IN DEFENCE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT: AN IMMANENT CRITIQUE OF LABOUR MOVEMENT CAMPAIGNS TO DEFEND LOCAL DEMOCRACY, JOBS, AND SERVICES IN THE 1980S

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ABSTRACT

This thesis constitutes a new approach to the study of labour movement opposition and resistance to Conservative Government policy and practice toward local government in the 1980s. In contrast to previous analyses, for example, this exploration of labour movement activity considers trade union involvement, does not use artificial frameworks, such as New Urban Left, or evaluate subject matter against a priori standards. Examination of the campaigns studied is undertaken within the framework of society as a whole, so that the development of campaign practices and conceptual principles, identified in relation to campaign aims of defending local government services, jobs, and local democracy, are subjected to reciprocal processes of interrogation.

This is achieved by examining events within an historical context, that begins with the expansion of local service provision and employment in the 1960s, includes retrenchment of the late 1970s and early 1980s, and concludes with labour movement campaigns against rate capping in the mid-1980s. This period also includes: changes in local democratic practice, in both constitutional and labour movement terms; developments in the composition, organisation, and outlook of constitutive labour movement bodies; and, labour movement responses to attempts to reduce public expenditure, local government service provision, and local government employment. The interrelations between these factors, changing socio-economic developments, conceptual principles and practice within the labour movement, and government policy and practice are all identified and explored as part of this thesis.

Similarly, an integral part of this process involves the consideration afforded to interrelations between labour movement officers, leaders, activists, members, and the broader populace; in terms of conceptual principles, the use and development of labour movement structures, and democratic practice. Thus, by exploring the interrelations between the areas identified, as opposed to imposing dichotomous or causalistic interpretations, the fate of the campaigns against rate capping are explained.
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<tr>
<td>AES</td>
<td>Alternative Economic Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>AGM</td>
<td>Annual General Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>ALA</td>
<td>Association of London Authorities</td>
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<td>AMA</td>
<td>Association of Metropolitan Authorities</td>
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<td>AMMA</td>
<td>Assistant Masters and Mistresses Association</td>
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<td>ASTMS</td>
<td>Association of Scientific, Technical and Management Staffs</td>
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<tr>
<td>ATTI</td>
<td>Association of Teachers in Technical Institutions</td>
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<tr>
<td>AUEW</td>
<td>Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers</td>
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<tr>
<td>BEC</td>
<td>Branch Executive Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>BIC</td>
<td>Business in the Community</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCLGF</td>
<td>Consultative Council on Local Government Finance</td>
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<td>CCSU</td>
<td>Council Central Support Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>CLP</td>
<td>Constituency Labour Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>CLPD</td>
<td>Campaign for Labour Party Democracy</td>
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<td>COHSE</td>
<td>Confederation of Health Service Employees</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPSA</td>
<td>Civil and Public Servants Association</td>
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<td>Civil Servants Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSE</td>
<td>Conference of Socialist Economists</td>
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<td>CCT</td>
<td>Cardiff City Transport</td>
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<td>DOE</td>
<td>Department of the Environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>DLO</td>
<td>Direct Labour Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>DLP</td>
<td>District Labour Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>DOE</td>
<td>Department of the Environment</td>
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<td>EEC</td>
<td>European Economic Community</td>
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<td>EETPU</td>
<td>Electrical, Electronic, Telecommunication and Plumbing Union</td>
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<td>Enterprise Zone</td>
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<td>Fire Brigades Union</td>
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<td>Financial Institution Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>FTDLD</td>
<td>Fight To Defend Local Democracy (NALGO Bulletin)</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<tr>
<td>GLC</td>
<td>Greater London Council</td>
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<td>GMBATU</td>
<td>General Municipal Boiler-makers and Allied Trade Union</td>
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<td>GMCLC</td>
<td>GLC/Metropolitan Counties Liaison Committee</td>
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<td>GRE</td>
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<td>Grant Related Expenditure Assessments</td>
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<td>Grant Related Poundage</td>
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<tr>
<td>HRA</td>
<td>Housing Revenue Account</td>
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<tr>
<td>ILEA</td>
<td>Inner London Education Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>JSSC</td>
<td>Joint Shop Stewards Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>JTUC</td>
<td>Joint Trade Union Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>LCC</td>
<td>Labour Co-ordinating Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEA</td>
<td>Local Education Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>LGCC</td>
<td>Local Government Campaign Co-ordinating Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(sub-committee of TUCLGC)</td>
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<td>LGCU</td>
<td>Local Government Campaign Unit</td>
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<td>LPAC</td>
<td>Labour Party Annual Conference</td>
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<td>MATSA</td>
<td>Managerial, Administrative, Technical and Supervisory Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDC</td>
<td>Metropolitan District Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP</td>
<td>Member of Parliament</td>
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<tr>
<td>MPU</td>
<td>Medical Practitioners Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>MTULMCC</td>
<td>Merseyside Trade Union and Labour Movement Campaign Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>MTUURC</td>
<td>Merseyside Trade Union and Unemployed Resources Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>NALGO</td>
<td>National and Local Government Officers Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAS</td>
<td>National Association of Schoolmasters</td>
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<td>NASUWT</td>
<td>National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers</td>
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<td>NATFHE</td>
<td>National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education</td>
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<td>NDAM</td>
<td>National Delegate Advisory Meeting (NALGO)</td>
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<tr>
<td>NEC</td>
<td>National Executive Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>NEDC</td>
<td>National Economic Development Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>NHS</td>
<td>National Health Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>NLACC</td>
<td>National Local Authorities Co-ordinating Committee</td>
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<td>NLGC</td>
<td>National Local Government Committee(NALGO)</td>
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<td>NLLGM</td>
<td>National Local Government Group Meeting(NALGO)</td>
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<tr>
<td>NNEC</td>
<td>NALGO National Executive Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>NSC</td>
<td>National Steering Committee Against the Cuts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>NSOED</td>
<td>New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary</td>
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<tr>
<td>NUGMW</td>
<td>National Union of General and Municipal Workers</td>
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<tr>
<td>NUM</td>
<td>National Union of Mine-workers</td>
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<tr>
<td>NUPE</td>
<td>National Union of Public Employees</td>
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<tr>
<td>NUR</td>
<td>National Union of Railway-workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUT</td>
<td>National Union of Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAT</td>
<td>Professional Association of Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLP</td>
<td>Parliamentary Labour Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSBR</td>
<td>Public Sector Borrowing Requirement</td>
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<tr>
<td>PTA</td>
<td>Passenger transport Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>QGA</td>
<td>Quasi-Governmental Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>RCLGM</td>
<td>Rate-Capping Liaison Group Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>RFMC</td>
<td>Rank and File Mobilising Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RLGSC</td>
<td>Regional and Local Government sub-Committee(Labour Party)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RPE</td>
<td>Relative Price Effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSG</td>
<td>Rate Support Grant</td>
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<tr>
<td>SCLV</td>
<td>Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory</td>
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<tr>
<td>SCPS</td>
<td>Society of Civil and Public Servants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SGM</td>
<td>Special General Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STUC</td>
<td>Scottish Trade Union Congress</td>
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<tr>
<td>TGWU</td>
<td>Transport and General Workers Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>TSG</td>
<td>Transport Supplementary Grant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TUC</td>
<td>Trade Union Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TUCLGC</td>
<td>Trade Union Congress: Local Government Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>UCATT</td>
<td>Union of Construction Allied Trades and Technicians</td>
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<tr>
<td>UDA</td>
<td>Urban Development Area</td>
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<tr>
<td>UDC</td>
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INTRODUCTION

This introductory chapter provides an outline of the research programme undertaken, defines and explains the preferred means of theorising and critique used, and details the structure of the thesis. To achieve these objectives the chapter is split into four sections entitled: Research Aims, Research Practice, Research Programme, and, Thesis Development. Additional clarification of the epistemological approach, informing this thesis, is provided in Appendices One and Two, under the respective titles: Abstraction; and, Theoretical Processes. Reading of this chapter is therefore recommended in conjunction with, or at least in reference to, these Appendices.¹

The first section, as its title suggests, outlines the final research aims and compares them to those presented at the start of the programme. The similarly eponymous second section outlines the conceptual parameters of the research programme and practice and comprises three sub-sections. These are of a conceptual nature, discussing: 'methodology', 'practically reflexive theorising' and 'immanent critique'. Each discussion undertaken demonstrates the relevance of these concepts to my research practice, and form part of an on-going clarification of my epistemological stand-point. The Research Programme section identifies the sources investigated, describes how and why they were used, and thereby introduces the material which fuels the modes of theorising and critique employed throughout the thesis. This section also includes a discussion of the problems encountered in the execution of the research programme. Finally, an outline of the overall structure and therefore development of the thesis is provided in the last section.

¹ Appendix One considers the epistemic significance of the formulation and use of abstractions in theoretical and critical processes. The discussion is illustrated through references to the use and understanding of abstraction that are evident or appropriate to the subject matter of this thesis. Similarly, Appendix Two highlights the epistemic relevance of theoretical processes which rely on a separation of theory and practice. The processes discussed, and illustrated in reference to particular examples, relate to the dangers involved in the use of causal explanations, models, and frameworks as means of theorising.
RESEARCH AIMS

This thesis examines campaigns mounted by sections of the British labour movement to oppose and resist central government attempts to restrict local authority spending and centralise governmental decision making in the 1980s. The labour movement is therefore the primary focus of the thesis. In keeping with the epistemological approach that informs this thesis, however, the campaigns and associated labour movement activity are studied in the context of society as a whole, as opposed to artificially constructed frameworks or models.

This approach was only partially developed when the original research aims were formulated and presented; in line with registration requirements for the degree of MPhil with transfer possibility to PhD. They were therefore presented in general terms, and identified three main objectives: to study, within the context of developments in local government over the period 1960 to 1987, the campaigns mounted against central financial restriction by Labour local authorities in the 1980s; to identify the nature and effects of trade union involvement, locally and nationally, in the said campaigns; and, in explaining the reasons for the above, to assess the consequences for the British labour movement in general.

Little qualitative difference exists between the final research aims and those identified at the start of the research programme. If anything has changed it is that the means of interrogating and explaining the events under study have become more certain and more clearly defined. In other words, the final research aims reflect the theoretical and epistemological development that accompanied, and was engendered by, the research process. First of all, the campaigns and associated labour movement activity are studied within the historical context 1960 to 1987, but not just in relation to developments in local government. On the contrary, the developments experienced by local government and the labour movement took place not only as a consequence of their own interactions, but in the context of broader societal processes. Their respective development should therefore be understood in this context.

Secondly, to avoid an application of external critique, a reciprocal evaluation of the practice and conceptual principles of the campaign is undertaken. The conceptual principles are indicated by the claim to be defending, jobs, services and local democracy, but are not interpreted externally in relation to the values of the researcher. On the contrary, they are defined in reference to historical practice, and their development during the period studied recognised.

A further research aim is to be aware of and identify, where practicable, the impact of and interaction between positions adopted by the various geographic and functional strata evident in the structures, organisation, and practices of the labour movement; especially those employed as part of the campaigns studied. In other words,
examination of the reciprocal interrelation and interaction between local, regional and national structures and between activists, councillors, full-time officers, leadership, membership, parliamentarians, and general public is also a research aim. The essential difference between this thesis and other attempts at explanation, lies with its rejection of causal, dichotomous or dualistic, and therefore external, interpretations of the way these elements relate to and influence each other.

Approaches founded on causal, dichotomous or dualistic premises, for example, fail to explore or recognise the interaction and interrelation between local and national structures; whereby individuals are involved in both at the same time. The problems encompassed by such approaches, and the means by which they are overcome, receive detailed analysis in the Research Practice section of this chapter and also in Appendices One and Two. They are also addressed as part of the main body of the thesis.

Finally, one further research aim can be identified as a prerequisite, if superficiality is to be avoided in analysing the phenomena identified above. Namely, that the analysis acknowledge and identify, the reciprocal interaction between those involved in the labour movement and the ideological forces pervading British society, during the historical period studied. Recognition of the development and influence of theoretical perspectives over the period covered is therefore an integral part of this thesis. The acceptance or rejection of such forces, their promotion as orthodoxy, doctrine, or dogma, and their impact on the campaigns are constant themes running through this thesis. Such analysis is, however, only possible where society itself forms framework within which events are studied. The means by which these epistemic research aims are fulfilled is explained as part of the Research Practice section, whereas the realisation of broader research aims is addressed in the sections entitled: Research Programme; and, Structure.

RESEARCH PRACTICE

This section identifies and explains the research practice adopted for this thesis and the reasoning behind it. The task requires more than a mere description of research methods employed, however, because such a limited exercise would be inadequate and misleading. Research which seeks to identify the play of ideological forces in society should, for example, also acknowledge the influences exerted on the research programme and on the presentation of its findings by: the value system(s) of the

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2 In this context, and throughout this thesis, the term 'ideology' refers to theoretical perspectives which, as a consequence of separating theory and practice, fit Schrayer's description of: belief systems which maintain their legitimacy despite the fact that they could not be validated if subjected to rational discourse. [Held, 1980: 256] See, for example, the discussions of hypostatisation and theoretical equivalence in Appendix One.
researcher; the dominant value system(s) of the society in which the researcher operates; and, interactions between the two. As Horkheimer argues, there is no objective reality upon which social theorists can reflect, because social theorists are part of the societal process analysed.[Held, 1980: 191] The account and explanation of research undertaken should therefore include details of the author's epistemological and methodological understanding, of her/his approach to the question of academic research, and of her/his value system(s) and truth claims.

This section identifies and explains how and why research can, without the acknowledgement of the researcher, be influenced by dominant and other value systems. For a comprehensive elucidation of the thinking that informs this thesis, however, this introductory chapter needs to be read in conjunction with Appendices One and Two. Read in such a fashion, the discussions serve to explain how and why the impact of dominant value systems can affect the practice of research. They also provide solutions to the problems discussed, and offer an insight into the value system and truth claims brought to this thesis by the researcher.

To consider the manner in which the above problems can be identified and overcome, the section considers the practical relevance to this thesis of: 'methodology'; 'practically reflexive theorising'; and, 'immanent critique'. Each concept is discussed and explained in a separate sub-section. As was indicated above, these sub-sections serve to demonstrate, the understanding and usage of the concepts mentioned, their relevance to the research programme, and their implications for research in general. Neither of the explanations should be viewed in isolation, however, as the discussions demonstrate how the interaction and interrelation of the concepts form the basis through which the impact of ideology can be overcome.

**Methodology**

Formulating a precise definition of the term 'Methodology' involves several difficulties. These problems stem from the common practice of defining and using the term in an ambiguous fashion. In this sub-section the causes of, and solutions to, the problems which engender ambiguity are identified and explained. This is achieved by providing specific examples of ambiguity, and by discussing and relating them to academic and other forms of research. This process is important because it informs the explanation of how theory and practice can be united as part of the research process, and how the impact of value systems can be recognised and overcome.

The ambiguous nature of the term 'methodology' can be traced to a variety of sources. Eagleton, for example, considers all words ending in 'ology' to have ambiguous meaning and usage.[1991: 63] Not only can such words be taken to mean the study of a given phenomenon, but also: "by a curious process of inversion "ology"
words end up meaning the phenomenon studied rather than a systematic knowledge of it.'[loc. cit.] Thus: 'To say you are examining Max Weber's methodology probably means that you are considering the methods he uses, rather than his ideas about them.'[loc. cit.] This use of the term represents the most consistent source of ambiguity in academic and other circles.³

Gunn[1989] and Silverman[1993] both provide examples of how ambiguity manifests itself in practice. In talking about 'Structuralist Marxism' and 'Rational Choice Marxism' as 'methodological schools', for example, Gunn[op. cit: 88] uses the term in a similar fashion to Silverman when he talks about positivist and qualitative methodologies.[op. cit: 2] Such usage is ambiguous because it can, and probably does, refer at one and the same time to the methods used by the schools, and to their ideas about them.

In spite of this ambiguity, however, Gunn also provides a more precise definition and use of the term methodology. This interpretation is not only unambiguous, it also provides the basis for the robust critique that the research aims and subject matter of this thesis require. Thus, in construing methodology as external meta-theory, that is as a separate process for validating methods, Gunn is quite definitely employing a literal understanding and use of the term.[op. cit.] In this context, methodology allows for the categorial validation of methods to take place, separate to their application, and therefore pertains to the study of method as a separate process. This interpretation is unambiguous and is therefore used in the remainder of this section and thesis, but its significance is explicable in reference to the concepts of 'practically reflexive theorising' and 'immanent critique'.

Practically Reflexive Theorising

Establishing a workable understanding of the term methodology is a first step towards identifying forms of theorising and critique that facilitate a rigorous interrogation of subject matter and value systems. Thus, by establishing a form of theorising that meets these requirements, this sub-section complements the conclusions of the previous discussion. This is achieved by first of all identifying pitfalls in the way orthodox approaches to theorising seek to validate their categories, and by explaining the consequences of such practices in terms of the impact of value systems. The process is then completed through the identification and justification of practical reflexivity, defined by Gunn[1989], as a mode of theorising which is equipped to overcome those flaws identified in the orthodox approaches.

³ The same arguments also apply to the use of the term 'Ideology', but this matter has already been addressed in footnote 2. Similarly, the term epistemology is used in this thesis to refer to my understanding of the nature and structure of knowledge, as opposed to knowledge itself.
Problems occur in the validation of categories if the process is attempted where empirical or first order theory is maintained as an entity which is separate and distinct from philosophical or second order meta-theory. This statement is made for two reasons. First of all, because any form of theorisation, no matter how empirical, employs categories[loc. cit.] and, secondly, because it is in the process of validation that the impact of value systems can be identified. Thus, where the two levels of theory are separate and distinct, two options exist for the validation of the categories employed. A given level of theory can either presuppose the validity of its own categories, or it can seek recourse to a meta-theory for the purposes of validation. [loc. cit.]

According to Gunn, however, 'If first order theory were to undertake the justification of its own categories then theory couched in some set of terms would have to validate those same terms...it would presuppose what it was supposed to show and vicious circularity would result.'[ibid: 89] To escape such circularity a given level of theory can employ an external meta-theory as a means of validating its categories, but in such circumstances the validation of the meta-theoretical categories remains an issue. In such instances circularity is avoided at the risk of a process of 'infinite regress', whereby each level of meta-theory requires recourse to an additional level in order to validate its own categories.[loc. cit.] If a process of theorisation does not seek to be answerable for its own categories, however, the outcome is a relativist position that any conceptual perspective is as good as any other.[Gunn, ibid: 90]

Separation of the two forms of theory is the crucial point at issue here, because it is the process of separation that prevents a reflexive interaction between the two. Thus, when they are understood as separate entities, meta-theory is unable to validate its categories in reference to the practical social world represented by empirical theory. First order empirical theory, on the other hand, is also unable to challenge the validity of the categories employed at that level because their validity is either presupposed or validated externally[Gunn, ibid.]. In such circumstances, the separated levels of theory are not equipped to take account of what Silverman terms 'the social construction of meaning'[1993: 21] or, put another way, the dominant value systems operating within the society that the theory seeks to interpret.

Second order theory, for example, is unable to offer a credible challenge to dominant value systems of the society it seeks to interpret, because it operates in a manner that is external to the practical social world. There is therefore no means of validating the meta-theoretical categories through which it seeks to challenge the categories of a dominant value system. First order theory, on the other hand, avoids challenging the validity of its categories through a tautological assumption that
appearance and reality are one and the same thing in the practical social world. [Gunn, op. cit.]

In the interests of brevity, just two examples of this process are used to illustrate the above points. Harding, for example, notes that in Hunter's study of community power structures in Atlanta: 'the basic data employed to "prove" the power of individuals is their reputation for having that power'. [1995: 38] Similarly, Judge identifies a process in Dahl's study of New Haven whereby "issue areas" were selected because they involved "important decisions requiring the formal assent of local government officials." [1995: 17] The authors were charged, therefore, with predetermining their findings by presupposing the validity of the categories they sought to investigate. In other words, by restricting theorising to the empirical level they fell prey to the circularity described above; validating 'power' and 'issues' in terms of their appearance. Thus, by employing a descriptive empirical approach they risked portraying, as universal and immutable, those values which are inherent within the processes studied.

In other words, Hunter and Dahl were guilty of separating theory and meta-theory. By failing: 'to place powerful individuals within a local economic, political and social context' [Harding, op. cit: 39], for example, Hunter rejected a reciprocal validation of the meta-theoretical and empirical categories of power that could have identified and challenged the values inherent to the processes studied. It would be wrong to assume, however, that the age of these examples serves to undermine their relevance. On the contrary, Harding defends Hunter by arguing that: 'it is difficult to see how any researchers, whatever their methodology, could begin exploring power without using some sort of working hypothesis about who is powerful and why' [ibid: 139]. The key words here are 'methodology' and 'hypothesis'. The significance of the first, and the solution to Harding's problem, is explained in this and the following sub-section, while problems associated with the second word are discussed in Appendix Two.

The exposition and interrogation of inherent value systems requires a form of theorising which is both theoretical and meta-theoretical at the same time. For this to be the case, the validity of empirical categories must be challenged through recourse to meta-theoretical categories, and at one and the same time the validity of meta-theoretical categories interrogated by their empirical equivalent. In the case of Hunter, for example, philosophical and empirical questions about power need to be addressed at the same time and at the same level of theorising. The theory needs to reflect from an empirical perspective on the question of validity, or justification for, its own philosophical categories about power, while reflecting simultaneously and reciprocally from a philosophical stand-point, upon the practice of power at the level
of the practical social world i.e. in an economic, political, and social context. Gunn terms this form of theorising 'practical reflexivity'. [op. cit: 92]

By engaging both philosophical and empirical concepts at the same time, practically reflexive theorising recognises its own presence in society, and is therefore equipped to challenge dominant value systems and the social construction of meaning evident within the society it seeks to interpret. It refuses to accept, at face value, the way society presents categories, such as power for example, as being beyond reproach and enjoins an interaction between their philosophical and empirical aspects. For this thesis the process of reciprocal empirical and meta-theoretical interrogation is undertaken in relation to labour movement identification of jobs, services and local democracy as categories worthy of defence. To illustrate this process, the following sub-section explains how practical reflexivity operates in the form of critique.

**Immanent Critique**

This discussion of the nature and value of immanent critique develops the arguments presented in the previous sub-sections in two ways. First of all, an analogy is drawn between the use of methodology as a meta-theoretical means of validating methods, and the use of meta-theory to validate empirical categories in the theoretical process. Secondly, the sub-section explains what impact this approach to methodology and methods has on the practice of critique, and how the problems identified are overcome through immanent critique. By proceeding in this manner the relation between immanent critique and practically reflexive theorising is made clear.

The analogy between methodology as meta-theory and methods as first order empirical theory, bears elucidation because problems that afflict theorisation are liable to have a similar impact on the critical process. Rosen, for example, describes a 'post festum paradox', affecting methodologically based critique, whereby evaluation of the results of a critique depends on the validity of the same results.[Gunn, 1989: 104] In other words, the process employs a circular evaluation of method by outcome, and outcome by method.[loc. cit.] The similarity between this process and the attempt of first order theory to validate its own categories is apparent. Similarities do not end there, however, because to avoid circularity in a methodologically based critical process there has to be an external application of standards and criteria that are presumed to be beyond reproach.[Gunn, ibid.] In such circumstances, methodology would be used to validate methods, in the same way as a separate and un-reproachable meta-theory is used to validate empirical categories.

This analogy can be taken one step further to consider the practice of external critique. In the case of methodologically based, or external critique, for example, the values and categories interrogated are measured against pre-given conceptual
criteria. [Gunn, ibid.] Thus, although the critical approach refuses to take appearances at face value, external critique amounts to a form of meta-theoretical validation. In instances where the values, categories or truth claims of the critic are not at issue in the critical process, the outcome is doctrine, dogma and orthodoxy. In other words, the critic's truth claims are not open to challenge, and their value system is therefore allowed to remain intact.

This approach is evident in Thompson and Allen's critique of the socialist practice of Liverpool City Council's Labour administration, first elected May 1983. [1986] Starting from the contention 'that there are three major dimensions of socialist practice in the local state': 'client relations', 'participation' and 'mobilisation', Thompson and Allen proceed to measure Liverpool's performance against these presupposed criteria. [ibid: 8] Their argument rests on the assertion that: the administration placed 'a minimal emphasis on participation' [loc. cit.]; that such an approach undermined attempts at mobilisation [ibid: 10]; and, therefore flawed its Urban Regeneration Strategy. [ibid: 11]

Thompson and Allen's position is openly opposed to that of the Labour administration, but the conceptual principles of the latter are not subjected to a rigorous interrogation against performance. Instead, they are merely depicted as errant and juxtaposed to the ideal of 'participation' which never receives extensive articulation, over and above the involvement of housing co-operatives, tenants organisations, community and voluntary groups. [loc. cit.] The validity of Thompson and Allen's conclusions, that Liverpool failed because of its 'minimal emphasis on participation'[ibid: 8] are therefore based on the validity of their own assumptions. Those assumptions are not, however, engaged as part of the critical process and therefore remain in tact. Thus, by excluding their own conceptual criteria from the critical process, and thereby preserving them as beyond reproach, Thompson and Allen leave themselves open to charges of dogmatism.

In contrast to the approach adopted by Thompson and Allen, 'immanent critique' interrogates and challenges all conceptual criteria and categories from within the critical process. This is achieved, as Horkheimer explains, by confronting 'the existent in its historical context, with the claims of its conceptual principles, in order to criticise the relation between the two and thus transcend them'. [Held, 1980: 183] Thus, the Research Aims section of this chapter has already signalled the intention to subject the practice of the campaigns and their aims and conceptual principles to reciprocal interrogation. This reciprocal interrogation also takes place in a specified historical context, between 1960 and 1987, and covers related developments in local government, the labour movement, and in society at large.
In contrast to external critique, there is no application of presupposed meta-theoretical validity against which the success or failure of the campaigns can be measured. Within the critical process adopted here, the meta-theoretical categories of the campaigns are also explored at the empirical level, and both are interrogated simultaneously and reciprocally. Jobs, services and local democracy, for example, are interrogated as conceptual principles worthy of defence, and as practically existent categories. The type of jobs, services, and democracy defended are therefore identified and explored, and the conduct of their defence interrogated in reference to the democratic practice of the labour movement. There is therefore no circularity of presupposing the conceptual or empirical validity of jobs, services, and democracy as categories, nor a validation of them or their defence through recourse to a separate meta-theory.

The compatibility of practically reflexive theorising and immanent critique lies in the shared practice of each asking after the validity of all categories, while recognising their existence in the practical world. In other words, both investigate the social world in the course of its development. [Gunn, op. cit.] Beginning with the conceptual principles of an object, their implications and consequences are unfolded and then re-examined and re-assessed in the light of these implications and consequences. [Held, 1980: 184] By proceeding in this fashion, practically reflexive theorising is empirical and meta-theoretical at the same time, and the methods and methodology of immanent critique are forced to interact reciprocally and simultaneously without either being reduced to the other.

Practically reflexive theorising and immanent critique therefore operate as a totality of theory and meta-theory, and are therefore non-methodological. Thus, the evaluation of labour movement campaigns to defend jobs, services, and local democracy is conducted through a reciprocal interrogation of labour movement conceptual principles and practice. By evaluating performance and principles in this way, theorisation and critique are cognisant of their existence in the practical social world. The categories and areas of exploration are therefore selected by the subject. There is no opportunity for a separate methodology or meta-theory to be used as validation, nor for a circular presupposition of categories.

**RESEARCH PROGRAMME**

This section provides an overview of the conduct of the research programme by discussing sources used, and by explaining how and why they were chosen for interrogation and data collection. In so doing, the section demonstrates how the major methods of data collection in qualitative research were employed in a manner
consistent with the assertions made in relation to research practice. The discussion therefore contributes to the on-going explanation of how the concepts introduced in the Research Practice section are evidenced in the execution of the research programme.

This overview is divided into three sub-sections. The first summarises the practice of identifying and interrogating, within a specific historical context, the development of campaign aims, values, tactics and organisation. A separate sub-section discusses the interview process, and explains how the in-depth interviews were used to corroborate information and conclusions drawn from other sources. Finally, attention is afforded to problems, encountered during the research programme, which were significant enough to influence the scope and direction of the research. In sum, this discussion demonstrates how categories, both meta-theoretical and empirical, were identified and subjected to reciprocal interrogation in the given historical context.

Texts and Documents

The primary purpose of the research programme was to conduct, within the specified historical context, a rigorous interrogation and analysis of labour movement campaigns to defend jobs, services and local democracy in the 1980s. The investigation was designed, therefore, to identify and understand factors and events that helped shape the environment in which the campaigns took place. In other words, the campaigns were recognised as factors influencing, and influenced by, the general socio-economic environment. To this end, the years 1960 to 1987 were identified as encompassing a period which witnessed the rapid expansion of local government spending and responsibility, and also its dramatic demise.

In particular, the historical context, within which the campaigns are understood and explained, encompassed changing attitudes to government in general, and to local government in particular. An examination of relevant factors therefore required a critical review, from mainly secondary sources, of the dominant theoretical approaches, both academic and otherwise, that attempted to explain the role and nature of the state in Britain. The research programme was also designed to identify the interaction between such ideas, and the policy and practice of government, political parties, trade unions, or all three.

One of the most vivid conclusions to emerge from this exercise, was that theoretical approaches react to socio-economic fortunes. Thus, the realisation of

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4 Silverman, identifies these methods as: observation, analysing texts and documents, interviewing, and recording and transcribing. [1993: 8-9] Analysis of text and documents and interviews are recounted below. The recording and transcribing activities pertain to the interview process and observation is based primarily on my trade union activism and the insight gained therein of practice and procedures.
fundamental problems facing the British economy, for example, was accompanied by an increasing acceptance of fundamentalist fiscal analysis. Such prescriptions were evident in the 1970s when, as Chapter Three records, the Labour Government and PLP introduced a version of the monetarist approach that was gaining credence within the Conservative Party.

As indicated above, however, the investigation of theoretical categories was not conducted in isolation from practical developments. The two were explored reciprocally, with findings from the review of developments in the Labour Party being compared to the corresponding theoretical categories identified. For instance, the development of the campaign for democracy within the Labour Party, discussed in Chapter Two, is a case in point.

As the thesis demonstrates, the research programme utilised both primary and secondary sources to identify, explore, and explain practical developments in, among other things: local government finance and functions; the internal and external politics of the Labour Party; the Labour Party’s approach to local government; the membership and outlook of trade unions organising in local government and the public sector; central government approaches to the practice of local government; and, the changing outlook of the Conservative Party. Furthermore, as part of this process, the interrelations between the categories were examined and, where identified, new sources for theoretical, and or practical accounts, were explored.

The overwhelming majority of the secondary sources that address the political activity of trade unions, focus on the national level and, more particularly, on relations with the Labour Party when in government. Similarly, secondary accounts of local Labour councils and their attempts to resist central government policy rarely investigate the roles played by local Labour parties, Labour groups, and local authority trade unions. Such accounts usually concentrate on the role of councillors and Labour groups rather than local labour movement.5

Consideration of the campaigns mounted by the broader labour movement in the 1980s therefore required a concentration on primary accounts and sources. This part of the research programme provided an insight into the development of the organisation, tactics, aims and values at local and national levels. Once again, information was cross referenced with that already held, and used to supplement secondary accounts. Where appropriate, therefore, newly discovered sources were investigated, gaps in information addressed, and meta-theoretical and empirical categories interrogated and validated reciprocally.

Most of the primary sources were obtained from Liverpool City Branch of the National and Local Government Officers Association (NALGO), where unrestricted

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5 Accounts which fit this description include: Blunkett and Jackson [1987]; and Livingstone [1987].
access was allowed to records. The information available included: minutes of local, branch, and national committees; local and national publicity material; local and national items of correspondence; minutes and circulars from the National Local Government Campaign Unit (LGCU), and, similar documentation from the Trades Union Congress (TUC). Other information included reports and minutes of national conferences convened by activists to develop national co-ordination of local campaigns.

This information was supplemented through access to personal papers of I Lowes (Convenor of Liverpool Branch 5 of the General, Municipal, Boilermakers and Allied Trades Union - GMBATU) and to those of Tony Byrne (Former Chairperson of Liverpool City Council's Finance Committee). These papers included: documents relating to the National Local Authorities Co-ordinating Committee (NLACC); an almost complete set of minutes of the management and strategy committees of the LGCU; and, correspondence between that body and the Secretary of State for the Environment.6

Through the range of primary sources accessed it was possible to build a broad picture of the scope of involvement in the campaigns. Similarly, the documentation available indicates the interaction between those involved in the local campaigns as activists and full-time officers, and their interaction with: the Labour Party nationally; central government; and, with national trade union structures. Of particular interest are the activities of NALGO at full-time officer and national level, and therefore the responsive nature of NALGO's activist led structures. In particular, the activities of NALGO, a trade union not affiliated to the Labour Party, is of interest because of its willingness to consider industrial action as an extra-parliamentary means of achieving campaign aims.

**Interview Process**

The original intention was to conduct in-depth, semi-structured interviews of six people who were involved in, and had knowledge of, the campaigns at both local and national levels. Three of the people chosen for interview were known to me. Graham Burgess and Peter Cresswell were Chairperson and Secretary of Liverpool NALGO, respectively, during the period under study, and while I was active as a shop steward in NALGO. Ian Lowes was, and still is, a Convenor for GMBATU Branch 5.

All three were also involved to varying degrees in the Liverpool Joint Shop Stewards Committee (JSSC) and, at various points, held representative posts at national and regional levels within their respective unions. Their views and experiences were therefore considered to be of value in providing an insight into local, 6A complete list of primary sources is attached as Appendix Three.
regional, and national issues. Similarly, as a prominent figure in the Liverpool labour movement, a member of Liverpool City Council, and a delegate to the LGCU, Tony Byrne's contribution was expected to add a different dimension to the local and national perspectives obtained from the trade unionists. ⁷

I had intended to interview two prominent people from outside Liverpool, to provide a broader perspective and to corroborate or refute the views of the Liverpool activists. To this end, David Blunkett and Ken Livingstone were identified as prominent figures who also had experience at both local and national levels during the period studied. Although neither was available for interview David Blunkett proved to be extremely co-operative, and agreed to provide answers to written questions. Livingstone, on the other hand, was less forthcoming and after several approaches designed to return my questions with cursory responses. The questions to Blunkett and Livingstone were intended to clarify points or omissions from their respective books and, on the whole, the interviews and questionnaires proved useful in supplementing and validating previous findings. Most of the questions asked covered shared areas, and the main questions are attached as Appendix Four.

**Research Problems**

The length of time taken to complete the research programme, and to write and submit the thesis is reflected in the dates of the sources used. This is due, in part, to the academic pre-occupation with contemporary issues, and so the more recent literature available has had little relevance to my area of study. In fact, this point is supported by the references recorded in more recent texts that can be considered to be relevant to the study. ⁸ This state of affairs serves to compound the problem signalled earlier, whereby much of the secondary literature available, focuses on the national arena, or does not address the political activity of trade unionists in the same context as this thesis.

In addition, attempts to keep a track of recent contributions by searching the British Humanities Index, has necessitated access to a wider range of sources than those held in the Libraries of the Liverpool J. M. University. The Sidney Jones Library at Liverpool University was therefore accessed as a day reader. Similarly, Liverpool City Council's Central Library, and the Library at the Merseyside Trade Union and Unemployed Resources Centre(MTUURC) were also accessed to supplement the range of sources available.

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⁷ Each of the four in-depth interviews were taped, semi-structured, lasted about an hour, and conducted at various locations. All the interviews were conducted in an informal and relaxed manner, with each participant showing a willingness to be questioned, and also great patience with points of minutiae. All four interviews were later transcribed in full.

⁸ See, for example, Judge, Stoker and Wolman[1995].
The prosecution of the research programme, outlined above, indicates how the methods of data collection were used to identify the categories controlling the programme, and those categories interrogated at the meta-theoretical and empirical levels. This was not a one way process, however, as the various sources were cross referenced, on an on-going basis, to identify shortfalls in the information accumulated and to validate, reciprocally, both levels of category. Questions raised by empirical findings were therefore addressed to the meta-theoretical conclusions, and vice versa. By proceeding in this manner, allowing the findings and the subject to control the direction and extent of the research undertaken, the imposition of external methodology is precluded, because methodology and methods interact reciprocally. [Gunn, 1989]

**THESIS DEVELOPMENT**

In addition to introductory and concluding chapters, this thesis comprises seven chapters. As a means of clarification an overview of the theoretical and critical development of the thesis is provided here, together with an explanation of how the chapters relate to each other. The structure of the thesis is thereby indicated, and the progressive elucidation of analysis outlined in reference to the modes of theorising and critique employed. This last undertaking is, together with Appendices One and Two, intended to assist those who are unfamiliar with the epistemological approach.

The first three chapters establish the broad historical context within which the conceptual principles espoused by the campaigns against Conservative Government policy and practice toward local government in the 1980s, can be interrogated. In other words, the thesis begins with an examination of particular historical conditions that shaped the events studied. Chapter One identifies and explores the categories that were, in the 1980s, identified as worthy of defence. Thus, the rapid expansion of local government service provision, fluctuating employment levels, changes in the organisation and practice of local government, and therefore the practice of constitutional local democracy in the 1960s and early 1970s, are validated as historical, empirical, and meta-theoretical categories. As part of the process, the Chapter also considers the outlook, practice, and therefore conceptual principles of the labour movement in these areas; as exhibited by the practice of Labour Governments between 1964-70 and 1974-76, and of the TUC during the period analysed.

Chapter Two complements its predecessor by addressing developments in labour movement composition, outlook and practice over a similar period. In this sense the chapter contributes to a primary aspect of the historical context outlined in Chapter One. By considering: the growth of activism in trade unions and Labour Party; the recovery of Labour Party membership; and, the struggles for democracy and
accountability within the Labour Party, the chapter identifies and validates areas within which the practice and conceptual principles of the campaigns of the 1980s are interrogated and explained.

Chapter Three completes the broad historical context, by discussing examples of labour movement defence of jobs, services and local democracy in the 1970s. The chapter cuts across the periods and topics of its predecessors, however, and therefore adds a new dimension to the historical context established by preceding chapters. Thus, an interrelation is identified between the areas discussed in previous chapters, through considering the aims, organisation, practice, and tactics evident in the examples of local labour movement resistance in Chapter Three. As part of this process, the chapter also: highlights the practice and conceptualisation of local democracy in terms of local mandates and the variation of local service policy and provision; verifies service areas identified, in Chapter One, as important to the labour movement; and, records the Labour Government's conversion to monetary theory.

Chapter Four provides the first analysis of opposition and resistance mounted in response to the Conservative Government's approach to local government between 1979 and 1984. The events studied cover a broad range and differ from earlier chapters by virtue of the motivations and intensity of the Government's approach to local government. In this sense, the subject matter of the chapter differs from those which contributed to the broad historical context described above. Given the separate attention afforded to the Rates Act 1984 and the labour movement opposition and resistance it engendered, however, the chapter still constitutes an historical context for the interrogation of later events. By considering the impact of individual areas of Government policy and practice, on jobs, services, and local democracy, and by examining labour movement responses, the chapter develops the historical context and reciprocal processes of validation and interrogation, through the identification and analysis of conceptual principles, practice, structures, organisation and tactics which are analogous to previous and subsequent resistance.

Chapter Five considers the organisation, practice, and tactics of the campaign for more resources conducted by the Liverpool labour movement between November 1983 and July 1984. In particular, attention is focused on the historical, organisational, and tactical similarities and differences between the Liverpool labour movement campaign and those explored in Chapter Four. The examination of Liverpool therefore forms part of the historical context developed by earlier chapters, and within which the subsequent campaigns to oppose and defy the Rates Act 1984 can be understood and interrogated. Furthermore, consideration of the similarities and differences between the role of activists in the Liverpool labour movement and those elsewhere, and of the approach of the parliamentary leadership to the Liverpool
campaign, contributes to the reciprocal process of validating labour movement categories and practices.

Chapters One to Five serve a dual purpose. First of all, they constitute an historical context for the analysis of labour movement campaigns to defend local democracy, jobs, and service provision between 1970 and 1984. Secondly, the analysis and context provides an empirical and meta-theoretical grounding from which to interrogate the practice of the campaigns against rate capping in terms of their conceptual principles. Stated more specifically, local democracy, jobs, and services are identified and explored as both philosophical and empirical categories. This is achieved by identifying and exploring the ideals and practice of those involved in the labour movement and, in later chapters, those of the Conservative Government and Party.

The campaigns against rate capping amount to a culmination of opposition, resistance, and broader developments identified and explored in the first five chapters. In contrast, however, the campaigns against rate capping exhibit a degree of co-ordination and organisation that is absent from the earlier, more disparate attempts at opposition and resistance. Thus, chapters Six and Seven reflect this enhanced co-ordination and organisation by focusing on a the broader scale of operation as opposed to individual, isolated examples. Opposition and resistance to rate capping was ultimately a two stage affair: a campaign against proposed legislation, and resistance to the provisions of the Rates Act. For this reason, analysis of the campaigns is spread over two chapters.

Chapter Six involves reciprocal analyses of the Conservative's justification and practice, and of the aims and practice of the campaign to oppose the Rates Bill. As part of this process the chapter identifies and explores: the development of labour movement structures in the process of struggle; the respective involvement and positions adopted by parliamentary leaders, councillors, full-time officers, activists, other sections of the movement, and the wider populace. In particular, this involves the immanent interrogation of the campaign practice and conceptual principles in reference to the categories identified and explored in earlier chapters.

Chapter Seven builds on the conclusions of its predecessor by analysing the campaign of resistance in reference to the specific campaign aims identified in Chapter Six, but also in terms of the context delineated by previous chapters. Once again the subjects considered are evaluated in relation to the conceptual principles and practice identified and discussed in preceding chapters. In other words, the outcome of the campaign is evaluated in reference to, and therefore as a consequence of, the historical context and societal developments that shaped and were shaped by the principles and practice of the labour movement in the areas investigated.
Finally, a concluding chapter summarises the theoretical and critical processes, their findings, and cross references them to the research aims. Thus, over the historical period, the consistency of labour movement practice with the aims and values, espoused through the defence of local democracy, services, and jobs, is evaluated. Overall, the campaigns are explored and explained in reference to the reciprocal interrelations between national and local levels, full-time officers and activists, economic, political, and societal factors.
CHAPTER ONE

SERVICES, JOBS, AND LOCAL DEMOCRACY: CONCEPTUAL PRINCIPLES IN AN HISTORICAL CONTEXT

As the final section of the Introduction explained, this chapter forms part of the historical context that facilitates a reciprocal interrogation of the principles and practice exhibited by the labour movement campaigns to defend jobs, services, and local democracy in the 1980s. Stated briefly, the chapter considers the effects exerted on these categories by the changing socio-economic functioning of elected local government during the fifteen or so years that preceded the retrenchment of the 1970s. A survey of this period is a prerequisite for any meaningful study of the campaigns, because it encompasses: the rapid expansion of local government service provision and employment; changes in the structure, organisation and therefore democratic practice of local government in England and Wales; and, the changing economic fortunes that precipitated the retrenchment of the 1970s and 1980s.¹

The chapter therefore identifies and explores historical and empirical aspects of the conceptual principles evinced through the campaign aims of defending services, jobs, and local democracy. Thus, the conceptual principles are validated in reference to changing socio-economic and democratic functions of local government, and these functions validated in reference to the conceptual principles. By proceeding in this manner, the breach between ideas and reality is overcome[Held, 1980: 183], and allows for the impact of these developments upon the values, outlook, and practice of the later campaigns to be explored in subsequent chapters. In sum, the analysis is undertaken within the framework of society, and through a reciprocal validation of the empirical and conceptual aspects of those categories identified as worthy of defence.

In accordance with the areas promoted and defended by the labour movement in the 1980s, the chapter is divided into sections entitled: Service Provision; Employment; and Local Democracy. The first of these sections considers

¹ Notwithstanding the validity of the critique expounded by Bonefield[1987], the Fordist treatise, for example, identifies the late 1960s and early 1970s as signalling the end of expansion therefore contraction of the Keynesian welfare state.[loc. cit; Painter, 1995]
developments in the nature and extent of local government service provision during the period. Similarly, the second section catalogues the changing levels and nature of employment in local government, and in the economy at large. The final section provides a brief review of the question of local democracy as it was understood and practised through the local state during the period considered. In keeping with the labour movement emphasis, however, the phenomena discussed reflect the urban focus of the campaigns, and therefore concentrates on what later became known as metropolitan areas.

SERVICE PROVISION

This section catalogues the expansion of local government service provision up until the mid 1970s, and offers an explanation for that growth in terms of labour movement demands. Thus, the identification and exploration of expanding areas of service provision employs empirical data to demonstrate the growth of service areas, and at the same time, indicates the values that informed the provision and growth of particular services, and their defence by the labour movement in the 1980s. There is, however, no single coherent account that is relevant to this area. References to the developments considered here are disparate, though the most useful sources are those texts which explore the changing approach of central government, most evident from the mid 1970s, to public expenditure in general and to local government finance in particular. Newton and Karran[1985] provide the best example of this type of approach, and their work is therefore used as a point of reference for the following account.

The discussion of services within particular sub-sections is somewhat misleading as the categories are interrelated and therefore over-lap. In order to allow exploration and validation of the concepts involved, however, the section is divided into four sub-sections entitled: Personal Services; Local Infra-structure; New and Improved Services; and Reasons for Expansion. Without seeking to imply trichotomous categorisation, the first three sub-sections afford respective consideration to demographic, infra-structural, and generalised examples of expansion. Similarly, the final sub-section offers an explanation for expansion in political and economic terms that avoids dichotomous understanding. Taken as a whole, the four sub-sections identify the role of local government as part of the welfare state, and demonstrate the interrelated economic and social aspects of local service provision.

Personal Services

The literature that addresses local government, in either financial or general terms, exhibits a consensual view that the provision of services to young, old, ill, and
disabled people became one of its primary functions. Responsibilities in this area were enacted by the Labour Governments of 1964-70 and include: the Children and Young Persons Act 1969; the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970; and the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970.[Byrne, 1985; Elcock, 1982; Gough, 1975; Hampton, 1987; Labour Party 1966-1984, 1970; Newton and Karran, 1985] Changes in the provision of services to these groups are therefore identified and discussed here.

First of all, the introduction of new or expanded responsibilities in the area of personal services should be understood in the context of changes in the composition of the groups identified above.[Gough, op. cit; Newton and Karran, op. cit] Between 1950 and 1978, for example, the percentage of people over the age of 65 increased from 10 to 14.5%, and by 1980 there were 1,500,000 more retired people than there were in 1960.[Newton and Karran, op. cit: 53] Increased rates of longevity therefore resulted in increased demand for the home helps, home nursing, and residential accommodation provided under the auspices of the legislation identified above.[loc. cit.]

At the other end of the spectrum, the numbers of young people increased in absolute terms, though not as a proportion of the national population. Between 1951 and 1971, for example, the number of school children increased from 5,400,000 to 9,600,000. Given the rise in actual numbers, there was a corresponding increase in demand on the education system[Newton and Karran, ibid: 54], and on associated services such as school meals.2 Similarly, improved infant mortality rates also resulted in increased demands on schools.[Hampton, op. cit.] These increases were therefore compounded by the increase in the school leaving age to 16 in 1972.[Elcock, op. cit; Hampton, op. cit; Newton and Karran, op. cit.]

The numbers of children in care and in local authority homes also increased over the period. Between 1951 and 1978, for example, the proportion of children in care rose from 1.4 in every thousand to 2.1 and, over the period 1951 to 1971, the numbers resident in local authority homes rose from 5.6 per thousand to 6.4.[Newton and Karran, op. cit: 54] Thus, by 1972-3 90,000 minors were in local authority care.[Elcock, op. cit: 128] Although these examples indicate an expansion in local government service provision they are not explained by Newton and Karran's assertion that the expansion in service provision was primarily the result of growing affluence.[op. cit.] The ability to pay for such facilities through an expanded tax base does not, for example, explain why they were provided, nor how socio-economic prosperity missed such groups.3

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2 Between 1963 and 1968, for example, the number of school children receiving school meals increased from 3,849,000 to 5,000,000.[Labour Party, 1966-1984, 1969: 74]

3 This and related points are explored in the final sub-section.
As intimated earlier, improved standards of care had the cyclical effect of increasing life expectancy and therefore demand among the groups discussed and those categorised as ill, disabled, or afforded special status. Similarly, the broadening of definitions to include more people within the above categories required expansion of service provision. Between 1951 and 1977, for example, the number of people registered as blind rose at a rate of 1.3% per annum and those categorised as deaf, dumb or hard of hearing by 3% a year. Over the period 1961 to 1978 the numbers of people categorised as physically disabled increased by 12% a year, while those categorised as mentally disabled rose by 4% per annum. Finally, between 1960 and 1970 the number of people in local authority residential homes who were categorised as disabled increased from 84,000 to 179,000 and local authority registers grew by 8% per year. [Newton and Karran, ibid: 55]

The preceding figures indicate changes in categorisation of particular groups, as well as demographic changes. Improved longevity, for example, affects population composition, but also explains increases in other categories such as blind, deaf, etc. Furthermore, by recognising and addressing the needs of such groups, the levels and diversity of local government provision increased. By improving services and increasing their effectiveness, for example, more people became dependent on, or at least users of, the facilities available. [loc. cit.] That such groups did not appear spontaneously, implies that the new responsibilities were allocated to local government in accordance with new political and administrative objectives. To this end, the Labour Governments of the 1960s, and the development of the welfare state as part of the post war settlement between capital and labour were contributory factors, and receive consideration in the final sub-section.

**Local Infra-structure**

As the introductory paragraphs of this section note, the topics discussed in each sub-section overlap. Thus, of the three areas discussed here, education provision is mentioned in previous and subsequent sub-sections. Similarly, the categories of housing and transport are considered here and in the following sub-section. Dichotomous or dualistic categorisation and interpretation, whether in terms of political, economic, or structural delineation would therefore be superficial and obfuscatory. Discussion of education, housing and transport under the heading of local infrastructure is undertaken to illustrate the interrelated dimensions of service expansion and provision, and as a contribution to the reciprocal validation of the services category.

In historical terms, education was the largest single service sector of local government, accounting for nearly two thirds of local authority expenditure and
almost half of its employment.[Elcock, 1982: 117] Although education services focus primarily on the young and therefore responsive to demographic changes, they should not be categorised exclusively as a personal service, as such functions also serve economic requirements by providing a trained work-force.[Newton and Karran, 1985: 56] Education therefore forms part of the local and national infrastructure, and constitutes a response to a variety of demands and needs; including those of capital and labour.\footnote{Motions submitted to the Labour Party Annual Conference(LPAC), and to the TUC, for example, indicate the demands of organised labour.[Labour Party 1966-1984; TUC 1960-1987]}

In addition to the changes outlined in the previous sub-section, the numbers using further and higher education facilities provided by local authorities increased from 38,000 in 1948, to 108,000 in 1973. An integral aspect of this expansion involved the creation of polytechnics in the 1960s[Hampton, 1987: 89]; with 26 out of 30 proposed institutions being designated by 1971, and serving 162,914 students.[Labour Party 1966-1984, 1971: 87] Furthermore, many local school buildings were of Victorian vintage, and in need of renewal and repair. In 1945, for instance, 60% of all primary schools and 21% of secondary schools in England had been built before 1902. Thus, a programme of renovation and renewal had, by 1974, provided 7,000,000 new places in primary and secondary school buildings.[Newton and Karran, op. cit: 58]

Another dimension of local infra-structural expansion involved the increase in motorised transport. By 1977, for example, the number of vehicles on the road had increased to 18,000,000, compared to 2,500,000 in 1945, and this contributed to the demand for road building, maintenance, planning, traffic management systems, and policing.[Newton and Karran, ibid: 57] A significant factor in the rise of road traffic was the increasing rate of individual access to a motor car, as indicated by Table 1.1. Similarly, increasing consumerism contributed to an increase in road freight from 1,400,000 lorries in 1960, to 3,100,000 in 1978.[loc. cit.] Thus, as local government had responsibility for the renewal and maintenance of sewers and bridges, again of Victorian origin, and not designed for such levels of motorised traffic, activities in this area also increased. Overall, the combination of the above factors required the provision and maintenance of 184,000 miles of local roads by 1974.[loc. cit.]

A final area of increasing infra-structural activity and responsibility of local authorities involves the provision of housing. Between 1945 and 1965, for example, local government was responsible for the building of 2,900,000 houses; exceeding private sector output by 1,000,000. By 1978, however, 8,900,000 units, nearly half the housing stock of Britain, had been built since the second world war, and local government managed around a third of the total housing stock.[Newton and Karran, op. cit: 59] Similarly, the proportion of housing stock owned by local authorities in
England and Wales rose from 25% in 1961, to 30% in 1976 [Hampton, op. cit: 59], and in Britain as a whole from 27% in 1960, to 32% in 1976 [Dunleavy, 1980: 72]. These figures are all the more remarkable if considered in the change of emphasis, after 1965, from new build to rehabilitation and renewal of existing buildings; even though both approaches required extensive housing management services [Newton and Karran, op. cit: 59].

**Table 1.1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Car Ownership</th>
<th>Proportion (%) of households with or without access to cars in:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Car</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Car</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or more cars</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Dunleavy, op. cit: 72

The growth in housing provision is also illustrated by Karn's description of central government's attempt to increase public sector activity through the advocacy of a comprehensive housing service which urged local authorities to become involved in urban renewal, home ownership and public sector construction [1985: 164]. Table 1.2, for example, demonstrates the growth in housing construction between 1964 and 1968, but illustrates the gap between the Labour Government's target of 500,000 per year; exacerbated by a fall in construction during 1969 and 1970 [Coates, 1975: 114].

**Table 1.2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New Houses Completed 1964-1968 (Great Britain)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The economic requirements for the renewal of an ageing infra-structure and the Labour Government's plan to improve the welfare state, contributed to the expansion of local authority infrastructural activity. This point is explored from another angle in Chapter Three, where the impact of the Callaghan Government's cuts programme is considered in a macro-economic perspective. At the local level, however, the expansion of local infra-structural provision is equally indicative of the internal relation between capital and labour. In other words, the provision of education and housing facilities address simultaneous economic and social needs; of people as private citizens and as workers and employers. As has been noted, however, the demands and perceptions of the labour movement form the focus of this thesis, and therefore receive further attention in the final sub-section.
New and Improved Services

In keeping with changing demands and expectations, a series of legislative decisions bestowed new responsibilities upon local government. Thus, in the 1960s and 1970s new obligations in relation to health, social services, housing, planning, environmental control, and consumer protection were created for local government.[Newton and Karran, 1985] The expansion of local government during the post-war period was, however, restrained by the loss of responsibility for: major roads, hospitals, public assistance schemes, rates valuation, gas, and electricity.[Dearlove, 1979; Dunleavy, 1984; Saunders, 1984; Thomson, 1982].

As well as acquiring new responsibilities, local authorities were required to improve the standards of services already provided. In the area of personal services, for example, the Children and Young Persons Act 1969 added to and improved the requirements laid down by the Children's Act 1948. The 1948 Act had specified responsibilities for the care, maintenance and supervision of neglected children, and these responsibilities were expanded by subsequent legislation.[Newton and Karran, op. cit: 62]

In addition, the Local Government Act 1972 facilitated the expansion and improvement of service provision by removing limits on local authority expenditure for leisure interests such as theatres, and on the promotion of festivals and shows.[Byrne, 1985: 83] Similarly, the Fire Precautions Act 1971, and the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 increased local authority responsibilities by requiring Fire Brigades to inspect and award fire certificates to premises used for residential, educational, leisure, and employment purposes.[Byrne, ibid: 71]


New powers allocated to local government, between 1968 and 1975, also included: pollution control; reclamation and conservation of land; preservation of wild creatures.
and flowers; provision of camping and picnic sites; removal of dangerous industrial tips; control of dangerous litter and poisonous waste; and, regulation of listed buildings. [Newton and Karran, op. cit] These responsibilities were also accompanied by: policing the sale of dangerous goods, under the Consumer Protection Act 1961; a requirement, under the 1973 Fair Trading Act, for local authority consumer protection departments to pass on complaints to the Office of Fair Trading; and, powers provided by the Consumer Credit Act 1974, for local authorities to regulate the provision of credit and to prosecute offenders. [loc. cit.] The increasing involvement of local government in the provision of environmental and consumer protection services is also indicative of the effects of increased road traffic, and the rise of consumerism. [loc. cit.]

**Reasons for Expansion**

The intention here is not to provide a definitive explanation of why local government service provision expanded in the ways outlined. Instead, attention is focused on welfare service provision, and consideration afforded to the issue and implications of the state's role as 'a mode of existence of labour in capitalism'. [Bonefield, 1993: 120] In other words, expanding local government service provision is understood not only as concessions won by the working class [Cockburn, 1977: 54-6], but as a consequence of the internal relation of capital and labour.

There is, for example, a superficiality about Newton and Karran's attempt to explain the expansion of service provision in terms of: increasing affluence, rising expectations, or as a response to the needs and demands of an affluent society. [1985: 66] Similarly, Hampton's equation of increases in the general wealth of society with a proportionate increase in spending on services provided by local government [1987: 89], is equally unsatisfactory. The simple assumption that as the economy grows basic living needs are met more easily, and that extra resources are available for the services provided by local government, fails to explain why the extra resources were used in a particular way. This discussion therefore addresses reasons why 'central government allocate responsibilities to local government in accordance with criteria that meet political and administrative objectives of the centre at a given time'[Hampton, ibid: 68], and why certain political responses are made to economic and other factors. [Newton and Karran, op. cit: 74]

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5 See Appendix One for further consideration of this issue.
6 The term 'working class' has an ambiguous and often emotive usage. Texts of an orthodox academic orientation use the term to refer to people employed in manual occupations. Unless attributed to a particular author, therefore, the terms is used in this thesis to refer to all those who sell their labour-power in order to live; notwithstanding the determinations that constitute the whole.
Such an explanation is fraught with difficulties, however, if focused on the 'complex and heterogeneous relationships that result in the local state pursuing policies which the centre finds inappropriate'[Duncan and Goodwin, 1988: 89] or the 'inter-governmental flows of influence in urban policy change'.[Dunleavy, 1980: 108] The present discussion therefore explains one aspect of such processes, namely: how and why the state's role as 'a mode of existence of labour in capitalism'[Bonefield, op. cit: 120] equates to labour movement demands for improved welfare provision.

The existence of such demands are evident in the annual reports of the LPAC and the TUC. In its report on the Social Contract 1976-7, for example, the General Council states: 'The TUC has always considered the steady growth of public expenditure as part of the social wage and part of the development of a socially just society'.[TUC 1960-1987, 1976: 412] Furthermore, the motions submitted by member trade unions, and the activities the official bodies of the TUC indicate that many of the services provided by local government, and the welfare state in general, correspond to the demands of organised labour.[TUC 1960-1987] Such coincidences do not, however, explain why concessions were allowed.

One superficial reason is the existence of a government favourable to the demands made. Thus, the majority of advances in welfare provision, described in previous subsections, were enacted by the Labour Government's 1964-70. The parliamentary report sections of the LPAC Reports for the period 1966-1971, for example, catalogue such developments. Similarly, motions submitted to the LPAC and TUC during the period demonstrate the demand for expanded services. In 1969, for example, both the LPAC and TUC approved motions calling for the early implementation of the Seebhomb Report recommendations on Social Services.[TUC 1960-1987, 1969; Labour Party 1966-1984, 1969]

As argued in Appendix One, and demonstrated in this and subsequent chapters, the provision of welfare services were not made for the sole benefit of organised labour. Stated in simple terms, such provision also constitutes an indirect subsidy to the reproduction of labour[Painter, 1995: 284], and an integral part of the wage level of the working class, and therefore a subsidy to capitalist production.[Gough, 1975: 76 & 83] In other words, the collective provision of social welfare amenities reduces demands on employers for wage levels to cover the cost of alternative arrangements, and therefore subsidises, indirectly, capital accumulation.

Conversely, concessions are not allowed simply because they are of benefit to capital accumulation. On the contrary, the processes at work can only be understood properly, in terms of the internal relationship of capital and labour i.e. capital's

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7 For the purposes of this discussion the term 'social wage' is taken to mean goods and services provided collectively to all or those unable to afford them privately.[Painter, 1995: 248]
dependence on labour for its continued existence, and therefore of class struggle. Thus, the welfare provision demanded by those who sell their labour-power in order to survive, constitutes a collective subsidy from capital to labour through the state. Due to the internal relation between capital and labour, however, capital also benefits through the indirect subsidies described earlier. A final affirmation of this internal relationship is evident from the intention of other labour movement policies and demands to secure capital accumulation as a means of financing welfare provision.

The identification of labour movement demands for, and Labour governments implementation of, expansion and improvements in particular areas such as education, housing and social services constitutes empirical and meta-theoretical validation of the services category; identified as worthy of defence by the labour movement campaigns of the 1980s. Aspects of service provision identified and discussed here, for example, correspond to those identified as worthy of defence by the Labour Party National Executive Committee (NEC) in the 1980s, and discussed in Chapter Four. The reciprocal process of validation is therefore developed in subsequent chapters, where the values attached to particular aspects of service provision are interrogated in reference to the levels and types of services provided in later years, as well as those described here. Thus, the values exhibited through the practice considered here, are explored in reference to the examples of resistance discussed in Chapter Three, and subsequent chapters.

