAC. There was to be a resolution calling for the Government to introduce reforms in the Army, Navy and Civil Service (perhaps the least controversial recommendation). Furthermore, the Federation was to propose the re-modelling of the 'object' paragraph in the constitution and rules of the ILP, and recommend that during 1894 the country be divided into federations, with a view that in future the federations should elect the NAC and undertake financial responsibility for the working of the national party.[2]

This scheme to remodel the ILP on a federal basis, with Manchester as the seat of power, drew forth immediate criticism. On 6 June 1894 Alfred Settle, in an article entitled 'Breakers Ahead', both defended the NAC and criticised the Lancashire and Cheshire Federation, in particular for its plan to nominate its own officers, '... all four of

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1 WT, 25 November 1893

2 Ibid., 23 December 1893

whom live within seven miles of the Manchester Exchange! How modest! Doubtless our friends of the Lancashire and Cheshire Federation would have nominated the whole nine had not their list of officers given out'. He remarked that the Yorkshiremen were 'coming up' with 'their little lot', and 'altogether it seems as if the ensuing conference is to be made the battle-ground of quite a number of cliques and "interests"'.[1]

It would appear the Settle had by this time removed to London,[2] but how far this influenced his opinions is impossible even to guess. Hall even suggested that Settle was piqued because his own name was not among the nominations. However, such issues apart, it is obvious that the Federation's proposals were not just a manifestation of parochialism. Hall described the aim as:

> ... Rendering (by economising the expense) the NAC into an actually consultative and active body. When Committees are so large and funds so small, that the former cannot meet together, it is obvious that if we really want a NAC we must have a reduction and retrenchment - in default, that is, of more money.

The existing scheme of 'geographical' representation, he denounced as 'absurd, unrepresentative, irresponsible, and resourceless'.

Even within Manchester, there was never agreement as to the future status of the Federations. As the AGM of Manchester and Salford ILP approached, 'Autolycus' anticipated a proposal to modify the rules concerning the Manchester Executive: 'The idea is to turn the business, as a going concern, to the Executive of the Lancashire and Cheshire Federation'. 'Autolycus' himself thought that any such action would be carrying centralisation too far; there could still be a federation within a federation. In the same issue of the Workman's Times, a

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1 Ibid., 6 January 1894

2 Ibid., 20 January 1894, gives his address as West Ham, London, E.

letter from 'J.P.' of Manchester emphasised the need for branch autonomy.[1]

The attempt by the Federation to promote radical changes within the ILP culminated at the 2nd Annual Conference, held on February 2nd and 3rd, at the Lesser Free Trade Hall. Here the Manchester district provided the largest contingent of delegates, although undoubtedly the absence of travelling and accommodation expenses helped to boost political enthusiasm. Leonard Hall, unanimously appointed vice-chairman of the conference, spoke in support of the Manchester Fourth Clause, which was again rejected by the national ILP. Bilcliffe, representing the Lancashire and Cheshire Federation, was also unsuccessful in promoting its resolution, that the conference instruct the NAC to approach the National Executives of the SDF and Fabian Society, 'with the object of forming one national Socialist party, under a constitution, name, or title, to be decided at a future joint conference of the three bodies'. The plan to promote Manchester as the headquarters of the party also failed, it being agreed simply that it was premature to decide upon the location. In a sense, the conference spiked the guns of the Lancashire Federation, for in its scheme for party organisation, the Federations were slotted neatly between the branches and district councils, and the NAC, with the emphasis being placed upon their necessity for education and organisational work. A further recommendation, that they might eventually be composed of delegates from District Councils, rather than from branches, would clearly remove them further from the grass roots of the party.[2]

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1 Ibid., 13 January 1894

2 ILP, Minutes of the Second Annual Conference ... 1894, passim

Apart from Leonard Hall's election to the NAC,[1] the Lancashire Federation's plans had proved unsuccessful. Although there is evidence of the continued influence of the Clarion faction within that organisation,[2] the 1896 Conference represents the climax of its attempt to remodel the ILP from within. During the two years which followed, the Federation concentrated upon organisation and propaganda, the basic 'making of socialists'.

In the spring of 1894, the Lancashire Federation's chief concern was the appointment of a paid district organiser. T.H. Garside, formerly of the Workman's Times, was appointed, only to resign when an injury to his throat prevented him from speaking. Thereafter the matter was regularly postponed,[3] and by 1896 the Federation itself had undergone a fundamental change. During 1894-6 the Federations were an integral part of the national ILP structure. They were responsible for forwarding subscriptions and levies from the branches to the national treasurer,[4] and F. Leeming, of South Manchester branch, even suggested a scheme whereby this role of the Federations could be utilised to improve the financial position of the NAC.[5] It was only through their affiliation to a Federation that branches could obtain representation at the 1895 Annual Conference.[6] By October 1894 the Lancashire and Cheshire

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1 Ibid., p. 22

2 For example, the controversy over the offices of president and vice-president affected the Lancashire Federation as well as the Manchester and Salford party (see C, 9 March 1895).

3 Ibid., 7, 21 April, 14 July, 20 October 1894; LL, 21 April, 14 July, 22 September, 13 October 1894.

4 C, 14 July 1894

5 For details, see LL, 28 July 1894

6 C, 14 July 1894

Federation embraced 43 branches, and was in communication with several more, which were likely to join. Its chief concern was to gain the affiliation of established branches and districts which had held aloof, most notable being the Liverpool Federal Council. Beyond this, its aim was to establish an ILP branch in every town and village in Lancashire and Cheshire. Towards such an end, the Federation Executive proposed to divide the whole area into four districts, with an organising Secretary in each, and an official representative in every Parliamentary division. To promote ILP propaganda, the Federation now had a list of over forty acceptable speakers. At the annual delegate meeting on 6 October, parliamentary candidatures were endorsed in Ashton, Hyde, N.E. Manchester, Bolton and Preston.[1]

The last year of the Federation's existence proved equally innocuous. Its principal concerns appear to have been a new financial arrangement (whereby branches paid an overall subscription to the Federation),[2] the registration of speakers and organisation of a lecture list,[3] and general propaganda, including a fortnight of lecturing by Leonard Hall.[4] By November three branches had, for reasons unstated, signified their intention to secede from the Federation. At this juncture they were reminded of the National Conference resolution, which stated that no branch or club was recognised by the national party if it was not affiliated to a district council or union; similarly no such district organisation was recognised if it was not affiliated to the county

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1 Ibid., 6, 20 October 1894; LL, 13 October 1894

2 C, 19 January 1895

3 Ibid., 19 March, 1 June 1895

4 Ibid., 13 April 1895

Federation.[1] At the time some local organisations were in arrears with their fees to the Federation, and one suspects that this may have had some connection with the desire for disaffiliation. There does not, however, in the closing months of 1895, emerge any evidence of a plan by the Lancashire Federation to attack the existing structure of the national party. Yet in January 1896 the NAC moved to undermine the power of the Federations, by stipulating that representation at the forthcoming annual conference should be on the basis of NAC certificates, and not affiliation with the county federations.[2] At that conference, held in Nottingham on 6th and 7 April, a revised constitution and rules were accepted, which eliminated the county federations as an integral part of the ILP structure.[3]

While it is obvious that the ILP hierarchy viewed the Federations as a threat to be eliminated, certainly the activities of the Lancashire body in the previous two years do not appear as a justification for their fears. In practice, the conference ruling had the opposite effect from that which had been desired, for the Lancashire Federation, no longer slotted into its appointed niche within the ILP structure, transformed itself into the 'Lancashire and Cheshire Independent Labour and Socialist Federation', thereby opening its ranks to any socialist societies pledged to independent action. Such a move, claimed its secretary, H. Bodell Smith, was another step towards the 'One Socialist Party'.[4] The exact relationship between the Manchester and Salford ILP

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1 LL, 23 November 1895

2 C, 18 January 1896

3 ILP, Report of the 4th Annual Conference ... 1896. For constitution and rules, see pp. 32-36.

4 LL, 3, 17 October 1896

and this county federation is not clear. Certainly some of the Federation's most prominent personalities were based in Manchester. In the spring and summer of 1896 Bodell Smith gave his address as 759 Hyde Road, Gorton;[1] James Johnston became the Chairman in January 1897, while Joseph Grady of Walkden was to become Bodell Smith's successor as secretary.[2] Manchester and District ILP's decision to affiliate with the Lancashire and Cheshire Federation, in January 1898,[3] however suggests that the 'official' ILP organisation had remained aloof since the advent of the revised constitution. Whether the Manchester men had been involved as individuals, or through the Clarion organisation, is uncertain.

The development of the Lancashire Federation has been considered in detail because the changes in its role are indicative of the basic change within the structure of the ILP as a whole. In the '90s the Federation was, or was suspected of being, part of the movement within the ILP in support of local autonomy, grass roots participation, and 'One Socialist Party'. When, almost a decade later, county organisation was revived by the ILP, the move came from above and was directed towards consolidating the ILP into a national political party, more suited to the task of fighting general elections. Rather than expressing the views of the rank and file to the NAC, it implemented NAC policy among the local branches.

After the 1896 Conference, there is no evidence of an officially-recognised Federation existing beyond the immediate Manchester/Salford

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1 Ibid., 21 March 1896; C, 4 April, 25 July 1896. In November his address was given as 17 Crystal Road, Blackpool (Ibid., 7 November 1896)

2 LL, 23 January 1897

3 Ibid., 29 January 1898

area until 1904. In the report of the 12th Annual Conference, held in Cardiff in April of that year, the list of Federations includes 'Lancashire, Cheshire, Derbyshire and Yorkshire', with H.J. Ingham of Failsworth acting as its secretary.[1] It would appear that this represented a local arrangement to facilitate propaganda activities, rather than an integral part of the national party structure. In the following year's conference report[2] there was no mention of this organisation, and it was not until April 1906, after the General Election, that a supplement to the NAC Report included a suggested scheme of reorganisation. The plan was for the NAC to comprise 13 members, of whom 7 were to be elected by branches in the geographical regions. Of the proposed Divisional areas, number 4 was to include Lancashire, Cheshire and Cumberland.[3] Manchester Central Branch, on receipt of a letter from Head Office concerning the scheme, duly nominated Mrs. Pankhurst as NAC representative for Division 4.[4] Apart from necessitating such elections, the Divisional organisation appears to have made little impact upon activities in Manchester and Salford.[5]

During 1907 the Lancashire/Cheshire district was sub-divided to facilitate propaganda. A conference of 90 delegates was held at the Co-op. Hall, Downing Street, Manchester, on 18 May. After speeches from James Howard and Bruce Glasier of the NAC, it was resolved to divide the area into three Federations: Nelson, Burnley and district; Cheshire (centred

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1 ILP, Report of the 12th Annual Conference ... 1904, p. 55

2 ILP, Report of the 13th Annual Conference ... 1905, passim

3 ILP, Report of the 14th Annual Conference ... 1906, p. 22

4 Manchester Central Branch ILP, Minutes of meeting, 24 April 1906

5 Ibid., passim

on Stockport); and Manchester and Salford. The intention was to provide organisers under the new NAC scheme, and consolidate the various monthly journals then being run in Lancashire, many of them at a loss.[1] The Divisional system however continued, being changed in January 1909 to provide for 11 as opposed to 7 areas. Under the new arrangement, Division 10 now comprised Lancashire.[2] This Lancashire division, having elected Councillor John M. McLachlan of Levenshulme as its NAC representative, arranged a conference on 19 June 1909, at the Coal Exchange, Manchester, to implement the new scheme of organisation.[3] The scheme has been described above, in connection with the Manchester and Salford Federation. Suffice it here to add that one of the functions of the Divisional Council was described as: 'To assist and advise in securing ILP representation on County, Borough, District, and Parish Councils'.[4]

The county organisation was not intended so much as a vehicle for expressing rank and file opinion, as for increasing the efficiency of the national party as an election machine. Nor did the delegates to the Divisional Council attempt to utilise it for any purposes other than those officially intended. The era of 'No. 10 Division' was also an era of turmoil within the ILP; of protests against the Labour alliance in Parliament, which appeared to many of the rank and file as submission to the needs of the Liberal government. In 1910 John McLachlan, still the Divisional Representative on the NAC, emerged as one of the authors of Let us Reform the Labour Party, otherwise known as the 'Green Manifesto'. His position in leading a protest within the party might be compared to

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1 LL, 10, 31 May 1907

2 Ibid., 22 January 1909

3 Ibid., 7 May, 25 June 1909

4 Ibid., 25 June 1909

that of the Clarion faction in the '90s. But McLachlan received no official backing from the Lancashire ILPers. At a Divisional Council meeting, held in Manchester on 6 August, it was resolved:

> That this Divisional Council, whilst refraining from pronouncing any opinion on the contents of the pamphlet 'Let us Reform the Labour Party', dissociates the Divisional Council from the issue of the pamphlet and asserts that Mr. McLachlan has issued it an an individual and not in his capacity as the representative of this Division.[1]

The subject was further discussed at a Divisional Conference in October, at which resolutions both commending and condemning the Green Manifesto were all lost! The report of the conference in the Labour Leader, signed E.W. (E.P. Wake?) claimed that the Labouralliance was almost unanimously supported.[2] The Green Manifesto and its adherents must be further considered elsewhere; it is mentioned here simply to illustrate the political contrast between 'No. 10 Division' and the Lancashire Federation of the '90s.

Throughout the pre-war years, the political attitudes of the Lancashire division followed the same pattern. In January 1913 a conference of Lancashire branches, now classified as 'No. 9 Division', considered the Labour alliance. A resolution that the ILP Members of Parliament should ignore the decisions of the Labour Party, and vote as they thought fit, received only 5 votes. Every effort to change party policy was overwhelmingly defeated, while a resolution was passed expressing disapproval of syndicalism.[3]

From the point of view of organisation, the most important subject

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1 Ibid., 12 August 1910

2 Ibid., 7 October 1910

3 Ibid., 23 January 1913

dealt with by the county was the stamp system. The stamp system, a scheme to formalise both the collection of dues and the relationship between branches, local Federations, districts and the NAC, was discussed at intervals during 1912-13.[1] It was finally adopted by the Lancashire Divisional Council at a meeting held at Miles Platting, in April 1913. A special sub-committee was then appointed to make arrangements and draft a new Council constitution.[2] By 8 May, copies of the proposals had been circulated to branches and the federation secretary, and a further conference called for 12 July, to adopt the scheme. The Divisional report in the Labour Leader of 8 May waxed enthusiastic over the stamp system: '... its chief merit will be that it lays a foundation on which we can begin to erect the edifice of decent organisation'. Most socialist movements abroad, it added, gave a member a number when he joined, and this remained on his card throughout any removals; the names and addresses of all members and accounts of subscriptions were, moreover, kept in a national office. In Germany, it was added, no member leaving one branch was allowed to join another unless clear on the books of the branch he left. Similarly, no member was allowed to assume office unless he was good on the books for a certain definite period.[3] Clearly this example of a centralised and highly organised national party held an appeal for a section of the ILP.

The proposals were detailed in the following week's Labour Leader[4]

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1 Manchester Central Branch ILP, Minutes of meeting, 6 February 1912; LL, 1 August 1912.

2 LL, 17 April 1913.

3 Ibid., 8 May 1913.

4 Ibid., 15 May 1913.

and finally adopted on 12 July 1913, to come into operation on 1 September. (For a copy of the printed Rules and Constitution, see Illustration 2, overleaf). To the advocates of an essentially national political party, the firm establishment of a hierarchy and the central control, which might be exerted through the issue of stamps, were a welcome feature. But not surprisingly such a threat to the local autonomy, so long cherished by ILP branches, raised strong criticism, not least from Charles W. Hunt, treasurer of Withington branch. Hunt's letter to the Labour Leader, printed (with errors) on 22 May and partially reprinted (with corrections) the following week, is worthy of quotation, for it expressed again the sentiments once voiced by Blatchford, the Clarion socialists, and the Manchester and Salford ILP of the '90s. Having asserted that his branch would neither accept nor work the stamp system, he continued:

> If the idea is to dragoon with red tape and officialdom this area of Lancashire, so as to bring all branches into order, and make them toe the line, observe one ordinance, and venerate a clique of officials; to appear outwardly like a set of 'charity' children on parade, dressed alike, moving, talking, and behaving alike; who dare not call their souls their own, then they who have devised the thing are welcome to all the kudos there is in and about it ...
>
> I'm certain this system will, if put into operation: (a) destroy at once every branch in this area now struggling for existence; (b) by putting unwarrantable and unnecessary duties and anxieties upon secretaries, etc., of branches, keep good men out of office and thereby weaken efficiency and impair progress; (c) will not obtain a single socialist more, or result in better propaganda, or enhance our movement in the eyes of the 'masses' yet unconverted ...[1]

The Withington branch unanimously passed a resolution of protest against the stamp system.[2]

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1 Ibid., 22 May 1913

2 Ibid., 5 June 1913

DAMAGED TEXT IN ORIGINAL

RULES and CONSTITUTION

OF

No. 9 Divisional Council I.L.P.

Adopted July 12th, 1913; to come into operation September 1st, 1913.

1.—This organisation shall be known as the No. 9 Divisional Council of the I.L.P. It shall be composed of all the members of the I.L.P. within the area which, according to the decisions of the N.A.C. and National Conferences, this Council may at any time represent.

2.—Its affairs shall be administered by a Council composed of one delegate from each Federation as constituted in Rule 4, except that the branches in Manchester and Salford shall be entitled to two delegates, but shall form only one Federation. A Chairman, Hon. Secretary, and Hon. Treasurer, and five delegates shall be elected by the Council from its own number, at the annual meeting in , who shall, with the N.A.C. Representative, act as the Council's Executive Committee.

3.—A Parliamentary Committee, consisting of three members of the Council elected at the Annual Meeting shall, with the N.A.C. Representative, upon instructions being given to them, investigate, consider, and report upon to the E.C., the Council, or the N.A.C., as directed, any matters affecting Parliamentary representation of the I.L.P. within the Area.

4.—A branch or group of branches, with a membership of 200 or over, shall, as approved by the Council, constitute a Federation, and such Federation shall, whenever practicable, be co-terminous with County Boroughs or Parliamentary Divisions. Each Federation, or branch not included in a Federation, with a membership of less than 200, shall be entitled to representation in such manner, and under such conditions, subject to the approval of the Divisional Conference, as the Council may decide.

5.—The out-of-pocket expenses of each delegate attending the Council, or any of its committee meetings, shall be paid from the Council's funds, except as may be provided under Rule 4.

6.—Each branch within the Area shall provide for each of the its members a membership card, which shall be spaced so as to receive the official stamp receipt for members' subscriptions. No subscription will count for membership unless its receipt is acknowledged by the official stamp being placed on the member's card and then cancelled.

7.—The stamps, which will be supplied to the Council by the N.A.C., at a charge equal to an affiliation fee of 1d. per month per member, shall be re-sold by the Council to the Federation at 1d. and one-third, and to branches not affiliated to Federations at 1½d. The Federations shall sell them to branches at not less than 1½d., nor unless agreed to by all the branches concerned, at more than 2d. Branches may dispose of them to their members at such charge or charges as they deem fit.

8.—For good and sufficient reason, the branches may temporarily excuse any of their members from payment of fees; otherwise any member more than four months in arrears shall stand as "not good on the books," and if six months in arrears shall be dropped from the membership roll.

9.—The powers and duties of the Council shall be as follows :—

(*a*) To appoint, and allocate the services of, an organiser or organisers in the Divisional Area.

(*b*) To convene conferences in the Area as may be necessary, and especially a Divisional Conference to consider and decide upon resolutions to be submitted to the National Conference.

(*c*) To assist and advise in securing I.L.P. representation on local and national governing bodies.

(*d*) To conduct any business delegated to it by the N.A.C.

(*e*) To assist established branches and to found new ones, and to establish new branches of the I.L.P. Scouts.

(*f*) To receive from the branches, either through the Federations or direct, as circumstances may require, monthly report forms giving particulars including the :—

(1) Number of members on the branch roll.
(2) Number of members "good on the books."
(3) Number of monthly stamps in hand at first of the month.
(4) Number of monthly stamps received during the month.
(5) Number of monthly stamps sold during the month.
(6) Number of monthly stamps in hand at the end of the month.
(7) Receipts from collections and literature sales.
(8) Number of public meetings held.
(9) Number of pieces of literature, including leaflets, pamphlets, and party periodicals distributed free.

(*g*) And generally to further the interests of the I.L.P.

10.—The branch report sheet must be sent to the Federation Secretary or, if so decided by the Council, to the Council's Organising Secretary, not later than the 15th of each month. Federation Secretaries must forward branch reports to the Organising Secretary not later than the 22nd of the month. Amounts due for stamps should in every case be forwarded with the reports.

11.—Branches failing to remit with their report the sum due for stamps shall give the reason for the omission. If the reason is not considered by the E.C. to be satisfactory, the branches concerned shall be advised of the fact, and the Council shall have power to recommend to a Divisional Conference that if within a period named, the arrears, or part of them, are not paid, or a satisfactory reason for their non-payment given, the Council shall be invested with authority to cease the supply of stamps to the delinquents.

12.—Branches failing at any time to send in a monthly report, or, if sending in their report failing to remit their dues without giving a reason therefor, shall receive no further supply of stamps until the report or reason is forwarded.

13.—The E.C. shall meet once monthly, and shall at each meeting receive from the Organising Secretary a synopsis of the branch reports for the previous completed month, giving particulars among other matters, of :—

(*a*) The roll membership in the area.
(*b*) The "good on the books" membership.
(*c*) The number of stamps sold by the branches.
(*d*) The financial membership, and
(*e*) A general report of his work during the month.

14.—The Council shall meet at least once a quarter. No delegate shall attend the Council unless he present, or have presented, a credential signed by the Chairman and Secretary of the body he represents, and giving the period for which he is appointed.

15.—All delegates attending the Council shall, at the Annual Meeting of the Council, present new credentials on forms supplied by the Council.

16.—Each Federation shall have one vote in the Council meetings, with an additional vote for every 100 members or major portion of 100 members by which its membership exceeds 200.

17.—For the purpose of Rule 16 the membership of each Branch and Federation shall be determined by the monthly average of stamps sold by them and paid for to the Council during the last elapsed six-monthly period ending with the last day in February, or the last day in August.

18.—For Council Meetings eight members shall form a quorum, and for E.C. Meetings four members shall form a quorum.

The National Labour Press, Ltd., Manchester and London. 10625

Illustration 2

Two decades after the foundation of the ILP, the basic issues relating to its organisation were still the same: 'the autonomy of branches', 'officialdom', and 'the making of socialists'. But while in the '90s the first and last of these factors held sway, in 1913 'officialdom' won the day. In September 1913, Standring expressed his pleasure at the response to the stamp system in the ILP,

> ... which has been largely a voluntary, do-as-you please, and do-if-you like sort of organisation, wherein method and order growth have too frequently been laid as sacrifices in the lap of the fetish Local Autonomy ...[1]

By 1914 the ILP had transformed itself from a loose alliance of local socialists into a national political party. But the fundamental controversy concerning its role had never been solved within its own ranks. Was its chief purpose to act as an election fighting machine, or was it rather to concentrate upon propaganda and the conversion of individuals to socialism? The trend throughout the two decades of its existence had been towards a tighter, nationally-orientated organisation suitable for election purposes, but in pursuing this goal the ILP had lost the allegiance of some of its most dedicated crusaders, men like Robert Blatchford, Leonard Hall, and large numbers of the Clarion socialists. It may well have appeared to some of the veterans that the ILP, in gaining Parliamentary influence, had lost its soul.

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1 Ibid., 11 September 1913

Chapter 2

The Local Branches

Any attempt to trace the activities of the local ILP branches immediately encounters numerous pitfalls, resulting from the actions both of contemporary members and their successors. As ever, the most obvious problem is that created by the general absence of records. One may reasonably assume that all branches did keep minute books, but only those of Manchester Central Branch are known to have survived.[1] Former members of the ILP may occasionally produce odd documents, such as a membership certificate, a share certificate for a Labour Hall, and a programme of events, but most of the material which could have provided a complete picture of the local branches has, presumably, been destroyed. In the absence of local records one should, in theory, be able to turn to those maintained in the national Head Office. In the case of the ILP however, the exercise is equally unrewarding. The NAC minute book provides summaries of new and lapsed branches and membership only for the 1918-21 period.[2] Annual Conference Reports after 1899 do contain a 'Directory' of local branches, but can be taken only as indications of which secretaries actually bothered to send in reports. Thus the 1899 Report, in printing 'Annual Statements from Branches', remarked that no reports had been received from 200 branches.[3] Nor did the passage of time show any

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1 In the area surrounding Manchester and Salford, the only other minute books still extant are those of Stockport ILP, September 1896-February 1898, February-December 1898, and May 1916 to June 1922; and Pendlebury, Clifton and Swinton Branch ILP, 1919-21.

2 ILP, NAC Minute Books, passim.

3 ILP, Report of the 6th Annual Conference ... 1899, pp. 26-7.

significant improvement in the situation. In 1905 the list of branches' income and expenditure was published with the comment that only about a third of the branches had actually sent in returns.[1] Branch autonomy and the general laxity of ILP organisation, so berated by J.H. Standring, may have had their advantages in the eyes of some contemporary members, but for historians they have provided many problems.

The absence of so much basic information might be less of a problem if that which remains extant could be regarded as reliable. However, loyalty to 'the Movement' was seldom equated with providing accurate statistics for Head Office, and when a branch might benefit by a slight 'alteration' of figures, this was carried out. Thus in April 1905, Manchester Central Branch decided to pay affiliation fees to the NAC for a sufficient number of members to enable them to send two delegates to the Annual Conference.[2] In August of that year the branch decided to pay to Head Office on a membership of 60 'this only being several more than the actual number'.[3] On the other hand, when branch funds were short, Head Office was frequently under-paid. By mid-October 1906, Manchester Central Branch had still not paid its affiliation fee for the year, and finally resolved that the Treasurer should pay £1.[4]

If should, in fairness to the ILP branches, be added that they were seldom sure of their actual membership figures anyway. There was often disparity between active members, those 'good on the books', and the lists of names maintained by the secretary. Active members might

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1 ILP, Report of the 13th Annual Conference ... 1905, p. 23

2 Manchester Central Branch ILP, Minutes of meeting, 4 April 1905

3 Ibid., Minutes of meeting 8 August 1905

4 Ibid., Minutes of meeting 16 October 1906

be relatively few in number, in an apparently large branch. In the Clarion of 10 November 1894, Blatchford argued against the practice of leaving a small committee to do the work of the party, adding that: 'Manchester has had a painful proof of the truth of what I say. I have seen two or three zealous men doing the work of a whole branch. I have seen half-a-dozen men trying to carry out an election campaign ...'[1] Branches frequently continued to class as 'members' people who were not actually paying subscriptions. In October 1895 the Labour Leader, discussing the financing of Manchester and Salford municipal election contests, expressed the need for 'a continuous system of collecting subscriptions from that large section of members whose names appear upon the books of branches, but who are not financial members'.[2] Certainly the surviving membership lists of Manchester Central Branch are illuminating. Written in the back of the first of the minute books are several pages of names and addresses. What appears to be the original membership list is filled with deletions, queries, and ticks, while the revised list, dated 8 February 1905, again bears a succession of circles, ticks, dots and crosses, the purpose of which one can only surmise.[3] When the controversial stamp system finally attempted to provide effective organisation for the Lancashire ILP, it further revealed the disparity in 'membership' figures. Thus in November 1913, Gorton branch had 104 members on the books, 'possibly' 88 'good on the books', and had sold 88 stamps. East Manchester, with 128 on its books, had 110 members 'good on the books' and had sold 122 stamps.[4]

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1 C, 10 November 1894

2 LL, 5 October 1895

3 Manchester Central Branch ILP, Minute Book 1, 1902-5, passim.

4 LL, 27 November 1913

These problems have been detailed at length simply to emphasise the caution with which much of the information relating to the branches must be treated. In the absence of minute books and 'official' national records, one is obliged to rely heavily upon the ILP press, and the reports of branch activities submitted by local secretaries. While an account of a branch meeting can at least be taken as proof of the existence of that body, (even if the meeting was not, in fact, as 'splendid' or 'excellent' as the report may claim), the absence of information concerning a branch is by no means indicative of its demise. Failure to compile reports, lateness in posting them, or lack of column space might all suggest the non-existence of a branch which was, in fact, quietly going about its business. For the purpose of this survey, actual reports of the re-formation of branches, rather than simply the lack of reports concerning them, will be taken as evidence of a break in continuity.

Even with so many factors militating against accuracy, a survey of the branches is still crucial to a study of the Manchester and Salford ILP. Even more so than was the mass party, the local branches were the focal point of ILP life, upon which work, enthusiasm and loyalty were all centred. In this chapter the intention is to concentrate upon the development of individual branches; their meeting places, catchment areas, membership and organisation. Their most important functions, namely propaganda and election work, as well as social activity, will be considered at a later stage in terms of Manchester and Salford as a whole. It is rather to form a background for those surveys, and to locate the ILP within the geography of Manchester and Salford, that this chapter is intended.

As has previously been described, ILP branches were established

in the Manchester and Salford constituencies before the 1893 Bradford Conference. The party in Salford continued upon these lines, and has proved relatively easy to trace. In the case of Manchester, however, complications present themselves. Most obvious was the growth in size of the City of Manchester. By 1914 the general movement of population away from the centre had led to the extension of the city boundaries. Thus 'Manchester' now included Crumpsall, Blackley and Moston to the North, and Gorton, Levenshulme, Withington and Burnage to the south.[1] Within the older areas of the city there was, moreover, some disparity between the boundaries of municipal and parliamentary constituencies. Thus the municipal wards of St. Luke's and All Saints were divided by the parliamentary boundary, with their Northern districts being included in the Manchester East constituency, and the Southern districts in Manchester South-West.[2] For the purposes of this survey, and in order to avoid unnecessary complications, the parliamentary constituencies of 1893 will be treated as the basic units, and branches within, or extending from them, considered in turn. There were, however, two branches which do not fit this geographical organisation; Manchester Central and City of Manchester, which was in fact founded as a result of a split in the former's ranks. Apart from being an exception to the geographical rule, Manchester Central is also the only branch for which a set of minute books remain extant. From their pages can be gathered something of the day-to-day life of an ILP branch, information which is

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1 See 'Kelly's Map of the City of Manchester', in Slater's Directory, 1915

2 (J. Hudson, ed.), Manchester Municipal Code, being a digest of the local Acts of Parliament, charters, commissions, orders, by-laws, regulations, and public instructions and forms in force within the City of Manchester. Vol. V (Manchester, 1899), pp. 408-10. See also Map 5.

sadly lacking for its counterparts.

In tracing the development of the branches, it is necessary to look for any breaks in continuity, the most obvious being in the 1898-1901 period of centralisation. A further factor to consider is the possibility of whole branches transferring their allegiance to the BSP after its foundation in 1911, and the establishment of new ILP branches in the districts in question. During the periods of branch continuity, some attempt must be made to trace the peaks and troughs of membership and activity, and ultimately to provide some comparison between branches. The reasons for general fluctuations in ILP activity are in many cases likely to relate to national and international events, in particular the Boer War and the Parliamentary Labour Party's activity (or lack of activity) with regard to the unemployment. But in comparing the varying fortunes of individual branches, more local factors must be considered: the nature of the immediate area, the presence or absence of a dedicated group of activists, the facilities by which the branch might attract new recruits. Although this chapter is intended to concentrate upon organisation at branch level, it cannot be emphasised too strongly that it was by propaganda and the provision of social activity that the branch actually recruited and maintained their membership. As the Minutes of Central Branch reveal, routine business meetings would hardly inspire or attract anyone.