EMPLOYMENT

This section considers two important general trends, evident in the decades that preceded the campaigns of the 1980s, and thereby helps to explain why the issue of job protection formed an integral part of the campaigns. In broad terms, these developments can be identified as the apparently concomitant circumstances of public sector expansion and private sector contraction. They are important to the extent that parallels can be drawn between the 'overload thesis' which developed in reaction to these perceived circumstances, and those aspects of government policy and practice which engendered the campaigns studied. Specific attention is paid to these aspects of government policy and practice in Chapters Three and Four, but for the moment the discussion focuses on three factors that help illustrate the growing importance of local authority employment: the expansion of local government employment; attempts at economic regeneration; and, the rise in overall unemployment.

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8 Chapter Three considers labour movement variation from this equation in the form of the AES, and the acceptance of fiscal and 'overload' theories by the Callaghan Government 1976-79.

The discussion is divided into three sub-sections, each dealing with one of the above factors. The first sub-section, for example, is entitled Local Authority Employment and outlines its growth, the reasons for it, and the type of employment it involved. Economic Regeneration is the subject and title of the second sub-section, where consideration is afforded to: the growing importance of regeneration projects for the creation and preservation of jobs; the main schemes employed; and, the role played by local authorities. The final sub-section provides a brief synopsis of general employment trends that developed in the 1970s, including the rise in post-war unemployment, and explains the importance attached to local authority employment levels in this context.

**Local Authority Employment**

As part of their contribution to the 'overload thesis' Bacon and Eltis produced figures to show that employment outside what they described as the industrial sector increased by 40% between 1961 and 1975. This figure was broken down to show increases of 26.5% in central government employment, 69.7% in local government, and 10.5% in other services.[Newton & Karran 1985: 22] The proclaimed increase of 69.7% in local government employment, however, contained two major flaws. First of all, the figure was based on estimated employment levels for 1975, and the source on which the figures were based produced revised figures in 1982 showing a 66.9% increase.[Newton and Karran, ibid: 27] Secondly, and perhaps more seriously, Bacon and Eltis adopted, uncritically, the practice of counting part-time employees as a whole job.[loc. cit.] Corrected figures produced by Newton and Karran show a still substantial increase in local government employment of up to 45%[loc. cit.], but this example demonstrates problems that stem from a separation of theory and practice.

Elsewhere, the increase in local government employment is chronicled as a proportion of the national work-force and, in spite of the different base years used, several commentators provide strikingly similar figures. Cockburn, for example, records an increase in totals employed from 1,500,00 in 1954 to 2,500,000 in 1974, with the latter figure accounting for 11% of the national work-force.[1977: 62] Similarly, for the period 1960-1974, Taylor records an increase from 1,821,000 to 3,000,000, equating to 7.5 and 12.1% of the national work-force respectively.[1978: 30] Meanwhile, Walsh shows local government employment doubling, between 1952 and 1975, from 1,450,000 to 2,900,000, and therefore from 6.2 to 11.3% of the national work-force.[1985: 100] If there had been no movement of jobs from local government to the health service and water authorities, however, local government would have accounted for 13% of all employees.[Dunleavy, 1980: 60]
Figures relating local government employment as a proportion of the public sector also indicate its growth. Between 1958 and 1980, for example, local employees increased from 1,656,000 to 3,000,000 and therefore from less than 25% to 40% of the total public sector work-force.[Newton and Karran, op. cit: 86] These totals are similar to those provided by Thomson who records total local authority employment rising from 1,870,000 in 1961 to 3,013,000 in 1980, and from 32% of the public sector in 1961, to 41.2% in 1979.[1982: 111] Given these figures, it seems safe to conclude that, in spite of the over-estimation by Bacon and Eltis, there was a significant rise in local government employment in gross numbers, and as a percentage of national and public sector employment.

The evidence that local government employment increased during the period up to 1975 may be convincing but it does not explain why it increased. Simplistic, monological explanations equate expanding service provision with increased levels of employment. The rise in employment was not just a reflection of the increase in service provision, however, but also of the nature of those services. In other words, many of the services performed by local government, education, policing, social work, and local health, were geared to dealing with people and their problems. They therefore offered limited scope for technological development, and the use of capital intensive machinery.[Gough, 1975; Newton & Karran, op. cit; Thomson, op. cit; Walsh, op. cit.]

This view reflects the values and approach prevalent at the time of service expansion and improvement. The quality of service provision in the areas identified was, for example, measured more in terms of labour intensity than outputs that were difficult to quantify.[Newton and Karran, op. cit: 86] Thus, improvements in social services were reflected in the increased in the number of home helps from 6,000 in 1949, to 11,000 in 1975.[Newton and Karran, ibid: 53] Likewise, overall numbers of teachers rose from 344,000 in 1961, to 477,000 in 1971[Newton and Karran, ibid: 54], and after the school leaving age rose to 16 in 1972, the years 1973 and 1974 witnessed increases in the numbers of secondary teachers of 6.7 and 6.2% respectively.[Newton and Karran, ibid: 69] Improvements in the standards of provision therefore contributed to higher levels of employment, due to the nature of the service areas improved and expanded; essentially personal services.

Although local government was labour intensive, the expansion in employment was not accompanied by increased labour costs; as 'the relative price effect'(RPE) predicts, and the overload thesis maintained. According to the RPE, for example,
labour costs of labour intensive enterprises are expected to increase in line with increases in more capital intensive areas. In other words, the capability of the latter area to pay higher wages in return for increased productivity through the use of technology is assumed to create demands for higher wages in labour intensive areas due to pressures of comparability and inflation.[Walsh, op. cit: 100] Local government was able to avoid an explosion in labour costs, however, due to the increased use of low paid, part-time women workers.[Newton and Karran, op. cit: 84-9]

This group of workers are portrayed as slowly and reluctantly unionised and therefore difficult to organise for political and trade union action[loc. cit.]; such as wage increases. The implication that women or part-time workers are inevitably anti-union should not, however, be accepted at face value. Many part-time jobs were and are located in isolated units, and include school secretaries, school meals workers, office cleaners, and carers working in social service centres. Isolation and attachment to clients accounts for the absence of militancy and organisation,[Cresswell, 1994] more than a person's sex or employment status. Nevertheless, the rise in part-time employment helps explain why local government wages and salaries accounted for a similar proportion of local current expenditure in 1978 as they had in 1958.[Newton and Karran, op. cit: 88-9]

Table 1.3
Local Authority Employment, 1952-72 (thousands)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male Full time</th>
<th>Female Full time</th>
<th>Male and Female Full time</th>
<th>Male Part time</th>
<th>Female Part time</th>
<th>Male and Female Part time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>798</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>1193</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>1089</td>
<td>667</td>
<td>1756</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>703</td>
<td>828</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage increase  1952-72</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: These figures relate to UK local authority employment. Source: Stoker, 1988: 11.

Table 1.3, for example, details the increases in local government jobs according to employment status. Thus, between 1952 and 1972, there was an overall increase in part-time employees of 224.7% compared to 47.2% for full-time employees[loc. cit.] Almost half of the increase in full-time employment occurred between 1962 and 1972, however, when numbers increased by 20%.[Newton and Karran, op. cit: 27] In contrast, part-time female employees rose, between 1950 and 1980, from 15 to 33% of the local government work-force, while full-time male employment decreased from 55 to 37%.[loc. cit.] By 1980, only 64% of total local government employees were full-time, and divided 58% to 42% between men and women. In stark contrast, and
confirmation of Newton and Karran's claim, 91% of part-time workers at this time were women. [Thomson, op. cit: 110]

In addition to explaining the fairly stable labour costs of local government, the developments in part-time and full-time employment provide an indication of problems encountered by trade unions and others involved in the campaigns of the 1980s. They represent problems in terms of organising and mobilising a fragmented work-force, but also with regard to the type of job and conditions of service that the campaigns were trying to defend. In other words, the campaign to save jobs, of whatever nature, emphasises the defensive nature of the campaigns. Granted that trade unions were, as part of their day to day business, trying to improve the conditions and wages of their members, but as subsequent discussions demonstrate, this aspect of their struggle tended to be lost in the drive to create and protect jobs of any status, and therefore as an abstract category.

**Economic Regeneration**

A striking level of agreement is evident among analyses of local authority attempts at economic regeneration in the decades preceding the 1980s. The similarity between accounts is all the more striking because they cover several areas. A consensus exists over: the reasons why local authorities became involved in economic regeneration; the type and intensity of activity; and the use of powers conferred through legislation. In outlining central government attempts to encourage economic regeneration, the following discussion recognises that powers were conferred to local authorities through legislation, but that the use of such powers depended on local determination. The account should not, therefore, be understood as indicating a universal or homogeneous approach by local authorities. On the contrary, such concern and activity was most evident in those areas affected by the ravages of economic decline and even then variations exist between the levels and directions of the initiatives undertaken. Significantly, however, many of the areas considered here, were prominent in the campaigns of the 1980s.

In a broad sense, the mere existence of a local authority can act as a stimulant to the local economy; as perhaps the largest employer in a given area, or a major consumer of goods and services, such as insurance, new technology, stationery, building supplies, equipment, and food for school meals. [Mawson & Miller, 1985; Newton and Karran, 1985; Walsh, 1985] Similarly, a local authority's infra-structural responsibilities, discussed in the previous section, are carried out through its capital programme, and represent a major form of local investment, providing work for the local building industry and other contractors. [Benington, 1985: 5] More specifically, however, local authorities undertook small scale activities in the 1960s that are
analogous to the later more determined attempts at economic stimulation. Under the auspices of the Local Authority (Land) Act 1963, for example, local authorities were allowed to acquire land, build factories on it, and provide loans to private developers worth up to 75% of the capital value concerned.[Chandler and Lawless, 1985; Boddy, 1983]

Until the 1970s, however, local authority attempts at economic regeneration were focused on assisted areas, and aimed at supplementing the regional industrial policy of central government which rested on industrial incentives and location controls.[Boddy, 1983; Mawson and Miller, op. cit.] Then, in the early 1970s, a rapid expansion of economic initiatives took place.[Boddy, 1984a: 160-5] In addition to the provision of sites for industries, already identified, efforts were also made to promote specific localities, to market specific sites and premises, and to provide property lists and information for business advice services. Firms were also financed through favourable loans or grants for the acquisition of sites and premises, plant machinery, or operating costs.[Boddy, ibid.] This new approach was achieved, in part, by taking advantage of various pieces of legislation, whether designed for the purpose of regeneration or not.

The Town and Country Planning Act 1971, for example, was used in ways that exceeded traditional land use concerns.[Hampton, 1987: 211] Thus, under section 112 of the Act, local authorities were allowed to acquire, sell or develop land.[Chandler and Lawless, op. cit: 225] Similarly, section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 allowed authorities interested in regeneration to let land on a free or reduced industrial rent, on either a short term tenancy or with the consent of the secretary of State.[loc. cit.] Section 122 of the same Act also allowed local authorities to transfer land from one use to another, e.g. from housing development to industrial estate.[loc. cit.] Finally, section 137 of the 1972 Act, allowed authorities to spend the equivalent of 2p for every pound raised in rates, on projects considered to be of benefit to the locality. Such initiatives were inevitably small scale, however, as central government permission was required for major investment in public service infrastructure.

Concern over the effects of unemployment, precipitated by the decline in the manufacturing sector and the high interest rates which followed the oil crisis of 1973[Boddy, 1983 and 1984a; Mawson, 1983; Young and Mason, 1983], were reflected in legislation intended to facilitate local authority activity in the area of economic regeneration. The Community Land Act 1975, for example, provided local authorities with the power and finances to acquire land for industrial development, and to fund the provision of infrastructure before sale or lease to the private sector.[Boddy, 1983; Lawless, 1979; Chandler and Lawless, op. cit.] Similarly, the
Inner Urban Areas Act 1978 is described by Boddy as recasting the Urban Programme from a concern with welfare to regeneration.[1984a: 162]

Under the 1978 Act, local authorities were allowed to spend a greater proportion of funds on the regeneration of urban infrastructure.[Mason, 1983: 51] In particular, the Act allowed specified authorities to declare industrial or commercial improvement areas.[Chandler and Lawless, op. cit: 98] All those involved were eligible for central grants up to at a rate of 75 percent of expenditure in improvement areas approved by the DOE, and within two years of the Act, 60 such areas were declared by 30 local authorities.[loc. cit.] The Inner Urban Areas Act took many of its characteristics from the Tyne and Wear Act of 1976 which, as a private act of parliament, had addressed specific local problems.[Chandler and Lawless, ibid; Storey, 1983]

Individual authorities practised a variety of initiatives under the legislative provisions identified, including the development of older commercial and industrial premises in Nottingham, Southwark and West Yorkshire.[Chandler and Lawless, op. cit: 96] Southwark, for example, adopted policies in 1975 aimed at countering unemployment, including a preferred industry policy intended to strengthen local manufacturing activity, and in 1978 created an Industrial and Commercial Development Fund financed under the auspices of section 137 of the 1972 Local government Act.[North and Gough, 1983: 156] Wandsworth and Southwark also received designated area status under the Inner Urban Areas Act, and the docklands of Southwark and Hackney were granted partnership status.[North and Gough, ibid: 156-7]

Elsewhere, Calderdale established an Economic Regeneration Advisory Committee in 1976; as the initiative of councillors, the local Chamber of Commerce, and the Trades Council.[Mawson, op. cit: 98-101] Similarly, West Yorkshire Metropolitan District Council established an Economic Development Sub-Committee in 1977.[Chandler and Lawless, op. cit: 192] Finally, a number of authorities included specific measures in their capital accounts for economic regeneration: Sunderland Borough Council's capital expenditure on industrial land acquisition, site development and factory construction averaged £600,000 per year from 1977-8 to 1979-80; for 1978-9, Sheffield City Council's capital programme identified industrial development expenditure of £3,600,000 for the period 1974 to 1980, of which £2,900,000 was for factory development; and, Lewisham Borough Council in London produced a capital programme for 1979-80 to 1983-4 which included £3,200,000 for industrial development.[Boddy, 1983: 34-5]

Because local authority attempts at economic regeneration were property led, however, the creation of jobs became a secondary focus in the aim of economic development.[Boddy, 1984a] Thus, the type of activity described earlier, attempted to
attract expanding or relocating firms with the hope of promoting new business in the area. Employment creation was therefore overshadowed as local authorities competed with each other for 'new' investment, rather than developing existing firms. [Boddy, ibid: 163-4] Furthermore, the focus of local authority assistance on capital expenditure, such as the provision of premises, plant and machinery, served to reduce the cost of capital investment relative to that of labour. If local authorities wanted to increase employment, therefore, a more appropriate subsidy would have been directed at the cost of labour. [Boddy, ibid.]

Furthermore, the emphasis on small firms, though considered to be dynamic and therefore offer the potential for rapid expansion, developed as a consequence of the reserves available to local authorities, and the local orientation of small firms. [Boddy, ibid: 163-4] Between 1975-6 and 1977-8 Cleveland County Council's £3m expenditure is dwarfed by £269.5m Regional Development Grant allocated over the same period. [North and Gough, op. cit: 191] The small scale of local investment also meant that one large employer, or in some cases whole industries, closing down in the locality wiped out employment equivalent to many small firms. In Tyne and Wear, for example, the 35 nursery factory units built and let by the end of 1976 produced only 139 jobs. [Storey, op. cit: 205] Similarly, while the 147 firms receiving grants and loans from Tyne and Wear County Council increased employment by 81%, this amounted to only 967 jobs. [Storey, op. cit: 205] The scale of this problem is illustrated further in the following sub-section, where the scale of job losses over the period is identified.

In addition, the epistemological truth claim outlined in the introductory chapter, that circular processes of validation serve to obfuscate reality, is illustrated by Boddy's argument that the success of economic regeneration schemes was measured in their own terms. By interpreting economic regeneration as the provision of sites and premises, and measuring its success in terms of the numbers made available, for example, the espoused aim of creating jobs was obscured. Similarly, the number of jobs created or retained, or the number of jobs lost by or to other areas, were also excluded from the process of measuring the success of local regeneration schemes. [Boddy, op. cit: 163-4] Instead, the creation of industrial sites became the objective, and the attraction of employers to those sites became more important than the overall quality or numbers of jobs in the locality or elsewhere.

Local authority attempts to regenerate the local private sector, and the extent of private sector employment stimulated by local authorities, contrasts with the level of local authority employment described in the previous sub-section. The small scale of the schemes, and their limited success, also serves to provide a context in which to understand the importance attached to local authority jobs themselves, especially in
relation to the move toward long-term mass unemployment discussed in the next subsection. Thus, to the extent that local authority jobs, albeit increasingly low paid and part-time, were more abundant than those stimulated in the private sector, they were considered to be worth defending. This point is developed in Chapter Four were attention is afforded to negotiated reductions in service conditions in favour of saving jobs.

**Employment Levels In Perspective**

The increase in local government employment, described in the first sub-section, acquires greater significance when understood in terms of the steep rise in unemployment. Between 1964 and 1974, for example, unemployment levels rose from 393,000 to 600,000, or from 1.7 to 2.6% of the national work-force, including a jump from 260,000(1.1%) to 600,000(2.6%), between July 1966 and February 1967. [Middlemass, 1979: 437] By 1976, however, unemployment stood at 1,276,000 the equivalent of 5.3 percent of the work-force. [King, 1980: 368] Furthermore, and in keeping with the view that the levels of unemployment resulted from a collapse of manufacturing industry, Mason records that between 1960 and 1980 the number of manufacturing jobs fell by almost 2,000,000. [1983: 54]

This overall demise is illustrated graphically in reference to local developments in urban areas. Manchester, for example, lost 20% of its manufacturing base between 1966 and 1971 [Lawless: 1979: 154], and between 1966 and 1972 lost 35,000 jobs while only 11,000 were created. [Young and Mills, 1982: 88] Similarly, 20% of Islington's jobs base of 1961 had disappeared by 1971. Between 1951 and 1971 Wandsworth also lost about half of its manufacturing labour force, and in 1975 Liverpool had 70% more unemployed males than it had in 1971. [Lawless, op. cit: 154-5] Furthermore, Lawless's assertion that London's employment base was reduced by about 500,000 between 1961 and 1974 [loc. cit] reflects the views expressed in the Greater London Labour Party (GLLP) Manifesto for the Greater London Council (GLC) election of 1981. Thus, the GLLP argued that: 'over the past twenty years the capital has lost some 500,000 jobs, a pace of decline that outstrips any other region in the country'. [Chandler and Lawless, 1985: 27] The 100,000 office jobs created in London during this period are therefore put into perspective, and their impact on unemployment levels reduced because they were not necessarily compatible with the skills of those who were losing their jobs. [Lawless, op. cit: 159]

The developments described here, demonstrate the inadequate scale of local attempts at regeneration when compared to the collapse of whole industries. In South Yorkshire, for example, the Sheffield cutlery industry contracted from 30,000 employees in the 1950s to 5,500 by 1977. [Chandler and Lawless, op. cit: 142]
Furthermore, Sheffield City Council estimated that between 1971 and 1983: employment in Sheffield's steel industry fell from 45,000 to 18,000; the total number of steel jobs lost between Sheffield and Rotherham amounted to 35,000; and, 110,000 steel jobs had been lost in Britain during the period.[Chandler and Lawless, ibid: 148-9]

In the context of growing unemployment and the limited impact of local authority responses, it is not surprising that the defence of local authority jobs became a major issue. One of the reasons local government employment was so important for the campaigns of the 1980s was because, in many cases, local authorities were the largest sector of employment, or the biggest single employer in their particular area.[Chandler an Lawless, op. cit: 160] Thus, in the context of the continuing economic decline that blighted the 1970s, and even accelerated in the 1980s, local authorities were the main source of local jobs. As Thomson argues, for example, the increase in local authority jobs was not only a means of expanding local government services, but also a way of absorbing some of the jobs lost to the manufacturing sector.[1982: 110]

Furthermore, LPAC and TUC reports during the period demonstrate a growing labour movement concern at the levels of unemployment, and also identify local authority activity with attempts to address local unemployment. In 1971, for example, the TUC organised a campaign involving nine demonstrations in cities across Britain, and culminating in a mass lobby of Parliament on 24.11.71.[TUC 1960-1987, 1971 and 1972] Three motions on the issue were also submitted to the Labour Party Conference in 1971 and three to the TUC in 1972.[loc. cit.] A significant element of the motions submitted to the TUC in 1972, and other years, is their identification of an interrelation between economic growth, employment and social and welfare provision. Composite motions in 1964, 1971, 1972 and 1976, for example, all make such a link in calling for a planned approach to economic policy.[TUC 1960-1987, 1964; 1971; 1972; and 1976] The significance of this approach lies in the acceptance of Keynesian assumptions, which linked welfare provision with economic growth, and sought a solution to unemployment through the latter. In other words, redistribution of wealth and full employment are premised on a healthy capitalist economy, and not identified as an end in itself to be achieved through a transformation of economy and society.

Finally, the importance attached to local authority involvement in economic regeneration can be demonstrated by referring to two examples. First of all, at a meeting between the TUC General Council, the Prime Minister and other Ministers in December 1971, the Secretary of State for the Environment stated that the

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12 See Chapter Four for examples of the employment levels in the larger authorities.
Government was encouraging local authorities to use slum clearance and housing improvement schemes as means of regenerating local economies. [TUC 1960-1987, 1972: 250] Secondly, in February 1972, the General Council illustrated the significance it attached to the role of local authorities in employment creation by recommending that Trades Councils consider creating Unemployment Committees. Among other duties, such committees were expected to press local authorities to expand local employment through slum clearance, housing improvement schemes and through local authority house building programmes. [TUC 1960-1987, 1972: 51]

The discussion and identification of changes in employment patterns, at the public and private sector level, and within local authorities provides an explanation for the importance attached to local authority employment in the 1980s. Thus, consideration of the move toward mass unemployment, attempts at local regeneration, and labour movement demands for remedial action identifies labour movement concerns and attempts to address the problem. As with the discussion of services in the previous section, therefore, the category of jobs is therefore validated in empirical and meta-theoretical terms, and the process continued in subsequent chapters where the value attached to local authority employment, the type and conditions of jobs, and the practice of defence are interrogated in reference to the historical context initiated here.

LOCAL DEMOCRACY

By considering the constitutional practice of local democracy in the decades prior to the 1980s, this section completes the preliminary stages of the historical context within which the conceptual principles and practice of the labour movement campaigns of the 1980s can be interrogated. In other words, the section explores the concept of local democracy in reference to the practice of the local state, and thereby helps to identify what the labour movement campaigns were defending. As part of the process, the practice of constitutional local democracy is explored and validated in reference to the questions of autonomy and centralisation. Thus, those aspects of constitutional democracy threatened by the financial restrictions, penalties and rate-capping imposed by the Conservative Government in the 1980s, are identified and explored.

13 The reference to motions adopted at national conferences is a reflection of local activity as well as general concern in the movement. The Liverpool NALGO Branch records shows, for example, how motions to the national conference and the TUC were debated, amended and proposed at branch level through Branch Executive Councils and Departmental Steward Committees. [Liverpool NALGO BEC 1979-1987] Similarly, and not withstanding the changes in membership and activity discussed in the following chapter, within the Labour Party motions are discussed at Ward and District Party level before reaching conference. The composition of motions also demonstrates a wide interest in particular topics as, of course, does their adoption by national conferences.
At this juncture the question of local democracy is addressed in constitutional terms. By identifying and considering issues and categories related to this practice, however, the section facilitates their reciprocal interrogation validation with the practice of democracy within the labour movement. This process is developed in later chapters, where questions of representation, delegation, and the mandating of representatives are considered in relation to the practice of labour movement bodies involved in the campaigns. Thus, the influence of constitutional practices on the organisation and practice of the labour movement is identified and subjected to interrogation.

The areas identified in the opening paragraphs of this section are explored in sub-sections entitled: Autonomy; Centralisation; and, Organisation. The first discussion addresses the concept of local autonomy in terms of local tax raising powers, the legislative orbit of local government, and consequent variations in local policy, spending, and service provision. This theme is then developed in the second subsection through the exploration of arguments that local authorities became increasingly dependent on central grants as opposed to local rates, and that such trends amount to a process of centralisation. Finally, debates concerning the organisation and structure of sub-national government, the level of government to which functions are allocated, and the reasons offered as explanations for re-organising local government are considered as interpretations of democratic practice.

**Autonomy**

In his analysis of theories that address the issue of sub-national and city government autonomy, Goldsmith defines the concept as one of independence or self-government.[1995: 228] The two categories should not be understood as separate entities, however, as both interpretations are evident in Miliband's assertion that local government can act as agent of, and obstacle to, the centre.[1969: 49] In other words, the extent to which local government can be an obstacle to the centre depends on how far it acts as government or administrator, and therefore on the amount of independence exercised in the formulation and practice of its policies. This discussion explores the extent to which local authorities were able to exercise a degree of autonomy during the period analysed, and identifies the relevance of such factors to the campaign aim of defending local democracy in the 1980s.

In common with others, Cockburn[1977] identifies a shift in the practice of local government in the 1960s from administration to government.[Gyford, 1985; Hampton, 1987] This development is considered to have accompanied the rediscovery of urban poverty and attempts to solve such problems at the local level.[Cockburn, op. cit: 18] She does not accept, however, that local government
represents an extension of an ancient right of self-government. On the contrary, the local state is considered to be subject to national government and, given Cockburn's view that the state in capitalist society is an instrument of class domination, arguments over a perceived decline in local democracy are held to be misplaced.[ibid: 2 & 46] In fact, Cockburn portrays the local electoral process as a one way system of domination.[ibid: 48-9] The problem with such a rigid approach is that it fails to recognise, let alone explain, how the local state's role as elected local government can bestow not only an appearance of self-government and independence, but also a practice of it as well. Furthermore, it overlooks the extent to which the electoral process serves to legitimise the demands and activities of localities.[Duncan & Goodwin, 1988: xii & 41]

In addition to the consideration of electoral processes, undertaken in the final sub-section, the perception of local autonomy and local democracy is explored here in reference to two areas of local government practice: the ability of local authorities to raise and collect a local tax; and, the related option to vary the level and quality of service provision above certain minimum standards. Thus, even though local government was politically and economically subordinate[Newton & Karran, 1985: 77], there was enough room for local authorities, such as Clay Cross and South Yorkshire discussed in Chapter Three, to pursue policies which were premised on the validity of local mandates.

Until the 1980s, local authorities retained the right to set their own spending and taxation levels via the rating system, and therefore experienced a degree of political and financial autonomy.[Duncan & Goodwin, op. cit: 96] Furthermore, as has been recorded in the economic regeneration sub-section, the provisions of section 137 of the 1972 Local Government Act allowed local authorities raise extra revenue for anything, unless specifically forbidden, considered to benefit the locality. The Act therefore served to acknowledge and extend the autonomous role afforded to local government.[Duncan & Goodwin, ibid: 97] In these areas local government spending was effectively outside central control and provided for a self reinforcing linkage with political autonomy.[Duncan & Goodwin, ibid: 98]

In addition to, or at least consistent with, their revenue raising powers local authorities were also able to vary policy and therefore levels of service provision. Due to the way local government is founded in statute, for example, local authorities were restrained by centrally imposed statutes, but only to the extent that they had to provide minimum standards in certain areas. They were free to improve upon standards in areas of their choice.[Boaden & Alford, 1969: 206] Similarly, Duncan and Goodwin describe local government law as being concerned primarily with power rather than duties, and as establishing a legal framework within which local
authorities are given discretionary powers to act. [op. cit: 5] Any such autonomy was, and is, limited to the extent that local authorities could act only in those areas allowed by central government. Viewed in retrospect, and especially from the dystopia of the 1980s, however, the combination of such flexibility with local revenue raising powers appears as a favourable practice of local self-government.

The nature of local government autonomy described above goes some way to explaining how or why local government could be understood as a vehicle which could be steered in any direction. [Cockburn, op. cit: 1-2] In other words, the successful struggle for improvements in service provision at both local and national levels reinforced the view that local government entailed an element of autonomy. Indeed, Duncan and Goodwin see such autonomy as a necessary means of dealing with uneven development in capitalist society, and as a consequence giving local groups access to state power. [op. cit.] Thus, while Cockburn's argument rejects the idea that long-term gains could be made for the working class by individual councils, short-term gains contributed to the development and legitimacy of local government.

The significance of this paradox lies in the assertion, made by Crouch and others, that in order to survive and develop, capitalism allows access to state power and authority to groups that are potentially hostile to it. [Flynn 1983; Panitch, 1980] Thus, in this context the potentially hostile groups, represented by the labour movement, were able to make limited gains through the tax raising powers and policy variation allowed at local state level. Advances in welfare, for example, were explained earlier in reference to national initiatives, but the consideration of local attempts at economic regeneration, and the areas considered in chapters Three and Four, also provide examples of variations in local policy and practice. When understood in this context, it is possible to appreciate how and why advocates for labour were motivated to defend as local democracy, what others perceive to be repressive institutions.

Centralisation

In contrast to the conclusions of previous discussion, a number of commentators argue that the period studied here encompasses a move toward centralisation through an increasing reliance of local authorities on central grants, and therefore a reduction in their relative autonomy. Newton and Karran [1985], for example, commenting in retrospect from amidst the developments of the 1980s conclude that the drift toward centralisation, declining local autonomy, and financial dependence had been a long term trend. While some commentators, like Alexander, equate centralisation with an increased central contribution to the financing of local government [1982: 89], others recognise the existence of local discretion. Ashford, for example, argues that the heavy financial dependence of local authorities on central government did not produce
demonstrable effects on policy choice in the sub-national system. [1974: 21]
Similarly, Rhodes [1980] notes that some local authorities chose to accept government directives while others accepted some or none at all.

In addition to the centralisation thesis, premised on increasing financial contributions to local government from the centre, a predominance of so-called national issues in local elections, led some commentators to postulate a 'nationalisation' thesis whereby local politics was believed to be increasingly dominated by national factors which limited the room for local manoeuvre. [Bristow, Kermode, Mannin, 1983] In keeping with other centralisation theses, however, such monological approaches fail to acknowledge or explore the interrelations between local struggle and national policy. They are also guilty of a form of circularity whereby an issue receives an a priori classification as 'national', and based on this classification its identification as a factor in local elections is used to support the thesis that local politics are dominated by national issues. In the context of the previous sub-section, however, it is difficult to pinpoint the moment when local unemployment becomes a national issue. The reality is that there is an interaction and interrelation between each level, as opposed to a domination of one by the other.

Attempting to distinguish increasing financial centralisation and a retention of autonomy in the local determination of policy and service levels holds a potential for confusion, especially as current perceptions may be influenced by the experiences of the 1980s and 1990s. The necessary distinction is illustrated, however, by referring to the DOE's 1972 decision to alter the manner in which local transport was funded. In this instance, the funding system was transferred from a 'specific' to a 'block' grant scheme; a move designed to reduce central government's detailed project control, associated with specific grants, and increase its strategic control of resources and policy. [Skelcher, 1985: 155] Thus, by allocating a block grant, central government allowed a given local authority the discretion to devise its policy and programme, albeit with the proviso of a central veto, and therefore allowed a degree of autonomy within overall limits. Similarly, detailed control over local authority capital expenditure was relaxed in 1970, with the introduction of an annual block loan sanction. This replaced the previous practice of central government approving individual projects, though direct control was retained in the key areas of education, housing and social services. [Redcliffe-Maud and Wood, 1974: 106-7]

As is noted above, the evidence presented in favour of centralisation rests on the monological assumption that an increased reliance on central funding reduces local autonomy. A variety of figures and formulations are presented in support of this view, but they are not wholly convincing as a means of demonstrating greater centralisation prior to the 1980s. Newton and Karran, for example, claim that during
the 1970s for every one pound raised by rates local authorities received two pounds in central grant[op. cit.], and Alexander corroborates these figures by citing the proportion of local services paid for from local rates as 25% in 1973-4 compared to nearly 50% financed from central government grants.[op. cit: 86-88] Similarly, despite the fact that there is some slight variation in the dates and figures and that they are not presented as evidence of centralisation, Table 1.4 provides comparable evidence of a move from local to central finance between 1953 and 1976.

Table 1.4
Local Authority Income Sources, 1953-76 (Current Expenditure)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Made by:</th>
<th>Percentage of Income</th>
<th>Central Grants</th>
<th>Miscellaneous</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rates</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>35.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England &amp; Wales</td>
<td>1953-4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>1958/9</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>36.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1966/7</td>
<td>34.2</td>
<td>36.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1975/6</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>46.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Stoker, 1988: 11.

Duncan and Goodwin, on the other hand, recognise the shift in the proportions involved in local finances, but argue that in spite of a 'strong sense of he who pays the piper calls the tune' the limits on local government spending, set since the 1960s by the Public Expenditure Survey Committee, were often exceeded.[1988: 96-7] Thus, as Duncan and Goodwin point out, and the developments of the early 1980s show, local authorities could still finance overspending through revenue raised from local rates. Attempts to understand the relation between central grant and local policy and practice in monological terms, as one determined by the other, are therefore not only naive but are demonstrably false. Indeed, attempts by the Callaghan Government of the 1970s to influence local spending, discussed in Chapter Three, support the view that prior to the 1980s central government had little direct means of control.

Local authorities may have used central funding as opposed to rates to pursue projects, but this does not necessarily imply a form of central control. On the contrary, local authorities could have spent further if they so wished by raising rates, and as Rate Support Grant(RSG) was calculated on previous years spending local authorities were able to influence the next years contribution. Thus, while Henney argues that Labour governments in the 1960s and 1970s pursued a deliberate political programme of expanding local spending while minimising costs to the local tax payer[1984: 113], this was a process of encouragement as opposed to coercion or control.

The distinction, outlined earlier, between strategic control and detailed policy control is the crucial issue. If outright centralisation was desired central government
could have moved to specific grants which provide direct stimuli for particular functions, and therefore a source of control for central government. By 1973, however, specific grants involved only 47 areas and accounted for 10% of grant aid. [Redcliffe-Maud and Wood, op. cit: 109] The move toward block grant and the absence of any concerted attempt to control the levels of local rates allowed local authorities room for manoeuvre and a perception of local autonomy. There appears to be a double temptation, in the literature covering the period, to view developments either through a perspective of control conditioned by the 1980s and 1990s, or to assume a causal relation that increased central government spending implies increased control over local government. The relation between the two is not so simple and the subtleties need to be appreciated if the perception of autonomy and local democracy is to be understood.

**Organisation**

The re-organisation of local government in England and Wales that took place in the early 1970s served to shape the organisation and practice of constitutional local democracy defended by the campaigns of the 1980s. This sub-section therefore identifies and discusses those areas of contention that were raised before, during, and after the re-organisation, and thereby outlines the local democratic and governmental form considered to be worthy of defence. In broad terms, the practice of local democracy during the period preceding the 1980s is indicated through an exploration of: the structure of elected and un-elected local government; the distribution of functions between levels of government; the issues of size, efficiency, and councillor calibre; and the internal workings of local authorities.

Before considering matters that relate to elected local authorities, it is worth recognising that not all government is in fact elected. Thus, although there were over 440 elected local authorities in England and Wales after re-organisation in the 1970s [Stoker, 1988: 30-1], there were also a number of un-elected quasi-autonomous governmental agencies (QGA). By 1975, for example, the number of QGAs had increased to 85, and their creation usually involved the transfer of powers from local authorities. [Dunleavy, 1980: 103] This process was particularly evident in the post war years with the industry nationalisation of gas, electricity, and health removing related responsibilities from the orbit of local government. [Dunleavy, 1984: 54-5]

A similarly broader trend can also be identified whereby contentious local government responsibilities were transferred from the local electoral sphere to un-elected local, regional, or national agencies. Examples of these transfers include: unemployment benefit administration to the Unemployment Assistance board in the 1930s; the appointment of Regional Hospital Boards and Hospital Management
Committees in the 1940s; and the creation of Regional Economic Planning Councils to by-pass local structures in the 1960s.[Dearlove, 1979: 250-1] In similar fashion, Saunders argues that while the reasons for the creation of regional Water Authorities, Health Authorities, and Economic Planning Boards may vary, the effect was to remove them from the electoral arena, as the preserve of central government, professionals, and private sector interests.[1984: 35]

Recognising that aspects of government are un-elected is one thing, but to assume that elected local government is democratic simply because elections are held annually, is to confuse appearance with reality. Such an assumption is based on one or two premises: an electoral chain of command theory whereby local elections pass policies from voter to councillor, and into practice via officers; and or, that popular participation is evidence of the democratic nature of elected local government.[Dearlove, op cit: 29-30] There are, however, a number of issues that question the validity of such monological theorising. Taking the second premise first, there is general acknowledgement that voter participation in local elections is low in comparison to turn-out in general elections. Between 1973 and 1978, for example, the average turn out in contested Metropolitan County elections was 39%, and 52% the highest average turn-out in Welsh District elections.[Stoker, op. cit: 44] These figures are in sharp contrast to a post 1951 average turn-out of 76% for general elections. Both sets of figures are misleading, however, as they are percentages of those who bothered to register to vote.[loc. cit.] Local government was not a thriving example of participatory democracy, therefore, and claims to legitimacy based on universal franchise are questionable; though individual authorities may witness higher and lower levels of electoral participation at particular times.

In relation to the broader issue of local democratic practice, a clear trend is evident in the 1960s and 1970s whereby many of the approaches to, and prescriptions for, local government became concerned with the technical needs of service delivery, rather than democratic participation.[Dearlove, op. cit; Keating, 1995] In particular, the re-organisation of the 1970s sought to address issues relating to the optimum size and efficiency of local authorities, and councillor calibre.[Dearlove, op. cit; Duncan & Goodwin, 1988; Goss, 1988; Keating, op. cit; Stoker, op. cit.] The parameters of this debate were shaped by two main inquiries and reports produced during the 1960s: the Maud Commission in 1967, and the Redcliffe-Maud Commission in 1969.[Redcliffe-Maud and Wood, 1974]

The case for increased local authority size discussed by the Redcliffe-Maud Commission, for example, equated local authority size with improved democratic practice, improved technical proficiency, and professionalism. While the categories of democracy and efficiency are not mutually exclusive, the practice of bigger
authorities exercising greater powers, financial competence, and exerting greater control over local policy[Keating, op. cit: 119] had the effect of reducing the levels of councillor influence, participation, and therefore electoral representation.[Cockburn, 1977; Dearlove, op. cit; Keating, op. cit.] Furthermore, others argued that local authorities became too big, too political, and subject to vested interests.[Henney, 1984: 381] There is, however, a paradox in Henney's advocacy of business votes, or scrutiny committees representing local business[ibid.: 129], and his complaint that local government was subject to vested interest. Nevertheless, Henney's argument illustrates how the terminology used to justify local government reform concealed a real concern to curtail working class representation on locally elected bodies.[Dearlove, op. cit.]

During the late 1960s and 1970s, developments in the internal organisation and practice of local authorities also eroded the extent to which back-bench councillors, as elected representatives, could affect the formulation and practice of policy. In particular, this process involved the introduction of new management techniques described variously as: Planning, Programming, Budgeting Systems; Policy Planning; Corporate Planning; and, Corporate Management.[Dearlove, op. cit: 143-4] Cockburn, for example, describes how the introduction of Corporate Management in Lambeth involved the removal of detailed policy decisions from the council chamber to committees and, ultimately, to a top level policy committee.[op. cit: 49] An analogy is therefore drawn between this process and the recession of power at the parliamentary level, into cabinet and civil service, that accompanied franchise extensions in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries[loc. cit.], and is in keeping with the Maud Committee's proposals to introduce cabinet style government into local authorities.[Dearlove, op. cit: 133].

The effect of introducing new management techniques also excluded back-bench influence and participation from the decision making process, vesting power in the political leadership and senior officers, and thereby reducing accountability.[Cockburn, op. cit; Dearlove, op. cit.] As was indicated earlier, many of the changes were outlined in the Maud Report of 1967, and are in keeping with attempts to remake local authorities in a corporate image.[Cockburn, op. cit: 15] Thus, the concern with administrative efficiency and the introduction of distinct management techniques, sought to structure local authorities in the image of the private firm[Dearlove, op. cit: 188-9], and were responsible for reductions in accountability and democratic practice.

14 On occasion, the advocacy of fragmenting working class representation on local authorities is quite open, such as in W A Robson's oral evidence to the Royal Commission on Local Government in London, 1959.[Goss, 1988: 64]
The changes outlined above served to abstract decision making from society and, perhaps surprisingly, engendered little overt opposition from the labour movement; apart from isolated examples of local resistance such as in the case of the re-organisation of London County Council in the 1960s.[Goss, op. cit: 67-79] In general terms, labour movement organs were favourable toward the processes. Opposition to the creation of the GLC in 1963, and the Conservative Government's proposals in 1972, for example, rested on fears that the moves would break up the Labour Party's urban power base by merging the existing authorities with the suburbs.[Keating, op. cit; Redcliffe-Maud and Wood, op. cit.] In similar terms of self interest, the general acceptance of the moves by trade unions, and of white collar unions in particular, can be understood as a consequence of the regradings and enhanced career opportunities that often accompanied re-organisation.[Fellows and Grimes, 1984; Redcliffe-Maud and Wood, op. cit.]

The lack of Labour Party opposition can also be understood in terms of a declining commitment to, and interest, in local democracy. The Labour Party in Government under Wilson, for example, were exponents of 'technocratic collectivism', extolling the virtues of efficiency and professional competence; a view associated with the Fabian traditions of the Party.[Basset, 1984; Coates, 1975] There should therefore be little surprise that many of the re-organisation proposals and the practices which reflect these approaches, emanated from inquiries that had been given a remit by the Labour Government's of the 1960s. Neither should there be surprise at the composite motion moved at the 1969 LPAC, by NUPE and South Dorset Constituency Labour Party, welcoming the Redcliffe-Maud report, and recognising the need for restructuing local government to combine efficiency of operation with 'effective' democracy.[Labour Party 1966-1984, 1969: 150] The TUC, on the other hand, though generally in favour of the re-organisation proposals, still valued a degree of autonomy for local authorities. This view is demonstrated by the 1970 annual statement of the TUC's National Advisory Committee for Local Government Services, which welcomed the reorganisation proposals for unitary and metropolitan areas, but called for the greater financial independence of local authorities.[TUC 1960-1987, 1970: 233-4]

The discussions undertaken in this sub-section validate the meta-theoretical categories of local democracy and autonomy in reference to the ability to raise local taxes and vary local service provision. Particular examples of these practices are discussed in chapters Three and Four, where empirical and meta-theoretical categories are validated and interrogated further. Thus, the constitutional practice of local democracy and autonomy is explored here in terms of the implications of increased central funding for the practice of local government, and in later chapters through its
decrease. Similarly, identification and consideration of issues pertaining to democratic practice and the organisation of sub-national and local government facilitate a later comparison with, and therefore exploration and validation of, the practice of democracy within the labour movement.

The discussion of service provision, employment patterns, and the democratic practice of elected local government, provide a basis for the interrogation of categories and conceptual principles identified as worthy of defence by campaigns of the 1980s. Subsequent chapters contribute to the processes of validation and interrogation by relating the developments identified in this chapter to later demands and practices of the labour movement. In particular, the areas considered in this chapter indicate the character of urban local government as an 'historically emerging, changing, and contradictory class relation'[Duncan and Goodwin, op. cit: 33], and therefore provide a preliminary validation of relevant labour movement practice and conceptual principles. The following chapter develops this process by identifying and discussing changes in labour movement organisation, outlook, and practice over a similar period. Thus concomitant and interrelated developments that occurred within the labour movement, are acknowledged and analysed in relation to the developments discussed here.
CHAPTER TWO

FORMATIVE LABOUR MOVEMENT DEVELOPMENTS:
CHANGING COMPOSITION, OUTLOOK,
AND PRACTICE

To complement the context developed in the previous chapter, the following discussions provide an historical overview of labour movement developments that are related to local government, and to the campaigns of the 1980s. Of particular interest are developments in labour movement composition, organisation, outlook, and practice that exerted a formative influence on the later campaigns; in terms of practice and conceptual principles. Furthermore, the chapter goes beyond the historical ambit of its predecessor to consider developments up to the end of the 1970s. By proceeding in this manner, another dimension is added to the historical context within which labour movement campaigns of the 1980s, and the events discussed in Chapter Three, can be subjected to reciprocal interrogation.¹

Consideration of these developments involves the reciprocal validation of 'labour movement', as meta-theoretical category and as empirical elements that form the whole. In general terms, this means that the TUC, trade unions, Labour Party, and their respective constituent elements are categorised as comprising the labour movement, while the latter is categorised in reference to those same organisations and constituent elements. Stated more succinctly, the process involves the identification and reciprocal interrogation of the values and practices of the constituent elements identified and discussed. This approach allows the campaigns of the 1980s to be analysed in reference to their conceptual principles and practice within the specified historical context established here, and developed within a broader context as the thesis progresses.

Developments in labour movement composition, organisation, outlook, and practice are identified and explored in two main sections entitled: Local Government

¹ By identifying and analysing related examples of labour movement resistance from the 1970s, Chapter Three completes the preliminary stages of the historical context within which the ideas and practice exhibited by the campaigns of the 1980s are interrogated.
Trade Unions; and, Labour Party. A third section entitled New Urban Left, affords critical consideration to theorists' use of that category. The separate treatment of trade unions and the Labour Party is undertaken for purposes of analysis, and should not be taken to imply or affirm the notion of a political and economic dichotomy pertaining to the activity of the labour movement. As far as this thesis is concerned, these organisations act, and have interests in, the political and economic spheres of society. In addition to trade union representation at the LPAC, on the Labour Party NEC, and through the sponsorship of MPs[Marsh and Locksley, 1981: 20], numerous other examples of activity in both spheres are considered throughout the thesis.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT TRADE UNIONS

The period considered here, roughly from 1960 to 1979, encompasses a broad range of developments that affected not only the practice and perceptions of trade unionism in Britain, but also those of the Conservative Party which held office throughout the 1980s.[Marsh, 1992; Moran, 1979] Several high profile cases can be cited, for example, to demonstrate that the period was one of 'strong, confident, mobile and innovative trade unionism'.[Wainwright, 1987: 36] These include: opposition and resistance to, the Labour Government's incomes policies and proposed imposition of 'In Place of Strife' in the 1960s[Panitch, 1976]; the struggle against the provisions of the Industrial Relations Act 1971[Marsh and Locksley, 1981; Middlemass, 1979; Taylor, 1993; Wainwright, op. cit.]; campaigns against redundancies and factory closures, ranging from the less well known campaigns against the closure of Surrey Docks in 1971[Goss, 1988: 84], to more famous examples such as the occupation of the Upper Clyde Shipbuilders in 1971[Blunkett and Jackson, 1987: 87], and the Lucas workers alternative economic plan developed in 1976[loc. cit; Wainwright op. cit.]; the Miners strikes of 1972 and 1974[Taylor, op. cit.]; events surrounding the Grunwick strike of 1976; and the rebellion against incomes policy toward the end of the 1970s, which culminated in the 'Winter of Discontent'[Dorfman, 1983]. For the purposes of this discussion, however, attention is focused on trade unions that were active in local government; though the unions considered here are recognised to have influenced, and been influenced by, the events described above. Particular consideration is afforded to: the rapid growth of membership and membership density of unions recruiting in local government during

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2 The campaign for trade union recognition and improved wages and working conditions at Grunwick Processing Laboratories in London, staged between November 1976 and July 1977, raised issues and involved tactics that reflected the outlook and perceptions of trade unionism in Britain at the time. The postal workers boycott of mail to and from Grunwick was, for example, challenged in the courts by the National Association for Freedom.[Rogaly, 1977] Similarly, the mass picketing during June and July 1977, and the support it attracted from Yorkshire and Scottish Miners, from MPs and Cabinet Ministers[loc. cit.] is evidence of the outlook and practice of the labour movement.
the period; their organisational development; and, their changing outlook and practice.³

**Membership**

Between 1973 and 1979 membership of trade unions in general rose from 11,456,000 to 13,289,000, but within this trend, unions recruiting in local government and the public sector exhibited striking patterns of growth. During the period 1960-77, for example, the membership of NUPE almost trebled from 240,000 to 670,000, while between 1964 and 1977 NALGO's membership doubled from 338,000 to 690,000.[Taylor, 1978: 9] The growth rates of these two public sector unions exceeded that of trade unions in general; a trend that can be demonstrated further by considering the period 1970 to 1978. During this time, trade union membership increased overall by 21%, but the TGWU increased its membership by 26%, NALGO by 66%, and NUPE by 91%. Of the five largest local government unions only GMBATU showed a less than average increase at 13%.[Marsh, 1992: 152] Table 2.1 provides a further comparison of the growth in membership exhibited by the five largest unions operating in local government.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Government Trade Union Membership 1960-80 (thousands)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Membership 1960 1970 1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUGMW 796 853 916</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUPE 200 373 699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NALGO 274 440 782</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUT 245 311 232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NASUWT (23) (57) 124</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Hampton, 1987: 139

Note: The NASUWT was formed in 1975, therefore membership figures for 1960 and 1970 refer to the NAS. NUGMW is now GMBATU and is referred to as such throughout this thesis.

Unfortunately, the table does not recognise the fact that the recruitment practice of each of the unions identified was not restricted to local government, but included other parts of the public sector. An indication of the local government involvement of these unions can obtained by looking at the year 1982, when NUPE and GMBATU members equated to 38 and 16%, respectively, of national local government union membership.[Laffin, 1989: 46] The third largest manual trade union, the TGWU equated to 11%, and NALGO, the predominant representative of white collar local government employees, accounted for 72% of union members in that category.[loc.

³ The trade unions active in local government also recruited in the wider public sector. Many of the references to those unions are made in terms of their overall membership but, where possible, specific references are made to local government activities and membership.
Union membership among teachers was more fragmented, however, with the NUT representing 50% of union members, NASUWT 25%, AMMA 15% and PAT 10%.[loc. cit.]

The public sector in general, exhibited a comparatively high density of union membership.[Hampton, op. cit; Laffin, op. cit.] Referring specifically to local government and education, for example, the proportion of employees belonging to a trade union increased from 69.4% in 1948, to 77.5% in 1979. In contrast, however, only 32% of white collar employees in the manufacturing sector belonged to a trade union in 1974[Hampton, op. cit: 137], and in 1978 the TUC as a whole represented only 54.5% of the national work-force.[Marsh, op. cit: 152] This increase in membership density implies an increase in union membership over and above the rise in the numbers employed, described in Chapter One, or any increases in individual union membership that resulted from mergers with other unions.4

Explanations provided for growing levels of membership and density include a posited causal link between a presumed willingness on the part of governments to recognise unions, and the assumption that because many senior officers in local government belonged to unions they were therefore favourably predisposed.[Hampton, op. cit: 137] The high level of membership exhibited by local government trade unions may, however, be explained in terms of prior arrangements which afforded little benefit to the union membership.[Lowes, 1994] Such arrangements began to change with the growth of stewards movements in local government trade unions, but in the 1980s full-time officials in Sheffield and Doncaster, were still conducting all the main negotiations between the manual unions and the council.[McLaverty, 1989: 19] As is indicated by the reference to shop stewards movements, the growth of local government trade unions was accompanied by changes in their organisation, outlook and practice. These developments and their interrelation with membership growth and density are therefore considered over the next two sub-sections.

Organisational Development

During the 1970s the growth of local government unions was accompanied by the development of local authority based trade union organisations which revolved around shop steward systems.[Terry, 1982; Burgess, 1994; Cresswell, 1994; Lowes, 1994]

4 Following the 1964 Amalgamation Act larger unions benefitting from mergers with their smaller counterparts offers a partial explanation for the rapid growth of individual unions during the period.[Hampton, 1987; Marsh, 1992] This process continued in the early 1980s with the number of unions falling to 393 by 1983, but was accompanied by a fall in overall levels of union membership to 11,338,000.[Coates and Topham, 1986: 8] While the membership of other unions declined, however, NALGO and NUPE continued to rise by 4 and 2% respectively, between 1979 and 1982.[Coates and Topham, ibid: 10] The growth of public sector unions was also a source of tension within the TUC where diminishing private sector counterparts felt threatened.[Cresswell, 1994.]
The shop stewards movement was characterised by the control of local bargaining and decision making by rank and file activists, developed in the private sector in the 1960s[Marsh and Locksley, 1981], and permeated local government in the following decade[Beaumont, 1992: 55]; after the official recognition of union stewards by local government employers in 1969.[Marchington and Armstrong, 1982; Taylor, 1978] NUPE, for example, held its first shop stewards elections in 1970, and its system of steward representation was considered to be the norm by 1974.[Terry, op. cit: 1] Thus, whereas 39% of NUPE branches had no shop steward in 1970 and only 21% five or more, 48% had five or more by 1974 and only 11% had no steward.[Walsh, 1982a: 58] Between 1971 and 1977, the estimated number of NUPE stewards therefore rose from 1,800 to 10,000.[Terry op. cit: 1] Similarly, NALGO adopted the principle of a shop steward system in 1974, and put the system into practice in 1976.[Marchington and Armstrong, 1982: Burgess, op. cit.] The NALGO system was therefore 'pretty much in place by the end of the decade'.[Cresswell, op. cit.]

The introduction and increase in shop steward systems is indicative of a general move toward greater lay involvement in local negotiation and activism. Unions used to operating in the private sector, like the TGWU and UCATT for example, afforded more power to their stewards, though local government unions like NUPE and the GMBATU were more content with the principle of negotiation by full-time officials.[Walsh, op. cit: 59] Thus, although the number of GMBATU stewards trebled between 1968 and 1978[loc. cit.], the 1974 conference introduced a new District Official and thereby increased the number of full-time officials.[Undy, Ellis, McCarthy and Halmos, 1981: 288] This is reflected in the ratio of full-time officials to shop stewards in GMBATU which fell from 1:4974 in 1968 to 1:4807 in 1976 and 1:3809 following the introduction of District Officers.[Undy, et al, ibid: 289] In general terms, however, the changing ratios accompanied an increased lay participation and independence in local bargaining which replaced the domination of full-time officials evident prior to the 1960s.[loc. cit.]

The introduction of shop steward systems and decentralisation of power in local government trade unions can be seen as a response to, and reason for, new levels activism and militancy at rank and file, and branch levels.[Walsh, 1982b: 6 & 15] Suddaby, for example, describes how strengthening the shop stewards organisation in the Camden branch of NUPE contributed to an increase in membership and a successful campaign for improved pay and conditions.[1979: 87] Similarly, the emergence and development of shop steward organisations in local government is also associated with dissatisfaction over wages and conditions, and with the actions of management under economic pressure to change their approach to the workforce.[Terry, op. cit: 15] Several authors identify a link between incomes policies,
applied to state employees with more vigour, and the development of militancy.[Beaumont, op. cit; Hampton, 1987; Laffin, 1989; Panitch 1976; Taylor, 1993] In contrast, however, the ex-NALGO officers interviewed considered incomes policy to have had less of a radicalising effect on their union.[Burgess, op. cit; Cresswell op. cit.]

The development of union organisation was also assisted in practical terms by the re-organisation of local government. This acted as a catalyst for NALGO to dissolve and reconstitute its local branches; a process which afforded the removal of previous modes of leadership and practice.[Sharron, 1985: 20] In other words, because NALGO organised its branches on an authority wide basis, the amalgamation of smaller authorities would require similar processes at branch level. Such a process would not have been restricted to NALGO, however, as the local branches of other unions would also be required to merge.

The 1960s and 1970s witnessed an increase in activism, militancy, and local control of negotiation and decision making through the growth of shop steward organisations. Such developments were influenced by the struggles against public expenditure cuts in the late 1970s, and these are considered in Chapter Three. Thus, the historical context: considers of the introduction of activist structures, in this Chapter; covers their growth and development in the late 1970s, in Chapter Three; and, explores the role and function of activists in the campaigns of the 1980s, in chapters Five, Six, and Seven. For the moment, however, consideration is afforded to the interrelation of this burgeoning activism, and the changing outlook and practice of local government trade unions.

**Outlook and Practice**

The growth of shop steward systems within local government trade unions, together with other organisational developments, influenced and were influenced by changing outlook and practice. NALGO, for example: introduced strike procedures in 1961[Beaumont, 1992; Hampton, 1987; Walsh, 1982b]; witnessed its first strike by officers in 1964[Hampton, op. cit: 140]; held its first official strike in 1970[Beaumont, op. cit; Burgess, 1994; Laffin 1989]; conducted, its first industrial action in support of a wage claim in 1974[Beaumont, op. cit: 52]; and, mounted its first national demonstration in 1977.[Burgess, op. cit.] Similarly, the first national teachers strike was held by the NAS in 1961[Hampton, op. cit: 139], and the NUT undertook its first industrial action in 1967.[Laffin, op. cit: 51] Furthermore, 1969-70 also saw the first ever local government strike over pay, involving teachers, ambulance workers and fire brigades.[Taylor, 1978; Hampton, op. cit.] In general terms, therefore, there was an
increase in blue and white collar industrial action in local government in 1960s, culminating in 1970s with the Winter of Discontent.

The period also witnessed the migration of white collar unions into the TUC: NALGO, for example, affiliated in 1964; the NAS in 1968; and, the NUT in 1970.[Leopold and Beaumont, 1982; Hampton, op. cit; Laffin, op. cit.] Of the various reasons given for local government unions joining the TUC, the most common is the desire to gain access, via the TUC, to the various centres of government policy, and to decision making during a period of incomes policy.[Leopold and Beaumont, op. cit: 49] The TUC's membership of the National Economic Development Council(NEDC) from 1962, for example, is depicted as a major incentive after the government had rebuffed attempts by NALGO, the NUT and sixteen other white collar trade unions to gain membership of the NEDC as a non-TUC constituency.[Hampton, op. cit: 138] Similarly, the sharp increase in the affiliation to the TUC of white collar unions is depicted as concomitant feature of the TUC's increasingly corporatist role.[Minkin, 1978: 465]

In a similarly broad context, Wainwright argues that in the early 1970s new kinds of resistance such as occupations and work-ins were developed, and that direct forms of work-place organisation and practice spread through national and international stewards organisations.[1987: 36] This view is supported by the examples of activity provided at the start of this section, which are considered to have contributed to a general radicalisation of the labour movement.[Burgess, op. cit.] Similarly, the refusal to accept public expenditure cuts, discussed in Chapter Three, is depicted as breeding activism and radicalism[loc. cit.], and contributing to the changing outlook and practice of local government trade unions.

The radicalisation of local government trade unions in the 1970s also coincided with their growth, and therefore the introduction of new forces.[Burgess op. cit; Lowes, 1994] In NALGO, for example, the radical affects of the late 1960s, and the impact of people who were active in student politics during that era, contributed to the radicalisation of the union.[Burgess, op. cit.] This view is similar to the thesis that educated radicals were drawn to local government and the public sector[Laffin, op. cit.], and that such people played a prominent part in the 'New Urban Left'.[Gyford, 1985; McLaverty, 1989] Finally, a further factor in the 'generational' explanation of growing radicalism in the 1960s and 1970s, involves the absence of discipline equated with conscription into the armed forces, and to the absence of fears created by the memory of the 1930s, among workers who joined local government in the years of expansion.[Walsh, 1982b: 12-13]

The radicalisation of local government trade unions, through the introduction of new members, has other complementary explanations that have their roots in the
changing employment patterns of the 1970s. Thus, Taaffe and Mulhearn's view that the influx of youth normally destined for blue collar work contributed to the radicalisation of white collar unions[1988: 73], finds a resonance in the view that those: 'who formerly may have worked as skilled craftsmen in engineering or on the docks, were now... working in local government and white collar local government in particular'.[Burgess, op. cit.] Similarly, many of the stewards active in Liverpool NALGO were noted to have families with labour movement backgrounds.[loc. cit.]

A comparable process can also be identified with regard to manual trade unions whereby the 1970s and early 1980s witnessed a migration of industrial workers into local government. Such recruits were primarily from a manufacturing background and drawn to local government due to the absence of employment opportunities, a recorded in Chapter One. Some of these recruits also had experience of trade union organisation, and used their knowledge and experience to help organise local government trade unions.[Lowes, op. cit.] Suddaby, for example, describes a strong trade union consciousness among those who had worked in industry before joining Camden council in the 1970s.[1979: 88]

One final development, indicative of the changing outlook of the trade union movement, was the TUC's decision to re-organise its committee structure in the early 1970s. This was achieved by establishing 'industrial committees' which were intended to provide a structure for the development of common policies between unions covering all grades of workers within a given sector. Thus, the new Local Government Committee(TUCLGC) replaced the low profile National Advisory Committee for Local Government, which had only met infrequently and pursued a narrow range of objectives.[Leopold and Beaumont, op. cit: 51-2] As is demonstrated in later chapters, the role played by the TUCLGC developed in response to the policies pursued by the Conservative Government first elected in 1979. In particular, the TUCLGC played a significant, if as yet unacknowledged, role in the campaigns against the Rates Act 1984.

The preceding discussions identify those trade unions recruiting in local government and consider developments affecting them during the specified period. In particular, membership growth and composition, changing organisation, and developments in outlook and practice exhibit interrelations with developments discussed in Chapter One, and therefore indicate the origins of the conceptual principles and practice evident in the campaigns of the 1980s. The reciprocal process

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5 The developments described in this sub-section are more applicable to cities than the shire counties. Thus, Walsh identifies London, Liverpool, and Sheffield as notable examples of militancy and predicates militancy in shire counties, such as Cleveland and Avon, on the existence of urban areas within them.[1982b: 8]
of validation and interrogation are therefore evident in relation to trade unions, but are also continued in the next section were developments in the Labour Party are explored in a similar fashion. Exploration of these areas here, allows examination to be undertaken in Chapter Three of how such factors contributed to, and were developed by, campaigns to defend services in the 1970s, and therefore facilitates the development a broader historical context within which to examine the campaigns of the 1980s.