Much of the local geography with which the development of the ILP was inextricably linked, is virtually unintelligible without the aid of maps. Needless to say, no map of usable size shows all the principal features required. The clearest plan of ward boundaries is that enclosed in Manchester City Council's How Manchester is Managed. After reference

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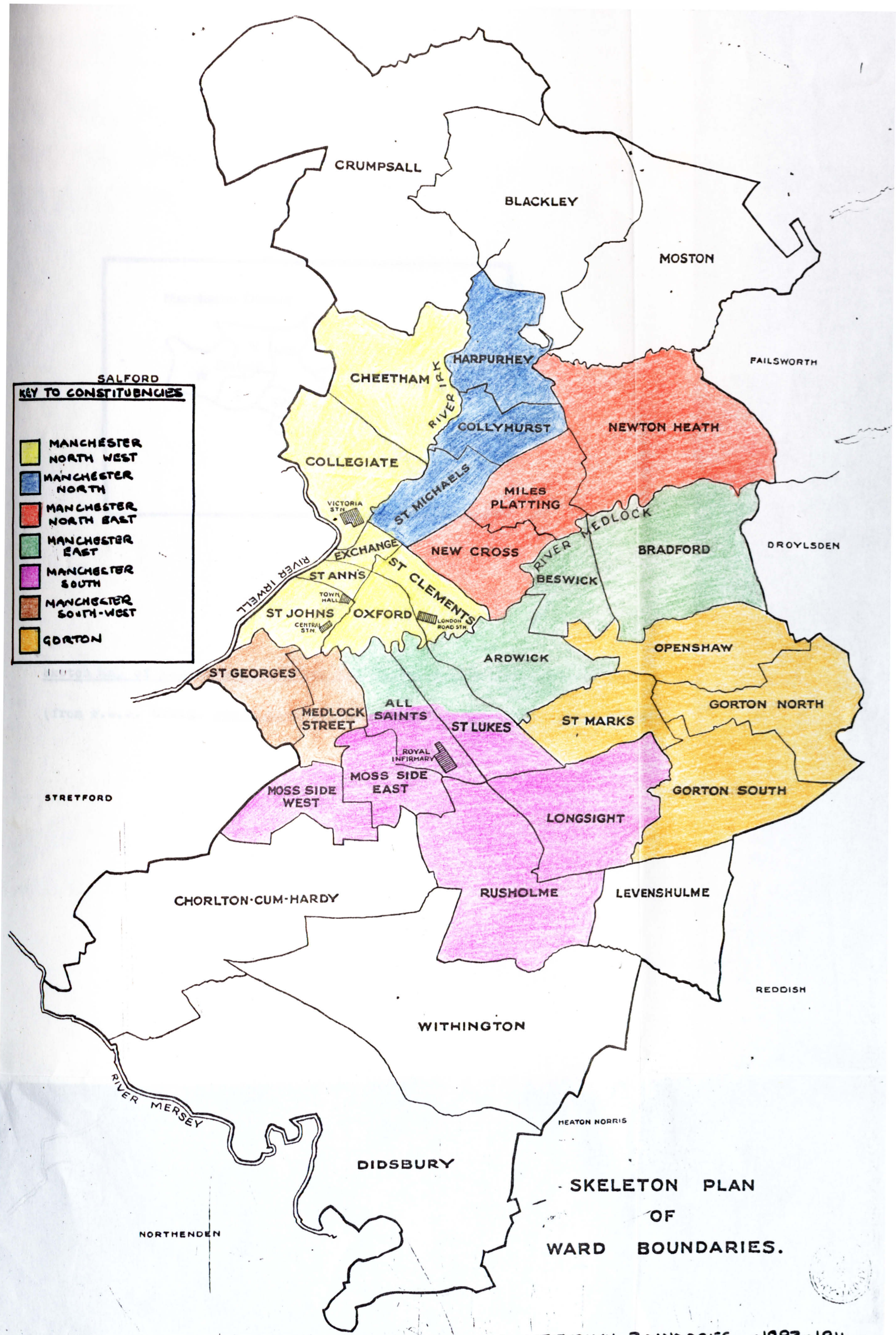
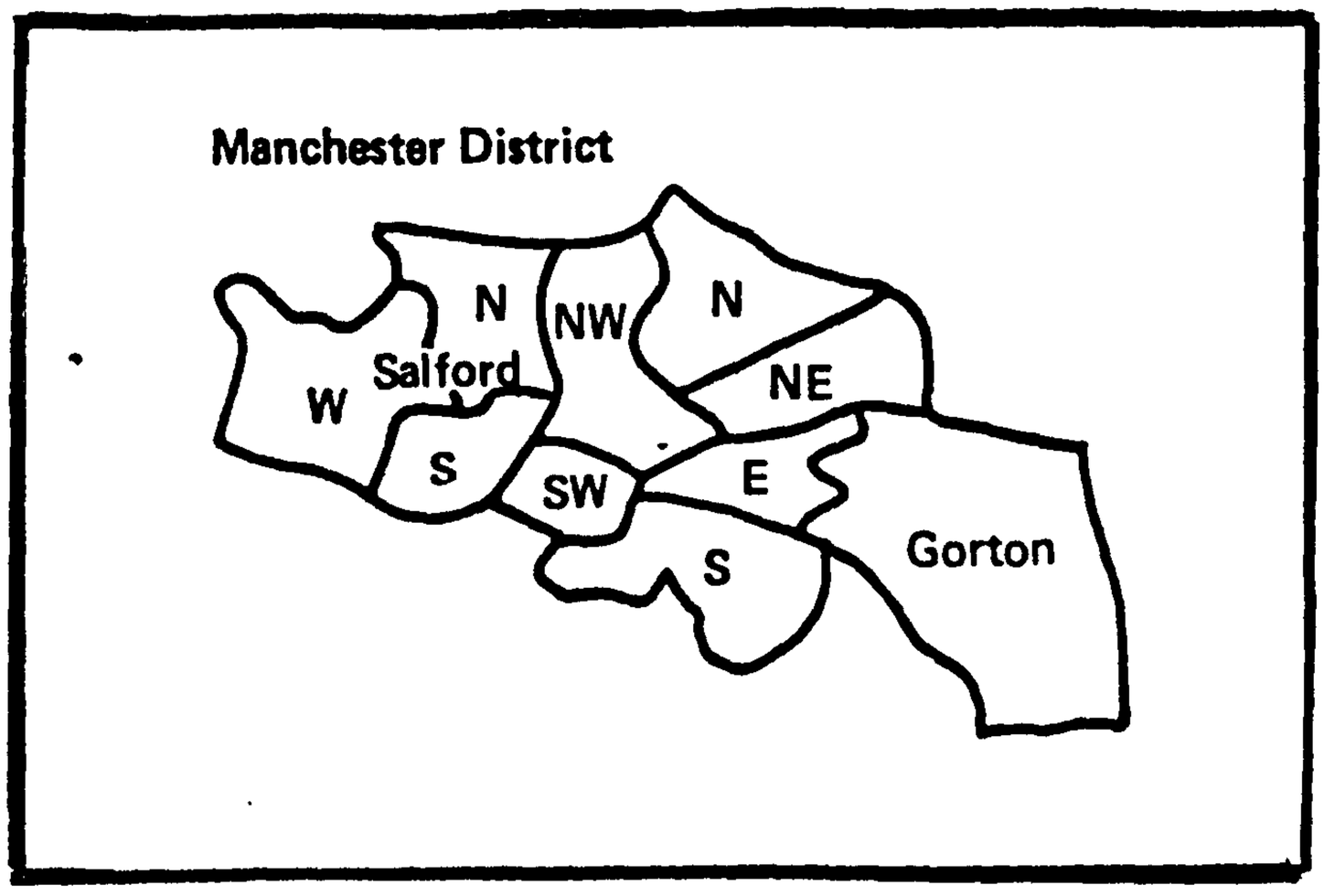
1 Manchester City Council, How Manchester is Managed (Manchester 1927). See 'Skeleton Plan of Ward Boundaries' facing p. 192.



MAP 5 MANCHESTER AND GORTON; WARD AND CONSTITUENCY BOUNDARIES c1893-1914



Map 6

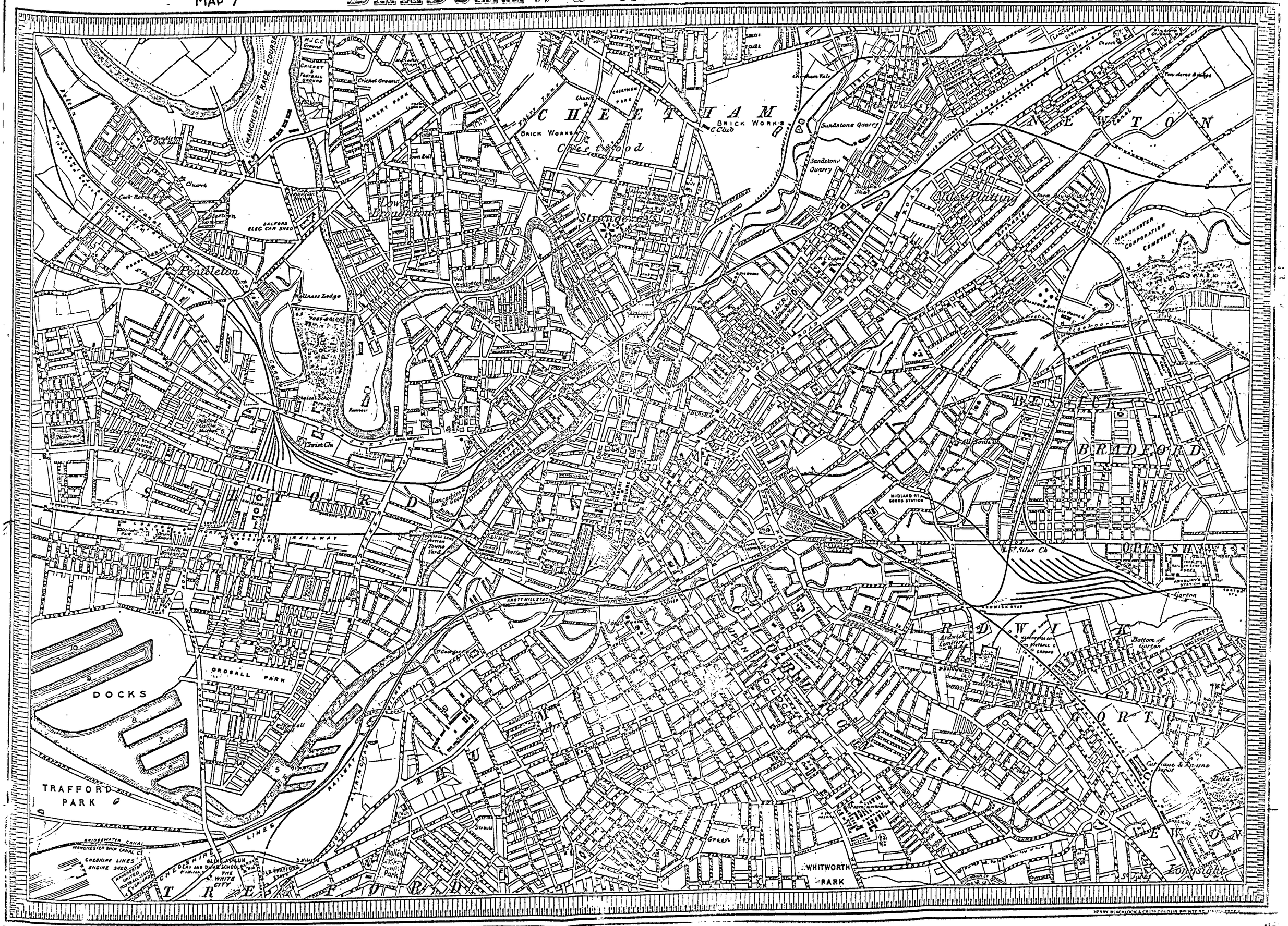
Sketch Map of Manchester, Salford and Gorton constituency boundaries, 1885-1918

(from F.W.S. Craig, Boundaries of Parliamentary Constituencies, 1885-1972 (Chichester, 1972))

MAP 7

BRADSHAW'S ABC GUIDE MAP.

c.1914



HENRY BLACKLOCK & CO LTD COLOUR PRINTERS

to other maps,[1] this has been shaded to depict the pre-1914 parliamentary divisions (see Map 5). Unfortunately its limits do not extend to Salford, and a small sketch map of the wider district[2] is therefore added (see Map 6). As a general street plan, Bradshaw's 'A.B.C. Guide Map'[3] is also reproduced (see Map 7). To correlate the boundary and street maps however is not a particularly easy task, even for a Manchester resident. For this reason, maps of the individual localities will be included with the relevant sections. The most useful maps for this purpose are those produced by the Manchester Guardian in conjunction with its election surveys of November 1885. Obviously they are to some extent 'out of date', for additional wards were included in the Manchester boundaries in 1890.[4] However, for the inner city districts, where boundaries tended to be at their most confusing, they are a particularly helpful source.

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1. North Manchester

It is perhaps appropriate to commence a survey of the local ILP with what claimed to be the 'Oldest Branch in England', North Manchester. The map below (see Map 8) shows the parliamentary constituency as it remained up to 1914. Beyond its northern boundary, the districts of

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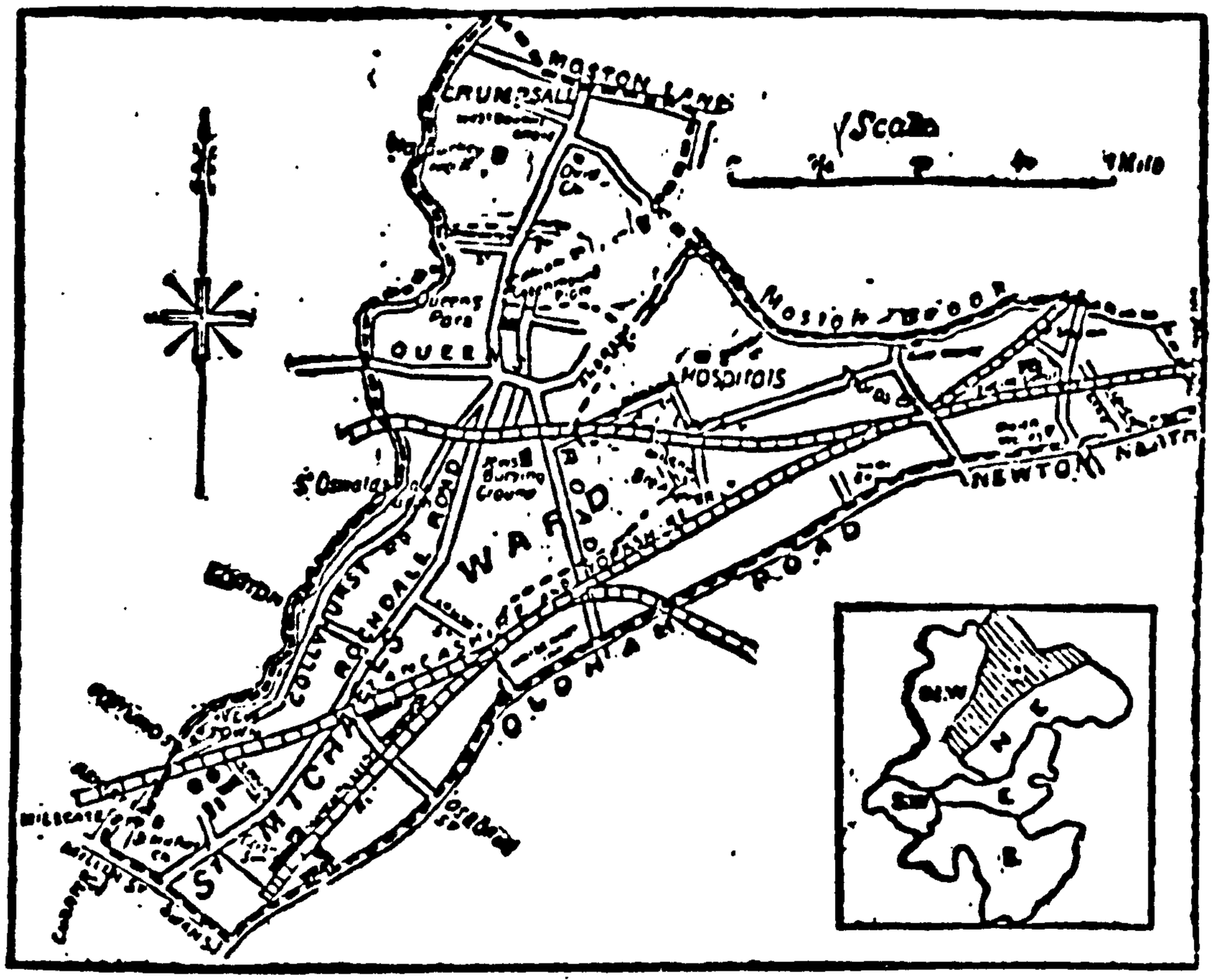
1 In particular, Kelly's Map of Manchester and Salford (1903) and 'Kelly's Map of the City of Manchester', op. cit.

2 F.W.S. Craig , Boundaries of Parliamentary Constituencies 1885-1972 (Chichester, 1972), p. 189. The map is part of a page entitled 'Northern England 1885-1918'.

3 Bradshaw's A.B.C. Guide Map, (Manchester, ?1914)

4 See the list of wards on Kelly's Map of Manchester and Salford (1903)

NORTH MANCHESTER.



Map 8

(from Manchester Guardian, 16 November 1885)

Blackley and Moston formed municipal wards after 1890 (see Map 5), but were part of the South Lancashire parliamentary constituency. Even the North Manchester constituency was, however, far from being a cohesive unit. St. Michael's ward was classed as being one of the poorest districts in the city, with a 'large floating population of hawkers'. The constituency as a whole had a bigger Irish population than any other in Manchester.[1] Within this constituency, as within most others, social status of districts rose as distance from the city centre increased. Collyhurst and Harpurhey were largely filled with rows of terraced houses, occupied by the 'respectable' working class.[2] Thus Livesey Street, between Rochdale Road and Oldham Road, was in 1893, inhabited by both shopkeepers and 'upper working dass' men whose occupations included policemen, steward, furnaceman, tailors, packer, agent, plumber, compositor, glass blower, photographer, painter and clerk.[3] The most obvious sources of employment in the Harpurhey/

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1 MG, 16 November, 1885

2 Any assessment of the social composition of an area tends to be somwhat arbitrary. For what can only be a rough guide, however, four basic sources have been used. Firstly the maps do reveal housing patterns; it is possible from a 6" : 1 mile map to pinpoint areas of courts and alleys, rows of terraced houses, and detached villas with gardens. Secondly, sample streets within a district can be traced in Slater's Manchester, Salford and Suburban Directory (Manchester, 1893), thus providing information regarding occupations. Thirdly, there are occasional indications in the press, particularly as to the presence of distinct occupational or national groups within an area. Finally, the evidence 'on the ground' cannot be ignored. Although vast areas of Manchester and Salford have been rebuilt, particularly within recent years, there are still pockets of pre-1914 buildings which reveal the social status of the neighbourhood; the now-crumbling villas of Levenshulme, or the terraces of Gorton. No claim to sociological accuracy is being made; the aim is merely to provide general indications as to the social nature of individual areas, and attempt to trace any correlation between this and the progress of local ILP branches.

3 Slater's Directory, 1893, p. 166 (Street Directory)

Collyhurst areas were the railways; Oldham Road Goods Yard and the Lancashire and Yorkshire Carriage Depot were both within the district. Also providing jobs were a gas works, sandstone quarries and a dye works.[1] Within the area perhaps the most desirable residences were to be found around Queen's Park. Hendham Vale, bordering the park, had among its residents in 1893 an insurance superintendent, manager, silk and yarn agent, hat and cap manufacturer, paper merchant and boiler inspector.[2] Further north, Blackley and Moston were industrial townships, which nevertheless had access to open countryside, most notably Boggart Hole Clough.[3] Blackley in 1893 contained works for calico printing, cotton spinning, weaving, dyeing, bleaching and the manufacture of silk and chemicals. In Moston at the same time was located a large colliery worked by Messrs. Platt Brothers & Co., of Oldham.[4]

North Manchester ILP began its activities in 1892, at Charlton Street Temperance Hall, off Rochdale Road. In December of that year a ball was duly held to celebrate the opening of a club room in Hannah Street, Rochdale Road.[5] The branch had a further claim to fame, in that it was the first ILP branch in the area to acquire a banner. In May 1893 a gathering was held in Churnet St. Public Hall, with William Johnson in the chair. The banner, which was ceremoni_ally unfurled by Robert Blatchford, was thus described by 'Fidus Achates':

> On the front is inscribed - 'independent Labour Party. North Manchester Division', in a beautiful scroll,

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1 Kelly's Map of Manchester and Salford 1903; Bradshaw's A.B.C. Guide Map

2 Slater's Directory 1893, p. 141 (Street Directory)

3 Kelly's Map of the City of Manchester in Slater's Directory 1915

4 Slater's Directory 1893, p. 1 (Prestwich Directory); p. 5 (Droylesden Directory)

5 C, 24 December 1892, 25 February 1893

> and the Workman's Times picture, 'Knowledge and Labour', and on the back the words 'Neither riches nor poverty, but justice'.

The gathering then proceeded to hear speeches from Keir Hardie, Russell Smart, Alfred Settle, 'Dangle', and 'The Bounder'.[1] In a more practical sphere, North Manchester ILP also took the lead in forming a 'benevolent and victimised fund' for ILP members. A society in relation to this scheme was formed in August 1893, and appears to have been open to members of all branches. Its secretary was C.E. Brierley of 33 Emmett Street, Queen's Road.[2]

North Manchester ILP was strengthened in April 1894 by the adhesion of the local Fabian Society. On 21 April the Clarion announced that:

> There are no longer two Labour parties in North Manchester. The Fabian Society (whose record of past achievements is one of be-dazzling brilliancy), have joined the ILP in holy wedlock, Russell Smart playing the part of best man, or benevolent parent, last Sunday. The ILP welcome their old allies, and new comrades with hallellujahs ...

The Clarion further informed its readers that the old Fabian Institute was to become a branch club house for the party, while a further branch was to be opened at Barnes Green for Blackley, Moston and Crumpsall comrades.[3] It was presumably this fusion which led to a notice being placed in the Clarion, in April 1895, under the heading 'Manchester (North) Socialist Union'. 'Meetings for study' were at this juncture being held every Tuesday evening, at 796 Rochdale Road, opposite Queen's Park. Socialists were duly invited to join, and visitors welcomed.[4]

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1 WT, 13 May 1893

2 Ibid., 26 August 1893

3 C, 21 April 1894. There appears to be no reference in the press to the actual opening of a branch in Barnes Green

4 Ibid., 27 April 1895

On the surface this might appear to represent a new and separate organisation, but the venue does suggest that this was the 'club house' mentioned above, for the Fabian Institute had been located on Rochdale Road, opposite Queen's Park.[1] The only other traceable reference to 'Manchester (North) Socialist Union' was an advertisement for a meeting to be held, again at 796 Rochdale Road, on 18 February 1896. George Peck was billed to speak on 'Merrie England and Thoughts upon it'.[2]

The effect of Fabian adhesion to the branch is virtually impossible to gauge. As has been described above, many local Fabians were active in the movements which led to the formation of the ILP and it is likely that a large number of the Fabians were already individual members of the ILP. Apart from the two 'Socialist Union' references, there is no evidence of any ILP activity at the former Fabian headquarters. North Manchester ILP remained based at its Labour Club in Hannah Street, Collyhurst. During the summer the indoor gatherings tended to be restricted to business meetings, while open air propaganda was carried out at Albert Croft, Thornton Street, Queen's Park Gates, and Boggart Hole Clough. In the winter the Club Room became the venue of almost nightly gatherings. On Sundays lectures and readings were held at 3.00 and 7.30 p.m. There was a singing class on Tuesdays, discussions on Wednesdays, and a reading class on Fridays. Sunday nights were devoted to socials.[3]

In its early years, North Manchester ILP must have been greatly aided by the presence within its ranks of John Harker, organiser of the

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1 Ibid., 15 February 1896

2 Ibid., 1 June 1895; LL, 21 September 1895

3 LL, 11 January 1896

Shirt Cutters' Union, and a Fabian. He was a founder member of Manchester and Salford ILP, serving as its first lecture secretary and latterly as vice-president. He also played an active part in the unemployed agitation of 1894-5, and in the fight to secure the right of public meeting in Boggart Hole Clough. Harker represented North Manchester at the national ILP conferences from 1893-5, and acted as branch secretary in 1894 and '95. In the electoral sphere, he stood as a Manchester School Board candidate in 1894 and for Harpurhey Ward in the Municipal elections of 1894 and '95.[1]

North Manchester ILP in its early years was clearly based upon the central part of the constituency, Collyhurst and Harpurhey. In October 1895, however, plans were formulated to open a branch at the Manchester end of St. Michael's Ward. An appeal for assistance was duly made in the Clarion, by J. Collier, of 11 Gould Street, Rochdale Road.[2] The new ward group was formed on Tuesday 8 October, 'when a number of unattached Socialists joined us'. Business meetings were arranged for Tuesday nights, at Collier's home.[3] This branch made an effort to attract the Irish element in the ward for, in April 1896, the Labour Leader announced: 'It is felt that good work can be done amongst the Irish population in St. Michael's Ward, North Manchester, if local speakers can be obtained, to deal specially with the Irish and Land Questions'. Names of suitable speakers were requested by Collier.[4] It

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1 Labour Annual, 1897, pp. 227-8; LL, 27 October, 10, 17 November 1894; 5 October 1895; 25 January 1896; ILP, Annual Conference Reports, 1893-5 passim; OBIT, LL, 8 May 1908

2 C, 5 October 1895

3 LL, 19 October 1895

4 Ibid., 18 April 1896

is however doubtful whether this scheme proved successful. There are no further references to the St. Michael's Ward branch and, apart from what was presumably an open air meeting in Bilberry Street, St. Michael's on 10 May,[1] activity again appears to have gravitated back to the northern part of the constituency.

The summer of 1896 witnessed the battle for free speech in Boggart Hole Clough,[2] and after this controversy had finally been settled, in the interests of the ILP, the venue became extremely popular for meetings, both of the North Manchester branch and the city party in general.[3] The other regular location for outdoor meetings in this period continued to be opposite Queen's Bank.[4] However the branch headquarters had, by the beginning of 1897, removed to 347 Rochdale Road.[5] There it remained until 20 June 1898,[6] after which time it would appear that the branch no longer retained any premises of its own. At the beginning of August a business meeting was held in the Methodist School, Churnet Street, while the political committee met at 31 Phelan Street (presumably a member's home).[7]

At the end of 1898 Manchester and Salford ILP was reorganised as a centralised party.[8] North Manchester branch, however, remained for a time outside the fold. The exact reasons for this are not immediately obvious. Certainly North Manchester was one of the larger branches, and

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1 Ibid., 9 May 1896

2 See below, pp. 469-79

3 For example, LL, 15 May 1897, reported that North Manchester branch had opened its summer campaign in Boggart Hole Clough the previous Sunday.

4 Ibid., 19 June 1897

5 Ibid., 23 January 1897

6 C, 18 June 1898

7 Ibid., 30 July 1898

8 ILP, Annual Conference Reports 1897, 1898

despite a decline in numbers which was general at this stage, it still remained a viable unit. Thus the ILP Annual Conference Reports of 1897 and '98 cited the membership as 102 and 120.[1] Between June and November 1898 it claimed 80 members, for whom it paid the sum of 6s. 8d. as monthly fees to Head Office.[2] Then from January to May 1899 it claimed (and generally paid on) a membership of 60.[3] North Manchester branch, by retaining its separate status, was thus enabled to send a delegate, W.T. Jackson, to the Annual Conference in Leeds, in April 1899. None of the resolutions which it promoted there, however, throw any light upon its failure to conform with the local re-organisation.[4]

In May 1899, the ILP News announced that: 'North Manchester branch had decided to cast in its lot with the Manchester and Salford party. A district committee of twenty members has been appointed to look after the interests of North Manchester'.[5] Centralisation did however improve organisation within North Manchester. When the District held its annual meeting, in January 1900, Harpurhey ward was duly divided into 13 districts, according to the polling districts and sub-polling districts, according to the Citizen's Roll or Municipal Register of Voters. A captain, wherever possible resident in the district, was appointed over each, his duty being to keep in touch with

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1 ILP News, June-November 1898. See lists of branch returns and fees paid

2 Ibid., January-May 1899. ILP Annual Conference Report, 1899, however gave the branch membership as 55, but prints an annual statement quoting the number as 60.

3 ILP Annual Conference Report, 1899, passim. Resolutions moved by North Manchester called for the NAC to consider issuing a manifesto on the political side of trade unionism and co-operation, and for the ILP to oppose the granting of parliamentary sanction to private companies for the supply of electricity (ibid., p. 46)

4 ILP News, May 1899

5 Manchester, February 1900

members. Plans were also made to run Tom Cook as candidate for the ward in the next municipal election.[1]

If North Manchester had not initially conformed to the centralisation scheme, the reversion to the branch system witnessed its hasty re-formation, in August 1901. It immediately commenced a scheme whereby members were supplied with free copies of the ILP News.[2] Information concerning individual branches during the early 1900s is somewhat sparse. North Manchester does however appear to have been one of the stronger branches; in the 1902 Annual Report it claimed a membership of 96.[3] In the absence of figures for succeeding years, affiliation fees suggest a slight increase until 1909 at least.[4] The only other membership evidence was provided in 1913, with the inauguration of the stamp system. In November of that year, the branch was estimated as having 60 members on the books, who were also 'good on the books', and had sold 60 stamps.[5] Other odd items of information all indicate satisfactory progress. In March 1905, the report to the Annual Meeting stated that North Manchester hoped to form branches in Miles Platting, and Blackley and Moston wards.[6] According to the ILP organiser, 'The branch is active and healthy'.[7] Early in March 1907, North

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1 Manchester, February 1900

2 Social Reformer, September 1901; LL, 8 February 1902 stated that the branch had been established for six months.

3 ILP Annual Conference Report, 1902

4 Affiliation fees were £3 12s. in 1905, £3 6s. in 1908 and £4 19s. in 1909. (Ibid., 1905, 1908, 1909)

5 LL, 27 November 1913

6 Ibid., 10 March 1905

7 Ibid., 24 March 1905. For a list of North Manchester committee members in 1905, see letter W.P. Baugh to Ramsay MacDonald, 23 November 1905 (LRC 27/13 LRC Archives)

Manchester ILP opened a new club, at 665A Rochdale Road, with a gathering of 150 members and friends.[1] The street number again indicates the Collyhurst area.

During the period in question, two of the most prominent branch members were W.T. Jackson, its delegate to many of the Annual Conferences,[2] and W.H. Baugh, secretary from 1901-4, and in 1907.[3] In September 1908 the branch claimed to have made 14 new members as a result of lectures held the previous Sunday. These included 'a member of the ministry'[4] presumably the Rev. Dr. Griffiths, who served as its delegate to the 1909 Conference, and also ran an economics class for the branch in February of that year.[5] When the ILP commenced its Coming-of-Age celebrations in 1913, the Labour Leader of 4 September bore a notice commencing: 'Oldest Branch in England. Grand Meet of Old and New Members. North Manchester celebrates its coming of age'. A social evening was planned in Churnett Street Hall, on Saturday 20 September, and on the Sunday evening the Queen's Park Picturedrome was to be the venue for a 'Grand Demonstration'. Among the speakers were to be 'Alf Settle, The First Labour Candidate' (who was now resident in London), and W.T. (now Councillor) Jackson.[6]

North Manchester ILP clearly drew its strength from the Harpurhey/ Collyhurst area of the constituency. While attempts were made to implant

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1 LL, 13 March 1907

2 ILP, Annual Conference Reports, 1902, 1903, 1905, 1908

3 ILP News, September 1901; ILP, Annual Conference Reports, 1902-4, 1907

4 LL, 4 September1908

5 ILP, Annual Conference Report, 1909; LL, 26 February 1909

6 LL, 4 September 1913

the seeds of Socialism in St. Michael's Ward, the soil was not apparently fertile. In July 1908 North Manchester ILP, again determined to form a branch in St. Michael's. Four meetings were duly arranged; with the intention of continuing to hold meetings in the ward every night for two weeks. A general appeal for assistance was issued in the Labour Leader: 'Socialist meetings have never before been held in the ward, and in order that the meetings may be crowned with success Manchester socialists are urgently appealed to render all the assistance they can'.[1] The initial meetings proved successful, and a fortnight's campaign duly followed as planned. On 7 August Councillor Howell, Conservative Parliamentary candidate for the division, attempted to start an opposition meeting to Fogarty (Labour's municipal candidate for Harpurhey), only to find it taken over by the Socialists.[2] Despite the apparent success of the propaganda, it was not until 4 March 1909 that a meeting was called to form a St. Michael's ward branch.[3] What actually happened at that meeting has not been recorded in the press; St. Michael's was certainly not included in the regular lists of new branches. In June 1909 efforts were still being made to establish a branch, with open air meetings being held on Sundays in Buckley Street, and on Thursdays in Whitley Street.[4] There was, moreover, no further reference to a St. Michael's Ward branch.

Attempts by North Manchester ILP to extend the movement outwards from the city centre were slightly more successful. In February 1898

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1 Ibid., 31 July 1908

2 Ibid., 14 August 1908

3 Ibid., 26 February 1909

4 Ibid., 25 June 1909

reference was made in the Clarion to Blackley and Moston Socialist Union, which had invited Margaret MacMillan to speak in Blackley Co-operative Hall.[1] The exact nature of this organisation is uncertain, for the only other reference which can be traced appears in the Report of the Socialist Unity Conference. Among the founder members of the BSP was its delegate, L. Galbraith.[2] Thus there is not even any evidence of continuity between the two dates. It is most likely that the 'Union' was one of the independent societies of unattached Socialists, which tended to be a feature of the suburban areas.

Efforts to form a definite ILP branch began in September 1904, when T. Jackman, of 18 Alexandra Road, Blackley, was advertised as the Secretary pro tem.[3] By the following May, the new branch was able to claim that it had held eleven meetings since Christmas, some of them attracting audiences of more than 40 people.[4] The branch cannot, however, have been particularly long-lived. In February 1912 Clement Stott, Secretary of the Manchester and Salford ILP Federation, was requesting ILP sympathisers in Blackley and Moston, among other districts, to communicate with him, with a view to forming branches.[5] Again a branch was duly established, now with A.S. Leigh of 7 Sulby Street, Moston, as Secretary.[6] Little more than a year later, the complaint was made that the branch had not ordered stamps, or acknowledged reminders

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1 C, 26 February 1909

2 BSP, Official Report of the Socialist Unity Conference ... 1911, p. 28

3 LL, 2 September 1904

4 Ibid., 12 May 1905

5 Ibid., 9 February 1912

6 Ibid., 11 July 1912

from the Divisional organiser.[1] The following week it was described as remotely resembling a branch, but secretaryless.[2]

+ + + + + +

2. North-West Manchester

The Manchester Guardian in 1885 wrote of '... the North-West Division of Manchester, which if regard were had to its real character and importance would be better described as the Central Division of the city'. It comprised almost the whole of the business quarter of the city (see Map 9), and consequently a large proportion of its electorate was composed of men with business premises in the area. Actual residents within the city centre tended to represent the poorer elements of the working class; both St. Clement's and St. John's wards were described by the Guardian as 'poor districts'.[3] Rather higher in the social scale were Cheetham, and the adjacent district of Crumpsall (see Maps 5 and 9). Crumpsall, although forming a Manchester municipal ward, was part of the Prestwich parliamentary division. Slater's Directory of 1893 described it as 'principally a residential locality', but also referred to 'some manufactories, dye and calico printing works, etc.' at Lower Crumpsall.[4] Perhaps the most notable feature of Cheetham was the concentration of much of Manchester's Jewish population within its boundaries. A mere glance at the list of residents of Cheetham Hill

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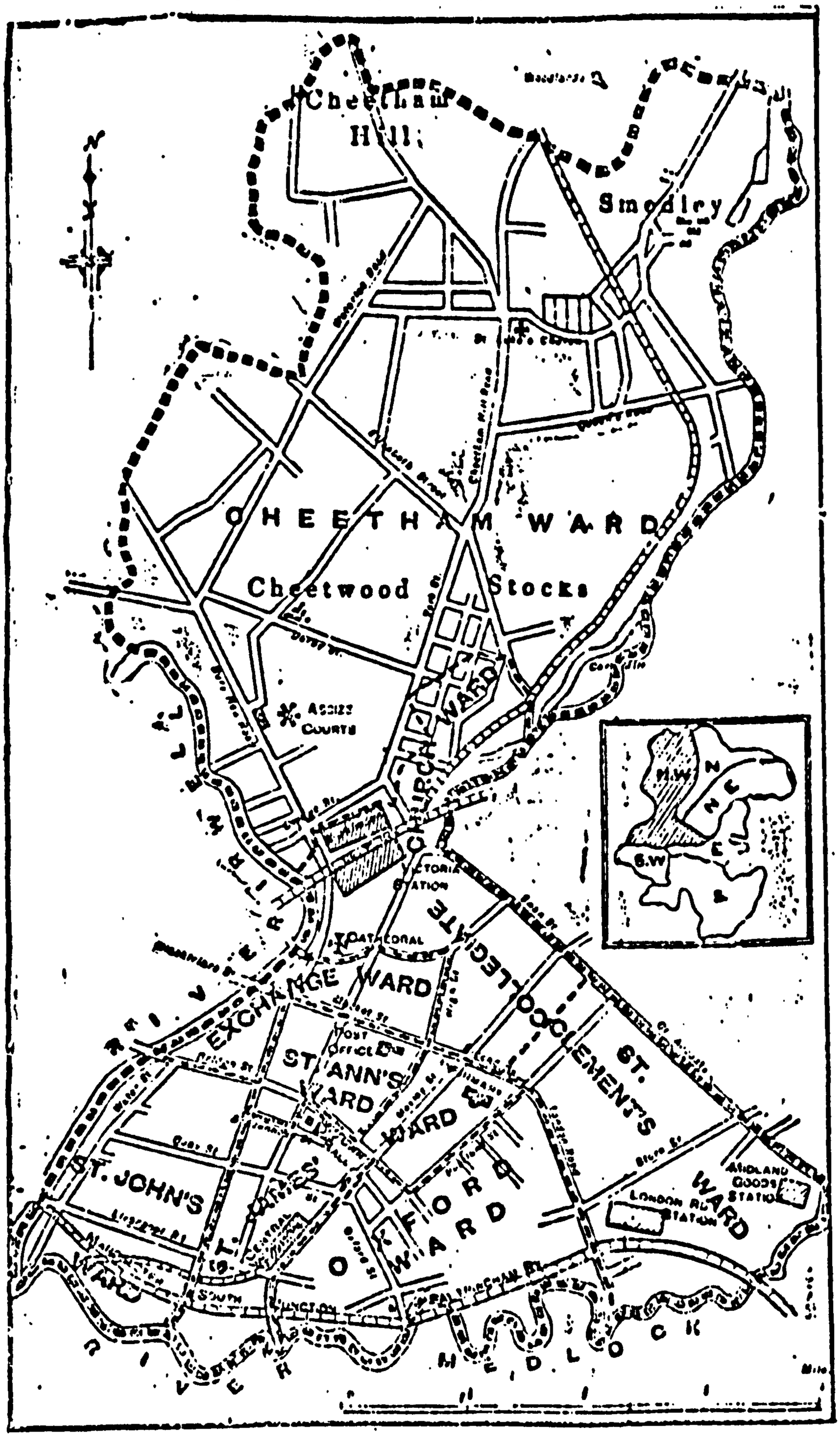
1 Ibid., 11 September 1913

2 Ibid., 18 September 1913

3 MG, 14 November 1885

4 Slater's Directory 1893, p. 1 (Prestwich Directory)

NORTH-WEST MANCHESTER.



Map 9

(from Manchester Guardian, 14 November 1885)

Road or Cheetham Street in 1893[1] serves to illustrate the proportion, and influence upon economic life, of the immigrant community. When considering the development of the ILP in the area, the extent of contact between that party and the Jewish community is a factor which should not be overlooked.

An attempt to inaugurate an ILP branch in the constituency was made in 1892. G. Crowe, who described himself as secretary pro tem, gave notice of a meeting at Cheetham Hill Institute, 490 Cheetham Hill Road, on 11 October.[2] Presumably a branch was formed on this occasion, and survived for long enough to send R.J. Fovargue as its delegate to the 1893 Conference.[3] However the Workman's Times on 16 December 1893 referred to the N.W. Manchester branch as having just been formed. Clearly there had been a gap in continuity. Plans were now made to hold meetings every Saturday night, for public debate, and the branch could boast at least one experienced campaigner: Joseph Billam, who had fought Miles Platting ward in the last municipal election.[4] Again the branch achieved representation at the annual conference,[5] only to fade once more into oblivion.

The resurrection of NW Manchester ILP was becoming something of an annual event. In September 1894 the Labour Leader described St. John's ward as one of the best districts for ILP work in Manchester: '... I am informed by a member who canvassed the ward some time ago that there is a ripe harvest of votes ready for the reaping'. But despite the location

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1 Slater's Directory, 1893, pp. 58-60 (Street Directory)

2 C, 8 October 1892

3 ILP, Annual Conference Report, 1893

4 WT, 16 December 1893

5 ILP, Annual Conference Report, 1894. Fred Brocklehurst was the branch delegate.

of the Labour Church Institute in the centre of the ward, it had hitherto remained untouched.[1] Less than a fortnight later, the Clarion announced that the branch had made a fresh start, with every prospect of improvement. It was likely that it would shortly transfer its meeting room from the Rechabite Hall in Stanley Street, Dale Street, to a more populous district, possibly St. John's Ward.[2] On 10 November notice was given that the NW division of Manchester was inaugurating a branch at the Labour Church Institute, St. John's Parade, that same day.[3] Presumably this represented the proposed transfer, rather than the creation of a second branch. On its record so far, the NW division could scarcely sustain one branch, let alone two. Moreover the 1895 Labour Annual, which must have been compiled from information collected at the close of the previous year, listed one NW Manchester branch, with Jas. Heywood as its secretary.[4]

Removal to the city centre had little effect upon the fortunes of NW Manchester ILP. No further reports emerged concerning the branch in St. John's Ward, and in October 1895 Joseph Nuttall, the organiser, was engaged in forming yet again a branch in Cheetham. An inaugural meeting was planned for the Cheetham Public Hall, with Fred Brocklehurst being billed as chairman, and Tom Mann as principal speaker. Before the proposed date, Nuttall had already collected a large number of sympathisers' names, but issued a further request for socialists in Cheetham, and Higher and Lower Crumpsall, to send their names to the ILP Central

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1 LL, 8 September 1894

2 C, 22 September 1894

3 Ibid., 10 November 1895

4 LL, 1895

Offices.[1] One suspects that the plans were not fully realised, for in November the Clarion advertised a meeting at Mrs. Ramsay's Coffee Tavern, Cheetham Hill, to form a branch of the ILP[2]. The first actual meeting of the Cheetham branch took place on 2 December, after 20 names had been handed in. Officers were duly elected, and a small committee appointed to scour the district for a permanent room. Meanwhile communications were channelled through 'Comrade Hewitt' of 40 Fountain Street, Cheetham Hill, the branch secretary.[3] By February 1896 NW Manchester ILP was advertising regular business meetings on Wednesday evenings at the 'Labour Hall', Tyson Street, Cheetham Hill.[4] Unfortunately no description of the premises has been provided in the press, but judging by the previous history of the branch, it is more likely to have been a rented room than an edifice on the scale of Pankhurst Hall in North Salford, or Margaret Street Socialist Hall, Openshaw. How long the branch retained its hall is another matter, for in March 1898 meetings were advertised for the New Public Hall, Cheetham.[5] The Cheetham ILP was still far from flourishing. In August 1898 the Head Office monthly report listed branches from which it wanted to hear, asking 'Are they dead or sleeping?'[6] NW Manchester, included in the list, seems likely to have been dead.

While many ILP branches sprang into action immediately the

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1 C, 19 October 1895

2 Ibid., 23 November 1895

3 LL, 7 December 1895; C, 14 December 1895

4 C, 8 February 1896

5 Ibid., 12 March 1898

6 ILP News, August 1898

centralisation scheme ended, there is no evidence of any such enthusiasm in North West Manchester. There are records of meetings being held in Crumpsall, near Exley's Hotel, Waterloo Street, in June 1903,[1] and on the open space near the Clarendon Road schools, in June and July 1904. When, on 5 June 1904, Councillor Tom Cook opened a series of meetings with a speech on the ILP and its aims, the audience was reported as having been 'not large but very encouraging'.[2] Whether such activities were organised by a local ILP, or whether they were promoted by the Manchester and Salford party, with the aim of forming a branch, is uncertain. In September 1904 the Labour Leader, reporting a lecture by J. Mallon of the University Settlement, remarked that 'A very good impression is being made in this district, and if only there were more workers greater headway could be made. Sympathisers were then asked to communicate with W.E. Taylor, of 7 Waterloo Street, Lower Crumpsall.[3] If there was a NW Manchester branch already in existence, it cannot have been much in evidence. However a Crumpsall branch was among those listed in a Labour Leader article on 'The Movement in Manchester', in April 1905,[4] and during the following summer regular meetings were held on the Croft, opposite St. John's Church, Waterloo Road, Hightown.[5] By this stage, the branch was renamed 'Crumpsall and Cheetham', and had as its secretary John A. McGee, of 33 Brookfield Road,

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1 C, 12 June 1903

2 LL, 10 June, 22 July 1904

3 Ibid., 2 September 1904

4 Ibid., 21 April 1905

5 C, 22 June 1906; LL, 6, 13, 22 July 1906

Crumpsall.[1] The venue of open air meetings appears to have been well chosen, for it was retained throughout the following summer. Regular reports were made of new membership applications at the close of meetings.[2]

Crumpsall and Cheetham branch may well, in the period following the 1906 General Election, have enjoyed some measure of stability. For the North West Manchester constituency, another parliamentary contest was to follow at an interval of only two years, when Winston Churchill was obliged to seek re-election after his appointment as President of the Board of Trade.[3] The local Labour Representation Committee decided against running a candidate; even the Clarion remarked that 'The constituency is not the most favourable to our cause'. The SDP however decided that Dan Irving should contest the seat, and local ILP branches rallied to assist him. According to the Labour Leader, 'the candidate himself has acknowledged to Press interviewers that his party has no organisation in the division except a small Jewish branch, and that no preparations for the contest were made beforehand'.[4] Irving's candidature must be considered at a later stage, in the light of the Colne Valley by-election, the long-continuing desire for socialist unity, and the discontent expressed in many ILP circles, concerning the Labour alliance.[5] For the local ILP however, the contest was not insignificant. Most obviously, the by-election made the NW constituency a focal point of

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1 LL, 10 August 1906

2 Ibid., 5, 12 July, 2 August 1907

3 For the election results, see J. Vincent and M. Stenton, op. cit., p. 164

4 LL, 17, 24 April 1908; C, 17 April 1908

5 See below, pp. 947-50

propaganda and political enthusiasm, from which the Crumpsall and Cheetham branch, now renamed 'NW Manchester and District ILP',[1] can hardly have failed to benefit. The Labour Leader's remark, quoted above, also draws attention to the composition of the socialist organisations. While there is no evidence of Jewish membership of the local ILP, the SDP held greater attraction for the immigrant population, or at least made more effort to recruit them.

In August 1908 the branch acquired, apparently for the first time, its own Socialist Hall, at 98 Herbert Street, Cheetham. The premises were duly opened by Philip Snowden, who also attended a demonstration at Marshall Croft, Waterloo Road, and spoke at Cheetham Hill Public Hall.[2] The new hall continued for several years to be the venue of regular branch meetings and lectures,[3] while at intervals the visit of a national public figure, such as that of Will Crooks in June 1910,[4] provided the occasion for a demonstration. After its longest spell of recorded activity, the branch then ceased to receive any coverage in the ILP press. This apparent decline occured at the close of 1911, around the same time as the formation of a BSP branch for Cheetham District.[5] While there is no evidence of any direct connection between the two events, the possibility of members' defection to join the BSP

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1 LL, 10 April 1908

2 Ibid., 7 August 1908

3 The branch still maintained its hall in October 1911 (see ibid., 6 October 1911)

4 Ibid., 10 June 1910

5 A meeting of intending members of the BSP in Cheetham District was held on 5 November, and convened by G. Ernest of 22 Ansdell Street, Greenhill Road, Cheetham (See C, 3 November 1911)

cannot be overlooked.

The branch does appear to have remained in existence, although in August 1912 its new secretary, H.V. Berry, was actually resident in Salford.[1] It failed however to remit any fees to Head Office for that financial year.[2] February 1913 found the branch running Labour candidates in a mock election, held under the auspices of the Proportional Representation Society, at Crumpsall Liberal Club.[3] There was, however, no great revival of enthusiasm, and in September 1913 the NW Manchester branch opted for internal re-organisation. The Labour Leader duly announced that:

> NW Manchester Branch, after hesitating for a time as to whether it should transfer some of its members to N Salford, and change its name nearer to Crumpsall, or die, had decided to do both, and is re-born under the name of the Crumpsall ILP. It is to be hoped that it will be able to revive some of the glories of the former Crumpsall ILP - a one-time flourishing and very active branch.[4]

This last of many reorganisations highlights some of the problems of one of Manchester and Salford's weaker branches. A large proportion of the constituency comprised the city centre area, with its non-resident property-owning electorate, and lower-working class enclaves. Further north, Cheetham had a large Jewish population, to whom the SDP was apparently the more attractive socialist organisation. The constituency was, moreover, bordered on its eastern and western sides by districts which sustained active and flourishing ILP branches; North Salford with its Pankhurst Hall, and North Manchester. Apart from this, the city

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1 LL, 22 August 1912. Berry's address was 137 Broughton Lane, Broughton

2 Ibid., 2 January 1913

3 Ibid., 27 February 1913

4 Ibid., 18 September 1913

centre provided the meeting places for two non-constituency branches: Manchester Central, formed in 1902, and City of Manchester, which emerged after a split in the former branch in 1907. For an enthusiastic socialist resident in the North-West constituency, there were clearly more attractive options than the struggling local ILP.

+ + + + + +

3. North-East Manchester

By contrast with the North-West division, the North-East Manchester (see Map 10) branch may be described as one of the Labour strongholds. In 1906 the constituency returned J.R. Clynes to Westminster with a majority of almost two-and-a-half thousand. Apart from the villa-dwellers in Newton Heath, the area was overwhelmingly working class.[1] An election report of 1911 described NE Manchester in terms of 'Rain and dirt, and miles of mean, dreary, drab streets'. Clynes' workers were, however, a 'mixed crowd', 'parsons, carriers, railway men, clerks, spinners, labourers and journalists'.[2] New Cross, better known as the Ancoats district, contained the homes of some of Manchester's poorest inhabitants, as well as the Ancoats Recreation Movement and the University Settlement.[3] These attracted into the immediate vicinity some of the middle class and intellectual socialist activists, who would otherwise have been unlikely to move into the district. Perhaps the most famous resident of the district was Victor Grayson, who before departing to Westminster lived in both the Oldham Road and

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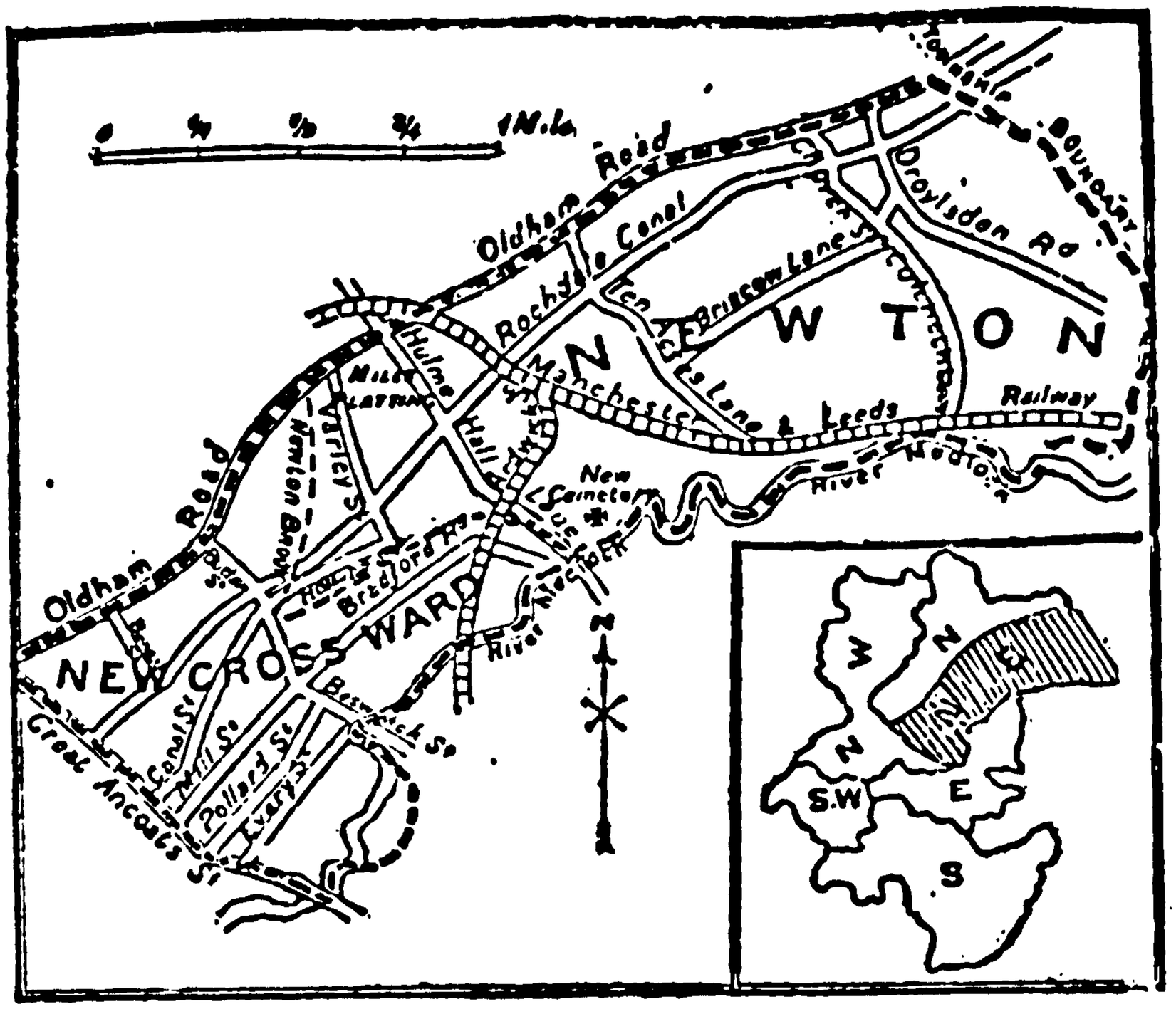
1 MG, 20 November 1885

2 LL, 21 January 1911

3 See above, pp. 16-17

NORTH-EAST MANCHESTER.



Map 10

(from Manchester Guardian, 20 November 1885)

Pollard Street Dwellings.[1] Miles Platting, which attracted far less attention than its neighbouring ward, was an area of heavy industry, of which chemical manufacturing appears to have been particularly important. Bradford Road Gas Works, and the nearby L & YR Oldham Road Goods Yard also provided sources of employment.[2] The constituency as a whole thus provided the type of 'mixed crowd' upon which the ILP thrived, a high proportion of skilled workers with a sprinkling of socialist intellectuals.

The constituency ILP was holding meetings in Hayes St. Hall prior to the formation of the national party. In February 1893 the branch took over Walker St. Temperance Hall (Miles Platting), which it duly opened as a social club.[3] Within a matter of three months, the secretary, James Worsley, was able to provide a glowing report of progress. The branch was holding three outdoor meetings a week and making new members at every one; it was being talked about all over the division. Current membership was around 270; 'of course they are not all earnest workers, but all can be counted on at election times'. As well as regular business and other meetings, not forgetting the social club, the branch provided debates and training in public speaking. Members themselves had made forms for the large room (which accommodated about 300), and were now thinking of acquiring a small printing press, upon which to produce a small monthly sheet, with adverts on the back.[4]

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1 Manchester Central Branch ILP Minutes. List of Members, February 1905

2 Slater's Directory, passim; Bradshaw's A.B.C. Guide Map

3 C, 25 February 1893

4 WT, 20 May 1893

Such success encouraged the local ILP to form a second branch within the constituency, centred upon Newton Heath. The inaugural meeting, addressed by Leonard Hall, took place at Queen Street Ragged School, Droylesden Road, in August 1893.[1] Regular Sunday meetings were then held at Church Street Fair Ground, and after only two such gatherings, the branch could boast an additional 22 members. The formation of the Newton Heath branch coincided with a strike by local miners, against wage reductions. It was in the course of collecting for strike funds that four Newton Heath members, Bilcliffe, Worsley, Berresford and Brittain, were arrested.[2]

Much of the early history of the Newton Heath branch is in fact provided by its own reports for Manchester. In October 1900 its secretary, J. Webb, wrote:

> As usual with the ILP branches, our first rooms were over a stable. Twelve or eighteen months propaganda and social work resulted in our removing to the Co-operative Society's room over the Oldham Road store, where we remained until the re-organisation of the Manchester and Salford Party in 1898.
>
> Before this time, however, the branch had got into low water, and the people of the district regarded it as dead or dying.

Newton Heath ILP had, apparently, still managed to pay the rent each quarter and meet all its liabilities, but no progress seemed to be made; for a time the branch even gave up its club room.[3]

From the reports in the Labour Leader and Clarion, it would appear

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1 C, 26 August 1893

2 The ILP activities in relation to the miners' strike, see WT, 9, 16 September 1895

3 Manchester, October 1900. The Co-op. store was at 370 Oldham Road (see LL, 24 August 1895)

that the branch also held open air meetings near Newton Heath Town Hall, and Church Street,[1] as well as Wednesday evening debates in the club room.[2] The meeting concerning the closing of the club room was actually held on 13 March 1898,[3] but the branch cannot have been 'homeless' for long; in November of that year the new centralisation scheme necessitated a Newton Heath members' meeting, in the club room, to consider the disposal of club effects, and the new scheme.[4]

The 'Newton Heath Notes' provided by J. Webb for the November 1900 edition of Manchester, paid tribute to the contribution of past secretaries towards the branch's success:

> How our first secretary, Tom Allen, did work from 1892 till about 1896! ... Then there was the studious, quiet and thoughtful Victor Kenyon inveigled into the ranks. How came it that Victor should so far forget himself as to join in the stuggle and stress of politics. He was intended for the garrett, the study, and the hermit's den. Instead of which we made him secretary.
>
> He worked very hard for some time, but his health gave way and he was compelled to give up all social work ...
>
> Next followed the ever genial and untiring Ben Parkinson. He too, was but moderately strong. But how he worked! His whole soul was - aye and is - in the movement, and all his waking thoughts were occupied working out how best to spend his energies and his life in the service of the people.[5]

The enthusiasm manifested by the Newton Heath ILPers by no means detracted from the progess of the original New Cross branch. The Walker Street Club provided a focal point for the social activities, which were

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1 LL, 24 August 1895

2 Ibid., 11, 18 January, 15 February 1896

3 C, 12 March 1898

4 Ibid., 5 November 1898

5 Manchester, November 1900

one of the chief means of cohesion. Thus in January 1896, having just held its 3rd Annual Cinderella Evening, the branch was preparing for a sale of work, and forming a singing class for children and adults.[1] Plans were also being made to start a women's branch, which finally materialised on 27 February, at a meeting addressed by Caroline Martyn and Joseph Nuttall.[2]

In February 1897 a new ILP branch was formed within the New Cross Ward. Described in the Labour Leader as 'Every Street, Manchester',[3] it was in fact located at Kelmscott Hall, 24 Russell Street, Every Street,[4] and was more accurately referred to as the 'New Cross Ward No. 2 Group ILP'. A year later the No. 1 Group vacated the old club in Walker Street, 'which Nunquam opened five years ago ...' and removed to 14 William Street, Varley Street, on the fringe of Miles Platting. They had hopes of eventually finding a suitable room near Butler St.[5] The formal opening of the William St. clubroom was performed by Keir Hardie, on 6 March 1898.[6]

Actual membership of NE Manchester ILP was not in fact as large as the existence of three clubs might suggest. In February 1896 there were 45 members in the constituency, while by the following year the number had risen to 60.[7] This would suggest that the clubs were open

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1 LL, 11 January 1896

2 C, 22 February 1896. For the women's movement within the ILP, see below pp.641-94.

3 LL, 13 February 1897

4 C, 12 February 1898

5 Ibid., 29 January, 12 February 1898

6 Ibid., 5 March 1898

7 LL, 15 February 1896; ILP, Annual Conference Report, 1897

to non-ILP members, and certainly this theory is substantiated by a report concerning the New Cross No. 2 Branch. In January 1899 the members decided to form a club, 'The Every Street Literary and Social Club', to hold reading classes, debates, lectures, rambles and dances. It was advertised as being 'Open to anyone, of whatever creed or politics'.[1]

During the era of centralisation, the Newton Heath branch never completely disintegrated. In October 1900 the secretary of what was then the Newton Heath district reported that:

> ... For several years prior to the outbreak of the South African War, we were busy with house-to-house distribution of literature. The epidemic of Khaki-fever and Maffiking-madness[sic] put an end to this several months since, and latterly all our energies have been spent on Bazaar work, Executive committee meetings etc., ...[2]

But if the ILP as a movement had retained its continuity, the members themselves had changed. The following month, Webb was obliged to ask what had happened to all the original members,

> ... One cannot help feeling somewhat sad that so few of the old guard should have come through the fire - that so many should have burnt out in those first fierce years of conflict.[3]

When the Newton Heath branch was officially re-inaugurated, in September 1901, members duly celebrated by setting off in wagonnettes for a picnic at Alderley Edge![4] In New Cross and Miles Platting local activity continued during centralisation. Fred Brocklehurst was returned to the City Council; a series of Sunday evening lectures was commenced

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1 C, 7 January 1899

2 Manchester, October 1900

3 Ibid., November 1900

4 The Social Reformer, September 1901

in co-operation with the Social and Literary Society of Oldham Road, and plans were formulated to contest the School Board elections.[1] The 'New Cross and Miles Platting branch' was actually re-formed in September 1901,[2] but its later history is obscure. Newton Heath branch was represented at the national conferences of 1902 and 1903 and could, in the former years, boast a membership of 59.[3] However its activities appear to have escaped the notice of the press, and the branch must have faded into oblivion during 1903, for on 15 January 1904 John Wrigley wrote to the Clarion suggesting that an ILP or Clarion Club be started in North-East Manchester. John Harker had been adopted by the LRC as parliamentary candidate, and Wrigley did not even know of any ILP club in the division.[4] A reply concerning Wrigley's letter, signed 'F.A.', materialised on 5 February, and confirmed the absence of a local ILP: 'He (Wrigley) may or may not know some past history of the ILP in the district. For many years we flourished like the proverbial green bay tree, but for various reasons we fell upon woeful days'.[5] The 'various reasons' were not, unfortunately, provided. While the aftermath of the Boer War affected the ILP in general, it would not explain the problems of NE Manchester in particular. One suspects that the activities of the LRC may have had some bearing on the situation.

In March 1903 Ramsay MacDonald wrote to J. M'Clellan, then secretary of the Newton Heath Branch ILP, seeking information regarding

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1 Manchester, November 1900

2 ILP News, September 1901

3 ILP, Annual Conference Report, 1902, 1903

4 C, 15 January 1904

5 Ibid., 5 February 1904

the possibility of a Labour parliamentary candidature in North-East Manchester. The secretary was not enthusiastic, replying:

> Do not think any of the candidates open on the list are strong enough for us. It will require a good speaker and organiser one who is willing to do a year or two's hard up hill work.
>
> If we are successful in forming the Committee (local ILP?) you might give us some idea of the sort of men they are.[1]

The parliamentary election campaign in the constituency, as well as the activities of the LRC must be considered elsewhere. It would, however, be distorting the picture of socialist activity in the constituency, not to mention the candidature of Tom Fox, who in October 1903 retired on grounds of ill-health. The LRC decided forthwith to abandon the campaign in W. Salford, and transfer the candidate, John Harker, to N.E. Manchester. As Harker himself wrote, 'The decision not to contest Salford is a sore point with a great section of our members and has caused a little friction which may wear off with time.[2] The likelihood is that socialist activity in North-East Manchester had become centred upon the LRC and its parliamentary campaign, to the detriment of the ILP.

Concerning the re-formation of the local ILP, 'F.A.' provided some advice for Wrigley in the columns of the Clarion:

> What I suggest is that Mr. Wrigley sets to work to collect data as to the amount of sympathy with our ideals there is in the bottom end of this great district of North-East Manchester, as the time is particularly suited to activity of this kind. R.C. Hall, of 26 Westmoreland Street, Harpurhey, is the best man to see, as he is organising the whole division in connection

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1 Letter: J. M'Clellan (Newton Heath Branch ILP) to J. Ramsey MacDonald, 31 March 1903 (LRC 11/286. LRC Archives)

2 Letter: John Harker (Manchester and Salford LRC) to J. Ramsay MacDonald, 9 October 1903 (LRC 11/296. LRC Archives)

with friend Harker's candidature under the LRC, and will tell any applicant which of his (Hall's) 'workers' are most likely to serve friend Wrigley's purposes in the re-formation of the ILP.