THE LABOUR PARTY

Whereas the previous section discussed developments affecting local government trade unions, the following account considers the transformative changes experienced by the Labour Party over a similar period. This approach provides a balanced account of labour movement development, facilitates the drawing of analogies between the two areas, and allows shared experiences to be identified. By proceeding in this manner, the section contributes to the historical context of formative labour movement experiences, initiated in the previous section, through which the principles and practices of the campaigns conducted in the 1980s can be understood and interrogated.

The section is therefore split into two sub-sections which address areas of change affecting local Labour parties in the 1960s and 1970s. First of all, the loss of councillors in the local elections of the late 1960s, the effects of the re-organisation of local government in the 1970s, and the change in membership levels and patterns are considered as facilitating change within the Party. Secondly, the progress made by campaigns for greater democracy and accountability within the Party, at both national and local levels, are considered in reference to the changes identified above.

Facilitators of Change

Three main developments assisted or augmented change in the organisation, outlook, and practice of local Labour parties in the 1960s and 1970s. The first of these, chronologically speaking, was the catastrophic performance of the Labour Party in the local elections of 1967 and 1968, when the Party lost more than 3,000 council seats. In 1967, for example, elections to the GLC, county councils, provincial boroughs and urban districts saw over 1,500 seats lost to the Conservative Party alone. A further 1,602 seats were also lost in the London borough, provincial borough, and urban district elections of 1968.[Gyford, 1985; Seyd, 1987]

For the London boroughs of Islington, Lambeth and Wandsworth the catharsis of 1968 resulted in the election of many new councillors in 1971.[Gyford, op. cit: 26] In Lambeth, for example, only 12 of the 51 Labour councillors had served on the council before.[Livingstone, 1987: 20] These new councillors favoured a more open style of
government than their predecessors, but fell short of the approach espoused by those that followed later in the 1970s and early 1980s.[Gyford, op. cit: 26] Furthermore, many of the old Labour Group cliques and hierarchies were undermined by these events. In Islington, for example, the electoral debacle triggered an internal struggle for control of the local party, and of selection procedures for council candidates.[loc. cit.]

The process of change, initiated in local Labour parties in the late 1960s, received new impetus with the re-organisation of local government in the mid 1970s. Stated simply, the reduction in the number of elected local authorities from approximately 1,300 to 400[Redcliffe-Maud and Wood, 1974: 52], and the amalgamation of the old authorities into larger units, required a comparable re-organisation of local parties to reflect the new district and county structures.[Gyford, op. cit: 27-8] Local Labour parties were therefore forced to embark on a process of internal re-organisation and re-structuring that resembles concomitant changes, identified in the previous section, affecting local government trade unions.

In particular, internal party workings were affected by the size and procedures of the new authorities. The running of new larger authorities and the adoption of committee structures and practices, described in Chapter One, for example, meant greater responsibilities for leading councillors. These new responsibilities made it difficult, however, for leading councillors to hold office in the local Labour Party; as had been the established practice.[Goss, 1988: 79] In other words, it was no longer practicable for the Leader of the Labour Group to be chairperson of the District Labour Party(DLP) as well. Local party leadership was therefore fragmented, the potential for boss politics and cliques diminished, and the likelihood of differences developing between DLP and Labour Group enhanced.

The new Metropolitan authorities were also required to hold elections for all their seats in 1973[Seyd, op. cit: 138-9], and this heralded a comprehensive selection process for candidates. Thus, although local parties had to find a greater number of candidates than normal, there was keen competition for winnable seats.[Gyford, op. cit; Seyd, op. cit.] Taken together with the abolition of the position of alderman, who were nominated by councillors[Redcliffe-Maud and Wood, op. cit: 60], the combination of developments, described above, served to remove the last vestiges of leadership cliques that pre-dated 1968.[Gyford, op. cit: 27]

Finally, the introduction of the two tier system of local government also affected the number and nature of local candidates. Previously, there had been only one authority for a given district, and employees of that authority were barred from standing for election to it. Under the new arrangements, however, those employed in local government could now stand for election to the different tier of local
government in the area were they lived and worked.[loc. cit.] A new dimension was therefore added to the insight and motivations of local councillors.

Much has been made of such 'institutional interest' in the 1980s, when in urban areas people employed by one authority acted as councillors in a neighbouring one. In 1982, for example, 55% of Labour councillors with identifiable jobs in Lewisham, and 48% in Camden, were either teachers, local government officers, or employed by housing associations or voluntary groups.[Kogan and Kogan, 1983: 180] Elsewhere, David Blunkett was employed by Barnsley College of Technology[Boddy and Fudge, 1984: 242] and therefore Barnsley Metropolitan District Council, but held office in the neighbouring Sheffield Metropolitan District Council. Similarly, Derek Hatton was employed by Knowsley Metropolitan District Council, while acting as a councillor in Liverpool Metropolitan District Council.[Hatton, 1988]

The developments described above, took place at a time when the Labour Party was experiencing significant changes in the levels and composition of membership. Between the years 1964 and 1979, for example, the Party lost 164,025 members; an overall reduction of 20% that includes the loss of 150,000 members between 1964 and 1969.[Seyd, op. cit: 41] The provision of accurate figures for this period is impossible, however, due to the requirement for Constituency Labour parties(CLP) to have a minimum of 1,000 members in order to affiliate to the national Party.[Seyd, ibid; Wainwright, 1987; Whitely, 1982.] As a consequence of this rule CLPs were given an incentive to over-estimate the levels of membership in order to secure representation at the national level.

Nevertheless, a decline in membership over and above such minimum levels is still apparent. Between 1955 and 1977, for example, the number of CLPs with over 3,000 members fell from 45 to 6.[Seyd, op. cit: 42] Similarly, in the six years from 1964 to 1970, the number of CLPs with 2,000 or more members fell from 66 to 22.[Wainwright, op. cit: 27] This trend is in stark contrast to the growth of local government trade unions over the same period, and explained, at least in part, by the pursuit of political and other goals through the strong, confident, mobile and innovative trade unions, described earlier.

Of the reasons given for the haemorrhage of members from the Labour Party, disillusionment with the Wilson governments of the 1960s is cited most often.[loc. cit; Livingstone, op. cit; Seyd and Whitely, 1992] Other explanations include the dissolution of trade council links and therefore organisational structures[Goss, op. cit: 148], and a decline in working class politics and identity. The latter thesis was premised on a study of the Liverpool Labour Party by Hindess[1971], which concluded that wards consisting mainly of manual working class members displayed a tendency toward decline while 'middle class' wards were expanding.[loc. cit.] The
conclusions drawn were based solely on a study of Liverpool Labour Party, however, and Hindess later acknowledged the dangers of generalising from one study. [1983: 2] Forester’s study of Brighton Kemptown CLP [1976], for example, reached different conclusions to Hindess. Furthermore, the decline in Conservative Party membership over the same period [Seyd and Whitley, 1992: 17] suggests a disillusionment with the political process in general [Forester, op. cit: 80], and contrasts with the growth of local government trade unions over a similar time period.

There are also problems in attempting to present a general picture from varying local party experiences. The Liverpool Labour Party of the 1960s, for example, is described as: organisationally and politically bankrupt [Parkinson, 1985: 24]; as experiencing a drop in membership after the 1967 local election [Davies, 1987: 158]; and, as lacking full-time agents in all of its constituencies in 1970. [Davies, ibid: 159] Similarly, Southwark, Peckham, Bermondsey and Dulwich lost full-time agents in late 1960s and early 1970s, as there was an absence of new members to replace retiring personnel [Goss, op. cit: 94], and Leeds had no full-time agents in 1969. [Forester, op. cit: 80] In contrast to the experiences of other local Labour Parties, however, Sheffield suffered no lost generation of the 1960s and 70s. [Wainwright, op. cit: 108] On the contrary, as a consequence of the local links maintained between trade unions and the Labour Party, the Party in Sheffield was not by-passed by militant trade union committees or community politics, but was drawn into industrial and community militancy of the late 1960s. [loc. cit.]

In general terms, however, the Labour Party's membership levels began to recover or at least stabilise in the 1970s. [Forester, op. cit; Seyd, op. cit.] Thus, although the London Labour Party lost members between 1963 and 1969 some returned as a response to the effects of the Conservative Government of the early 1970s. [Kogan & Kogan, op. cit: 157] Similarly, following community conflicts in Southwark and neighbouring areas, new people began to join local parties from tenants associations, community groups, and voluntary organisations. These new members included public sector professionals and, a factor excluded from the New Urban Left framework, 'working class' radicals alienated by the closed politics of the old Labour Party. [Goss, op. cit: 95] Similarly, Seyd describes the recovery of Party membership in 1970s as consisting of young, educated public employees, 'working class' militants, and radical feminists. [op. cit: 44] Another factor, analogous to the backgrounds of NALGO shop stewards identified in the previous section, is that these young educated public sector employees often emanated from a 'working class' parental background. [Seyd, ibid: 46]

An absence of national data prevents a conclusive demonstration of an influx of trade unionists into local parties, but Seyd argues that his studies of Lincoln and Sheffield Brightside CLPs provide evidence of such a trend. [ibid: 47] Similarly, in
Liverpool people are described as moving into the Labour Party from the trade union movement in the 1970s as they began to realise that the isolated struggles over factory closure and redundancies required broader strategies. [Parkinson, op. cit: 25] Furthermore, a concerted effort was mounted in the late 1970s and early 1980s, to encourage local authority workers to become involved in the Liverpool Labour Party. [Lowes, 1994] The extent to which the introduction of new members, from local government trade unions and community politics, coincided with a rise of activism within the Labour Party, is explored in the following sub-section, and analogies with the experience of local government trade unions developed.

**Democracy and Accountability**

Changing patterns of membership and discontent with the performance of the Wilson Government were responsible for, and indicative of, a shift in the attitudes of Labour Party members. [Kogan & Kogan, 1983: 12] Seyd also considers the industrial militancy of the 1970s to have exerted a radicalising influence on trade unions and the Labour Party. [1987: 47] These developments also coincided with a greater air of toleration inside the Labour Party during the 1960s and 1970s, and this resulted in a proliferation of internal rank and file organisations that would have been banned in the 1950s. [Seyd, ibid: 8] Such groupings are characterised as having an extra-parliamentary emphasis in their attempts to wrest control of policy making from the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP), and to make it accountable to the Party at large. [Kogan & Kogan, op cit: 14] In other words, those campaigning to make the PLP accountable, rejected the view that elected representatives acted on behalf of all the electorate, as opposed to the activists who sponsored, voted, or worked for their election. MPs were therefore viewed as delegates of the Party mandated to act according to manifesto pledges.

In 1968, for example, Socialist Charter became the first extra parliamentary group to be formed as an internal opposition to the Wilson government. [Kogan & Kogan, ibid; Seyd op. cit.] The effectiveness of such groups is questionable, however, if their success is measured in terms longevity. Socialist Charter, for example, aimed to stimulate and develop the work of activists in CLPs, but was succeeded by the Young Chartists in 1972, who, in turn, evolved into London Labour Briefing. [Kogan & Kogan, op. cit: 22-3] Other groupings of a similar ilk, included: the Labour Co-

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6 The increase in the number of public sector workers joining the Labour Party, and an emergence of issues relating to public expenditure and service provision should not be misconstrued as representing a dichotomous shift from 'production' to 'consumption' politics. On the contrary, the Keynesian prescriptions of the TUC and Labour Party premised the existence and expansion of welfare provision on economic growth. Furthermore, as is described in Chapter One, the internal relation of capital and labour means that production and consumption are not separate entities, they are interrelated parts of the whole.
ordinating Committee (LCC) founded 1978; the Socialist Campaign For a Labour Victory (SCLV) also founded in 1978; and the Rank and File Mobilising Committee (RFMC) founded in 1980. [Kogan & Kogan, ibid: 16]

The emergence of such groups are an indication of, and a spur to, the development of activism in the Labour Party. With an average membership of 1000, for example, the LCC's espoused aim was to develop the Labour Party as a campaigning organisation, and not just an electoral machine. Of most significance to the organisation and practice of the campaigns mounted in the 1980s, however, is its promotion of alliances between local Labour parties, community groups, tenants associations, and local trade unions. [Seyd, op. cit: 92-3] Furthermore, an analogy can be drawn between the rank and file organisation and practice of such groups within the Labour Party and the growth in activism, through the introduction and development of shop steward systems, experienced by trade unions during the same period.

Perhaps the most durable activist group, and indicative the internal democratic practice of the Labour Party, was the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy (CLPD). Formed in 1973, the CLPD is portrayed as a response to Wilson's rejection of the Labour Party's 1973 programme. [Kogan & Kogan, op. cit; Wainwright, 1987]

Ultimately, its main aims were to make the PLP accountable to the LPAC, and that, as the sovereign body of the Party, the LPAC be responsible for the development of policy and manifesto commitments. [Kogan & Kogan, op. cit: 26] In the context of this discussion, however, the CLPD's importance lies in its indication of changing attitudes and activity among party members at the local level. Thus, Seyd criticises Kogan and Kogan's description of the CLPD as a small London based group, and argues that a wide base of support existed throughout the Party. [op. cit: 127]

Before discussing similarities between the demands of the CLPD and developments in party democracy and accountability at CLP and DLP levels, however, the attitude of trade unions to the CLPD needs to be noted. The growth in union support for CLPD, for example, is linked to two factors: the imposition of public expenditure cuts associated with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) [Wainwright, op. cit: 30]; and, the persistence with incomes policy that contributed to the defeat of the Labour Government in 1979. [Kogan & Kogan, op. cit: 48] Thus, from a starting point of no affiliations in 1974, 36 branches or other trade union organisations were affiliated in 1977, and 161 in 1980. [Kogan & Kogan, ibid:

7 Conspicuous absences from this discussion are Militant Tendency and the issue of entryism. The omission is deliberate and reflects the localised significance of the group. As is argued in Chapter Five, much of the reputation attached to the group's role in Liverpool was a consequence its own propaganda and its demonisation by opponents; both of whom sought to over emphasise its significance.
Similarly, re-selection motions at conference did not receive trade union support until 1977, but T Sawyer who led NUPE's industrial action in the North East during the Winter of Discontent 1978-9, identifies those aspects of government policy and practice that produced the Winter of Discontent, as the impetus for trade union support of CLPD.[Wainwright, op. cit: 30]

During the 1970s and early 1980s local Labour parties conducted a similar struggle to make Labour groups accountable to the wider membership. Chapter Five, for example, recounts developments in the Liverpool Labour Party during the 1970s, where the Labour Group voted against DLP policy. Similarly, the leadership of Labour groups on the GLC, in Manchester, and in Sheffield are depicted as cutting services, raising rents, and ruling Group and Party with a heavy hand, in the 1970s.[Wainwright, ibid: 136] In contrast, however, those councillors and party activists who were insisting on internal party democracy and on the accountability of the Labour Group were the same people who were campaigning against cuts and rent increases.[loc. cit]

In Manchester, for example, the DLP adopted a similar line to that of Liverpool[Cresswell, 1994], described in Chapter Five, setting up groups of experts to formulate policy. CLPs and trade union branches were allowed to discuss and amend the findings of such working parties, and the outcome of the process formed the party's programme, its manifesto and therefore the policy of the Labour Group.[Wainwright, ibid: 118] The Conservative victory in the GLC elections of 1977 also presented the GLLP with the opportunity to introduce procedures for the re-selection of councillors and new methods of electing the party leader.[Kogan & Kogan, op. cit: 161]

A distinct approach to democracy and accountability is identifiable in certain local parties in the late 1970s and 1980s, and comparable to the demands of the CLPD. This approach viewed party representatives as delegates acting on behalf of, or authorised to act by, the local Labour Party.[Goss, 1988: 152] Manifestos were considered to be binding and party representatives were mandated and made accountable directly to the local party organisation. Significantly, this type of approach was adopted in the policy and practice of two local parties that mounted determined campaigns of resistance to government policy in the 1970s: Clay Cross, and South Yorkshire.

Consideration of their resistance forms part of the following chapter, but is referred to here to illustrate the contrasting approaches to, and practices of, representative democracy within the Labour Party. The PLP, Labour Government, and old style Labour groups, for example, practised and promoted the approach whereby elected representatives where supposed to represent all their constituents. In contrast, those
demanding accountability within the Labour Party, viewed MPs and councillors as
delegates of the Party, implementing manifesto commitments as mandated by the
Party and electorate. The implications of these approaches and practices for the
campaigns of the 1980s are considered and developed in forthcoming chapters.

As part of the previous discussion, analogies were drawn between the experiences
of, and developments in, local government trade unions and local Labour parties
during the period considered. In both cases, the categories of labour movement,
Labour Party, and trade unions are validated in reference changes in membership
levels and composition, changing organisation, and developments in outlook and
practice. These developments included the growth of the shop steward movement in
trade unions, and the growth of activist led groups in the Labour Party; both of which
were effects of, and vehicles for, activist control of policy and practice. Thus, as later
chapters demonstrate, these developments are important for the interrogation of
campaigns aims and practice in the 1980s, and therefore form part of the on-going
reciprocal process of validation.

NEW URBAN LEFT

The preceding sections concentrated on particular developments within the labour
movement that had a bearing on the policy and practice of the campaigns of the
1980s. Examples of such developments are provided in support of the views
expressed, but should not be taken to represent an extensive account of labour
movement development. As part of those discussions, for example, the danger of
generalisation is exposed in the assumption that the membership of the local Labour
parties involved in the campaigns of the 1980s, with the exception of Liverpool, were
almost exclusively comprised of white collar professionals. Such practice is evident,
however, in McLaverty's acceptance of the view that the 'New Urban Left' were
'middle class' radicals and professionals.[1989: 37-8] Thus, while it may have been
the case that some local parties would have fitted this description, it is sheer folly to
generalise in this manner.

Gyford acknowledges the difficulties involved in applying a general term to
authorities which shared, ostensibly at least, similar values, but which adopted
differences in practice, strategy and style.[1985, 16-18] Wainwright makes a similar
point with regard to the Race and Women's committees set up in the GLC, Sheffield
and Newcastle.[1987: 94-144] Despite these considerable differences, however,
Gyford concludes that: 'As for the councillors and their policies one can perhaps talk
of a "new urban left" and of "local socialism".[op. cit: 17] The problem with Gyford's
stance is that the meta-theoretical category of 'New Urban Left' amounts to 'a chaotic
conception of the whole' from which point he and other theorists 'move analytically towards ever more simple concepts, from the imagined concrete towards ever thinner abstractions' until they arrive at 'the simplest determinations'. [Marx, 1973: 100] What they are unable to do, is to retrace that process back to reconstitute the category as a 'rich totality of determinations and relations'. [loc. cit.] In other words, the preconceived meta-theoretical category of the 'New Urban Left' is applied as a general description of a particular form of practice, but the category cannot be validated in reference to that practice; it remains a meta-theoretical and therefore abstract construct.

This problem is evident in the tendency to depict the 'New Urban Left', as a movement of white collar, public sector professionals, accompanying a decline in 'working class' activism. The collapse of Labour Party's traditional working class base in London [Wainwright, op. cit: 105], for example, is considered to have resulted in a lack manual trade union input that was evident in many provincial CLPs. [Seyd, 1987: 173] As was pointed out earlier, however, local Labour parties in London also included younger manual workers, who were mostly men, mostly employed in the public sector, and who adopted a confrontational approach. [Goss, 1988: 151-2] Similarly, in Sheffield two sets of activists are identified: articulate, highly educated and professionally qualified, and a new generation of manual worker trade unionists concerned with defending living standards. Both of these groups are described as being less deferential to the Labour Party and trade union leadership. [Seyd, op. cit: 74] Furthermore, the tendency to focus selectively on certain London boroughs, as do Lansley, Goss, and Wolmar [1989], produces an inevitably distorted picture.

The 'New Urban Left' abstraction also embodies the nebulous character of all references to the concepts of left and right. As Lipsey points out in reference to trade unions, such dichotomies are bogus and serve only to conceal variations within categories that cannot be classified on a day to day basis. [Seyd, op. cit: 2] Accounts that employ such generalities as a form of short hand, therefore offer a stylised version of reality that does not bear practical validation. This practice is all too evident in attempts to explain the events studied here as a part, or consequence, of a 'New Urban Left' movement. The contention here, and supported by the evidence presented in the first three chapters, is that the campaigns should be understood in the context of broader labour movement developments within society as a whole, and not stylised version of reality.

Attempts to evaluate the policy and practice of the campaigns, in reference to a preconceived framework or model of 'New Urban Left' are guilty of separating theory from practice. In other words, analyses of the campaigns which conduct a selective

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study of authorities on the basis of the unvalidated meta-theoretical category of 'New Urban Left', are unable to explain the motivations and activities in reference to developments in society as a whole. These approaches therefore face the dilemma of opting for a circularity of presupposing the categories they seek to investigate, or of resorting to a process of infinite regress, validating their meta-theoretical categories in reference to another level of meta-theory.⁹

This thesis studies the campaigns of the 1980s in the context of societal developments affecting local Labour parties, Labour groups, the wider Labour Party, local government trade unions, and trade unions in general. In other words, the campaigns are examined in a labour movement and societal context. The identification and understanding of the role of societal processes facilitates the evaluation of principles and practices of the later campaigns, not in terms of unvalidated categories, but as part of reciprocal processes of interrogation and validation between meta-theoretical and empirical levels.

The events discussed in this chapter, for example, serve to demonstrate two interrelated developments. First of all, the period witnessed a growth in trade union membership and organisation which was accompanied by an ebullient outlook and practice. These factors are also an indication and product of the emerging confidence the movement had in its own capabilities; as evidenced the examples cited at the start of this chapter. Similarly, during the same period the Labour Party experienced a decline, partial recovery, and recomposition of its membership. In both areas, however, a movement toward local control by activists was evident through the growth of the shop steward movement in the trade unions, and the campaign for democracy and accountability within the Labour Party.

The 1970s, however, also witnessed a decline in the fortunes of the British economy, and a concomitant change in approach to public finance by central government. Chapter Three therefore considers how the labour movement, as validated here, approached and responded to these changing circumstances. Examination of labour movement opposition to attacks on local government and the welfare state, and of the rationale and circumstances that precipitated both attack and defence, therefore completes the historical context within which the policy and practice of the 1980s campaigns can be interrogated.

⁹ Further consideration is afforded to the problems associated with the use of models and frameworks in Appendix Two.
CHAPTER THREE

LABOUR MOVEMENT DEFENCE OF LOCAL SERVICE VARIATION,
AND OPPOSITION TO RETRENCHMENT
IN THE 1970S

Chapters One and Two began the process of establishing the historical context within which the campaigns of the 1980s can be interrogated and understood. As part of the analyses conducted in those chapters references were made to the interrelationships between the areas considered, and explanations constructed in reference to broader societal and economic factors. Examples of this approach include the consideration afforded to: labour movement demands for expanded welfare provision and the expansion of local government services executed by a Labour Government; the premising of such demands on economic growth; and, the growth of local government trade unions at a time of increasing local government employment, increased militancy, and private sector job losses.

That approach is developed here by considering high profile examples of labour movement opposition to central government attempts to restrict public spending and service provision in the 1970s. In keeping with practice of previous chapters, these events are considered in reference to the fortunes of the British economy, which experienced a downward spiral through the late 1960s and 1970s. By proceeding in this manner, the development of labour movement principles and practices relevant to the campaigns of the 1980s are identified, interrogated, and the interpretations and understandings developed in earlier chapters transcended.

Two specific examples of localised opposition are analysed here: the campaign against the Housing Finance Act 1972; and, South Yorkshire's dispute with central government over the funding of its transport policy. Both examples establish a clear link, in terms of the justification of their stance and the manner in which the goals were pursued, between the topics discussed in the previous chapters and the campaigns of the 1980s. These discussions are also accompanied by a more general consideration of issues and practices surrounding labour movement opposition to
central government attempts to reduce public expenditure toward the end of the 1970s. By considering the interrelated aspects of the areas explored here and in earlier chapters, and by subjecting the empirical and meta-theoretical aspects of categories to reciprocal processes of interrogation and validation, the chapter completes the historical context within which to interrogate the campaigns conducted in the 1980s.

These areas are addressed in three sections entitled: Housing Finance Act 1972; South Yorkshire and Transport Policy; and, Anti-cuts Campaigns. The discussions undertaken within each section explore, within a labour movement context, approaches to the issues of service provision, local democracy and autonomy, and highlight those principles of local democratic practice that are evident in the organisation and tactics of the campaigns studied. Furthermore, preliminary analogies are drawn between the principles and practices reviewed here and those exhibited by the campaigns of the 1980s. A particular aspect of this approach concerns the identification of developments in labour movement structures and organisation that take place through the process of struggle. Thus, the significance of such developments and events for the campaigns of the 1980s are identified as part of the on-going reciprocal processes of interrogation and validation.¹

HOUSING FINANCE ACT 1972

The most infamous case of opposition and resistance to the Housing Finance Act 1972 is that of Clay Cross Urban District Council. Although other authorities, most notably in Scotland and Wales, mounted similarly determined campaigns, only Clay Cross has been the subject of an in depth account.[Skinner and Langdon, 1974] Consideration of Clay Cross therefore forms the focus of this section, which is divided into two sub-sections entitled: The Broader Campaign; and, Clay Cross. As part of the first sub-section, the scope and practice of the wider campaign is considered, but the general issues of service provision, internal party and constitutional local democracy, and the structures and organisations through which the campaign was conducted are explored in more detail when considering the case of Clay Cross.

The Broader Campaign

The White Paper, 'A Fair deal for Housing', published July 1971, formed the basis of the Housing Finance Act and outlined the Conservative Government's plan to reduce the levels of subsidy for public rented housing by prescribing rent levels

¹ Unfortunately, the areas investigated here have received only limited coverage and this is reflected in the limited number of sources cited.
centrally. [Duncan and Goodwin, 1988: 150] In similar fashion to punitive fiscal measures introduced by the Conservative governments of the 1980s, the proposals affected mainly Labour councils; in this case those who adopted a policy of subsidising local authority rents from the local rates charge. Under the provisions of the Act designated local authorities were required to increase their rents in line with central prescriptions.

The Act therefore raised two important questions concerning the theory and practice of local autonomy and democracy, introduced in Chapter One, and both issues underpinned the justification of local resistance. The first point concerned the rights of local authorities to set their own rent levels through the use of revenue raised locally, and the second involved their right to follow local variations in policy on the basis of local electoral mandates. [loc. cit.] Once again, there are evident parallels with the 1980s when much of the opposition and resistance was premised on these same principles.

These issues need to be understood in the context of two other factors. First of all, the outlook and expectations of local authorities at this time differed from those of the later 1970s and 1980s. The atmosphere of the period was still one of expansion and relative independence as opposed to retrenchment and coercion. Secondly, the events discussed here took place before the re-organisation outlined in the Local Government Act 1972. Thus, the responsive nature of small local authorities to the demographic needs and structure of their local communities played a deciding role in the formulation of policy and service provision. In Clay Cross, for example, local policies and service provision were targeted at local authority tenants and the elderly, as the largest sections of the community. [Mitchell, 1974]

Initially, defiance of the Housing Finance Act was fairly widespread, with 42 authorities declaring their opposition on 1.10.72. [Skinner and Langdon, 1974: 49]. Thus, in similar fashion to the campaign against the Rates Act 1984, there was hope of making the Housing Finance Act unworkable if enough local authorities refused to implement it. [Skinner and Langdon, ibid: 43] Livingstone, for example, describes how Ted Knight, later to lead Lambeth Council's resistance of the Rates Act, argued that the Government could be forced to back down by the mobilisation of public support, and 12 or more local authorities refusing to implement the Housing Finance Act. [1987: 27]

While the campaign in 1972 coincided with the period and examples of confident labour movement resistance and advance, identified in Chapter Two, a number of factors also described in the previous chapter, mitigated the likelihood of Knight's proposal achieving any level of success. At this time, for example, there was minimal development of activist structures such as local government trade union shop steward
systems or internal Labour Party organisations. Furthermore, the small and fragmented nature of local trade union branches and local Labour parties prior to re-organisation, and the dominance of the latter by Labour groups, suggest that the organisational means required to conduct a broad-scale campaign were difficult to build.

Nevertheless, at its high point during 1972, the campaign involved a number of authorities promising non-implementation, and employed tactics similar to those used in the 1980s. These include the staging of rallies and conferences, and calls for industrial action by trade unions in support of opposition.[Skinner and Langdon, op. cit: 91] Several lobbies of parliament were also staged, and the TUC raised objections to the legislation.[Skinner and Langdon, ibid; TUC 1960-1987, 1972] Similarly, successful motions to the LPAC, and the TUC called on their respective organisations to support campaigns of non co-operation and non-implementation, mounted by tenants, trades councils, and local Labour parties. As both motions were moved by the private sector AUEW[Labour Party 1966-1984, 1972; TUC 1960-1987, op. cit.], however, there is no scope for the invention of sectoral dichotomies. NALGO's 1972 conference also rejected the Housing Finance Act, and as it did in the 1980s, agreed to support its members who refused to co-operate with commissioners introduced to run local authority affairs.[Newman, 1982: 288]

The Labour Party NEC issued statements on the Housing Finance Act, on 20 January and 10 March 1972[Labour Party 1966-1984, 1972: 355-6], advising Labour groups not to increase rents until the were forced to and then to blame the government. The Labour Party's central offices also produced leaflets and a Labour Weekly broad-sheet for local use, urged local deputations to be sent to the Secretary of State, and called on Labour groups to organise meetings on a ward basis.[loc. cit.] The similarity between the approach adopted here and that of the 1980s is evident in the NEC's refusal to offer a clear national lead; although it pledged its opposition to the Bill and promised its repeal by a future Labour Government.[Skinner and Langdon, op. cit: 91] Thus, the NEC's March statement argued that a national lead was impracticable because the position of each local authority was different, and each therefore had to make their own decisions.[Labour Party 1966-1984, 1972: 355-6]

By November 1972, only 12 of the original 42 authorities were still refusing to co-operate with the Act.[Mitchell, op. cit: 174] Of those 12, six were English councils and included Clay Cross, Halstead and Eccles who had received default orders.[Skinner and Langdon, op. cit: 50] By the end of the year only three English authorities were maintaining their stance, and were accompanied by an unspecified number of authorities in Scotland, including Glasgow[Newman, op. cit: 289], and two in Wales: Bedwas and Machen; and, Merthyr Tydfil.[loc. cit; Skinner and Langdon,
The English authorities were: Camden in London; Consiborough in Yorkshire; and Clay Cross in Derbyshire. Eventually, Camden and Consiborough followed the other Labour groups where the decision to oppose the Act had not been unanimous. Glasgow and Camden, for example, complied in early 1973, and Consiborough in March 1973. Newman, op. cit: 289

Apart from Clay Cross, therefore, the only authorities maintaining resistance were in Scotland and in Wales, where Housing Commissioners had been appointed to Bedwas and Machen, and to Merthyr Tydfil. Within the labour movement, explanations for the absence of a sustained campaign of widespread non-co-operation focused on actions of the Labour Party NEC. Thus, the NEC was accused of failing to mobilise the Party in opposition to the Act, and for creating confusion and splits in many Labour councils. A motion to the 1973 LPAC, for example, condemned the lack of NEC support offered to Clay Cross, and called for an intensification of the struggle against the Act. While the NEC's role may offer a partial explanation of events, other factors, such as those outlined earlier in this discussion, need to be taken into consideration; as do the special circumstances prevailing in Clay Cross at this time.

**Clay Cross**

Two aspects of the Clay Cross campaign warrant attention here. First of all, the practices of the local labour movement, and accompanying social and economic circumstances, help explain why Clay Cross Labour Party was able to mount a concerted campaign against the Housing Finance Act. Secondly, the stances adopted by the Parliamentary leadership of the Labour Party and the NEC, in relation to Clay Cross and to the Housing Finance Act, indicate broader practices and principles, relating to internal Labour Party democracy. Exploration of these areas contributes to the interrogation and validation of the categories of service provision, employment, and democratic practice within the Labour Party and local state, commenced in previous chapters. Furthermore, the identification of analogies, between these areas and the practices and principles of the 1980s, forms an integral component of the development of reciprocal processes, and of the historical context.

The Clay Cross Labour Party practised a disciplined form of delegatory representation that treated councillors as delegates of the local Party. From the 1960s until the dissolution of Clay Cross in the 1970’s re-organisation, for example, the Labour Group met every Friday to decide policy, and decisions were then presented as a united front. Councillors were also answerable to a monthly meeting of the local
Party, and those who disagreed with Party policy were either de-selected or asked to resign. [Mitchell, 1974; Skinner and Langdon, 1974] In other words, the Labour Group was accountable to the local Party, and all councillors were expected to abide by Party policy and manifesto commitments. By operating in this fashion, the local Party practised principles similar to those promoted by the CLPD and local parties struggling to make MPs and local councillors accountable to the Party at large, as described in Chapter Two, but they also adapted the structures and practices of the local state to suit their own requirements.

This approach should not be attributed to the size of the local Party, or to a lack of participation. On the contrary, the Clay Cross Labour Party increased from 15 members in 1969, to 120 in 1972. [Mitchell, op. cit; Skinner and Langdon, op. cit.] Participation of the wider populace was also encouraged through an open forum, held after every council meeting, where members of public could question councillors and discuss current policy. Following disruption by the Resident's Association, however, the ‘Forum’ was replaced with a new scheme entitled: 'communiplan', which aimed to involve local groups in council policy making and to allow for co-option onto council committees and council meetings. [Skinner and Langdon, ibid: 35] The new scheme resembled some of the committee structure initiatives developed by Labour local authorities during the 1980s, and constituted an attempt by the Clay Cross Labour Group to prevent themselves being distanced from the local electorate; especially as they held all 11 seats on the council.

The approach to local authority housing provision in Clay Cross was founded on principles of slum clearance, and affordable rents that were based on a 16% subsidy from the rates. [Skinner and Langdon, ibid.] These policies formed a central plank of Clay Cross Labour Party's programme, and were therefore at the forefront of local electoral contests. Electoral opposition to the Labour Party, for example, took the form of a Residents Association which contested local elections on a commitment to remove the housing subsidy. Thus, the high profile of the issue at each election, together with the Party's continuing electoral success, meant that the Clay Cross Labour Party had a convincing case for arguing that it had a clear local mandate on which to practise a degree of local autonomy; through the practice of local policy and service provision.

The Clay Cross experience, and broader opposition to the Housing Finance Act, illustrates the importance of housing provision to the labour movement, and therefore validates related claims made in Chapter One. Similarly, the changing demographic and economic circumstances of Clay Cross reflected those described in Chapter One; especially in terms of rising levels of unemployment resulting from mine closures, and an increasingly elderly population. The local Labour Party justified its housing
policy, therefore, as a means of redistributing wealth in the locality [Skinner and Langdon, ibid: 28] and, given the composition of housing in Clay Cross, where 1,600 local authority homes provided for a considerable percentage of an electorate of 7,000, the policies of the Labour Party almost guarantied it a majority in local elections [Mitchell, op. cit.]. Similar approaches were still evident in the 1980s, however, where Norwich and Sheffield maintained high levels of local authority housing stock; in spite of the attempt, noted in Chapter One, to break up of tight knit communities through local government re-organisation in the 1970s.

Analyses can also be drawn between the campaign practices adopted in and around Clay Cross, and those of the 1980s. These include holding public meetings to discuss related issues, the staging of demonstrations in October 1972 and April 1973 [Skinner and Langdon, op. cit.], and the holding of a conference on the issue of Clay Cross at Central Hall Westminster in June 1973. The conference was attended by 200 CLP delegates, 200 trade union branches and 150 Labour Party Young Socialist (LPYS) branches [Skinner and Langdon, ibid: 95-6], and bears analogy with the delegate conferences discussed in later chapters. Of particular significance to this thesis, however, is the view that the development of political awareness in Clay Cross gained its momentum from militancy in trade unions. This reflects the assertions of Chapter Two, that the period was one of mobile and confident trade unionism, and indicates an interrelation between local government and the outlook and practice of the broader labour movement.

Clay Cross councillors, for example, are described as working for a fusion of political struggle in the council chamber, and trade union struggle outside [Skinner and Langdon, ibid: 58]. Evidence of this approach includes: the award of a pay increase to manual council workers in 1970, when elsewhere their pay claim resulted in the 'dirty jobs strike' of October [loc. cit.]; refusing to hold council meetings during the Post Office workers strike of 1971; circumventing the 1972 national pay freeze by re-negotiating contracts with manual workers [Skinner and Langdon, ibid: 65]; and, unanimous support given to the Miners strikes of 1972 and 1974. In particular, the NUM and NUPE are identified as influential in the Clay Cross Labour Party, with five out of the 11 councillors who defied the Housing Act being NUPE members. [Skinner and Langdon, ibid: 60-1]

This view has to be kept in perspective, however, as several disputes arose with NALGO members over dealings with the Housing Commissioner. Thus, although it was national NALGO policy to support councils refusing to implement the Act, the members in Clay Cross rejected the council's order that staff should not co-operate with the Housing Commissioner, because NALGO members would then be breaking

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2 These are discussed in Chapter Four in the Deregulation section.
the law.[Newman, 1982; Skinner and Langdon, op. cit.] Furthermore, the authority employed a small work-force in contrast to the Metropolitan authorities created after 1974, and this may have made it easier to have a close working relationship.

The size of the authority's labour force can be gauged from the numbers involved in the 'dirty jobs' pay settlement, and by the numbers of NALGO staff who took industrial action against the authority's instruction for them to break the law; 44 and 27 respectively. When considered in these terms, the doubling of the Clay Cross Direct Labour Organisation (DLO) in 1971, in an attempt to counter the effects of unemployment in the area[Skinner and Langdon, ibid: 61], is barely comparable to those authorities who, as Chapter Four identifies, employed tens of thousands in the 1980s. Nevertheless, the practice demonstrates a concern with local employment levels and also illustrates the small-scale of local initiatives.

In addition to the issues of local democratic practice discussed earlier, Clay Cross also raises issues concerning the internal democracy of the Labour Party; particularly PLP and NEC accountability, and the role of the LPAC as the sovereign body of the Party. Motions passed at successive conferences, for example, called for support to be given to local authorities defying the Housing Finance Act, and for retrospective legislation to relieve councillors of any penalties incurred as a result of their defiance.[Labour Party 1966-1984, 1972 and 1973; Skinner and Langdon, op. cit.] In spite of conference decisions, however, the NEC voted to adopt a policy which included a commitment to repeal the Housing Finance Act 1972, the removal of disqualification, but excluded financial indemnity of penalised councillors.[Skinner and Langdon, ibid: 52-3, & 91]

Furthermore, Edward Short, the Deputy Leader of the Labour Party, argued at the 1973 LPAC that, in spite of Conference policy, the NEC could not encourage councillors to break the law, because: to do so would be an offence in itself; they could not tell councillors to suffer the consequences of their actions; and, the next Labour Government would introduce legislation that might be unpopular, but which it would expect to be carried out.[Labour Party 1966-1984, 1973; Skinner and Langdon, op. cit.] Similarly, Harold Wilson argued that the decision to do something about the surcharge of councillors was taken by the LPAC, and was therefore not the responsibility of the PLP or a Labour Government.[Skinner and Langdon, ibid: 94-5] Thus, a conference held in Westminster Hall to discuss the plight of Clay Cross passed a motion which, in a similar fashion to the stance of the CLPD, questioned the nature of the Labour Party's parliamentary representation, and indicated the need for a change in the balance of power within the Labour Party.[Langdon and Skinner, ibid: 96]
The expectation that local authorities obey Government policy, but that the PLP and NEC could ignore LPAC decisions is indicative of an inconsistency in the attitude of the PLP and NEC toward the autonomy of local parties. Thus, while local parties were not required to comply with decisions relating to campaigning activity, compliance was required in other areas. After reorganisation in 1974, for example, North East Derbyshire CLP adopted a policy of not raising rents under the Housing Finance Act, but 11 councillors refused to accept DLP policy and were barred from the list of prospective candidates. Following an inquiry by national officers of the Labour Party, the 11 names were reinstated, in spite of their refusal to accept local policy. [Skinner and Langdon, ibid: 81]

Similarly, the decision by the annual meeting of the CLP to expel 17 Labour councillors who voted against a manifesto commitment to extend Clay Cross policy on the Housing Finance Act to the whole area, heralded an inquiry into the conduct of the CLP. [Skinner and Langdon, ibid: 82] The contradiction between the PLP and NEC's refusal to require Labour groups to support Party policy and their active intervention on behalf of councillors who actually disobey Party Policy was also an issue in the early 1980s, and is discussed in the next Chapter. The practice related here, however, reinforces the view that the PLP and NEC adopted an approach to democracy which was premised on the representation of all electors as opposed to those who voted, campaigned, or worked for their election. The stance also reflects a parliamentarist approach whereby decisions taken by the PLP and Government were held to be beyond the remit of the LPAC.

The areas discussed in this section contribute to, and are explored within, the historical context initiated by chapters One and Two. The attempt to mount a campaign against the Housing Finance Act should, for example, be understood in the context of confident labour movement outlook and practice, but also in relation to the difficulties such an attempt faced in view of the nature of local authorities and labour movement organisation prior to re-organisation. In particular, the categories of service provision, local democracy, autonomy, and to a lesser extent employment, all introduced in Chapter One, are interrogated and validated in reference to the practice of the Clay Cross Labour Party, Labour Group, and the broader campaign against the Housing Finance Act. Similarly, issues first raised in Chapter Two relating to the practice and perception of accountability and representation within the Labour Party are developed in reference to the Clay Cross campaign, the PLP, NEC, and North East Derbyshire CLP. These categories receive further interrogation and validation in the following sections, where they are explored in the context of financial limits promoted a Labour Government.
SOUTH YORKSHIRE AND TRANSPORT POLICY

The resistance undertaken by South Yorkshire contrasts to that mounted by Clay Cross and the other authorities that opposed the Housing Finance Act. South Yorkshire was not part of a broad based campaign against an Act of Parliament, though it was opposed to a particular aspect of central government fiscal policy. The stance adopted by South Yorkshire is similar to that adopted Clay Cross, however, to the extent that both stemmed from a commitment to provide, develop and defend a particular service area.[Gyford and James, 1983: 138-47] Thus, in both cases a particular policy lay at the centre of the local Labour Party's manifesto commitment, and each saw their election success as a mandate to vary local policy and provision. Unfortunately, a thorough comparison of the tactics and organisation employed in the two areas is not possible as the attention afforded to South Yorkshire Labour Party is somewhat remiss. In view of the limited information available, only a brief discussion of the issues and tactics employed is possible.

The process of adopting their policy on service provision started in December 1972 when, as a first step toward free public transport for all, the South Yorkshire Labour Party Manifesto Working Group for the new Metropolitan County Council elections recommended consultation with district councils to explore the possibility of providing free public transport for the elderly, the handicapped, and the disabled.[Blunkett and Jackson, 1987; Gyford and James, op. cit.] These demographic groups are recorded in Chapter One as receiving expanded and improved service provision, and such practice is therefore confirmed here as a labour movement objective.

The policy review took place as a consequence of the re-organisation of local government in the mid 1970s when, amongst other things, transport provision was made the responsibility of the newly created metropolitan county councils. Thus, as a consequence of re-organisation, existing local fares, previously set at different levels, had to be unified under the new authority. South Yorkshire therefore chose to set its fares at the level of one of the cheaper districts, and later froze them at that level.[Blunkett and Jackson, op. cit: 71] Re-organisation also involved a new system of allocating central funds for public transport. The old system entailed a combination of RSG and specific grants for particular projects, but was replaced by the Transport Supplementary Grant(TSG). The new TSG, Chapter One explains, took the form of a block grant designed to reduce central government supervision.[Gyford and James, op. cit; Skelcher, 1985] TSG, however, was paid at a fixed rate, and based on accepted expenditure plans. Any excess would therefore have to met through a local subsidy from the rates, and this, in line with its manifesto commitment, is exactly what South Yorkshire did.
A conflict of interest arose with a change of government thinking in this area. First of all, the RSG No. 2 Order 1974 recommended that local authorities increase fares in line with costs, and that: 'authorities who have not increased fares of late should consider what additional increases are necessary to cover some of the lost ground.'[Gyford and James, op. cit: 139] This represented a difference of opinion between South Yorkshire and the Government, but the real problem began when the Government sought to reduce the overall TSG available to authorities as a means of reducing public expenditure levels. As part of the TSG settlement for 1977-78, for example, South Yorkshire submitted plans for a transport programme costing £28,300,000 at 1975 prices. The Government, however, considered this programme to exceed, by £10,000,000, South Yorkshire's entitlement to funds from a finite resource of £720,000,000.[Gyford and James, ibid: 141]

The Government's case rested on the argument that higher subsidies, and therefore higher spending, would attract greater RSG.[loc. cit.] In other words, because the previous years spending was used as a base to calculate the following years RSG, allowing South Yorkshire to spend more on Transport would attract a higher RSG settlement the following year. From South Yorkshire's point of view, however, the Labour Group had a mandate to pursue its policy, not only from the local electorate but also from: LPACs of 1973, 1975 and 1977; the precepted metropolitan district authorities of South Yorkshire; and at CLP, City, County and Regional levels of the Labour Party.[Gyford and James, ibid.]

The campaign launched by the South Yorkshire Labour Group, or at least that part covered by the sources available, concentrated on official channels. Thus, the main means of communication are identified as: bilateral meetings between council officials and civil servants, and council leaders and ministers; through the Association of Metropolitan Authorities(AMA); and through the internal channels of the Labour Party.[Gyford and James, ibid: 141] Although there is no obvious analogy here with Clay Cross, there are analogies with the tactics employed in Liverpool's campaign for more resources in 1984, where channels of communication with government were maintained throughout the period.[Byrne, 1994] There is also evidence of the lines of communication established within the Labour Party during the campaign in Liverpool[Jinkinson, 3.4.84; Sonnet, 31.5.84], and during the campaign against the Rates Act the following year.[LGCU Management Committee 1984-85; LGCU Management Group 1984-85]

Both South Yorkshire and Clay Cross sought to defend policies that formed central planks of their respective local election manifestos, but because of changes in central government policy brought them both into positions of confrontation. Both South Yorkshire and Clay Cross considered their respective transport and housing policies to
be public services. [Gyford and James, op. cit; Skinner and Langdon, 1974] They therefore sought to defend a particular local service, but were also asserting their rights to pursue variations in local policy based on local mandates at successive elections, on the basis of democratic decision making within the Labour Party, and financed through local taxes. These positions, together with the tactics discussed above, are also evident in the campaigns of the 1980s.

Finally, the solution adopted by South Yorkshire indicates the level of autonomy available to authorities, at that time, in the area of finance and service provision. For the 1978-9 settlement South Yorkshire declared only a part of its total revenue support for transport in its submission for TSG. The remainder of its planned expenditure was included in the budget as a whole and therefore not submitted to the Department of Transport for TSG purposes. [Gyford and James, op. cit: 145] This technical solution obviated the need for a protracted and high profile campaign, and is reminiscent of 'creative accountancy' measures adopted by many authorities in the 1980s, and discussed in Chapter Four.

Consideration of the policy and practice adopted by South Yorkshire Labour Party affords another dimension to the exploration and interrogation of the issues of service provision and local democracy. The section therefore provides additional validation of the areas identified and discussed in relation to Clay Cross and in earlier chapters, and also introduces the concept of financial restraint; explored further in the following section. In particular, using the service category of transport as a means of serving the needs of particular demographic groups is identified as a labour movement objective. Similarly, the notions of local democracy and autonomy are developed in reference to relations between government and local authorities, between PLP and local Party, in terms of manifesto commitments and local mandates, and the ability of local authorities to finance service provision through local taxes. The objective now, in completing the pre 1980 historical context, is to consider the wider implications of financial restraint and labour movement responses.

ANTI CUTS CAMPAIGNS

This section introduces and explores the policy and practice of labour movement opposition to reductions in public expenditure implemented, toward the end of the 1970s, by the Callaghan Labour Government. The importance attached to the areas of service provision, employment, and local democracy by labour movement organisations, is therefore explored in the context of financial restraint, and earlier validation of these categories and associated values developed. Similarly, the validation of categories pertaining to labour movement organisation, outlook and
practice is developed in reference to the structures that arose during the campaigns of opposition mounted by trade unions in the 1970s. In particular, the categories and areas identified are considered in reference to the changing outlook and practice of a Labour Government, and the contrasting values identified and explored.

By exploring the reasons for, effects of, and responses to financial restraint, the section completes the preliminary stage of the historical context, and facilitates interrogation of the policy and practice of subsequent Conservative governments toward local government, and of labour movement responses. To achieve these objectives a working definition of the term 'cuts' is provided. Consideration is then afforded to the opposition and resistance mounted by trade unions, and to the vestiges of dissent evident within the Labour Party. Exploration of these areas involves drawing analogies with associated principles and practices interrogated and validated in earlier sections and chapters, and is undertaken over three sub-sections entitled: Defining and Quantifying the Cuts; Trade Union Opposition; and Opposition in the Labour Party.

**Defining and Quantifying the Cuts**

Since the mid 1970s, when central government policy and practice turned to restricting the growth of public expenditure, the term 'cuts' has been used in labour movement circles as a euphemism for reductions in public expenditure. The term is vague, however, referring to anything from reductions in planned expenditure growth at the national level, to the practical effects of expenditure restriction in individual local authority service areas. Similarly, the policy and practice of public expenditure restriction in the 1970s differs significantly to that of the 1980s. The following account concentrates on the 1970s, and addresses three areas as a means of defining the term: reductions in proposed public expenditure as a whole; reductions in specific areas of expenditure; and the effects of such reductions in terms of the levels and standards of local authority services. As part of this process consideration is also afforded to the reasoning behind attempts to curb public expenditure, and alternatives approaches identified.

The expenditure white papers, published in the second half of the 1970s, afford the best indication of the Labour Government's approach to public expenditure during this period. Duncan and Goodwin, for example, note that The Attack on Inflation White Paper was presented to Parliament in July 1975, and signalled the Labour Government's conversion to monetary economic theory.\[Duncan and Goodwin, 1988: 101\] Control of inflation was earmarked by the White Paper, as a social and

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3 Too much emphasis has been placed on the influence of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in securing the Labour Government's conversion to monetary policies. Prior to the intervention of the IMF in 1976, Cabinet Ministers were already exhibiting a monetarist bent: in July 1975 D Healey.
economic priority requiring reductions in public sector borrowing and spending, and the containment of real wage levels.[loc. cit.] Similarly, Fryer records that the approach was confirmed in 1976, when the Public Expenditure White Paper envisaged a levelling off of public expenditure growth, and the Cash Limits and Public Expenditure White Paper imposed limits on three quarters of central government expenditure, other than social security benefits.[1979: 96] Table 3.1 shows the level of original reductions and those for 1977-8 and 1978-9, announced in July and December 1976, and made at the behest of the IMF. Fryer also notes that the 1977 Expenditure White Paper outlined further reductions for 1977-8, and provided 'a year of overall stabilisation or minor improvement in 1978-9'.[loc. cit.]

Table 3.1
Announced Cuts in Public Expenditure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>£1,100 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>1976</td>
<td>£4,595 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>1976</td>
<td>£1,012 million from 77-78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>1976</td>
<td>£1,513 million from 78-79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Fryer, Manson and Fairclough, 1978: 76
Note: The later figures are at 1976 prices and do not allow for the effects of inflation.

In practice, estimated effect of reductions in levels of expenditure proved to be conservative. Expenditure White Papers for 1977-8, for example, are described by Fryer as identifying an actual under-spend of £2.4 billion, but if this figure is compared to the original level of planned spending for that year, produced in 1975, the effect is that public expenditure for 1977-8 was actually reduced by nearly £5 billion.[op. cit: 97] This issue was raised by the TUC Liaison Committee in 1978, and the concerns reflected in an ASTMS motion that called for £1 billion of underspend to be carried over as an additional figure for the following years expenditure round.[TUC 1960-1987, 1978] Table 3.2 indicates the level of local government underspending.

As part of the Government's attempt to reduce levels of public borrowing and expenditure, particular attention was paid to the funding of local government. In December 1974, for example, the Department of the Environment Circular 171/74 'Rate Fund Expenditure and Rate Calls 1975-6', offered guidance to local authorities on limiting service provision.[Blunkett and Jackson, 1987: 147] Furthermore, the Consultative Council for Local Government Finance(CCLGF) was established in

Chancellor of the Exchequer, identified a sharp reduction in the rate of inflation as an over riding priority[Newman, 1982: 400], and in April 1975 identified unemployment as a price paid for lower inflation[McDonnell, 1978: 43]; in May 1975 J Barnett, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, expounded a version of the 'overload thesis' that the public sector claimed more resources than was compatible with provision for production investment[Taylor, 1979: 9]; and, S Williams, Secretary of State for Prices and Consumer Protection, warned against 'the cancer of inflation' at the NALGO conference in 1975.[Newman, op. cit: 400]
1975[loc. cit.], and used as a means of persuading local government that central guidelines where reasonable.[Jones and Stewart, 1985: 33] Local government finance was therefore an issue before the intervention of the IMF, but following their intervention the tenor of central government prescriptions changed. Until Crosland's speech at Manchester Free Trade Hall in October 1976, for example, attempts at reducing local expenditure had been persuasive rather than coercive.[Blunkett and Jackson, op. cit.] The upward trend in central contributions to local spending stopped, therefore, with the RSG settlement for 1976-7, and actually fell by 4.5% for 1977-8.[Blunkett and Jackson, ibid: 150]

### Table 3.2
**Over and Underspending by Local Government 1974-1979**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Over/Underspend %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1974-5</td>
<td>+5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975-6</td>
<td>+0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976-7</td>
<td>-1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977-8</td>
<td>-1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978-9</td>
<td>-1.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Duncan and Goodwin, op. cit: 105.

Note: Figures relate to local government expenditure minus RSG target, for England and Wales.

The cash limits introduced in April 1976, amount to a coercive weapon for central government to reduce contributions to local spending.[Blunkett and Jackson, op. cit; Duncan and Goodwin, op. cit.] Under this mechanism, central grant allocations were fixed to price levels assumed to operate for the whole financial year, and could not, therefore, be adjusted for inflation.[Duncan and Goodwin, ibid; Newton and Karran: 1985] As the late 1970s was a period of spiralling inflation, however, cash limits had the effect of reducing RSG in real terms. Table 3.3 shows local government spending falling as a proportion of both GDP and public sector expenditure, and therefore provides an indication of the impact of cash limits, following their introduction in 1976.[Duncan and Goodwin, op. cit: 102]

The attempt to restrict local spending was not targeted exclusively on current expenditure. To appreciate the full effect of the Government's approach, cash limits need to be understood as working in conjunction with the loan sanctions introduced for capital spending in 1976.[Duncan and Goodwin, ibid: 109] Just as inflation compounded the effect of cash limits, the impact of loan sanctions was exaggerated by the high level of interest rates already restricting capital spending.[Stoker, 1988: 13-14] Consequently, gross figures of capital spending by English local authorities, including spending funded by loans and sales of assets, dropped from £7,898,000,000 in 1976-7 to £6,588,000,000 in 1979-80.[loc. cit.]
Table 3.3
Local Government Spending in the United Kingdom, 1960-1978

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Local government expenditure as % of GDP</th>
<th>Local government Expenditure as % of total Government expenditure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>30.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>31.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>29.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>28.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>27.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Duncan & Goodwin, ibid: 99.

Reductions in projected expenditure programmes are difficult to quantify in terms of their effect on the levels of service provision and employment in individual local authorities. Notwithstanding the argument that reductions in planned expenditure and programmes are not actually quantifiable cuts [Cresswell, 1994], the general nature of targets that are expressed as national totals serves to confound their impact at the local level. For the year 1975-6, for example, the government budgeted for a reduction of £86,000,000 in the education budget, but this still translated into 4% growth in spending, as the cuts highlighted were in proposed spending. [TUC 1960-1987, 1975: 167] Similarly, cuts that take involve reductions in the quality of provision, lowered standards of service, repair, and maintenance, and the use of inferior materials, are more difficult to quantify than large scale redundancies or the sudden slashing of projects. [Fryer, op. cit: 97]

The Treasury, for example, estimated that the measures of July and December 1976 would each increase unemployment by 100,000 across the private and public sectors. [Fryer et al, op. cit: 76] In contrast, the National Steering Committee Against the Cuts (NSC) estimated that 150,000 jobs were lost as a consequence of the December measures, and a further 250,000 in the following year. [CSE, 1979a: 2] Furthermore, the TUC estimated that the RSG settlement for 1977-8 would result in a reduction of 20-30,000 local government jobs. [1960-1987 1977: 278] Localised examples of these effects are difficult to identify, however, as employment levels were reduced through the non-filling of vacancies. [Fryer, op. cit: 97]¹ Labour costs were also reduced through the switch from full-time to part-time labour, discussed in Chapter One, and became common practice during the two years from March 1976. [loc. cit.]

¹ Redundancies did take place, however, in Surrey County, Strathclyde, Tayside and Glasgow, and NALGO estimated that there were 50,000 vacant local government posts in 1976. [Newman, 1982: 459]
The measures adopted by the Labour Government to control money supply and the primacy afforded to inflation resembled those advocated by the Conservative Party in 'The Right Approach', published October 1976. Accordingly, G Howe's reply to the Chancellor's budget speech in 1976 welcomed the Government's conversion, albeit that they were castigated for not going far enough; a view to which the practice of the Conservative Party in government in the 1980s bears witness. Significantly, however, the deflationary and quasi-monetarist approach adopted by the Government was one of three alternative strategies proffered at the time. The others included the general Keynesian prescriptions for demand management and the Alternative Economic Strategy (AES).

The AES is of particular relevance here as it was advocated within the labour movement as a programme for economic growth that excluded reductions in expenditure and welfare provision. The most common components of the AES were: planning agreements; expanded industrial investment through the National Enterprise Board to reduce unemployment; increased public ownership, including control over the banks and financial institutions; cuts in military expenditure; price controls; selective import controls; and industrial democracy as a means of controlling the planning process. These elements of the AES are evident in composite motions moved at the TUC in 1976 by the AUEW and NALGO, and the composite motion moved by NUPE at the LPAC in 1976. The NALGO motion to the TUC was supported by COHSE, the CPSA, the FBU, NATFHE and NUPE.

Significantly, NALGO identified the contradictions in the Government's thinking by pointing out the cyclical and self-defeating effect of cuts: increasing unemployment and therefore public expenditure and borrowing to finance welfare payments, while at the same time reducing tax and national insurance contributions. Furthermore, by arguing that redundant public sector workers did not have the skills required by the private sector, NALGO undermined a central contention of the 'overload thesis', and the Government's case, that the public sector deprived the private sector of prospective employees. This does not, however, deny an intention of creating mass unemployment in order to reduce wage costs in the

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5 Attempts to control inflation and reduce public expenditure were intended to facilitate capital accumulation and thereby rejuvenate the private sector. Equally important, however, is the consequent move from validating the quality of service provision in terms of levels of employment levels, to the acceptance of meta-theoretical validation in terms of abstract exchange value. Thus, the Labour Government's variant of monetary fiscal analysis signalled the move toward measuring service quality, efficiency and effectiveness in terms of monetary as opposed to human worth, in theory as opposed to practice, a development now accepted as the norm in local government policy and practice.

6 A variant of which was represented by Peter Walker's call, in October 1977, for tax cuts and increased public expenditure channelled to industry under a panel of 'experts'.
private sector, as implied by D Healey's 1975 statement referred to earlier, or the argument that attempts to reduce public expenditure were symptomatic of the restructuring of capital. [McDonnell, ibid.]

The term cuts is validated here through consideration of reductions in public expenditure, including the effects of inflation and underspending, and by considering reductions in proposed public expenditure for future years. This process is enhanced by exploration of specific measures for reducing local government expenditure, such as cash limits and loan sanctions, and identifying education spending and employment levels as affected areas. The effects of these measures on the levels and standards of individual local authority services are difficult to quantify, however, especially because of the range of bodies involved at local and regional levels, and through which national policies were implemented. [Fryer, op. cit: 104]. Finally, the absence of restrictions on the spending limits of individual local authorities, and their continued ability to finance local spending through local rates, left the levels of local democracy and autonomy relatively in tact.

**Trade Union Opposition**

Together with the conceptual principles espoused, the organisational and tactical aspects of the trade union campaign against public expenditure cuts in the late 1970s form the focus of this sub-section. Identification and exploration of these areas allows later labour movement campaigning activity to be evaluated immanently, in terms of their principles and practice, and therefore adds to the context within which the campaigns of the 1980s are interrogated. Thus, as part of this process, this sub-section explores the development of structures, tactics, and conceptual principles, identifies their relevance to the findings of other chapters and sections, and thereby develops the historical context and validation of categories. Particular attention is focused on those aspects of the campaign that were concerned with either: co-ordination and organisation; publicity and education; parliamentary intervention; or mass protest and industrial action, and thereby facilitates the development of analogies in subsequent chapters.

Attempts to organise and co-ordinate opposition to public spending cuts involved a number of ad hoc bodies that resembled the structures and tactics employed in earlier and later labour movement campaigns. In October 1975, for example, the National Co-ordinating Committee against Cuts in the National Health Service was elected at a delegate conference organised by the Medical Committee Against Private Practice. [Fryer, 1979: 99] Similarly, in December 1975, a broad based committee was formed to oppose cuts in Manchester and involved ASTMS, ATTI, COHSE, FBU, MPU, NALGO, NUPE, NUT, the National Union of Students and the National
Abortion Campaign.[loc. cit.] Also in December 1975, NALGO established a Campaign sub-committee of its National Executive Council (NNEC).[Newman, 1982: 456] Local campaigns and protests were also organised by trades councils, such as in Lancashire, and by joint trade union committees in South Wales, Birmingham, Sheffield, Tyneside, Humberside, Oldham, Bristol, Portsmouth, Southampton and elsewhere.[Fryer, op. cit: 99] A campaign committee was also set up by NALGO's Metropolitan District, serving London.[Newman, op. cit: 465]

Additionally, and in response to local developments and initiatives, NALGO and NUPE began to hold meetings at the national level during 1976, to explore the possibility of mounting a common approach to the Government's policy of cuts.[Fryer, op. cit: 100] This co-operation extended to a joint meeting of the research staff of both unions to discuss the opportunities for practical co-operation in the campaign, and to a NALGO-NUPE committee which considered a joint approach to other unions to muster support for a joint lobby of parliament on the issue of public expenditure cuts.[loc. cit.]

Another example of joint union co-operation is provided by the NSC, which involved representatives from ASTMS, COHSE, CPSA, NALGO, NATFHE, NUPE, the National Union of Students, NUT, and the TUC South East Regional Council.[Fryer, op. cit; Fryer, Manson and Fairclough, 1978; Newman, op. cit.] Set up to plan a lobby of parliament in November 1976, the NSC was re-established on a continuing basis following a meeting of General Secretaries and National Officers of the unions involved in the original steering committee. Other NSC activity involved: meetings between senior full-time officials; staging regional 'days of action' involving stoppages, demonstrations, and lobbies; establishing regional and local joint union committees (JTUC); holding a delegate conference on the social wage; and, preparing and publishing joint literature setting out the arguments against cuts.[Fryer, op. cit: 101]

The decision of the NSC to establish regional and local JTUCs corresponds, in timing and nature, to the TUCLGC recommendation that joint committees be formed at the local level to combat redundancies.[TUC 1960-1987, 1976; Leopold and Beaumont, 1982] Also at this time, the TUC General Council was encouraging trades councils to lobby local authorities and to resist government cuts.[TUC 1960-1987, 1976: 188] A distinction needs to be drawn, however, between JTUCs that developed in response to local struggles[Burgess, 1994; Cresswell, 1994; Lowes, 1994]7, and those that were the product of national edicts. TUC and NSC engendered committees,

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7 In addition to the joint committees identified earlier in this sub-section, other examples include: a local Authority Workers Shop Stewards Combine formed in Coventry in 1975; and, a Joint Trade Union Committee in Swansea in 1976. [Walsh, 1982b: 7] Similarly, Chapter Five discusses the emergence of Liverpool's JSSC.
for example, were geared toward full-time officials as opposed to shop stewards [Lowes, ibid.]; whereas the involvement of stewards made JTUCs more likely to be responsive to local events.

In keeping with normal trade union practice, local publicity was produced on ad hoc bases for distribution at demonstrations and lobbies. [Fryer, op. cit: 99] Publicity was also produced though official union structures, including NUPE's internal circulars distributed to local branches, and a document entitled 'Inflation: Attack or Retreat', was produced in response to the Government's White Paper: The Attack on Inflation. 'Inflation: Attack or Retreat' argued that NUPE could not fight to defend member interests through wage negotiating machinery alone, but required trade union action on a broad political front.[Fryer, ibid: 98] Along similar lines to NUPE NALGO co-operation described earlier, the SCPS and the CPSA co-produced a pamphlet in 1975 entitled 'Cuts that Puzzle'. [loc. cit.] The SCPS/CPSA document argued that Britain consumed less of its national product on public spending than comparable nations, and rejected the idea that a programme of cuts could solve the problems of inflation and unemployment.[loc. cit.]

Furthermore, as part of the pre-budget debate in 1976, NUPE produced an economic review entitled 'Time to Change Course', and called for a general trade union withdrawal from involvement in wages policy if the government continued with public expenditure cuts.[Fryer, ibid: 99] As part of its campaign, NALGO Publicity Department produced bulletins, speakers notes, leaflets, stickers and posters[Newman, op. cit: 458], and, in similar fashion to NUPE, produced an economic review in 1976 and a document entitled: 'The Economic Situation and Cuts in Public Expenditure' in 1977.[McDonnell, 1978] Finally, the NSC's 1977 document entitled 'Breakdown: the crisis in your public services' analysed successive government announcements of cuts in the various areas.[Fryer, op. cit: 96]

A common labour movement approach to the dissemination and development of ideas and structures involves the concept and practice of the 'delegate conference'. Such activities appear as initiatives of both official or unofficial structures and their attendance rates vary accordingly. Individual or groups of delegates were accepted from recognised bodies such as trade union branches or local parties, but the bodies recognised depended on the organisers or sponsors of the conference. A national delegate conference on the social wage and cuts, for example, was organised through the NSC in March 1977.[Fryer, ibid; Newman, op. cit.] The official sponsorship of this conference is reflected in its organisation and arrangements, with delegates being addressed by academics and national union officials, and by the attendance of 200 delegates, from 23 different trade unions.
Other conferences held on related issues during the same period include: a National Save Our Hospitals Delegate Conference, staged in 1977 by Hospital Worker and the Right to Work Campaign[Fryer, op. cit: 102]; and, a National Right to Work Campaign delegate conference, held in Manchester in 1976 to protest against cuts and unemployment.[Fryer, ibid: 100] Similar initiatives, undertaken in the 1980s, are described in subsequent chapters and, as has already been recorded, a delegate conference was organised as part of the Clay Cross campaign.

Opposition to public expenditure cuts also took the form of demonstrations and lobbies of Parliament, trade union, and Party conferences. The National Coordinating Committee against Cuts in the NHS, NALGO, and the Socialist Medical Association, for example, organised a demonstration held in London in April 1976.[Fryer, ibid: 99] Local demonstrations and days of action also took place toward the end of 1976, during the early months of 1977[Fryer, ibid: 102], and were supported by sections of the labour movement not involved in the NSC. British Leyland shop stewards in Birmingham supported local initiatives[loc. cit.], for example, and local sections of the AUEW, TGWU, GMBATU, and EETPU supported the NSC's lobby of Parliament in November 1976.[Fryer, ibid: 101] Furthermore, workers from Greenwich Reinforcements, a British Steel subsidiary, were disciplined for supporting a NALGO/NUPE day of action against public expenditure cuts.[Newman, op. cit: 446]

Other examples of mass protest against public expenditure cuts and unemployment involved: the Hospital Worker group and Hammersmith JSSC joining the TUC North West Region's lobby of Parliament in 1976[Fryer, op. cit: 99]; NUPE organising lobbies of the TUC and LPAC to encourage support for an NSC lobby of Parliament in November 1976[Fryer, ibid: 100]; and a national week of action from 21 November 1977, including a rally and lobby of Parliament[Fryer, ibid: 102] and the presentation of a 175,000 signature petition to 10 Downing Street.[Newman, op. cit: 466]

Parliamentary intervention was also evident, at the level of the TUC General Council and its Industrial Committees. The Trade Union-Labour Party Liaison Committee, and other links within the Labour Party were therefore used by the General Council to try and influence government policy and practice; as were contacts between other TUC committees and corresponding government departments and Ministers. In 1975, for example, the restoration of cuts in education, announced by the previous Conservative Government, was made a condition of the Social Contract.[TUC 1960-1987, 1975: 166-7]

Other TUC activity illustrates the importance attached to education as an area of service provision worth defending. As part of the 1976-7 Social Contract discussions, for example, the TUC General Council pressed the Government to avert cuts in
education[TUC 1960-1987, 1976: 412-3], and at a meeting with the Education Secretary, in November 1976, the TUC outlined its continuing opposition to the Government's plans.[TUC 1960-1987, 1977: 136-7] In relation to more general matters, the TUC Economic Committee also met with the Chancellor and Prime Minister, in July 1976, and expressed concerns over the proposed reductions in the Public Sector Borrowing Requirement(PSBR) for 1977-8.[TUC 1960-1987, 1976: 309] During the meeting the TUC argued that cuts were not necessary up to the planned date of 1980, and expressed the concern that cuts increased unemployment unnecessarily.[loc. cit.]

The stances adopted by the TUC, representing both private and public sector unions, demonstrate the futility of postulating simplistic sectoral cleavages based on a dichotomous interpretation of trade unions recruiting in the public and private sectors. So to, do the organisational practices of GMBATU, TGWU, EETPU, and UCATT, who all recruit in both public and private sectors. Furthermore, to distinguish between the interests of trade unionists on the basis of their employer discounts the possibility that low paid workers employed by private enterprises benefit from the social wage. The estimated job losses, identified earlier as a result of cuts in public expenditure, also affected both sectors; not least because of consequent reduction in public sector orders for goods and vehicles, and a decline in construction work in housing, hospitals, schools and roads.[Newman, op. cit: 462]

Finally, the apparent contradiction between the motion moved by the AUEW at the TUC in 1976[TUC 1960-1987, 1976: 526], with it's implicit criticism of public expenditure restrictions, and H Scanlon's argument that there was a need for cuts[Fryer, op. cit: 100], is not as surprising as it might first appear. On the contrary, these conflicting stances merely reinforce the validity of observation made in Chapter Two, in reference to the invented dichotomy of left and right. In other words, absolute distinctions based on dichotomy, in this case between private and public sector interests, are meaningless in relation to categories and issues that arise on a day to day basis.

As well as identifying employment and service provision, such as education, as areas of labour movement concern, this sub-section allows clear analogies to be drawn between the campaign structures and tactics practised in the 1970s and 1980s. Particular similarities involve: the existence of, and roles played by national joint committees and organising bodies; the use of publicity to encourage mobilisation and participation; the development of local JTUCs; the staging of delegate conferences; and, calling weeks of action, lobbies of Parliament, and demonstrations at the local

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8 McDonnell[1978: 60] argues, for example, that little support for the campaign against the cuts was forthcoming from manufacturing trade unions.
and national levels. Furthermore, the development of local government trade unions, considered in Chapter Two, had implications for the trade union campaign against cuts in the 1970s. Campaigning activity, for example, was hampered by the underdeveloped organisational forms and the absence of well established shop stewards systems [Fryer, ibid: 98], but benefited from, and contributed to, struggles to establish internal democracy and shop steward structures.

Finally, involvement in trade union campaigning activity against cuts, by those who were traditional targets for cuts and redundancies, contributed to the organisation and radicalisation of such groups. [Fryer, ibid: 104 & 109] Such activity also contributed to the development of activism, organisation, and structures that facilitated more concerted opposition and resistance on the 1980s. These developments are evidenced through the historical context constructed over the first three chapters. Their identification and exploration therefore allows the policies and practice of the campaigns of the 1980s to be understood, not in isolation, but as the product of particular historical developments and experiences.

**Opposition in the Labour Party**

The sources available offer scant evidence of internal Labour Party opposition to the Labour Government's public expenditure cuts and their effects. The scarcity of evidence means that it is unwise to draw concrete conclusions. One of the few examples of such activity relates to the Camden Labour Group in London which, under the leadership of F Dobson, convened a London wide meeting to oppose housing expenditure controls imposed by the Labour Government. From that meeting an organisation called Labour Against Housing Cuts was established and involved T Banks, D White, and K Livingstone. This group evolved into Labour Against the Cuts, but their operations were limited and practised mainly in London. [Gyford, 1985; Kogan and Kogan, 1983; Livingstone, 1987; Seyd, 1987] Furthermore, at the GLLP Annual Meeting in 1976, affiliated trade unions expressed opposition to the cuts programme implemented by the GLC Labour Group; primarily because of the number of jobs lost. The meeting rejected the GLC programme of housing cuts and fares increases, and repudiated the Labour Government's cuts programme. [Livingstone, op. cit: 71-2]

Outside the LPAC, there are few examples of dissension over the issue of cuts. One of the few examples of parliamentary dissent involves the abstention of 37 Labour MPs from a vote on the Government's Expenditure White Paper in March 1976. [Seyd, op. cit: 80] Opposition was evident within the Cabinet, however, and reflected the perspectives, identified earlier as alternatives to the Government's fiscal approach. A Crosland and R Hattersely, for example, preferred a Keynesian solution,
while A Benn promoted a version of the AES. [McDonnell, 1978: 58-9] The Tribune newspaper was also a vehicle for the expression of parliamentary dissent with G Sinclair and B Sedgemore espousing an AES line in December 1976, and April 1977 respectively. [loc. cit.] In the absence of evidence to the contrary, therefore, Fryer's assertion that opposition to cuts was principally a union campaign [op. cit: 103] seems to be well founded.

The opinions of those involved in the Party at CLP, NEC and PLP levels, as well as those of trade union delegates, are indicated by the motions submitted and debated at the LPAC. Motions submitted to the Party conferences that were critical of the Government's cuts programme were moved, seconded, or received support from CLPs. In 1976, for example, composite 25 was moved by Richmond, and seconded by Bromsgrove and Redditch CLPs. The motion called on the Government not to implement further cuts in public spending, and to prevent further decline in the standards of social, education and community services. [Labour Party 1966-1984, 1976: 158]

An example of trade union opposition is provided by composite 26, which was moved successfully by NUPE in 1976, in spite of the NEC's request for remission. [Labour Party 1966-1984, ibid: 161] The NUPE motion was seconded by Cardiff North West CLP, supported by two CLP speakers, referred to the Party's manifesto commitment to improve and expand social services, and rejected the view that public spending on houses, schools, hospitals and health centres should be cut to provide profits in the private sector. It also argued that unity existed in the trade union movement to resist cuts and, expressed opposition to proposed cuts in education and social services. Furthermore, the LPAC was asked to support Labour councils refusing to implement cuts, and other Labour groups were encouraged to follow suit. Finally, the motion demanded a Labour Party campaign opposing cuts, and called on the NEC to support unions opposing cuts.

Based on the evidence available, it seems that opposition to the Government's approach to public expenditure was most evident at the constituency level; the area most accessible to activists. Similarly, NUPE had a high profile of opposition, associated with a burgeoning activist movement and the growth in its shop steward structures; identified in Chapter Two. The motions considered here also identify specific areas of service provision to be defended, and therefore contribute to the validation of the category introduced in Chapter One.

Not until 1979 and the return of Conservative Government, do motions opposing public expenditure reappear on the agenda of the LPAC. Composite 22 on public expenditure, for example, highlighted cuts in public services and called for the PLP, Labour groups, the trade union movement, and CLPs to unite in full scale opposition.
As part of this opposition councils were asked to refuse to implement cuts in services, and not to increase rates or rents. The NEC was also instructed to organise a campaign against cuts with the trade union movement, and to provide support for trade unionists involved in industrial action against cuts. As NEC spokesperson, Michael Foot opposed the motion, and the size of the card vote, 5.29m to 1.62m against, suggests trade union opposition to a motion which was moved and seconded, respectively, by Woking and Blackpool CLPs. [Labour Party 1966-1984, 1979: 195-6]

In contrast to the specific nature of composite 22, D Basnett, General Secretary of GMBATU, moved composite 23 which called for a campaign between the Labour Party, trade unions, and Labour local authorities to maintain services within the law. [Labour Party 1966-1984, ibid: 197] This motion was seconded by Pontefract and Castleford CLP, supported by Orpington CLP, and carried unanimously. There are two significant aspects in the nature of the motions submitted to the 1979 LPAC. First of all, both composites called for campaigns involving the Labour Party, trade unions, and Labour local authorities, and are therefore consistent with the principles and practice of the campaigns in the 1980s. Secondly, the general nature of composite 23, and its call to defend services within the law, is indicative of the stance taken by the national leadership of the labour movement in the 1980s. These issues are explored in greater detail in forthcoming chapters.

This chapter completes the historical context within which to explore and interrogate the principles and practice of the labour movement campaigns of the 1980s. This is achieved by adding extra dimensions to the validation of the categories introduced in chapters One and Two, and by demonstrating their interrelations. Thus, the issues of service provision, employment, and local democracy are considered in terms of constitutional and labour movement practice. These three areas are, for example, explored in reference to: the campaign against the Housing Finance Act 1972; South Yorkshire’s transport policy; and, the Labour Government’s conversion to a version of monetarist economic theory.

Furthermore, the categories of labour movement, its constituent elements, and the development of structures and tactics through campaign committees, delegate and annual conferences are explored in reference to the areas identified. As part of this exercise, the practice democracy within the labour movement is identified and explored in reference to Clay Cross and South Yorkshire, as are the varying attitudes exhibited by its constituent elements to: service policy and provision; the autonomy of local authorities and local parties; and, the importance of employment. The impact of financial restraint on the areas of service provision, employment, and local democracy
are also explored in terms of: the changes in approach exhibited by the PLP and Labour Government; and, the broader labour movement responses engendered.

In each of the above cases, the findings are cross referenced to those of earlier chapters, and identified as precursors of the principles and practice exhibited by the labour movement campaigns of opposition in the 1980s. In other words, developments in the organisation, outlook, and practice of the labour movement are understood as products and sources of the struggles referred to in this and earlier chapters. Finally, an interrelation is also identified between the Labour Government's acceptance and practice of a version of the monetary theory, and the policies pursued with greater vigour by the Conservative Governments of the 1980s. Chapters One to Three therefore provide an historical background to the 1980s; one which facilitates the reciprocal validation and interrogation of the practices and principles of the labour movement campaigns conducted during the first half of that decade.
CHAPTER FOUR

THE CONSERVATIVE APPROACH TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT, AND LABOUR MOVEMENT RESPONSES

Chapters One to Three established an historical context within which to examine the approach of Conservative governments to local government in the early 1980s, and more specifically, labour movement responses to it. As part of this process, the categories of local government service provision, employment, local democracy, and labour movement were validated in reference to practical developments and conceptual principles. This approach is practically reflexive, as described in the Introduction, because it asks reciprocally after the validity of empirical categories through recourse to meta-theory and vice versa; treating both levels of theory as a totality. The processes undertaken in the opening chapters therefore facilitate the reciprocal confrontation, in their historical context, of labour movement campaign practice and conceptual principles in the 1980s.

The practically reflexive process is developed here through the reciprocal exploration and interrogation, in historical and contemporary terms, of the categories, principles and practices of campaigns mounted in the early 1980s. This reciprocal process is described in the Introduction as immanent critique, whereby the areas interrogated are selected by the conceptual principles of the subject; in this case selection rests with the incidence of labour movement resistance and therefore correspondence to conceptual principles relating to local government service provision, employment and local democracy. There are therefore no presupposed meta-theoretical or empirical categories against which to measure the principles or performance of the campaigns, and there is no external methodology to be employed as a means of conducting such an examination. Both levels of theory interact reciprocally and simultaneously without either being reduced to the other.

1 In relation to service provision, for example, Chapter One charts the growth of services and the labour movement approach to the area. Similarly, Chapter Three considers examples of labour movement defence of service provision in the areas of housing and transport.
In accordance with this approach, the chapter consists of five sections entitled: Financial Restraint, Deregulation, Economic Regeneration; A Nascent Campaign; and Campaign Leadership. The first three sections focus on aspects of legislation that demonstrate the implications of Conservative Government policy and practice, between 1979 and 1983, for local government jobs and services, and for local democracy. The chapter therefore explores: the application of financial and other policies to local government by the Conservative Party; the justification of such measures; their practical implications; and, labour movement responses to them. The last two sections consider the extent to which the examples of localised resistance discussed in the chapter can be understood as elements of a broader campaign.

FINANCIAL RESTRRAINT

The concept and practice of financial restraint is considered over three sub-sections entitled: Calculation and Distribution of Grant; Government Rationale; and, Labour Movement Resistance. The first sub-section identifies the main changes to the calculation and distribution of local authority funding, introduced by the Conservative Government between 1979 and 1983. As part of the on-going analysis, the following sub-section assesses, in reference to the Government’s practice, the reasoning espoused as justification for the approach to local government expenditure. The third, and final sub-section discusses labour movement responses to the practice of financial restraint. As a whole, the section identifies and explores the implications of the Government's approach for local government services, jobs, and local democracy in reference to earlier conclusions and contemporary circumstances. Similarly, and as part of the same process, attention is afforded to related labour movement thinking and practice. Finally, by demonstrating the Government's inability to control local authority current expenditure, policy, and practice the chapter develops the historical context through which the provisions of the Rates Act 1984, and labour movement responses to it, can be interrogated.

Calculation and Distribution of Grant

The Conservative Government's approach to the autonomy and funding of local government are indicated by particular provisions of the Housing Act\(^2\) and the Local Government Planning and Land Act; both of 1980. These acts introduced procedures whereby funding for individual local authorities was calculated and distributed according to centrally devised formulae and criteria, and ostensibly removed local discretion to vary policy and levels of service provision. Under the Housing Act, for

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\(^2\) The Deregulation section of this chapter explores the extent to which the Act constituted an attack on local authority housing provision, by affording tenants of three or more years standing the right to buy their council house.
example, central government funding was calculated as the amount a local authority needed to break even on its Housing Revenue Account (HRA), after the deduction of notional income; assumed by the government to have been raised through rents, house sales and rates. [Duncan and Goodwin, 1988: 153] Thus, if by virtue of the above calculation an authority's HRA was deemed to be in surplus, no general housing subsidy was allocated. [loc. cit.]

The use of centrally devised formulae imply that greater central control was exerted over local housing policy. [Duncan and Goodwin, ibid; Rayner and Conway, 1981] Through the use of negative incentives, for example, the Government attempted to set minimum levels for each authority in relation to: rents charged; houses sold; and, rates used to fund housing provision. Ultimately, however, authorities were not obliged to obey Government guidelines, as they could subsidise housing provision through local rates charges. Ironically, therefore, the withdrawal of central funding left local policy effectively beyond central control, and by 1984-5 only 46 of the 367 local authorities with responsibility for housing received central funding. [Duncan and Goodwin, op. cit: 153] Local control had a price for the local electorate, however, in terms of increased rates, discussed later, and through an increase in the average weekly rent for local authority housing in England, from £8.18 in 1980-1, to £13.59 in 1982-3. [Stoker, 1988: 178]

This aspect of the Housing Act indicated a change from the persuasive attempts to restrict local expenditure in the 1970s, to one whereby local authorities were coerced through the restriction of central funding if they failed to obey Government prescriptions. Thus, the use of centrally determined formulae to calculate funding, and the sale of 550,000 council houses by the end of 1984 [Duncan and Goodwin, op. cit: 161], contributed to a reduction in central government spending on public housing to 3% of public expenditure in 1984-5, compared with 10% in 1974-5. [Duncan and Goodwin, ibid: 149] The extent to which these measures represented an attack on the policy and service provision of Labour controlled authorities, such as Norwich and Sheffield, is considered in the Deregulation section.

Central control of grant allocation also formed part of the Local Government Planning and Land Act 1980, which replaced the RSG with a block grant. In similar fashion to the change to housing subsidy allocation, entitlement to block grant was calculated and distributed to authorities according to centrally determined formulae known as Grant Related Expenditure Assessments (GREA). The amount of block grant allocated depended on the circumstances of each individual authority, and corresponded to the balance remaining after a figure for 'locally raised rate fund

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3 The following sub-section considers increased spending in other areas, such as transfer payments, that served to reduce spending on public housing as a percentage of overall government expenditure.
contribution', or 'grant related poundage' (GRP), was deducted from the GREA. [Duncan and Goodwin, ibid; Howells, 1982; Stewart, 1985; Travers, 1986] As with the HRA calculations, both the GREA and the GRP were calculated according to central criteria, and therefore intended to increase control of central contributions to local current spending. As RSG had been calculated according to previous years spending, and was therefore open to local authority influence, the change in funding arrangements implied a loss of local autonomy. As the following sub-sections demonstrate, however, authorities still retained some control by raising rates to compensate for lost grant, and by minimising the impact of targets and penalties by over estimating budgets.

The changes in central funding favoured rural authorities [Boddy, 1984b; Duncan and Goodwin, op. cit; Gibson and Travers, 1985; Loughlin, 1986; Stewart, op. cit; Travers, op. cit.], as opposed to urban areas which included impoverished inner-cities, required greater welfare facilities, and were generally represented by Labour local authorities. [Duncan and Goodwin, op. cit: 276] Similarly, the demographic and economic circumstances evident in authorities like Liverpool, and Clay Cross described in Chapter Three, where population migration and mass unemployment created a population dependent on council services, were integral factors in the election of Labour authorities, and the adoption of policies tailored to local needs. [loc. cit; Liverpool City Council, 1983; Liverpool City Council, undated(a)] The misnomer of overspending was therefore applied by central government as an external critique, based on calculatory models that did not reflect the practical circumstances facing those authorities. In effect, the Government's approach formed an attack on local authorities right to vary local levels of service provision which, as later observations confirm, formed the basis of labour movement claims to be defending local democracy.

The Local Government Planning and Land Act also introduced annual cash limits on capital spending by individual authorities, and block allocations for education, personal social services, transport, housing, and other services. [Duncan and Goodwin, op. cit; Stoker, op. cit; Travers, op. cit.] These block allocations were monitored by the relevant Government Minister, amounted to another form of central control, and therefore a reduction in local autonomy. [Duncan and Goodwin, op. cit: 110] The block allocation presents an appearance of greater flexibility within financial limits through the variance of allocation between blocks [Travers op. cit: 141]; a perception reinforced by allowing authorities to spend up to a limit of 10% over allocation, and

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4 Given that education, personal social services, transport, and housing are identified as the major areas of capital spending, standards of service provision would be affected by the restrictions imposed. The introduction of new buildings, facilities, equipment and repair and renovation of existing ones was, for example, limited under the new controls. [Rayner and Conway, 1981: 86]
to include proceeds from the sale of assets in any calculation of overspend.[Duncan and Goodwin, op. cit; Travers op. cit.] In reality, however, further spending could be refused if previous allocations had been exceeded, and future allocations were reduced by any amount of overspend; including the 10% allowance.[Duncan and Goodwin, op. cit: 110] Finally, the use of capital receipts were also restricted from up to 100% of housing and non-housing capital receipts in 1981-2, to 50% in 1983-4, and to 20% of housing capital receipts by 1985-6.[Travers, op. cit: 142]

Chapter Three records how cash limits for local government current expenditure, introduced by the Labour Government in the 1970s, were exacerbated by high inflation and unexpected levels of underspend. In the 1980s, the Conservative Government made a similar mistake by allowing cash limits on capital spending to be compounded by the effects of economic recession and high interest rates. This resulted in an under-spend of 21% in 1981-2[Boddy, 1984b: 218], and an estimated under-spend of one-third for 1982-3.[Caulcott, 1983: 80] The Government was therefore forced to urge local authorities to increase capital spending in October 1982, and to raise ceilings on such spending for 1983-4.[Boddy, 1984b] As a percentage of total local government expenditure, therefore, capital spending fell from 32% in 1975-6, to 10% in 1982-3[Boddy, ibid: 219], and as a percentage of GDP from 4.5% in 1973-4, to 1.1% in 1981-2.[Travers, op. cit: 144] The relative severity of measures to reduce capital spending is illustrated by Table 4.1 which compares local authority current and capital expenditure during the period.

**Table 4.1**
Local Government Capital and Current Expenditure
1979/80-1982/83 at Constant Prices (mid 1981) (Britain)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Capital Expenditure</th>
<th>Current Expenditure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1979-80</td>
<td>5,952</td>
<td>22,291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-81</td>
<td>4,912</td>
<td>22,894</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981-82</td>
<td>3,312</td>
<td>23,352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982-83</td>
<td>2,772</td>
<td>23,958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(est. outturn)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Caulcott op. cit: Tables 4 and 5.

As Table 4.1 indicates, the Government exerted more control over capital than current spending. The reasons why current expenditure continued to rise are considered in following sub-sections, in terms of the flaws evident in Conservative attempts to control current spending, and as a consequence of labour movement responses. For the moment, attention is focused the imposition of targets and penalties aimed at reducing grant allocation for those local authorities deemed to be high spenders. This approach first appeared with the Local Government Planning and Land Act, which introduced a grant taper to discourage authorities from spending
more than 10% over government guidelines.[Boddy, 1984b; Stoker, op. cit, Travers, op. cit.] Together with the later imposition of centrally defined targets and penalties, this move represents a clear threat to local autonomy by attempting to limit spending on projects financed through local taxes, and subject to electoral approval.

The changes in the calculation and imposition of penalties were frequent and complicated, and are therefore summarised in tables 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4. The said tables detail the various targets set by the Government, the penalties imposed for breaching targets, and provide an indication of the increasing severity of penalties imposed according to the percentage level of overspend. Thus, January 1981 saw the first individual targets allocated to local authorities in England.[Stoker, op. cit, Travers, op. cit.] The system of targets and penalties were not included in the Local Government Planning and Land Act 1980, however, and therefore required retrospective legalisation by the Local Government Finance Act 1982. This Act also abolished the right of local authorities to levy a supplementary rate, thereby removing the ability to raise extra revenue during the year to offset the effect of government penalties.[Stoker, op. cit.]

Table 4.2
Local Authority Targets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Target Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1981-2</td>
<td>5.6% below each authority's 1978-9 current spending in volume terms;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982-3</td>
<td>1981-2 minimum volume budget, i.e. lesser of an authority's original or revised 1981-2 budget.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983-4</td>
<td>Tied to 1982-3 targets: authorities budgeting to spend less than one percent over 1982-3 target allowed 1982-3 budget plus 4%; those over 1% allowed 5% on top of their 1982-3 target, as long as the new target was not more than a 1% reduction in the authority's 1982-3 budget.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Duncan and Goodwin, op. cit; Gibson and Travers, op. cit; Loughlin, op. cit; Stewart, op. cit.

Table 4.1 demonstrates the increase in current spending during the first four years of the Conservative Government. In 1981-2, for example, local authority spending exceeded government targets by an estimated 5.3%[Duncan and Goodwin, op. cit; DOE, 1981], and by 1983-4 the overspend was still 3.8% in England.[NALGO, 1984a: 3] This was in spite of a reduction in the proportion of local authority current expenditure supported by central government grant, from 48.5% in 1979-80, to 35.9% in 1982-3.[Travers, op. cit 211] Changes in the percentage of grant allocation are, however, the product of both central government reductions and compensatory rate rises, whereby the latter serves to exaggerate the impact of the former. Thus, Table 4.5 shows overall reductions in central contributions to local expenditure in England.

5 Targets were not applied in Wales until 1983-4.[Stewart, 1985: 21]

6 References to levels of overall expenditure should not be confused with those of current or capital expenditure, but represent a total of the two. Similarly, separate references to capital and current expenditure are made for the purposes of illustration.
and Wales, for England from 1979-80 to 1983-4, and the reduction in the proportion of RSG contributions.

### Table 4.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Timing of</strong></td>
<td><strong>Notification</strong></td>
<td><strong>June 1981</strong></td>
<td><strong>December 1981</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spending level</strong></td>
<td><strong>above which</strong></td>
<td><strong>Higher of volume target or GRE</strong></td>
<td><strong>Higher of target or GRE constitute effective target</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Penalty Scheme</strong></td>
<td><strong>Stepped - see method of implementation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Continuous, 3p for each percentage point</strong></td>
<td><strong>Continuous, 1p for each of the first two percentage points above target. 5p for each point thereafter</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maximum Penalty</strong></td>
<td><strong>No maximum</strong></td>
<td><strong>15% or more above effective target</strong></td>
<td><strong>No maximum</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Method of</strong></td>
<td><strong>Implementation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Resetting of poundage schedule so as to increase the rate poundage cost of spending at GRE by 9.03p with steeper slope and taper. Full protection for authorities spending below the higher of GRE or target. Authorities not more than 2% above target protected from 75% of grant loss and authorities between 2% and 4% above target protected from 40% of grant loss-by means of multipliers less than one.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Increased poundage schedule with full protection for authorities spending below ‘effective target’ and partial protection for those spending up to 5% above ‘effective target’ by means of multipliers less than one.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Travers op. cit: 128

### Table 4.4
**Penalties Imposed. Rate Poundage Effect**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenditure above Target</th>
<th>1%</th>
<th>2%</th>
<th>3%</th>
<th>4%</th>
<th>5%</th>
<th>10%</th>
<th>15%</th>
<th>20%</th>
<th>30%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1983-4</td>
<td>1p</td>
<td>2p</td>
<td>7p</td>
<td>12p</td>
<td>17p</td>
<td>42p</td>
<td>67p</td>
<td>92p</td>
<td>142p</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Travers, op. cit; Loughlin, op. cit; Stewart, op. cit.
In general terms, government grant fell from 61% of a local authority's budgeted expenditure in 1979-80 to 53.8% in 1983-4. [Blunkett and Jackson, 1987: 153] There, were variations in the reductions cited, however, and these reflect the period covered and the element(s) of spending referred to. Cochrane, for example, cites a reduction in RSG as a percentage of budgeted expenditure from 66.5% in 1975-6, to 50% in 1983-4. [1985: 44] Alternatively, Duncan and Goodwin state that central government grants covered only 55% of local government expenditure in 1981-2, compared to 63% in 1975-6 [op. cit: 110], and that RSG dropped from 61% of expenditure in 1980-1, to 45% of a reduced total in 1985-6. [ibid: 123] NALGO, on the other hand, reflect the figures shown for England in Table 4.5, when RSG as a percentage of relevant expenditure is identified as falling from 61% in 1979, to 52.8% in 1983-4, and to 51.9% in 1984-5 [op. cit: 4] There is, however, general agreement that as a percentage of GDP local government spending fell from 15.9% in 1974-5, to 12.8% in 1983-4. [Cochrane, op. cit; NALGO, op. cit.]

Table 4.5
Grant percentage at main Rate Support Grant Order

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>England and Wales (Percent)</th>
<th>England only (Percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1979-80</td>
<td>61.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-81</td>
<td>61.0</td>
<td>60.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981-82</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>59.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982-83</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>56.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983-84</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>52.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rate Support Grant Reduction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>£m</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1979-80</td>
<td>11,733</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-81</td>
<td>11,623</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981-82</td>
<td>10,196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982-83</td>
<td>9,565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983-84</td>
<td>9,205</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Accumulated Reduction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>£b.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1978-9 to 1979-80</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978-9 to 1980-81</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978-9 to 1981-82</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978-9 to 1982-83</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978-9 to 1983-84</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978-9 to 1984-85</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Caulcott, op. cit; Blunkett and Jackson, op. cit.
Note: Both Caulcott and Duncan and Goodwin [op. cit.] cite 61% for England and Wales 1980-81 as opposed to Blunkett and Jackson's figure of 60%.

This discussion focused on the implication of financial restraint for local democracy and autonomy. The argument is not, however, clear cut. On the one hand, central government increased its control over the allocation of funding, but authorities
retained a degree of autonomy as to how the reduced funds could be spent. Furthermore, they also retained the right to use local taxes to supplement central funding in order to pursue, within legal constraints, the wishes of their local electorate. The extent to which such autonomy was restricted by imposition of targets and penalties and the effects they had on local policy, service provision and employment levels are explored in the following sections and sub-sections.

**Government Rationale**

A chasm exists between the pronouncements and practice of the Conservative Government in its approach to local government funding. This stems from the Government's eclectic use of economic devices, and is confused further by the indolent 'monetarist' categorisation of the Government's approach to local government finances. While the use of interest rates to control money supply may, for example, fit a monetarist categorisation, there is little macro-economic justification for the imposition of spending targets and penalties on individual local authorities. [Boddy, 1984b; Duncan and Goodwin, 1988; Lansley, Goss, and Wolmar, 1989] In 1982-3, for example, local government accounted for only 4.1% of the PSBR as opposed 79% for central Government, and 17% for public corporations. [Boddy, 1984b: 230] In view of the percentages involved it is difficult to justify, in monetarist terms, the concern to control or reduce current spending at the local level, even if, as Caulcott argues, the PSBR would have been higher if central contributions had not been controlled. [1983: 77]

Another flaw in the monetarist categorisation is indicated by Table 4.6 which shows central government expenditure rising between 1979-80 and 1982-83. This rise in central expenditure does not fit with the monetarist prescription of controlling or reducing money supply, but is attributable to increased defence spending, to increased transfer payments to finance mass unemployment, and increased pension provision, associated with improved longevity. [Caulcott, ibid; Goldsmith, 1985; Howells, 1982] (see Table 4.7) Reductions in local authority grant provision can therefore be explained in terms of priorities, as the Government chose to finance unemployment, pensions, and defence. [Travers, 1986: 80] Furthermore, the Conservative Party's antipathy toward the collectivist ethos and practice of local service provision provided a motive for the attack on local government in general and on Labour local authorities in particular. [Blunkett and Jackson, 1987; Boddy, 1984b; Duncan and Goodwin, op. cit; Goldsmith op. cit.] The fact that the reduction of state intervention at the local

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7 Chapter 6 revisits the question of the Government's monetarist credentials by considering rate limitation as a macro-economic device.
level required strong intervention by the centre is but another paradox of Conservative
policy and practice.[Duncan and Goodwin, op. cit: 108]

The Government's pronouncements are a further source of confusion if principles
and practice are interrogated reciprocally. A DOE press notice of 19.6.80[Liverpool
NALGO Branch Records], for example, states that public expenditure reductions are
central to the Government's economic strategy, but this is contradicted by the data
presented in Tables 4.6 and 4.7. Furthermore, the notice states that 'Extra local
authority staff and employees mean fewer houses, old persons homes, schools, roads
and less work in the construction industry' because local authority staffing accounted
for 70% of gross expenditure.[loc. cit.] In practice, however, the introduction of cash
limits for local authority capital spending does not equate with the apparent desire to
protect the capital projects mentioned. The unspoken intention here, but one apparent
from the measures discussed in the Deregulation section, is that the Government
expected such functions to be transferred to the private sector.

Table 4.6
Total Central and Local Government Expenditure
1979-80 to 1982-83 at Constant Prices (mid 1981) (Britain)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Central Government £m.</th>
<th>Local Government £m.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1979/80</td>
<td>73,493</td>
<td>28,242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980/81</td>
<td>75,179</td>
<td>27,805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981/82</td>
<td>76,933</td>
<td>26,664</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982/83(est. outturn)</td>
<td>79,856</td>
<td>26,730</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Caulcott, op. cit: 71

Table 4.7
Central Government Current Expenditure 1979-80 to
1982-3 Excluding Social Security and Defence at Constant Prices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Current Expenditure £m(Nov. 81)</th>
<th>Social security Expenditure £m(Nov. 81)</th>
<th>Defence Current Expenditure £m(Nov. 81)</th>
<th>Current Expenditure £m(Nov. 81)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1979-80</td>
<td>66,146</td>
<td>24,987</td>
<td>12,060</td>
<td>29,099</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-81</td>
<td>67,860</td>
<td>25,537</td>
<td>12,376</td>
<td>29,947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981-82</td>
<td>70,459</td>
<td>27,932</td>
<td>12,606</td>
<td>30,921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982-83</td>
<td>73,041</td>
<td>29,256</td>
<td>13,402</td>
<td>30,383</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Caulcott, ibid: 74

The absence of Green or White Papers to accompany the introduction of the block
grant system makes identification of the Government's objectives and rationale
difficult. Nevertheless, four objectives are discernible from a variety of sources:
equalisation of authorities rateable value per head; simplification of the calculation
process; improved local accountability through the publication of needs assessments; and, a reduction in local spending levels. [Gibson and Travers, 1985: 17] In practice, however, the introduction of targets and penalties served to undermine the first objective by treating each authority as a special case. Similarly, the complicated and ever-changing system of targets and penalties undermined the aim of simplification, and removed any semblance of accountability by making needs assessments more complex, and therefore more difficult for voters to comprehend. [Gibson and Travers, ibid: 21]

The gap between pronouncement and practice is also evident in the mechanisms employed by the Government to control local authority current expenditure. As has been stated earlier, some of the reasons why local authority current expenditure rose are attributable to flaws in the mechanisms and calculations employed by the Government. Traditionally low spending authorities, for example, were encouraged to spend up to their GREA when the use of the new formulae calculated their needs in excess of present spending. [Duncan and Goodwin, op. cit; Howells, op. cit; Travers op. cit.] In 1982-3, for example, Inner London Boroughs budgeted for an increase of 4.5% while the mainly Conservative non-metropolitan counties who accounted for nearly 45% of total expenditure, budgeted for an increase of 8.8%. [Boddy, 1984b: 224] Hence the point made in the previous sub-section, that the Government penalised authorities controlled by Labour, and benefitted those under Conservative control.

Similarly, the practice of setting targets that were based on previous years budgets failed to reduce spending, as authorities with large budgets received larger targets, and were therefore encouraged to spend more to increase their targets. [Gibson and Travers, op. cit; Loughlin, 1986] In addition, local authorities were able to maintain spending levels by increasing rates to offset penalties, and create special funds with which to counter the effects of future reductions and limitations on grant. [Loughlin, ibid; Stewart, 1985; Travers, op. cit.] These last two points indicate the degree of autonomy local authorities retained to resist central spending restrictions, and provides a partial explanation for the introduction of the Rates Act in 1984.

Only in the area of local capital expenditure did the Government's claims match performance, and then the measures proved to be too effective and had to be relaxed. In terms of immanent critique, measuring practice against principles and vice versa, two related conclusions can be drawn. First of all, the Government's failure to put espoused principles in to practice or to realise stated aims, stems from epistemic weaknesses in the analysis and reasoning employed. In particular, this relates to the separation of theory and practice whereby needs assessments, targets, and penalties were calculated according to a priori criteria and not practical circumstances. The use
of centrally determined formulae, for example, represents a mode of external critique whereby anything that does not meet pre-ordained standards is rejected.

Secondly, the practice of introducing a-priori standards and assessment criteria which allowed Conservative authorities to increase spending while penalising Labour authorities suggests that the macro-economic rhetoric was designed to conceal other objectives. Conservative Party antipathy toward Labour local authorities is, for example, evident in the 'Politics Today' series, published by Conservative Central Office, where Labour controlled councils are variously categorised in unvalidated abstract terms, as 'high spending', 'left-wing', 'lunatic', and, 'Red'. [21 February 1983 - 1 March 1986]*

**Labour Movement Resistance**

The extent to which the resistance of the Conservative Government's financial restraint formed part of a broader labour movement campaign is considered in the final two sections of the chapter. For the moment, attention is afforded to localised incidences of resistance. Table 4.8, for example, supports the view that increases in annual and supplementary rates formed the main resistance of reductions in central funding by Labour local authorities in the early 1980s. [Stoker, 1988: 159] The Table also shows a decline in the use of the tactic, which reflects several factors including: the growing unpopularity of the tactic within the labour movement; increased pressure from central government; and, the use of special funds financed through earlier, higher, rate increases.

In Sheffield, for example, rates were increased by 41% in 1980, and by 37% in 1981 [Blunkett and Jackson, 1987: 154], in Liverpool by 50% for 1980-81 [Parkinson, 1985: 29-31], and Lambeth levied a supplementary rate equivalent to a 70% increase in weekly rates for the period to which it applied, in order to compensate for a £5.6m reduction in grant imposed by the Government in July 1980. [Livingstone, 1987: 130]*

Similarly, in 1982 the GLC's Labour administration combined a 35% rate increase with creative accountancy measures to finance its spending programme. [Livingstone, ibid: 217-8] The GLC rate increase was justified as a one off measure needed to finance future plans, and avoiding the experiences of Lambeth. [loc. cit.]

The rate increase tactic proved to be unpopular electorally, and within the labour movement. In Liverpool and Lambeth, for example, the Labour Party lost control in

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* The analytical weaknesses include the categorisation of Labour councils as high spending on the basis of pounds spent per head of population [Politics Today # 3, 21 February 1983: 46]. No consideration is afforded to the practical circumstances that pertained to such authorities, and the evaluation of service provision in terms of abstracted exchange value is again demonstrated as a Conservative practice.

* The Lambeth increase followed a failed attempt to mount a broad based campaign of resistance to the Government's approach, explored in the A Nascent Campaign section.
elections following the rate rises noted above.[Parkinson, op. cit; Lansley, Goss and Wolmar, 1989] Control was regained in Lambeth in November 1982, after the defection of a Social Democrat Party councillor to Labour[Kogan and Kogan, 1983: 176], but Liverpool was not regained until May 1983. The case against rate increases also rested on the objection that increases in domestic rates were subsidising central government[Lambeth, 1980; Liverpool City Council, 1983], and increasing the burden on poorer domestic rate payers.[Lambeth, 1980; Liverpool City Council, undated(a)] Ironically, the change in attitude toward rate increases preceded the Rates Act 1984, and calls into question the need to cap rates.

Table 4.8
Domestic rate
Increases in England 1980-84 (per cent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Stoker, op. cit: 159

Financial restraint resulted in reduced service provision and employment levels in Conservative authorities like Wandsworth where, in the absence of strong trade union action: 230 social service posts were made redundant; 11 social service aides posts deleted; a day centre closed; the number of meals on wheels reduced; and the home help budget cut by £380,000.[Rayner and Conway, 1981: 82-3] In Labour authorities such as Camden, Lewisham and Newcastle, however, cuts were also adopted and combined with rates increases.[Lansley et al. op. cit: 32]

Thus, the local authority associations warned that the combined effect of expenditure reductions, unrealistic targets, and the change to cash planning could result in actual cuts of 9% in 1982-3 and a loss of 250,000 local government jobs.[NALGO, 1981: 3] More specifically, the Labour controlled authority of Sheffield reduced its new house building programme to a virtual standstill, and by March 1980 the local authority housing list had increased over the previous year by 5,000 names.[Alcock and Lee, 1981: 74] Similarly, the Labour Group in Birmingham introduced: a moratorium on spending prior to the 1982 local elections; reduced the 1981 education budget by £3,000,000; privatised Sutton Coalfield Leisure Centre; and introduced a vacancy freeze and a redundancy programme.[Kline, 1983: 94]

Apart from increasing rates, a series of financial devices were employed to maintain spending commitments, jobs, and minimise cuts in service provision.[Stoker, op. cit: 160] This 'creative accountancy' was used primarily as a means of avoiding penalties and maximising grant allocation. The main devices employed were: the

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10 Between January 1979 and September 1982 local government in England and Wales lost 97,500 full time equivalent posts.[Travers, 1983: 64]
creation of special funds in one year for revenue purposes in other years; capitalisation, whereby spending on repairs and maintenance was transferred from the revenue to the capital account; the re-scheduling of debt re-payments to reduce revenue spending on interest payable for capital borrowing; and, deferred purchase schemes to avoid restrictions on a local authority's capital allocation by transferring spending on projects to another year.[Blunkett and Jackson, op. cit: 155] Thus, local authorities sought to maintain local service variation, and therefore local autonomy and constitutional democracy, by using local rates charges or technical financial devices. In either case, defence was carried out through the abstracted form of the state and did not involve the mobilisation or participation of labour movement members.

Resistance also included legal challenges mounted by Brent and Camden London boroughs, again through abstracted state structures, against central government financial orders under 1980 Act.[Blunkett and Jackson, ibid; Duncan and Goodwin, 1988; Stoker, op. cit.] Birmingham and Greenwich also undertook separate legal suits against the Government, and found that the Local government Planning and Land Act was drafted incorrectly, and all RSG paid since 1980 was therefore illegal.[Duncan and Goodwin, op. cit: 124] By depending on increased rates, cuts, financial manoeuvring, or legal action, however, the labour movement failed to address or resist the impact Government policy and practice was having on the welfare state and local democracy.[Clarke and Cochrane, 1989: 53] In other words, the Government was engaged on its own technical ground, and its policies not confronted.[Blunkett and Jackson, op. cit: 156]

The imposition and resistance of financial restraint was conducted by councillors and professionals through abstracted structures of the state, and in terms that were not easily accessible to the lay person; as elector, trade unionist, or Labour Party member. The areas of resistance discussed above, for example, indicate that service provision and jobs were defended by minimising the impact of financial restraint, as opposed to confronting it. Campaigns of resistance involving broad-based mobilisation and participation were attempted, but tended to be local and against Labour authorities not with them. In Birmingham, for example, a Public Sector Liaison Committee was formed to combat cuts and redundancies, but not all local unions participated in its organisation of demonstrations.[Kline, op. cit: 94]

Local examples of opposition and resistance also tended to be isolated, and the result of, and reason for, the practice of resistance being restricted to councillors and officers. Attempts to develop a broad based campaign against financial restraint, and the reasons for its failure are discussed in the Nascent Campaign section, and explored
in later chapters. In the early 1980s, however, labour movement responses were also engendered by other areas of Government policy and practice toward local government. These areas, and their relevance to financial restraint, are explored in the following sections to provide a broader picture of the policies and practices of both Government and labour movement, and to develop the historical context within which to analyse later labour movement activity.

DEREGULATION

The discussion of financial restraint concentrated on implications for local democracy and autonomy, while indicating a impact on service provision and jobs. This section concentrates on the implications for local government service provision and jobs of transferring local government functions to the private sector, and therefore develops the analysis of the Government policy and practice toward local government. Three areas of legislation demonstrate the relevant aspects of central government policy and practice: the provisions of the Transport Acts 1980 and 1983, aimed at deregulating local bus services; changes to the operation of local authority Direct Labour Organisations (DLO) introduced by the Local Government Planning and Land Act 1980; and, the sale of council houses under the Housing Act 1980. In keeping with the interrelation identified, in this and previous chapters, between variation of local service provision and local autonomy and democracy, the transfer of functions and responsibilities to the private sector had the effect of restricting options for local policy and service variation, and also accountability. These changes and labour movement responses to them are explored here in three sub-sections entitled: Public Transport; Privatisation; and Council House Sales.

Public Transport

The provisions of the Transport Act 1980 are perhaps the least contentious of those discussed in this chapter. Ultimately, the Act was intended to make it easier for private sector operators to obtain licences to run bus services [Evans, 1985: 100], and in three trial areas removed the need for such licences altogether [Stoker, 1988]. Nevertheless, the Act constituted a step toward the transfer of functions to the private sector in an area of service provision identified in Chapter Three as important to the labour movement, and also posed a threat to job totals and working conditions. The following discussion considers examples of the effects such moves had on service provision and jobs, and labour movement responses engendered.

In 1981 the Secretary of State for Transport exercised powers under section 43(2) of the 1980 Act, and repealed the Cardiff Corporation Act 1930 to allow private firms licences to run bus services on two routes [Evans, op. cit: 101]. The Labour controlled
authority responded by reducing fares and increasing the frequency of services on the routes subject to private tender.[Evans, ibid: 102] Thus, it could be argued that service provision actually improved. When Labour gained control of South Glamorgan County Council in May 1981, however, the Passenger Transport Authority (PTA) refused an application from the private company to extend its services because they conflicted with the PTA's plans and policies. Furthermore, in July 1981, as part of a re-tender process, the County Council's schools transport contract, worth £8,000 per month, was awarded to Cardiff City Transport (CCT) who submitted a lower bid than the previous contractor; the firm involved in Cardiff.[Evans, ibid: 103]

Significantly, the CCT contract was successful because the TGWU agreed to reductions in working conditions and changes in working practices to obviate the threat of privatising services.[loc. cit.] As was argued in Chapter One, therefore, the labour movement engaged in the defence of job totals at the expense of quality. In particular, the extra duties required under the new contract were incorporated in existing shift duties, and the standard of maintenance checks on vehicles used under the contract were less than those undertaken on the rest of the CCT fleet.[loc. cit.] In this latter respect, therefore, standards of service provision were reduced.

The Transport Act 1983, though not overtly concerned with deregulation, invited challenges to local policy by introducing legal limits on public transport subsidies up to levels prescribed annually by the Transport Secretary.[Boddy, 1984b: 222] This legislation was at least a partial response to the transport policies implemented by the GLC, the Metropolitan counties of Merseyside and South Yorkshire, and the labour movement campaigns mounted to defend them. In December 1981, for example, following proceedings brought by Bromley borough council, the Law Lords declared the GLC's transport policy illegal because, in line with earlier examples of variation in service provision and local autonomous practice, London Transport fares were subsidised from rate income. In response the Labour Group adopted a position of non-compliance and launched a publicity campaign in January 1982 to build support for their stance.[Livingstone, 1987]

As part of its campaign of non-compliance the Labour Group held meetings with: the public; local trade unions; Labour MPs; and, with the Secretary of State for Transport.[Livingstone, ibid: 198-9] The GLC also liaised with commuter and other community groups, and representatives of commuter groups and London Transport workers were co-opted onto its campaign committee.[Livingstone, ibid: 201] The trade unions also mounted their own campaign which began with a one day strike and threatened an indefinite stoppage if the Government failed to resolve the situation.[loc. cit.] The practice of democracy in the GLLP, however, was uncertain.
Thus, although the Regional Executive voted 25 votes to seven in favour of non-compliance, the Labour Group only voted 23 to 22 in favour. Labour councillors therefore voted against: local party policy; their manifesto pledges; the wishes of their electors; and, with opposition councillors to implement the court decision and reverse the GLC's transport policy [Livingstone, ibid: 206-8].

South Yorkshire Metropolitan County Council's transport policy was threatened by the ruling against the GLC, and by court proceedings brought against Merseyside County Council by Great Universal Stores [Blunkett and Jackson, 1987; Livingstone, op. cit.] A campaign was therefore mounted by the South Yorkshire labour movement involving: a one day stoppage on 25.1.82, supported by engineering and steel workers; the distribution of leaflets; and, a 250,000 signature petition supporting local transport policy. South Yorkshire affirmed its transport and fares policy, following the vindication of Merseyside County Council on 17.2.82 [Blunkett and Jackson, op. cit: 72-3], and thereby maintained an area of policy and service provision identified as important to the local labour movement in Chapter Three.

The examples discussed here illustrate the complexity of the arguments and responses to what was perceived to be an attack on service provision, jobs and local democracy. In Cardiff for example, the local authority could argue that local autonomy had been compromised by the intervention of the Secretary of State and the imposition of private transport facilities. Alternatively, however, the removal of local discretion at one level, and its retention on another, resulted in the reduction of fares and increases in the frequency of services. This improved service, however, was paid for by reductions in the employment conditions of the work-force.

Similarly, the local autonomy and electoral legitimacy of the GLC and Merseyside County Council were challenged in the courts; by another elected authority in the case of the GLC. In practice, the GLC had to amend its transport policy and service provision, but engaged the labour movement in a campaign which involved the membership at large in industrial action and demonstrations. Thus, in both examples activity involved abstracted structures and broader involvement at Councillor, activist and membership levels. In Cardiff, for example, the membership accepted the reduced terms and conditions as a means of saving jobs and avoiding greater reductions in conditions and levels of employment.

**Privatisation**

Changes in the operation of local authority DLOs, introduced under the Local Government Planning and Land Act 1980, represented a direct threat to jobs, services, and local democracy. By compelling local authority DLOs to make a 5% rate of return on each area of activity, such as maintenance and new buildings, as opposed to
on the whole operation as a private firm would [Blunkett and Jackson, 1987; Stoker, 1988], the Act reduced discretion and therefore local autonomy. Furthermore, DLOs were not allowed to tender for work outside the local authority remit, but had to compete with outside contractors for a percentage of existing work. [Blunkett and Jackson, op. cit; Stoker, op. cit.] As with the Transport Act 1980, these measures indicate the Government's desire to transfer local authority functions to the private sector. They are also part of the process of reducing local expenditure, as discussed in the previous section, whereby private contracts reduce costs due to the fewer numbers employed, lower wages, and poorer working conditions.

The extent to which such measures constituted an attack on jobs can be gauged by the 22.5% reduction in the numbers of DLO employees from 156,606 in 1980, to 121,381 in 1985. This was accompanied by a fall of 17% in the value of DLO output from £1,800,000 to £1,500,000 over the same period [Stoker, ibid: 186]; though this is attributable to both the transfer of work to the private sector, and to restrictions on capital spending. Furthermore, of the 90,000 local authority jobs lost in England and Wales between 1979 and 1982 [Travers, 1983: 64], the main losses were experienced by manual workers; especially those in construction and refuse collection. [Caulcott, 1983; Travers, op. cit.] In other words, jobs were lost in the areas where local authorities were required to compete for existing work with private companies.

Both the threat of privatisation and the process itself were used to reduce jobs and working conditions, and therefore standards of service provision. In Birmingham, for example, 236 Refuse Collectors jobs were lost in 1982-3 as part of a successful in-house tender. [Kline, 1983: 96] Croydon's school cleaning contract, on the other hand, required longer hours to be worked for a smaller hourly rate of pay. Thus, although contractors claimed that their workers were paid more per week than local authority employees, the former were working longer. [Halford, 1982: 4] Other examples of reduced conditions include: the removal of bonus schemes (Southend - Refuse Collection); the imposition of compulsory overtime at lower rates (Southend - Refuse Collection); reduced rates of sick pay (Wandsworth - Street Cleaning); reduced holiday entitlement (Southend - Refuse Collection, Wandsworth - Street Cleaning); and inferior or no pension provision (Wandsworth - Street Cleaning). [Halford, ibid: 4-8] Finally, employees lost rights to grievance and disciplinary procedures and, due to the practice of summary dismissal, rights to redundancy payments. [Halford, ibid: 8]

National trade union opposition took the form of publicity drives among the general public and union members, which utilised the experiences of former employees of privatising firms. [Ascher, 1987] Individual unions also ran courses for stewards, brought high profile court cases against firms, and publicised industrial disputes as a means of deterring councils from looking to privatise work. [loc. cit.] In
general terms, the TUC acted as a focal point for opposition[Ascher, ibid: 118], but in April 1981 the TUCLGC wrote to local government unions urging them to oppose contracting out because of its impact on the terms and conditions of employment.[TUC 1960-1987, 1981: 331] Furthermore, the TUC's General Council issued the Keep Public Services Public pamphlet in April 1982, which outlined the TUC's case against contracting out as a threat to the social wage and local democracy.[TUC 1960-1987, 1982: 285] Finally, the TUCLGC also wrote to Blackpool local authority, in 1983, threatening a boycott of their venues by the TUC and its member unions if services were privatised. In response, the local authority passed a motion promising no privatisation for 5 years.[TUC 1960-1987, 1983: 301]

Overt campaigns of opposition to the privatisation of council work tended to be localised, reflecting the development of the local labour movement, the Party controlling the local authority, and employer-employee relations. Opposition was mounted more often by trade unions in non-Labour local authorities, and a conference on tendering organised by Sheffield City Council in September 1984 attracted 200 delegates.[Stewart and Underwood, 1983: 167] By 1983, for example, no Labour controlled authority had privatised a contract worth over £50,000.[Ascher, op. cit: Table 7.4, p.222] This does not mean that Labour authorities refused to co-operate with requirements to submit a percentage of DLO work to private competition. More often than not, private tenders were deterred by strict contract specifications relating to: health and safety; trade union and employment rights; service standards; and strict penalty clauses.[Ascher, ibid: 115] Nevertheless, the financial restrictions identified in the previous section led authorities to seek savings by subjecting work to private competition, and thereby reducing staff numbers and working conditions.

Given the variation in local circumstances trade unions allowed local branches to decide their own responses. Thus, in the absence of a national campaign, unions offered support to local branches where they felt the need to take action.[Ascher, ibid: 114] One such local initiative was the 'Campaign Against Privatisation: Resistance 83' organised by Basingstoke Trades Council. This involved public sector trade unions, local Labour Party delegates, tenants groups and the Labour groups on Basingstoke Council and Hampshire County Council.[Ascher, ibid: 122] Also in 1983, the Gloucester branches of NALGO, NUPE and the TGWU met local MPs to discuss a joint strategy of combating privatisation. From this meeting the Gloucester City Public Services Defence Committee was established to rally local union members, mobilise public opinion, and organise a one day strike, demonstration, and lobby of the council.[Ascher, ibid: 229] Resistance collapsed, however, following the Conservative's local election victory.
Similarly, local authority workers in Wandsworth mounted a campaign involving local authority unions, rate-payers, local Labour Party branches and the local trades council.[Minogue and O'Grady, 1985: 38] The Wandsworth campaign had membership support in the form of a seven week strike over privatisation plans, and received support from workers in other authorities who refused to process refuse from Wandsworth. In almost a mirror image of Gloucester, however, the action folded with the Conservative's local election victory in May 1982.[Ascher, op. cit: 234] These developments also bear similarities with the experience in Liverpool, discussed in the next chapter, where the local labour movement waged a campaign against privatisation of the Cleansing Service prior to the local elections of 1983. There, however, the Labour Party was successful electorally and the privatisation plans abandoned.

Council House Sales

Together with the new formulae for calculating housing subsidy and restrictions on capital expenditure, discussed in the Financial Restraint section, the mandatory sale of council houses under the Housing Act 1980[Rayner and Conway, 1981: 86] constituted a direct attack on an area of service provision central to the policy and practice of many Labour authorities. The mandatory element of the Act was supported by section 23(3) and allowed the Secretary of State to 'do all such things as appears to him necessary or expedient to enable secure tenants...to exercise the right to buy'.[Duncan and Goodwin, 1988: 157]. Almost 100 Labour councils stated their opposition to the Act, and in view of the perceived attack on local autonomy and the legitimacy of local electoral mandates, launched a national campaign against council house sales; involving a conference sponsored by Lambeth.[Alcock and Lee, 1981; Duncan and Goodwin, op. cit.]