The undersigned has for some weeks engaged in re-forming an ILP in the top part of the division, and is meeting with much encouragement. Therefore, forge ahead ...[1]

Despite the good advice, it was not until January 1904 that the Newton Heath ILP branch was formed, under the secretaryship of J. Sellars, of 10 Durham Street.[2] Progress then appears to have been far from spectacular, but in May 1905 the Labour Leader at last announced that the branch was reviving; new members were joining each week, open air propaganda had commenced, and there was even talk of the branch again taking possession of its old club room.[3] On 16 September 1905, the branch returned again to 370 Oldham Road, where the New Labour Hall was duly opened. J.R. Clynes, now parliamentary candidate for the division, and J.J. Rudge, the municipal candidate, were the guests of honour.[4]

On the surface it would appear that the branch fell into the usual routine of open-air propaganda in the summer months, and indoor business meetings and lectures during the winter. The North East Manchester constituency witnessed Labour victories at the polls, in both general and municipal elections. But perhaps because of the success achieved locally by the LRC, the conflicts rampant within the ILP seem to have been keenly felt in North-East Manchester. In November 1911

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1 C, 5 February 1904

2 Ibid., 29 January 1904; LL, 30 January 1904

3 LL, 15 May 1905

4 Ibid., 8 September 1905. Rudge proved victorious in the Newton Heath municipal elections in November 1905 (see ibid., 3 November 1905 for results)

the inaugural meeting of a BSP branch for Newton Heath and Miles Platting took place in Newton Heath Labour Hall.[1] Before a month had passed, a large number of Newton Heath ILP members had decided to join.[2] Thereafter the local ILP underwent an obvious decline. In August and September 1913 the Labour Leader referred to the 'weaker brethren' at Newton Heath, and described that branch as one of the 'very flickering lights'. Indeed it was listed among those bodies 'which remotely resemble branches but are secretaryless'.[3]

Newton Heath branch was eventually re-formed, again at the Oldham Road Labour Hall, in April 1914. With a membership of 15, it had Clynes' election agent, Alfred James, as secretary. Clynes' speech at the first public meeting gave some hint of the dissensions which must have arisen:

> In his opening remarks he dealt with the cause of the decay in the branch activities, and pointed out it was not because of principles or policy, but a questioning of the ILP method that, to a large extent, was responsible.[4]

Miles Platting branch was re-formed, after the era of centralisation, early in 1905, apparently with assistance from North Manchester.[5] With E.J. Howarth as secretary, meetings were held on the second and fourth Wednesdays in the month, at Wilson Street Schools.[6] The revival was by no means spectacular; in April of that year the Labour Leader reported that 'new ground was being broken into in Miles Platting, but

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1 C, 17 November 1911

2 Manchester Central Branch ILP, Minutes of meeting, 12 December 1911

3 LL, 28 August, 11 and 18 September 1913

4 Ibid., 9 April 1914

5 Ibid., 10 March 1905

6 Ibid., 24 February 1905; C, 10 March 1905

conditions were 'not exhilarating.'[1] Disillusionment with the Labour alliance also appears to have affected this part of Clynes' constituency, for in 1911 the ILP branch sent Howarth as its delegate to the Socialist Unity Conference.[2] Whether the branch split, or was re-formed as a consequence of the BSP's formation, is uncertain. In the year before the outbreak of war its views frequently differed from those of the Manchester and Salford party in general. Thus Miles Platting ILPers were 'rather lukewarm about spending much effort in securing the Parliamentary franchise for women'.[3] In July 1913 the branch was threatening to withdraw from the Federation (for reasons unspecified) and the following month[4] Miles Platting and Newton Heath were the only branches which had failed to fix up a list of meetings.[5] The most vital disagreement, with the national as well as the Manchester and Salford party, came upon the outbreak of war, when Miles Platting objected to the ILP's anti-recruiting stand.[6] Moreover Miles Platting was by no means an insignificant branch at this time; in November 1913 the Labour Leader reported it as having 185 members on the books, with 150 'good on the books', and 126 stamps sold.[7] One suspects that the BSP had drawn away the local 'left-wing', leaving an ILP branch which was perhaps distinctively 'Labour'.

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1 LL, 21 April 1905

2 BSP, Official Report of the Socialist Unity Conference, p. 25

3 LL, 20 March 1905

4 Manchester Central Branch ILP, Minutes of meeting, 1 July 1913

5 LL, 28 August 1913

6 Ibid., 17 September 1914

7 Ibid., 27 November 1913

The third of the North-East Manchester wards, New Cross, was reorganised after the turn of the century, mainly through the efforts of Central Branch. With financial assistance from the Central Council, and 'pioneer work' by A.P. Hardy, Central branch held meetings at the corner of Butler Street and Bradford Street on Wednesday evenings, and on Saturday mornings at Every Street.[1] In June 1905, after about two months' propaganda by Central Branch members, a New Cross Ward branch was finally opened.[2] A.P. Hardie, a member of Central Branch who, like Victor Grayson, lived at 131 Pollard St. Dwellings, became secretary.[3] The chairman was Charles Priestley of 6 Cardigan St., Phillips Park Road.[4]

Initially the branch appears to have been a success, re-awakening 'what was once quite a strong Socialist centre'.[5] By September it had acquired a hall, in Naylor Street, Ancoats, which was opened every evening, and members were also engaged in helping Clynes' election campaign.[6] But after the first flush of enthusiasm, not to mention the General Election, came a more realistic appraisal from an ILP organiser, Theresa Billington. The meetings she held in Ancoats had, admittedly, resulted in an increased membership, but the general result was disappointing: 'A congested working class district of this type requires

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1 Ibid., 5 May 1905

2 Ibid., 9 June 1905

3 Ibid., 9 June 1905; Manchester Central Branch ILP, Minutes of meeting 19 August 1905, and list of members, February 1905

4 LL, 16 June 1905. For biographical information on Priestley, see Clayton Divisional Labour Party, Memorial souvenir to the late Charles Priestley (n.d. ?1926) 64 pp.

5 LL, 4 August 1905

6 Ibid., 10 November 1905

an organiser with vigorous helpers for a few months if good results are to be produced. The active members in this branch are working against great odds'.[1] Meetings were held fairly regularly for the remainder of 1906, but during the following two years the New Cross branch, although still in existence,[2] faded from the limelight. News of its reorganisation, with Fred Bannister as secretary, emerged in April 1908.[3] Apparently Bannister himself carried much of the workload; in June 1909 the Labour Leader was obliged to make the following appeal:

> ... Would all those socialists who are anxious for the return to the House of Commons at the next general election of our able and faithful comrade, J.R. Clynes, come along and help the New Cross ILP? The branch is not as stong as we would like it to be, a fact mainly due to the recent death and previous ill-health of our comrade Fred Bannister, than whom there was no more faithful and able secretary in the district.
>
> Meetings are held every Sunday morning at Every Street, and every Sunday evening and Wednesday evening at Spittle Street.[4]

The secretaries of New Cross branch would appear to have been singularly ill-fated. Less than a year later, in April 1910, the Labour Leader was again obliged to report:

> In consequence of the illness of the secretary and falling off in interest of members, an extraordinary meeting of the branch was held on Sunday afternoon to consider winding-up or re-organisation. After discussion it was decided to make a fresh start; ...

Officers were duly appointed, including James Andrews of 238 Ridgeway St., Ancoats as secretary.[5] Andrews was apparently unable to stimulate any great ILP revival in the ward; indeed in January 1913 the Labour Leader

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1 Ibid., 2 March 1906

2 ILP Annual Conference Reports, 1907, 1908, both include New Cross in the lists of branches.

3 LL, 3 April 1908

4 Ibid., 25 June 1909

5 Ibid., 22 April 1913

informed readers that New Cross had remitted no fees during the current financial year.[1] The branch did however pay up when the stamp system was introduced; albeit selling only 20 stamps, in spite of claiming 30 members who were also 'good on the books'.[2] During the spring of 1914 yet another attempt was made to instil new life into the New Cross branch, this time by means of a series of propaganda meetings.[3]

Thus all three ILP branches within the NE constituency present a similar pattern of development; flourishing in the '90s, but in constant need of reorganisation and stimulation through external efforts after the era of centralisation. Admittedly the '90s were the great era of enthusiasm for the ILP generally, but one suspects that the problems of the early twentieth century were something more than a reflection of this national trend. While the local ILP branches were still in abeyance, the newly-formed LRC lighted upon the NE Manchester constituency as a potential Parliamentary seat. Despite the ILP allegiance of the successive Labour candidates, they were promoted by the local LRC, and their campaigns were followed, rather than preceded, by attempts to revive the ILP. The ILP was thus regarded merely as part of the Labour electoral propaganda machine, and it is suggested that the LRC's prominence rendered divisions inherent within the ILP more apparent. For those members whose hopes were centred upon a parliamentary Labour Party, the obvious temptation would be to concentrate upon work for the LRC, rather than the ILP. For those who became increasingly disillusioned with the Labour alliance, the BSP proved an attractive alternative.

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1 Ibid., 2 January 1913

2 Ibid., 27 November 1913

3 Ibid., 12 March 1914

It is easy to fall into the trap of assuming that constituencies which returned Labour MPs in 1906 and 1910 must necessarily have had already flourishing ILP branches. North-East Manchester serves as an illustration of the way in which LRC activity could detract from the ILP, occasionally seeking to bolster the latter organisation when it might be of use for electoral propaganda.

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4. East Manchester

The East Manchester division (see Map 11) comprised the wards of Ardwick and Bradford, together with the northern parts of St. Luke's and All Saints (part of the township of Chorlton-on-Medlock). According to the Manchester Guardian in 1885, the Boundary Commissioners who split this township,

> ... were avowedly guided in fixing the boundary by the character of the population. Beswick, Bradford, and the greater part of Ardwick are almost purely industrial districts, and the district adjoining Ardwick along the South bank of the Medlock is of the same description, while in the southern part of these wards the character of the houses improves and the population is a good deal less dense.

Of East Manchester, it continued:

> The industries carried on within the Division are very various. There are Messrs. Galloway's great ironworks, Messrs. Melland & Coward's spinning mill, Messrs. Crabtree's dyeworks, Messrs. J.M. Bennett & Sons' ironfoundry and railway waggon manufactory, the Ardwick Limeworks, and many other great industrial establishments. There is a considerable mining population in Bradford and the surrounding district. The most extensive collieries on that side of Manchester are those of the Bradford Colliery Company, of which Mr. Clegg Livesey is the principal proprietor ...[1]

The local ILP began its existence in Ardwick, holding meetings at

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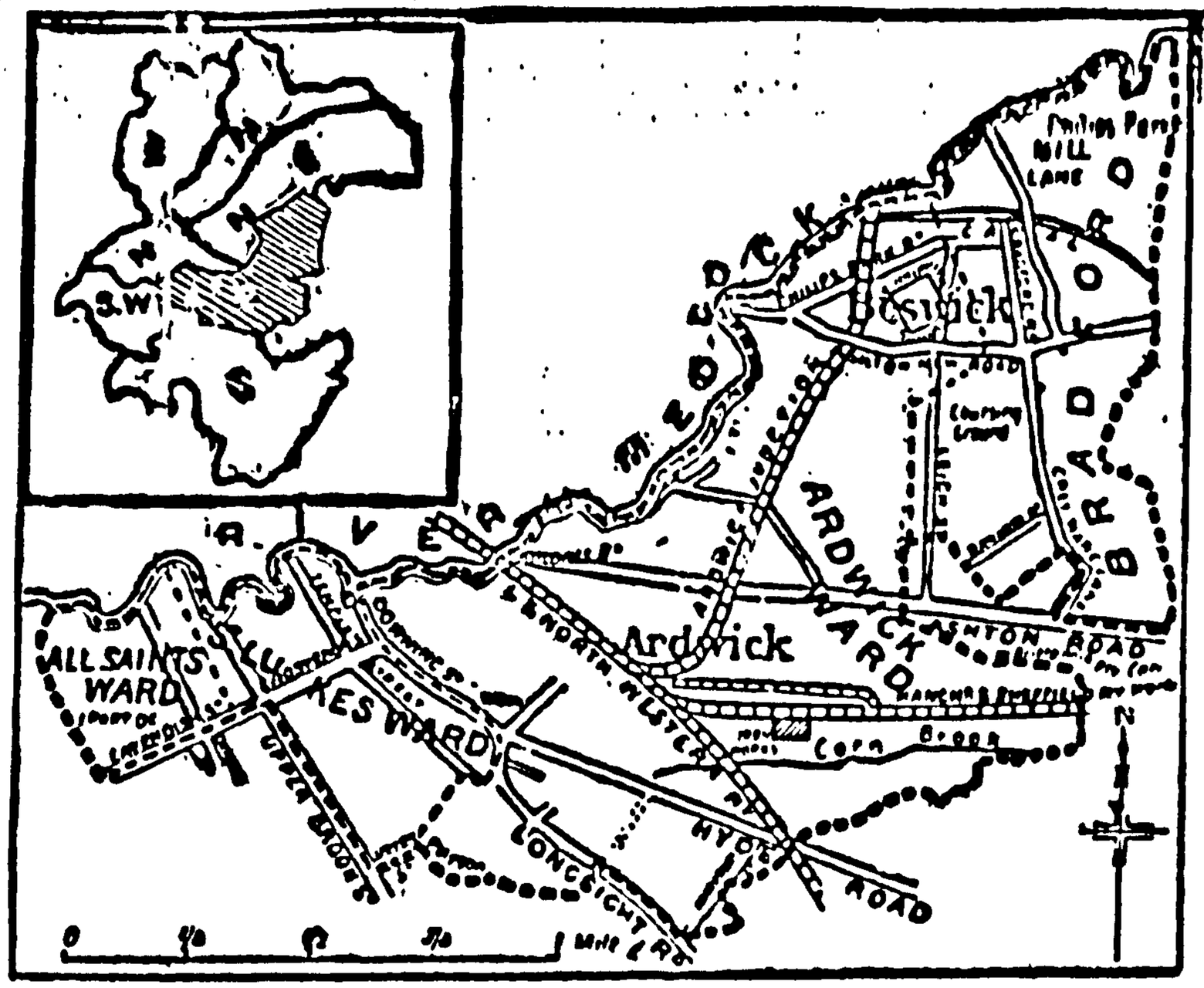
1 MG, 17 November 1885

EAST MANCHESTER.



Map 11

(from Manchester Guardian, 17 November 1885)

the Temperance Hall, Tipping Street, in 1892 and, during the following summer, open air gatherings at the corner of Chancery Lane and in Pin Mill Brow.[1] In July 1893 activities extended to Bradford. Meetings were held at the corner of Ford's Lane, Ashton New Road, and the party took over a large room in Shakespeare Street, which was opened on 16 July.[2] At this stage the local ILP remained concentrated into one branch.[3] Its numbers were increasing rapidly; in the course of the meetings held on 10 July, 20 new members were recruited.[4] Such enthusiasm for the ILP was not, however, difficult to explain. Before the end of July the local miners went on strike against wage reductions, and the ILP associated itself with their cause. Thus on 27 August E Manchester ILP organised a demonstration and mass meeting to raise funds for the strike. Participants met at Wellington Street, Ashton New Road, whence they held a procession to Church Street, for a mass meeting opposite the Board School. Speakers included Leonard Hall, J. Anderson, J. Riley, Ben Bilcliffe, and J. Worsley.[5] Nor did the ILPers fail to realise the potential benefit of the strike to their own movement. On 4 October, the Workman's Times quoted the comment: 'This lockout will do more to convert people to Socialism than years of preaching'.[6]

At the beginning of 1894, East Manchester still constituted a single

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1 WT, 1, 8 July 1893

2 Ibid., 8 July 1893

3 See 'ILP Directory' in ibid., 22 July 1893

4 Ibid., 15 July 1893

5 Ibid., 26 August 1893

6 Ibid., 14 October 1893

ILP branch.[1] However in October of that year, the Clarion reported: 'The Bradford (Manchester) ILP is booming. They've opened a fine hall at 60, Grey Mare Lane, that will hold 400. Powell, Hardcastle, and Binns are the officers'.[2] Thereafter the Grey Mare Lane Hall appears to have become the focal point for the ILP activities in the whole constituency. Although in 1896 there was reference to an 'Ardwick Group' and a 'Bradford Group',[3] during succeeding years lists of local branches excluded any mention of Ardwick, referring only to 'Manchester, Bradford W'[ard].[4] The concentration of the local ILP upon Bradford must have been partly due to the location of the Hall; 60 Grey Mare Lane was accessible from Ardwick as well as Bradford. But it may also have been influenced by the presence of a mining community, and the attitude of their union. Whereas Lib-Labism reigned supreme among miners elsewhere in the country, the Lancashire and Cheshire Miners had at an early stage provided support for the socialist and independent labour movements. ILP support in the 1893 strike and lock-out had moreover consolidated the ties.[5] Thus in 1894 John Edward ('Jack') Sutton, a checkweighman at Bradford colliery, and secretary of the Bradford branch of the Lancashire and Cheshire Miners' Federation, became the victorious ILP candidate in the Bradford Ward municipal election.[6] In 1910 he went

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1 Ibid., 27 January 1894

2 C, 27 October 1894

3 Ibid., 22 February 1896

4 See ILP News, April 1897-November 1898 passim

5 R. Challinor, op. cit., pp. 218-20

6 C, 14 July, 27 October, 10 November 1894. See also biography of Sutton in Manchester, December 1900

on to become Labour MP for Manchester East.[1]

Bradford was one of the last branches to merge itself into the central organisation, finally complying in August 1899.[2] When the branch system revived, East Manchester ILP was again centred upon that district, in Grey Mare Lane. As was the case in so many other constituencies, success in one area generated a desire to extend the organisation. Thus when Bradford ILP held its half-yearly members' meeting in January 1905, the Labour Leader reported: 'The branch management is excellent, Comrade Barton being specially commended for his work as secretary. A vigorous propaganda is to be undertaken this summer, and attention paid to the adjoining district of Ardwick'.[3] M.T. Simm, the organiser, appealed to Central Branch for assistance in establishing a branch in Ardwick.[4] Why the request was made to Central, as opposed to just Bradford, is uncertain, but Central Branch did have considerable experience in opening up new districts. Arrangements were left to the indefatigable Sam Robinson, who reported that the Temperance Hall, Pin Mill Brow, had been booked for 10 March, and that Councillor Tom Foc had promised to attend. It was decided to advertise the meeting in the non-Labour press, the Evening News and Chronicle on Thursday 9th.[5] Of course the Clarion also urged its readers to attend.[6] Despite bad weather, the meeting proceeded as

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1 J. Vincent and M. Stenton, op. cit., p. 165

2 Manchester, August 1899

3 LL, 3 February 1905

4 Manchester Central Branch ILP, Minutes of meeting 21 February 1905

5 Manchester Central Branch ILP, Minutes of meeting, 7 March 1905. It should be added that Central Branch also provided financial aid (see LL, 17 March 1905).

6 C, 10 March 1905

planned, and the new branch was duly launched, with George Fernley of 49 Marsland St. as secretary.[1]

Thereafter the development of the Ardwick branch proved relatively uneventful. The first summer of outdoor propaganda[2] was disturbed only by the police, when the Chief Constable prohibited Richard Robinson, prospective municipal candidate for the ward, from addressing the electors on 'Unemployment'.[3] A sequel to the Boggart Hole Clough saga[4] was prevented when negotiations with the police proved successful, and the meetings resumed at their old pitch in Blucher Street.[5] The branch received little publicity in the Labour press, but it appears to have continued to function until at least 1908, with occasional success stories, such as the 'record meeting' held by J. Seddon in July 1906, at which 15 new members were recruited.[6] 1908 witnessed an attempt to extend and improve the ward's organisation. A meeting was duly arranged to consider the matter at Birchall's Cafe, 35 Downing Street, on 8 March.[7] On 1 May the plans were announced, for two meetings to be held every Sunday morning during the summer season; at Lime Bank St. (Ashton Old Road) and Blucher St. (Hyde Road).[8]

After 1908 however, the Ardwick branch appears to fade from the

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1 LL, 17 March 1905

2 For examples, see ibid., 12, 19 May 1905

3 Ibid., 8 September 1905

4 See below, pp.469-79.

5 LL, 22 September 1905

6 LL, 6 July 1906

7 Ibid., 6 March 1908

8 Ibid., 1 May 1908

notice of the press. Much the same pattern of development seems to have occured in Bradford. In March 1905 the Grey Mare Lane club was reported to be 'improving on its good record'.[1] During the summer regular Sunday morning meetings were held on Christ Church Croft,[2] and once the 'outdoor season' had ended, enthusiasm turned to the municipal elections. J. Billam's subsequent victory at the polls meant that Bradford Ward now had complete Labour representation on the City Council, with a total of three members.[3] In November 1908 an attempt was made to form a new ILP branch, in St. Luke's Ward. Interested persons were asked to communicate with T. Cunningham of 4 Powell Street, Clayton.[4] There is, however, no evidence of such a branch having been established.

When, however, one looks beyond the somewhat scanty information concerning meetings and club activities, there is a hint of conflict within the East Manchester ILP. Since the issues were associated with the SDF, the Clarion, and the 1906 Parliamentary Election, they must be considered in this light, at a later stage.[5] Basically, they surrounded attempts by a group of Clarion socialists and SDF members to run Clarion Vanner, Fred Bramley, as Parliamentary candidate in opposition to A.J. Balfour. The local LRC as well as the NAC soon raised objections and Bramley was never officially adopted. East Manchester was, in 1910, to run a successful parliamentary fight with the blessing of the Labour Party.[6]

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1 Ibid., 24 March 1905

2 Ibid., 14 July 1905

3 Ibid., 3, 10 November 1905

4 Ibid., 27 November 1908

5 See below, pp.392-4

6 For correspondence relating to Jack Sutton's signature of the LRC constitution, see Letter: Asst. Sec. LP to J. Sutton, 27 May 1908, and Sutton to Middleton, 4 June 1908 (LP/CAN/06, Labour Party Archives)

But the controversy concerning Bramley suggests a reason for the apparent lack of enthusiasm within the ILP after 1906. East, like North-East Manchester, contained a large potential Labour vote, and was therefore subject to attention from, and intervention by, the LRC. In such areas the conflict between socialism and labourism, between proselytising the socialist message at every possible opportunity, and calculating the best means of achieving a viable Parliamentary Labour Party, became most apparent. The internal conflicts which beset the ILP in general during the 1908-11 period must be detailed elsewhere. In the case of East Manchester two pointers to the dissensions may be cited here. In December 1910, Jack Sutton, commenting on his Parliamentary election victory, remarked that '... some clean-cut (?) Socialists thought they were helping the cause by writing Socialism across their ballot papers'.[1] Less than a year later, A. Graham representing East Manchester, attended the Socialist Unity Conference.[2] Again, as in the case of the NE constituency, one suspects, but cannot prove, a certain re-alignment after the formation of the BSP. In November 1913, a report on the stamp system showed 'Manchester East' (presumably Bradford) as having a membership of 128 on the books, with 110 'good on the books', and 122 stamps sold. Ardwick, with 32 members who were also 'good on the books' has sold 16 stamps.[3] The possibility is that many of these adherents were 'Labourists' as opposed to socialists. The political differences between Sutton and the ILP became most apparent shortly afterwards, when the outbreak of war found Sutton taking an active part in the

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1 LL, 9 December 1910

2 BSP, Official Report of the Socialist Unity Conference ... p. 25

3 LL, 27 November 1913

recruiting campaign.[1]

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5. South-West Manchester

The smallest of the Manchester constituencies, South-West consisted of the two wards of St. George's and Medlock Street, which together formed the township of Hulme (see Map 12). According to the Manchester Guardian:

> It is densely peopled throughout, mainly with an artisan population, who find occupation in the numerous factories of various kinds in the district. Among these may be mentioned the Corporation Gasworks at Gaythorn, the large ironworks of Messrs. Galloway in Chester Road, and the wharves of the Bridgewater Navigation. The southern portion of the Division is occupied by seemingly endless rows of more highly rented but still small houses, inhabited by clerks, warehousmen, etc.[2]

The local ILP was at a later date to take considerable pride in its development during the 1890s. When, in 1905, Frank Lawler, 'a one-time comrade and municipal candidate' came to speak, the Labour Leader reminisced: 'Lawler's appearance and form reminded one of the old South-West Manchester Branch, one of the first in the borough, with its 700 odd financial members.'[3] The exact date at which such a membership figure was achieved has not, however, been recorded.

In February 1893 the branch opened its Labour Hall in Elvington Street, Medlock Street, Hulme.[4] Its secretary was Thomas Yardley, who

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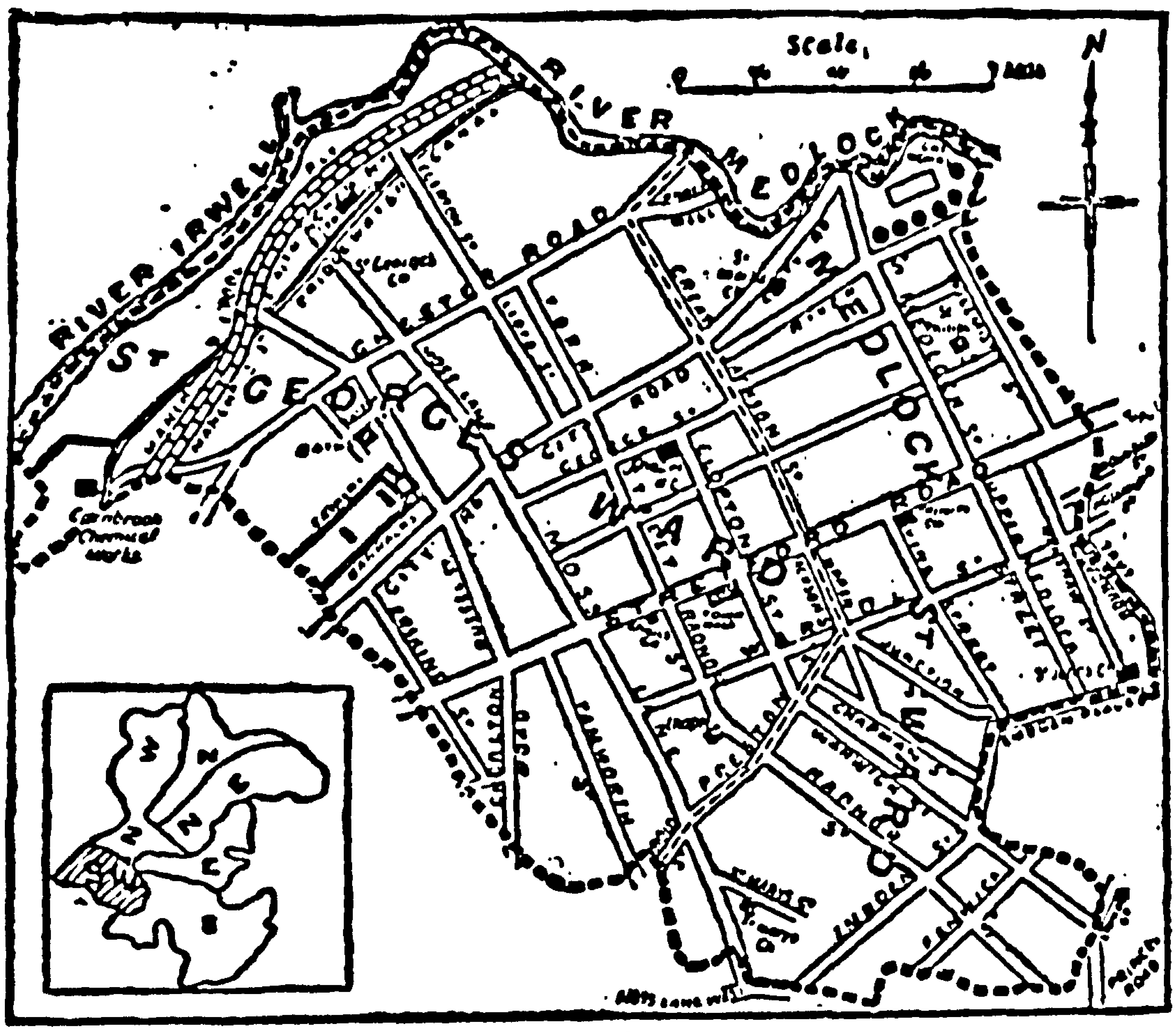
1 Labour Party. Report on Manchester East by S. Higenbotham, 22 April 1915 (Labour Party Archives)

2 MG, 20 November 1885

3 LL, 7 July 1905

4 WT, 18 February 1893

SOUTH-WEST MANCHESTER.



Map 12

(from Manchester Guardian, 19 November 1885)

had been involved in the formation of the Manchester and Salford party.[1] Weekly lectures were held on Wednesday evenings and, in the spring and summer, open air meetings took place on Sunday mornings, on the spare ground in Chorlton Road.[2] Membership expanded rapidly. On 1 July 1893 the Workman's Times stated that the branch had made 95 new members in the past 6 months.[3] On the last Sunday of that month, 12 new members joined,[4] and on 19 August the branch claimed to be making new members almost daily.[5] It was at this stage that a general members' meeting decided to split the division into two ward groups, St. George's and Medlock Street.[6]

St. George's branch, located at 69 Upper Moss Lane,[7] entered upon a somewhat troubled existence. In June 1894 its outdoor meetings were banned by the police, in spite of the fact that the pitch, at the centre of Moss Lane and Stretford Road, was also used by the Salvation Army. A request was promptly made to the Manchester and Salford EC, to prepare a petition on the subject in the name of the whole district.[8] Within a matter of months, however, St. George's branch itself was engaged in a dispute with the Manchester and Salford party, which culminated in its dissolution and abolition by the NAC. That dispute has been detailed above, and it is necessary here only to remark that the group eventually became

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1 Ibid., 20 May 1893.