By May 1981 39 local authorities had been contacted by the Housing Minister for not implementing the Act fast enough.[Evans, 1985: 105] In a similar fashion to the resistance of the Housing Finance Act 1972, however, the broader campaign had by November 1981 all but collapsed leaving only Norwich refusing to co-operate. The analogy can also be developed by comparing the argument espoused by Norwich and

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11 Another example of attempted resistance involves the joint union committee formed in Birmingham in 1982 to oppose privatisation plans. The committee was dominated by full-time officials, however, and failed to resolve inter union rivalry and white and blue collar differences.[Kline, 1983: 94] Initial opposition among union members to the privatisation of the refuse collection, school cleaning, school meals, and caretaking services, also opted for negotiation and reduced working conditions as a means of saving jobs. [Kline, ibid: 96]

12 In Sheffield, for example, 44% of its housing stock was council owned[Alcock and Lee, 1981: 84] and in Norwich 50.4% of all households resided in local authority dwellings in 1981.[Evans, 1985: 106] Similarly, the importance of housing provision to Labour authorities is demonstrated by the discussion, in Chapter Three, of the Housing Finance Act 1972.
Clay Cross, both of whom advocated the right of local authorities to make their own decisions about local housing stock. [Stoker, 1988; Skinner and Langdon, 1974] Furthermore, Sheffield's position had, in similar fashion to South Yorkshires transport policies in the 1970s and 80s, been bolstered by local electoral success on a manifesto commitment to oppose sales, agreed by the DLP and Labour Group. [Alcock and Lee, op. cit; Duncan and Goodwin, op. cit.]

As with the examples of opposition and resistance discussed in the previous section, however, the failure to develop a co-ordinated campaign meant that opposition occurred in isolated pockets; in this case, where co-operation occurred between sympathetic trade union branches and Labour groups. In particular, support for resistance was forthcoming from NALGO members who were required to process sales applications. Thus, NALGO conferences in 1979 and 1980, resolved: not to co-operate with new service demands without adequate funding; to oppose Council House sales in stress areas; and, to support councils resisting central sales directives. [Ascher, 1983: 14] In Glasgow, Hackney, Lambeth, Newcastle, Sheffield, and Southwark, for example, local union branches took the first initiative and refused to process applications without extra resources. [Ascher, ibid: 15]

Disparity in the local action undertaken by trade unionists, local politicians, and tenants organisations was also a feature of opposition and resistance. In Barking, for example, opposition was the initiative of councillors and there was no trade union action. Camden councillors, on the other hand, encouraged the slow processing of applications, but NALGO pre-empted their position by refusing to process any at all. In contrast, Lambeth councillors agreed to co-operate with the Act, but NALGO took official action over the lack of resources. [Ascher, ibid: 16-18] NALGO action was confined to twelve Labour areas, however, where implicit support was forthcoming from the Labour Group. [Ascher, ibid: 19]

Ultimately, resistance and the resultant failure to sell houses in line with government projections meant that local authorities lost revenue as a consequence of the GREA calculations described earlier. Thus, as with the other examples discussed in this section, the failure to comply with central government prescriptions served to compound financial restrictions. [Duncan and Goodwin, op. cit: 160] The case of housing, for example, involved the calculation of subsidy on the basis of a notional figure assumed to be raised from council house sales.

There are obvious analogies between the abstracted and bureaucratic manipulation of financial controls, through creative accountancy techniques, and the tactics

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13 The justification of NALGO action relates to service conditions issues of processing more work with the same or less resources. This reflects the motivation of those involved in the action and also avoidance of the label of a 'political', and therefore illegal, strike.
employed to delay council house sales by: requesting extra information; 'counselling' prospective buyers; limiting the number of cases reviewed each month; refusing to use the District Valuer for house valuation; and, refusing to delegate powers to officers, thereby requiring council committees to make all decisions.[Evans, 1985] Similarly, use of the courts to challenge the Government's financial mechanisms resembles Norwich's use of abstracted legal structures to resist the Government's imposition of commissioners in December 1981. In general, however, the extent to which opposition and resistance involved abstracted structures, broader involvement or a combination of the two, depended on local labour movement development.

**ECONOMIC REGENERATION**

The Conservative Government's approach to economic regeneration in the early 1980s has been characterised as: state intervention to show that state intervention does not work[Duncan and Goodwin, 1988: 132], and as continuing the property led emphasis of earlier initiatives.[Boddy, 1984a: 162] This approach exhibited four main characteristics: co-operation between central and local government; the creation of Enterprise Zones(EZ); the creation of Urban Development Corporations(UDC); and, the provision of urban development grants to support local initiatives developed between local authorities and the private sector.[Chandler and Lawless, 1985; Stewart and Underwood, 1983] The implications of these and other initiatives for employment levels and the practice of local democracy are considered over two subsections entitled: Central Government Approach; and Labour Movement Responses. The section therefore complements the findings of its predecessor by exploring another facet of the Government's attempt to promote the private sector and its drive to privatise state functions. Similarly, the exploration of categories relating to labour movement concern over employment levels and attempted solutions, develops the conclusions of earlier chapters.

**Central Government Approach**

In addition to the areas considered in the preceding sections, the Local Government Planning and Land Act 1980 instigated the Conservative Government's approach to economic regeneration: providing public assistance to private enterprise through the introduction of EZs and UDCs.[Duncan and Goodwin, 1988] EZs, for example, offered firms relief from taxation, as well as relaxed planning procedures.[Duncan and Goodwin, ibid; Stewart and Underwood, 1983] Similarly, UDCs were funded by

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14 The financial assistance to firms located in EZs included: exemption from development land tax; 100% allowance for corporation and incomes taxes for capital expenditure on industrial and commercial building; exemption from industrial training levies; and, exemption from paying rates on
central government, established in designated Urban Development Areas (UDA), and allocated local government functions relating to planning, housing, public health, and building controls. [Duncan and Goodwin, op. cit; Stewart and Underwood, op. cit.]

The two schemes indicate a reduction in the autonomy of elected local authorities through the transfer of functions to the centre or to un-elected agencies. Thus, although EZs were requested by local authorities and run locally, central government retained control over their designation and overall execution. [Duncan and Goodwin, op. cit: 132]

UDCs represented a reduction of local autonomy and democracy through the transfer of functions from elected local authorities to un-elected bodies appointed by, and answerable to, central government. [Duncan and Goodwin, ibid: 133] In addition, however, the Local Government Planning and Land Act 1980 allowed the Secretary of State to designate UDAs where it was considered to be 'expedient in the national interest', and to vest UDCs publicly owned land in, or adjoining, the designated UDA. [loc. cit.] Thus, the transfer of functions and land was conducted under the pretence of an unvalidated meta-theoretical category of 'national interest', and therefore made it virtually impossible to challenge the decisions of the Secretary of State.

The extent of this form of intervention should not by overplayed, however, as only 28 EZs were created between 1981 and 1983 [Shutt, 1984: 29], and about 20 still in existence by 1984. [Chandler and Lawless, op. cit.] Furthermore, the total number of jobs created in EZs during this time totalled no more than 3,000, and a number of those were jobs transferred from existing sites. [Duncan and Goodwin, op. cit: 134]

The development of dockland on Merseyside and in London was transferred from local authority to UDC control in 1981, and by 1987 four more UDCs had been created in Tyne and Wear, Teeside, Manchester, and the West Midlands. [Duncan and Goodwin ibid: 136] Significantly, all six UDCs were in Labour controlled inner city authorities, as opposed to 15 EZs. [Duncan and Goodwin ibid: 141 & 136] The transfer of functions from local to UDC control corresponds to the practice, described in Chapter One, whereby functions are transferred from the electoral sphere to avoid challenges to central priorities.

The Government's promotion of the private sector as an agent of local economic regeneration also involved a number of other initiatives. Some of these required private and public sector co-operation, but the involvement of the private sector led, inevitably, to a dilution of local electoral accountability and, ultimately, the exclusion of local authority participation. The Financial Institution Group (FIG), for example,
was formed in October 1981, seconded personnel from financial institutions as a means of promoting private sector interest in urban questions, and spawned a property service company, named Inner City Enterprises, which sought investment opportunities in inner city areas.[Duncan and Goodwin, ibid: 142-3] Urban Development Grants were also an offspring of the FIG initiative, involving the use of public money to support private investment in 41 schemes by February 1983.[Duncan and Goodwin, ibid: 143]

Co-operation between public and private sectors was a more obvious component of the Business in the Community (BIC) scheme. In this instance, regional DOE officers participated in the creation of local enterprise agencies which brought together local companies, chambers of commerce, voluntary groups, trade unions, and local authorities in schemes to assist local communities. Thus, by 1983 for example, 34 of the 100 active enterprise agencies had been developed through the BIC initiative.[loc. cit.] In contrast to the BIC approach, however, the Task Force initiative introduced on Merseyside and in the West Midlands in 1983, excluded the participation of local authorities and trade unions. Under such schemes, civil servants from the Department of Industry, Manpower Services Commission, and managers from local firms were brought together to co-ordinate schemes and policies, pilot new initiatives, and allocate public subsidy.[Duncan and Goodwin, ibid: 146-7]

The examples discussed here illustrate a trend whereby responsibility for local economic regeneration was removed from the local electoral sphere. In this respect, the programmes contrast with the mainly local initiatives, identified in Chapter One. The examples demonstrate a reduction in local democratic accountability and control through the removal of functions and responsibility from local authorities to unelected agencies, and to the unaccountable private sector. This is apparent in the direct involvement of ministers, the creation of agencies answerable only to the centre, the involvement of civil servants in bodies designed to develop local schemes, and the secondment of private sector personnel. Finally, the reduction in funding to local authorities, discussed in the first section of this chapter, made local initiatives difficult to maintain. Thus, while resources committed to the urban programme reached £361,000,000 in 1985-6, £500,000,000 in RSG was lost by London authorities in 1982 alone.[Duncan and Goodwin, ibid: 142]

**Labour Movement Responses**

Labour movement responses to the Conservative Government's approach to local economic regeneration were inconsistent, confused, and essentially took place at the

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15 The origins of these processes are evident in the Inner Urban Areas Act 1978, discussed in Chapter One, and introduced by the previous Labour Government.
Labour Group level. In its Home Policy Statement of August 1980, for example, the Labour Party NEC announced its opposition to EZs, but by the end of 1983 15 zones were situated in Labour authorities, and Bradford MDC had requested that the whole of Bradford be designated as an EZ. Furthermore, Salford's ruling Labour Group ignored a campaign by local residents against the proposed designation of an EZ in an area set aside for housing, a school, and parkland. In effect, Labour authorities were presented with the option of co-operating with the EZ initiative, developing their own proposals, or risk accusations of not doing anything about local unemployment.

This dilemma is evident in the stance adopted by those authorities that refused to apply for EZ status. North East Derbyshire, for example, refused to accept designation in the second round of EZ applications, and Manchester and Sheffield refused to apply. The latter authorities, however, drew up alternative proposals for local regeneration based on EZ applications. More sustained examples of resistance involved the creation of an employment committee and department by Sheffield MDC, and enterprise boards by the GLC and by West Midlands County Council. These bodies pursued local economic strategies that differed from the Conservative Government's emphasis on private capital, and from attempted economic regeneration practised in the 1970s. Among other things, for example, the Sheffield employment department attempted to co-ordinate local authority, trade union, and community group activity to: prevent further job losses; stimulate new investment; create new kinds of employment; and, diversify job opportunities. Thus, these initiatives indicate the degree of autonomy retained by authorities.

The scale of labour movement initiatives was only on a par with that of EZs. Thus, by December 1983, the Greater London Enterprise Board had approved investment worth £18.6m, in support of 142 projects, and saved or created about 2,000 jobs. When compared to the employment levels of the larger metropolitan authorities and the scope for job creation and protection exhibited there, however, EZs and the initiatives of the Labour authorities pale into insignificance. At the end of 1982, for example, full-time employee levels in the largest authorities included: ILEA - 40,339; Birmingham - 30,508; Manchester - 23,360; Liverpool - 21,705; GLC - 20,666; Sheffield 20,495; Leeds - 20,162. Furthermore, through London Transport the GLC was until 1984, responsible for a further 60,000 employees.

Trade Union opposition and activity was focused on the anti-union nature of firms re-locating in EZs and health and safety matters. Similarly large employment levels are also evident among some other non-metropolitan county councils.
Together with the stimulation provided to local economies through the purchase of supplies and services, therefore, local authority employment levels represented a significant focus of attempts to create and protect jobs. Thus, the smaller Labour controlled London boroughs of Haringey, Hackney and Lambeth all increased their establishments between 1979 and 1982. [Travers, op. cit: 66]

The introduction of financial restraint, the sale of council houses, the restrictive practices imposed on DLOs, the attempted privatisation of local government functions, and the introduction of EZs, UDCs, and other initiatives for economic regeneration, contrast with the policy and practice of Labour authorities discussed in this and previous chapters. The pressures exerted through financial restraint cannot be separated from the other areas, however, because reductions in bloc grant required authorities to raise rates, adopt creative accountancy measures, and look for savings through the privatisation and reduction of services. Similarly, central housing subsidy was premised on the sale of council houses. The measures identified and discussed in the first three sections of this chapter therefore required local authorities to review their spending commitments; an almost inevitable consequence of which, given the labour intensive nature of local government identified in Chapter One, was a reduction of labour costs. This interrelation is recognised in calls, discussed in the following section, for a comprehensive campaign of opposition.

So far, the discussion of labour movement resistance has focused on localised examples, and on resistance mounted through Labour groups. Analysis of the internal democratic practice of the labour movement has therefore been limited, and relates mainly to the practices discussed in the Deregulation section. In contrast, the broader question of local democracy has been identified in all three sub-sections, in reference to the implications of Conservative measures for local autonomy and the legitimacy of electoral mandates. With the following sections, however, the focus of the chapter moves to consider the extent to which localised examples of resistance fit with the idea of a broader labour movement campaign. Thus, as part of this process, the internal democratic practice of the labour movement receives greater attention, and therefore facilitates the reciprocal validation of local democracy as conceptual principles and practice, in a broader context.

A NASCENT CAMPAIGN

The discussion of financial restraint, deregulation and economic regeneration subjected particular aspects of Government policy and practice to reciprocal interrogation, and explored their implications for the interrelated areas of local government services, jobs, and local democracy. Similarly, labour movement
responses to Government initiatives were identified and explored in terms of their conceptual principles and practice. Because the discussions followed Government policy and practice, however, the extent to which the examples of localised resistance can be understood as constituent parts of a broader campaign still needs to be addressed.

Over the next two sections, therefore, consideration is afforded to the extent and nature of calls for a broad based campaign of resistance, and to attempts to build structures and alliances through which such a campaign could be conducted. The present section is divided into three sub-sections entitled: Conference Resolutions; Delegate Conferences; and Structures. These sub-sections explore: the nature of motions adopted and rejected at the LPAC and the TUC; the differences between, and the consequences of, the approaches advocated in the motions; and, the implications of such approaches for the existence of, and the roles played by, forums attempting to co-ordinate campaign activities. By addressing these areas, the section provides a context within which the labour movement responses, discussed earlier in this chapter, can be understood as elements of a broader campaign of opposition and resistance. These discussions also provide an insight into the practice of democracy within the labour movement, and develop the historical context within which the subsequent campaigns against rate capping can be explored.

**Conference Resolutions**

The extent to which the examples of opposition and resistance, recounted in earlier sections, can be understood as elements of a broader campaign is established by examining the calls for a co-ordinated response to the central government measures made in different forums and formats. Such calls were evident at the LPAC, where motions displayed a degree of consensus over the need for a labour movement campaign to defend local government, but differed over how it could and should be achieved. A specific difference between motions, identified at the end of Chapter Three, involves the inclusion or exclusion of specific tactics. Both types of motion, however, employed abstract terminology when referring to 'cuts', 'privatisation', or the defence of 'services'. This practice serves to highlight the importance of reciprocal validation. In other words, the categories and their relation to labour movement conceptual principles and practice are identified and explored in earlier sections and chapters, and therefore facilitate the demonstration of the link between earlier examples of opposition and resistance and the motions discussed here.

The most common tactics prescribed in conference motions involved local authorities refusing to: implement cuts; raise rates and rents; and, trade unions taking industrial action to defend jobs and services, and support local authorities resisting
cuts. Motions making reference to specific tactics, however, were defeated at successive conferences, composited, and moved by Liverpool CLPs.¹⁸ At the 1981 conference, for example, Composite 40 advocated specific tactics, was moved by Liverpool Toxteth CLP, seconded by Sunderland CLP, and lost.[Labour Party 1966-1984, 1981: 28] In contrast, resolution 431 was moved successfully by Cardiff North West CLP, and called on the NEC to: campaign against cuts; give guidance to local authorities; and, co-ordinate their actions with the support of the whole labour movement.[Labour Party 1966-1984, ibid: 29-30] The pattern continued in 1982 when Composite 65, moved by Liverpool Edge Hill CLP and seconded by Poole CLP, was defeated. In addition to the tactics identified earlier, the motion also provides a link with the examples of opposition and resistance discussed in this Chapter, by advocating: 'no council house sales'; 'no privatisation'; and, the removal of 'anti-democratic' UDCs.[Labour Party 1966-1984, 1982: 147]

At the 1983 Conference there is an indication that the mood within the Party was changing. Composite 30, for example, was moved successfully on behalf of Sheffield CLP by D Blunkett and seconded by Glasgow Shettleton CLP. Though not as prescriptive as the Liverpool motions, it called for a campaign involving the use of 'political and industrial muscle' to 'oppose through all available channels' further legislation against local government.[Labour Party 1966-1984, 1983: 80] This more combative stance now accompanied the less prescriptive approach. Thus, conference still approved Composite 29, moved by Tooting CLP and seconded by Lewisham CLP, which opposed the abolition of the Metropolitan counties, and supported a campaign of local authorities and trade unions to defend jobs and services.[Labour Party 1966-1984, ibid: 78] In spite of the apparent mood change, however, a prescriptive motion moved by Liverpool West Derby CLP, and seconded by Edinburgh West CLP, was still unsuccessful. [Labour Party 1966-1984, ibid: 82]

Calls for a campaign involving the NEC of the Labour Party, local Labour parties, trade unions, and local authorities were also evident in other quarters. In 1981, for example, the Sheffield Branch of NALGO circulated a resolution adopted at an Special General Meeting(SGM) 19.11.81, to all branches considered by Sheffield to be affected by government proposals. The motion called for a campaign against cuts in jobs and services involving council members and local authority trade unions.[Liverpool NALGO F&GP 1979-1986, 12.11.81] In the same year, the TUC

¹⁸ There were exceptions to this trend. In 1980, for example, emergency motion No. 5 was successfully moved by T. Knight on behalf of Norwood CLP and seconded by Sheffield CLP. The motion instructed the NEC to: co-ordinate a united fight of Labour councils and Trade Unions on a no cuts position; include industrial action as a tactic; and campaign to unite local communities behind local councils and their unions.[Labour Party 1966-1984, 1980: 111-112] An emergency resolution(No. 3) was also moved by T Knight at the 1981 conference on behalf of Norwood CLP and as Leader of Lambeth Council. This was less specific than its earlier counterpart, but was carried even though the NEC asked for the motion to be remitted.[Labour Party 1966-1984, 1981: 30-31]
approved a composite motion, moved by the Civil Service Union (CSU), which identified a link between public expenditure cuts, the centralisation of RSG decisions, privatisation, and the use of the voluntary sector and unemployment to depress wages. The motion called for a campaign involving the Labour Party NEC, trade unions, and local authorities to fight cuts, and for support to be given to local authorities and local unions working together against cuts. The fact that the motion was seconded by the AUEW would appear to deny scope for the invention of sectoral cleavage dichotomies. [TUC 1960-1987, 1981: 504-6]

The adoption of Composite 30 at the 1983 LPAC coincided with a growing resolve among Labour local authorities¹⁹ and the wider labour movement. The discussion of labour movement opposition to financial restraint, for example, recorded a growing dissatisfaction with the tactic of rate increases, and described how subsequent Government measures reduced the options open to local authorities who wished to resist central policy and practice. Due to the lack of guidance offered by successful motions, on how local labour movements should oppose and resist the implementation and consequences of financial restraint, however, all attempts at opposition and resistance can be interpreted as part of a general labour movement campaign of opposition.

Furthermore, the prescriptive motions moved and seconded at the LPAC by CLPs indicate the variety of responses available to local labour movements wishing oppose or resist central government, and also support for particular approaches at CLP level. That such motions were composited and supported by areas other than Liverpool, suggests a fairly broad support for this type of stance; albeit a minority in LPAC terms. The extent of support for prescriptive motions needs to be kept in perspective, however, as such motions were all defeated on a show of hands, and CLPs also moved and supported less prescriptive motions.²⁰ This suggests a more complicated division than one restricted to a dichotomy between leadership and local parties.

Finally, the composite motion passed at the 1981 TUC provides an opportunity to understand the process by which prescriptive and other motions reached national forums, and therefore another example of democratic practice within the labour movement. The TUC motion corresponds to one adopted by NALGO's 1981 Annual Conference which instructed its NEC to: ‘call on the TUC General Council to seek joint action with the NEC of the Labour Party in co-ordinating the activities of trade

¹⁹ The capture of twelve London Boroughs by Labour in the local elections of May 1982 [Kogan and Kogan, 1983: 176] had been consolidated, and added to by the capture of Liverpool in May 1983. Furthermore, the internal developments in local Labour groups and parties, described in Chapter Two, made resistance a more realistic option.

²⁰ The defeat of these motions on a show of hands indicates an aspect of democratic practice within the labour movement, and suggests that the motions had no realistic chance of success. The use of trade union block votes, for example, was not required to ensure defeat.
unions and local authority Labour Groups in the fight against the cuts'. [NALGO, 1981: 4] The NALGO motion was moved by the Scottish District Council and a corresponding motion was duly submitted to that year’s TUC by NALGO. [loc. cit.]

Motions intended for submission to NALGO Annual Conference and to the TUC, were first moved at Branch and steward committee level, and later discussed and amended before final submission through District Council. [Liverpool NALGO BEC 1979-1987] Such bodies were composed of activists, but as is indicated by the SGM decision circulated by Sheffield and the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and SGM decisions of Liverpool NALGO, discussed in the following chapter, the decisions taken by these bodies were supported by the broader membership who attended AGMs and SGMs. For motions to arrive at national forums, therefore, some level of support had to exist in the wider labour movement, and at the local level in particular; albeit that activists alone could make such meetings quorate. There was therefore scope for a variety of tactical approaches to be advocated and practised within a broad based campaign, such as those advocated at the LPAC, TUC, and the NALGO Conference, and conducted under the guise of the Labour Party NEC.

**Delegate Conferences**

While the submission or approval of conference motions do not constitute a campaign, the identification of characteristics exhibited by the motions assists the development of a context within which the examples of labour movement opposition and resistance, discussed in the first three sections, can be understood as part of a broad campaign. The previous sub-section, for example, identified two main labour movement approaches to the defence of local government: prescriptive and non-prescriptive. An integral part of their differentiation involves the degree of emphasis placed on the co-ordination of campaigning activity, and the development of structures through which to oppose and resist central government policy and practice. The interrelation between prescriptive and non-prescriptive motions and the issues of co-ordination and structure, are therefore explored in this and the following sub-section.

Delegate conferences were identified in Chapter Three as a feature of labour movement opposition to the policy and practice of public expenditure reductions in the 1970s, and in support of Clay Cross. The convening of conferences continued as a means of formulating responses to the approach to local government of the Conservative Government elected in 1979, but there is evidence of differing approaches in this area. On 8.12.79, for example, a conference for representatives from Labour groups was held in Coventry to discuss the formulation of strategic responses to the RSG settlement for 1980-81. [Gyford and James, 1983: 179] Twelve
months later, on 6.12.80, another delegate conference was held in Leeds and attended by representatives from Labour groups, local Labour parties and trade unions. The Leeds conference was called to discuss the Labour Party NEC's statement on local authority spending cuts.[loc. cit.]

The practice of the non-prescriptive approach, as advocated by the NEC's 1981 statement[Labour Party, 23.11.83], is illustrated by a meeting of controlling Labour groups and their local parties in July 1981.[Gyford and James, ibid: 190] The aim of this meeting was to: 'co-ordinate a sustained campaign against present policies and threatened further legislation', but merely called another meeting involving the Labour Party NEC, Shadow Cabinet, the Regional and Local Government Subcommittee(RLGSC) of the NEC, the local authority association of Labour groups, and trade union representatives[loc. cit.]. Furthermore, the follow-on meeting did not take place until October 1981, after the LPAC had passed Lambeth's emergency resolution calling on councils to refuse to make cuts and for trade unions to defend jobs.[loc. cit.]

The confused approach, described above, contrasts with the more definite stance adopted by the 'Local Government in Crisis: National Labour and Trade Union Conference'. Held 1.11.80, the delegate conference was organised by Lambeth local authority trade unions, Lambeth Labour Party and Lambeth Labour Group, and its sponsors included the NEC of NUPE, several NALGO Branches and two NALGO district councils.[Lambeth, 1980] The Lambeth conference happened after the LPAC supported Lambeth's emergency motion instructing the NEC to: co-ordinate a united fight of Labour councils and trade unions on a no cuts position; include industrial action as a tactic; and, campaign to unite local communities behind local councils and their unions.[Labour Party 1966-1984, 1980: 111-112] The agenda and decisions adopted at the Lambeth conference therefore indicate an attempt by those in favour of the prescriptive approach to take the initiative.

The conference draft statement corroborates the conclusions of the Financial Restraint section by describing early labour movement responses as relying on rate increases as their main form of defence.[Lambeth, op. cit.] Similarly, the depiction of rate increases as having limited effectiveness due to the imposition of government penalties, and the effect of rate increases on impoverished communities, corroborates another conclusion of the Financial Restraint section.[loc. cit.] The aim of the conference was therefore identified as organising concerted action to secure more government funds for local government services and jobs. In pursuing this goal, however, the statement recognised the importance of differing local circumstances, and the need for individual local authorities and trade unions to take their own decisions.[loc. cit.] This recognition contrasts with the NEC and PLP's refusal, on the
grounds of local autonomy and diversity, to offer a definite lead to those demanding it. 21

Four options for Labour local authority opposition and resistance were identified in the draft statement as: rate increases; no rate increases or cuts, effectively deficit budgeting; resignation; and, industrial action. These tactical alternatives formed the basis of debate, and the adoption of a prescriptive approach that Labour councils should: not cut jobs or services; not raise rents or rates to compensate for government cuts; refuse to sell council houses or housing land; introduce a 35 hour week for all employees; and, work with local anti-cuts committees and community groups to build local support. The conference also resolved that trade unionists should: refuse to cover for unfilled vacancies; refuse to deal with increased charges; and, consider strike action and occupation to defend threatened facilities.[loc. cit.]

A steering committee consisting of 50 delegates was also elected by the conference for the purposes of exchanging and disseminating information relating to action being taken in different labour movement organisations, and to recall the conference in support of councils or councillors penalised by the Government.[loc. cit.] In adopting the position outlined above, the delegates had refused to support a call by T Knight, Labour Leader of Lambeth Council, for Labour controlled authorities to refuse to implement cuts provided that trade unions agreed to organise extended industrial action from January 1981. An amendment was also moved, unsuccessfully, on behalf of NUPE's NEC by R Keating, the union's Assistant General Secretary, proposing that local authorities should increase rates and blame the government.

The Lambeth conference provides further evidence of the differentiation between prescriptive and non-prescriptive approaches. In this instance, the stance adopted by the NEC of NUPE, indicates the kind of action envisaged by those who, at the LPAC, moved and supported motions calling for an unspecified campaign of opposition. The conference decision and the position proposed by NUPE's Assistant General Secretary also corroborates the view that support for the prescriptive and non-prescriptive approaches approximates to a difference between the stances adopted by some local activists and those in positions of leadership. The extent of such local support is indicated by the conference attendance: 450 delegates from local authority unions; 200 from CLPs; 50 from Labour Groups; and, 300 observers.[Liverpool NALGO, 1980]

The adoption of a prescriptive approach was not simply an idealistic or symbolic opposition. If that had been so, Knight's proposal for Labour controlled authorities to refuse to implement cuts provided that trade unions agreed to organise extended industrial action from January 1981 would have been adopted. The immediacy of

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21 This point is explored further in the following section.
Knight's proposal fits with developments in Lambeth before it introduced its supplementary rate, but the conference's refusal to back them suggests a recognition that effective structures for the organisation of support within the labour movement and among the public, were absent.

Finally, analysis of the Lambeth conference produces several important conclusions. By advocating that local authorities refuse to cut jobs or services, not raise rents or rates to compensate for government cuts, and refuse to sell council houses or housing land, for example, the conference provides further evidence that the examples of opposition and resistance, discussed in earlier sections, were part of broad based campaign. The decision by Lambeth to act against the delegate conference decision and increase rates, however, calls into question the authority of the conference; organised, amongst others, by the Lambeth labour movement. This point also raises the issue of democratic practice and questions the role of people attending conferences, voting for positions of high-principle, and then finding that there is no local support for the position they adopted. In other words, the people attending from Lambeth were not delegated by the membership of their organisations to vote the way they did.\(^22\)

In addition to the differences identified between leaders and activists, therefore, differences existed between labour movement activists and those they claimed or sought to represent. In London, for example, K Livingstone claims that the positions adopted by local NALGO BECs were 'out of sympathy with the bulk of its membership' and therefore weak.[Livingstone, 1984: 270] This an important issue which is considered in the following sub-section and revisited and developed in later chapters as part of the explanation for the outcome of the campaign against rate capping. The final position adopted by the Lambeth conference can, however, be viewed as an agenda through which the support of trade unionists, party members, and electors could be won. The staging of delegate conferences therefore formed part of the process of developing effective structures through which a co-ordinated campaign of opposition and resistance could be conducted.

**Structures**

The structures and alliances that developed in the early 1980s are analogous to those of the anti-cuts campaigns of the late 1970s; discussed in Chapter Three. In

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\(^{22}\) The Liverpool NALGO delegate, for example, was nominated by the Branch Executive Council(BEC)[Liverpool NALGO BEC 1979-1987, 24.9.80] which was made up of representatives from departmental steward committees. A process of practical abstraction is evident here, however, whereby stewards elected, theoretically at least, by the membership represented their departmental committee on the BEC and voted accordingly. As part of this process a gap could therefore develop between activists and members, but as is demonstrated in Chapter Five the Liverpool NALGO positions were approved at AGMs and SGMs.
addition to the delegate conferences already considered, the existence and development of ad hoc committees provide a striking resemblance. On Merseyside alone, such committees included: the Merseyside Liaison Committee which organised public meetings on cuts in 1980 [Liverpool NALGO Service Conditions 1979-1987, 22.5.80]; the Merseyside Anti Cuts Committee [Liverpool NALGO F&GP 1979-1986, 16.10.80]; a group called Merseyside Education Alliance which, in 1983, included trade unions, community and other groups [Liverpool NALGO Service Conditions 1979-1987, 3.2.83]; and, the North West Public Sector Campaign Committee. [Liverpool NALGO F&GP 1979-1986, 26.5.83] As the representative nature of such groupings is hard to establish, this discussion focuses on structures that have a clearer genesis. 23

At the national level, the TUCLGC encouraged and participated in the creation and development of structures. Local government unions, for example, were reminded of the TUCLGC's 1976 recommendation that local JTUCs be established to co-ordinate action against cuts [TUC 1960-1987, 1980: 308]. The TUCLGC also encouraged the creation of co-ordination committees at the regional level, to improve TUC-Labour Party liaison, and wrote to member unions stressing the importance of liaison with local Labour groups. [loc. cit] As Chapter Three records, however, the trade union activists interviewed considered JTUCs to have developed in response to local struggle; a view reflected in the identification, in the Deregulation section, of local JTUCs created to fight privatisation.

A similar, but more tangible development of structures also took place in NALGO around this time. In July 1981, for example, the annual National Local Government Group Meeting (NLGGM), held during NALGO's annual conference in June, was reconvened to agree a response to the Government's approach to local government. NALGO NLGGMs were attended by delegates from local branches, and therefore offered a means by which activists could develop policy and practice on a national level. They also indicate the extent to which activist involvement and structures had developed within NALGO since the introduction a stewards system; identified in Chapter Two. The reconvened NLGGM agreed to adopt a '...detailed strategy of national action to defend the jobs and living standards of NALGO members in local government' [NALGO, 1981: 2]. The NLGGM was then adjourned pending preparation, by the National Local Government Committee (NLGC), of a discussion paper outlining proposals for a national strategy; including options for maximum unity among all NALGO members, and a drive for solidarity with other local authority unions and with the Labour Party at national and local levels. [loc. cit.]

23 The structures and activities which developed around the NEC of the Labour Party are identified and addressed as part of the next section.
The NLGC report was circulated in September 1981, and included publicity drives and parliamentary intervention to encourage opposition to specific measures, as part of the proposed national strategy[loc. cit.]; tactics that are analogous with the campaign against cuts in the 1970s. The strategy also included other tactics which reflect the local government focus of the 1980s campaigns, such as meeting with the local authority associations to help achieve goals. Significantly, however, the report indicates a readiness to contemplate and implement a co-ordinated campaign of industrial action to achieve desired aims. The type of action considered feasible at that stage included action similar to that taken in the 1970s, such as not covering for vacancies, and one day strikes. Thus, as a consequence of this cautious perspective, the options for industrial action that was not 'already being taken as part of the cuts campaign' were considered to be limited.[NALGO, ibid: 6]

In part, this stance was based on the view that only two forms of action would have a direct effect on central government. Thus, apart from a combination of 'less extreme' measures aimed at irritating the Government, the only examples of industrial action with any chance of success were identified as: widespread national strike action by all local government trade unions; or branches urging 'hit-list' authorities to resist Government cuts even if it involves bankruptcy and refusing to co-operate with Government commissioners.[loc. cit.] The first option was considered to be vulnerable to the variable impact of the Government's policies, and both options were recognised as not guaranteeing maximum unity amongst NALGO members. A paradox is also identified in the practice of taking action in authorities that are supposed to be allies[loc. cit.], and this corresponds to the dilemma of withdrawing from users, services that the action is supposed to be defending.[Blunkett, 1994] Once again two approaches are evident, a combative offensive approach to achieve predetermined objectives, and a more passive resistance based on nuisance value. 24

The identification and consideration of more emphatic measures indicate the responsive nature of NALGO structures which allowed an input from activists, and also of the way the campaign was to develop in response to the Government's imposition of more punitive measures. Thus, when the NLGGM was re-convened, on 5.3.82, it adopted a 'National Strategy of Action' consisting of eight features indicative of resolve and the prescription of tactics. The features included: branches taking indefinite strike action if they were severely affected by cuts, or if one or more of their members was declared compulsorily redundant; initiating the creation of JTUCs within their authority to prepare joint action and co-ordinate publicity; and, adhering strictly to existing NALGO policies opposing cuts, including total opposition to privatisation and refusing to cover for vacant posts.

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24 This and related issues are afforded further consideration in Chapter Seven.
As part of the strategy, the NNEC was instructed to: collect a levy from branches to maintain a national Fighting Fund for striking members, and to begin collection of the levy when an appropriate level of strike action in defence of jobs and services was taking place; instruct District Councils to co-ordinate support for striking branches; continue parliamentary opposition; and, continue the provision of publicity material and advice to Branches for the mobilisation of public and trade union support. Finally, the NLGC was instructed to seek the support of other local government unions in the implementation of this strategy, and to request that the TUC and STUC co-ordinate support and organise national demonstrations as appropriate. [NALGO, 1984a]

When viewed in conjunction with the discussion of delegate conferences, NALGO’s adoption of a national strategy in 1982 illustrates the low level of structural development within the labour movement at this time. The absence of effective structures and preparation helps to explain the lack of co-ordination evident among the examples of resistance described in the first three sections of the chapter. These developments also indicate a growing resolve and preparation for co-ordinated opposition and resistance, however, and therefore contribute to the context within which the examples discussed in the first three sections of the Chapter can be understood as parts of a broader campaign. Similarly, the national strategy’s reference to NALGO policies opposing cuts, privatisation, and refusing to cover for vacant posts also indicates that existing opposition was part of a broader movement. Significantly, however, such decisions were adopted at abstracted levels involving officers and activists, as opposed to the membership at large.

The willingness of NALGO’s leaders to accept wide-scale industrial action as a tactic to secure a change in government policy constitutes an important factor in the development of the policy and practice of the labour movement. Approval of the national strategy not only demonstrates the responsive nature of NALGO’s internal democratic structures, but also the extent to which policy was decided by activists, and a certain section of activists. The tactics identified in the national strategy, for example, reflect the prescriptive elements of the motions discussed earlier in relation to the LPAC, and therefore help identify the demands of activists with such motions. These aspects of NALGO’s approach were also accompanied by more usual tactics, aimed at securing broader support: publicity; parliamentary lobbying; demonstrations; and, days of action. Thus, chapters Six and Seven explore the extent to which the

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25 A later NLGC report, for example, records that: 'activity at district and branch level is sporadic and that adherence to existing policies and tactics is not complete...with some notable exceptions in the metropolitan county, GLC and some "hit list" branches, there is little or no action to mobilise the membership and public around the issues'[NALGO, 1984a: 9]
approval of radical and conventional tactics, through abstracted labour movement structures, and the interrelation and interaction between the tactics helped to shape the practice and outcome of the campaigns against rate capping.

Similarly, the approval of extra-parliamentary tactics, though contrary to the parliamentarist critique of the labour movement and, as is demonstrated later, to the stated aims of the national Labour Party, is a consequence of the working through of internal relations. The recognition and adoption of the extra-parliamentary tactic within NALGO, for example, is evidence of policy development through the interaction and interrelation of officers, leaders, and activists. Furthermore, as the prescriptive and non-prescriptive approaches correspond to activist and leadership positions, a similar process of interrelation and interaction can be identified, whereby each group and their respective positions affected the development of the other. The working through of these reciprocal processes is considered in chapters Six and Seven, but before this process can be understood, the position adopted by the national leadership of the labour movement needs to be identified and explored.

CAMPAIGN LEADERSHIP

As previous sections demonstrate, the elements that constituted a labour movement campaign against the Conservative approach to local government in the early 1980s lacked co-ordination and a unified goal. In part, this reflects the disparate approach of the Government, but the absence of developed structures was also a symptom of, and a reason for, the lack of co-ordination. The lack of co-ordination, and therefore the absence of broad-based structures, is also attributable to the approach of the national leadership of the labour movement, in general, especially that of the Labour Party. 26 Notwithstanding arguments about uneven development and variations in labour movement activity and organisation at the local level [Duncan and Goodwin, 1988], the approach adopted by the national leadership was consistent with its response to the campaign against the Housing Finance Act 1972, and an important factor in the development of the campaigns studied here. The practice and implications of this approach are therefore addressed in two sub-sections entitled: National Campaigning Activity; and Leadership Goals.

26 References to local and national in this thesis indicate functional and spatial variations. National leadership, for example, is responsible for decision making and practice that impacts on sections of the movement within the geographical and political framework of the nation state. Such distinctions should not be taken to imply dichotomy, however, because, as has been explained previously, national phenomena are influenced and constituted by local variants and vice versa.
National Campaigning Activity

In keeping with the non-prescriptive approach supported by the Party leadership and approved by the LPAC, a number of broad based activities were undertaken by the national leadership of the labour movement in 1979 and in the early 1980s. In 1979, for example, a campaign sub-committee of the Labour Party NEC was established and organised a series of rallies, marches, and meetings to oppose the Conservative Government's approach to local government. The focal point of this activity was a demonstration, rally, and lobby of parliament in the November 1979; an event supported by the TUCLGC.[Gyford and James, 1983; TUC 1960-1987, 1980] The NEC campaign committee also produced a monthly circular entitled: Cuts Briefing, to provide facts and arguments for spokespeople at the local level, and facilitate the sharing of local experiences.[Gyford and James, op. cit: 179] Similarly, the TUC circulated a ‘Cuts Checklist’ to Trades Councils and County Associations of Trades Councils, to provide examples of the kind of cuts taking place.[TUC 1960-1987, 1980: 308; TUC 1960-1987, 1981: 331] The generality of these initiatives provides another context within which the examples of opposition and resistance, discussed previously, can be viewed as part of a broader campaign.

Another similarity between the approaches of the Labour Party and TUC, and indicative of their respective outlooks, is their focus on the parliamentary process as a means of prosecuting their respective campaigns. To argue, as do Duncan and Goodwin, that such a concentration of resources is the inevitable consequence of opposing legislation[1988: 217], is to succumb to monological reasoning. Specific actions may be explained in this way, such as: the TUC General Council's approach to the Secretary of State for the Environment to express their opposition to the provisions of the Local Government Planning and Land Bill[TUC 1960-1987, 1980: 264]; the TUCLGC's request that local government unions encourage sponsored MPs to oppose the Bill; and, the TUCLGC's liaison with opposition spokespeople on the same issue.[TUC 1960-1987, 1980: 309] The same is not automatically true, however, of the TUC's other contacts with government ministers.

The TUCLGC, for example, held meetings with the Secretary of State for the Environment, and other ministers, to discuss public expenditure and annual RSG settlements. Such meeting took place in October 1979, May 1980[TUC 1960-1987, ibid: 307], December 1980[TUC 1960-1987, 1981: 329], and November 1981.[TUC 1960-1987, 1982: 312] This focus of attention on ministers is more a reflection of corporatist practices, and an indication of the TUC's acceptance of the primacy of parliament. The historical practice of liaison between the TUC and PLP, such as

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27 The TUC opposed the Local Government Planning and Land(No. 2) Bill because a unitary grant system would remove a local authority's freedom to provide a higher level of services than that laid down by central government.[TUC 1960-1987, 1980: 264]
during the Social Contract period of the 1970s for example, served to emphasise and reinforce the dominance of the parliamentarist approach in the outlook and practice of the labour movement in Britain.  

The concentration of resources on parliamentary opposition was not an inevitable consequence of opposing legislation, but a preferred practice of labour movement leaders. Thus, the most interesting feature of TUC activity during this period, was not that it focused on parliament as the seat of government, and therefore a means of amending or influencing government policy and practice, but that it focused almost exclusively on that arena. This approach contrasts with that being developed in NALGO at the time, and is particularly beguiling in view of the large parliamentary majority held by the Conservative Party.

Given the Labour Party's electoral raison d'être, and the presence of its leadership in parliament, their approach focused on the legislative process; though not with any consistency. During the passage of the Local Government Planning and Land Bill, for example, the PLP leadership advocated neither alternatives to the Bill nor a distinct line.[Gyford and James, op. cit: 168-9] Most of the PLP amendments were provided by the AMA, and it was the AMA who co-ordinated parliamentary lobbying for other local authority associations, not the PLP.[Gyford and James, ibid: 167-8] One explanation for the absence of any sustained PLP opposition to the Local Government Planning and Land Bill, is that it indicates an acceptance of the measures of central financial control and restraint.[Gyford and James, ibid: 169] This conclusion certainly fits with the practice of the PLP in government in the 1970s, but two other explanations for the PLP's behaviour are also plausible: the absence of Green or White consultative papers; and, the sheer complexity of the local Government Planning and Land Bill[Duncan and Goodwin, op. cit: 106], both made concerted opposition difficult.

In contrast, every clause of the comparatively straight forward Housing Bill was opposed before its enactment in 1980.[Gyford and James, op. cit: 168] The similarity between the financial measures contained in the Housing and Local Government Planning and Land bills, and the PLP's concerted opposition to the former, suggests that the PLP did not accept the necessity of central financial control and restraint. The Housing Bill was easier to oppose, however, and the Party had a clear historical position which supported and promoted the provision of local authority housing. Opposition to the subsequent Act’s provision for the sale of council houses was therefore confirmed at the 1980 LPAC[Labour Party 1966-1984, 1980: 109]; whereas

28 Miliband[1972], for example, provides an historical account of the labour movement's parliamentarism.
block grants and a call for the repeal of the Local Government Planning and Land Act were not raised at the LPAC until 1981.[Gyford and James, op. cit: 169]

The generalised nature of national campaigning activity, and the preoccupation with the parliamentary process offers a partial explanation for the lack of a co-ordinated labour movement campaign. Due to their concentration on the parliamentary process, for example, the PLP and TUC merely reacted to Government policy and practice. Their room for manoeuvre was therefore restricted, and the task of mounting a concerted and co-ordinated campaign of opposition to the Government's approach to local government made almost impossible.

In its defence, the PLP could argue that it was complying with LPAC decisions calling for a campaign without specific tactics, and reflecting the position of the majority of Labour groups who were not practising overt opposition to Government policy. Furthermore, by adopting their own version of the non-prescriptive approach, the TUC, Labour Party NEC, and the PLP sought to include a range of activities and traditions in the campaign to defend local government services, jobs, and local democracy. A more complete explanation for the campaigning activity undertaken by the Labour Party NEC, PLP, and TUC, therefore requires that the campaign objectives advocated by these bodies be identified and explored.

Leadership Goals

The goals of the Labour Party's national leadership are evident from the statements issued by the NEC. The Rate Controls statement issued 23.11.84, for example, refers to an earlier statement which was endorsed by the 1981 LPAC, entitled: Local Government Cuts, and offered guidance to local authorities dealing with cuts in RSG.[Liverpool NALGO Branch Records] Significantly, the 1984 document states that the principles outlined in 1981 were still applicable, and thereby illustrates a lack of development in the position adopted by the national leadership. Of particular importance, however, is the statements' identification of service areas considered to be worth defending, and an absence of recommendations for the conduct of defence.

The guiding principle of the 1981 statement was one of avoiding measures rather than promoting solutions, and therefore in keeping with the non-prescriptive approaches discussed earlier. Labour groups were therefore urged to avoid: 'as far as possible' cuts in essential social and public services; 'in any event' compulsory redundancies among the work-force; and, actions which jeopardise maximum unity.[loc. cit.] Guidance was therefore offered on what should not be done rather than what should be achieved, let alone how it could be achieved.

The statement identified service areas requiring protection as: teacher-pupil ratios; school meal charges, to be increased by no more than the rate of inflation; nursery
education, day nurseries, provision for under-fives, and services for children in care or at risk; housing management and maintenance affecting responsiveness to tenants’ day to day problems, and avoidance of excessive rent increases; and, residential home provision, home helps, meals on wheels, and back up services for elderly, sick, or disabled people. Local authorities were also advised to maintain: local passenger transport services; standards of street lighting, road-sweeping, refuse collection, and environmental protection.

The document provides an invaluable insight into the position and reasoning of the national leadership, and helps complete the context in which local labour movement opposition and resistance to central government policy and practice, and attempts to defend services, jobs, and local democracy formed part of an uncoordinated campaign. First of all, the statement identifies services areas considered important by the national Labour Party; covering the same areas as the examples of expansion identified in Chapter One, and the areas of labour movement defence discussed in Chapter Three and in the earlier Deregulation section. The call to avoid compulsory redundancies 'in any event', also implies a concern with employment levels, but does not rule out reductions in the work-force by other less provocative means such early retirement. Furthermore, the concern with employment does not include opposition to the reduction of working conditions of those employed in local government, and therefore fails to recognise that lowering working conditions lowered levels of service provision. Finally, the offer of guidance on what to avoid as opposed to what to do, is an important factor for explaining why local resistance lacked co-ordination, fits with the non-prescriptive approach adopted by the LPAC, and demonstrates the absence of clear leadership.[Gyford and James, 1983; Gyford, 1985]

A series of national figures, including R Hattersley, N Kinnock, and F Allaun, sought to justify the absence of a prescriptive or clear lead on the basis that local authorities had to take decisions according to local circumstances.[Gyford and James, op. cit; Gyford, op. cit.] Hattersley, for example, argued that the PLP could not oppose the Local Government Planning and Land Act on the basis that it reduced local government autonomy and then instruct Labour groups how to act.[Gyford, ibid: 28] This is a consistent position adopted by various PLP spokespeople, and the predecessors of Hattersley are recorded in Chapter Three as offering the same reason for not providing a clear lead to the campaign to oppose and resist the Housing Finance Act in the 1970s. There are inconsistencies in this approach, however, and in the claim that the Labour Party lacked the machinery to secure concerted action by Labour groups, or hold them accountable to the national Party.[Gyford and James, op. cit; Gyford, op. cit.]
Meetings at the Labour Party Local Government Conference 1981 between the Shadow Transport Spokesperson and representatives from Metropolitan County councils, for example, were able to agree a policy for reducing bus fares. [Blunkett and Jackson, 1987: 72] Similarly, delegates to the Labour Party's 1982 Local Government Conference were warned that local enterprise Boards should not be allowed to go against national Labour Party economic planning policy. [Gyford, op. cit: 114] The Labour Party also retained and practised the power to suspend local parties and hold enquiries into their affairs. As Chapter Three records, the latter option was adopted in North East Derbyshire CLP following the dissolution of Clay Cross in the 1974 re-organisation of local government. Similarly, councillors could be suspended from Labour groups and this happened in Manchester, Bristol, and Coventry where councillors voted against cuts. [Gyford and James, op. cit; Wainwright, 1987]

The exercise of such powers is conspicuous in its application to parties or elements within parties that sought to adopt a more combative approach, but appears to be at odds with the NEC statement issued in 1980, which called for councils to 'refuse to implement' government policies and to 'maintain' services. [Gyford, op. cit: 30] A more feasible explanation for the action taken by the PLP and NEC is offered by referring to Clay Cross when, as Chapter Three notes, the PLP opposed local authorities refusing to obey central legislation, for fear that Conservative councils may refuse to obey Labour Government legislation. In the 1980s, however, there was also the added fear that Labour councils may also refuse to obey a future Labour Government. [Lowes, 1994]

The lack of guidance from the national leadership of the Labour Party on how to achieve the aims identified in the NEC statements is one reason for the lack of coordination between the campaigning activity described in earlier sections. As was noted in the previous sub-section, however, the absence of a clear lead was also a product of, and reason for, the absence of developed broad-based structures. Furthermore, local campaigns had their own specific targets, such as persuading a local authority not to privatise certain services. Local action of a focused nature was therefore difficult to co-ordinate as part of a campaign concerned with broader issues. The existence of different attitudes, strategies, and goals within the same campaign also made co-ordination difficult. Thus, although the general approach adopted by the Labour Party NEC contrasts with the prescriptive tactics advocated and defeated at the LPAC, both shared the same ultimate goal of avoiding cuts and changing Government policy. Ultimately, however, attempts to ensure maximum unity, as required by NALGO's national strategy, and by the NEC statement of 1980 [Gyford and James, 1987: 29]

Other devices were used to persuade Labour groups to abandon combative stances, such as the meeting between national officials of the Labour Party and local government trade unions from Liverpool in 1984. This event is discussed in more detail in the following chapter.
op. cit: 188], had the effect of reducing goals and tactics to the lowest common denominator; that of the majority of Labour groups who were not prepared to adopt an overt stance of opposition and resistance.

This chapter covers a broad range of subjects to demonstrate the Conservative Government's approach to local government in the early 1980s, and the extent and nature of labour movement responses. Through this approach the focus of the thesis moves from the identification and exploration of historical experiences that helped shape labour movement policy and practice in the 1980s, to an identification and interrogation of the latter. Furthermore, the evaluation of principles and practice is undertaken in reference to both historical and contemporary matters. The categorisation and validation local government service provision, employment, and local democracy, for example, are developed as part of this chapter.

Thus, the Deregulation and the Campaign Leadership sections identified the service areas that were the subject of central government attention, and labour movement defence in the early 1980s. Housing, social services, education, and transport were all defended to a greater or lesser extent during the early 1980s, and correspond to the areas of expansion in the 1960s, and areas defended in the 1970s. The interrelation between these areas of policy and practice and the Government's imposition of financial restraint is also identified and explored in terms of their implications for local democracy and local autonomy, and of their implications for levels and conditions of employment. Furthermore, the concept of democratic practice is developed in reference to the development and practice of the labour movement campaign, with specific reference to the LPAC, TUC, NALGO, and delegate conferences.

By introducing and interrogating the campaign goals and practice of labour movement organisations in the early 1980s, the chapter also contributes to the development of an historical context within which to study the anti-rate capping campaigns. The differing commitment and strategies of leaders, activists, and members, for example, are introduced as factors influencing the aims and practice of the campaigns. Overall, therefore, the chapter contributes to the validation of elements that assist the direction and intensity of interrogation of the anti-rate capping campaigns; specifically in terms of their aims and practice. Before considering the campaigns mounted against rate capping, however, one more aspect of the historical background, and its correspondence to the conclusions drawn here, needs to be identified and analysed. To this end, the campaign mounted for more resources by the Liverpool labour movement in 1983-4 forms the subject of the next chapter.
CHAPTER FIVE

LIVERPOOL AS ENIGMA

In contrast to the examples of labour movement opposition and resistance discussed in Chapter Four, the Liverpool labour movement campaign for more resources mounted between November 1983 and July 1984, represents a more focused, concerted and apparently successful resistance of the Conservative Government's approach to local government. Thus, by considering the difference and similarities between the labour movement experiences, practices, and structures discussed in previous chapters and those evident in Liverpool before and during the said campaign, this Chapter contributes to the developing historical context within which the campaigns against rate capping can be understood and interrogated. In particular, consideration of the Liverpool labour movement contributes to the ongoing reciprocal validation and interrogation of the categories, principles, and practices explored in previous chapters and evident in the labour movement campaigns of the 1980s; especially those relating to the mobilisation of party and trade union activists and members.

The approach adopted here therefore contrasts with accounts that focus on the practices of the Liverpool Labour Group, or conduct their analysis within the artificial framework of New Urban Left, and thereby treat Liverpool as a separate and distinct phenomenon; such as those of McLaverty[1989], Lansley, Goss and Wolmar[1989] and Stoker[1988]. Failure to consider the labour movement campaign in Liverpool within the framework of society as a whole, and therefore as related to events elsewhere, means that the significance of the Liverpool experience for the anti-rate capping campaigns, can not be understood or demonstrated in its entirety. The victory claimed by Liverpool in 1984, for example, served to galvanise resolve for the non-compliance of others in 1985, was instrumental in the choice of the no rate tactic, and provided the Government with experience of combating such an approach.[Blunkett,
This is not to suggest that the Liverpool labour movement did not exhibit differences in approach, outlook, and practice. On the contrary, the argument here is that the experiences of the anti-rate capping campaigns are best understood by examining the differences and similarities evident between the Liverpool labour movement, and those of other authorities involved campaigning activity; not by treating Liverpool as an enigma.

The chapter is therefore divided into two sections entitled: Liverpool Labour Movement; and, Campaigning Activity. The first section considers aspects of the historical development and experiences of the Liverpool labour movement and draws analogies with those discussed in previous chapters. Campaigning Activity, on the other hand, concentrates on the organisation, practice, and tactics employed in Liverpool during the campaigns of the early 1980s, and again draws appropriate analogies. Given the extensive coverage afforded elsewhere to the financial arguments that supported Liverpool's campaign for more resources in 1984, the chapter focuses on organisation, practice, and tactics before and during the campaign.

LIVERPOOL LABOUR MOVEMENT

Chapters One to Four identify a variety of developments and experiences that have implications for the organisation, practice, and tactics exhibited by labour movement campaigns of opposition and resistance mounted in the early 1980s. Some of the examples provided relate to Liverpool and serve to indicate the shared nature of the developments and experiences. Given the importance attached to the Liverpool campaign, however, further attention is required to identify the extent of such similarities and the significance of any differences.

This is achieved by addressing two areas that, although treated separately for reasons of analysis, are to all intents and purposes integral parts of the same process. The first area, discussed under the title: General Developments, outlines the evolution of the local labour movement in a socio-economic context. A second sub-section carries the self explanatory title: Local Authority Trade Union and Labour Party Relations, and focuses on the development and significance of the relationship between these two groups. As part of the analysis, consideration is afforded to

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1 The previous chapter identified organisational preparations for opposition to rate capping, as defined in the Local Government Finance Bill No. 1, as early as September 1981. Publication of the Rates White Paper in 1983, however, heralded more concerted preparations on this front and coincided with events unfolding in Liverpool. These preparations are afforded specific attention in Chapter Six, but the reciprocal interaction between such preparations and developments in Liverpool should not be underestimated.

2 As has already been mentioned, Livingstone[1987] draws a connection between the Liverpool experience and the choice of tactic for the anti-rate capping campaign. Blunkett and Jackson also make a similar point[1987: 169-70], and in spite of excluding Liverpool from the New Urban Left framework, McLaverty describes Liverpool as a focal point of the local government left between 1983 and 1987.[1989: 42]
NALGO's involvement in the local labour movement and its relations with the Labour Party. Given NALGO's status as a non-affiliated union, therefore, the section provides a broader analysis of Labour Party-trade union relations than accounts that focus on manual trade unions and portray their involvement in the campaign as determined by their affiliation to the Labour Party, and by favourable service conditions improvements.[Crick, 1986; Davies, 1987; Thompson and Allen, 1986]

**General Developments**

The evolution and formation of local labour movements reflect local socio-economic circumstances and developments. In the case of the Liverpool, for example, labour movement development was influenced by the reliance on the port as a source of unskilled, casualised employment, and the post-war introduction of manufacturing industry to the city.[Davies, 1987; Parkinson, 1985] In contrast, the Sheffield labour movement was dominated by engineering and steel unions[Duncan and Goodwin, 1988; Wainwright, 1987]; again a reflection of the local industrial landscape. The comparison of Liverpool and Sheffield is not arbitrary, however, as both maintained until the 1970s, a joint labour movement organisation in the form of the Trades Council and Labour Party.[Wainwright, ibid: 106-7]

As Chapter Two records, the close relationship maintained in Sheffield meant that the Labour Party did not suffer the membership loss experienced elsewhere.[Wainwright, ibid: 107-8] In Liverpool, however, ties were maintained through an alliance of trade union and Labour Party officials, premised on moribund party organisations, such as Liverpool Exchange constituency which had no members.[Davies, op. cit: 155] Thus, the religious divisions and casualised employment practices that had militated the development of a strong and unified labour movement in Liverpool[Davies, ibid; Parkinson, op. cit.] contributed to the 'boss politics' of the Braddock era.

Significantly, however, the maintenance and development of the Liverpool labour movement through the Trades Council meant that its structures were vulnerable to the effects of local social and economic change. Issues of internal democracy and policy making were, for example, points of contention within the Liverpool labour movement as early as 1957. During that year the Trades Council and Labour Party organised a Municipal Policy Conference to consider items for the following year's manifesto, but the Labour Group ignored those policies it disliked.[Davies, ibid: 180] This practice was challenged from the 1960s onwards, however, following changes in the internal organisation of the TGWU which allowed local branches to send rank and file delegates from the docks and car plants to the Trades Council and Labour
Furthermore, the 1960s and early 1970s also witnessed a growth of white collar affiliates to the Trades Council and Labour Party. The influx of activists threatened the established structures and arrangements within the Liverpool labour movement, and therefore contributed to the separation of Trades Council and Labour Party in 1970, with the support of the Labour Group leader. [loc. cit; Taaffe and Mulhearn, 1988] Explanations for the growth of militancy and radicalism in the Liverpool labour movement should not, however, be premised on a monological association with casualism. While the experiences of casualism may have influenced the development of rank and file labour movement structures, the developments were also part of broader societal processes, including the growth of shop stewards movements and white collar unionism described in Chapter Two.

Although the issues of internal party democracy, accountability, and policy making were issues within the Liverpool labour movement as early as 1957, the Labour Group split in 1972, over its response to the Housing Finance Act, is cited as marking the emergence of Labour Group accountability and democracy as issues within the Liverpool Labour Party. [Crick, 1986; Lansley, Goss and Wolmar, 1989; Parkinson, op. cit; Taaffe and Mulhearn, op. cit.] This development was undoubtedly important, but should be understood in the context of the growth of activism described above.

Thus, in 1972, 21 Labour councillors voted in line with Party policy, and opposed the rent increase, while 28 reneged. [Parkinson, op. cit; Taaffe and Mulhearn, op. cit.] Those who opposed the increase were supported by activists in the DLP, and a campaign mounted to make the Labour Group accountable. [Crick, op. cit; Davies, op. cit; Parkinson, op. cit.] The isolation of those who supported the increase is demonstrated by the Trades Council condemnation of the increase [Davies, op. cit: 160], and a rent strike among local authority tenants, supported by activists and workers from Fords and Birds Eye. [loc. cit.] The power struggle between Labour Group and DLP continued until 1978 when members of the Labour Group voted by 21 votes to 16 to select a new leader. Following DLP objections, however, the decision was reversed by 24 votes to 14. [Davies, op. cit; Parkinson, op. cit.]