2 Ibid., 18 February, 1 July 1893

3 Ibid., 1 July 1893

4 Ibid., 5 August 1893

5 Ibid., 19 August 1893

6 C, 26 August 1893. The groups appear to have commenced their separate existence in January 1894. (See WT, 6 January 1894)

7 LL, 15 September 1894

8 Ibid., 30 June 1894

an SDF branch, although 'loyal' members were asked to join Medlock St. branch.[1]

The Medlock Street branch, which was now referred to at times simply as 'SW Manchester' or 'Hulme', was not particularly large; in January 1896 it had taken up only 25 membership certificates, while the 1897 Conference Report gave its membership as 30.[2] The branch was, however, extremely active. Apart from election work, there was a full programme of meetings. Thus by October 1895 a complete syllabus had been prepared for Sunday afternoon lectures in the Elvington Street hall. During that winter general meetings took place on the first and third Tuesdays in each month, while Sundays witnessed a favourite propaganda tactic: open debates with opponents.[3] In July 1897 there took place what was described as the first Socialist meeting in Alexandra Park, attended by an audience of some 500.[4] Propaganda schemes were ambitious; in the Clarion of 16 July 1898 the branch announced:

> 50 members wanted at 8 pm next Tuesday, to hear scheme propounded, whereby £10 can be raised for branch funds, and socialism introduced to 2,500 homes.[5]

Certainly the money was needed, for at the time Elvington Street Hall was in the process of re-decoration. It was duly re-opened after 'beautification' with a concert on 30 July, and was acclaimed as 'the prettiest Socialist hall in the kingdom'.[6] Julia Dawson, writing 'Our Woman's

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1 See above, pp.307-9 and below, p.721

2 LL, 25 January 1896; ILP, Annual Conference Report, 1897

3 LL, 5 October, 9 November 1895

4 C, 3 July 1897

5 Ibid., 16 July 1898

6 Ibid., 30 July, 6 August 1898

Letter' in the Clarion, devoted much of her column space to a picture and description of the much-admired premises.[1]

This apparent enthusiasm for, and activity on behalf of, the ILP in the district should not, however, suggest that the party reigned supreme as the only socialist organisation. Hulme had been perhaps the most important Manchester centre for the SDF and Socialist League long before the foundation of the ILP. During the '90s there existed an apparently independent Hulme Socialist Society, which in September 1897 was entering upon its 7th municipal election contest.[2] The following autumn, it ran James Johnstone JP as candidate for St. George's Ward, in conjunction with the Liberal Association Ward Committee.[3] The SDF was also very much in evidence, and apparently on good terms with the local ILP; in 1898 South Manchester branch of the SDF held its meetings at the ILP's rooms in Elvington Street.[4] With the abolition of the ILP's local branch system, links between its South West Manchester members and other socialists in their neighbourhood appear to have become even closer. The Clarion on 21 January 1899 bore a notice for a meeting to be held on the following day at the 'Manchester (SW) United Socialist Club, Elvington St., Hulme'. The speaker, E.J. Hart, and his subject, 'The Fourth Clause, a necessity',[5] indicate ILP participation. It seems likely that in part the Club reflected a desire to keep up the Elvington Street Hall in the absence of branch funds. However socialist co-operation

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1 Ibid., 17 September 1898

2 Ibid., 25 September 1897

3 LL, 15 October 1898

4 C, 22 January 1898

5 Ibid., 21 January 1899

in the area also entered the field of political action. In March 1899 the socialist organisations of Hulme, namely the ILP, SDF and Hulme Socialist Society, were running candidates for Chorlton Union Guardians Election. Again Elvington Street Hall was the centre of activity.[1] When in November 1901 a meeting was held at Upper Moss Lane School, Hulme, to consider the question of re-forming the old ILP branch in SW Manchester, a resolution was passed: 'That this meeting considers it in the interests of socialist unity to join the existing branch of the SDF in Hulme, and appeals to all unattached Socialists in the district to follow that course.'[2]

Such an arrangement was hardly likely to be acceptable for long to the Manchester and Salford party. In March 1905 Sam Robinson of Central Branch, together with John Lee, began to arrange some meetings in SW Manchester, with the intention of forming a branch. On the 26th of that month, Robinson made an appeal in the Clarion: 'Will old ILPers living in SW Manchester please show, by their presence at Welcomb Street, next Sunday morning, that they desire the re-inauguration of a branch in the South-West'.[3] The outcome can hardly have been inspiring, for on 7 April, 'W.F.B.', in an article entitled 'Manchester meetings' recorded that he had visited Welcomb Street in SW Manchester, 'where the comrades are making an effort to resuscitate an old ILP Branch, and where Mr. Hardy, Mr. Lee, and others did valiant service, under somewhat discouraging

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1 LL, 18 March 1899

2 J, 30 November 1901

3 Manchester Central Branch ILP, Minutes of meeting 21 March 1905; LL, 24 March 1905

conditions'.[1] The branch did, however, materialise eventually, and on 20 April the organiser M.T. Simm, had a short meeting with members.[2] Years later, in an article for the Labour Leader entitled 'The Adventures of a Branch', 'M.T.S.' (Simm) reminisced:

> My mind went back to the time when Sam Robinson and I opened a branch in Jackson-street, Manchester, in a room lighted with two farthing candles, one chair for the use of speaker and chairman, and a plank resting on two barrels for the accommodation of the audience. All went well that night, until John Lee, coming in late, planted himself on the end of the plank with such force as to spread the audience on the floor.[3]

For a couple of years the new SW Manchester branch seems to have been quite active. During that first summer, open-air meetings were commenced at the corner of Welcomb Street and Stretford Road, later being transferred to the corner of Medlock Street 'on account of the noise'.[4] By August the branch was holding three meetings a week, and reporting with pride the extent of its literature sales.[5] It also took part in the campaign to compel the Education Committee, via the Guardians, to undertake the feeding of school children.[6] Indoor meetings continued through the winter,[7] and the following March ambitious plans were formulated for future activities. The branch was about to take club premises, and in June it was proposed to have a 'missionary month' with 'a sort of revival meeting'; at least one meeting was to be held in the SW division

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1 LL, 7 April 1905

2 Ibid., 28 April 1905

3 Ibid., 26 December 1912

4 Ibid., 23 June 1905

5 Ibid., 23 June, 25 August 1905

6 Ibid., 25 August 1905

7 Ibid., 24 November 1905

every night for a month.[1]

After 1907 however, the columns of the ILP press seem devoid of any mention of SW Manchester branch. Yet in January 1906, the constituency had witnessed a Labour victory, with G.D. Kelley achieving a majority of more than a thousand votes over his Conservative opponent.[2] Again the ILP appears to have suffered a marked decline in a strong Labour area after the Labour Party emerged upon the scene. It was not until March 1909 that a new SW Manchester ILP branch was formed.[3] A programme of open air meetings was embarked upon, with speakers every Sunday and Wednesday at 11 am and 8 pm, at Upper Medlock Street, Stretford Road.[4] During the winter the branch confined itself to monthly meetings at 32 Higher Chatham Street, Hulme, until a general election again loomed on the horizon. J. McLachlan fought the seat on behalf of the ILP in January 1910; his Unionist and Liberal opponents each polled over 3,000 votes, while McLachlan received only 1,218.[5] Details of the campaign must properly belong elsewhere, however it should be noted that six months later, McLachlan emerged as one of the party's critics, as an author of the 'Green Manifesto'. The December 1910 General Election was fought without Labour intervention.[6] However Socialism in SW Manchester was by no

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1 Ibid., 6 April 1906

2 J. Vincent and M. Stenton, op. cit., p. 166

3 LL, 5 March 1909

4 Ibid., 25 June 1909

5 J. Vincent and M. Stenton, op. cit., p. 166

6 See below, pp. 379-80 It might be added here that the January 1910 election campaign in South West Manchester left in its wake considerable financial problems, which were sufficiently grave to merit an inquiry in September 1910 (see ILP, NAC Minutes 1910-12 'Report to Manchester and Salford ILP Council of its Special Sub-Committee appointed to inquire into the Financial Arrangements of the SW Manchester Election of 1910 and the nature and extent of the party's present obligations with respect to same').

means dead. The SDF/SDP branch survived to merge itself into the BSP, and it seems likely that its members were there augmented by erstwhile ILPers.[1]

Some ILPers at least continued to entertain hopes of resurrecting a SW Manchester branch. In June 1914 the Labour Leader published a letter from M.J.M. Court of 99 Tamworth Street, Hulme. An old Longsight member, at present unattached, he wanted to start up a branch in Hulme.[2] Even had war not intervened, one doubts his chances of success. Again the pattern has emerged of an ILP branch in a strong 'Labour' area, which virtually collapsed after the election of a Labour MP. Although it has not in this chapter been the intention to consider the development of the SDF/SDP, it must be emphasised that in Hulme it had been established long before the ILP, and as discontent within the ILP grew, presented a viable alternative for many local socialists.

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6. South Manchester

The South Manchester constituency (see Map 13), was both the largest in the city, and most predominantly middle class. As the Manchester Guardian recorded:

> It contains hardly any factories or great works, and the population is largely composed, not of workpeople, but of clerks, shopkeepers, and others of the middle class. A number of doctors and other professional men have their houses in this

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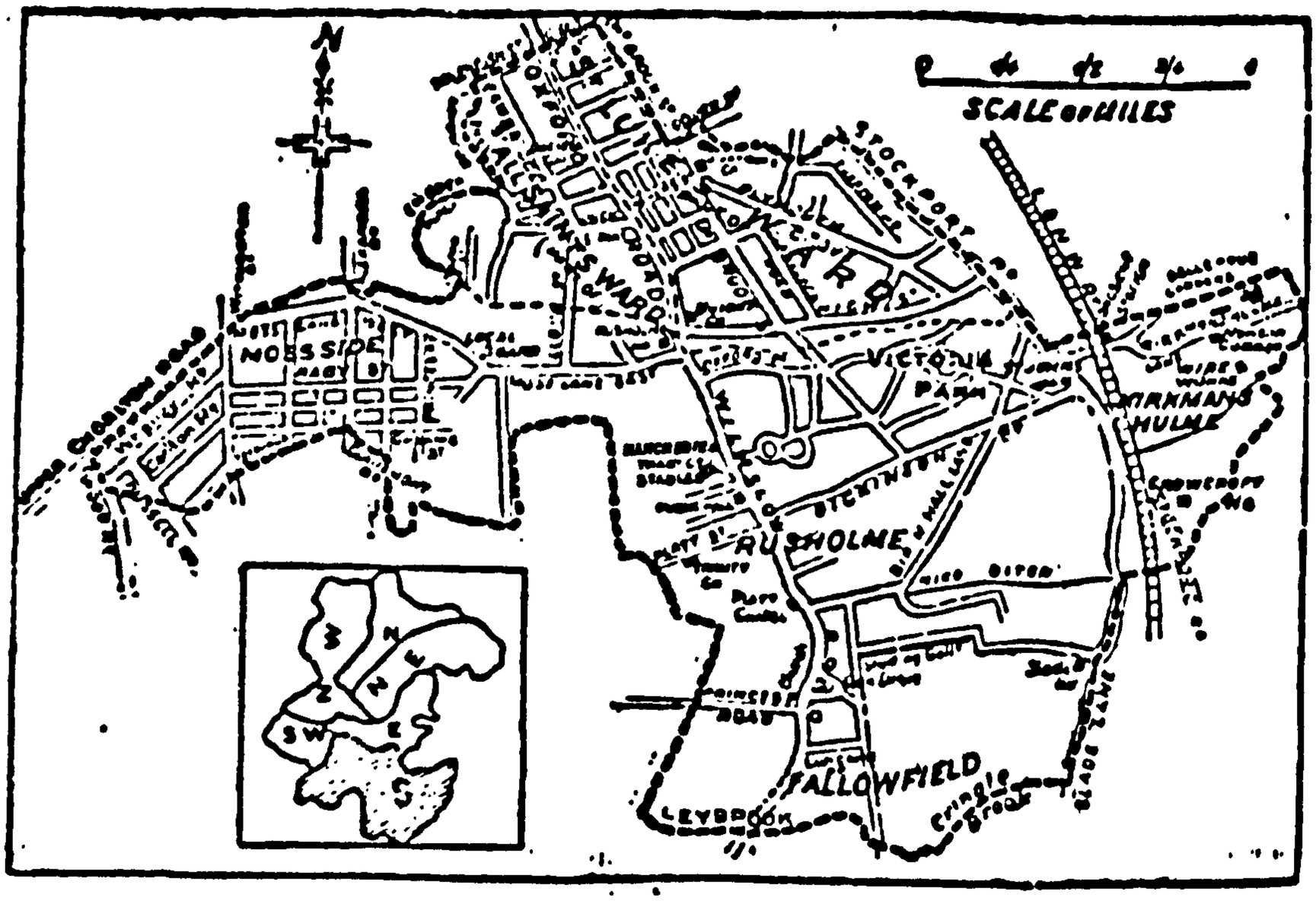
1 Manchester Central Branch ILP, Minutes of branch meeting, 2 July 1912, recorded that correspondence was dealt with concerning SW branch. After an (unrecorded) explanation by the secretary, 5 members of the late SW branch' who were in attendance, were duly placed upon the Central Branch membership roll.

2 LL, 11 June 1914

SOUTH MANCHESTER.



Map 13

(from Manchester Guardian, 18 November 1885)

> Division, and the professional element is further reinforced by the presence of the great educational establishment of Owens College. None of the Divisions of Manchester contains so large a number of highly-rented houses as this.[1]

Despite its geographical size, the constituency was far from being an amorphous mass. To the north, the portions of All Saints' and St. Luke's wards included in the constituency comprised the major part of the township of Chorlton-on-Medlock; Moss Side formed a distinct Local Government District;[2] while the nucleus of the central and southern portion was undoubtedly Rusholme. The eastern section of the map, namely the district labelled 'Kirkmanshulme', and divided by both the railway and main Stockport Road from the rest of the constituency, is somewhat misleading for the purpose of this survey. 'Kirkmanshulme' formed part of Longsight, which in 1890 was formed into a municipal ward.[3] No doubt for the simple reason of communications, Longsight was always a distinct area for the ILP, and the development of its branch will be considered separately.

The original South Manchester ILP began life in rooms at 27 Nelson Street, Chorlton-on-Medlock. It was never a particularly large branch; in 1896 its membership was about 30, and in 1898, 36.[4] On the other hand, a branch which included Dr. Pankhurst[5] among its members could hardly remain totally insignificant. However the size of the branch, and undoubtedly the nature of the area, did make accommodation difficult to

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1 MG, 18 November 1885

2 Ibid., 18 November 1885

3 See Kelly's Map of Manchester and Salford 1903

4 LL, 25 January 1896; ILP, Annual Conference Report, 1898

5 ILP, Annual Conference Reports, 1895, 1896. On both occasions, Dr. Pankhurst was the South Manchester delegate.

acquire. In June 1894, the branch was still unable to find proper premises for a club; 'But there are some trusty stalwarts and steady stickers among its members, who are resolved not to go to heaven till they get premises'.[1] Without its own premises, the branch was obliged to hold meetings at various locations; including Dow Street (off Brunswick Street) and Turner's Dancing Academy (which was over 198 and 200 Brunswick Street).[2] During 1896 and '96, South Manchester ILP regularly met at the Labour Church's premises, 53A Booth Street East (off Oxford Road).[3] It was the Labour Church's removal which enabled the ILP finally to achieve its ambition of a club, and on 4 September 1897, a social and dance was duly held to celebrate the opening.[4]

Thus established, the South Manchester branch prepared for electoral work. In February 1898 it determined to run two candidates (including Miss Evans of the Labour Church) for the Chorlton-on-Medlock Guardians election. Assistance was duly requested, not only from ILP branches, but also from the SDF and other socialist bodies in the neighbourhood, as well as unattached socialists.[5] It was unfortunate for South Manchester that, so soon after becoming firmly established, it lost its status as a branch. Centralisation appears, however, to have had less effect upon activities in this area than elsewhere. The club was retained, and a systematic scheme of organisation and propaganda adopted. Captains were placed in charge of each local district, it being their duty to see

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1 LL, 2 June 1894

2 C, 9 February, 16 March 1895

3 For example, C, 29 February 1896, 21 August 1897

4 Ibid., 21, 28 August 1897

5 Ibid., 26 February 1898

that each member therein received his monthly copies of Manchester and ILP News, and had an opportunity to pay subscriptions as they became due. This last factor was important not only from the point of view of finance, but also that of maintaining membership. Apparently some members, whose payments were heavily in arrears, had simply left the ILP through their inability, or unwillingness, to pay off their debts.[1]

The branch was re-formed in October 1901, and by the 1902 Conference had a membership of 35.[2] In March 1902 it was holding Sunday lectures at the club, and business meetings on alternative Wednesdays at 62 Nelson Street, Oxford Road. The latter address was in fact the home of Mrs. Pankhurst,[3] who must have been a member of the South Manchester branch before she joined the newly-formed Central Branch in August 1902.[4] One suspects, however, that she was not particularly active in the day-to-day affairs of the branch; once in Central Branch she attended meetings irregularly, usually when a delegate was to be elected, or an important resolution considered.[5]

How long the branch actually survived is, however, uncertain. In June 1909 the ILP was again trying to establish a branch in Chorlton-on-Medlock, holding open-air meetings every Sunday, and support was duly requested through the columns of the Labour Leader. Other meetings were fixed for Wednesdays, but the pitch had not yet been secured.[6] The effect of such efforts cannot have been long-lived, for in March 1911 came the

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1 Manchester, April 1901

2 ILP News, October 1909; ILP Annual Conference Report, 1902

3 C, 21 March 1902; Manchester Central Branch ILP. Branch list February 1905. See also E.S. Pankhurst, op. cit., p. 153. It appears that the family moved to this address from Victoria Park shortly after the death of Dr. Pankhurst.

4 Manchester Central Branch ILP, Minutes of meeting 19 August 1902

5 Ibid., 19 August 1902-17 September 1907 passim. (Mrs. Pankhurst's resignation from the ILP was considered at this last meeting.)

6 LL, 25 June 1909

announcement that 15 Socialists had decided to form a branch in the district. The organisers of this attempt all lived outside Chorlton-on-Medlock, being T. Cunningham of Clayton, W. Lowth of Ardwick, and the ILP organiser, J.H. Standring, then resident of 30 Blackfriars St., Manchester.[1] Whether their efforts did achieve any results is uncertain, but by August 1912 the whole South Manchester constituency (apart from Longsight) appears to have been devoid of ILP organisation.

While Chorlton-on-Medlock witnessed the somewhat frustrating fortunes of an ILP branch, nearby Moss Side underwent a development common among the residential and suburban areas, namely the formation of a Socialist Society, as opposed to simply an ILP. Formed in November 1895, the society appears to have been independent of both the major socialist parties. Announcing its regular Tuesday meetings at the Duke of Edinburgh Hall, the secretary, J.B. Elliott, requested that 'all socialist friends should attend and join'.[2] 1899 found the society running Sunday afternoon lectures at Moss Side Liberal Club, Alexandra Road.[3] What happened to this organisation thereafter remains a mystery; in December 1900 it was still thriving, and preparing to hold a social and dance;[4] by November of the following year it would appear to have dissolved. Then on 16 November 1901, the Clarion carried a request to Socialists of Hulme and Moss Side to attend a meeting at the SDF Rooms, at 3 Fownall Street, Upper Medlock Street, adding that 'This is the only public hall in the district devoted to Socialism'. The speakers billed for the following Sunday were 'Comrade Elliott' and

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1 Ibid., 10 March 1911

2 Ibid., 11 January 1896

3 Ibid., 4 March 1899

4 Ibid., 1 December 1900

J.B. Hudson (also of the ILP).[1] It would seem possible that the former independent Socialist Society had dissolved into the SDF. That organisation's branch in SW Manchester, which also extended its activities into Moss Side,[2] was one of the strongest and most active in the whole district, and an obvious attraction to the erstwhile 'unattached' socialists.

But although there appears to be no evidence of a distinct ILP branch having existed in Moss Side in the '90s, in September 1903 the Labour Leader announced that, as a result of open-air meetings inaugurated by McLachlan of Central Branch, an ILP branch was again established in Moss Side. Members' meetings were to be held every Tuesday evening at 146 Moss Lane East, the home of the Secretary, Florence Archer. Open-air lectures were also planned for Wednesday evenings in Alexandra Park.[3] The venue of business meetings was, however, quickly changed when rooms were secured at the Lancashire College Settlement, in Embden Street, Hulme. The college also had available a large hall suitable for public meetings, which the ILP promptly booked to accommodate lectures by Bruce Glasier, Philip Snowden, and various local speakers.[4] The hall in question appears to have been the Palmerston Hall in Greame Street.[5]

Moss Side branch would then seem to have led an uninterrupted existence until 1911. It ran propaganda activities, both alone and in conjunction with the Clarion Scouts, and ran the first Socialist municipal

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1 Ibid., 16 November 1901

2 See below, p.724

3 LL, 12 September 1903

4 Ibid., 17 October 1903. Glasier spoke on 'The Politics of the General Election' on 22 October (see ibid., 17, 31 October 1903)

5 Ibid., 31 October 1903

candidate in Moss Side West.[1] When the 'Green Manifesto' brought to the surface the conflicting views within the ILP, Moss Side readily affirmed 'That this branch support comrades Hall, McLachlan, Belcher, and Douthwaite in the attitude taken up by them in their pamphlet in relation to the Labour Party'.[2] From such a standpoint, it was but a short step to the Caxton Hall and the Socialist Unity Conference, where Moss Side ILP was represented by W. Thursby.[3] When the BSP held its first Annual Conference the following May, a Moss Side branch had been established,[4] but there was no local ILP.

One of the notable features of the ILP's development after the turn of the century was its attempt to organise in the residential suburbs, as opposed to simply the predominantly working class industrial districts. In accordance with this policy, the Clarion Scouts undertook some propaganda work in Rusholme during August 1905, and their efforts were followed by the establishment of a new ILP branch. Councillor McLachlan, Harry Green and R.C. Wallhead (then best known as the organiser of the Scouts) all took part in the meetings, which were initially held on Friday, Saturday and Monday evenings. Plans were made to continue with Sunday evening meetings at Monmouth Street corner, Wilmslow Road.[5]

The 1906 'open-air season' was entered upon with similar enthusiasm. On 23 March 1906, the Labour Leader announced a forthcoming 'Raid on

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1 Ibid., 16 September 1904; C, 22 September 1905

2 LL, 16 September 1910

3 BSP, Official Report of the Socialist Unity Conference ... P. 25

4 BSP, The First Annual Conference of the British Socialist Party ... Official Report ... p. 63

5 LL, 8 September 1906

Rusholme', adding that 'a few determined Socialists intend that this Tory Ward shall be won for Socialism'.[1] Plans were later formulated for a 'monster meeting' on 26 April, and 'vigorous summer propaganda'.[2] Members met at the Coffee Tavern on the corner of Moor Street and Wilmslow Road, but the classification of their advertisements in the Clarion as 'Socialist', as opposed to 'ILP',[3] and the speakers themselves, led one to question how long the branch was destined to 'toe the party line'. Thus in April 1906 Arthur Woollerton, then of the SDF, was lecturing on 'The Scientific Basis of Socialism'.[4] By November 1910 the ILP branch had seceded, presumably on the advice of the Socialist Representation Committee, to form an independent Socialist Society. In 1911 Rusholme Socialist Society was among the bodies represented at the Socialist Unity Conference.[5] In August 1912 the Labour Leader was therefore obliged to carry an appeal, to all readers who lived in Moss Side, Brook's Bar and Rusholme, 'or in the South Manchester Parliamentary area proper', and who were willing to form a branch of the ILP, to communicate with F. Williams. It added that 'Former members of the late Moss Side branch might also observe'.[6] But if much of the South Manchester constituency was now devoid of any ILP organisation, the BSP was, in 1912, well entrenched, with branches in both Moss Side and Rusholme.[7] South Manchester had rejected not socialism, but the policies of the ILP.

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1 Ibid., 23 March 1906

2 Ibid., 6 April 1906

3 C, 6 April 1906

4 Ibid., 6 April 1906. J, 17 March 1900 printed a letter from Woollerton, who was trying to form an SDF branch in Bradford (E. Manchester)

5 C, 4 November 1910; BSP Official Report of the Socialist Unity Conference p. 28

6 LL, 8 August 1912

7 BSP, The First Annual Conference of the British Socialist Party ... Official Report ... pp. 62-3

The one district of South Manchester where the ILP did manage to thrive was Longsight. Bordering onto the Gorton constituency, it was both more working class in composition, and more industrialised, than was the remainder of South Manchester. Maps of the district reveal the Gorebrook Iron Works, dye works, tarpaulin and chemical works, while the London and North Western Railway had its goods depot and carriage works within the ward. The environment was however alleviated by the presence of Belle Vue Gardens, as well as Crowcroft Park. From the eastern boundary of Longsight, a stretch of open countryside separated it from the built-up area of Gorton.[1]

A preliminary meeting for the formation of a Longsight ILP branch was convened in December 1894, and was duly attended by about 50 people. The gathering resolved to form a branch and to hold a propaganda and business meeting in a larger hall, namely Gaskill Hall. With an initial membership of 40, the branch prepared a programme of open-air meetings 'every favourable Sunday', and hoped to establish a club.[2] The branch was, in March 1895, meeting at 24 Grey Street,[3] and two years later moved to new premises at 16 South Street.[4] During the last months of the original branch system, Longsight claimed a membership of 33, and usually paid its fees on time to Head Office (which in ILP circles was no mean feat.)[5]

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1 O.S. Lancashire Sheet Civ 16 (1908); Kelly's 'Map of the City of Manchester' in Slater's Directory, 1915

2 LL, 22 December 1894

3 C, 2 March 1895

4 Ibid., 13 March 1897

5 ILP News, April 1897-July 1898. Membership figures were recorded for May-July 1898

But what had once been a viable branch did not re-form spontaneously at the close of the centralisation era. It was only after a visit by Fred Bramley and the Clarion Van, in May 1905, that a local ILP meeting was held, and plans made to open a branch 'at an early date'.[1] W.J. Butters was elected as secretary, being thereby obliged to resign his membership of Central Branch.[2] Within the space of a year, Butters' work for the ILP had proved the principal reason for his losing his job. Obliged now to return home to Nottingham, he resigned from the branch, leaving C.T. Capper to succeed him as secretary.[3] The branch which Butters had helped to form had, by March 1906, achieved a membership of over 60,[4] and in that year's municipal elections ran Richard McDonald as its candidate.[5] His poll of 792, as against 1,098 for the Conservative, indicates considerable support for the ILP in the area.[6]

In the summer of 1907, Longsight could boast not only a strong ILP branch, but also a Socialist Sunday School, with about 60 members, and a Labour Church. All three now moved into a new hall, at the corner of Richmond Grove East and New Bank Street.[7] ILP membership continued to increase, both during the summer season of outdoor propaganda, and

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1 LL, 2, 9 June 1905; 12 October 1906

2 Ibid., 2 June 1905; Manchester Central Branch ILP, Minutes of meeting 20 June 1905

3 LL, 16 March 1906

4 C, 25 March 1906 stated that Butters was mainly responsible for the branch's formation

5 Ibid., 12 October 1906

6 LL, 9 November 1906

7 C, 30 August, 6 September 1907

after the municipal elections, which nevertheless found T.A. Flynn, the ILP and LRC candidate, at the bottom of the poll in a three-cornered fight.[1] Enthusiasm for the ILP seems to have been encouraged not by election success, but by the range of activities provided for members; apart from the Labour Church on Sunday evenings, and afternoon Sunday school, there was a discussion class on Wednesday evenings, and a choral society, commenced by Miss Wardley, met to practice on Fridays.[2] In the autumn of 1909 activities removed to the new Socialist Hall on Stockport Road, a former Liberal Club, which was opened by J.R. Clynes on 25 September.[3]

The apparently untroubled existence of the branch was not, however, an indication of unquestioning acceptance of party policy. When the 'Green Manifesto' was published, Longsight ILPers were among its most vociferous supporters. Resolutions were passed, calling for a referendum on party policy among the branches, and deploring the criticism of the Manifesto voiced by the party Chairman and the Labour Leader.[4] They also called upon ILP members in the Commons 'to keep the policy of independence well to the fore ...'.[5] Having taken part in the campaign for a minimum wage, in the summer of 1911,[6] the branch then sent two delegates to the Socialist Unity Conference.[7] However there did not emerge any BSP branch

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1 LL, 13 September, 6 December 1907

2 Ibid., 6 December 1907

3 C, 24 September 1909

4 LL, 26 August 1910

5 Ibid., 2 September 1910

6 Ibid., 7 July 1911

7 BSP, Official Report of the Socialist Unity Conference ... p. 25

in the area,[1] and although it is possible that some individual members changed their allegiance, Longsight ILP continued its regular weekly meetings. By November 1913 it had 112 members on its books, although admittedly only 56 were 'good on the books', and the sale of stamps amounted to 50.[2]

Clearly there was a great disparity between the development of the ILP in Longsight, and in the other districts of the South Manchester constituency. In part this may be attributed to the social composition of the area. Not only was the main South Manchester area more distinctly middle class, but it was also drawn into the orbit of Manchester Central Branch. For 'white collar' workers employed in the city centre, Central Branch was not only convenient, but also enabled anyone who so desired, to conceal his political activities from his neighbours. Not surprisingly, some of the most prominent figures in the Central Branch, the entire Pankhurst family, Sam and Annot Robinson, as well as many of the rank and file members, hailed from South Manchester.[3] Longsight branch undoubtedly benefitted from the acquisition of a hall, and the organisation of a cohesive social life for its members. This latter factor must be considered in more detail at a later stage, but it may be suggested here that the ILP social activities would tend to appeal more to the skilled upper-working class and clerical workers, rather than to the professional element, who already enjoyed far wider social horizons. One other factor may be suggested as contributing towards the stability

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1 BSP, The First Annual Conference of the British Socialist Party ... Official Report, pp. 62-3 passim

2 LL, 27 November 1913

3 Manchester Central Branch ILP, Minutes Vol. 1 Members' names and addresses. Revised list 8 February 1905

of Longsight ILP; it did not attract the attention of the LRC. The benefits received by the ILP upon the formation of the LRC have always received great emphasis. Indeed if one considers electoral victories as the hallmark of success, then the claim can hardly be disputed. But it must be remembered that a section of the ILP considered socialist propaganda, rather than the establishment of a Parliamentary Labour Party, as the primary mission of the party. It may be claimed that the ILP as a cohesive propagandist organisation was in many localities adversely affected by the intervention of the LRC.

From the above survey of the Manchester branches, other indications regarding the development of the ILP may also be suggested. Particularly in the areas where it pre-dated the ILP, the SDF did offer a real challenge as a rival attraction for socialists. Thus in part the local development of the ILP must be considered in the light of the SDF/SDP's activities. Moreover the BSP, originating as it did in Manchester, brought about a major realignment within the ranks of the local socialist body. It may tentatively be suggested that the ILP members who remained within that party after 1912 showed stronger inclinations towards 'labourism', than towards the crusading socialism of the '90s. Having raised such issues in relation to the survey of Manchester branches, it remains to consider the extent to which they held sway in Salford, the traditional stronghold of the SDF, and in Gorton, which at an early date appeared likely to yield a Labour victory at the polls.

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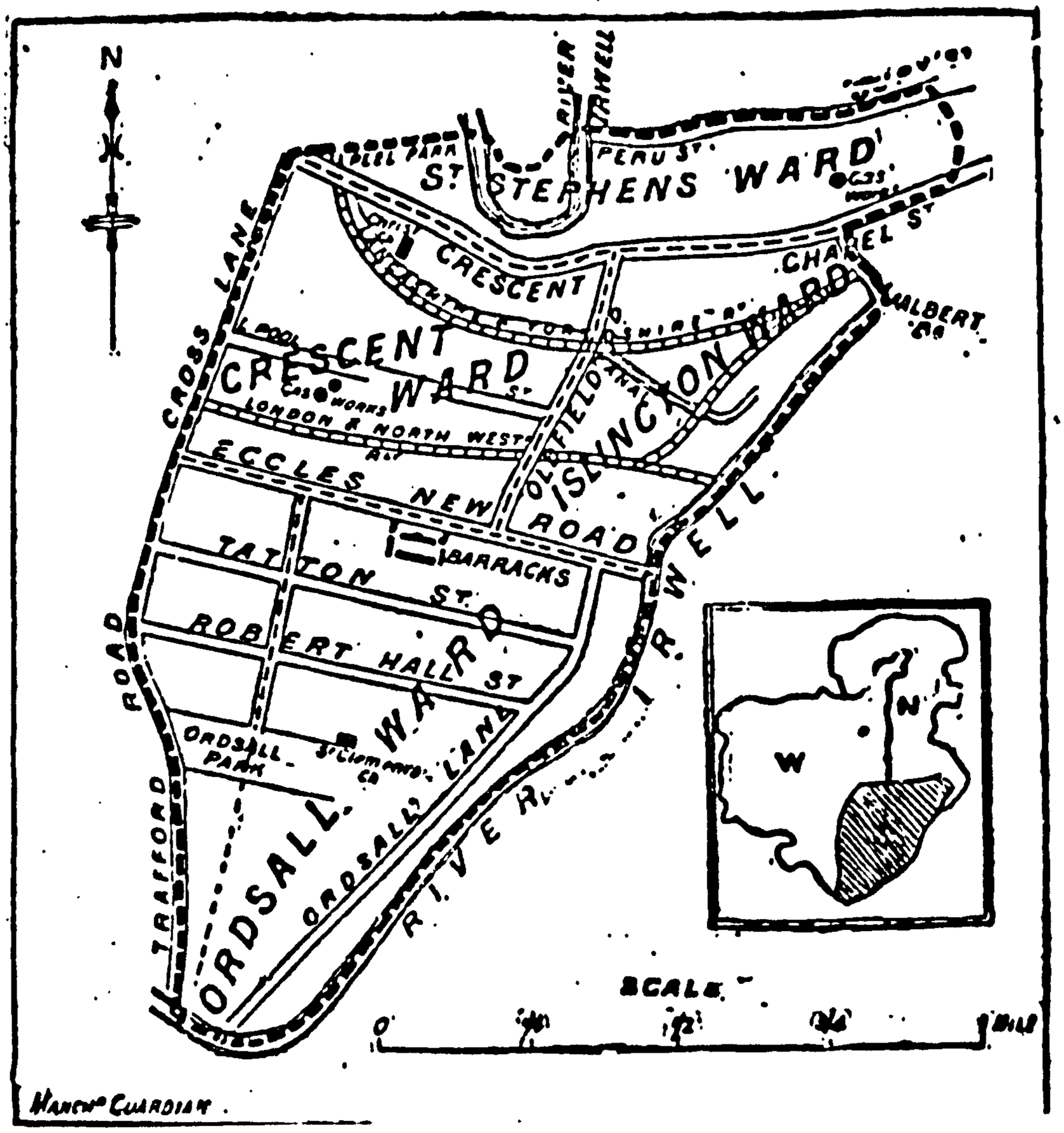
7. South Salford

South Salford (shown on Map 14), perhaps more than any other single



Map 14

(from Manchester Guardian, 24 November 1885)

district, has already received considerable attention. Not only did it represent the old town centre, and a densely populated industrial area, but it was also the centre of the pre-ILP socialist movement. With regard to this constituency, there was posed the major question; could the ILP ever take root and survive in an area already propagandised and organised under the auspices of the SDF?