An essential feature of these struggles, and a deciding factor in the transfer of power from Labour group to DLP, was the move to give the DLP control over the selection of prospective councillors. Under the new arrangement, for example, candidates were only accepted if they agreed to vote in line with DLP policy. [Byrne, 1994; Parkinson, op. cit.] The processes outlined here are analogous to events elsewhere in the 1970s and early 1980s, described in Chapter Two, when local Labour parties in Greater London, Manchester, and Sheffield sought to make their Labour groups accountable. The resultant control exercised over the Labour Group in Liverpool, with the consent of prospective councillors, resembles the practices
discussed in Chapter Three in reference to Clay Cross, and pertains to the issues of democratic practice identified and discussed in Chapter Two. Finally, the ascendancy of the DLP also saw the creation of policy sub-committees that mirrored the structure of the local authority.[Byrne, op. cit.] This development not only bears analogy with developments in Manchester, described in Chapter Two, but also resembles the Trades Council's 1974 initiative to establish policy committees on such matters as: industrial injuries, nursery schools, social security, pensions, illiteracy, women, youth and race.[Davies, op. cit: 184]

Liverpool also experienced developments in membership growth and composition comparable to other local Labour parties. The recovery of Labour Party membership in Liverpool in the 1970s, for example, was similar to Sheffield and Southwark where Labour parties witnessed an influx of new members; including manual working class people as well as public sector professionals.[Goss, 1988; Seyd, 1987] In Liverpool, many of the activists who joined the Labour Party came from struggles against factory closure, supported Labour Group accountability, and included people who became councillors in the 1980s.[Byrne, op. cit; Parkinson, op. cit.] This concurs with the assertion that the Party machine was broken up in the 1970s by rank and file struggles in the industrial sphere, and that the moribund wards of the 1960s were rejuvenated by an influx of activists from this arena.[Davies, op. cit: 196]

One other factor that deserves mention in the context of the development of the local Labour Party is the impact and role of Militant Tendency. Although moribund parties, of which there were many in Liverpool, are considered to be easy targets for entryism[Seyd, op. cit: 50], a monological equation between the influence of Militant and the existence of moribund parties should be avoided. Labour Party membership and outlook in Liverpool was developed and influenced by activists radicalised through industrial struggles[Parkinson, op. cit.], not just by Militant. Entryism may represent a partial explanation for the influence of Militant in Liverpool, but it should not be overstated. There is, for example, agreement among activists and commentators that Militant's influence as a minority group in Liverpool was dependent on the support of a broader spectrum.[Burgess, 1994; Cresswell, 1994; Crick, op. cit; Seyd. op. cit; Wainwright, op. cit.]

Militant's notoriety was a product of their own grandiose claims, and the propaganda of Conservative and Labour Party leaderships who sough to discredit the Liverpool campaign.[Wainwright, ibid: 126] This process is also assisted by the non-critical acceptance of claims made by Militant to be the decisive factor.[McLaverty, 1989: 42] Similarly, unsubstantiated claims are made about Militant's presence in the

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3 Struggles against factory closure and redundancy are also recognised and discussed in Chapter Two as a factor in broader labour movement development.
DLP, Labour Group, and local authority trade unions. Crick, for example, estimates that 16 out of 51 Labour Councillors were Militant supporters in 1983, and that by 1982 they almost had a majority on the DLP Executive.[op. cit: 229 & 232] The statement is qualified, however, by acknowledging that the adoption of policies depended on the support of others, and that confrontation with the Government would have happened without Militant’s existence.[Crick, ibid: 232 & 236] Similarly, Davies asserts, without evidence that Militant supporters held 'key' positions on the DLP Executive.[op. cit: 173] In contrast, however, the maximum number of Militant supporters in the local authority trade unions is estimated as: GMBATU, 100; NALGO 20; TGWU single figures; and, minimal in the remaining unions.[Lowes, 1994]

Local variations notwithstanding, the developments experienced by the Liverpool labour movement during the 1960s and 1970s are analogous to those identified in Chapter Two as affecting the labour movement in general. Thus, the period witnessed: a fall and rise in Labour Party membership; struggles to make Labour groups and the PLP accountable to the Party at large; the radicalisation of trade unionists through industrial struggles, latterly against factory closure; the growth of public sector trade unions; and, the introduction and growth of stewards systems within those unions. Developments in Liverpool should therefore be understood in this general context, while recognising the significance of specific local factors such as the casualism of port related employment, and the maintenance of close relation between Labour Party and trade unions through the Trades Council. In particular, the close links between Labour Party and trade unions, albeit at officer level during the immediate post war period, was evident and developed as part of local labour movement organisation and practice in the 1980s.

**Local Authority Trade Union-Labour Party Relations**

The relationship between Liverpool Labour Group and the local authority workforce is recognised as an important factor in Liverpool’s ability to mount concerted campaigns between November 1983 and July 1984, and again in 1985-6.[Blunkett and Jackson, 1987; NALGO, NDAM 16.10.84; Parkinson, 1985; Byrne, 1994] Several writers, however, posit a simplistic causal connection between improvements in employee conditions of service, or increased status for union representatives, especially GMBATU, as a means of explaining trade union support for the campaign.[Crick, 1986; Davies, 1987; Thompson and Allen, 1986] While there is an element of truth in this view, the developing relationship between Labour Party, Labour Group, and local authority trade unions was more complex, and took place in a broader context. The nature and genesis of the relationship is therefore examined by
exploring three factors that shaped the links between party and unions: the decline of the private sector in the 1970s; the importance of service conditions improvements; and, union disputes with the Liberal administration 1981-3.

In a similar fashion to the industrial decline experienced in London, Manchester, Rotherham, and Sheffield, described in Chapter One, Liverpool suffered a collapse of its manufacturing sector during the 1970s. Between 1971 and 1984, for example, Liverpool lost 57% of its manufacturing sector, 47% of its construction sector, and one-third of its service sector.[Davies, op. cit: 80] The severity of Liverpool's experience can be emphasised by comparing the above figures to Merseyside as a whole, where the respective sectors declined by 42, 17, and 5%.[loc. cit.] Furthermore, this process resulted in Liverpool unemployment levels rising from 6.2% in 1971, to 25% in 1986[Davies, ibid: 81] or, put another way, employment in the city declined by 33% between 1971 and 1985, as opposed to a national decline of 3%.[Parkinson, op. cit: 13]

The decline in Liverpool was exacerbated by a local peculiarity whereby a small number of large firms provided most of the city's employment, and by the absence of a service sector.[Parkinson, ibid: 11 & 13] By 1979, for example, 40% of employees were employed by less than 1% of the city's firms.[Parkinson, ibid: 12] In part, this imbalance is attributable to regional economic policy which encouraged large scale enterprises to invest in the area, as a means of stemming long term economic decline.[loc. cit.] The down side of this policy, however, meant that the public expenditure cuts of the late 1970s and early 1980s accelerated the pace of economic decline. Due to reductions in regional aid, for example, firms receiving public subsidy were forced to shed jobs or close completely. Similarly, jobs were lost in the public sector, including local authorities, as expenditure was curtailed.[Parkinson, ibid: 13]

As the previous sub-section noted, socio-economic changes had important consequences for the development of the labour movement in Liverpool. In common with the campaigns described in Chapter Two, the Liverpool labour movement resisted closure of the factories that provided many of the area's jobs. Thus, an eight year campaign was mounted to save Tate and Lyle[Davies, op. cit: 185], a campaign launched against the closure of Fisher Bendix in 1971, and CAV Lucas was occupied for four months in 1972.[Taaffe and Mulhearn, 1988: 42] The failure of such resistance witnessed an influx of radicalised trade union activists into the Labour Party in search of a broader political strategy[Parkinson, op. cit: 25], and into local government which offered the main chance of employment.[Lowes, 1994] Another consequence of this decline was that Liverpool City Council became the largest single employer on Merseyside, employed almost one-third of public sector employees in
Liverpool, and therefore increased the importance of defending local authority jobs. [Liverpool City Council, 1983: 3]

Furthermore, the decline of the private sector meant that the bulk of the trade union movement in Liverpool was now based in the local authority, and this was reflected in trade union affiliations to the Labour Party where GMBATU and the TGWU dominated. [Davies, op. cit; Lowes, op. cit; Parkinson, op. cit.]\(^4\) GMBATU and the TGWU, for example had 85 delegates between them; more than other delegates put together. [Crick, op. cit: 254] Representation was, however, based on the number of members and branches. As the biggest union, therefore, and because it was organised in several branches, GMBATU had most delegates. In contrast, NALGO had a large membership but organised in one branch. If it had been affiliated to the Labour Party, therefore, it would have had limited influence on policy and practice [Lowes, op. cit.; though it may have been able to ally itself with other groupings.

Similar processes were also evident elsewhere. In Sheffield, for example, job losses in the steel and engineering industries were reflected in the composition of the Trades Council. Thus, by the early 1980s, NALGO and not the AUEW was the largest union on the Trades Council, and other public sector unions increased their affiliations. [Duncan and Goodwin, 1988; Wainwright, 1987] In London too, the demise of industrial unions reflected the loss of manufacturing jobs, and the two largest block votes at the GLLP conference were held by the TGWU and NUPE; amounting to around 25% of the votes. [Livingstone, 1984: 264]

The more sceptical accounts of the policy and practice of the Liverpool Labour Group between 1983 and 1987, including those of the LCC, seek to portray relations between the Labour Party and trade unions as dependent on improved service conditions [Davies, op. cit: 173], or as the product of a 'sweetheart relationship'. [Thompson and Allen, op. cit: 9] While there is little doubt that the size of GMBATU's delegation to the local Labour Party and its political composition afforded it a pivotal position in policy making [Crick, op. cit; Lowes, op cit.], such arguments fail to explain NALGO's relations with the Labour Party. The Chairperson and Secretary of the Liverpool Branch, during the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s, both refute the idea that service conditions improvements played a part in securing NALGO's support of the campaign for more resources. Both say that improvements were easier to negotiate with the Liberal administrations, but that Labour afforded more job security. [Burgess, 1994; Cresswell, 1994] Furthermore, GMBATU was forced into disputes with the Labour authority to ensure that promises of improved conditions, such as a 35 hour week, were honoured. [Lowes, op. cit.]

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\(^4\) A further consequence of this process was the displacement of the Trades Council by the local JSSC as the focus of trade union organisation. This development is discussed in more detail as part of the following section.
In the context of the later campaign, the most important arrangements introduced by the Labour administration were advantageous, not to the conditions of service of trade union members, but to trade union activism. Such initiatives include: paid time-off for trade union duties; JSSC observers on the Council's Personnel Committee; trade union nomination rights in the filling of vacancies; non-voting trade union observers at recruitment interviews; departmental stewards committee representation when Personnel and Performance Review Committees considered Chief Officers' recommendations on the filling of departmental vacancies; and, paid time off for work-place meetings and courses promoting the campaign. The last of these facilities is identified as the most important to the conduct of the campaign.[Burgess, op. cit; Cresswell, op. cit; Lowes, op. cit.]

Perhaps the most contentious of these arrangements was that of nomination rights, whereby trade unions were allowed to suggest candidates for vacant jobs. NALGO, for example, declined to exercise such rights, and for NUPE, who did not have the one-third membership requirement to qualify for such rights[Crack, op. cit; Liverpool, 1984-5], the arrangement was a source of grievance. This may explain, at least in part, Thompson and Allen's assumption that the provision of nomination rights constituted part of a sweetheart arrangement with GMBATU.[op. cit: 9] The other arrangements were evenly available, however, and contrast to experiences in Southwark where stewards had more difficulty acquiring time off for normal union duties than campaign activities.[Weinstein, 1986]

The policy and practice of Liverpool NALGO in relation to the Labour Group and DLP, does not fit the view propounded by Crick, Davies, or Thompson and Allen. Of particular interest, is the extent to which NALGO's policy development was ostensibly independent of the Labour Party, given their unaffiliated status, but similar in content. The NALGO BEC 23.1.80, for example, called an SGM 11.2.80 to discuss Liverpool Labour Party's policy of opposing 'huge rent and rate increases' that compensate for cuts in RSG. The SGM received a report entitled: 'The Rate, the Cuts and the Grant', which discussed the Party's policy in the context of local government oriented public expenditure developments since 1975, and outlined the case for and against cuts.[Liverpool NALGO, 11.2.80] The approval of branch policy through the holding of general meetings, open to all members is evidence of the democratic practice of Liverpool NALGO, but no attendance figures are available to gauge the level of support.5

5 At this time the process, discussed in the previous sub-section, through which the DLP came to control Labour Group policy and practice was incomplete. Thus, the minority Labour Group ignored DLP policy by proposing and securing a rates increase of 50% for the 1980-81 financial year.[Parkinson, 1985: 29-31] The losses in the following election, however, mirrored those suffered by Lambeth Labour Party in similar circumstances, described in Chapter Four, and assisted the selection and election of candidates who would abide by DLP policy.
A special Service Conditions Committee, held 3.11.83, provides another example of the decision making process, and therefore democratic practice within Liverpool NALGO. The meeting considered a City Council/Labour Party document entitled: 'Jobs, Services and Rates', agreed to circulate the document to all NALGO stewards, and to submit motions to the NALGO's North West and North Wales District Council, and to the North West District Local Government Committee calling for national support for the campaign in Liverpool.[Liverpool NALGO Service Conditions 1979-1987, 3.11.83] The decisions of the SGM and Service Conditions committee are important because they demonstrate they existence of support, among activists at least, for policies similar to those adopted by the Liverpool Labour Party. NALGO's support cannot be explained, however, in reference to affiliation to the local Party, or to nomination rights; although a number of activists were Labour Party members. The position adopted by NALGO was also a response to the severity of the problems faced by Liverpool, and indicates the basis of co-operation on which the later campaigns were conducted.

A final area that helps to explain and illustrate the evolution of the relationship between Labour Group, DLP, and local authority trade unions is the latter’s dealings with the Liberal and Conservative administrations between 1980 and 1983. The renegotiation of the local authority's 'no redundancy agreement', for example, developed links among the local authority unions, and between unions and the Labour Party. As part of this process, NALGO District and Branch Officers achieved their own agreement with the City Council in August 1980, but agreed that they would not to undermine action taken by other unions pursuing a similar agreement.[Liverpool NALGO BEC 1979-1987, 20.8.80] The Labour Party, however, voted against the NALGO agreement at the Finance and Strategy Committee and at the full Council meeting, because vacancies were not being filled, and because the Group had not been consulted as part of the negotiating process.[Liverpool NALGO Branch Organiser, undated]

The NALGO Branch organiser’s report on the issue argues that the lack of coordination between NALGO and the local Labour Party resulted from councillors not understanding the agreement reached. This was in spite of the Chairperson of Liverpool NALGO writing to the Leader of the Liverpool Labour Party on 3.4.80 to request a meeting with the DLP to discuss joint opposition to cuts.[loc. cit.] Taken at face value, therefore, the Labour Group's position is one of detached principle, ignoring the practical improvements available to a particular set of employees, and the fillip provided to others in negotiating a similar settlement. By September 1980, however, the agreement applied to all unions, but the process demonstrates the level of interaction and understanding evolving between the two groups at that time.
A final factor important in developing a level of co-operation and understanding between local trade unions, DLP, and Labour Group, was the successful campaign mounted against Liberal plans to privatisate the Housing Management and Cleansing services. The campaign against privatisation is, for example, credited with contributing to Labour’s local election victory of 1983[Burgess, op. cit; Liverpool NALGO, undated], and contrasts with those examples of opposition cited in Chapter Four, primarily because it was successful. Like the examples of action in other areas, the Liverpool campaign involved joint trade union action and committees, but its significance here lies with its contribution to the development of labour movement unity. The burgeoning unity was also a consequence of previous struggles and collaboration discussed above, but the campaign against privatisation raised the consciousness of union members through the successful prosecution of joint initiatives, such as delivering leaflets and boycotting work associated with privatisation, and was perceived to have aided the Labour Party’s electoral victory in 1983.[Burgess, op. cit; Cresswell, op. cit; Lowes; op. cit.]

Relations between Labour Party and trade unions form a particular feature of the development of the labour movement in Liverpool. An alliance of Party and trade union officials, for example, dominated the Labour Party and Trades Council, until the delegation of activists from affiliated unions in the 1960s precipitated the break up of old structures. Similarly, the radicalisation of the Liverpool Labour Party and moves toward greater accountability within it, coincided with the influx of trade union activists radicalised by struggles against factory closure in the 1970s. The demise of the private sector in Liverpool was also a factor in the changing structure within the Party, where local authority unions became the main affiliates. Finally, the defence of jobs and services against the Liberal administration in the early 1980s, assisted the development of co-operation between Labour Party and trade unions, with NALGO adopting positions similar to those developing in the DLP, and co-operating with manual unions to combat Liberal policies.

Nevertheless, these developments should be understood in the context of the socio-economic evident elsewhere. As has been demonstrated in Chapter Two, for example, struggles against factory closure, for greater accountability within the Labour Party, and the development and impact of shop steward systems, were part of broader societal developments. In Liverpool, however, the combination of all these factors with local circumstances, such as the conflict between casualism and factory discipline in the 1960s[Davies, op. cit.], and the experiences, opinions and personalities of those who joined the Labour Party in the 1970s[Parkinson, op. cit.],
served to shape the close working relationship between Party and local authority unions, and thereby the conduct of the campaigns for more resources in the 1980s.

CAMPAIGNING ACTIVITY

The experiences that shaped the relationship between local Labour Party and trade unions in Liverpool, were important for the conduct of the campaign for more resources between November 1983 and July 1984. In particular, the influence of these factors is evident in the practice and structures through which the campaign was prosecuted. Thus, the tactics employed to mobilise and express support for campaign aims, the role played by activists, and the democratic practice through which decisions were taken and constituent bodies represented, can all be understood in reference to the development of Labour Party-trade union relations. These factors are therefore an important means of understanding the differences between Liverpool and elsewhere, and how the Liverpool labour movement was able to mount a concerted campaign to resist the Conservative Government policy and practice.6

By considering the interaction and interrelationship of these factors, the conclusions of the last section are expanded, together with the validation and interrogation of labour movement categories, aims, experiences, practices, and structures. These processes are developed over three sub-sections entitled: Structures; Campaign Tactics; and, National Involvement. The first two identify and compare activities evident in Liverpool and elsewhere, while the third complements the former by examining the attitude and approach to Liverpool of the national leadership of the labour movement. As has already been explained, the identification and exploration of differences and similarities, between Liverpool and elsewhere, form the basis of explanations, developed in succeeding chapters, for the fate of the campaigns against rate capping.

Structures

The experiences described in reference to developing Labour Party-trade union relations in Liverpool are also evident in the emergence and practice of broad based committees to organise, promote, and prosecute campaigns of opposition and resistance. Broad based committees form the focus of this discussion, provide a comparison with campaign structures and practices evident elsewhere, and therefore afford identification and analysis of the difference and similarities between Liverpool and others. Exploration of these issues and their relevance to campaigning activity in

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6 As part of this process, consideration is focused on those trade unions that were active in the campaign, and on NALGO in particular. NUPE and the NUT were the main dissenters from the campaign, though as was evidenced by events, their absence had little practical effect on its conduct or on its chances of success.
Liverpool are undertaken here in reference to: the JSSC of trade unions organising in Liverpool City Council; the Merseyside Trade Union and Labour Movement Campaign Committee (MTULMCC); Meetings between councillors, full-time and lay trade union representatives; and, the Campaign Working Party established by the local authority.  

The JSSC provides a prime example of the similarities and differences between Liverpool’s campaigning activity, and opposition and resistance mounted elsewhere. Formed and developed in the late 1970s as a response to attacks on jobs and working conditions by Liberal and Conservative administrations [Burgess, 1994; Parkinson, 1985; Liverpool NALGO, undated], JSSC activities included opposition to redundancies, cuts, and privatisation. As Chapter Four notes, joint union co-operation to oppose privatisation also occurred in other areas, but co-ordination in Basingstoke was undertaken by the Trades Council [Ascher, 1987], and in Birmingham there were two committees: the Public Sector Liaison Committee founded by lay members; and, a committee dominated by full-time officials. [Kline, 1983: 94] The Liverpool JSSC faced no such bifurcation, despite eschewing of full-time officer participation [Lowes, 1994], and campaigned successfully to defer privatisation plans until a Labour victory had been secured in local elections. Conversely, analogous campaigns in Gloucester and in Wandsworth folded following Conservative victories in local elections. 

As well as being activist led, the Liverpool JSSC included both manual and non-manual trade unions. Chapter Three, for example, records the development of JTUCs in the 1970s in response to the effects of public expenditure cuts. The total number of such committees was limited, however, and rarely involved both employment categories. [Fryer, 1979: 99] In Sheffield, for example, a joint union campaign committee was not formed until January 1985, and involved full-time officers. [Blunkett and Jackson, 1987: 176] Furthermore, the previous JTUC representing local authority workers in Sheffield involved only blue collar unions. [Blunkett, 1994]

Local campaigns and protests were also organised through Trades Councils, such as: Lancashire County Association of Trades Councils opposition to the effects of public expenditure cuts in the 1970s [Fryer, op. cit: 99]; Basingstoke’s opposition to privatisation; [Ascher, op. cit.]; and, Croydon Trades Council’s campaigning activity in the 1980s. [London NALGO, 10.8.83] Similarly, Liverpool Trades Council supported NALGO action over vacancies in June 1979, established a Trades Council Co-ordinating Committee Against Cuts in September 1979, and supported a one day

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7 Committees were also important at other levels in the Labour Party and in individual trade unions. Liverpool NALGO Branch, for example, carried out much of its co-ordinating activity through its Finance and General Purposes Committee (F&GP), Service Conditions Committee, and BEC. A series of ad-hoc sub-committees were also created to deal with specific campaign responsibilities.
strike on 18.2.80, called by South Yorkshire Trades Council to oppose cuts. [Liverpool NALGO BEC 1979-1987, 23.1.80] The Liverpool Trades Council also helped to found the MTULMCC in 1983. [Liverpool City Council, undated(a): 11]

As a consequence of developments described in the previous section, however, the Liverpool JSSC replaced the Trades Council as the main co-ordinating body for local government unions. References to the Trades Council in Liverpool NALGO BEC Minutes, for example, tail off from April 1981, while references to the JSSC increase. In practice though, the Trades Council co-existed with the JSSC, albeit as a junior partner, and was used to obtain support from the wider labour movement. Ultimately, however, the demise of the private sector, the shift of attention to the local authority arena, and a pre-occupation with sectional in-fighting, all contributed to the eclipse of the Trades Council by the JSSC. [Burgess, op. cit; Cresswell, 1994; Lowes, op. cit; Davies, 1987]

The main campaigning functions undertaken by the JSSC relate to the co-ordination of activities and policies, among member unions. As has already been noted, much of the JSSC's activity, prior to the campaign for more resources, focused on opposition to cuts, privatisation, and redundancies. Specific examples of the tactics used as part of these activities are explored in the following sub-section, but can be summarised as: limited industrial action, such as one day strikes and non-co-operation with work or councillors; demonstrations and lobbies of Council meetings; and, holding mass meetings. This last activity allowed JSSC polices to be explained to, and approved by, activists and members. Separate meetings, for example, were held between stewards from all affiliated trade unions, and between all local authority trade unionists. A programme to stop cuts and redundancies and to establish an Industrial Action Committee was discussed in this manner in 1980. [Liverpool NALGO, 17.6.80] The practice of holding mass meetings formed an integral part of campaign activity to inform and mobilise activists and members, and therefore receives further consideration in the following sub-section.

Democratic and representative practices of the JSSC are also evident in the practices of Liverpool NALGO; though these should not be taken to represent practices common to all affiliated unions. NALGO representatives to the JSSC, for example, were elected from the BEC, and nominations for executive positions were discussed and agreed at that level. [Liverpool NALGO BEC, 1979-1987] Individual stewards committees were also encouraged to affiliate to the JSSC. [Liverpool

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8 A NALGO programme to stop cuts and redundancies was carried out in conjunction with the JSSC in 1980, and involved various forms of industrial action including non co-operation: with councillors who voted for cuts; working parties on cuts; the transfer of housing repairs to private contractors; and, the processing of redundancies. The programme also involved not covering for absences; ceasing to serve Council committees and sub-committees after 4.45pm; and, non co-operation with rationalisation plans for special schools if trade unions were not consulted. [Liverpool NALGO, 17.6.80]
NALGO F&GP 1979-1986, 10.2.81] In addition to the mass meetings held by the JSSC, Liverpool NALGO also discussed and obtained support for JSSC policies through a number of general meetings.

On 25.6.80, for example, the re-convened half-yearly AGM approved a day of action called, in conjunction with the JSSC, for the 23.7.80 to oppose 600 threatened redundancies in the Minor Works Department. Similarly, an SGM, held 10.3.81, agreed a motion opposing cuts in jobs and services, and instructed negotiators to seek, in conjunction with the JSSC, an unconditional no redundancy agreement for all council employees. The meeting also agreed to hold a demonstration and lobby of the Council's Budget meeting on 18.3.81. Finally, an SGM held 6.3.84 supported the Labour Group's case for more resources and approved strike action for 29.3.84; the day of the Council Budget meeting, and designated 'Democracy Day' by the TUC.[Liverpool NALGO, 8.3.84]

The broadest based committee, in terms of labour movement involvement, in the campaign for more resources was the MTULMCC. Established to oppose public expenditure cuts and anti-trade union laws[Liverpool City Council, op. cit: 11], the MTULMCC adopted a role in Liverpool's campaign for extra resources that is comparable to that played by the NSC in the 1970s, and by the LGCU in the later the anti-rate capping campaigns. The MTULMCC was the initiative of, and therefore involved, a number of local labour movement bodies including: Liverpool Trades Council; Liverpool DLP; Liverpool Labour MPs; Merseyside County Council Labour Group; Liverpool City Council Labour Group; MTUURC; and Liverpool City Council JSSC.[loc. cit.] Thus, together with other structures discussed in this subsection, the MTULMCC provided a means through which joint policies, activities, and mutual support could be discussed and agreed.

Like the JSSC, the MTULMCC was involved in the co-ordination of activities and policies among its affiliates. These included assisting in the organisation of: a rally and demonstration in Liverpool on 19.11.83; the 'Liverpool in Crisis' delegate conference 27.2.84; a meeting of activists 9.2.84; lobbies of City Council budget meetings; public and factory gate meetings, and a lobby of parliament 22.3.84.[MTULMCC 1983-85] Other MTULMCC initiatives involved the compilation, production, and distribution of leaflets and newsletters, and the organisation of meetings at which representatives from stewards committees, trade union branches, district committees, other trade union organisations, community groups, tenants associations and unemployed centres could be consulted.[loc. cit.]

Regular meetings also took place between councillors, full-time trade union officials and lay officials, to discuss the tactics, direction, and progress of the campaign for more resources. Such meetings were, however, outside the above
structures and included full-time officers from GMBATU, MATSA, NALGO, NUPE and the TGWU. Links therefore existed between the Labour Group and full-time trade union officials, and allowed differences in approach between lay officers and full-time officials to be aired. At one meeting, for example, the full-time GMBATU official announced that the policies presented to councillors were not necessarily official, because full-timers had not been involved in the decision making process. [Liverpool 1984-5, 28.2.84] A divide is also evident in NUPE, but there national pressure was exerted to encourage greater local involvement. [loc. cit.]

Similar meetings were also held between full-time trade union officers, the JSSC executive, the DLP and Officers of the Labour Group, and provide further evidence of the collaboration between Labour Party and trade unions. Such a meeting was held 1.4.84, for example, to discuss campaign strategy and direction after the City Council meeting of 29.3.84 failed to agree a budget. [Liverpool Labour Group, 28.3.84; Liverpool 1984-5, 1.4.84]

Finally, a 'Campaign Working Party' was established by the local authority as an additional means of co-ordinating the campaign for more resources. The terms of reference of this body indicate that it was designed to assist the local authority's Communication sub-committee in establishing and developing links with other local authorities and bodies who shared the City Council’s aims of retaining and expanding jobs and services. The Working Party’s terms of reference are similar to the activities undertaken by the MTULMCC and include: assisting the promotion of public, trade union, and political support for the policies of the council; co-ordination and development of an effective campaign to further the Council’s aims; prevention of redundancies in the council work-force, and privatisation of council services; improving services and creating jobs; and, securing greater resources for the city from the Government. [Liverpool City Council, undated(b)]

Representatives eligible to attend the working party included: councillors from the Communication, Performance Review, and Financial Control sub-committees, and from the Housing and Building, Education, and Social Services Committees; councillors from Merseyside County Council, Knowsley and Saint Helens councils; the executive of Liverpool JSSC; representatives of the trade union movement organising workers outside the City Council; representatives from local community based organisations; and, representatives from ‘umbrella’ organisations such as Merseyside Community Relations Council, the Liverpool Council of Voluntary Services and Merseyside Pensioners organisations. [loc. cit.] The body therefore provides another example of collaboration between trade unions and Labour Party, but this time in a broader context.
The first meeting of the working Party took place 9.1.84, and an undated draft resolution indicates the committees anticipated functions and the similarities to those undertaken by the JSSC and MTULMCC. The motion outlines a programme of action to be undertaken which included: public meetings⁹; council speakers to organisations represented on the working party; factory-gate meetings to encourage private sector involvement in the campaign; assisting in the organisation of demonstrations and lobbies; and, the development of links with service users through council departments, by the Council's Central Support Unit (CCSU), to promote services in ways which help to further the campaign. As part of an attempt to create a climate of public, trade union and political support for the Council's policies, the CCSU also liaised between the Council, voluntary organisations, community groups and the MTUURC, and arranged for speakers to attend meetings on the campaign. [Liverpool NALGO Bulletin 1983-84, 15.12.83]

As chapters Three and Four demonstrate broad based committees were essential features of labour movement campaigns to oppose and resist aspects of government policy and practice. Thus, similar structures are also evident in Liverpool's campaign for more resources; especially in the co-ordination of activities and policies. Consideration of these bodies demonstrates the similar practices adopted by the Liverpool labour movement and those elsewhere, and how, through the trade union-Labour Party relationship that emerged from local struggles, described earlier in the chapter, Liverpool practices differed. The JSSC, for example, developed in response to, and campaigned against redundancies, cuts, and privatisation; the same issues that engendered greater co-operation between Liverpool's local authority unions and Labour Party.

This relationship developed in response to local and national socio-economic developments and struggles, but the local aspects served to shape the outlook and practices of the bodies involved in the campaign for more resources. A resolution passed by the Merseyside in Crisis Organising Committee, for example, linked the predicaments of local authorities with factory closures, job losses, proposed abolition of the Metropolitan County councils, privatisation, cuts in the NHS, and the attack on public transport. [MTULMCC 1983-85] Similarly, the involvement of activists in the bodies considered, and the democratic practices identified, especially in relation to the activist controlled JSSC, are a product and reflection of the struggles for accountability within the local labour movement, and of the growth of activist structures in the trade union movement in general. In particular, the involvement of

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⁹ Parkinson records 40 public meetings taking place between April and June 1984 with an estimated attendance of 50,000.[1985: 42]
activists played an important part in the selection and practice of the tactics used to pursue the campaign and to encourage participation and support.

**Campaign Tactics**

Through the use of broad based committees in the organisation of its campaign for more resources, the Liverpool labour movement exhibited similarities and differences with campaigning activities undertaken elsewhere. Another area that exemplifies the convergence and divergence of campaigning activity involves the extent to which activists were involved in the organisation and prosecution of the Liverpool campaign. The previous sub-section, for example, identified the representation of activists on broad based committees through the JSSC; an activist led committee. The importance of activists for the conduct of the campaign and the similarities and differences between Liverpool and elsewhere can, however, be explored further in reference to the kind of tactics employed. There are three main activities where analogies can be drawn, and these form the focus of the following discussion: the convening of delegate conferences; the production and distribution of education and publicity; and the holding of lobbies and demonstrations. Other activities where similarities can be discerned, such as parliamentary intervention and the use of industrial action, are discussed as part of these three areas.

The practice of staging delegate conferences is associated with labour movement campaigning activity in Chapter Three, where opposition to, and resistance of, the Housing Finance Act 1972 and public expenditure cuts in the 1970s are considered. Similarly, Chapter Four identifies delegate conferences as part of labour movement campaigning activity to oppose and resist the Conservative government’s approach to local government in the early 1980s. Thus, the holding of delegate conferences, as part of the Liverpool campaign for more resources, demonstrates similarities between the structures and tactics adopted, but also differences on approach.

The 'Liverpool in Crisis' delegate conference, for example, took place on 27.2.84, was open to local authority workers from other areas, and five delegates invited from interested stewards committees.[MTULMCC 1983-85] In addition to its focus on trade unionists, the conference was called consider and develop the situation in Liverpool. This focus is clear from the aims of the conference which were to: discuss concrete proposals for support; explain the council’s position; and, conclude the first phase of the campaign, defined as consultation with shop stewards committees and trade union leaders.[loc. cit.] By virtue of the approach to stewards committees, the conference and the first stage of the campaign was aimed, essentially, at informing and mobilising activists.
More details are available regarding organisation, preparation and practice of the 'National Fight Back' conference, held 23.6.84.[Liverpool City Council, undated(a): 13] The conference was open to a broader spectrum than the 'Liverpool in Crisis' conference and included: trade union branches; stewards committees; Trades councils; Branch, Constituency and District Labour parties; Labour groups; LPYS; trade union youth sections; community groups; tenants associations; and, unemployed centres.[MTULMCC 1983-85] Invited speakers included: Labour MPs T Benn, E Heffer, J Maynard, and D Skinner; Labour Group leaders D Blunkett of Sheffield Council, and K Livingstone of the GLC; and, trade union leaders A Kitson from the TGWU, R Bickerstaffe from NUPE, and A Scargill from the NUM.[loc. cit.]

The conference agenda identified the format as opening speeches, followed by discussion groups: 'In Defence of Local Authorities and Metropolitan Counties' chaired by K Livingstone; 'Trade Unions, Community Groups, Tenants Associations and the Defence of Public Services' chaired by E Loyden Labour MP; 'Building the Campaign' chaired by E Heffer; and 'Closures, Redundancies and Organising the Unemployed' chaired by B Owens TGWU, Region 6.[loc. cit.] A statement submitted to the conference also linked: the Miners' struggle; the city council's campaign; the defence of local democracy; the defence of the NHS; and, the defence of trade union rights. Conference arrangements were organised by the Liverpool CCSU, but conference practice differed from the stated intention. In contrast to the decision making process evident at the 'Local Government in Crisis' Conference, described in Chapter Four, the workshops planned for Liverpool's 'National Fight Back' conference were cancelled, and the conference adopted the approach of a rally which left little room for meaningful discussion of tactics or issues.[Islington NALGO, 23.6.84]

Much of the publicity and education practices undertaken as part of the Liverpool campaign reflected the labour movement approach evident in the campaign against public expenditure cuts, described in Chapter Three. The production and distribution of leaflets, stickers, posters, and badges, and the compilation of a petition containing 20,000 signatures[Parkinson, 1985: 42], represents a significant part of this activity. Many of the leaflets produced served a combined purpose of explaining issues, and publicising demonstrations and other events. They were therefore intended to raise awareness among activists, trade union and Labour Party members, and the general public.

A MTULMCC leaflet, for example, promoted the 'Liverpool in Crisis' delegate conference 27.2.84, a half day stoppage on 28.2.84, linked the Liverpool campaign to a wider defence of local democracy, and called on the PLP, the Labour Party NEC, and the TUC to support to the Liverpool campaign.[MTULMCC 1983-85] The
demonstration and lobby of the Liverpool City Council budget meeting 29.3.84 were also promoted in a similar way. [loc. cit.] The local authority also produced a Campaign Bulletin and a civic newspaper entitled: 'Liverpool News'. [Liverpool City Council Bulletins] Both of these circulars publicised events and issues, and promoted the council's stance. Similarly, a document entitled: 'Rates, Services and Jobs: The Campaign in Liverpool' was produced by the council in 1983 and included: analyses of Liverpool's problems; a review of the Liverpool Labour Party's manifesto; and, a general description of the approach to the campaign in Liverpool. [Liverpool City Council, 1983]

Similar practices were undertaken within Liverpool NALGO, where activists produced and distributed various ad hoc circulars, and the regular 'NALGO Herald' news sheet, to publicise events and explain issues. As part of this process the Branch Campaign Committee, consisting of delegates from departmental stewards committees, produced a regular bulletin entitled: 'Our City Our Fight' to explain issues, provide a running report on developments, and catalogue support from elsewhere. [Liverpool NALGO Campaign Committee 1983-85] The production of reports for consideration by general meetings, identified in earlier sub-sections, was also continued and developed as part of the campaign. Thus, reports were produced to inform activists and the general membership, and for broader circulation, such as: 'The Liverpool Crisis - an explanation for other NALGO Branches'. [Liverpool NALGO, undated] Whereas the local authority's initiatives were produced through the CCSU, much of the NALGO publicity was produced by activists, and distributed to members through the stewards system. These channels of communication and the holding of general meetings were an important aspect of informing the broader membership and securing their support for the campaign.

Activists also played a significant role in obtaining support from, and explaining ideas to other local authority workers, by visiting other local authorities and addressing meetings. [MTULMCC 1983-85] Liverpool NALGO, for example, sent speakers to: Norfolk Branch [Norfolk NALGO, April 1984]; North East District Council, who also ordered publicity from Liverpool [North East NALGO, undated]; and, to the South West District Delegate meeting 11.5.84. [South West NALGO, 14.3.84] This initiative formed part of a reciprocal process, with speakers addressing Liverpool NALGO from: Merseyside County Branch of NALGO [Liverpool NALGO BEC 1979-1987, 26.10.83]; and, Hackney NALGO [Liverpool NALGO BEC 1979-1987, 23.2.84] Similarly, Glasgow District Branch of NALGO requested speakers from Liverpool, Lothian, and Sheffield, to address a meeting in February 1984. [Glasgow NALGO, February 1984]
Councillors also undertook similar activities, visiting local authorities to address meetings and promote Liverpool's case [Liverpool City Council, op. cit: 12], and by addressing Liverpool NALGO's BEC. Speakers addressing the Liverpool NALGO BEC on the campaign for more resources, included D Hatton Deputy Leader of the Liverpool Labour Group, and T Byrne Chair of Finance [Liverpool NALGO BEC 1979-1987, 26.10.83] Their attendance at the BEC provides a further example of the practices employed to disseminate information to activists, and indicates the working relationship between NALGO and the Liverpool Labour Group.

Perhaps the most innovative role played by activists as part of the publicity and education drive involved the Campaign Committee organising and conducting the 'Jobs, Services and Rates: NALGO Road Show' which leafleted various parts of the city in the week prior to the local elections in 1984 [Liverpool NALGO Bulletin 1983-84, 18.4.84] The 1984 local elections formed a focus for publicity, with advertisements placed in the local media asking people to vote for 'Jobs and Services'. Similarly, a circular to NALGO members stressed that NALGO was independent from the Labour Party, but both supported the same issues in the May elections [loc. cit.] Finally, Liverpool NALGO also wrote, on 29.3.84, to dissenting Labour councillors enquiring after their positions on cuts and redundancies [Liverpool NALGO, 29.3.84]

An important element of Liverpool NALGO's campaign was the education and mobilisation of members. NALGO activists, for example, conducted a programme of workplace meetings, attended by an estimated 4000 members, and campaign courses attended by 180 shop stewards [Liverpool NALGO Bulletin 1983-84, 5.2.84] In addition to the holding of general meetings, the Branch also held several all steward meetings to discuss issues and events. On 12.4.84, for example, an all stewards meeting was held to discuss the situation after the Council failed to set a rate [Liverpool NALGO BEC 1979-1987, 9.4.84; Liverpool NALGO Bulletin 1983-84, 18.4.84], and on 10.7.84 a similar meeting was convened to receive a report back from the discussions that had been held with the Government [Liverpool NALGO Bulletin 1983-84, 6.7.84] On a larger scale the Labour Group also held meetings with stewards from all the unions at various stages, the first being held in September 1983 [Liverpool City Council, 1983: 10] These meetings also formed part of the decision making process, and their decisions taken into account when the DLP decided on its tactics [Byrne, 1994]

10 An important factor indicating relations between trade unions and Labour group, and affecting the attendance of such meetings, especially those held with the membership, was that they were allowed with pay. As has been noted previously, however, it would be too simplistic to assume that such provisions influenced the decisions taken at those meetings.
Finally, campaigning activity of the labour movement in Liverpool, in similar fashion to elsewhere, involved the use of demonstrations and lobbies. In particular, such activities involved demonstrations that culminated in lobbies of council meetings. Examples of earlier activities are provided in preceding sections of the chapter, but as part of the campaign for more resources one day strikes and lobbies of Council budget meetings were staged on 29.3.84, 25.4.84, and 11.7.84. A lobby of Parliament also took place 22.2.84, as part of a national initiative described in the following chapter, and Liverpool NALGO representatives met J Straw and C Clarke; N Kinnock's personal assistant.[Liverpool NALGO BEC 1979-1987, 23.2.84]

The tactics identified above are analogous to those described in previous and subsequent chapters. In particular, the use of publicity and education, lobbies, demonstrations, and one day stoppages are areas of common ground. The issues raised and linked by the campaigning activity in Liverpool, the central role played by activists, and the close working relationship between Labour Group and local authority trade unions were, however, a reflection of the historical development of the local labour movement. In Liverpool, for example, the issues of casualism, unemployment, and the struggle for activist control over, or at least involvement in decision making processes were dominant features of recent labour movement history and development. They therefore had a significant impact on the formulation of the policies and practice of the campaign, and contributed to its ability to inform and mobilise trade union and party members, as well as broader sections of the public.

**National Involvement**

The previous sub-sections identify the role of activists, and developing trade union-Labour Party relations, as factors influencing the approach to campaigning in Liverpool. This interpretation is supported here, by exploring the involvement of national labour movement figures in the Liverpool campaign for more resources. Consideration of national involvement is worthwhile because it: affords a different perspective through which to view the Liverpool campaign; facilitates the identification and exploration of the organisational and practical strengths of the Liverpool campaign; demonstrates differing local and national goals; exhibits inconsistency in the national approach to local autonomy and democratic practice; and, contributes to the on-going validation of the categories.

The involvement of national figures in the Liverpool campaign is identified and explored here in reference to meetings between representatives of the PLP, trade unions organising in Liverpool City Council, and the Liverpool Labour Group. The first of these meetings were held in March 1984, and involved J Straw and J Cunningham for the PLP, and Assistant General Secretaries and National officers
from GMBATU, NALGO, NUPE, the NUT, and the TGWU. [Jinkinson, 3.4.84; Parkinson, 1985] Following the Liverpool Labour Party's success in the local elections of May 1984, meetings were also held between representatives from the Liverpool Labour Group, the PLP, and officials of GMBATU, NALGO, NUPE and the NUT. One such meeting, was undertaken in preparation for a meeting with P Jenkin, Secretary of state for the Environment and his departmental officials, and this is considered here. [Sonnet, 31.5.84]

National labour movement figures are characterised in the previous chapter as not offering a lead to instances of overt opposition and resistance between 1979 and 1984. Similarly, the Chapter also notes that this stance was in keeping with LPAC decisions, and that national Party and PLP figures, including Kinnock and Hattersley, argued that local parties could not be instructed to participate in a national campaign because it was against the Labour Party's advocacy of local autonomy. This respect for local autonomy took a curious form, however, in response to events unfolding in Liverpool.

In March 1984, for example, the Labour Party, through N Kinnock's office, approached the General Secretaries of five unions involved in Liverpool MDC. [Jinkinson, op. cit.] As a consequence of this approach, a meeting took place between J Straw and J Cunningham for PLP, and the Assistant General Secretaries of the unions approached. The meeting was attended for NALGO by D Prentis, Assistant General Secretary (Service Conditions), who reported that Cunningham and Straw were seeking trade union support for an attempt to restrain the leadership of Liverpool Labour Group. [loc. cit.] To this end: 'representatives of the NUT, NUPE, and TGWU agreed with John Cunningham that they should seek a meeting with leading members of the Labour Group....to indicate that the Labour Movement would not support illegality nor would it be willing to bale anybody out if things went wrong'. [loc. cit.] There is no evidence of a mandate for the position adopted by the PLP, the NUT, NUPE and TGWU, but both Prentis for NALGO and J Edmonds for GMBATU stated that they would not support such a proposal because their members in Liverpool supported the policies adopted by the Council. They also argued that neither Cunningham nor Straw appreciated the issues involved or strength of feeling of those aroused by the problems in Liverpool. [loc. cit.]¹¹

This meeting is important because it indicates that, in contrast to NUPE, the NUT, and the TGWU, the level of support for the campaign within NALGO and GMBATU was such that the national leadership of each union felt obliged to support the local

¹¹ This intervention by the PLP also serves to corroborate the assertion, made in the previous chapter, that the Labour party had the means to discipline and coerce local parties if it so desired, but that such action was taken against those local parties, or sections of parties that adopted a combative form of opposition and resistance.
position. The GMBATU and NALGO positions are also an endorsement of the local
democratic practice, described previously in relation to NALGO, which secured
support among the general membership for positions adopted by activists. Finally,
the meeting exposes the contradiction in the Labour Party’s defence of local
autonomy when it meant not instructing local Labour groups to oppose and resist
central government policy, and the preparedness of the PLP to overturn agreed
policies of opposition and resistance in Liverpool.

In view of the position adopted by NALGO and GMBATU, a fact finding meeting
was sought with leaders of the Labour Group to explore possible alternatives in
relation to the impending budget. Prentis and A Jinkinson, NALGO Assistant
General Secretary, attended the subsequent meeting with councillors, and described
the trade union presence as 'conciliatory'.[loc. cit.] At the meeting the NALGO
representatives again stressed that NALGO's Liverpool Branch were strongly in
support of the Council's policy not to cut either jobs or services. In contrast, however,
the PLP representatives proposed compliance with national Labour Party policy, and
then minimisation of central government measures through a 60% rates increase, and
reductions in service provision.[Parkinson, op. cit: 53-4] These opposing positions
again raise the question of local autonomy, and the right of local parties to vary policy
based on local democratic practice.

In addition to the meetings held with the trade unions, there had been regular
contact between the Liverpool labour movement and the PLP. Labour MPs
representing Liverpool constituencies had, for example, been involved in arranging
meetings between local and national officials.[Byrne, 1994; Liverpool 1984-5, 1.4.84]
As was noted earlier, representatives from Liverpool NALGO Branch arranged to
meet C Clarke, Personal Assistant to N Kinnock, and J Straw MP as part of the lobby
of parliament on 22.2.84.[Liverpool NALGO Campaign Committee 1983-85, 25.1.84]
In the wake of the 1984 local election, however, the PLP approach changed from
dissuader, to facilitator and intermediary.

Thus, J Cunningham arranged for a meeting between representatives of Liverpool
Labour Group, himself and Straw for the PLP, representatives from GMBATU,
NALGO, NUPE, and the NUT, and the Secretary of State for the Environment and his
officials.[Sonnet, op. cit; Liverpool City Council, undated(a): 2] The meeting took
place 17.5.84, and identified room for manoeuvre on both sides; the possibility of
which was established through informal talks between Cunningham and Jenkin, and a
preparatory meeting between labour movement representatives, prior to the meeting of
17.5.84.[loc. cit.]

The local mandate provided by the local election in May 1984, where the
Liverpool Labour Party increased its majority by seven, and secured 46% of the vote
in a turn-out of 51%[Parkinson, op. cit: 59-60], appears to have been an important factor in the PLP's change of tack; partly because the result increased the resolve of the local labour movement. Up to that point the leadership of the PLP had, following the general Election defeat in 1983, exhibited a wariness of 'anything that smacked of radical or revolutionary politics'.[Blunkett, 1994] The PLP attitude to Liverpool's refusal to set a rate is also consistent with it's opposition to illegality, described in Chapter Three in reference to Clay Cross; although as Chapter Seven establishes, Liverpool's campaign tactic did not involve a clear point of illegality.

Furthermore, the PLP stance was restated at the Local Government Conference in Nottingham February 1984, by J Cunningham, when he urged local authorities to stay within the law, and to minimise the impact of government policies.[Parkinson, op. cit: 45] Finally, the overlap between Liverpool's campaign in 1984 and preparations for the campaign against rate-capping was also used as an argument by PLP leaders for Liverpool to hold back.[Parkinson, ibid: 44] The PLP therefore attempted to dissuade the Liverpool Labour Group from following its chosen course of action, and that option having failed, then attempted to ensure that a negotiated settlement was reached.

That the PLP was unable to achieve its primary goal, and the Liverpool campaign achieve a modicum of success, was due in part to the specific campaign characteristics exhibited in Liverpool. As has been recorded, the democratic practice within NALGO played a part in securing membership support for the campaign, and this translated into national support which obstructed PLP attempts to undermine the campaign. Furthermore, the strength of local campaign structures and involvement of activists were factors in: the mobilisation of labour movement members, through rallies, demonstrations and mass meetings; the election victory in 1984, through leafleting activities like the 'NALGO Road Show', and the placing of adverts in the local media as part of the run up to the election; and, ultimately, the change in PLP tactics.

This Chapter explored, in national and local contexts, and in reference to socio-economic and labour movement developments, the similarities and differences evident in labour movement campaigning activity practised in Liverpool and elsewhere in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The analysis undertaken therefore identifies the shared experiences of economic decline, changes in the composition and structures of labour movement organisations, and aspects of these processes that were peculiar to Liverpool and important for the conduct of it's campaign for more resources between November 1983 and July 1984. As part of this process, relations between local authority trade unions and the Liverpool Labour Party, and the role of activists in
mobilising labour movement members and the wider electorate, are identified as central factors in the Liverpool campaign for more resources.\textsuperscript{12}

By considering labour movement experiences, practices, and structures, in previous chapters and in reference to Liverpool, before and during the said campaign, the analysis contributes to the interrogation and validation of categories. Categories are interrogated and validated in reference to Liverpool through consideration of the development of activism, structures, and Labour Party-trade union relations, and by acknowledging the influence of national developments, such as economic decline, the fluctuations in Labour Party membership, and the growth of shop stewards systems. Examination of the campaign to oppose and resist the proposed privatisation of cleansing services, for example, provides an analogy between the practice of defending services in Liverpool and those discussed in Chapter Four.

Of particular significance here is the democratic practice evident in the Liverpool labour movement. Through struggles to make the Labour Group accountable to the DLP, to the validation and approval of activist decisions at general and mass meetings, and the involvement of activists in securing the election victory of 1984, the campaign for more resources was able to overcome pressure from within the labour movement, as well as from central government. By considering these developments as part of historical and societal processes, therefore, the chapter forms an important part of the historical context, within which the categories, principles, and practices employed during the labour movement campaigns against rate capping can be understood, validated, and interrogated.

\textsuperscript{12} The extent to which local chauvinism played a part in mobilising activists, labour movement members, or electors is not explored as part of this thesis. Admittedly, the campaign for more resources played on the unfair treatment of the meta-theoretical category of Liverpool, but the same approach was open to the rate capped authorities. Reasons why they were unable to mobilise support in a similar fashion to Liverpool are therefore considered in subsequent chapters by examining labour movement practice.
CHAPTER SIX

RATE CAPPING AND THE CAMPAIGN OF OPPOSITION

The labour movement campaigns against rate capping represent a culmination and transition of opposition and resistance to the Conservative's approach to local government in the early 1980s. During the campaigns, labour movement activity was transformed from fragmented local initiatives, described in chapters Four and Five, into a co-ordinated and focused response at national and local levels. This development was due, in part, to the implications of rate capping, the primary purpose of which was to allow central government to limit taxation levels raised by an individual authority, but was also influenced by the experiences gained as part of the struggles outlined in previous chapters. Similarly, the severity of the Government's measures indicates the failure of previous attempts to control the spending and activity of particular Labour groups, while the drastic nature of the labour movement response was fuelled by exhaustion of previous schemes to counter Government policy and practice. This and the following chapter demonstrate that the issue of rate capping constituted a decisive stage in the struggle between Labour local authorities and central government.

The threat of rate capping had accompanied earlier attempts to control the spending and activity of local authorities [NALGO, 1981: 3], however, and was evidenced in the Local Government and Planning (Scotland) Act 1982. [NALGO, 1984a; Stoker, 1988] The labour movement response to capping was therefore developed, at theoretical and practical levels, alongside the struggles described in chapters Four and Five. In particular, the campaign against capping in England and Wales consisted of two elements: opposing the Rates Bill and Act prior to and during implementation; and, resisting the provisions of the Act. Opposition to the conceptual principles and practicalities of rate capping are therefore considered in this chapter, and resistance to the Rates Act in Chapter Seven.
In keeping with the examples of labour movement opposition and resistance, discussed in earlier chapters, the campaign against rate capping espoused the same aims of defending local government services, jobs, and local democracy. The validation of these categories is therefore developed here by examining labour movement opposition to the Rates Bill and Act in the historical context established by preceding chapters, and by analysing, in reference to earlier campaigns, the organisation, tactics and ideas used to oppose it. As part of this practically reflexive approach, the successes and failures of the campaign are explored through the immanent process of interrogating, in reference to each other, campaign practice and the claims of the conceptual principles espoused.

To achieve these analytical objectives, the chapter is divided into two sections entitled: Legislation and Background; and Labour Movement Opposition. The first section introduces and discusses the conceptual principles informing the Government's position, and those of the labour movement. An evaluation of the aims espoused by those who were, to varying degrees, involved in the labour movement campaign of opposition, completes the section. The second section develops the conclusions of its predecessor by examining, in reference to espoused principles, aims, and previous practice, the structures and tactics employed to oppose the provisions of the Rates Bill and Act. An evaluation of the campaign's performance in reference to these criteria concludes the section.

LEGISLATION AND BACKGROUND

For the conceptual principles informing rate capping, and opposition to it, to be subjected to rigorous interrogation, they should be explored in the context of the Conservative governments' approach to local government since 1979, and in reference to the developments considered in preceding chapters. In other words, the Rates Bill, subsequent Act, and labour movement campaign to oppose them should be evaluated within an historical context that: identifies the post-war expansion and contraction of local government service provision, employment, and local democracy; explores concomitant developments within the labour movement; and, evaluates and explains both within a societal framework. As the context and framework are established by preceding chapters, the task here is to begin analysis of the labour movement campaign of opposition by identifying and exploring the conceptual principles that informed arguments about rate capping.

The three sub-sections into which this section is divided analyse: the Conservative Justification of rate capping; the Labour Movement Interpretation of it; and, the Campaign Aims of those mounting opposition. Conservative Justification, for example, considers the Conservative's explanation of the provisions of the Rates Bill
and Act, while the following sub-section, juxtaposes the labour movement's understanding. Taken as a whole, therefore, the sub-sections assess and explain the arguments for and against the Bill, in reference to previous and contemporaneous practice in the area of local government legislation and finance. A final sub-section analyses, in reference to the preceding sub-sections, the aims espoused by those involved in the labour movement campaigns.¹

Conservative Justification

Ostensibly, Boddy[1984b] notes, the Government's reasons for imposing rates limitation are outlined in the Rates White Paper published in August 1983, but their practice in this area should also be understood in terms of Conservative antipathy toward the rating system as taxation without business representation. In general terms, the White Paper argued that local government was spending more than 'the country' could afford; a problem apparently aggravated by a small number of authorities.[Boddy, ibid: 226] This argument is also restated in the White Paper as: 'the economic regeneration of the country cannot be secured if the cost of local government is too great for the private sector to carry.'[Sheffield Information Pack, undated] The term 'country' is employed as a euphemism for business, as is indicated by the White Paper's assertion that local rates constituted a heavy burden on business and commerce, and that business, with no voting power, exerted only a limited influence on local rating decisions. Thus, the effect of high business rates on industrial and commercial costs was considered to have major consequences for competitiveness and jobs extending beyond the locality.[loc. cit.]

These assertions are similar to the 'overload thesis' and the justification of cuts in public expenditure, referred to in Chapter Three, but take no account of the increase in central government expenditure. As Chapter Four notes, central expenditure rose between 1979-80 and 1982-83, due to: increased transfer payments to finance mass unemployment; increased pension provision demanded by improved rates of longevity; and, increased defence spending.[Caulcott, 1983; Goldsmith, 1985; Howells, 1982] The Conservative's use of the term 'country' as a meta-theoretical validation of its approach to local government, therefore served to obscure the reality that, as Chapter Four records, local government accounted for a fraction of the PSBR, in comparison to central government, and public corporations.

The 'Politics Today' bulletin 13.2.84, repeats the lamentation that those who pay non-domestic rates 'have no direct influence on councils'[Conservative Central Office 1983-86, 13.2.84: 20], and justifies rate limitation in reference to the British Chamber

¹ Because opposition to the principles of rate capping continued after the Rates Act became statute, and accompanied the resistance of that legislation, references are made to the Bill and Act interchangeably, but each usage reflects the date of documentation referred to.
of Commerce's unsubstantiated claim that rates stifle growth, cost jobs, and damage industry. [ibid: 21] Paradoxically, however, rate limitation was also propounded as a means of bringing the overall level of public spending in line with public expenditure plans [Conservative Central Office 1983-86, ibid: 24]; even though central grants and not local rates form part of the PSBR calculation. Arguments, explored in Chapter Four, which question the macro-economic case for the control of local expenditure are relevant again, and demonstrate the Conservative's separation of theory and practice in an attempt to justify rate capping. As Chapter Four demonstrated, local government spending as a proportion of PSBR was not out of control by 1984 [Boddy, 1984b; Duncan and Goodwin, 1988], and selective rate capping was estimated to reduce taxation by only 0.5%. [Duncan and Goodwin, ibid: 180]

Insight into Conservative thinking on issues of democracy is also available from Blunkett and Jackson's report of a parliamentary speech, made 30.7.84 by C Franks, Conservative MP for Barrow in Furness, and K Baker's contribution to The Times 14.11.84 [Blunkett and Jackson, 1987: 166]. The latter, for example, justified rate limitation on the basis that the non-domestic rate sector was without a vote, and contributing half of the rates raised by local authorities. Both men also sought to question the legitimacy of local mandates on the basis that some rate-payers received rebates. [Blunkett and Jackson, ibid: 167] This amounts to a curious version of the no taxation without representation tenet, and questions the theoretical equivalence of one person one vote implied by universal suffrage.  

Although the Government was not confident enough to re-introduce the 'business vote', the consequences of the thinking outlined above are evident in the Rates Bill. Thus, the Bill allowed the Government to limit the level of domestic and non-domestic rates levied by an individual local authority, and by local government in general [Duncan and Goodwin, op. cit; NALGO, 1984a; Stoker, op. cit.] Similarly, local authorities were required to consult representatives of industrial and commercial rate-payers, over an authority's expenditure and finance plans. [Duncan and Goodwin, op. cit; Gyford, 1985] Authorities were allowed to appeal against their rate limit, however, but at the risk of having their spending curbed after a central inspection of local finances.

Ultimately, the imposition of rate limits formed part of a general attempt to centralise power and control, by removing the right of local communities to decide their own levels of service provision and taxation. [Boddy and Fudge, 1984: 16]

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2 See Appendix One for an explanation of 'theoretical equivalence'.

3 In addition to the imposition of rate limitation, the Act was accompanied by a new system of targets and penalties designed to restrict local expenditure; these are discussed as part of the following sub-section.

4 These measures included: the London Regional Transport Bill; the Paving Bill for the abolition of Metropolitan County Council elections prior to the abolition of those authorities; and, the Education
Following the failure of earlier attempts to control the spending and activity of individual local authorities, the Rates Bill constituted a more direct threat to the elements of autonomy and local democracy identified and explored in earlier chapters, and therefore exceeded the impact of the devices described in Chapter Four. Thus, although the provisions of the Rates Bill were presented as the culmination of a process that began with the attempts to reduce public expenditure in the 1970s, and justified in terms of macro-economic rhetoric, the immediate objective was central control of local decision making.

In addition to evaluation undertaken in labour movement circles, the proposals and their justification were received with caution in other quarters. Thus, in spite of their Conservative domination, both the Association of County Councils and the Association of District Councils expressed opposition. [Boddy, 1984b; Duncan and Goodwin, op. cit.] Back-bench Conservative MPs also expressed doubts about the proposed legislation. [Blunkett and Jackson, op. cit: 159] Significantly, however, the doubts expressed by Conservatives related to constitutional implications for local democracy and accountability, as opposed to jobs, service provision, and the effect of the legislation on local communities. Understood in this light, therefore, PLP calls for a broad campaign, and consensus of opposition [TUCLGC, 1983], risked accepting the aims of the lowest common denominator as the ultimate aims of opposition.