The ILP branch began its existence in premises over the Co-op. Stores in Chapel Street. By the summer of 1893 it had acquired rooms at 4, West Craven Street, and was engaged in holding open-air meetings on Sunday mornings opposite Fritz's Circus, on Regent Road.[1] Despite such assurances in the press as 'This division is going steadily' and 'Hitherto this branch has been overlooked on account of its modesty',[2] it is clear that South Salford was rather weaker than its counterparts elsewhere. On 22 September 1895 it was even necessary to hold a special members' meeting, 'to consider the present position of the branch'.[3] Having on this occasion 'decided to remain in existence', the branch proceeded to elect officers and arrange some meetings, rather than any political disagreement.[4] Immediately after this reorganisation, there was a mood of optimism, and the claim made that the South Salford branch was likely to become one of the most active and effective in the district. Its paid-up membership in the period 1898-9 ranged from 30 to 39.[5] Achievements in practice were by no means spectacular, but at least the branch managed to retain

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1 WT, 1 July 1893

2 Ibid., 22 July 1893; C, 2 February 1895

3 LL, 21 September 1895

4 Ibid., 28 September 1895

5 C, 7 December 1895; ILP News, May 1898-June 1899 passim

its clubroom and hold meetings into the era of centralisation.[1]

By the end of 1900 South Salford members were being asked 'to waken things up a bit'. According to the appeal in the Clarion: This district has done magnificently in the past, but apathy and other causes have upset things recently, and wrought havoc in our once united ranks'.[2] It soon, however, became apparent that a separate South Salford ILP was no longer viable. A year later the branch system was revived, and West Salford ILP moved into its new Fellowship Hall. South Salford comrades were, according to the Clarion, joining this branch, 'and it is hoped that a really powerful organisation will be formed'.[3] There is, however, little sign of any ILP activity in South Salford during the pre-war era.

The reason for the short and inauspicious life of South Salford ILP is not difficult to discover. It was perhaps best expressed by C.W. Fraser, a Salford ILPer, in a letter to Justice:

> Here in Salford the ILP and SDF have co-operated on many occasions, both for political and propaganda campaigns, with most satisfactory results. The fact that there is no ILP in South Salford and no SDF in West Salford is mainly due to a disinclination to split the militant forces.
>
> We find here no widely differing attitude or characteristic, either in methods or personnel ...[4]

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8. West Salford

In the light of the unofficial division of territory between the

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1 For example, see C, 2 May 1896, 29 January 1898, 17 November 1900; LL, 12 March 1898

2 C, 8 December 1900

3 Ibid., 30 November 1901

4 J, 14 December 1901

ILP and SDF, one might expect to discover a more flourishing ILP branch in West Salford. Certainly the district (see Map 15) appeared a likely recruiting ground, for, despite the presence of open countryside and large villas around the Eccles New Road, the Pendleton and Charleston areas were industrialised and densely populated, with mills and engineering works predominating. Just within the northern boundary of the division was one of Messrs. Knowles and Sons' pits, while the Pendlebury and Agecroft Collieries lay just beyond.[1]

The ILP commenced its activities in club premises on the corner of Broad Street and Booth Street, Pendleton, and held regular outdoor meetings, on Sunday mornings, opposite Broad Street Baths.[2] As membership increased, larger premises were acquired, in the form of the old Reporter office, at 17 Brindle Heath Road.[3] The new clubroom, opened in July 1893, was capable of accommodating about 400 people,[4] and although it is doubtful whether many indoor gatherings were ever this large, the branch did claim audiences of 3-400 at open-air meetings held by W.J. Gerrard of Liverpool.[5] Admittedly ILP enthusiasm was at this stage enhanced as a result of the assistance being given by the branch to the locked-out colliers.[6]

In the mid-'90s, the ILP branch provided a focal point of both political and social activity. There were lectures and debates in the

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1 MG, 25 November 1885

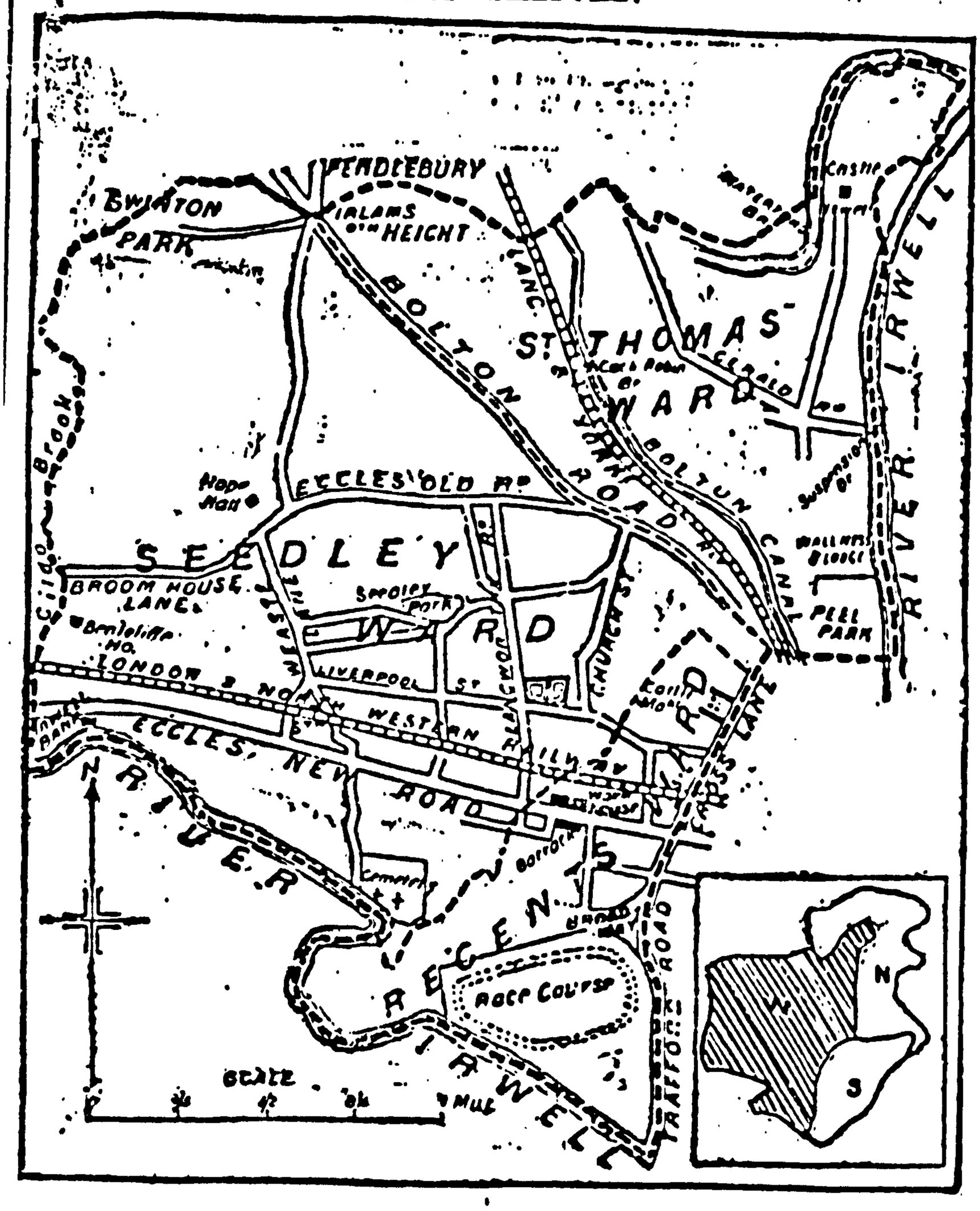
2 WT, 17 June 1893

3 C, 24 June 1893

4 Ibid., 2 September 1893

5 Ibid., 2 September 1893

WEST SALFORD.



Map 15

(from Manchester Guardian, 25 November 1885)

club room, a Glee Party, and a dramatic class,[1] as well as occasional visits from national figures. When Keir Hardie and Tom Mann were billed to speak, it was necessary to book the Pendleton Co-op. Hall.[2] Presumably in search of more spacious accommodation, the branch removed, in September 1897, to a new Central Club in Milton Place, Broad Street, Pendleton.[3] Membership had, in the late '90s, undergone a marked increase. In January 1896 the Labour Leader reported that the branch had taken up 25 (membership) certificates.[4] By May 1898 numbers had reached 112, rising to 114 in June and July, and then falling slightly to 100 in November of that year. Such figures would place West Salford as second in size only to Openshaw among the local branches. There was, however, one less optimistic note; West Salford did not, in this period of apparent success, pay any fees to Head Office.[5] In December 1898 it was busy planning a sale of work 'to pay off the debt'.[6] Whether the branch ever joined in the centralised Manchester and Salford party is uncertain; as late as June 1899 it was still submitting separate returns to Head Office. The reason behind this is likely to have been financial, for the new system did divert resources from the districts to the Manchester and Salford party. Membership appears to have been falling, in May and June 1899 the figures were 62 and 63 respectively.[7] By July 1899 the branch had also changed its headquarters to Cook Street, Pendleton.[8]

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1 LL, 14 September 1895

2 C, 4 May 1897; LL, 16 January 1897

3 C, 4 September 1897

4 LL, 25 January 1896

5 ILP News, May-November 1898

6 C, 10 December 1898

7 ILP News, May-June 1899

8 C, 15 July 1899

However the ILP in West Salford had, by no means fallen into decay. In the autumn of 1901, as well as the regular outdoor meetings, the branch received two week-long visits from James Connolly (editor of the Dublin Workers' Republic). No doubt inspired by his oratory, West Salford ILP decided to sell its billiards table, and concentrate on propaganda work.[1] The real resurrection of the branch came in 1901, when it was both augmented by the South Salford members and removed to the new Fellowship Hall, above the Beaver Works on Spring Vale Road. The formal opening ceremony was performed by Bruce Glasier, on Saturday 13 December, and followed by a tea party and social. On the following day a lecture by Philip Snowden brought in its wake seven new members. The branch was now in a 'very healthy condition'.[2] Actual membership figures however seem particularly unreliable. Annual Conference Reports cited the numbers for 1901 and 1902 as 33 and 47 respectively.[3] However in the Labour Leader on 1 February 1902, the branch stated that it now paid on 78 members to the NAC, besides which new members were being rapidly enrolled. Perhaps most reliable was the statement that 'a spirit of hopefulness prevails in the branch'.[4] One suspects that actual figures were cited as and when expedient.

The unofficial division of territory between the ILP and SDF in Salford has already been mentioned. Not surprisingly, relations between the two local parties continued to be extremely amicable. A joint

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1 The Social Reformer, September 1901; LL, 5 October 1901

2 C, 30 November, 6, 13 December 1901; LL, 21 December 1901; ILP News, December 1901, January 1902

3 ILP Annual Conference Reports, 1901, 1902

4 LL, 1 February 1902

committee was set up to arrange a further week of lectures by James Connolly, culminating in a social (at the South Salford SDF club) to mark his departure to the USA.[1] Socialist unity was regarded as eminently desirable by the West Salford ILP. After the 1902 Annual Conference it called for a referendum on the question of 'One Socialist Party', and added its objections to the manner in which the conference was conducted. According to the West Salford delegate, discussion on resolutions from the branches had been stifled, and the branch now resolved: '... that conferences on such lines are futile, if not mischievous, and should be supplemented or replaced by referendum votes of the branches'.[2]

In 1899, North Salford branch opened its Pankhurst Hall,[3] and by October 1903 the ILPers in West Salford had decided to emulate its example, and establish a 'permanent home for socialism' in the district. At this stage they proposed to dedicate it to the memory of Enid Stacy. A committee was duly formed[4] and money raising activities in aid of the building fund commenced.[5] However no appeals for shareholders appeared in the labour press, and it would appear that West Salford, rather than attempt to erect a new building as their neighbours had done, had decided to purchase on mortgage a suitable building. Hopes of removal into new premises were raised at the beginning of 1905,[6] and in March 1905 the

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1 C, 8, 15, 29 August 1902

2 Ibid., 2 May 1902

3 See below, p.421

4 LL, 31 October 1903

5 Ibid., 30 October 1904 advertised a jumble sale to be held in the Fellowship Hall, in aid of the building fund.

6 Ibid., 13 January 1905

branch headquarters was transferred to Milton Hall, Milton Place, Broad Street. On Saturday 25 March a tea party and social was held, 'to celebrate the opening of these premises as our property'. Katharine Bruce Glasier and several councillors were expected to attend.[1]

Once established in its new hall, the branch continued a stable but unremarkable existence, comprising largely of lectures and social activities. This should not, however, suggest that the conflicts within the national movement completely by-passed West Salford. In December 1909 Milton Hall became the central committee room for the parliamentary election campaign of A.A. Purcell. Purcell has been variously described as both an SDP and independent Labour candidate.[2] In fact he was a member of the SDP whose candidature was promoted by the West Salford Parliamentary Division Socialist Representation Committee. This body comprised the South and West Salford SDP branches, and Irlams-o'-th'-Heights and Weaste Societies. It was a forerunner of the Manchester District SRC, which played a leading role in the foundation of the BSP.[3] During May 1911 there was in existence a 'West Salford Socialist Electoral Committee'.[4] Its exact affiliations are uncertain, but it would appear to have been part of the movement which culminated in the BSP. West Salford ILP was undoubtedly sympathetic towards the originators of the BSP. It continued to advertise its own activities in the Clarion as late as

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1 Ibid., 17, 24 March 1905

2 J. Vincent and M. Stenton, op. cit., p. 211

3 C, 19 November 1909. See also below, pp.972-3. The ILP had in 1894 attempted to start a branch in Weaste, but to no apparent effect (see ibid., 7 July 1894)

4 Ibid., 19 May 1911

September 1911,[1] long after most ILP branches had, officially at least, veered away from the paper. The branch was also represented at the Socialist Unity Conference,[2] although there is no evidence of any merger, or major disruption, within North Salford ILP immediately afterwards. Perhaps because of the long-standing modus vivendi with the SDF/SDP, and the existence of an independent Weaste Socialist Society, individual allegiancies might be changed amicably, and with a minimum of disruption to the organisations themselves.

The beginning of 1913 found West Salford ILP in what its secretary described as a 'healthy position'. Its debts (presumably relating in part to Milton Hall) had been reduced by half over the previous year. New activities had been commenced, in the form of a Dramatic Society, Women's Circle, and Electoral Committee. On the propaganda front, the branch could boast of having held two meetings per week during the previous summer, with good audiences.[3] After a new mortgage had been arranged for the Hall, the management committee turned its attention to plans for heating, repairing and redecorating the rooms.[4] The improvements (including the installation of 'new heating apparatus') were completed by mid-August 1913, and the Hall duly re-opened with a celebration tea and social.[5] The branch celebrated its 'Coming-of-Age' with a week of open-air meetings at Langworthy Road, Seedley.[6] By the close of 1913 it

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1 Ibid., 15 September 1911. Ibid., 4 November 1910 states that Seedley Socialist Society had been formed as a result of secession from West Salford ILP, in accordance with the policy of the SRC.

2 LL, 20 February 1913

3 Ibid., 24 July 1913

4 Ibid., 21 August 1913

5 Ibid., 18 September 1913

had a membership of 66 (63 of them being 'good on the books').[1] In the course of the year it had commenced a Socialist Sunday School, reduced its mortgage with the assistance of some free loans from members, and ended with a balance of nearly £57.[2] In ILP circles, such a record was worthy of considerable admiration.

To describe a branch as successful begs the question as to what, for the ILP, constituted success. If the fundamental aim was to promote the election of Labour MPs, then clearly West Salford had fallen short of the goal. But despite differing priorities, no ILP members would dispute the value of systematic propaganda, carried out from an established base by a group of enthusiastic members. To assist recruitment, and provide cohesion among the existing membership, was also a full programme of social activities. In considering why West Salford branch had been able to achieve this measure of success, two factors spring to mind. Firstly the branch enjoyed cordial relations with the SDF/SDP, which included a virtual 'territorial agreement'. While the branch flourished in the absence of such rivalry, it was also spared the pitfall of many other thriving branches, namely domination by the LRC. Although municipal elections were fought, and fought successfully, candidates tended to be ILPers rather than 'Labour' men. Moreover the SDF usually co-operated on such occasions. In May 1903 when the ILP fought a municipal by-election in St. Thomas' Ward, the SDF assisted by supplying speakers.[3] The abandonment of Harker's parliamentary candidature,

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1 Ibid., 27 November 1913

2 Ibid., 26 February 1914

3 LL, 30 May 1903

unpopular though it was at the time,[1] at least ensured that the controversies surrounding the post-1906 Parliamentary Labour Party were one stage removed from West Salford.

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9. North Salford

The North Salford constituency (see Map 16) was divided socially, as well as geographically, by the River Irwell. South of the river, Greengate, St. Mathias and Trinity wards were highly industrialised and densely populated. To the north, villas and 'residences of the better class' predominated. Admittedly the division tended to be somewhat blurred in Lower Broughton, where from the mid-'80s an extension of cottage property drew an influx of working class inhabitants into a previously more affluent district. Some Jewish immigrants were also to be found in the Broughton Lane/Great Cheetham Street district.[2]

Perhaps more than any other ILP branch, North Salford formed a cohesive social unit, as well as a political, propagandist organisation. Even before the 1893 Bradford Conference, the branch was established in its Labour Hall at 53 Duke Street, Lower Broughton. Despite the fact that the 'old Guard' of the 'political parties' (i.e. Liberals and Tories) were seen hovering among ILP meetings, the branch added almost daily to its numbers during the summer of 1893.[3] The current coal dispute, and the presence of speakers from mining families, can only have

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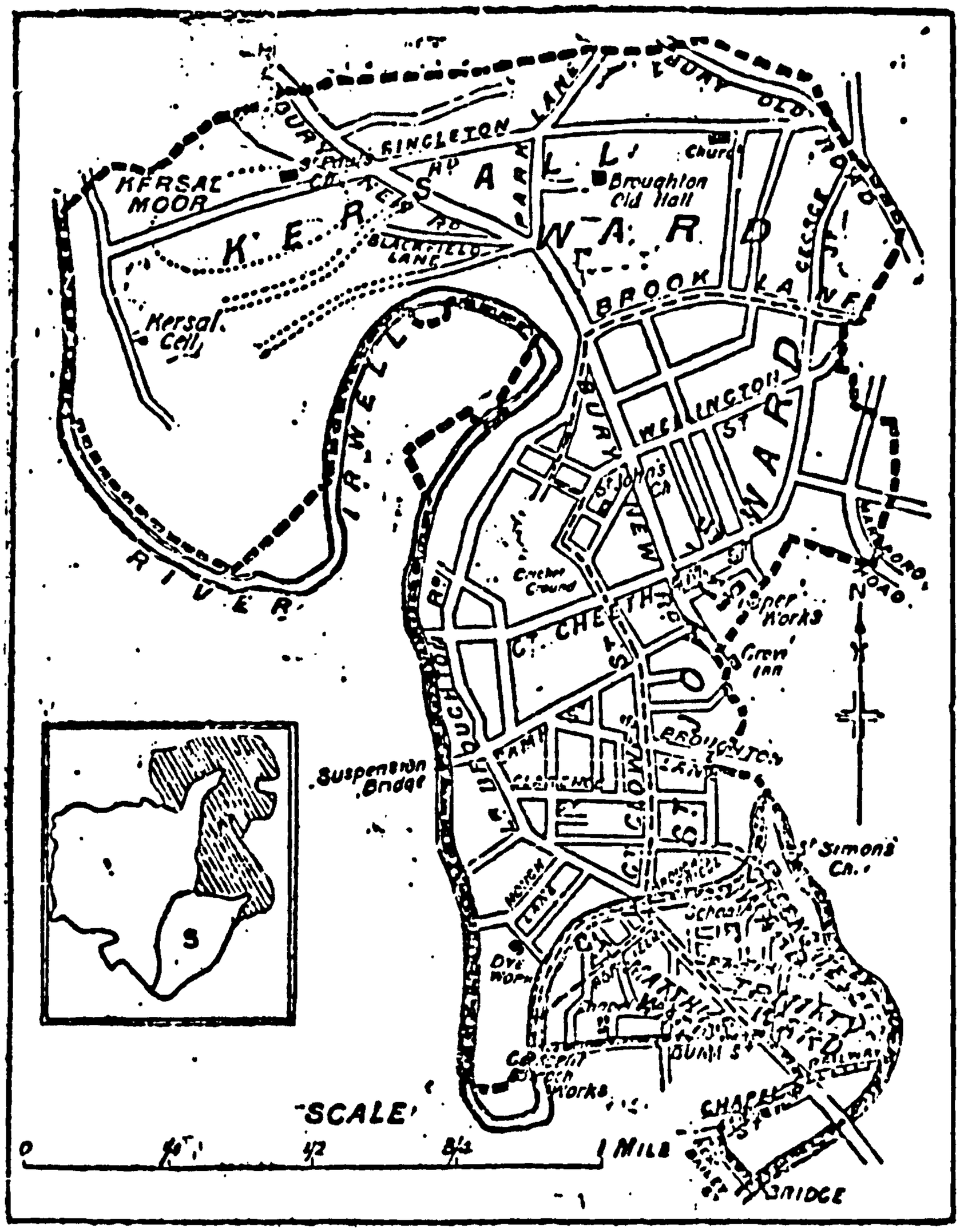
1 See below, pp. 891-3

2 MG, 23 November 1885; B. Williams, op. cit., p. 369. See Map 8, showing Jewish settlement in 1871

3 WT, 24 June, 1 July 1893

NORTH SALFORD.



Map 16

(from Manchester Guardian, 23 November 1885)

assisted the promotion of the socialist cause among the local working class.[1]

By 1895 the North Salford ILP had divided into two branches, one based on the Duke Street Hall, and the other on a hall at Marlborough Road, Hightown.[2] Information concerning the two separate branches is not forthcoming, and it is not certain whether the organisation continued in this form until 1898, or whether a merger and later re-division ensued. In June 1898 the ILP News listed a Hightown, Salford, branch with a membership of 30 (increased to 40 the following month) and a Lower Broughton branch with a membership of 40. In August 1898, however, it announced that the Lower Broughton group had dissolved, its members having joined Hightown.[3]

The ILP in North Salford was extremely active as a propagandist organisation. For example, on the first Sunday in June, 1895, meetings were planned for the Fair Ground, Hightown; opposite the Baths in Clowes Street, Broughton; the Labour Hall, Duke Street; Irwell Place, Broughton; and opposite the Broughton Hotel in Great Cheetham Street, Hightown.[4] But for most of the year, successful propaganda depended upon suitable indoor accommodation, and there was simply no public hall available for hire in the Hightown district. Thus in the spring of 1898 the Hightown socialists evolved a plan for building a Labour Hall, capable of accommodating 400 people. They had obtained land, had the plans approved by the Corporation, and were about to invite tenders for the

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1 Ibid., 29 July 1893

2 Labour Annual, 1895

3 ILP News, June-August 1898

4 C, 1 June 1895

building. At this juncture £100 was still needed before they could even commence work, and a request was therefore made to sympathisers to take up £1 shares (payable at 5/- per quarter).[1] Before the end of June, the 'Hightown Socialists' Land and Builders' Society Ltd.' had 134 shares taken up by 76 members.[2] The building when completed was expected to cost around £1,400, and the original scheme provided not only for a large hall and clubrooms, but also for three shops, which would produce revenue for a sinking fund.[3]

The memorial stone of Pankhurst Hall was laid by Councillor Fred Brocklehurst, on 26 November. By this time £800 had been raised for completing the first stage of the building. Admittedly only £200 of this represented shares taken up; £600 had come (presumably on loan) from 'a Socialist friend'. Before the second stage, which included the Hall, could even be commenced, another £500 was needed in the form of share capital, loan or mortgage.[4] At the end of March 1899 the shops, with a club room (48' x 19' 0 overhead, were completed and duly opened by Fred Brocklehurst. An evening of dancing, singing and reciting followed, while another appeal was made for shareholders, to provide the funds still needed if the large hall was to be completed that year.[5]

However the first stage of the building left the society in debt, and local ILPers therefore devoted themselves to money-raising schemes,

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1 Ibid., 23 April 1898

2 Ibid., 25 June 1898

3 Ibid., 3 December 1898. Mrs. Plant, who became involved in Pankhurst Hall activities in 1907, has no recollection of any shops (Mrs. Plant, Tape, 6 August 1976)

4 C, 19 November, 3 December 1898; LL, 10 December 1898

5 LL, 1 April 1899; C, 1 April 1899

such as the sale of work planned by the women's section of the branch, for the end of September 1899.[1] The centralisation of the Manchester and Salford party thus came at a very bad time for the North Salford members. Although the 'Hightown Socialists' Land and Builders' Society Ltd.', duly registered under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act,[2] was legally distinct from the ILP, in practice they must have had the bulk of their membership in common. Debts resulting from the building were thus a major commitment for the Hightown members, and a scheme which channelled the bulk of available resources into the central party was hardly to be welcomed. Initially North Salford joined in the centralisation scheme, only to decide to withdraw in October 1900. On being notified of this decision, the Manchester and Salford EC pointed out that it would not be considered as binding upon any Hightown members who had not attended the meeting concerned, but on the whole the central party tended to be sympathetic towards the recalcitrant branch. The EC thus stated that 'whilst fully alive to the difficulties of the North Salford comrades, it regretted the decision, and appealed to all members who felt they could afford to continue their membership of the central party'.[3]

North Salford members also wrote to the NAC, asking to be reinstated as a separate branch, whereupon they were reminded of the gravity of such a step, and advised to consult with the Manchester and Salford branch.[4]

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1 C, 19 August 1899

2 LL, 1 April 1899

3 Manchester, October 1900

4 ILP, NAC Minute Book 4. Minutes of NAC meeting 29 October 1900. The order in which North Salford informed the Manchester and Salford party and the NAC of its decision is uncertain. As the previous NAC meeting had been held on 28 July, the date on which the matter was raised provides no clue.

Apparently in December 1900, the Manchester and Salford EC sent a deputation to N. Salford, but found the members still adamant on the question of forming a separate branch. It therefore decided to inform the NAC that the resignations were accepted, 'but that we cannot, in the face of our constitution, agree to the formation of a separate branch in N. Salford'.[1]

Recognised locally or not, North Salford was listed as a 'New Branch' in the ILP News of March 1901.[2] That the split had been the result of financial, rather than political, considerations, was emphasised by the Secretary, Thomas Barlass, in his district report for Manchester. Having emphasised that the branch had '... such a responsibility as the Pankhurst Hall on their hands', he continued: 'When taking over the Large Hall we were compelled to reorganise as a separate branch, to enable us to concentrate our energies, both financial and otherwise, for the success of the undertaking. Our expenses are over £2 a week'. However the branch had had good meetings, with equally good collections, since the opening of Pankhurst Hall, and was not, at the time, in debt. What it now needed were a few more financial members, to make it independent of outside support, and a few more shareholders in the buildings.[3] When North Salford ILP held its quarterly meeting on 15 April 1901, it was able to record a total of 16 new members enrolled during the quarter. The income had been just over £78, and the expenditure just over £71, which included £15 'paid on account of a large billiard table'. Future plans included contesting Albert Park Ward in the forthcoming municipal

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1 Manchester, January 1901

2 ILP News, March 1901

3 Manchester, January 1901

elections, to commence a Socialist Sunday School as soon as possible, and to hold a bazaar to raise funds to heat and decorate the large hall.[1]

The foundation of Pankhurst Hall has been described at length simply because it was the major factor in the life of the branch. Actual membership of North Salford ILP was not outstandingly large,[2] but the activities at Pankhurst Hall drew into contact with the ILP many people who sympathised with the movement, even if they did not always go on to become financial members. The social life of the ILP must be considered at a later stage, but perhaps the best indication as to the activities of a local branch is provided by the lecture syllabus for 1908-9 (see Illustration 3). Needless to say, possession of a hall did not detract from the outdoor propaganda, which was a regular event in spring and summer. Popular locations were Lower Broughton Road, and the open ground behind the Duke of York Hotel, on Marlborough Road, Hightown.

North Salford branch appears to have been unaffected by the controversies which raged in the post-1906 ILP. It may even be argued that the branch was too bound up in the social life of Pankhurst Hall. Admittedly the branch did send two delegates to the Socialist Unity Conference,[3] but there is no evidence that this represented, or led to, any major division in the ranks. At the beginning of 1914 North Salford ILP agreed to purchase Pankhurst Hall for £900 (which was practically equivalent to the transfer of the assets and liabilities of Hightown Socialists' Land and Builders'

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1 LL, 4 May 1901

2 ILP, Annual Conference Report 1902 gives the membership as 51. LL, 27 November 1913 lists 50 members on the books, of whom 40 were 'good on the books'. 40 stamps had been sold.

3 BSP, Official Report of the Socialist Unity Conference ... p. 25

Illustration 34

North Salford I.L.P.

Copies of the Constitution Form of the Branch, and Membership Cards containing the Constitution, etc., of the North Salford I.L.P. and the National I.L.P., may be obtained from the General Secretary, at the address given below.

The Secretary will also be pleased to forward on application a complete List of the I.L.P. Branches in the Manchester District, for the convenience of those who prefer to join district branches.

If you want to join the North Salford I.L.P., or desire to know more of the literature, objects, or methods of the Party, please communicate with the General Secretary—

WALTER PLANT,
67a, Great Ancoats St.,
Manchester.

NORTH SALFORD I.L.P.

Pankhurst Hall, St. James' Road, Hightown.

WINTER LECTURES,

OCTOBER, 1908 to APRIL, 1909.
Every SUNDAY Evening at 7 o'clock. Admission Free.

Pankhurst Hall Socialist Sunday School, EVERY SUNDAY, at 2-30. Send your Children.

Adult Class, EVERY SUNDAY AFTERNOON, 2-45. Everybody Welcome.

Elementary Singing Class, EVERY WEDNESDAY EVENING, 8 o'clock.

Pankhurst Hall Dramatic Society. REHEARSALS EVERY THURSDAY, 8 o'clock.

Pankhurst Hall Social Club, OPEN EVERY EVENING, 7 till 11 p.m. Billiards, Games, Etc.

Branch Membership 7d. per month for Men, 4d. per month for Women.

North Salford Operatic Society. REHEARSALS EVERY TUESDAY, 8 o'clock.

"To the Clear-headed, Whole-hearted Citizen: This is your town; it is no mean one; help us to mend it.—It is the only one we have."

Illustration 3B

Notice!

THE NORTH SALFORD BRANCH OF THE INDEPENDENT LABOUR PARTY have much pleasure in bringing before your notice the Meetings held every Sunday evening at the Pankhurst Hall.

We are of the opinion that many people would avail themselves of the opportunity to attend our Meetings if they were better acquainted with the list of excellent speakers we lay before you. It is with this object that we submit this leaflet, fully believing that we shall receive a large share of your support.

We have no fears when we tell you that each and all of our speakers will lay before you a careful statement of any subject they take up, which are always questions of social interest and vital importance to every worker in this country. If you have any objection to the line of thought taken up by any speaker, you have the liberty at the close of the lecture to ask any question bearing upon the point at issue. We have no hesitation in saying that your question will be treated courteously and we hope answered to your satisfaction.

We are firmly of the belief that a new spirit of interest in social questions is dominating the minds of the people, and we hope that every individual in North Salford will make the district one of the best and foremost in all matters pertaining to the well-being of the people.

The subject dealt with by the list of speakers is announced every Friday in the *Clarion* and *Labour Leader*.

Syllabus of Lectures, 1908.

Oct.	11	Miss LIZZIE GLASIER (Sunday School Anniversary).
„	18	LEONARD HALL (Birmingham).
„	25	HARRY DAWSON LARGE (Scottish Clarion Van).
Nov.	1	RUSSELL SMART.
„	8	J. O'GRADY, M.P. (East Leeds).
„	15	DR. GARRETT.
„	22	COUN. B. RILEY (Huddersfield).
„	29	Miss L. WILLIAMSON, B.A.
Dec.	6	OPENSHAW CLARION CHOIR.
„	13	PETE CURRAN, M.P. (Jarrow).
„	20	J. R. FERREY.
„	27	MUSICAL EVENING.

Nov. 27 (Friday) Miss MARY MACARTHUR (Editor of *The Woman Worker*).

Syllabus of Lectures, 1909.

Jan.	3	T. F. RICHARDS, M.P. (Wolverhampton).
„	10	Mrs. ROBINSON, L.L.D.
„	17	Rev. F. R. SWANN (London).
„	24	HARRY GREEN.
„	31	W. WALKER, J.P. (Belfast).
Feb.	7	FRANK ROSE (*Clarion*).
„	14	FRED COATES.
„	21	R. C. WALLHEAD (*Labour Leader*).
„	28	MANCH'R CLARION CHOIR.
Mar.	7	J. PARKER, M.P. (Halifax).
„	14	COUN. PICKLES (Huddersfield).
„	21	RUSSELL WILLIAMS (Huddersfield).
„	28	COUN. T. R. MARR, M.A.
Apl.	4	RICHARD ROBINSON (Bowden).
„	11	W. C. ANDERSON (London).

Society Ltd. to the branch).[1] In March the actual transfer was marked by a social evening, attended by Keir Hardie, a conference, and an evening meeting at which the principal speaker was J.R. Clynes. Some of Clynes' remarks are particularly relevant to a study of the local ILP branches, for he 'opened with a whimsical reference to the early days when the ILP "had nothing to do but talk". They were absolutely free agents, they had no quarrels and internal difficulties were scarcely known. Happy was the party which had not yet reached the point of having responsibilities thrust upon it'.[2] Undoubtedly the stability of North Salford ILP lay in its provision of a cohesive social life for its members. In a branch which concentrated more heavily upon business meetings and propaganda lectures, the 'quarrels and internal difficulties' could all too easily bring about a permanent rift. In North Salford, where Pankhurst Hall became the focus of social life for many whole families, friends could easily agree to differ.

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10. Gorton

Gorton is, unfortunately, yet another area in which the boundaries present an initial complication. While the districts of Gorton, St. Mark's and Openshaw (as shown on Map 5) were for parliamentary purposes included in the Gorton division of South-East Lancashire, Openshaw and St. Mark's were designated as municipal wards within the city of Manchester from 1890, and in 1909 Gorton itself was also included. The following section will therefore deal with the parliamentary division of Gorton which,

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1 LL, 22 January 1914

2 Ibid., 2 April 1914

despite the peculiarities of its boundaries, formed a distinctive social and economic unit. It was essentially an area of heavy engineering, perhaps its best-known source of employment being 'Gorton Tank', where the locomotives of the Great Central Railway were made and repaired, (and where the future general secretary of the CPGB began his apprenticeship as a boilermaker in 1905).[1] The large proportion of settled, highly-skilled and comparatively well-paid working men was extremely promising for the ILP.

Gorton ILP began its existence in 1892, centred upon Thompson Street Hall in Gorton Lane, West Gorton. In 1893 it duly removed to the Independent Labour Institute at Ainsworth Street, Clowes Street.[2] Before the national ILP was even formed, in November 1892, Gorton branch ran a municipal election candidate in St. Mark's Ward. Only 20 comrades were resident in the ward, and of these only 10 had votes, but nevertheless the ILP polled over 300 votes as against the 800 received by the victorious Liberal.[3] It was not, therefore, surprising that by July 1893 the Gorton ILP could boast a membership of 'just over 200', ... 'but we have a vast amount of latent public sympathy'. Although progress was described as 'sure, though slow', it appears to have been more satisfactory than in many other divisions. Public meetings were held at the Institute every Tuesday evening; open-air meetings on Wednesdays in various parts of the division, and on Sundays there were two open-air gatherings, at Openshaw and Gorton. On 2 July the Openshaw meeting drew an audience of 400.[4]

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1 J. Mahon, Harry Pollitt. A Biography (1976) p. 12

2 C, 1 July 1893

3 WT, 8 July 1893

4 Ibid., 1, 8 July 1893

Moreover, at the beginning of August the branch was able to report that 25 members had enrolled within the space of three days.[1]

By the summer of 1893 there had emerged a separate ward group in Openshaw. The development of what became a distinct branch must be considered separately, after tracing the history of the Gorton branch itself, as well as the general election campaigns common to the whole division. The ILP's progress in the area was noted by the NAC at a very early stage. In May 1894 the General Secretary's Report advised that:

> Lancashire must keep a keen eye on Gorton Division, where such excellent propaganda and educational work has already been done by the ILP.[2]

In the course of that summer, the matter of running an ILP parliamentary candidate in the division was broached. The Labour Leader commented that it 'should be a good seat for a good man ... A well-known trade unionist preferred'. Apparently G.N. Barnes of the ASE had been approached, but was not able to stand.[3] Only a couple of weeks after the statement had been made, Dr. Pankhurst joined the ILP, and in May 1895 he became prospective Parliamentary candidate for Gorton.[4] For the local ILPers, Pankhurst's defeat by a Conservative was a severe disappointment. As a well-known public figure in Manchester, he might have hoped for support from a wider spectrum of the electorate than was usually sympathetic towards the ILP. It was widely believed that the election had been lost

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1 Ibid., 12 August 1893

2 Ibid., 5 May 1894

3 Ibid., 1 September 1894

4 MG, 20 September 1894; Manchester Evening News, 31 May 1895. For details of the campaign, comprising press cuttings and election literature, see Pankhurst Collection. Cuttings Collection Vol. 4, 'Gorton Election'.

because of the local Liberals' concerted action in voting Tory or abstaining, simply to keep Pankhurst out. However, the latter's poll of 4,261,[1] without any Liberal assistance, did reveal a vast pool of sympathy for the ILP.

Outside election work, much of the ILP activity concentrated upon St. Mark's Ward, rather than the more easterly area of Gorton proper. In part this was obviously due to the location of the Ainsworth Street Labour Institute in St. Mark's Ward. Here in 1895 were held 'Merrie England' discussion classes on Tuesday evenings, and socials on Saturday nights. During the summer there were open-air meetings on Sundays, morning and afternoon, near the Library at Gorton Brook, while the winter season was marked by Friday evening lectures at the Institute. Since the notices detailing these activities were headed 'Gorton-St. Mark's Ward',[2] it is not altogether certain whether there was any other ILP organisation in Gorton at this time. In April 1897 however, the ILP News listed a 'Gorton (E.)' branch, as well as a 'St. Mark's' (town unspecified)[3] and these names appeared in successive issues until the summer of 1898. It would seem that from one original group, based on St. Mark's, the local ILP had simply divided up its forces. The most obvious reason would seem to be sheer size; in 1897 the Annual Conference Report gave the membership figures for Gorton as 223; the following year it was 156.[4] Between May and July 1898, Gorton East had a membership of

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1 J. Vincent and M. Stenton, op. cit., p. 142, provides the result, but classified Pankhurst as 'GL' - Gladstonian Liberal. He was, however, an official ILP candidate (see ILP, NAC, Minute Book 1893-1895. Minutes of NAC meeting, 4 July 1895).

2 LL, 31 August, 21 September 1895; 8 February 1896

3 ILP News, April 1897

4 ILP, Annual Conference Report, 1897, 1898

29, while St. Mark's rose from 50 to 70.[1] Clearly numbers, though still larger than in many other local districts, were continually falling. Thus in August 1898 the East Gorton group dissolved, with its members joining either Openshaw or St. Mark's. From this time until the new centralisation scheme came into operation, St. Mark's had a steady membership of 100.[2]

Openshaw branch had, by the beginning of 1894, established itself in a Labour Club at 134 South Street, behind the Drovers' Inn.[3] Apart from the usual propaganda activities, it also undertook a census of unemployed, in March 1895.[4] Moreover Openshaw was prosperous; the balance sheet produced in February 1897 showed the branch 'to be worth £56. 2s. 1½d. thanks to the tea business'.[5]

The general support for, and financial position of, the ILP in the Gorton constituency led, not surprisingly, to plans for building its own hall. On 24 April 1897 the Clarion bore an advertisement for 'The Gorton Socialists' Land and Builders' Society Ltd.', which had been formed for this purpose. A plot of land, in 'a good position', and capable of holding a 40' x 70' building, had already been secured in Openshaw. Shares of £1 each (limited to 10 per person) were now available. By way of explanation for its nationwide advertisement, the Society added:

> Gorton is probably the strongest Socialist Division

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1 ILP News, May-July 1898

2 Ibid., August-November 1898

3 C, 17 February 1894

4 LL, 2 March 1895

5 Ibid., 13 February 1897

> in the country, and is well able, on its own responsibility, to carry out this undertaking, but this would require time, which might be utilized to greater advantage it the hall could be erected within a short period.

Application forms were available from the secretary at the ILP Club, Old Lane, Higher Openshaw.[1] By the end of 1898 the land had been paid for, and a balance retained towards the cost of the building itself. A bazaar was planned for November 1899, by which time it was hoped that the society would have a sum in the region of £300 in hand towards the hall.[2]

The general prosperity of the ILP in Openshaw has already been remarked upon. Obviously it was to a great extent a reflection of the social composition of the area. Skilled tradesmen in the engineering industry were very much the 'aristocracy of labour', and while their working conditions were by no means enviable, they were in a better position to maintain regular contributions to the ILP than were most of the Manchester working class. Moreover, Openshaw branch did set out to make money on a bigger scale than was attempted in many other districts. Thus its balance sheet for 1899 reveals the standard sources of income, i.e. literature and the Sunday lectures, to have raised barely more than £5 between them. On the other hand the tea account had passed the £46 mark, while 'Saturday socials' had brought in nearly £24.[3]

When the centralisation scheme for Manchester and Salford ILP was evolved, the St. Mark's branch duly merged itself into the district party. However the Labour Leader on 3 December 1898 carried a short announcement; that Openshaw branch had seceded from the Manchester

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1 C, 24 April 1897

2 Ibid., 31 December 1898

3 LL, 18 February 1899

district, as a result of disagreement over the new scheme of organisation.[1] Whether there was any connection is uncertain, but Openshaw branch also appears to have had its differences with the national party. In July 1900 the members asked for members of the NAC to visit them, to give reasons why they should remain affiliated. The NAC decided that Bruce Glasier should go, but the Minutes provide no record of his actions. Moreover by September 1901, Openshaw ILP had withdrawn from the Trades Council, which it had taken the initiative in forming. The NAC decided 'not to take action at present', but again no further information is given.[2]

The picture is thus one of the increasing alienation of Openshaw ILP from both the Manchester district and national parties, but the reasons are not immediately obvious. No such problems appear to have emerged in Gorton, and for this reason one suspects that the issues did not concern the 1900 General Election, where concerted action between the two branches was involved. Initially the most obvious source of friction seems likely to be financial. Openshaw was, for an ILP branch, comparatively affluent. For example, the ILP News of March 1900 stated that:

> Few branches can rival Openshaw, in financial matters at any rate, the income of the society during the past twelve months having been £275. 4s. 0¾d. and the expenditure £231. 0. 4½d. The assets are valued at £186. 9s. 6¾d. and apparently the branch has no liabilities. We notice that it has made handsome profits on the Tea, Socials, Literature, Mineral Waters, and Sunday Evening Lectures, while the General Fund has been drawn on to make up deficiencies on the outdoor lectures and municipal elections. Altogether Openshaw ILP is a most

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1 Ibid., 3 December 1898

2 ILP, NAC Minute Book 4, 1899-1904. Minutes of NAC Meetings Central Hall, Derby, 28 July 1900 and Neilson's Hotel, Glasgow, 16-17 September 1901

prosperous organisation.

Balance sheets for 1900 and 1901 both showed assets exceeding liabilities by more than £300.[1] In an organisation where local autonomy was so jealously guarded, it is not difficult to imagine that Openshaw members might resent any increased diversion of their resources to the district or national parties. On the other hand, there do emerge signs of fundamental political differences between the Openshaw branch and the 'official' ILP. Thus in April 1900 the Labour Leader announced that Openshaw had sent a resolution to the Conference at Glasgow, proposing the total abolition of the NAC, but had failed to send a delegate to move their proposal.[2] Two years later, the branch was calling for a referendum on the question of 'one Socialist Party'.[3] One suspects a strong Clarion influence; a suspicion which is strengthened when later events, leading to the emergence of the Openshaw Socialist Society, are considered.

Throughout its period of isolation, and into the early years of the twentieth century, Openshaw continued to be one of the largest ILP branches in the area. Membership was claimed as being 162 in 1899 (although fees to Head Office were paid on 97). After reaching a peak of 198 in 1900, numbers then declined, to 111 in 1901 and 97 in 1902. In 1905 the affiliation fees of £3. 12s 2d., were the highest in the district.[4] Whatever the causes of dissension may have been, Openshaw was, until 1906, functioning as a normal ILP branch. Branch meetings, open-air propaganda, winter lectures in the Whitworth Halls, not to

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1 ILP News, March 1900; C, 9 and 16 March 1901, 1 March 1902

2 LL, 21 April 1900

3 C, 2 May 1902

4 ILP, Annual Conference Reports, 1899-1902, 1905

mention money-raising social activities, all made up the normal pattern of life.[1] Thus in January 1905, the Clarion was able to announce: 'Openshaw has been at the front for the last twelve years. If a full complement of Socialists representing them on the Manchester City Council as Labour Councillors be sufficient, then they have achieved success'. The branch's major need was still for a new hall. Land and money to the value of over £500 were now waiting to be utilised, but further funds were needed before building could be commenced. Hopes were entertained that the new club might be an accomplished fact within two years.[2]

Attempts to trace the development of the ILP in Openshaw are then complicated by the emergence on the political scene of the Openshaw Socialist Society. The exact date at which this body was founded, and even the reasons behind the move, continue to remain something of a mystery. J. Mahon, in his biography of the Society's most famous member, Harry Pollitt, described the development of the society, but has been unable to trace the circumstances surrounding its formation.[3] His dating of the first mention of Openshaw Socialist Society as October 1906 is, however, rather late. In the Clarion of 28 September a notice bearing that organisation's title stated that it had ended its series of outdoor lectures, and intended to continue indoors during the winter. Moreover, the Socialist Hall, in Old Lane, Openshaw, had been redecorated.[4]

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1 LL, 15 July 1899; 22 July, 26 October 1901; 23 September 1904; 6, 20 January 1905; ILP News, September 1899

2 C, 27 January 1905

3 See J. Mahon, op. cit., pp. 497-501. Appendix 2 'Openshaw Socialist Society 1906-1911'.

4 C, 28 September 1906

Thus initially Openshaw Socialist Society appears to have continued in the path of the erstwhile ILP branch. The payment of fees to Head Office, and representation at annual conferences over the next three years,[1] all indicate that allegiance was maintained, but what had once been a regular branch had now changed its status to that of an independent Socialist Society. These Socialist Societies were by no means uncommon in the Manchester area, especially in the suburbs, although the pattern was usually of a society functioning in isolation for a time, then affiliating to the ILP, rather than a branch changing its status. Thus Withington Socialist Society decided to become affiliated with the Manchester and Salford ILP Federation in January 1908;[2] Chorlton-cum-Hardy Socialist Society was approached by the ILP organiser in February 1905, with a view to its affiliation to the ILP.[3] If, as would seem apparent, the Openshaw Socialists had no desire to break their ties with the ILP, then why the change of name? Politically, Clarion attitudes seem apparent: the aim to attract members from a wider spectrum of socialist opinion, and a general desire for socialist unity. Certainly the newly-formed OSS appears to have been in closer contact with the SDF than was usual for ILP branches. Thus Justice of 6 October 1906, reporting the last of the outdoor lectures which had been held by the OSS, stated that Arthur Watson, 'secretary of the Lancashire District Council' presided. The ILP at this time had no Lancashire District Council, and the reference must therefore be to an SDF official.[4] It is

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1 ILP, Annual Conference Reports, 1907-1909

2 LL, 17 January 1908

3 Ibid., 10 February 1905

4 J, 6 October 1906

also likely that the Openshaw Socialists were not unmindful of more practical considerations. Plans for the Hall were going ahead, and the status of an independent socialist society would offer the prospect of a propagandist and social organisation more closely connected with the club premises, and with greater financial independence. After all, the ILP in Manchester and Salford might at any time evolve another centralisation scheme which would involve the diversion of financial resources away from the branches. Building funds were now held by a registered society formed for the purpose, but once the club was functioning, the local advantages of its management being in the hands of an independent society, rather than an ILP branch, were obvious. In considering a socialist organisation, it is all too easy to attribute every action to purely political motives. As will be described later, the social side of life, particularly the running and financing of club facilities, received a great deal of attention from the ILPers.

As a preliminary to the actual building of the hall, in Margaret Street, the Openshaw Socialists themselves undertook the excavation for the cellars.[1] The stone-laying ceremony, performed on 20 July 1907, was itself an essay in Socialist unity. Among the prominent participants were E.J. Hart (representing the Socialist Society); Dr. Garrett (officially from the Clarion Cycling Club, but also a prominent Social-Democrat); J. Blatchford (of the Clarion Vocal Union); John Hodge MP, acting as Chairman; James Howard (of the NAC), and local Labour councillors.[2] The building was actually opened in September 1908, when it became a hive of propagandist and social activity.[3]

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1 C, 8 March 1907

2 LL, 12, 26 July 1907

3 J. Mahon, op. cit., p. 498

Although J. Mahon wrote of 'Openshaw Socialist Socidty', while Harry Pollitt chronicled the same actions as being carried out by the 'Openshaw branch' of the ILP, the picture is in both instances one of growing disillusionment with the Labour alliance in Parliament. The attitude of Manchester and Salford ILPers to national events of the period must be considered elsewhere. It remains only to state here that on 10 June 1909, OSS voted, by a narrow majority, for secession from the ILP, and on 2 September of that year also withdrew from Gorton Trades Council. Its future path lay in the direction of the Manchester Socialist Representation Committee, and the BSP.[1]

After the disaffiliation of the Openshaw Socialist Society, the ILP seems to have held little sway in the district. Sam Hague attempted to form a new branch in November 1909.[2] A year later, at the municipal elections, Openshaw Socialist Society members refused to hear, or work for, the Labour candidate, George Titt. Some even spoiled their ballot papers by writing 'Socialism' across them. This so incensed Hague that he wrote to the Labour Leader: 'It seems to me about time to leave off fooling and get to business, and if the comrades (?) of the Openshaw Socialist Society are not inclined to drop their anarchist tactics, then we must have a strong ILP in Openshaw to do the work now being neglected ...'[3]

When the ILP was actually resurrected in Openshaw is unknown, but was certainly before February 1912.[4] By May of that year, it was

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1 Ibid., p. 498; H. Pollitt, op. cit., p. 32

2 J. Mahon, op. cit., p. 489 wrote of events in November 1911, then stated that 'the ILP then called for the formation of a new ILP Branch in Openshaw'. However the only attempt to reform an ILP that has been traceable in the LL occurred in November 1909 (LL, 12 November 1909)

3 LL, 18 November 1910

4 Ibid., 2 February 1912. Openshaw was among the branches demanding full adult suffrage

established in headquarters at 404 Ashton Old Road.[1] Clearly there cannot have been much progress, for in July 1913 the Labour Leader announced that Openshaw had 'decided to renew local propagation of Socialism after laying dormant for the last few months'. C. McIlwraith was appointed secretary,and a welcome extended to old members. Two members, Jones and Simpson, were duly appointed to meet the organiser, J.H. Standring, and the remainder of the Gorton Federation, to discuss the advisability of joining Manchester and Salford Federation.[2] Although November of that year brought forth a report of 'steady progress' by the branch,[3] numbers were still small; 27 members and a total of 16 stamps sold.[4] It was indeed a far cry from the Openshaw ILP in the days before the Socialist Society.

Gorton branch, after its re-formation in September 1901,[5] suffered none of the major disruptions experienced by its neighbour. Indeed one suspects that in the post-1906 period Openshaw Socialist Society drew into its ranks the dissident socialists from all parts of the constituency, leaving the ILP branch in Gorton to continue a comparatively untroubled existence. Undoubtedly this polarisation was associated with the parliamentary representation of the Gorton division by John Hodge, who held the seat from 1906 to 1923. A members of the British Steel Smelters'

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1 Ibid., 17 May 1912

2 Ibid., 31 July 1913

3 Ibid., 13 November 1913

4 Ibid., 27 November 1913

5 ILP News, September 1901

Association, who was selected by the Gorton Trades Council,[1] and very much a 'Labour' man as opposed to a socialist, his presence can only have heightened the controversy which raged on the subject of the Parliamentary Labour Party. Hodge's own memoirs were particularly bitter with regard to the 'left-wingers', of whom he wrote: 'That element were few in number, but what they lacked in that respect they made up for by the volume of their talk and general cussedness'.[2] Thus while Hodge could hope for little sympathy from the socialists of Margaret Street, his support emanated from the Trades Council, unions, and the ILP branch in Gorton.

Gorton ILP thus tended to lead a very stable existence; propaganda, education and social activities interspersed with election campaigns and participation in May Day demonstrations. Indeed the branch was perhaps most notable for what it did not do; there emerged no concerted protest against the Labour alliance, no support for Victor Grayson or the 'Green Manifesto', and no involvement in the Socialist Representation Committee. Gorton ILP did send a delegate to the Socialist Unity Conference, but no further involvement appears to have followed. A BSP branch was subsequently formed in Gorton, but the presence in the area of a Clarion Cycling Club apparently provided the necessary nucleus.[3]

Apart from the election campaigns, the major event in the life of Gorton ILP was the opening of its new Labour Hall on Knutsford Road. The

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1 Letter: J. Hodge to J. Ramsay MacDonald, 18 June 1903 (LRC 9/195 LRC Archives)

2 J. Hodge, op. cit., p. 156

3 BSP, Official Report of the Socialist Unity Conference ..., p. 25; BSP, First Annual Conference of the BSP Official Report, p. 63; C, 20 October 1911

hall was duly opened on Saturday 9 May 1908, at a ceremony attended by John Hodge, G.N. Barnes, Katherine Bruce Glasier, and all the local Labour councillors. At a cost of £400 it now provided seating accommodation for 600. The whole enterprise had been very much a do-it-yourself affair:

> The Secretary (Mr. T. Goddard), in giving a brief history of the hall's evolution, told how one comrade scouting round spied a tin church (St. Chad's) for sale, paid a deposit of 10s., and pledged the branch to buy it, the comic and tragic incidents of their search for a site, the troubles and worries with builders, contractors, etc., and the final triumph of 'Tom, Dick, and Harry', who undertook to build, furnish, decorate, and otherwise complete the place. All kinds of specialists tumbled over one another to do plumbing, painting, etc., etc. They spent their Easter holidays working like niggers, they were on his doorstep by 5 am to get their instructions - and the key - and they had to be forcibly driven from the job at 11.45 pm, 'and now here's the hall in reality, a thing of beauty and a great joy for some time to come'.[1]

With an apparent absence of internal political dissensions, and the advantage of its own Hall, Gorton ILP arrived at its 'Coming of Age'[2] as a large and active branch. At the end of 1913 it claimed a membership of 104, although only 88 had actually paid for stamps. Even considering only the paid-up members, it ranked third in size in the Manchester area, being outnumbered by Miles Platting and Manchester East.[3] In many ways the size and stability of the Gorton branch was a side-effect of earlier events in Openshaw; whereas in other constituencies socialists and labourists had continued to fight out their battles within the branches, in Gorton they had at an early stage reached the parting of the ways.

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1 LL, 15 May 1908

2 For details of the Coming of Age Campaign meetings, see ibid, 18 September 1913

3 Ibid., 27 November 1913

11. Manchester Central and City of Manchester

The city centre branches may best be considered together for two fairly obvious reasons. City branch was in fact created as the result of a split in Central, and neither had the geographical links of the usual ward or constituency parties. Central is perhaps the easiest branch to trace, simply because its minute books are the only ones known to have survived. They present the fullest picture available of the week-by-week activities of the local ILP. Much of that information is, however, best considered elsewhere in a more general context; it is here necessary only to trace the landmarks in the development of the branch.

On 19 August 1902, a meeting was called at 9 Albert Square, by the ILP Council. The aim was to form a central branch as a means of organising Socialists who were not at the time connected with any branch of the party. Officers and a committee of 9 were elected, and a meeting arranged for the following week.[1] By that time it had acquired 21 members, with another 10 promising to join.[2] Subsequent meetings were held, usually at fortnightly intervals, at 44 Victoria Buildings[3] and Lockhart's Cafe, Deansgate,[4] before a room at 116 Portland Street was finally rented on behalf of the branch, by H.C.D. Scott.[5] Arrangements were extremely complicated; as Scott later wrote:

> 'I wanted to have a vote in Manchester as I am Manchester born and was prepared to pay £10 per annum for that luxury and

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1 Manchester Central Branch ILP, Minutes of meeting 19 August 1902

2 Ibid., Minute of meeting, 26 August 1902

3 Ibid., 9 June 1903

4 Ibid., 20 October 1903

5 Ibid., 16 November 1903

let the Central Branch have the use of the office. I advertised but could not get a suitable office for meetings. Mr. Benson offered the present office for £15 which I guarantee. The ILP were to pay me £5 per year and I understand they received £3 per annum from Mr. Benson as a subscription to the branch and I also gave them permission to sublet the office to the Shop Assistants Union and understood the latter were paying £2 per annum, to the Central Branch so that the latter were practically rent free.

> Have not these arrangements been carried out? The Manchester and Salford ILP Council agreed to pay 1/- per meeting for the use of the room but have not sent anything for about 12 months.
>
> The WSP Union use the room rent free but promised to see that it was regularly cleaned ...[1]

Because it was not tied to a limited geographical area, Central Branch was at the forefront of propaganda activities. While these must be considered at length elsewhere, any survey of the branch would be incomplete without a mention of the Sunday open-air meetings at Tib Street and the literature stall at Shudehill Market.[2] The branch was also instrumental in organising meetings to found branches in various wards or constituencies throughout the area. Levenshulme, Ardwick, New Cross, Chorlton-cum-Hardy and Prestwich all benefitted from the expertise of Central Branch.[3] At election times the branch would, in accordance with the wishes of the district party, undertake responsibility for, or simply assist, a designated ward or candidate.[4]

In spite of the existence of minute books, the size of membership is not particularly easy to estimate. The revised list of names and

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1 Ibid., 7 August 1906. Copy of letter from H.C.D. Scott to H. Dean, 30 July 1906

2 See below, pp.465-6, 580-3.

3 Manchester Central Branch ILP, Minutes of meetings 29 December 1903, 21 February 1905

4 For example, in February 1905 it was decided that members should assist in the Newton Heath municipal by-election.

addresses compiled in February 1905 detailed 50 members; in July it was stated that the branch could 'rely on 40', and in the following month it decided to pay fees on a membership of 60.[1] Attendance of meetings was, however, a very different matter. Until June 1903 the average attendance was around ten. Thereafter the total number of members continually increased, with someone joining at almost every meeting. Notable occasions were 15 December 1903, when 6 new members joined, and 6 March 1906, which brought in 9. Not that even the new recruits made regular attendances, but the average numbers present at meetings did increase to nearly 13 in the latter half of 1903. Thereafter it fluctuated from an average of 8 in 1904, to just over 12 in 1905 and 11 in 1906. The membership, like many other aspects of Central Branch, was by no means typical of the Manchester and Salford ILP in general. Most obviously, there was a far larger than usual complement of professional and middle class members. In part this was a result of the very nature of the branch; residents of suburban and rural 'commuter' areas, as well as business men employed in the city centre, would naturally be more likely to join than working men employed and living in districts where the ILP had long been established. However if one looks closely at the dates of members joining, and their addresses, it becomes apparent that some people living in city constituencies were opting to join Central rather than their local branches.[2] Nor were they all members who might feel a need to conceal their socialism from employers. One suspects that in some cases ILPers simply preferred the Central Branch for political or social reasons.

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1 Manchester Central Branch ILP, Members names and addresses. Revised list 8 February 1905; Minutes of meetings, 11 July 1905, 8 August 1905

2 Ibid., passim.

The fact that Central Branch was open to members from a wide geographical area rendered it far more vulnerable to the age-old problem of political parties: infiltration. In this instance the branch was infiltrated not by 'left-wing' socialists, Liberals or even 'Free Traders', but by the Women's Social and Political Union. Many of the aspects associated with this must be considered at a later stage, in the light of the ILP and the women's movement as a whole.[1]

Problems arose when the interests of the two organisations came into conflict, at the Cockermouth by-election in 1906, when Theresa Billington and Christabel Pankhurst, both Central branch members, campaigning on behalf of the WSPU, repeatedly declared that their object was not to assist in returning Bob Smillie, the ILP candidate, but to assist in defeating the Liberal. On several occasions they actually held rival meetings to those of the ILP. The Manchester and Salford ILP duly called for their expulsion, but responsibility for such a step was vested in their local branch. Central Branch however not only refused to expel the two women, but endorsed their actions. But while majorities might be obtained for such resolutions, opinion within the branch was far from unanimous. In March and April 1907, R.C. Wallhead and other members who disagreed with the policy of the branch on the women's franchise question, resigned their membership of Central Branch.[2] On 20 March 1907 a well-attended meeting, 'consisting laregly of ex-members of the Manchester Central Branch', was held at the Portland Cafe. A decision was taken to form a new branch of the ILP, the City of Manchester Branch, and William Hallows, one-time

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1 See below, pp.665-79 passim.

2 For the resignations from Central Branch, see Manchester Central Branch ILP, Minutes of meetings, 19 March and 9 April 1907

secretary of Central Branch again took up his position in the new organisation.[1]

The development of City of Manchester branch was not particularly eventful. Without a distinct territorial base it became, like Central Branch, very much a propagandist organisation. Regular branch meetings took place at the Portland Cafe, 114 Portland Street,[2] but its major contribution to the work of the ILP lay in the open-air meetings in St. Peter's Square. Speakers here for the 1909 'season' alone included E.R. Hartley, W.C. Anderson, H.R. Smart, R.C. Wallhead, Councillor A.A. Purcell, Councillor J.E. ('Jack') Sutton, J.H. Standring, J. Penny and F.H. Rose.[3] On 24 May 1907 the branch reported that 'their fellow-member Victor Grayson spoke for well over 2 hours'.[4] The political tendencies of the branch remain somewhat obscure, although it is noticeable that in 1909, when the Clarion no longer enjoyed the 'official' approval of the ILP, and most branches had ceased to advertise in its columns, the City of Manchester branch still provided notices of its forthcoming meetings.[5]

In the spring of 1911 Central Branch made overtures of reconciliation. The question of amalgamation was considered, and a committee of three duly appointed to meet three members of City. The latter branch, having considered the matter, resolved 'That under present conditions we consider the organisation of two branches to be more satisfactory to all parties

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1 LL, 29 March 1907

2 C, 26 July 1907

3 LL, 23 April 1909

4 Ibid., 24 May 1907

5 C, 1909 passim

concerned'.[1] The practicability of this decision is by no means certain. By September 1911 City was being described as one of the 'very flickering lights' among the branches, and at the end of the year had a membership of only 12.[2]

The 1907 split had a far greater effect on Central Branch than simply a reduction in numbers. Initially it requested the NAC to intervene, to deflect the City Branch from what was considered an attempt to create rivalry between them. The NAC however felt itself compelled to abide by the decision of the Manchester Council, which had accepted both branches, and duly informed Central Branch that it 'did not see its way to take any action in the matter'.[3] Not only did Central Branch feel itself to be suffering from the activities of former members, but the feminists, who were the cause of the rift, now promptly abandoned it. Thus the branch meeting on 17 September 1907 was confronted with the resignations from the ILP (not simply from the branch) of Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst.[4]

By this juncture, support for the branch had reached an all-time low. Attendances at meetings fell from 8 on 9 April 1907 (just after the split) to an average of 5 in the summer and autumn months.[5] Clearly something had to be done to muster the depleted forces, and Sam Robinson duly drafted a circular to members, which was aimed at ascertaining the precise membership, reviving interest and, last but not least, collecting arrears of subscriptions! Seventy-five copies of the circular were issued, but the response was 'most disappointing'. By the end of a fortnight 12

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1 Manchester Central Branch ILP, Minutes of meetings 16 May 1911 and 18 July 1911

2 LL, 11 September, 27 November 1913

3 ILP, NAC Minute Book 5, 1904-9. Minutes of NAC meeting, 23 Bride Lane, London, 5-6 July 1907

4 Manchester Central Branch ILP, Minutes of meeting 17 September 1907

5 Ibid., 9 April 1907 to 8 October 1907 passim.

replies had been received, of which only 4 signified the intention to continue membership of the branch. Together with verbal replies, this brought the total membership of Central branch on 8 October 1907 to only 15. In the discussion which followed this revelation, H.C. Anderson pointed out: 'that considering the condition of the New Cross Branch was not far removed from that of our own, an amalgamation of the two branches might be effected with considerable benefit to both'. Anderson was duly empowered to communicate with New Cross branch, to ascertain its opinion on possible fusion.[1] New Cross, however, does not appear to have been interested.[2]

Central Branch survived in spite of all its problems, due largely to the enthusiasm of a small dedicated nucleus of members; Sam and Annot Robinson, J. O'Connor, George Benson, J.G. Clapham and H.C. Anderson. Numbers attending meetings did increase over the years, but not to any spectacular proportions. Whereas in 1908 it was usual to find about half-a-dozen members present, in 1914 there were more likely to be a dozen. Clearly Central Branch did suffer from its lack of ties with a distinct community, and the absence of a social/club side to its life. Purely business meetings were never particularly attractive to any set of branch members. Apart from the sheer hard work of the few stalwarts, the branch was undoubtedly kept alive by the Tib Street meetings, which were famed thoughout the district, and the literature stall.