Labour Movement Interpretation

Labour movement interpretations of the Rates Bill display two important contextual characteristics. First of all, the implications of the Bill are considered against a background of previous attempts to control local authority spending and, secondly, a link is identified between the provisions of the Act and other contemporary legislative measures. These interpretations also indicate how and why, from a labour movement perspective, the Conservative approach to local government from 1979 was detrimental to local government services, jobs, and local democracy. Significantly, however, the inclusion of jobs and services, as categories affected by the provisions of the Bill, differentiates labour movement opposition from that within the Conservative Party. Consideration of these areas is therefore undertaken here to: provide an alternative understanding of the Government's general approach to local government in the early 1980s; identify and explore the conceptual principles informing the labour movement campaigns to oppose the Rates Bill; and, develop the validation of categories.
In keeping with Conservative criticism, labour movement analyses depict the provisions of the Rates Bill as altering the constitutional position of local government, and threatening the practice of local democracy. The control of local expenditure via the selective and general rate capping schemes is, for example, considered to threaten local democracy. In other words, by imposing a limit on the amount of rates a local authority could raise, the Government was considered to have removed the right of authorities to set their own tax levels, and thereby to vary levels and standards of service provision, in accordance with mandates provided by local elections.\[NALGO, 1984a: 6\] The requirement for local authorities to consult with representatives of local business and commerce was also hailed as: undemocratic; constituting a business veto; presaging the end of the principle of one person one vote; and, signalling the re-introduction of property qualifications.\[NALGO, ibid: 7\]

The perceived increase in central control over local decision making is also presented as one stage in a continuing process of removing responsibility for financial and policy decision decisions from local authorities. The Rates Bill was therefore viewed as a means of neutralising the response of local authorities to the changes to the local government finance system since 1979. As was described in Chapter Four, for example, local authorities raised rates in response to: reductions in the level of RSG; changes in the allocation and distribution of grant; and, the imposition of targets and penalties affecting local expenditure.\[ALA/AMA, undated; NALGO, 1984a; TUC, 1984\]\footnote{The value attached to the principle of one person one vote fails to acknowledge the abstract nature of the equality afforded. Hence, NALGO argued that in similar fashion to the theoretical independence of judicial, legislative, and executive functions of the state apparatus, the independence of local government formed an integral part of the balance between centre and locality.\[1984a: 7\] The stance adopted therefore seeks to defend the status quo and accepts the prevailing constitutional balance, and as such, signals a reactive as opposed to pro-active form of campaigning.}

‘Creative accountancy’ measures were also adopted as a means of rendering ineffective the imposition of targets and penalties. Thus, given the level and success of resisting earlier measures, the limitation of an individual authority’s rate levels under the selective scheme, was considered to be aimed at those who had consistently defied the government.\[NALGO, 1984a: 6\]

The provisions of the Rates Act were accompanied by a new system of targets and penalties for non-capped authorities, and by other items of legislation that were perceived as threatening local democracy, jobs, and services. Consideration of these additional measures explains their relation to rate capping, and illustrates the severity of its impact in the relation to the categories identified. Ultimately, however, the initiatives were viewed as contributing to central government’s attempt to control the spending and practice of individual local authorities.

\footnote{The Association of London Authorities(ALA) and the AMA are included here given their domination by Labour groups, and their participation in the LGCU.}
The increasing severity of the Government's approach to local authority spending and activity is indicated by the new targets and penalties which involved deductions of: 7p for every pound of the first one percent spent over target; 8p for the second; and, 9p for each successive percentage point of overspend.[TUC, 1984: 4] The severity of these penalties can be gauged by comparing them to the levels described in Chapter Four, and by referring to Merseyside County Council where the maximum capped precept increase of 18p would incur 16p in penalties.[Coombes, 1985: 5]. Thus, the Rates Act and new penalties presented local authorities with a choice between rate increases and future capping, or cuts in jobs and services.[LGCU, undated: 4] In addition, 15 of the 18 authorities identified for capping, had their 1985-6 targets frozen at 1984-5 levels, and 13 were given a rate limit lower than the level raised in 1984-5. This move allowed no consideration of inflation or increased labour costs[TUC, 1984: 4], amounts to a cut in real terms, and illustrates the control over local spending available to the centre under the Rates Act.

Although the impact of such measures on services and job losses are difficult to quantify, indications are available.⁷ The Government, for example, expected 'fringe expenditure' to be reduced, such as: advertising; spending on police monitoring committees in non-police authorities; and, in the case of Sheffield, using private sector funding for housing.[LGCU, undated: 3] Similarly, a Liberal amendment to a parliamentary motion submitted by Labour MPs in March 1985, argued that it was possible for capped local authorities to adopt budgets that preserved all statutory and essential services and jobs.[Parliamentary Notices, 6813 and 6879] In other words, only the bare minimum could be retained.

In contrast, a joint statement issued by NALGO, NUPE, TGWU, GMBATU, FBU, NUT, and NATFHE, estimated that the measures would cost 75,000 jobs, and cuts in services for the old, young, sick, and disabled.[LGCU, undated: 4] Similarly, the TUC identified roads, Fire Brigades, schools, and social services in its list of services threatened by the provisions of the Rates Act.[1984b: 1] Essentially, labour movement opposition, and the case for maintaining service and staffing levels, was based on the effect of such actions had on communities already blighted by economic decline.[NALGO, 1984a; TUC, 1984] On Merseyside, for example, compliance with the County Council's cap was estimated to require: £23m worth of cuts; an increase in public transport fares; a redundancy programme; and, an overall reduction in services of 10%.[Coombes, op. cit: 6]

⁷ The difficulties are identified and discussed in chapters Three and Four, but can be summarised as: the variety of organisations affected by the measures; the different approaches adopted therein; and, the surreptitious nature of cuts such as not filling vacancies or using inferior products, as opposed to wholesale redundancies or complete withdrawal of services.
Contemporary items of legislation were also considered to undermine local accountability and democracy, and to reduce service provision. The London Regional Transport Bill, for example, transferred control of London Transport to central government, and thereby removed local control over service provision under the guise of creating a regional transport system. [NALGO, 1984a: 7] Similarly, the Education(Grants and Awards) Bill increased central influence and therefore control of local education policy, by withholding 0.5% of the annual RSG education settlement, and requiring local authorities to compete for allocation according to central priorities. [NALGO, ibid: 8] Perhaps inevitably, the proposed abolition of the Metropolitan County councils was considered to constitute an overt attack on local democracy, jobs, and services. Thus, the creation of 21 boards, three new quangos, and up to 100 joint local authority bodies to replace the directly elected Metropolitan County councils was cited as an attack on accountability and democracy. [loc. cit.]

Labour movement opposition to abolition was also based on other factors, including: the removal from local democratic control of strategic services, such as fire, police, and public transport; the increased likelihood of waste disposal and transport services being privatised; the undermining of co-ordinated strategic planning; an estimated loss of 9,000 jobs with minimal redundancy compensation; and, the practice of ministers appointing to joint boards and quangos, people who were sympathetic to the Government’s general objectives, and the consequent implications for the levels and standards of service provision, and increased central control. [loc. cit.]

The importance attached by the labour movement to local accountability and democracy, stems from a desire to exercise de facto rights to vary levels of taxation and service provision. In practice, for example, areas affected by economic decline, social deprivation, and urban decay, such as those identified in Chapter One, increased rates to mitigate the effects of Conservative policy. As Chapter Four records, however, the labour movement moved away from increasing the local domestic tax burden for those who could afford it least, to ‘creative accountancy’. The labour movement case for local democracy was couched in the language of community [Cochrane, 1985: 55], however, and while it contrasts with the Conservative Party’s advocacy for local business, both displayed an antipathy toward increasing local taxes. The provisions accompanying rate limitation were therefore indicative of the Conservative’s desire to control local spending, policy, and practice.

Finally, the financial logic of the Act was called into question, and the introduction of capping held to be counter-productive. The imposition of a cap, for example,

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8 The provisions of the Bill are also an example of how services are removed from the local electoral sphere. This matches the views of Dearlove[1979] and Saunders[1984], discussed in Chapter One, and should be understood in the context of the GLC’s transport policy of the early 1980s.
removed a particular authority from the system of targets and penalties. Thus, by freezing 13 of the capped authorities' targets at 1984-5 levels, and preventing them from increasing rates to fund spending, the amount of grant paid to those authorities could increase due to the removal of previous penalties. [Blunkett and Jackson, 1987: 158] Furthermore, studies by the Audit Commission and Cambridge University contradicted the Government's case for targets, penalties, and rate limits; particularly in terms of the impact of rates on local business. [ALA/AMA, op. cit; TUC 1960 - 1987, 1985] Given these anomalies, and the arguments recounted earlier, the labour movement agreed to oppose the Act. There was, however, little unanimity as to how such opposition should be expressed, and what it could and should achieve.

**Campaign Aims**

Preceding chapters validated the categories of local democracy, jobs, and services, by exploring the post-war expansion of local government, and labour movement identification of, and response to, measures that were considered to threaten one or all of these categories. Thus, the exploration of earlier, examples of labour movement opposition and resistance identified and explored aims, conceptual principles, and practices associated with the expansion and defence of local democracy, jobs, and services. These areas are also evident in the campaign against rate capping, but the focus and co-ordination of this campaign required a new approach. This sub-section therefore concentrates on the campaign against rate capping, but also draws analogies with earlier examples.

The aims proclaimed by those sections of the labour movement opposing the principles and implementation of the Rates Act, its theory and practice, operated at interdependent levels. First of all, the defence of local democracy, jobs, and services by countering and reversing the Rates Bill, as part of an on-going attack on local government, can be identified as ultimate aims. On interconnected and reciprocal levels, the campaign also involved aims of organisation, participation, and mobilisation through which the campaign could be waged and tactics practised. These intermediate aims were no less important than their ultimate counterparts, as they constituted the foundation upon which the success or failure of the ultimate aims depended. The identification and exploration of the interrelation between the two is therefore an essential element of the discussion undertaken in this chapter.

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9 The terms 'intermediate' and 'ultimate' are used in preference to 'means' and 'ends' because the former facilitate an understanding that recognises the internal relation between campaign structures and ultimate aims. In other words, while the structure through which the campaigns were conducted were an end in themselves, they were also essential to the operation of the campaign and therefore the realisation of the ultimate goals; neither automatically excluded the realisation of the other.
Within the span of labour movement involvement, almost as many agendas can be identified as individuals and organisations participating. These ranged from: Ted Knight’s proclamation that: 'They can't fight us and the Miners. We can bring down Thatcher and then anything can happen'[Livingstone, 1987: 315]; through, uncapped Liverpool’s participation in the campaign, as a means of securing more resources; to, the set of consistent aims that were elaborated at various meetings and conferences as part of the development and practice of the campaign. As a consequence of these variations, the conclusion has been drawn that the campaign lacked a clear understanding of what would constitute 'victory'[Blunkett and Jackson, 1987: 171], but a clear set of ultimate aims are evident in the records available; the realisation of which would have constituted a distinct victory.

The clearest exposition of ultimate campaign aims was made by representatives of local authorities and trade unions, under the auspices of the LGCU, at a meeting with Patrick Jenkin, Secretary of State for the Environment and his departmental officials, on 4.2.85. A document presented to the Minister at this meeting listed the following demands: the abandonment of targets and penalties for 1985-6; the publication of financial assumptions upon which maximum rate level calculations were based; disclosure of the anticipated impact of financial limits on services, clients, and jobs; abandonment of the Rates Act; that a commission of enquiry be established to resolve the financing of local government; the restoration of grant levels to those inherited by the Conservative Government in 1979; and, abandonment of the timetable for implementing the Rates Act.[LGCU, 1985a]

These demands are consistent with the decision of the LGCU's strategy conference 13.11.84 that the campaign should seek: withdrawal of powers, provided under the Rates Act, to enforce cuts in local government spending; abolish the system of targets and penalties; and, restore RSG to 1979 levels.[NALGO, 1984b: 3]10 Similarly, much the same demands were made in a joint approach to the Secretary of State for the Environment by the ALA and AMA.[AMA/ALA, undated]11

Common themes are also evident between the ultimate aims identified here, and opposition mounted against the effects of earlier measures. In particular, neutralisation or defeat of the Rates Act, protecting public services, counteracting

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10 Similar aims are evident in the debate and amendment, at the local level, of motions for NALGO's annual conference. Liverpool NALGO, for example, considered motions and amendments which identified the aims of the anti-rate capping campaign as: making the Rates Act inoperative; removing targets and penalties; returning RSG to, at least, 1979 levels; and, allowing adequate levels of capital spending for housing and infrastructure.[Liverpool NALGO BEC 1979-1987, 27.3.85] The ultimate aims identified were therefore supported at the local, and therefore activist level.

11 The ALA/AMA also made requests for what they considered to be improvements under the existing arrangements, including: the use of capital receipts by authorities to fund projects; the classification of expenditure which could be disregarded when calculating authorities targets and GREAS; and, matters relating to funds available under schemes for economic regeneration such as the urban programme.[AMA/ALA, undated]
market-place mentality, and resisting and defeating the Government's general attack on local government[Labour Party 1966-1984, 1984; Blunkett, 1985(b); NALGO, 1984a; TUC, 1984], cover a broad range of objectives acceptable to most sections of the labour movement. The restoration of grant levels to those of 1979 and the removal of penalties and targets, for example, addressed Liverpool's grievance, but would also benefit other authorities, including those that chose to make cuts. Similarly, protecting public services, and counteracting the market-place mentality, applies to privatisation as well as the justification and practice of financial restraint.

The general nature of the aims identified facilitated a broad level of support, but also allowed differences to exist between campaign participants over the desirability of certain aims, the commitment to campaigning, and the minimum level of concessions expected. Such generality therefore made the identification and agreement of intermediate objectives more difficult, but more important for the success of the campaign. Intermediate aims, for example, involved developing structures for the co-ordination and organisation of opposition and resistance, and these were, in turn, prerequisites for the mobilisation and participation of trade union and Labour Party members, activists, service users, and members of the general public. They also included the identification and practice of tactics for the pursuit of intermediate and ultimate aims, and therefore the means by which the Government could be persuaded to change or abandon its proposals.[TUC, 1984: 6]

The development and utilisation of structures that monitored and co-ordinated the implementation of tactics are indicated by the references used in this and the preceding sub-section. Furthermore, attention is afforded to these matters in the next section, where an examination of the activity and support of full-time officials, councillors, and activists, for the various aims, is undertaken through the exploration of the campaign organisation, structures, and tactics. Consideration here would therefore lead to repetition, and so attention is restricted to one final area of intermediate aims.

The aim of maintaining maximum levels of unity within a broad based campaign, also fits the intermediate aims category. Problems are evident in the general nature of this aim, however, as the probity of minimum demands and employment of effective campaign tactics had to be balanced with the desire to maintain an informal alliance formed from a myriad of organisations and individuals. Calls within NALGO for maximum unity among members, for solidarity with other trade unions, and with the Labour Party at national and local levels, for example, provide an indication of the breadth of attitudes and organisations among which some form of common ground was supposed to be identified and maintained.[1981: 4] Similar sentiments are also evident in the Labour Party, where J Cunningham, the Shadow Secretary of State for
the Environment, espoused the aim of maintaining a consensus position facilitating all party opposition to the Rates Bill as the best means of defeating the Government. [TUCLGC, 1983: 17]

Ultimate and intermediate aims identified here, are consistent with earlier labour movement opposition to the Conservative Governments' approach to local government. As part of it's National Strategy of Action, initiated in July 1981, for example, NALGO developed and applied ultimate and intermediate aims in response to Government policy and practice. Similarly, the campaigns of opposition and resistance to financial restraint, deregulation, and economic regeneration, considered in Chapter Four, exhibited a development of tactics and structures as part of campaigning activity; some of which were developed further as part of the campaigns against rate capping. Finally, an analogy can be drawn between the general nature of the ultimate and intermediate aims considered here, and the non-prescriptive approach described in Chapter Four.

Through the exploration of Conservative justification for rate capping, labour movement responses, and campaign aims this section identifies the conceptual principles employed in each area, but also relates them to particular examples of practice. Similarly, the identification of analogies with earlier labour movement opposition, and with Conservative practice described in Chapter Four, facilitates interrogation of the campaign against rate capping in terms of its practice and conceptual principles, and within the specified historical context. Thus, as previous chapters establish, the defence of local government services, jobs, and local democracy were consistent general aims, evident in previous labour movement practice.

During the campaign against rate capping, these principles were translated into the specific objectives of: abolishing targets and penalties; restoring grant levels to those inherited by the Conservative Government in 1979; and, withdrawing powers provided under the Rates Act, to enforce cuts in local government spending. Thus, having identified the existence of generally accepted aims, and the conceptual principles informing them, the task remains to explore the extent to which each informed, and were informed by, the practice of opposing the Rates Bill and subsequent Act; an essential aspect of which, is the role played by activists and full-time officers in developing and operating structures and tactics.

LABOUR MOVEMENT OPPOSITION

Evaluation of the campaign to oppose, defeat, or amend the Rates Bill is undertaken over the following sub-sections, with reference to the conceptual
principles, aims, and practices identified and validated in the previous section and chapters. Because the Act was not actually enforced until the financial year 1985-6, however, the campaign activities examined include opposition to the preparations for its implementation. Similarly, aspects of the later campaign of resistance are referred to where they have relevance for the discussion in hand, or serve purposes of illustration. Attention is therefore focused on three areas which facilitate a reciprocal examination of campaign aims and practice: the existence and development of structures necessary for the co-ordination, organisation, prosecution, and promotion of the campaign; the selection and utilisation of tactics; and, the effectiveness of attempts to realise stated aims. This approach also facilitates an examination of the role and functions of activists, full-time officers, and councillors in and through the campaign’s structures and tactics.

By undertaking the reciprocal interrogation of aims and practice within the established historical context, the analysis meets the requirements of immanent critique outlined in the introductory chapter, and therefore of practically reflexive theorising. This is achieved over three sub-sections entitled: Committees and Structures; Campaign Tactics; and Realisation of Aims. The first sub-section identifies the use and development of structures, and their relevance to the aims of the campaign. Similarly, the second sub-section examines the most prominent campaign tactics in reference to the same criteria. Finally, the aims and practices identified are evaluated through a process of reciprocal interrogation, and the performance and achievements of the campaign of opposition thereby assessed.

**Committees and Structures**

Identification and exploration of the main structures through which the campaign of opposition was co-ordinated and organised, and therefore how the aims of the campaign were addressed, forms the focus of this sub-section. The discussion serves to introduce the use and development of structures, however, as the processes are explored further during subsequent discussions. For the moment, attention is afforded to four areas of activity that illustrate the structural characteristics of the campaign: the TUC; the LGCU; the public sector trade union NALGO; and, the existence and activity of localised structures. These organisations exemplify the type and breadth of structures employed during the campaign, and an extensive investigation of campaign activities undertaken by their constituent elements is therefore conducted. Consideration of these areas also contributes to the identification and exploration of activist and full-time officer involvement.
As a body representing over 100 trade unions in the early 1980s, the policy and practice of the TUC was decided by its affiliates. References to the subject of rate capping in the TUC Annual Reports, for example, provide an indication of how decisions taken at annual congress were put into practice during the following year, by the General Council and other committees. Similarly, the specific interests of affiliates were represented and pursued through ad hoc committees. Trade unions organising and recruiting in local government, for example, were represented on and by the TUCLGC; a body consisting of full-time officers from the TUC and affiliated trade unions. Thus, as is noted in Chapter Four, much of the TUC’s campaigning activity was conducted, organised, and co-ordinated under the auspices of the TUCLGC; a practice continued in the campaign against rate capping.

To pursue the identified ultimate and intermediate aims, however, the TUCLGC created the Local Government Campaign Co-ordinating Committee (LGCCC), consisting of one national representative from each local government trade union, and the secretaries of the TUC’s regional councils. The LGCCC was established in line with a 1983 Congress motion, to oppose the Rates Bill and abolition of the Metropolitan County councils, and had intermediate aims of assisting liaison between individual trade unions, and promoting a unified trade union response. The main TUCLGC and LGCCC contributions to the campaign reflected their domination by full-time national officers, and involved the intermediate aims of co-ordinating and developing national initiatives through liaison with: affiliated trade unions; the PLP; the LGCU; rate capped local authorities; and, the local authority associations. TUC initiatives were also developed and co-ordinated at the regional and local levels through the TUC’s regional councils, the substance of which is identified and explored in the remainder of the thesis.

The LGCU was also established in 1983, as the initiative of public sector trade unions and 70 local authorities, and followed the decision of Labour local authorities meeting in Sheffield, in the aftermath of the 1983 General Election, to establish a national campaign unit. Furthermore, the purpose and functions expected of the LGCU are evidenced in the intermediate aims pursued during the campaigns of opposition and resistance, namely:

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13 The Unit changed its name to the Local Government Information Unit in March 1985, but for clarity and consistency all references in this thesis are to the LGCU.
14 By December 1984, trade union affiliates included: COHSE, CPSA, FBU, GMBATU, NALGO, NATFHE, NUPE, NUT, and the TGWU. NALGO FTDLD 1983-85, 4.5.84; LGCU Briefings and Bulletins 1984-85, Briefing, 4.1.85
the co-ordination of campaign activities; the creation and operation of a central resource; and, the accumulation of information for use by affiliates.[loc. cit.]

Co-ordination of campaigns mounted by groups and organisations including local authorities, professional associations, the voluntary sector, trade unions, and the TUC was, for example, aimed at avoiding organisational conflicts and unifying separate initiatives to common time-scales.[NALGO, 1984a: 10] The LGCU therefore played a role similar to that of the NSC in the 1970s, described in Chapter Three, and that of the MTULMCC in Liverpool, described in Chapter Five. The breadth of organisations involved in the LGCU, and the national approach, represents a difference to these other bodies, however; one that engendered a degree of national co-ordination and co-operation hitherto unseen in local government campaigns.

By acting as a central resource and accumulating information for use by affiliates, the LGCU was able assist co-ordination by sharing information through the production of bulletins and broad sheets.[LGCU, 16.1.85: 1] Similarly, links were developed between the LGCU and other bodies, and campaign co-ordination enhanced through the attendance of LGCU officers at meetings held by local authority campaign teams, trade unions, the voluntary sector, the local authority associations, and other interested bodies.[loc. cit.] The inaugural meeting of NLACC, for example, received an account of the latest developments in the campaign from an LGCU speaker.[NLACC 1985, 23.2.85]

There is also evidence of liaison between the LGCU, local government trade unions, and the TUC. Trade Union representatives from local authorities and regional structures are, for example, recorded as meeting regularly from November 1983, and as liaising with the LGCU.[TUC 1960 - 1987, 1984: 322] Another joint initiative involving the LGCU, local government trade unions and the TUC, was the lobbies of parliament organised in February 1984.[NALGO, 1984a: 10 & 11] Finally, a joint union campaign officers group was established by the LGCU to co-ordinate national level activities of unions campaigning against rate capping and abolition.[LGCU Briefings and Bulletins 1984-85, Briefing February 1985; NALGO FTDLD 1983-85, 4.3.85]

The LGCU also provided an opportunity for the leaders of the Labour groups involved in the campaign to share their views and experiences, and for their views to be shared with Labour groups not directly involved in the campaign. The LGCU Management Committee, for example, was open to representatives from all local authorities and trade unions affiliated to the LGCU, and dealt with general matters regarding the running of the LGCU and the conduct of the campaign.[LGCU Management Committee, 1984-85] A strategy sub-group was also established and attended by those with a direct involvement in the campaign, dealt with specific
Finally, representation at the LGCU consisted of leading councillors, full-time trade union officers, officers from the AMA and ALA, and employees of the Unit. Essentially, this structure reflected the bureaucratic nature of the functions undertaken and the concern with intermediate aims of co-ordination and disseminating information. In this sense, therefore, the LGCU's composition and activities reflected those of the TUCLGC and LGCCC. Decisions in both organisations were taken in a relatively detached environment, without procedures to ensure that decisions were put into practice, or supported by those the delegates claimed to represent. Thus, this practice compounds the point, made in Chapter Four, regarding the accountability of delegates attending delegate conferences where people adopted positions without a credible mandate. In the case of the LGCU, however, contact was made with activist bodies such as the NLACC, but took the form of external, detached briefings, as opposed to interactive dialogue. The implications of such practices for the development and prosecution of campaigns tactics is considered in Chapter Seven.

Figure 6.1
NALGO Structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Structures</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Branch</td>
<td>Stewards committees, Branch Executive Council and its sub-committees, attended by activists; and General meetings open to all members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>12 District councils attended by Branch representatives; including activists and full-time officers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>National Executive Council and its sub-committees. The NNEC comprised of full-time officers, representatives appointed by District committees and elected by the whole membership; sub committees comprised of full-time officers and appointees from District. Annual Conference and Service Groups, attended by national officers and activists.</td>
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In contrast, the development of structures within NALGO facilitated a greater degree of accountability and interaction between officers and activists. As Table 6.1 indicates, NALGO was comprised of affiliates and operated at three levels: national, district, and local. The structures through which the interests of members and activists were represented are also identified in Table 6.1. Thus, NALGO's annual conference formed the sovereign decision making body of the union, was attended by

References to NALGO are made in the past tense not only as a reflection of the historical nature of this study, but also as an indication that the union no longer exists following its merger with COHSE and NUPE to form Unison.
delegates from local branches, and its decisions put into practice by the NNEC and other committees. Conference also acted as a forum for the 'Service Groups' that reflected the specific areas in which members were organised and represented: local government, electricity supply industry, gas industry, the NHS, the transport industry, and the water supply industry.[NALGO, ibid: 9]

Each level of the union had parallel bodies representing service groups, and the union as a whole. At the national level, for example, local government was represented on the NLGC, at the regional level by District Local Government Committees and at the local level by Branches organised according to the employing authority. Thus, the NLGC served an analogous function to the NNEC, and the NLGGM paralleled the annual conference. These structures were reflected in the conduct of the campaign against rate capping, and their role in the formulation of earlier campaigning policy and practice is identified in Chapter Four.

At the national level, for example, the direction of the campaign and pursuit of intermediate and ultimate aims was undertaken by the NLGC, in conjunction with the NNEC's Economic, Education, Publicity, and Law and Parliamentary committees.[NALGO, 1984a: 10] Similarly, the campaign was progressed at the regional level through District councils, the creation of District Campaign Co-ordinating committees[NALGO, ibid: 9], and district delegate meetings involving Metropolitan County, District, and London Borough branches, called to discuss abolition.[NALGO FTDLD 1983-85, 4.5.84] Special NLGGMs were also called and recalled for activists to discuss developments and strategy proposals, such as that held in Liverpool 20.3.84.[NALGO, 1984a]

The NALGO campaign also developed structures to facilitate interaction between branches, and between officers and activists. The NLGC, for example, set up regular National Delegate Advisory Meetings(NDAM), starting 30.11.83, to provide a forum for discussion between the NLGC and local authority branches considered to be candidates for rate capping.[NALGO FTDLD 1983-85, 7.12.83] The attendance of local authority observers at NDAMs also indicates the level of links and co-ordination in the broader campaign.[NALGO NDAM, 16.10.84]

Interaction between officer and activists was also developed by the convening of Rate Capping Liaison Group Meetings(RCLGM), on a monthly basis. Representation at RCLGMs was based on two delegates from branches identified for rate capping, and one from those severely affected by targets and penalties.[NALGO RCLGM 1984-85, 20.11.84] Furthermore, the RCLGM was allowed to send two observers to the NLGC if the latter was discussing rate capping or the campaign for the defence of local government.[loc. cit] Motions adopted by the meetings are discussed in the following chapter, but indicate a primary concern with intermediate aims, pertaining
to the conduct of the campaign. [NALGO, 1984b; NALGO NDAM, 16.10.84; NALGO RCLGM, 1984-85.]

Finally, local activity and organisation was uneven, within NALGO and elsewhere. In London, for example, NALGO Hit List Branches held regular monthly meetings from 1983 onwards. [London NALGO, 10.8.83] Similarly, Liverpool NALGO established a Branch Campaign Committee in 1983 and, as Chapter Five records, other structures in Liverpool included: the JSSC; the MTULMCC; a local authority campaign working party; a CCSU; and, regular meetings between councillors, full time trade union officials, and activists. A significant refrain of national NALGO bodies, however, relates concerns over uneven activity at the local level; particularly among branches not affected by rate capping, but also among other local government trade unions. [NALGO, 1984a]

Similar, concerns are also evident in calls by NALGO and the TUC for the creation of local JTUCs. [NALGO FTDLD 1983-85, 22.11.83; NALGO, 1984a; TUC, 1984] In an attempt to create co-ordinated local structures reflecting LGCU activity, and echoing earlier calls, the TUCLGC wrote to public sector trade unions to encourage the creation of JTUCs. [NALGO FTDLD 1983-85, 22.11.83] As chapters Three, Four, and Five note, however, and as indicated by NALGO's recognition of uneven activity in branches not affected by rate capping, such committees tended to develop around local struggle. This uneven development is indicated by South Tyneside NALGO requesting correspondence and other material on the subject of joint union committees, and by Durham where the JSSC, consisted of manual workers. [NLACC, undated] Furthermore, the inaugural meeting of NLACC, held in Liverpool 30.3.85, was attended by representatives from only 40 local authorities, and only nineteen JTUCs had affiliated by the time the first meeting was held in Sheffield 13.4.85. [NLACC 1985, 13.4.85]

The preceding discussion identifies similarities between structures employed as part of the campaign of opposition, and those discussed in relation to earlier examples of resistance, such as the NSC in the 1970s, the MTULMCC in Liverpool, and local JTUCs. Furthermore, the creation of the LGCU, NDAMs, and RCLGMs represent a development of earlier initiatives, with the latter bodies affording new levels of interaction between officers and activists. The relation of structures to the pursuit and prosecution of campaign aims, their development, and the involvement of activists and full-time officers is also demonstrable through consideration of the selection and practice of tactics during the campaign of opposition.
Campaign Tactics

Eight tactical elements feature prominently in the campaign of opposition to the Rates Bill: education, publicity, delegate conferences, parliamentary intervention, legal action, public protest, and industrial action. The categories are identified as separate elements for the purposes of exploration, but should not be viewed as singularities. As is apparent from previous and later discussions, tactics such as delegate conferences served all three functions of education, publicity, and organisation. Similarly, each aspect of campaigning activity addressed ultimate and intermediate aims simultaneously. The tactics identified here, were also features of previous campaigning activity discussed in chapters Three, Four, and Five, and exploration here identifies developments in each area. Finally, analysis of the effectiveness of the tactics identified, takes place by identifying and exploring the interrelationship between conceptual principles, the practice of tactics, the structures discussed in the previous sub-section, and the role and function of full-time officers, activists, and councillors.

The practice of education and publicity demonstrates the difficulty and futility of attempting to differentiate between the two. NALGO's approach, for example, attempted no such dichotomy, recognising that each activity fulfilled both functions.[NALGO, 1984a: 10-11] For purposes of analysis, consideration of the tactics employed in this area addresses two types of practice: specific or detailed information targeted at those participating in, or belonging to organisations with an interest in the campaign; and, general information directed at a broad audience to raise awareness of the issues. In this context, education and publicity fulfil an intermediate aim of encouraging mobilisation and participation, but through an increase of activity the campaign would also exert pressure on the Government to realise its ultimate aims.

Examples of educational initiatives provided by full-time officers for activists, include the education workshops run by the TUC General Council, in conjunction with LGCU, on the subject of local government finance.[TUC 1960-1987, 1985: 205] The workshops took place in London, Southampton, Cambridge, Sheffield, Liverpool, and Preston during 1985.[TUC 1960 - 1987, 1986: 197-8] Similarly, a course on the implications of rate-capping was held at Northern College Barnsley, in October 1984, and included delegates from the GLC, Liverpool, and Sheffield.[Liverpool NALGO BEC 1979-1987, 24.10.84; Liverpool NALGO Campaign Committee 1983-85, 13.12.84]

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16 These categories are similar to the 'seven primary functions' identified by NALGO as essential 'for successful organisation of the campaign's objectives to resisting and defeating the government's attack': Co-ordination and Organisation; Publicity and Education; Branch Activity; Support for local authorities resisting cuts; Parliamentary intervention; Mass Protest and Industrial Action.[1984a: 9]
Education and information programmes were also run by activists for the broader membership. In NALGO, for example, all branches in local authorities on the Government's hit list, or earmarked for abolition, were encouraged to hold workplace meetings to discuss the Government's attack on local government, and to invite national speakers to address BECs. [NALGO FTDLD 1983-85, 4.5.84] This process was evident in active branches, such as in Islington. [London NALGO, 10.8.83] As Chapter Five records, Liverpool NALGO also undertook such activities as part of its campaigns in 1984 and 1985, running education workshops for stewards, and holding workplace and mass meeting to discuss issues. The campaign in Sheffield also included an education programme for employees through its trade unions, and Sheffield councillors held meetings with the work-force to discuss service provision, and employee concerns. [Blunkett and Jackson, 1987: 177] Workplace meetings were also held in Camden [LGCU Briefings and Bulletins 1984-85, Bulletin: June 1984], and in Haringey. [LGCU, January 1985]

Much of the information used in the local education and publicity initiatives was provided by circulars, bulletins, and through information and briefing packs produced and distributed by full-time officers. The LGCU, for example, produced and distributed packs on various issues including one, prepared with the ALA and AMA, on the RSG settlement for 1985/6. [LGCU Briefings and Bulletins 1984-85, Briefing 14.12.84]. Similarly, NALGO full-time officers circulated an information sheet entitled: 'Fight to Defend Local Democracy'(FTDLD) to local government branches, during the campaign. The first issue was produced in September 1983, and by March 1985 over 40 issues had been produced and circulated. [Liverpool NALGO Branch records] Targeted initially at local government branches, FTDLD was issued to all NALGO branches with effect from 1.2.84. [NALGO FTDLD 1983-85, 1.2.84] NALGO full-time national officers also produced and distributed to branches, a series of briefing packs and fact sheets on: rate capping and the Rates Bill; abolition of the Metropolitan County councils; the Education(Grants and Awards) Bill; and, RSG settlements. [NALGO FTDLD 1983-85, 22.11.83; LGCU Briefings and Bulletins 1984-85, Briefing 14.12.84; NALGO, 1984a] 17

The circulars and briefing packs produced by NALGO and the LGCU provided a range of information including: arguments against capping and abolition; updates and

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17 At the local level, Briefing and Information packs were also produced by: Basildon [LGCU Briefings and Bulletins 1984-85, Briefing 14.12.84]; Greenwich [LGCU Briefings and Bulletins 1984-85, Bulletin June 1984]; Hackney [LGCU Briefings and Bulletins 1984-85, Briefing 14.12.84]; and the South East Regional TUC produced a pack on the Rates Act. [loc. cit.] Furthermore, 13 authorities developed campaigning activity in this area by utilising technological developments in the production and employment of videos as a means of publicising service provision to both users and work-force. Avon, for example, produced a video illustrating the services they provided [LGCU Briefings and Bulletins 1984-85, Local Link, February 1985], and Liverpool NALGO used a Southwark video on rate-capping for its stewards courses. [Liverpool NALGO Campaign Committee 1983-85, 17.1.85]
advice on local organisation and developments; and, publicised the availability of campaign materials. Much of the information evident in the NALGO literature also appeared in local leaflets and circulars, such as Liverpool NALGO's 'Campaign News '85'.[Liverpool NALGO Campaign News 85] A common feature of these initiatives was the aim of assisting local groups and organisations to campaign for local services and local democracy. A Sheffield pack, for example, included advice and information on: Providing Services People Need; The attack on Services; Winning the Argument; What to do in your area; Finding out the Facts; Building the picture and Speakers notes.[Sheffield Information Pack, undated] Finally, the interaction and interrelationship between activists and officers through the provision and use of education and publicity materials demonstrates the futility of attempting to impose a simplistic dichotomy.

The inclusion of posters, leaflets, badges, and stickers in briefing and information packs, indicates the mainstay of publicity initiatives mounted by trade unions, local authorities, and other campaigning groups; identified in previous chapters. Other established practices, such as the production of booklets and pamphlets, and the compilation of petitions were similar to the activities of trade unions, discussed in Chapter Three, but also included the production of consultation documents. NALGO's national officers, for example, produced fact-sheets, leaflets, for use by local activists, and a 'hands off poster on abolition, and similar material on rate-capping[NALGO, 1984a: 10].

Similar publicity was produced for local elections and concentrated on the issues of jobs and services. NALGO election leaflets, for example, declared: 'If you care about services vote carefully', and 'Election Cancelled' was written across leaflets referring to Metropolitan County Council elections due for May 1985.[NALGO FTLDLD 1983-85, February 1985] Thus, the orthodox initiatives undertaken by Liverpool in 1984, described in Chapter Five, were repeated in the campaign against rate-capping, and similar tactics employed in Basildon, Camden, Greenwich, Leeds and Leicester.[LGCU Briefings and Bulletins 1984-85, Bulletin June 1984] The production of civic newspapers and the placing of adverts in local media were, for example, used by activists to raise public awareness.[loc. cit.]

At the behest of their ruling Labour groups, local authorities also contributed to the education and publicity campaign through the production of booklets and pamphlets, including: Camden[LGCU Briefings and Bulletins 1984-85, Briefing 1.2.85]; Haringey[LGCU Briefings and Bulletins 1984-85, Briefing 14.12.84]; Sheffield.[loc. cit.] Lambeth also produced a public consultation document entitled: Rate-Capping and Lambeth', outlining the effects of capping and government inspired cuts.[loc. cit.] Finally, the LGCU produced a series of pamphlets examining the economic case for
rate capping, and identifying its effects on: education; services for the elderly; DLOs; and, Women.[LGCU Briefings and Bulletins 1984-85, Bulletin June 1984]

Petitions were also compiled during the campaign to raise awareness, and thereby encourage mobilisation and participation. Haringey and Islington local authorities, for example, compiled petitions of service users, by collecting signatures at the point of contact.[LGCU Briefings and Bulletins 1984-85, Briefing 1.2.85] Other compilers included Manchester, Leeds[LGCU Briefings and Bulletins 1984-85, Bulletin June 1984], and Greenwich, where the latter collected 300,000 signatures.[LGCU Briefings and Bulletins 1984-85, Briefing 1.2.85] Such initiatives were dependent on activist involvement, and encouraged within NALGO where, along with leafleting, public meetings, and rallies, the compilation of petitions by local branches was expected to form part of campaign promotion activities.[NALGO, 1984a: 11]

The publicity campaign also included innovations conducted through existing local authority structures, and addressed intermediate aims of maximising mobilisation and participation. Such initiatives included: Haringey's Service user months to publicise individual service areas[LGCU Briefings and Bulletins 1984-85, Briefing 1.2.85], and Sheffield's community inquiry which involved an open ended questionnaire for community groups to identify specific needs, and areas where resources were required.[Blunkett and Jackson, op. cit: 177] Greenwich, Lambeth, Lewisham, and Southwark also conducted local opinion polls on the issues of local finances and service provision, and held a joint press conference to compare new RSG levels with local opinion.[LGCU Briefings and Bulletins 1984-85, Briefing 14.12.84]

These initiatives represent developments in the traditional campaigning structures employed by the labour movement, but also bear resemblance to the 'open forum' and 'communiplan' initiatives practised by Clay Cross in the 1970s, and discussed in Chapter Three. Like the publicity initiatives described above, they addressed intermediate aims of raising awareness and encouraging mobilisation and participation, but tended to be transitory. In this respect, they attempted to reach out beyond the labour movement to other organisations and individuals, but structures to organise and sustain forthcoming mobilisation or participation were absent.

As part of the campaign against rate-capping, however, attempts were also made to involve organisations outside the labour movement by developing 'community conferences'. The LGCU in conjunction with London Community Work service, for example, organised a London Voluntary Sector Conference on 13.2.84 to discuss rate-capping.[LGCU Briefings and Bulletins 1984-85, Bulletin February 1984] Lambeth also held a community campaign conference entitled 'Fighting for the Future', on 11.12.84, which attracted over 100 local groups.[loc. cit] Similarly, Sheffield's
community enquiry, referred to earlier, took evidence from three hundred local groups and culminated in a two day conference which produced a report on the needs of the community. [LGCU Briefings and Bulletins 1984-85, Local Link February 1985] Once again, however, such initiatives offered little scope for sustained mobilisation and participation, though Camden, Fulham, Hammersmith, and Lambeth attempted to address this breach by establishing umbrella assemblies of delegates and representatives from: the local community; trade unions; unemployed groups; and, others. [LGCU Briefings and Bulletins 1984-85, Briefing 14.12.84]

A series of labour movement delegate conferences were also held as part of the campaign. In 1983, for example, Southwark organised a London wide conference attended by six Labour Groups, and all local government trade unions, except NALGO. The conference passed a motion supporting a policy of no cuts, no redundancies, no increases in rent or rates over the rate of inflation, and agreed to establish a steering committee. [London NALGO, 10.8.83] In contrast, a conference of hit list authorities met 23.5.84, rejected derogation, but failed to adopt a clear strategy. [LGCU Management Group 1984-85, 4.6.84] Other conferences held during the period include that in Liverpool 23.6.84, discussed in Chapter Five, and, in Sheffield July 1984.

The Sheffield 'Forging the Links' conference was organised with the help of the LGCU [Blunkett and Jackson, op. cit: 170], and by delegates from 40 Labour authorities, and agreed to defy the Government by not complying with rate-capping, penalties or targets. Of the Northwest authorities attending the conference, however, only Merseyside County Council faced an actual cap, but both Liverpool and Manchester faced penalties. [Liverpool NALGO Service Conditions Committee 1979-1987, 26.7.84] The conference began with a group meeting on the evening of the 5th July to discuss the future of the LGCU. A conference of local authorities with budgets over £10m was planned for the 6th; splitting in the afternoon into Labour Groups only. The evening of the 6th and all day on the 7th was given over to a special Labour Party local government conference. [LGCU Management Group 1984-85, 4.6.84]

The conference decision to defy the Rates Act is portrayed as filling a leadership vacuum created by the PLP's reluctance to offer a lead [Gyford, 1985: 32], but as is demonstrated in Chapter Four the PLP was acting in line with LPAC decisions. Furthermore, the decision of the Sheffield conference reflects the sentiments expressed in the NEC statement presented to the LPAC in 1984 [Labour Party 1966-1984, 1984: 295-297], and with motions supported at the 1984 LPAC. The decision taken in Sheffield was not so much filling a leadership void, therefore, as signalling a
change of direction in Labour Party thinking and resolve; although the PLP leadership continued to adopt its consensus approach.

Furthermore, positions of defiance and non-compliance were already adopted by organisations other than the Labour Party, most notably NALGO. [NALGO FTDLD 1983-85, 8.11.83] As earlier chapters and sections demonstrate, the structures through which the campaign was waged were linked to earlier resistance, conducted regardless of a PLP lead. Campaigning activity was not dependent, therefore, on the national organs of the Labour Party. To suggest otherwise is to subscribe to, or foster, the myth that political actions take place only through political parties and their parliamentary or national bodies.

The aims and tactics of the campaign were also developed at delegate conferences after Sheffield. An LGCU strategy Conference held 13.11.84, for example, adopted objectives discussed and outlined in the previous section of this chapter. [NALGO, 1984b: 3] Similarly, the TUC's 'National Consultative Conference on the Rates Act and the Defence of Local Government' took place on 4.12.84. Attendance was based on two delegates from each affiliated union, 12 delegates from TUCLGC unions, and two delegates from authorities affiliated to the LGCU. [NALGO NDAM, 16.10.84] NALGO's 12 delegates were selected by the NDAM 16.10.84, as two from the GLC liaison panel, eight from the NLGC, and two from the NDAM. [loc. cit.]

Attendance at the TUC conference involved 200 delegates from 30 local authorities and 27 local government trade unions/branches [LGCU Briefings and Bulletins, Briefing 14.12.84], and raises the question of whom the delegates were representing, and therefore accountable to. The conference's support for a strategy of non-compliance for rate capped councils, for example, required that the position adopted by delegates be supported by those they claimed to represent; particularly, as the practice and success of non-compliance depended on the support of the broader labour movement. As has been identified, NALGO's delegation consisted of eight NLGC representatives and four activists, though their mandate from the broader membership is unclear.

The use of legal challenges to oppose central government, provides another similarity between the tactics of the campaign of opposition and those discussed in Chapter Four. Examples include the GLC's challenge to the Government's deadline for appeals against specific rate-caps as arbitrary, unjust, and unreasonable. [LGCU Briefings and Bulletins 1984-85, Briefing 18.1.85] Similarly, Sheffield challenged the GREA calculations as inconsistent and, in Sheffield's case, not taking all the factors into account. [loc. cit.] Leicester and Greenwich also considered challenging the assumptions made by the Secretary of State about authorities' balances and reserves in announcing the hit list for rate capping and general rate limits, and the
DOE's practice of not making the same assumption for all authorities in determining RSG and rate limitation.[loc. cit.] Such action was taken at a specialised level detached from activists and the broader public, but reflected the campaign aims of publishing central government assumptions; a move expected to provide local authorities with ammunition to counter the Government's decisions.

The campaign also focused on the abstracted institutions of parliament, aiming to disrupt the passage of the Rates Bill. In effect, this meant writing to, visiting, and distributing information packs to MPs and peers.[NALGO FTDLD 1983-85: 12.10.83; 1.12.83; 1.2.84] Local government trade unions, for example, contributed to a rolling programme of parliamentary lobbies, commencing in February 1984 and scheduled for each Wednesday of the parliamentary session.[NALGO FTDLD 1983-85, 1.2.84] Lobbying involved delegations of activists and councillors visiting parliament and were arranged, by the LGCCC and LGCU, to correspond to legislation being discussed in parliament.[loc. cit.] Local JTUCs, assisted by district campaign co-ordinating committees, also organised individual lobbies, and the LGCU sought to ensure participation of the relevant local authorities.[loc. cit.]

To enhance the process NALGO produced lists of MPs on select committees to be approached, and the LGCU produced a guide on lobbying MPs. Other parliamentary tactics included: trade union General Secretaries writing to members of the relevant standing committees[NALGO, 1984a; NALGO FTDLD 1983-85, 1.2.84]; trade unions placing adverts in the Houses of Parliament Journal[NALGO, 1984a: 12]; a selective distribution of NALGO briefing packs on rate-capping and abolition; and, branches lobbying local MPs.[loc. cit; NALGO FTDLD 1983-85, 12.10.83] The tactics described here demonstrate another aspect of the interaction between full-time officer and local activists. In this instance, the full-time officers, particularly in the LGCU, played a pivotal role in organising and co-ordinating activity.

Parliamentary intervention was, however, recognised to be limited in its effectiveness; at best defeating legislation, but not resisting cuts in RSG or the imposition of penalties and constraints.[NALGO, 1984a: 12] As early as October 1983, NALGO recognised that political and parliamentary resistance of the government had to be backed by a strategy of non-compliance.[NALGO FTDLD 1983-85, 8.11.83] The limitations of parliamentary intervention is, for example, demonstrated by the Conservative's overall majority of 144, of 188 over the Labour Party[Crewe, 1985], and by the guillotining of the Rates Bill in March 1984.[NALGO FTDLD 1983-85: 12.3.84; 12.4.84]

A tactic related to parliamentary intervention, and one which repeated the practice described in Chapter Five, involved NALGO full-time officers producing a specimen letter for local branch activists to send to election candidates. The letter enquired after
the candidates' position on issues relating to NALGO's service areas: rate-capping and abolition; bus deregulation; and, privatisation in the NHS and of the Gas, Electricity and Water utilities.[NALGO FTDLD 1983-85, February 1985] Examples of letters to send to councillors who might be voting on a policy of non-compliance with rate capping were also provided.[NALGO FTDLD 1983-85, 4.3.85] This particular letter expressed support for non-compliance even if it caused confrontation with the Government, and gave notice that the authors would not accept any settlement involving cuts. The letter also pledged support, including industrial action, for an authority opposing cuts and rate-capping, and described an alliance of trade unions and local authorities as capable of defeating the Government.[loc. cit.]

As with earlier examples of labour movement campaigning activity, the campaign of opposition employed public protest as: a means of pressurising central government; supporting or pressurising local authorities; mobilising support; and, raising the campaign profile.[NALGO, 1984a: 12] During the campaign of opposition, for example, protests were called in conjunction with days of action, like that organised by the GLC JTUC and Metropolitan County branches on 24.1.84 to oppose abolition.[loc. cit.] Similarly, the TUC's 'Democracy Weeks', held in 1984 and 1985, provide prime examples of this type of activity, and the interaction between full-time officers and activists. Thus, activities were co-ordinated through the TUCLGC, TUC Regional Councils, and the LGCU, aimed to focus attention on the Government's attack on local services, jobs and democracy[NALGO, 1984a: 12], but were dependent on activist involvement to secure local participation.

Events in 1984, for example, culminated in a national march and rally on 'democracy day' Thursday 29.3.84, and were timed to coincide with the passing of the Rates Bill from the commons to the lords, and publication of the abolition paving bill. As is noted in Chapter Five, however, 29.3.84 was also the date Liverpool Labour Group chose not to set a rate, and when local employees staged a one day strike and lobby of the Council meeting. Similarly, activities in 1985 culminated on 7.3.85, when councils defying the Government synchronised their budget meetings so as to defer rating decisions on the same day.[NALGO FTDLD 1983-85: 1.2.84; 2.2.84; 13.3.85] Thus, in authorities not setting a rate the local labour movement arranged protests and staged one day strikes to support councillors.[NALGO FTDLD 1983-85, 13.3.85]

The link between earlier forms of protest and the campaign of opposition is extended through the use of industrial action, but its practice was diverse in nature and purpose. Among other things, for example, limited industrial action involved one day strikes and boycotting vacant posts as a way of protesting against local cuts.[NALGO FTDLD 1983-85, 8.11.83] Furthermore, as the following chapter demonstrates, the
practice also involved a broader perspective indicated by NALGO's position, that: 'a coherent programme of militant industrial action against the government's attack on local democracy, services and jobs is imperative.' [NALGO, 1984a: 13] The forms of action discussed here, however, relate to the campaign of opposition and, within that context, focus on the use of industrial action: to 'alert and mobilise the membership (trade union) to the threat posed by the government's policies' [loc. cit.]; as 'a highly effective weapon for resisting the local implementation of cutbacks' [loc. cit.]; and, 'for putting political pressure on the government' [loc. cit.]

Industrial action aimed at alerting and mobilising trade unionists and pressurising the Government consisted mainly of one day strike action. In July 1984, for example, the TUCLGC called, in conjunction with NALGO and NUPE, a one day strike to protest at the crisis in local government. [Liverpool NALGO Service Conditions 1979-1987, 26.7.84] Similarly, NALGO members employed by Merseyside Metropolitan County Council also took strike action on 7.8.84 to protest against the imposition of a rate cap on the authority. [loc. cit.] As was noted in the previous discussion of protests, however, such action was often called to coincide with, and therefore encourage support for, demonstrations and lobbies. The most prominent examples of such action pertain to the strikes called as part of the TUC's democracy weeks, discussed previously.

As with the staging of protests, local examples of industrial action were designed to show support for or strengthen the resolve of local councillors; hence the co-ordination of action with important council meetings. In Liverpool, for example, strikes and mass lobbies of the council were common features of the campaign in 1984 and evident again in 1985. Thus, on 30.1.85 the JSSC called a lobby of the Council meeting which was due to discuss its financial position. [Liverpool NALGO Bulletin 1983-84, 21.1.85] Similarly, Liverpool, Sheffield, and other campaigning authorities held a one day strike and demonstration on 7.3.85. [Blunkett and Jackson, op. cit: 177; NALGO FTDLD 1983-85, 13.3.85] Finally, the staging of such action as part of a national strategy, such as the last example co-ordinated through the LGCU, indicates a degree of interaction between full-time officers and local activists, whereby the former arranged and timetabled events, and the latter orchestrated local activities.

The campaigning activities catalogued here, exhibit characteristics that are analogous to earlier examples of campaigning activity discussed in preceding chapters. Both encompassed successive and parallel activities, that included education, publicity, mass protest, parliamentary lobbies, and industrial action. Furthermore, the activities identified and explored required and produced interactions between activists and full-time officers, to agree aims and strategy, and to utilise and
develop the structures through which the campaign was co-ordinated, organised, and conducted. In the campaign of opposition, however, such activities required unprecedented co-ordination to address the ultimate aim of defeating or reforming the Rates Bill, as opposed to securing local concessions.

At this stage of the campaign emphasis was placed on securing mobilisation and participation to defeat a particular piece of legislation, as opposed to focusing on the specific areas of services, jobs, and local democracy; though localised struggles and publicity continued to promote these categories. Mobilisation and participation at the local level, involving union members and the general public in one day strikes, demonstrations and lobbies, were therefore goals in themselves, and ways of pressurising the Government into conceding the ultimate aims of the campaign. The success or failure of the campaign of opposition should therefore be measured against these criteria, and as preparation for the next stage of the campaign in the event that the Rates Bill was enacted.

**Realisation of Aims**

In this section, the campaign of opposition to the Rates Bill is the subject of critical analysis. The conceptual principles, as indicated by the campaign aims and the defence of local government services, jobs, and local democracy, are therefore evaluated in reference to the practice of this campaign, and vice versa. Thus, the following campaign aims are subjected to a reciprocal interrogation with campaign practice: amendment or defeat of the Rates Bill and associated cuts and penalties; development of campaign structures; and, cognisation, mobilisation, participation, and motivation of trade unionists and the general public with regard to the effect of central government policies on local government.

If taken literally, the campaign's ultimate aim of preventing the Rate Bill becoming statute, was unsuccessful; a virtual inevitability given the Conservative Government's overall parliamentary majority referred to earlier. In this context, the aim of preventing the Bill's effects on local democracy, jobs, and services, as described in the Legislation and Background section, was also unsuccessful. Closer inspection, however, reveals that this ultimate goal was not unitary, but exhibited sub-divisions that included amendment or defeat of the Rates Bill, and reversal of associated cuts and penalties. This conglomerate nature was not accidental, however, but the product of a coalition that, in Sheffield for example, accommodated different groupings that included: those prepared to accept nothing less than the defeat of the Rates Bill; those who sought negotiation; and, those who enjoyed the personal esteem of public life.[Blunkett and Jackson, 1987: 178-9]
Furthermore, the intermediate aims identified earlier included the maximisation of awareness to the effects of government policy and practice, and the mobilisation, and participation of as many people as possible in opposition to it. Thus, another way of evaluating the campaign of opposition’s success, is to examine the development of campaign structures, and the practice of tactics as means of encouraging mobilisation and participation in the campaign. Such activity was not only important to the conduct of the campaign of opposition, but also a prerequisite of any attempt to resist the Rates Act in the eventuality that the campaign of opposition failed to realise its ultimate aims.

In the preceding sub-sections, two versions of practice are presented. The first is a coherent and consistent development of structures involving full-time officers at the national level, and an interaction and interrelation through such structures between full-time officers, activists, and councillors. The second account, however, identifies fragmented and uneven levels of activity, organisation and structural development at the local level. Examples of the first version include the use of established structures, and the creation of ad-hoc committees by NALGO and the TUC. The creation and development of the LGCU also fits this criteria. Such a perception only has validity in relation to the organisations considered, however, as NALGO's NLGC was concerned by the lack of development in other trade unions as late in the campaign as March 1984. [NALGO, 1984a: 9]

Uneven development was also evident at the local level, where NALGO activity at district and branch level was described as ‘sporadic’, and adherence to existing policy and tactics as ‘not complete’. [loc. cit.] Thus, by March 1984, with the exception of the Metropolitan counties, the GLC and some hit list branches there was ‘little or no local action to mobilise the membership and public around the issues, despite the efforts of some District Campaign Co-ordinating Committees.’ [loc. cit.] Those branches not affected by rate capping, or targets and penalties, were not actively pursuing local campaign initiatives identified earlier.

The uneven development of the campaign was symptomatic of the Government’s selective approach to penalising and capping authorities, and of socio-economic circumstances affecting particular localities. In Liverpool and Sheffield, for example, the development and strength of local labour movement structures reflected socio-economic developments and contributed to the level of local activity. Similarly, these developments contributed to the election of Labour groups, and their practice of labour movement values which then brought them into conflict with central government priorities and policies. Within NALGO uneven development reflected the developmental process just described, but contributed to a position, whereby full-time national officers, responding to the demands of branch activists in authorities
where campaigning activity was underway, adopted a more radical approach than the non-active branches. Ultimately, therefore, the unevenness of campaigning activity detracted from the attempt to pressurise the Government into abandoning its legislation.

Furthermore, NALGO's NLGC assumed that where formal structures exist for co-ordination and promotion of the campaign then such structure are sound and effective. [NALGO, 1984a: 10] The existence of structures, as was noted in reference to delegate conferences, does not necessarily imply sound and effective practice. Issues regarding accountability and representation are of primary importance here. Analogies can therefore be drawn between the practice of delegate conferences such as the one held by the TUC in December 1984, NALGO's NDAM and RCLGM, the LGCU, whereby those voting for policies were not representing the views of their constituents, or did not attempt to mobilise them in accordance with the policies adopted. [Byrne, 1994; Lowes, 1994]

In other words, the existence of a gap between the aims and aspirations of full-time officers, activists, and members was a problem that the practice of campaign tactics was intended to address. This does not mean that campaigns should be undertaken only when there is pre-existing support, but education and publicity, and structures to maintain levels of mobilisation and participation are of paramount importance to ensure support for ultimate aims pursued. This is a fundamental point, developed through the following chapter's exploration of the campaign of resistance.

Though difficult to quantify in absolute and relative terms, the questions of awareness, mobilisation, participation, representation, and delegation form an integral aspect of the evaluation of the principles and practice of the campaign of resistance. An analogy can be drawn, for example, between activists, at delegate conferences or other committees, taking principled positions, and the abstract practice of democracy in society, where representatives in parliament or the council chamber take decisions according to their interpretation of the will of the people supposedly divined from elections. The issues of representation and delegation are therefore explored further in the following chapter, and relate to the extent to which activists operated within their own milieu, and failed to engage a broader audience to secure support for the positions they adopted. In other words, the extent to which activists were able or

18 Attendance on a march held in London on 24 January 1984 to protest at the Government's proposals for abolition was, for example, estimated at 30,000 [NALGO, 1984a: 12], while Democracy Day in March 1985 was estimated at 70,000. [Blunkett and Jackson, 1987: 175] These differing figures were both considered successful, but do not give any indication of sustained participation. Furthermore, under the heading 'Mobilisation', a survey undertaken for the LGCU to identify public awareness of local authority responsibilities, describes respondents as feeling powerless, and indicate the difficulties in attempting sustained participation and mobilisation. [LGCU, January 1985]
concerned to engage in dialogue with those they sought to mobilise, is an important area of exploration in explaining the performance of the campaign of resistance.

The chapter identifies conceptual principles informing Conservative and labour movement approaches to the policy and practice of rate capping, and explores the interaction of labour movement principles and practice by examining the development and use of campaign structures and tactics to achieve desired ends. This is undertaken within the historical context established by preceding chapters, and therefore identifies and explores the continuity between the conceptual principles, structure, and tactics employed in opposing rate capping, and in earlier labour movement campaigns. Thus, the interrelation and interaction between activists, councillors, and full-time officers in developing and operating structures and tactics, is explored as a fluid process informed by, and helping to shape, the principles and practice of labour movement democracy.

Of particular significance are the roles played by these groups, and their use of structures, to achieve the intermediate aims of mobilisation and participation as a means of defeating or amending the Rates Bill, and as preparation for the campaign of non-compliance. The practice of education, publicity, delegate conferences, parliamentary intervention, legal action, public protest, and industrial action are, for example, means of defeating or amending the Rates Bill, and encouraging mobilisation and participation in the campaign. As the discussion of campaign tactics demonstrates, however, mobilisation and participation relied on the direct involvement of activists, was therefore founded on the development of activist movements discussed in Chapter Two, but restricted to that grouping in particular areas.

In addition, the use of parliamentary intervention and legal action, serve to emphasise the campaigns reliance on, and replication of, abstracted structures whereby political and legal decision making processes are removed from society as a whole. As a consequence, mobilising tactics such as limited industrial action and mass protest appeared ephemeral and ineffective, showing little effect on the intended target of central government. This separation of campaign practice from society was also emphasised when the Rates Bill became law, as the focus of the campaign shifted from the direct involvement of activists in mobilising opposition, to a reliance on the resolve of councillors and Labour groups for non-compliance.
CHAPTER SEVEN

THE CAMPAIGN OF NON-COMPLIANCE

The emphasis and practice of the campaign of non-compliance represents a development from general opposition, described in the previous chapter, to a co-ordinated and focused challenge to central government. Whereas the campaign of opposition had sought to encourage mobilisation and participation as a way of preventing the Rates Bill becoming statute, the campaign of non-compliance required support for, and from, councillors and Labour groups who were committed to resisting implementation of the Rates Act. In particular, the non-compliance of councillors was backed by the promise of sustained industrial action should concessions not be won, councillors be surcharged, or commissioners introduced.[NALGO, 1984a; NALGO NDAM, 16.10.84; NALGO, 1984b] The short term success of the campaign relied, therefore, on the commitment of elected representatives, but in the long term required an unprecedented level of mobilisation and participation, not just of activists, but of the membership of local government trade unions involved in the campaign.

The threatened resistance to Parliament also represents a shift within the labour movement, away from accepted constitutional practice, to the sanctioning and anticipated use of extra-parliamentary opposition. Such an approach is particularly significant because through the intention to use industrial action to secure its aims, the campaign threatened the constitutional and ideological primacy of Parliament; both in society at large, and in the policy and practice of the Labour Party and labour movement. The question of whether all those involved intended such a challenge to take place is irrelevant in practical terms, because an outright defeat of the Government would have undermined Parliament’s claim to primacy based on a universal suffrage at least once every five years. Furthermore, this challenge to the primacy of Parliament was all the more potent, because it carried the added dimension that the action was based not only on mandates secured within the labour movement, but also through the institutions of the state at local elections.
These issues are explored within the historical context established by preceding chapters, and attention afforded to the function, interaction and interrelationship of councillors, full-time officers, and activists. Similarly, the interaction and interrelationship between these elements and the conceptual principles, structures, and tactics employed during the campaign are also identified and interrogated. The chapter therefore develops the reciprocal validation of categories, and completes the reciprocal interrogation of the aims and practice of the campaign.

This is achieved by dividing the chapter into two sections, entitled: Constitutional Confrontation; and Industrial Action. The first considers how those authorities resisting the Rates Act sought to gain concessions from the Government, and involves consideration of the tactics employed to defy the Act. The second section explores the issues surrounding the use of industrial action as a means of securing the desired aims of the campaign. In particular, this approach examines the structures through which the tactic was adopted, and how such activity was to be instigated and co-ordinated. A consistent theme is the identification of the roles undertaken by parliamentarians, full-time officials, and activists, in relation to the tactics of non-compliance and industrial action.