One aspect of Central Branch which did continue was its somewhat shaky financial position. Again this is likely to be associated with the absence of any club life; individual members were probably in a

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1 Ibid., 8 October 1907

2 Ibid., 5 November 1907

higher income bracket than the majority of ILPers, but individual donations, or assistance of the type given by T.D. Benson with the accommodation, could not compare with the income from a club, or from social evenings and bazaars run by a branch with over a hundred members. Balance sheets reveal that the 1903-4 period ended with a debt of just over nine shillings, owing to the Treasurer, but whereas 'liabilities' were all amounts which would have to be paid out in cash to cover bills, the 'assets' included items like the 'value of (literature) stall', which the branch would not be likely to sell anyway. Arrears in subscriptions amounted to £12 and, in the hope that half this amount might actually be paid, £6 was duly entered under 'assets'. At the close of 1909, the auditors noted 'a certain amount of confusion in the books owing to the illness of the late Treasurer'. There had been an actual loss of over £42, and £93. 15s. 5d. was owing to 'sundry creditors'. 1909 and 1910 represented perhaps the lowest ebb of the branch finances.[1] Debts mounted up, particularly to the Labour Leader. In September 1910 the branch deliberately decided to delay payment, as the money might be needed. By March the following year, the Labour Press was threatening to draw the attention of its directors to the amount owing.[2] The situation did however improve slightly; in March 1912 the treasurer had over £8 in hand, although admittedly rather more than this was actually owing to the Labour Leader.[3]

After its own troubles of 1907, Central Branch continued relatively unscathed by the controversies within the ILP. J. O'Connor, one of its

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1 See balance sheets contained in Manchester Central Branch ILP, Minute Books, 1903-10 passim.

2 Ibid., 28 September 1909, 25 September 1910, 28 March 1911

3 Ibid., 5 March 1912

most active members, did resign in December 1911, after having joined the BSP, but there is no evidence of any mass exodus. By the end of 1913 Manchester Central at least had the consolation of knowing that it was more than double the size of City branch. With 30 members, 28 of whom were classes as 'good on the books', it had managed to sell 20 stamps. Most important, the propaganda activities were still flourishing, and these above all else were the lasting contribution to the ILP of Central Branch.

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12. The suburban branches

While the aim has been to concentrate upon the ILP within Manchester and Salford, the picture would not be complete without some reference to that movement in the outlying suburban areas. In the period before the First World War, the business and professional men who actually worked in Manchester and Salford were showing an increasing tendency to live outside the urban boundaries. Not only did their ranks include possible converts to the cause, but also some of the leading socialists. The 'Labour Leader trio', Fenner Brockway, Clement Bundock and J.B. Nicholas all departed to lodgings in Mellor, and Fenner Brockway was particularly active in Marple ILP.[1] R.C. Wallhead and his family lived in Burnage Garden Village.[2] Moreover since the spreading of the socialist message was considered as perhaps the most important task of the ILP, the districts around Manchester were among the leading objectives for Clarion Cyclists

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1 F. Brockway, Inside the Left (1942; 2nd impression 1947) p. 32
Lord Brockway, 20 May 1975

2 Muriel Nichol, Tape, 9 November 1976

and Scouts, and the Clarion Vans, not to mention active propagandists within the Manchester and Salford ILP. Some of the surrounding districts were, of course, not simply 'residential' suburbs, but self-contained industrial communities, where ILP branches might well have sprung up without any assistance from Manchester.

To commence the survey on the southern side of Manchester, Chorlton-cum-Hardy[1] had its own Socialist Society by the end of 1895. On 14 November a public meeting at Lloyd's Hotel heard a paper on 'The Socialist Ideal'.[2] How long it survived is uncertain, but a further attempt to form a Socialist Society was made in October 1904, when John Crispin appealed in the columns of the Clarion for readers in the locality to contact him.[3] The Society was duly founded in November, whereupon Central Branch began to consider the prospects of bringing it into the ILP fold. Central Branch determined to open up negotiations with the Chorlton-cum—Hardy Socialists, with a view to holding an indoor meeting in the district. It was also prepared to pay up to 8s. of any loss incurred. The guarantee was not however required and, by February 1905, Sam Robinson was able to report that the branch had been founded without loss to Central Branch.[4] The ILP organiser later reported in the Labour Leader that: 'A small band of Socialists have maintained a Socialist Society in Chorlton for some time. On Friday, January 27th, I discussed with them the question of affiliation with the ILP, and met

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1 For all districts mentioned in this section, see Map 5

2 C, 9 November 1895

3 Ibid., 21 October 1904

4 Manchester Central Branch ILP, Minutes of Meetings, 10 January and 7 February 1905

with a cordial reception'.[1] Although the Chorlton-cum-Hardy Socialist Society retained its name, it was included in the 1906 'Directory of Branches and Secretaries' as a regular branch.[2]

Its activities appear to have been chiefly propagandist. In September 1907 it was able to record that weekly open-air meetings, with good audiences, had been held throughout the summer. Winter indoor meetings were being arranged; the branch was negotiating to rent 'admirable premises in a good position'.[3] What became of the Society is uncertain; it did not apparently survive into the era of the stamp system.[4] In October 1910 the Society announced its support for the Green Manifesto,[5] but did not send a delegate to the Socialist Unity Conference.[6] The emergence of a BSP branch in Chorlton-cum-Hardy[7] does, however, present the most likely clue concerning the demise of the Socialist Society.

Nearby Didsbury also had an ILP branch in the mid-'90s, which apparently dissolved, to be re-formed in 1908. Although then described as a Socialist Society, it functioned, and was described in the Labour Leader, as a branch.[8] Again propaganda was the prime function; the summer of 1909 was occupied by a series of 20 open-air meetings. During the first week in July 150 Labour Leaders were distributed house-to-house,

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1 LL, 10 February 1905

2 ILP, Annual Conference Report, 1906, p. 71

3 LL, 13 September 1907

4 Ibid., 27 November 1913 listed the branches among which the scheme was in operation

5 Ibid., 7 October 1910

6 BSP, Official Report of the Socialist Unity Conference ... passim.

7 BSP, First Annual Conference of the BSP Official Report, p. 62

8 LL, 17 October 1896, 21 August, 18 December 1908

and after delivering a further 600, it was planned to undertake a personal canvass.[1] The Socialist Society, as it was still termed, took part in the Socialist Unity Conference and immediately afterwards proposed to disband, presumably to join the BSP.[2] At the beginning of the following year, Clement Stott, secretary of the Manchester and Salford Federation, was again attempting to resurrect the ILP in Didsbury.[3]

Levenshulme, an urban district sometimes described as a 'village', did make its mark upon Manchester and Salford ILP. It fought successful election campaigns, most notably that of John McLachlan, whose own career in the party was by no means uneventful. It also took a prominent part in the unemployed movement.[4] The branch was formed in March/April 1894, with seven members. Within three months it had nearly fifty and was still increasing in size. While all the ILP branches did tend to be predominantly male, Levenshulme was able to record, at this early stage, that it was enrolling some women and girls. Local low wages appear to have been among the prime recruitment factors. In June 1894 the branch reported to the Labour Leader that: 'There are hundreds of men with families in this village working for 16s. and 17s. a week'.[5] During the following winter the branch set up a committee to 'uphold the rights of the deserving poor' with regard to the operation of the Poor Law.[6]

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1 Ibid., 16 July 1909

2 BSP, Official Report of the Socialist Unity Conference, p. 25; Manchester Central Branch ILP, Minutes of meeting, 12 December 1911

3 LL, 9 February 1912, BSP, First Annual Conference of the BSP Official Report, p. 62 listed a Chorlton-cum-Hardy branch.

4 See below, pp. 928-9

5 LL, 30 June 1894

6 Ibid., 9 February 1895

ILP development was again interrupted around the turn of the century, and at the close of 1903 a Levenshulme branch was re-formed as a result of the efforts of Manchester Central Branch.[1] Lack of a meeting room in the district proved a constant problem, but the branch did make steady progress. In August 1904 it was aided by a visit from the Clarion Van; the meetings were described as having been a success, 'despite the prejudice and ignorant hostility of local shopkeepers'.[2] The branch appears to have led an uninterrupted existence until 1910; its subsequent history is more obscure. In September 1910 Levenshulme ILP, not surprisingly, voiced its support for the 'Green Manifesto'. Exactly three months later the announcement appeared in the Clarion that a Levenshulme Socialist Society had been established, and unattached socialists were invited to attend its second meeting, to be held on 14 December over Entwistle & Co.'s old shop on Stockport Road.[3] The Socialist Society took part in the Socialist Unity Conference,[4] sending as its delegate A. Sugar. By the time the BSP held its first Annual Conference, Mrs. Sugar was the secretary of its Levenshulme branch.[5] Whether the ILP branch merged, or transformed itself into the Socialist Society, or whether it continued a separate existence is uncertain. There was, however, an ILP branch in Levenshulme in 1913. Although the complaint was made in the Labour Leader in January, that it had remitted no fees during the current financial year, the inauguration of the stamp system

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1 Manchester Central Branch ILP, Minutes of Meetings 29 December 1903 and 26 January 1904

2 C, 15 July 1904; LL, 15 July, 19 August 1904

3 LL, 9 September 1910; C, 9 December 1910

4 BSP, Official Report of the Socialist Unity Conference, p. 28

5 BSP, First Annual Conference of the BSP, Official Report, p. 63

appeared to re-vitalise the branch. Although claiming a membership of only 15, it nevertheless managed to sell 32 stamps.[1]

In parts of the South Manchester suburbs, however, there is no trace of ILP organisation until the 20th century. The districts often described as 'the Heatons', between Levenshulme and Stockport, were among the earlier 'commuter suburbs'. In November 1907 a request appeared in the Labour Leader, for readers in Heaton Moor, Heaton Chapel and Heaton Mersey, who wished to form an ILP branch, to contact T.W. Pearce of 31 Derby Range, Heaton Moor.[2] Presumably as a result of this appeal, there emerged the Heaton Moor and District Socialist Society. It appears to have been affiliated to the ILP, and held open-air meetings in Church Square, Heaton Mersey. The only extant record of its political tendencies was a resolution, passed in October 1908, in support of local autonomy.[3] Its later history remains obscure; in May 1909 the Labour Leader listed a new branch in Heaton Moor, with A. Cookson as secretary.[4]

Withington provides yet another example of the initial formation of a Socialist Society as opposed to an ILP branch. The most likely explanation of this tendency seems to be that in suburban areas socialists of any variety were comparatively few in number, and the only method of establishing any organisation of viable size was to appeal to all the 'unattached'. The exact date of Withington Socialist Society's foundation is uncertain, but in February 1907 it claimed to be 'progressing

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1 LL, 2 January, 27 November 1913

2 Ibid., 22 November 1907

3 Ibid., 21 August, 2 October 1908

4 Ibid., 7 May 1909

splendidly', remarking: 'Fancy Withington, the former stronghold of Conservatism and Liberalism'.[1] One of its early problems was finding halls for indoor meetings; the Society complained that the other political parties and the Church monopolized all the halls in the neighbourhood. In March 1907 it had to abandon a public meeting when unable to obtain the use of the local National Schools. The Clarion commented: 'There is only one remedy; they will have to build their own hall; and to that end will take a leaf out of the Church people's book and hold a bazaar'.[2] After a series of four indoor public meetings during April (at the British Schbols, Fallowfield; the Liberal Club, Didsbury; St. Paul's Schools, Withington; and the Public Hall, West Didsbury) the branch concentrated upon regular Wednesday evening outdoor meetings, alternating between Withington and Ladybarn. It also acquired a permanent room over a confectioner's shop in Burgess's Buildings, near Fallowfield Station, where special meetings of members and friends were held on Friday nights. Meetings were well-attended; the branch commented that: 'The advertisement received by being ejected from one site had had the effect of increasing the interest in the propagation of socialism in a middle-class district'.[3]

At its AGM on 10 January 1908, the Society unanimously agreed to become affiliated with the Manchester and Salford ILP Federation. A series of indoor public meetings, with some of the leading local ILP speakers, was planned for 17 January to 13 March, at the Public Institute

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1 C, 22 February 1907. The Society was probably founded at, or shortly after a meeting at the White Lion on 5 January 1907 (LL, 11 January 1907)

2 C, 22 March 1907; LL, 12 July 1907

3 LL, 7 June, 5 July 1907; C, 12 April, 7 June 1907

Hall. Socialists were requested to 'come and give a lift in the pioneer work which has yet to be done in a district where active socialism is by no means too well known'.[1] During that summer, assistance with propaganda was provided by both the Clarion Scouts and J. McLaren, the ILP organiser, who arranged a week's mission in Withington, Didsbury and Ladybarn.[2]

After its affiliation to the ILP, Withington Socialist Society appears to have led a stable existence, and avoided involvement with the BSP. Occasionally it could make its presence in the local party felt, as its previously chronicled stand against the stamp system bears witness.[3] At the time of this protest, the branch had a membership of 22-24[4] which, considering the nature of the district, and the fact that the society had managed to remain in existence for seven years, represented no mean achievement.

On the eastern side of Manchester, Reddish, Droylesden and Failsworth all had ILP branches (as opposed to Socialist Societies) but appear to have had far less contact with the Manchester and Salford party than had the southern districts. Reddish was more closely associated with Stockport than with Manchester, while Droylesden was propagandised by the Openshaw ILP, which some inhabitants joined before the local branch was formed

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1 LL, 17 January, 28 February 1908

2 Ibid., 24 July 1908

3 See above, p.341

4 LL, 27 November 1913

in 1908.[1] To the south-west of the city, Stretford also seems to have been outside its orbit; the branch which was in existence at the beginning of 1895 being termed 'Stretford and Sale ILP'.[2] Similarly, to the north of Salford, Prestwich ILP emerged as a result of the efforts of Manchester Central Branch, but was not thereafter an integral part of Manchester and Salford ILP.[3]

Perhaps the most successful of the suburban ILP branches was that which covered the districts of Urmston, Flixton and Davyhulme, part of the Stretford constituency. The area may well be unique in that it had an LRC group before an ILP. In March 1905, an LRC group composed of individuals was already established in Urmston.[4] The reasons for this are obscure; the Labour press provided no explanation and reminiscences of local members do not extend beyond the simple fact. However, when Wilson Wilson of Australia spoke in January 1907, at Urmston Public Hall, the meeting was reported under the heading of 'Urmston, Flixton and Davyhulme ILP', and described as '... our first meeting under the above auspices'.[5] Again no explanation for the change can be discovered.

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1 Reddish ILP branch was formed on 9 January 1908 (LL, 17 January 1908); Droylesden ILP began with 6 members in May 1908, and in November 1913 had a membership of only 8 (ibid., 15 May 1908, 27 November 1913). The socialist movements in Gorton and Openshaw seem to have proved a greater attraction to some of the Droylesden residents, most notably the Pollitt family (see J. Mahon, op. cit., pp. 10-11). Failsworth was the oldest branch in this area, and when it moved to new premises in March 1907 had a membership of 39 (LL, 22 March 1907)

2 C, 9 February 1895

3 Manchester Central Branch ILP, Minutes of meeting, 7 February 1905

4 LL, 3, 10 March 1905. One of the surviving pre-war members, Mrs. Elsie Huckbody, also remarked that there was an LRC before the ILP was formed in the area, but could not recall any details (see Elsie Huckbody and Jim Simmons, tape, 23 April 1975)

5 LL, 25 January 1907

The new branch held open-air meetings at the side of the Victoria Hotel,[1] and indoor meetings in school rooms, such as St. Clement's, or, for larger gatherings, the Urmston Public Hall. There was always difficulty in getting a room, for the ILP was regarded with distrust; some of the local populace apparently believed that the socialists intended to take all their property, including the pictures from the walls. Mr. and Mrs. Beckwith, the parents of Elsie Huckbody,[2] were among the early members who decided that the branch must acquire its own hall. Mrs. Beckwith, who had been brought up 'in the chapel' and was a 'genius at organisation', took charge of the funds, which took the form of interest-free loans (apparently Mrs. Huckbody's cousin lent the largest sum). Acquiring a plot of land was difficult, since the ILP was far from popular with local landowners, but eventually the branch acquired some land in Atkinson Road, which was sold by a Quaker family. The branch subsequently acquired an 'old wooden place', possibly a Sunday School, which was dismantled and 'dumped' on a farm belonging to another member of the family. Plans to erect the building were then formulated. At some stage in the proceedings, the branch obtained a mortgage from 'one of the national funds', although Mrs. Huckbody, the only source of information, could not remember the details. On September 17th 1910 the foundation stone of the building, to be known as Morris Hall, was laid by J.H. Hudson and J. Stewart (see Illustration 4). The Hall was finally opened on 1 July 1911, with ceremonies in both afternoon and evening being attended by Hardie, Lansbury, Clynes and J. Pointer, MP

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1 Ibid., 19 July 1907

2 Elsie Huckbody and Jim Simmons. Tape.

"FELLOWSHIP IS LIFE, AND LACK OF FELLOWSHIP IS DEATH."

William Morris.

BORN 24TH MARCH, 1834.
DEPARTED 3RD OCTOBER, 1896.

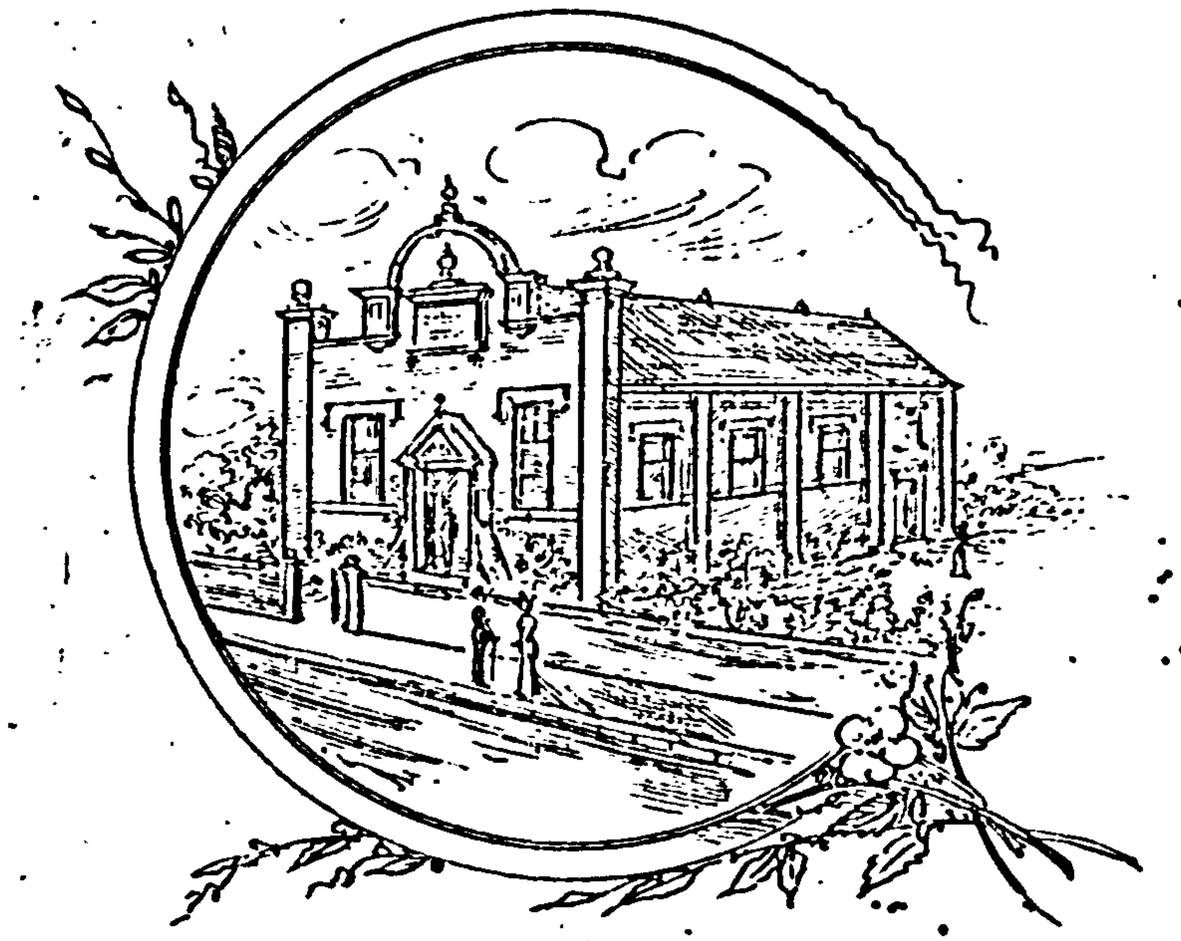
MORRIS HALL,

URMSTON.

DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF

William Morris,

ARTIST—CRAFTSMAN—POET—SEER.



INAUGURATION CEREMONY and SOIRÉE,

SATURDAY, 17th September, 1910.

Admission to Soirée, 6d.

Illustration 44

Illustration 4B

AFTERNOON at 3-30.

(Atkinson Road.)

Chairman - - - - - - Mr. C. H. BATES.

FOUNDATION STONE-LAYING.

Introduction by Chairman.

Trustees' Statement - - - Mr. J. BEANLAND.

THE FIRST STONE | FREEDOM. | WILL BE LAID BY

Mr. J. H. HUDSON, M.A.,

Who will give a Short Address on the Life and Work of

William Morris.

"The day will certainly come when men will shake off the yoke, and refuse to accept the mere artificial compulsion of the gambling market to waste their lives in ceaseless and hopeless toil."—*The Aims of Art.*

THE SECOND STONE | BROTHERHOOD. | WILL BE LAID BY

Mr. J. STEWART.

"And man shall help man, and the saints in heaven shall be glad, because men no more fear each other, and the churl shall be ashamed, and shall hide his churlishness till it be gone and he be no more a churl; and fellowship shall be established in heaven and on the earth."—*Dream of John Ball.*

EVENING at 7.

(Co-operative Assembly Room.)

Chairman - - - - - - - Mr. T. TAYLOR.

Opening Chorus....."March of the Workers".....*Morris*

Chairman's Address.

Song ....."The Sailor's Grave" ..... *Sullivan*
Mr. J. E. Smith.

'Cello Solo.....Nocturne No. 2.....*Burgmüller*
Mr. J. G. Birkhead.

Song ....."My Mother bids me bind my hair" .....*Haydn*
Miss Hudson.

Recital....."The Tale of a land called England" .....*Morris*
Mr. G. Titterington.

Duet ....."I have a Song to sing O!" (*Yeomen of the Guard*)
Mrs. Wellington and Mr. W. Spencer.

Interval for Refreshments.

Pianoforte Solo { (*a*) "Elfentanz" (*Fairy Dance*) .....*Grieg*
{ (*b*) Largo from Sonata (Op. 10, No. 3) *Beethoven*
Mr. J. H. Hudson, M.A.

Song....."Nita Gitana" ..... *Ernest Newton*
Mr. W. Spencer.

Humorous Recital.....Mr. F. Spencer

Song ....."The Swallows".....*Cowen*
Mrs. Wellington.

'Cello Solo.....Romance (Op. 22) .....*Goltermann*
Mr. J. G. Birkhead.

Song ....."Thora" ....*Stephen Adams*
Mr. J. E. Smith.

VALSE. LANCERS.

"Auld Lang Syne."

(see Illustrations 5, 6 and 7)[1]. It does not seem that the hall ever officially became the property of the ILP; the limited company continued into the 1930s (see Illustration 8).

When Morris Hall was opened, the Labour Leader reported that the branch membership 'now runs into hundreds';[2] one suspects exaggeration, for Mrs. Huckbody, who actually joined the branch in 1916 (see Illustration 9) but had been involved in its activities from childhood, remembers it as an 'interesting branch', but 'never very big'. She estimated the membership as around 40 or 50 when the hall opened, but a 'fair proportion' were sufficiently active to attend business meetings regularly. In November 1913 the Labour Leader estimated the membership as 29. The members were 'a bit inclined to be the intelligentsia', 'not usually artisans'. Mrs. Huckbody's father was a warehouseman; her uncle a farmer. Other members included a foreign correspondent, the head chemist for an engineering firm, doctors, parsons, businessmen and railwaymen.

The branch held regular meetings and ran candidates in the local elections (always without success). Having the advantage of Morris Hall, it managed to obtain the services of prominent national speakers, and on the occasion of a major 'event', perhaps at the Free Trade Hall, the five mile journey into Manchester itself presented no problem. Indeed the sights of poverty in Manchester, the housing conditions and the bare-foot children, were one of the reasons why comparatively prosperous people in a pleasant rural suburb were drawn to the ILP[3]. Otherwise Manchester

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1 C, 30 June 1911. See Illustrations 5, 6 and 7, taken from postcards illustrating the opening demonstration (in possession of Mrs. Elsie Huckbody).

2 LL, 30 September 1910

3 Elsie Huckbody and Jim Simmons. Tape; LL, 27 November 1913

Illustration 5
Morris Hall Opening:
the demonstration

Illustration 6
Morris Hall Opening:
the meeting

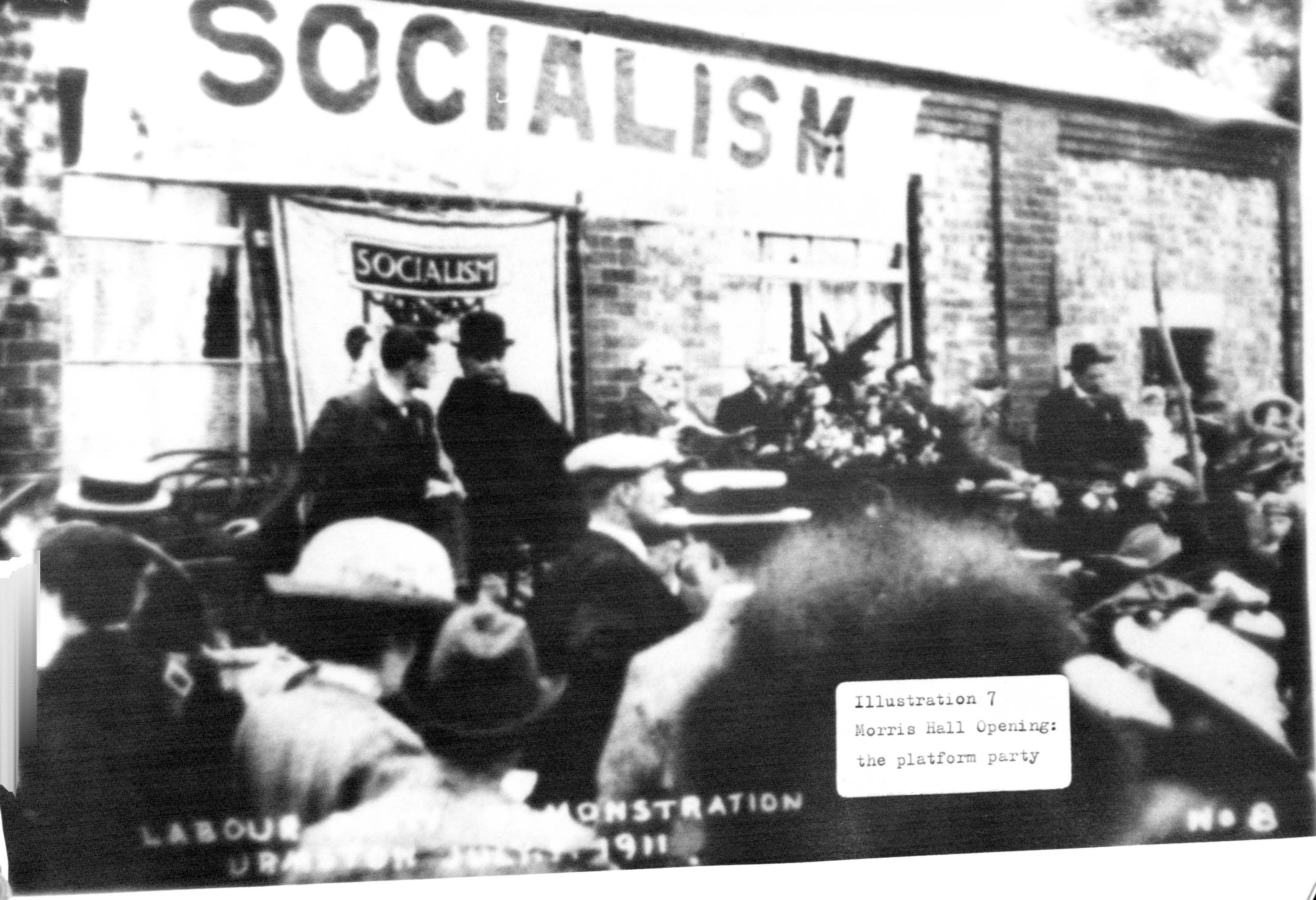

Illustration 7
Morris Hall Opening:
the platform party

No. 21 Share Certificate. One Shares.

Morris Hall Limited.

Incorporated under "The Companies Act, 1929."

CAPITAL - - £500.

Divided into 2,000 Shares of Five Shillings each.

This is to Certify that Mr T Back of Flixton is the Registered Proprietor of — One fully-paid Shares of Five Shillings each, numbered — to — inclusive, in the above-named Company, subject to the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the said Company.

Given under the Common Seal of the said Company, this 28 day of May 1936

Secretary. Joseph H Hanson } Directors.

N.B.—This Certificate must accompany any transfer of the above Shares lodged at the Company's Office for Registration.

Alfred H. Atkins, Limited, Joint-Stock Companies' Specialists, Printers, etc., 27 & 28 Fetter Lane, London, E.C.4.

Illustration 8

INDEPENDENT LABOUR PARTY

(Urmston Flixton and Davyhulme Branch)

LIMITED.

Registered under the Industrial and Provident Societies Acts 1893 to 1913.

CERTIFICATE No. [10].

This is to Certify that Mrs E Beckwith

of Moss Rd, Urmston is the Registered Proprietor of one fully paid up Share of One Shilling No. 10. in the Independent Labour Party (Urmston Flixton and Davyhulme Branch) Limited subject to the Rules of the Society.

Given under the Common Seal of the Society this twentieth day of December one thousand nine hundred and sixteen

James Irwin
Ernest Evans } Two Members of the Executive Committee.

E Murray Secretary.

Illustration 9

and Salford appears to have had very little influence upon the Urmston branch. Unlike nearby Partington, where the ILP was founded as a result of Central Branch's activity,[1] Urmston ILP was essentially a local organisation, maintained as a result of the efforts of a tightly-knit group very much at odds with their neighbours.

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Undertaking a survey of local branches presents very much the same problem as creating a picture from a jig-saw, of which some key pieces are irrevocably lost. However, even with the sources available, such an attempt is worthwhile. Initially the results demonstrate just how local the ILP really was. While it is difficult to generalise about the ILP as a national movement, it is by no means easy always to treat the Manchester and Salford party as an entity. Branches had their own peculiarities, often deeply rooted in the nature of the local area; trade unionist engineering workers in Gorton provide a contrast with the predominantly professional Urmston branch, or with Manchester Central in its era of suffragette domination.

But while it is necessary to record the disparity between branches, certain common factors do emerge. Firstly in the Manchester and Salford area proper, (as opposed to the suburbs), the '90s represented the high peak of ILP activity. Few branches appear to have regained their initial unity of purpose and crusading zeal after the period of the Boer War and centralisation. Admittedly the ILP chalked up more election victories, but whereas defeat after a hard-fought battle proved a unifying factor, success at the polls raised the ever-present controversy as to what, in

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1 C, 22 June 1906; LL, 22 June 1906

fact, was the basic aim of the party. The ILP as a local movement suffered far more as a result of Labour MPs being unable (or unwilling) to make their protest against unemployment, than it had ever suffered as a result of Liberal and Tory opposition in the '90s. Perhaps the branches which actually suffered the most internal conflict were those which returned Labour MPs in 1906. General histories of the ILP and Labour Party tend to leave one with the impression that the ILP heralded the way for the Labour Party, and that the Labour victories at the polls were to be equated with strong ILP branches. In fact the reverse appears to be true; the ILP as a propagandist and extra-Parliamentary organisation seems to have been most united and most stable in areas where there was no LRC intervention.

National histories which concentrate upon the ILP and Labour Party also tend to ignore the presence of the SDF and BSP. For some districts this picture may be accurate, but in parts of Manchester and Salford these organisations were often far more influential than was the ILP. In South Salford, where the SDF was long established, the ILP never really took root. Similarly, in a large number of districts the events surrounding the formation of the BSP brought about a major upheaval in the ILP. As will later be demonstrated, the BSP initially appeared a more active force in the area than the ILP, and one can only speculate as to what would have been the situation had not war intervened.

Within the branches, members, although widely differing in their backgrounds and occupations, rarely came from the poorest section of the community. Much of the success of a branch depended upon the presence of a nucleus of active, energetic and dedicated members. Also of primary importance was the possession of a hall, and the provision of social activities for members. The more politically-minded might at times chaff

at the preponderance of billiards or amateur dramatics, but in many cases it was this common social life which kept ILPers in regular contact with one another, and also drew a second generation into the party.

In histories of national movements, it is usual to move from the general to the particular. But the ILP 'grew from the bottom up' within Manchester and Salford, as well as in the country as a whole. This survey of individual branches suggests certain factors, which appear to have been common in the social and political development of the local party. It now remains to examine them as they influenced the Manchester and Salford party as a whole, but always in the awareness of the highly individual personalities of the branches.