**CONSTITUTIONAL CONFRONTATION**

The change in focus and practice accompanying the campaign of non-compliance, is explored within the historical context established by previous chapters, and in reference to the use of structures to prosecute the campaign, and the function of activists, councillors, full-time officers, and MPs. This is achieved by examining: the selection and practice of tactics; attempts to achieve a negotiated settlement; and, factors that contributed to the eventual failure of constitutional confrontation. These aspects of the campaign are therefore considered over three sub-sections entitled: Tactical Alternatives; Thwarted Negotiation; and, Local Practice of Non-compliance.

By exploring the relative merits of tactics considered for resisting the Rates Act, the first sub-section provides a reciprocally validated understanding of the term 'non-compliance'. An integral part of the adoption and practice of non-compliance, however, was the attempt to force the Government into a negotiated settlement that would have averted direct confrontation.[Blunkett, 1985b] Attempts at negotiation therefore forms the focus of the second sub-section. A synopsis of developments within local authorities and Labour groups prior to their setting a rate constitutes the final sub-section, and provides an insight into local decision making, and the levels of activity, commitment, and internal divisions affecting the campaign. Because the evaluation process involves the identification and exploration of structures and
elements over three sub-sections, however, the focus of individual sub-sections should not be interpreted as universal practice.

**Tactical Alternatives**

As Chapter Six records, the tactics of education, publicity, delegate conferences, parliamentary intervention, legal action, public protest, and industrial action were also elements of the campaign of non-compliance. As the mechanisms of non-compliance form the focus of this discussion, however, such tactics are afforded minimal consideration. Thus, following a brief account of the continuity of earlier tactics and structures, the main body of this sub-section explores the tactics considered or employed by the labour movement as mechanisms of non-compliance, namely: resignation; withholding information; not honouring financial obligations; not setting a rate; and, deficit budgeting.

The continuation of interrelated tactics during the campaign of non-compliance, such as publicity, delegate conferences, public protest, and industrial action, served the combined purposes of encouraging mobilisation and participation in support of councillors in their attempts to avoid setting a rate, and of pressurising the Government into negotiation. In preparation for strikes and public protests to be held in conjunction with the TUC’s ‘democracy day’ 6.3.85[LGCU Management Group 1984-85, 18.12.84], for example, the LGCU aimed to produce and distribute: a leaflet in January; ‘facts packs’ and a second leaflet in February; balloons, stickers, badges and a further leaflet in March.[LGCU, 16.1.85: 2] Furthermore, once non-compliance was underway, Greenwich suggested staging mass pickets outside DOE Offices in Marsham Street and P Jenkin’s home, until negotiations were agreed.[LGCU, 12.4.85: 2]

The convening of delegate conferences was also continued in 1985, as a means of developing structures, and a broadening of the campaign to defend local government. A particular example of this type of activity was the conference of 15 penalised but uncapped authorities, held 22.1.85 on North Tyneside, with the assistance of the LGCU.[LGCU, 16.1.85: 2] Events planned for the North Tyneside conference included an update on developments in the campaign of non-compliance, and discussions of: campaign experiences; anticipated developments up to and after the second round of capping; and, strategies for the second round. The conference was concluded with a Labour groups meeting.[loc. cit.]

A one day national conference of local authorities and trade unions was also planned for Sheffield 21.4.85, to discuss the position of local authorities that had not

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1 The compilation and presentation of petitions to the DOE as part of a media event during the week commencing 18.3.85[LGCU Management Committee 1984-85, 12.3.85], also repeats a tactic identified in chapters Four, Five, and Six.
made a rate, and consider future strategy. [LGCU Management Group 1984-85, 18.12.84] Conferences were also scheduled for London Labour groups that had not set a rate: South London boroughs on 14.4.85; and, North London boroughs on 20.4.85. [LGCU Strategy Sub-Group 1985, 3.4.85] The functions of education, publicity, tactics, and organisation addressed by these conferences through their involvement of activists, councillors, and full-time officers from trade unions and the LGCU, provide an analogy with the conferences discussed in Chapter Six.

Tactics of parliamentary intervention and legal action were also practised as part of the campaign of non-compliance, and indicate a continued use of abstracted state structures. In addition to the examples of legal action described in Chapter Six, the GLC and ILEA also took legal action to quash their precepts on the basis of the assumptions made by the Secretary of State for the Environment. [LGCU Management Group 1984-85, 11.2.85] As an additional means of pressurising the Government, the LGCU also sought to maximise media coverage of events, but recognised the presentational difficulties associated with technical legal points. [loc. cit.]

As a reflection of the detachment of the people operating through the LGCU, however, the effects of abstracting campaign activity from the broader populace to professionalised forums of the courts and the caprice of media notoriety were not addressed. A further analogy can therefore be drawn between the practice, noted in Chapter Four, whereby the campaign against financial restraint retreated in to the professionalised and detached domain of creative accountancy.

Finally, the tactic of parliamentary lobbying was also continued. In relation to the RSG settlement for 1985-6, for example, the LGCU: wrote to selected MPs; arranged a meeting between MPs and councillors; arranged press conferences; and, encouraged lobbying of sympathetic backbench Conservative MPs. [LGCU, 16.1.85: 1] Similarly, the LGCU Strategy Sub-Group agreed to write to 'all Labour MPs and NEC members urging them to raise the subject of rate capping at every opportunity'. [LGCU Strategy Sub-Group 1985, 18.4.85] The focus on Parliament indicates the level of abstraction involved in campaigning activity; though as part of the campaign of opposition it accompanied attempts to involve a broader base of labour movement members and general public. In contrast, the tactics of non-compliance signalled the transition from a campaign based on mobilisation and participation, to one focused on the

2 Other examples included the national planning conference held in Liverpool 30.3.85 that agreed to establish the NLACC [Liverpool NALGO Campaign News 85, 15.2.85; Liverpool NALGO F&GP 1979-1986, 14.3.85], and an LGCU organised conference held in Manchester, to discuss ways of continuing opposition to the Rates Act, cuts in jobs and services, and the attack on local democracy through privatisation, and abolition. [TUC 1960-1987, 1985: 358]

3 As is noted in the following sub-section, press conferences were also held following meetings with the Secretary of State for the Environment, as part of abortive attempts at negotiation. [LGCU Management Committee 1984-85, 16.1.85]
activity and commitment of Labour groups and councillors represented on and through the LGCU.

A campaign of non-compliance was endorsed by the Labour Party NEC and by the LPAC in 1984, but neither offered guidance as to what form it should take; except that cuts in jobs or services be avoided.[Coombes, 1985: 3] The options considered or employed as part of non-compliance are identified in the introductory paragraphs of this sub-section, placed councillors and council officers at the forefront of non-compliance, and therefore focused responsibility on them as opposed to the broader labour movement. This responsibility was emphasised by the early rejection of the option of councillors resigning, a move opposed by national Labour Party leaders[loc. cit.], and had been rejected by the Lambeth delegate conference held 1 November 1980 because it did not prevent cuts.[Lambeth, 1980: 2]

Extensive consideration was afforded to the tactics of not providing information to central government departments, and not honouring financial contributions or obligations. In particular, this meant not providing central authorities with information required to assist the abolition of the Metropolitan County councils⁴, the implementation of the Rates Act 1984, and routine and other information, such as Capital Estimates and Commitment returns.[LGCU, 15.4.85: 1] Similarly, the financial contributions and obligations considered for non-compliance included: not paying precepts, such as contributions made to police authorities; not honouring interest payments to financial institutions; and, not paying PAYE and National Insurance contributions.[LGCU, 12.4.85; LGCU Strategy Sub-Group 1985, 18.4.85] This latter tactic was considered at several meetings, and though the delay of financial contributions was countenanced and support sought from the TUC, non-payment was never formally adopted.[LGCU Strategy Sub-Group 1985, 3.4.85, and 18.4.85; LGCU, 12.4.85]

Refusal to return information was afforded more consideration, but was fraught with difficulties. NALGO, for example, had a policy of not co-operating with information requests relating to abolition and rate capping, but recognised that due to individual legal culpability, many chief officers could be prepared to defy councillors instructions.⁵[LGCU Management Group 1984-85, 18.12.84] Legal action was, for example, taken against Merseyside County Council because it withheld information relating to Waste Disposal.[LGCU Management Committee 1984-85, 1.2.85] Furthermore, much of the information required in relation to the abolition of the

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⁴ The TUCLGC adopted a similar tactic when it refused to meet the Government's Staffing Committee to discuss staffing levels that might apply following abolition.[TUC 1960-1987, 1984: 323] The merits of such withdrawal are unclear, but it indicates the extent to which the tactic of non-co-operation permeated official structures.

⁵ Chapter Three, for example, records NALGO members refusing to break the law in Clay Cross.
Metropolitan County councils was already in the public domain, and therefore made non-co-operation irrelevant.[loc. cit.]

This tactic was also hampered by other factors, including: the amount of information provided to central government made identifying crucial data difficult; certain local authority funding was dependent on returns; non-receipt of information could be used by employer bodies to stall negotiations with trade unions; and, some returns could be of benefit to one authority, but detrimental to another.[LGCU, 15.4.85: 1] The AMA therefore sought to maintain the status quo, and its Social Services Committee to continue discussions on issues not directly related to rate capping.[LGCU, Management Committee 1984-85, 1.2.85] Total non-co-operation was therefore considered to be inappropriate, and a number of initiatives undertaken to identify crucial information, including: consideration of the matter by the AMA’s Policy Committee 7.2.85; liaison between LGCU, AMA, and ALA officers[loc. cit.]; and, the distribution of a questionnaire to local authorities.[LGCU, 15.4.85: 2]

As a consequence of these problems, practice between individual authorities varied. A number of authorities, for example, returned routine forms under Councillor scrutiny, others under Councillor and officer scrutiny, and some, despite pressure from District Audit, delayed or refused to return particular forms.[loc. cit.] Ultimately, the one area where agreement could be reached involved delaying the Capital Estimates and Commitments Return 1985-6. This information was required by central government to monitor capital spending, was used in the consideration of restrictions, and had been delayed successfully since 1983.[loc. cit.] Thus, the tactic of refusing to provide information to central government exerted little pressure, and certainly did nothing to alleviate councillors’ burden of responsibility. Furthermore, the focus of the tactic and its consideration through bodies such as the LGCU, AMA, and ALA, demonstrates the involvement of, and reliance upon, councillors and full-time officers for its adoption, practice, and success.

A similar conclusion can be drawn by examining deliberations and practices pertaining to 'no rate' and deficit budget tactics, and associated levels of confusion and preparation. The separate consideration afforded to each tactic, and the emphasis of retrospective accounts implies that the tactics were mutually exclusive[Blunkett, 1985a; Blunkett, 1985b; Blunkett and Jackson, 1987; Coombes, op. cit.], and as the Labour Party NEC statement 1984 implied: 'Non-compliance could lead some Councils being unable to fix a rate. For others, it could mean running out of money for essential services'.[Blunkett, 1985a: 1] In practice, however, this proved not to be the case, because as subsequent sub-sections show, not setting a rate meant running out of money too. Attention is therefore focused here on: perceived strengths and
weaknesses of each approach; the campaigning focus they engendered; and, the overall aims and criteria that governed the preference for one tactic.

The advantages and disadvantages of the deficit budget and no rate strategies were articulated most often in reference to their perceived compatibility with achieving maximum unity among those authorities adopting a stance of non-compliance. Thus, the no rate tactic was preferred by the South London Boroughs[Blunkett, 1985a; Blunkett and Jackson, op. cit; Livingstone, 1987], reflected the position adopted by Liverpool during its 1984 campaign for more resources, and was presented as offering 'the greatest likelihood of unity and strength'.[Blunkett: 1985a: 1] In particular, the tactic was expected to allow local authorities to work to a common timetable, and maximise public pressure for a negotiated settlement.[Blunkett, 1985b]

Alternatively, deficit budgeting was considered to represent an obstacle to unity, because it was reminiscent of practices whereby authorities claimed to be maintaining services, while implementing surreptitious cuts.[Blunkett, 1985a] The tactic was therefore considered to be a recipe for suspicion between Labour groups and trade unions unless joint monitoring arrangements could be agreed[loc. cit.]. Furthermore, deficit budgeting was considered to be an obstacle to unity because it would allow each authority to run out of money at different times.[Livingstone, op. cit: 309] Thus, for the tactic to be successful, authorities would have to stick rigidly to their budget strategies and fulfil promises on existing services and minimal expansion[Blunkett: 1985a], even though this approach conflicted with the legal requirement, that authorities demonstrate the steps taken to match expenditure and income.[Coombes, op. cit: 5]

Other advantages and disadvantages of deficit budgeting were ambiguous. The time-scale involved before authorities ran out of money, for example, was considered to involve the deferral of crises until the end of the financial year or the start of 1986-7, thereby pressurising councillors, but at the same time maintain pressure on the Government throughout the financial year.[Blunkett, 1985a] Similarly, the tactic was expected to result in a requirement for drastic cuts to be carried out either by the local authority or government appointed commissioners, but the scale of cuts necessary to compensate for a deficit budget and comply with further reductions demanded for 1986-7, was expected to place the Government in an invidious position 18 months before a general election.[loc. cit.] Finally, deficit budgeting was considered to be a recipe for confusion amongst those campaigning, but also a means for confusing the

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6 Though Blunkett’s comments do not indicate the level at which such monitoring should take place, the practice was evident in Liverpool, when following the collapse of the campaign of non-compliance, Liverpool returned to deficit budgeting to secure concessions from central government. The structures through which this took place are identified in Chapter Five, in the final sub-section of this section, and the final section of this Chapter. Levels of consultation proved to be insufficient, however, as the campaign foundered on disagreements over strategy.
Government with regard to the financial position and viability of local authorities.[Blunkett: 1985a; Coombes, op. cit.]

In practice, the no rate tactic proved to be no less difficult than that of deficit budgeting, when on 19/2/85, the LGCU decided that refusal to set a rate would be changed to deferral. The phrase: ‘it will be impossible for the authority to make a rate’ was therefore adopted as the core wording for budget motions to be considered at meetings on 7/3/85[LGCU, 12.3.85; Livingstone, op. cit.], and the Government's refusal to declare the information upon which it decided individual authorities grant allocation, blamed for deferral.[loc. cit; Blunkett: 1985b; LGCU: 12.3.85] The change was intended to maximise the number of Labour groups willing to adopt the same stance, and maintain unity within and among Labour groups, as the fear of illegality was expected to reduce the number of councils resisting.[Blunkett: 1985b]

Adoption of the deferral tactic by the LGCU dealt a blow to unity amongst campaigning councils, however, because the precepting authorities, the GLC, ILEA and Metropolitan County councils, had a statutory obligation to set a rate by 10.3.85. Merseyside and South Yorkshire therefore declared that they would set a rate[Duncan and Goodwin, 1988; Lansley, Goss and Wolmar, 1989], while 15 Labour authorities deferred the decision on 7.3.85.[Blunkett and Jackson, op. cit: 175] Furthermore, the campaign divisions engendered by the no rate strategy were highlighted by the decisions of Merseyside and Basildon to adopt a deficit budget.[LGCU, 12.3.85: 2] The last minute change to deferral also indicates: a focus of campaign decision making on the LGCU; a lack of accountability within the GLLP; demonstrates uncertainty over the level of commitment of those involved; and, illustrates confusion over the viability of particular tactics.

Furthermore, like refusal before it, the deferral tactic was premised on assumptions that the Government would negotiate, and, that it would continue to pay grant instalments. Those involved in the LGCU assumed, therefore: ‘that as with Liverpool in 1984 negotiations would commence at an early date and the pressure of council action would ensure a favourable settlement’. [Blunkett, 1985b: 2] Such pressure was, however, intended to be a threat rather than an operation carried to its ultimate conclusion, a process of ‘bluff, counter bluff’ and tactical manoeuvring designed to achieve a negotiated settlement.[loc. cit.] As the consideration of attempts at negotiation makes clear, however, Government ministers were all too aware of the level of resolve within and among Labour groups. Similarly, the final sub-section

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7 Livingstone's observation that the decision to change tactic was taken without recourse to the broader Party in London [1987: 318–19], confirms the developing detachment of councillors and officers from the broader elements involved in the campaign, and the absence of accountability within the GLLP.
identifies the absence of local structures through which support could be expressed and pressure exerted on the Government.

Attempts were made to maintain a united front, however, and thereby give an impression of strength and resolve. Thus, council meetings discussing budget resolutions or matters relating to non-compliance were synchronised, and a collective approach to negotiations adopted on the basis of a rejection of rate limitation, targets, penalties, RSG announcements, and a refusal to use redetermination or appeals processes. [Blunkett, 1985b; LGCU, Management Group 1984-85, 18.12.84; LGCU, 16.1.85] This strategy was found to be flawed, however, because as a consequence of the initial budget meeting, opposition groups were entitled to call re-convened budget meetings [LGCU Management Group 1984-85, 12.3.85], and therefore disrupt synchronised activity. To counteract such disruption, however, preparations were made to hold meetings on 28.3.85 [loc. cit.], and again on 24.4.85. [LGCU Strategy Sub-Group 1985, 11.4.85]

This stage of the campaign exhibited a divergence of tactical focus. Education, publicity, delegate conferences, parliamentary intervention, legal action, public protest, and industrial action were, for example, all elements of the campaign of non-compliance, but reflected the broader emphasis on participation and mobilisation discussed in Chapter Six. In contrast, the practice of non-compliance and the agreement of changes in that practice, took place through Labour groups, and at LGCU level through the Strategy Sub-Group of councillors, trade union and LGCU officers.

The account provided here demonstrates the separation of particular practices, namely the tactics employed by councillors, and attempts at broad based mobilisation and participation in support of councillors. Thus, the absence of effective structures through which these respective practices could interact is explored further in the final sub-section, and remainder of this chapter, as an explanation for the campaign's limitations. For the moment, however, the process of evaluation continues to explore the structures, activity, and elements involved in LGCU orchestrated initiatives, by considering attempts to achieve a negotiated settlement.

**Thwarted Negotiation**

The tactics of non-compliance were adopted to pressurise the Government into early negotiations.[Blunkett, 1985b; Blunkett, undated] Ultimately, however, the practice of the campaign, and the constitutional primacy of Parliament over local authorities left the initiative with the Government. In other words, the confusion and lack of resolve described in the previous sub-section, together with the legal constraints on local authorities and their elected representatives, under the Rates Act
and 'the Judge invented doctrine of fiduciary duty'[Labour Party 1966-1984, 1982: 149], meant that those at the forefront of the campaign experienced more pressure than ministers. In the wake of the Miners strike, and wiser from its dealing with Liverpool the previous year, therefore, the Government could afford to await developments.

The relative position of weakness and pressure experienced by the campaigning authorities is indicated by their attempt to initiate negotiations through their early approach to the Secretary of State for the Environment on 23.1.85.[LGCU, 1985a] At the subsequent meeting on 4.2.85, the LGCU delegation involved: councillors from 26 local authorities; full-time officers from NUPE, NALGO, and GMBATU; and, full-time officers from the AMA, ALA, and LGCU.[LGCU, 1985b; LGCU, 1985c] The focus of the campaign of non-compliance on councillors and full-time officers, and its separation from broad based activity, is demonstrated by the composition of the delegation. At the meeting, the LGCU presented the Secretary of State with a document outlining its case as the: abandonment of targets and penalties for 1985-86; disclosure of assumptions; abandonment of the Rates Act; a commission of inquiry in to local government funding; and, the restoration of grant to 1979 levels.[LGCU, 1985a; LGCU, 1985b]

The Secretary of State’s behaviour at the meeting demonstrated the comparative positions of strength, by refusing to enter into negotiations on any of the matters raised, and by simply rebuffing the LGCU case.[LGCU, 1985b; LGCU, 1985c] In response, the LGCU demonstrated its inability exert real pressure on the Minister, by resorting to a predetermined plan for media activities following such meetings[LGCU Management Committee 1984-85, 16.1.85], and issued a Press Release which attempted to portray the Minister as precipitating confrontation.[LGCU, 1985c] Furthermore, the LGCU’s subordinate position was demonstrated by a letter issued to P Jenkin on 5.2.85, in the name of D Blunkett as Chairperson of the LGCU, which asked for the local authorities’ case to be reconsidered, and emphasised the call for an enquiry as a means of avoiding confrontation.[LGCU Letters 1985, 5.2.85]

At this point the LGCU’s only means of exerting pressure on the Government involved the threat of confrontation, and attempts to secure media attention; although a lobby of the CCLGF was organised for 17.4.85.[NLACC 1985, 13.4.85] The position of weakness was also evident in an exchange of letters between Blunkett and Jenkin, in which the LGCU offered further meetings, or requested details of the assumptions on which rate limitation was based.[LGCU Letters 1985; Jenkin, 1985] Not only does the LGCU’s repeated request for meetings suggest uncertainty over

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8 These demands are consistent with the campaign aims outlined in the Campaign Aims sub-section of Chapter Six.
their resolve, but the rapidity of their responses compared to those of the Secretary of State is also an indication of respective self-assurance. This view is confirmed by Jenkin’s response of 21.2.85, which agreed to further meetings, but only on the basis that there would be no changes to the Rates Act or RSG settlement, and that local authorities were not proposing or threatening illegal action[ibid.]. Similarly, the power relation between the two sides is evident in Jenkin’s suggestion, following parliamentary approval of rate limitations on 25.2.85, that consultation should be undertaken by individual authorities, or through the local authority associations and CCLGF.[Jenkin 1985, 14.3.85]9

Other labour movement organisations experienced similar treatment, and therefore demonstrates the power relation between Government and those involved in the campaign. N Willis, General Secretary of the TUC, for example, wrote to P Jenkin on 1.4.85, on behalf of the TUCLGC, to request a meeting to discuss ways of overcoming the impasse between the local authorities who had not levied a rate and the Government.[Willis, 1.4.85] Jenkin refused to meet the TUCLGC, however, because a meeting could be misrepresented as negotiations, and provide local authorities with a reason to delay making a rate.[Jenkin 1985, 3.4.85; LGCU Strategy Sub-Group 1985, 3.4.85]

In similar fashion to its involvement with Liverpool the previous year, the PLP engaged in a number of initiatives to precipitate a negotiated settlement. J Cunningham, Labour’s Shadow Secretary of State for the Environment, for example, tabled a series of questions regarding the publication of assumptions made in relation to the calculation of individual authority grant allocation and rate limits. In December 1984, January 1985[Cunningham 1985, 14.1.85], and again on 11.2.85[Jenkin 1985, 21.2.85], Cunningham tabled parliamentary questions regarding the disclosure of assumptions. On each occasion, however, Jenkin’s response was that such information would only be disclosed to authorities that sought derogation.[Cunningham 1985, 14.1.85; Jenkin 1985, 30.1.85] Cunningham also wrote to Jenkin on 12.4.85 requesting that a meeting be held with the Leaders of the ALA and AMA to discuss financial problems experienced by members of the two bodies.[Cunningham 1985, 12.4.85] Jenkin’s response merely reiterated earlier points about meetings being misrepresented as negotiation, justifying delays in rate setting, and consequently refused to meet.[Jenkin 1985, 24.4.85]

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9 Similar Government tactics are also outlined in a letter issued by the Chairs of the AMA and ALA, J Layden(AMA) and M Hodge(ALA), in which they complain about Patrick Jenkin’s refusal to meet outside the regular CCLGF cycle, and refers to an earlier joint letter dated 22.3.85 seeking discussions.[AMA/ALA, 10.4.85] The Government’s resolve is also evident in its refusal to discuss the operation of the Rates Act or the RSG settlement for 1985-6 at the CCLGF of 17.4.85, because it could be misrepresented as negotiation and delay further rate decisions by those authorities still resisting.[Jenkin 1985, 24.4.85]
This account identifies the strategies adopted by both sides, and the focus of labour movement activity on councillors, full-time officers, and MPs. In practice, it was the councillors of authorities seeking negotiation whom were isolated from broad-based support and under personal pressure. This pressure was exacerbated by the stream of authorities setting a rate, identified in Table 7.1 below, and the public feuding undertaken in high profile Labour groups such as the GLC. Given the precarious resolve exhibited amongst campaigning Labour groups, therefore, the Secretary of State was able to refuse negotiations on the basis that the Act made provision for individual derogation and, as the following sub-section explains, attempt to isolate or buy off individual councils.

By conducting this stage of the campaign through established structures, and at the level of councillors, MPs, and Government ministers, the level of support or pressure channelled through local parties and labour movements was distanced, but still important. The extent to which councillors were mandated to adopt the positions they did, or valued local support, for example, is brought into question by the change of tactic from no rate to deferral without recourse to local structures. These and related issues are explored next by examining examples of local developments and structures that accompanied this stage of the campaign.

Local Practice of Non-compliance

The preceding sub-sections identify two aspects of the campaign of non-compliance that help explain the eventual failure of constitutional confrontation: concentrating campaign practice on Labour groups and councillors; and, consequently, the varying levels of commitment evident among, and within, campaigning Labour groups. These characteristics are indicated by: the choice of the original no rate tactic; the change to deferral to avoid illegality; the structures through which participants made tactical decisions; and, the attempts at negotiation. The significance of these aspects can be demonstrated, and explained further, by exploring local developments and structures in selected campaigning authorities.

This process involves initial consideration of general developments that explain and catalogue the compliance of campaigning authorities. Then, as a means of exploring and explaining the commitment, practice, and structural probity of local campaigns, attention is afforded to developments within specific local authorities and Labour groups prior to their compliance. By examining and comparing different local developments, experiences, and practices, therefore, the varying levels of commitment between Labour groups is illustrated. Furthermore, the performance of local campaigns are explicable in reference to attempts by, and the ability of, local labour movements to support or encourage the non-compliance of councillors, and therefore
to overcome the separation of campaign practice engendered by the tactical focus on councillors and Labour groups.

Reliance on the resolve of councillors, allowed the Government to exert pressure on the fragile unity of purpose evident among and within Labour groups. In addition to refusing to negotiate, for example, an early attempt to encourage splits in the campaign involved approaches to Thamesdown by the Parliamentary Private Secretary of the Minister for Local Government, and to Lewisham through the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, to encourage applications for derogation.[Duncan and Goodwin, 1988: 233-4] Similarly, the resolve of selected councillors was tested in February 1985, when the rate limits of ILEA, Hackney, Haringey, Islington, Leicester, and Lewisham were raised.[Stoker, 1988: 165]

Furthermore, district auditors wrote, on 1.3.85, to local authorities threatening non-compliance, to inform them that failure to set a rate could be construed as wilful misconduct[Lansley, Goss, and Wolmar, 1989: 38], and reiterated the threat to those authorities still resisting in May.[Blunkett and Jackson, 1987: 182] As has been noted, however, the first and main split in the campaign was produced by the LGCU’s change to the deferral tactic. This resulted in the Metropolitan County councils of Merseyside and South Yorkshire deciding to set a rate, the GLC complying on the 10 March deadline[Stoker, op. cit: 164], and added to the pressure exerted by the Government.

Including the GLC’s prevarication until 10 March, 13 rate capped Labour authorities and three others, failed to set a rate on 7.3.85[NALGO FTDLD 1983-85, 13.3.85]; while Merseyside and Basildon adopted deficit budgets.[LGCU Management Committee 1984-85, 12.3.85] The pattern of compliance presented in Table 7.1, however, does not indicate any individual points at which Government pressure on Labour groups resisting the Rates Act made an impact. Similarly, the decision to withhold block grant and Housing subsidy instalments from authorities that had not set a rate by 1.4.85[Blunkett and Jackson, op. cit: 179-80], contributed to a gradual build up of pressure, but does not appear to have had an immediate impact on the resolve of councillors.11

Ultimately, given the focus of the deferred rate tactic, a lack of resolve among Labour councillors led to the demise of the campaign of non-compliance. This statement, however, exhibits the same degree of superficiality as explanations which

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10 In addition to the GLC, the rate capped authorities were: Camden; Greenwich; Hackney; Haringey; Islington; Lambeth; Leicester; Lewisham; Sheffield; Southwark; and, Thamesdown, and the uncapped authorities: Liverpool; Manchester; and, North Tyneside.[NALGO FTDLD 1983-85, 12.3.85]

11 The decision to withhold funds demonstrates the development of Government tactics, especially when contrasted with the payment of instalments to Liverpool in 1984, and the employment of J. Halligan, the retired Treasurer of Lambeth, to ensure that bank loans were still made.[Livingstone, 1987: 309]
premise the failure of the campaign on: the diversion of the campaign ‘into the issue of legality’[Lansley, et al, op. cit: 45]; the absence of a national Party lead[Stoker, op. cit: 165]; or, a concentration on opposing the Rates Act, rather than defending jobs and services.[Byrne, 1994] Such explanations are superficial because they describe symptoms of the campaign’s failure, but do not address determinate factors that produced the symptoms.

Each of the Government measures discussed earlier, were targeted at the perceived weaknesses in the resolve of Labour groups and councillors, and the varying levels of commitment among, and within, Labour groups and local labour movements.[Blunkett and Jackson, op. cit; Lansley et al, op. cit.; Livingstone, op. cit.] Similarly, the differing objectives outlined in Chapter Six, and the tactical alternatives recounted in the earlier sub-section, indicate differing levels of commitment. Explanations for the failure of the campaign need to be grounded in the practice of local Labour groups and labour movements; not just in terms of the divisions within, but also by exploring the means by which councillors and Labour groups were supported or encouraged through local labour movement structures. Such an exercise is undertaken here in reference to three prominent campaigning authorities, who set their rates at different stages of the campaign: the GLC; Sheffield; and, Liverpool.

Table 7.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates By Which Deferring Authorities Set a Rate</th>
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<tr>
<td>10 March</td>
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<td>3 July</td>
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Sources: Blunkett and Jackson, op. cit: 181; North Tyneside, 2.4.85; Taaffe and Mulhearn, 1988: 208.

In addition to abolition overshadowing rate capping[Livingstone, op. cit: 311], the structures and practice of the GLLP and GLC militated the conduct of a broad based labour movement campaign of non-compliance. As Chapter One notes, for example, London lost around 500,000 jobs between 1961 and 1964, mostly in the manufacturing sector. Socio-economic developments therefore translated into a
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GLLP's
the
of
collapse
working class base which, together with the involvement
of
activists and councillors in community based struggles, tenants associations,
and
voluntary organisations[Wainwright, 1987: 98-9], contributed to attempts to
create
beyond
the Labour Party. [Wainwright, ibid: 7& 105]
support
mass
The attempt to create support beyond the Labour Party involved the
creation of adhoc committees which, though ostensibly facilitating
participation and the
mobilisation of support, contributed to an absence of Labour Party activity
independent of the GLC. [Wainwright, ibid: 7] As Webster suggests, however,
such
committees equated to an extension of corporate planning structures[Cochrane, 1985:
51]; the undemocratic nature of which are discussed in Chapter One. Furthermore, the
for
dockers and printers on the GLLP executive reflected outdated
retention of places
representation practices[Wainwright, op. cit: 105], and the moribund nature of the
Party. Both areas of practice indicate an absence of structures necessaryfor the type
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in earlier chapters, involving the
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Despite convening an assembly of London trade unions and Voluntary groups to
discuss rate capping on 23.2.85[Livingstone, op. cit: 312], and the existence of the
London Bridge JSSC to co-ordinate London wide JSSCs[Lowes, 1994], the GLC
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7], or develop campaign structures for rate capping. This is explained in part, by
Livingstone's assertion that the GLC trade unions were weak[op. cit: 262], and the
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[Livingstone,
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councillors who had defied the Law Lords over 'Fares Fair', voted 24-18 to set a
rate.[Livingstone, ibid: 320-21] The analogy between the 'Fares Fair' and rate
capping campaigns is significant, because in the former case Livingstone chose to
expose councillors to the views of trade union activists in London Transport and the
GLC, as a means of stiffening resolve following the Law Lords 'Fares Fair'
decision.[ibid: 215] For the campaign against rate capping, however, no such tactic
was employed.

The experiences of the GLC and Sheffield labour movements exhibit similarities
and differences. One such similarity involved the collapse of local manufacturing
industry in Sheffield and South Yorkshire, recorded in Chapter One. As Chapter Two
notes, however, Sheffield did not experience a membership haemorrhage, or in the
collapse of local labour movement organisation and structures. These different
experiences are partly explicable in terms of the size differences, both demographic
and geographic, between the GLC and Sheffield. They also reflect the smooth
transition of Sheffield labour movement structures, such as the displacement of
private, especially steel industry related, unions by their public sector counterparts on
the Trades Council, and NALGO replacing the AEUW as the largest local
union.[Wainwright, op. cit: 108]

In spite of strong links between Labour Party and trade unions through the Trades
Council[Wainwright, ibid: 105], however, Sheffield experienced a late development
of campaign structures relating to rate capping. As Chapter Five records, a joint trade
union campaign committee was not established until January 1985, as the initiative of
councillors and activists[Blunkett, 1994], and private sector trade unions did not join
the campaign against rate capping until after the Miners strike.[Blunkett and Jackson,
op. cit: 181] Nevertheless, councillors attempted to develop links with the local
authority workforce, by holding meetings before and after 7.3.85.[Blunkett and
Jackson, ibid: 177 & 179]

In their general approach to matters of policy, however, there appears to have been
a cascade approach adopted by the Sheffield Labour Group. Both manual and white
collar representatives, for example, felt that unions were not mobilised in the
development of council policy, and that policy decided by councillors was presented
as complete.[Mclaverty, op. cit: 197] Such an approach would have serious
implications for campaign based on participation and mobilisation of labour
movement members.

Thus, despite assertions that: the Labour Group was in touch with the Sheffield
DLP; the DLP was responsible for motions passed by the council[Wainwright, op. cit:
109]; local labour parties, shop stewards, and some community groups persuaded and
supported councillors to maintain the campaign[Blunkett and Jackson, op. cit: 178-9];
and, the traditions of the Sheffield labour movement meaning that a majority of councillors would vote despite the personal consequences, a minority of Labour councillors moved a successful amendment to implement a maximum rate increase on 7.5.85. This move followed the DLP’s rejection of the Labour Group and local party leadership’s deficit budget proposal on 30.4.85, and its decision that a rate not be set: 'until the government provided sufficient resources for the fulfilment of the capital and revenues programmes for 1985/6 and subsequent financial years'. [Blunkett and Jackson, ibid: 180]

A deficit budget, as outlined earlier, could have allowed the campaign to continue, provided direction, and exhibited resolve; especially if it was the initiative of the Labour Group. The continuation of the campaign appears to have been rejected, however, in favour of a position of principle regardless of its chances of success. Furthermore, opposition to the no rate strategy by the Teachers' unions, GMBATU, and the Attercliffe Constituency [loc. cit.], meant that such a position was untenable.

Although adopting similar tactics, experiencing economic decline, and fluctuations in Labour Party membership, Liverpool's position exhibited important differences to other authorities involved in the campaign against rate capping. In particular, the development of the local labour movement, involvement of activists, and the campaign for more resources in 1984, recounted in Chapter Five, produced structures for mobilisation and support among the authority's trade unions, and for the conduct of the campaign. [Blunkett, 1994] Liverpool's campaign of 1984 was therefore based on unity between the Labour Group and local authority unions [Blunkett and Jackson, op. cit; NALGO NDAM, 16.10.84; Wainwright, op. cit.]; with the latter displaying degrees of radicalism and organisation developed through conflict with the previous Liberal administration. [Burgess, 1994; Lowes, 1994] Thus, the involvement of trade union activists in the campaign encouraged the involvement of the broader workforce, formed a bridge between the Labour Group and work-force [Lowes, ibid.], and allowed Labour Party policies to be practised. [Cresswell, 1994]

In addition to the leading role played by local authority trade unions in the DLP, recorded in Chapter Five, trade union participation was an integral factor in the campaign. Meetings between trade union activists, full-time officers, and councillors, for example, formed part of a consultation process that involved the Labour Group, DLP, JSSC, and mass meetings of stewards and members. [Byrne, op. cit.] This process is identified as a contributing factor to the resolve of the Labour Group [loc. cit; Parkinson, 1985]; a resolve that was encouraged by the DLP selection process described in Chapter Five, and ensured that a rate was not set until June 1985.

The Liverpool labour movement was also able to build on the experiences of the 1984 campaign, and strengthen local resolve, by: staging workplace meetings;
stewards courses; lobbies; demonstrations; party meetings; public meetings; and, mass meetings of stewards, local authority workers, and labour movement activists.[Byrne, op. cit; Cresswell, op. cit; Liverpool 1984-85, 24.1.85; Liverpool Labour Group, 2.9.85; Lowes, op. cit; MTULMCC 1983-85; Liverpool NALGO Campaign News 85, 21.1.85; Liverpool NALGO Campaign Committee 1983-85, 22.7.85; Liverpool NALGO Campaign News 85: 15.2.85; Parkinson, op. cit.] In sum, Liverpool was able to make the campaign more of a mass movement[Burgess, op. cit.], but one that was organised through established structures.

A crucial factor in the differing performances of the authorities considered here, relates to the existence of structures that facilitated the conduct of a co-ordinated campaign. Thus, although the GLC had participatory structures, they were not conducive to such campaigning activity. Similarly, Sheffield's structures were developed latterly, and therefore proved less effective than Liverpool's. Nevertheless, the existence of structures, or trade union pressure and support, were necessary for campaigning activity but not sufficient to ensure Labour Group non-compliance.

In Southwark, for example, the Labour Group voted to set a rate despite local authority trade unions occupying the Council chamber to prevent the decision being implemented, and lobbying a re-arranged meeting.[NLACC 1985, 2.5.85] Similarly, a mass lobby of Hackney Council Meeting was arranged in May 1985, following a Court instruction to set a rate[loc. cit.], but ultimately failed to ensure that no rate was set. Perhaps the clearest explanation can therefore be made by way of an analogy between Clay Cross and Liverpool, where: the resolve of councillors was a an integral factor in their selection by the local party; the local labour movements employed cohesive structures; and, both practised a form of delegated democracy.

Finally, trade union support for Labour groups adopting a stance of non-compliance had been a prerequisite for those promoting and participating in the campaign[Livingstone, op. cit: 309], and was proposed originally at the Local Government in Crisis Conference 1980. Similarly, the importance attached to such support is demonstrated by the Labour Party's NEC's resolution, 13.5.85, that:

no council should be expected to continue with a particular tactic unless it a) sincerely believes it is the only option for maintaining jobs and services and b) has identifiable and specific commitments from party members, trade unionists and community groups, to ensure that financial and personal risks are shared with those calling for or supporting such decisions.[Blunkett and Jackson, op. cit: 182]

Assertions that premise the failure of the campaign on the absence of national leadership are therefore misplaced, as a national lead could not compensate for the absence of local structures and resolve. Similarly, arguments that portray the concealed reality of budget positions as undermining local unity[Clarke and
Cochrane, 1989: Stoker, op. cit.], fail to recognise the pre-existence of divisions that were merely brought to the fore by such machinations.

The contention here is that the campaign of non-compliance failed for a variety of reasons, including local divisions, but that the overriding factor was the tactical focus on councillors. While an emphasis on participation and mobilisation was retained, the practice of non-compliance and the agreement of changes in that practice, took place through Labour groups, and at LGCU level through the Strategy Sub-Group of councillors, trade union and LGCU officers. Thus, the absence of effective structures, particularly at the local level, through which councillors, activists, and members could interact was a weakness of the campaign. In effect, councillors of authorities seeking negotiation were isolated from broad based support and under a degree of personal pressure that meant half-hearted commitment was unsustainable.

Furthermore, local support only had a significant bearing where councillors were selected on the basis of their commitment to policies, and mandated to adopt a position of non-compliance. Thus, the campaign of non-compliance did not fail, simply because it attempted to defend local government, and mobilise support for the defiance of councillors, as Mclaverty suggests[1989: 4]. The campaign failed due to the insufficient development of local labour movement structures, and their utilisation as a means of translating broad based support into Labour Group resolve and commitment. In other words, the structures and practice of the campaign mirrored the abstract nature of constitutional democracy; a consequence of accepting the validity of bourgeois political democracy, theoretical equivalence, and abstracted state structures.

INDUSTRIAL ACTION

The assertion that the campaign of non-compliance failed due to the underdevelopment and utilisation of labour movement structures, is also pertinent to the tactic of industrial action. Thus, in addition to supporting councillors and Labour groups who sought to resist the Rates Act, sustained industrial action was threatened as a means of continuing the campaign if Labour groups complied, and a way of penalising authorities that were making cuts.[NALGO, 1984b: 5] Consideration of the industrial action tactic therefore examines the way campaigning activity was designed to overcome the focus on councillors, and explores another aspect of labour movement democratic practice.

This is achieved by identifying: structures through which decisions concerning the adoption, co-ordination, and instigation of the industrial action tactic were taken; the types of industrial action approved and circumstances in which such action would be effected; and, by exploring the practicality of industrial action as a tactic for the
defence of local services and defeat of central government. As part of this process, the attitudes, function, interaction, and interrelationship of councillors, full-time officers, parliamentarians, and activists receive consideration, and the reciprocal interrogation of conceptual principles and practice is completed.

The specific or general character of decisions concerning the adoption, co-ordination, and instigation of industrial action correspond to the level or organisation at which the tactic was approved. The TUC, for example, approved a motion in 1984 that included a general reference to 'official industrial action to defend jobs services in local authorities'. [NALGO, 1984b; TUC, 1984] Support for such action was dependent on unions being affiliated to the TUC, however, and 'having involved the General Council'. [loc. cit.]. Decisions pertaining to industrial action were also required to involve the TUCLGC, and be taken through properly constituted trade union bodies, as opposed to ad-hoc campaigning committees. [TUC, 1984: 10]

General references are also evident at Labour Party and NALGO conferences. As Chapter Four records, for example, the 1983 LPAC approved a motion calling for a campaign involving 'industrial muscle', and 'all available channels'. [Labour Party 1966-84, 1983: 80] Likewise, the NALGO conference of 1984, pledged 'unqualified support to whatever industrial action proves necessary (subject to the industrial action regulations) in the course of an escalating campaign'. [NALGO, 1984b: 10] These resolutions are a reflection of an earlier recognition, by the Labour Party NEC in 1980, that the labour movement had to be 'prepared to use its full strength, including industrial action to defend the most needy in society'. [Gyford, and James, 1983: 188]

The development of structures within NALGO to improve campaign organisation and practice is recorded in Chapter Six, which also notes that these bodies provided for interaction between national committees, officials, and local activists. Thus, as the following analysis demonstrates, it was through these structures that the industrial action tactic received clearest elucidation, and the consent of those involved. Other bodies involved in the consideration of the industrial action tactic, however, included some that the TUC would not recognise as 'properly constituted trade union bodies'. In addition to officer led JTUCs at the local level, for example, activist led JSSCs were also evident, and the attempt to establish and develop the activist led NLACC is recorded in Chapter Six. [NLACC, 1985] The composition and functions of the bodies identified here, are explored by through an examination of their consideration and approval of the industrial action tactic.

A qualitative difference exists between the industrial action described in Chapter Six, and the action planned as part of the campaign of non-compliance. The campaign of opposition, for example, used limited industrial action to publicise issues, and to mobilise and encourage participation amongst labour movement organisations and the
As part of the campaign of non-compliance, however, industrial action of a ‘prolonged as opposed to demonstrative nature’ [TUC, 1984: 10] was envisaged, and specific objectives and circumstances identified for the instigation of such action. Nevertheless, ‘a coherent a programme of militant industrial action against the government’s attack on local democracy, services and jobs’ was also expected to ‘alert and mobilise members to the threat posed by the Government’s policies’. [NALGO, 1984a: 13] The distinction between earlier and later versions of the tactic therefore lies in the latter intention to take direct action in defence of local democracy, jobs and services [NALGO, ibid; NALGO, 1984b; TUC, 1984], to achieve the intermediate and ultimate aims identified in Chapter Six. [NALGO, 1984b: 3]

The type of industrial action envisaged in pursuit of these objectives, falls into three broad categories, and correspond to specific circumstances. The first example, and the least combative, required trade union members refusing to co-operate with commissioners introduced by central government to run a local authority’s affairs. [NALGO, 1981; NALGO 1984a, NALGO 1984b; NLACC 1985, 23.2.85; TUC 1960-1987, 1984]12 This type of action was passive, almost paradoxical, taking action by not doing something, and depended on Government action to provoke a response. Because the Government was required to make the first move, however, the initiative was left with the Government who could decide the timing and area of engagement; though adoption and declaration of the tactic was also a way of deterring government action. The stance was also the most overt defence of local democracy, premising non-co-operation on: the removal of powers from elected representatives; the suspension of an elected council, or transferral of its powers to a non-elected body [TUC, 1984]; and, attempts to take local authorities out of democratic control. [NALGO, 1984]13

Of the types of industrial action approved, the least ambiguous was that of strike action to defend jobs and services. NALGO, for example, envisaged that: branches seriously affected by cuts would, in conjunction with other trade unions, take indefinite and total strike action in defence of jobs and services [NALGO, 1984a: 13]; branches where one or more of their members were affected by compulsory redundancy would take all out strike action [loc. cit.]; and, strike action would be taken where wages and salaries could not be paid as a result of the Government withholding RSG contributions. [NALGO, 1984b; 5] The last example was also identified by D

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12 The imposition of Commissioners was used against Clay Cross in the 1970s, and in Norwich in 1980-1.

13 Non co-operation was also adopted by the NALGO NDAM as a response to legislation which required local government officers to set a rate or balance budgets in non-complying authorities. The practicality of this tactic bears analogy with the non return of information, discussed in Chapter Six, as the seniority of officers involved would mean that they were unlikely to belong to a trade union, comply with their instruction, or risk illegality.
Blunkett as a point where the campaign of non-compliance could be escalated.[1985b: 3]

The third form of industrial action considered and approved as part of the campaign of non-compliance involved supportive or solidarity strike action. This tactic was more problematic than the previous examples discussed, due to its potential implications for campaign unity. Such action could, for example, be justified as meeting the criteria laid down by NALGO for industrial action with any chance of success: widespread national strike action by all local government trade unions.[NALGO, 1981: 6] On the other hand, the action could have a detrimental effect on local authorities who, as part of a united labour movement campaign, were actively pursuing a position of non-compliance[NALGO, 1984b: 4], and the withdrawal of services in those authorities would risk alienating the support of people who depended on them.[TUC, 1984: 10; Blunkett, 1994] Nevertheless, this tactic was approved through NALGO's NDAM and RCLGM structures.

An NDAM held in October 1984, for example, approved a motion from Camden Branch that identified 'wide ranging solidarity action by all NALGO members in hit list boroughs at the point when any one of the branches has taken all-out strike action against cuts arising from Rate-Capping' as the 'key to an effective defence against the attack on jobs services and local democracy'.[NALGO NDAM, 16.10.84] A similar position was adopted by an RCLGM in November 1984 when all NALGO branches were requested to submit motions to AGMs or appropriate Branch meetings for the instigation of solidarity action if strike action was called in any NALGO Branch.[NALGO RCLGM 1984-85, 20.11.84] Finally, the position was reiterated in February when motions moved by Hackney Branch were approved, and required: all branches to strike regardless of the position of their employer, when one Branch takes strike action because of their position; and, for solidarity action to be instigated if Hackney Branch took industrial action as a result of the court case brought against the local authority's no rate position.[NALGO RCLGM 1984-85, 27.2.85]

The NDAM and RCLGM approval of a prescriptive approach, whereby specified action was to be staged in response to predetermined triggers, is in contrast to NALGO's NLGC recommendation that decisions on tactical industrial action be taken as the campaign develops and as the political circumstances become clearer.[NALGO, 1984b: 4 & 6] Thus, a difference in approach between local activists and national leaders and full-time officers is evident; one that reflects the prescriptive and non-prescriptive approaches discussed in relation to the LPAC in Chapter Four. As Chapter Six notes, however, NDAMs and RCLGMs involved national figures, full-time officers and local activists and therefore indicates the influence of activists in these bodies.
The similarity between the motions cited above, and the resolution submitted to the
organising conference of NLACC on 30.3.85 provides further evidence of the position
adopted by activists. As an activist body, for example, NLACC proposed that
motions be submitted, simultaneously, to branch meetings of all trade unions in rate
capped and penalised authorities for immediate action if: compulsory redundancies
were threatened; services privatised; or, any member of a trade union disciplined or
faced legal action for non co-operation with rate-capping, abolition, refusing to
implement cuts or cover for vacancies.[NLACC 1985, 23.2.85] There are obvious
analogies between the provisions of the NLACC motion and that of the NALGO
RCLGM 20.11.84 discussed above.

Delegations to NLACC, however, were not subject to uniform representative
practices or constitutional remit from affiliates, and activists were allowed to affiliate
as individuals.[Burgess, 1994; Lowes, 1994] The similarity between the positions
adopted by NLACC and the NALGO NDAM and RCLGM structures, raises the
question of how far the latter delegates were taking decisions agreed by their local
membership. This question is especially pertinent as the delegates from the NDAM
and RCLGM were unable to deliver the decisions they adopted[Burgess, op. cit.], and
therefore repeats councillors' failure to deliver the decisions adopted at the LGCU;
discussed earlier in the Chapter.

The development of local labour movement structures, the decisions they
supported, and their democratic practice were therefore crucial to the success or
failure of the campaign. Of the authorities attending the inaugural meeting of
NLACC, for example, only nine of those participating in the campaign of non-
compliance were represented by delegates from a JSSC or JTUC. While this does not
indicate the absence of structures in those attending from the other campaigning
authorities, or affirm the representative structures of those JSSCs and JTUCs present,
it raises the question of who the non JSSC and JTUC delegates were representing.

In contrast to the bold positions adopted by activist structures, for example,
NALGO's NLGC recognised that the success of industrial action depended on the
resolve of the membership[NALGO, 1984b: 5], and the TUC viewed bold policies
and unco-ordinated or inadequately prepared industrial action, backed by inadequate
understanding, to be a recipe for defeat.[TUC, 1984: 9-10] Discussion of all options
between those involved in the campaign, including 'the community generally', and
only after all information was available, was therefore recommended; as was the
adoption of tactical responses according to the degree of support engendered.[loc. cit.]
As the previous section demonstrated, however, there was an absence local structures
to facilitate the consistent participation and mobilisation of interested groups in such a
process.
The question of against whom industrial action would be directed, had implications for the mobilisation of support. Action against authorities engaging in cuts would, for example, have an obvious rationale, and may have engendered support from those affected by reductions in service provision. Alternatively, the withdrawal of services through strike action in authorities where no cuts were made, would have risked alienating service users. Any action, unless directed against the authority, was therefore recommended to be undertaken only with the consent of the local authority, and that of its service users. [TUC, 1984: 9]

The adoption prescriptive resolutions also ignored the extent to which structures had been developed in individual authorities, and the motivations of those involved. Much emphasis appears to have been placed on calls for action, but the ground work for that action was, if the final collapse of the campaign is to be taken at face value, unsuccessful or non-existent. While mobilisation and participation required a lead, the passing of worthy resolutions proved to be no substitute for disciplined organisation. The adoption of such motions therefore demonstrates the epistemological limitation of those advocating the positions adopted. The specification of universal, rigid, preconceived tactics in response to predetermined events, regardless of individual circumstances or preparations undertaken, represents a separation of practice and theory; a dogma of pre-ordained principles attempting to determine practical responses.

Although national labour movement policy and practice accepted and promoted the imposed dichotomy between industrial and political activity, and the campaign coincided with, and was therefore affected by, the unsatisfactory end to the Miners strike in 1985 [Blunkett, 1994], the failure of the industrial action tactic is not attributable to a lack of national leadership or commitment. The evidence presented here, suggests that the tactic did not develop as a consequence of theoretical and analytical limitations that failed to recognise: local variations; the inadequate structural development of local labour movements; and, the commitment of the members concerned. The commitment, resolve, and analysis of activists therefore failed to recognise or overcome the nature of rate capping, as a long term constitutional and abstract threat, as opposed to an immediate decimation of jobs and services. [Blunkett, ibid.]

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14 Following the general strike of 1926, for example, labour movement organisations generally accepted restrictions placed on the political activity of trade unions by the Trades Dispute Act 1927. [Wainwright, 1987: 115] Similarly, in 1974, the TUC and Labour Party were still insisting that areas maintaining a Trades Council and Labour Party organisation separate into individual trades council and Labour Party bodies. [Wainwright, ibid: 107] Furthermore, R Hattersley was totally opposed to the use of industrial action for 'political' purposes [Gyford and James, 1983: 188].
The observation made by Duncan and Goodwin, and discussed in Chapter Four, that opposing particular legislation focuses resistance on the parliamentary process, can now be afforded new meaning. At one level, for example, the focus on the Rates Act abstracted the defence of local government services, jobs, and local democracy from local practice to the defeat of a particular piece of legislation. Defeat of the Rates Act, the removal of targets and penalties, the return of RSG to 1979 levels, and the defence of jobs, services, and local democracy all became synonymous; abstracted from local labour movement practice.

On an adjacent level, the tactical focus of non-compliance on councillors, and the determination of decisions for industrial action on the commitment and analysis of activists, also abstracted opposition and resistance from local labour movement practice. While an emphasis on participation and mobilisation was present in both areas, the distance between the statements, aims, and actions of councillors and activists, and those they sought or claimed to represent proved to be too great. The absence of effective representative structures, particularly at the local level, through which the constituent elements could interact and the direction of the campaign be decided in accordance with membership wishes and resolve, was therefore a weakness the campaign was unable to overcome.

Finally, the element of truth in Mclaverty’s assertion that the campaign failed because it attempted to defend local government, and mobilise support for the defiance of councillors[1989: 4], can also be retrieved and developed. The crucial point is that the mobilisation of sustained popular or labour movement support was not possible because the development of local labour movement representative structures and practice emulated the abstracted nature of state structures. In other words, decisions relating to the campaign were taken by activists and councillors, and a reliance on the commitment and resolve of those groups reflect the parliamentary and council practice whereby decisions are taken independently of constituents. Paradoxically, therefore, one of the campaign’s main aims, that of defending local democracy, was undermined by a failure to recognise the nature of bourgeois democratic practice, and transcend it through representative local structures based on strict mandates and delegation.
CONCLUSION

In accordance with the research aims outlined in the introductory chapter, the thesis interrogates labour movement opposition and resistance to central government policy and practice toward local government in the 1980s. A distinctive feature of this approach is the use of society as a framework within which to interrogate the campaigns; as opposed to artificially constructed frameworks or models such as the ‘New Urban Left’. Furthermore, the imbalance created by accounts that concentrate on Labour Party activity is redressed through the identification and exploration of trade union involvement, locally and nationally, in the said campaigns. By understanding the campaigns as labour movement activity in the context of society as a whole, the thesis provides a comprehensive and reciprocal exploration of campaign principles and practice, and assesses their impact on the outcome of the campaign.

The societal framework is established in keeping with the original research aims, by exploring the genesis of relevant labour movement conceptual principles and practices within an historical context that runs from the early 1960s to the mid 1980s. In keeping with the practice of immanent critique, however, the subject selects the categories and areas of exploration. Labour movement conceptual principles and practice are therefore identified and explored in relation to those areas the campaigns claimed to be defending, namely local government jobs, services, and local democracy; hence the title of the thesis. The meta-theoretical and empirical aspects of these categories are not treated as separate entities, but as a totality. Conceptual principles are therefore validated in reference to practice and vice versa, as part of a reciprocal process that identifies and explores determinate abstractions.

Chapter One introduces the historical period within which the campaigns are studied by exploring: the rapid expansion of local government service provision and employment; changes in the structure, organisation and therefore democratic practice of local government in England and Wales; and, the changing economic fortunes that precipitated the retrenchment of the 1970s and 1980s. These developments influenced and were influenced by changes in labour movement organisation, outlook, and practice, and exploration of their interrelations is begun with Chapter Two’s
consideration of: the growth of activism in trade unions and Labour Party; the recomposition of Labour Party membership; and, the struggles for democracy and accountability within the Labour Party. In both areas a movement toward local control by activists was evident, and these factors contributed to the conceptual principles and practices evident in the campaigns of the 1980s.

The move toward greater accountability of leaders to activists within the Labour Party and trade unions facilitated and contributed to the kind of campaigning activity undertaken during the 1970s and 1980s; the nature of which is examined from Chapter Three onwards. In particular, this development constituted a means by which the gap between councillors, MPs, officials, leadership figures, and society as a whole, created by labour movement acceptance and imitation of abstracted political and state structures, could be breached, and democratic practice founded on mobilisation and participation. A major weakness of the campaign was that this development ceased at the activist level, and in too many instances structures through which activists and broader populace could interact were either unused or not developed.

The practice and implications of conducting campaigning activity detached from society, through abstracted labour movement and state structures, are explored throughout the thesis and summarised here in reference to labour movement defence and conceptualisation of local government jobs, services, and local democracy. This is achieved by affording brief consideration to the most important aspects of practices aimed at protecting service provision and local authority employment, and by exploring the significance of democratic practice for the defence of jobs, services, and local democracy.

**Local Government Services**

A striking feature of the period considered is the consistency between the areas of service provision evident in labour movement demands for, and Labour governments' involvement in, expansion and improvement, and those areas that were the subject of retrenchment and defence in the 1970s and 1980s. Reciprocal consideration and interrogation of demands, expansion and improvement, and attempts at defence constitutes the process of validating meta-theoretical and empirical categories in reference to each other. A link is evident, for example, between the expansion of housing and transport under Labour governments in the 1960s, outlined in Chapter One, and the campaign against the Housing Finance Act 1972 and South Yorkshire's dispute with central government over the funding of its transport policy, both considered in Chapter Three. In the cases of Clay Cross and South Yorkshire, the opposition and resistance practised were justified in reference to definitions of local
democracy and autonomy, namely the right of local authorities to vary levels of local service provision and taxation.

As Chapter Four records, the provision of local authority housing and transport were also the subject of central restrictions in the 1980s, as a consequence of the Local Government Planning and Land Act 1980, the Housing Act 1980, and the Transport Acts of 1980 and 1983. Local examples of opposition and resistance tended to be isolated, however, and restricted to councillors and officers. Both areas were also subject to pressure in the late 1970s and early 1980s, as a consequence of central attempts to restrict the growth of local government spending. Attempts to oppose and resist such initiatives, prior to the Rates Bill 1983, involved the protection of service provision by ameliorating the implications of financial restraint by increasing local taxes, and developing financial devices to avoid centrally devised targets and penalties. As opposed to campaigns involving broad-based mobilisation and participation, opposition and resistance depended on the practice of councillors and professionals through abstracted structures and mechanisms of the state; in ways that were not easily accessible to electors, trade unionists, or Labour Party members.

Examples of local resistance in the 1980s, most notably those considered in Chapter Four in relation to the privatisation of local service provision, tended to be restricted to the involvement of employees and therefore trade union members directly affected. Such campaigns were mounted in Basingstoke, Gloucester, Wandsworth, and in Liverpool where, as Chapter Five records, the campaign to oppose the proposed privatisation of cleansing services formed a feature of the local election campaign in 1983. Nevertheless, the localised nature of activity, its restriction to particular service areas, and its focus on local elections, MPs, councillors, and labour movement activists and members, militated the conduct of broad based campaigning activity.

Inherent difficulties in identifying reductions in service quality, as opposed to wholesale reductions in or withdrawal of services, worked against the mobilisation and participation of a broader constituency, and made the mounting of sustained campaigns difficult. There was therefore a focus on particular apparatus such as local elections, councillors, and council chambers. As chapters Six and Seven demonstrate, this problem is also manifested in the subsumption of the defence of services in the campaign against rate capping, and the associated ultimate aims. In other words, the defence of services became synonymous with the campaign against the Rates Act 1984 and its provisions, and day to day struggles were relegated to matters of local authority decision making in accordance with Labour Party NEC advice to minimise the effects of central policy and to blame the Government for less palatable measures.
Local Authority Employment

Service expansion and retraction affected, and was affected by, employment patterns in public and private sectors, and within local authorities. In particular, the move toward mass unemployment, attempts at local regeneration, and labour movement demands for remedial action, considered in Chapter One, identify conceptual principles, and help explain why importance was attached to maintaining local authority employment in the 1980s. Chapters One, Three, and Four, for example, illustrate the correlation between the expansion and retraction of service provision and fluctuations in local authority employment, and chapters Four and Six record various estimates made as to the numbers of jobs lost due to the practice of financial restraint and privatisation of local government services in the 1980s.

Throughout the period studied attempts were made to assuage the impact of economic decline and recession through local economic regeneration. As chapters One and Four record, however, such practices were inevitably small scale, and during the 1980s were shaped much more by central government prescriptions and intervention. Furthermore, an emphasis on subsidising investment in plant and machinery as opposed to the employment of labour, and measuring success in terms of the number of factories opened rather than new jobs created or transferred from existing enterprises, were common feature of such activity.

The value attached to levels of local employment also concentrated on overall totals, as opposed to the type and conditions of employment. Chapters One and Three, for example, identify the trend in local government employment whereby numbers employed remained relatively stable, but at the expense of full-time employment being replaced by part-time jobs. Similarly, attempts to avoid the threat of privatising jobs and services in the 1980s, discussed in Chapter Four, involved negotiated reductions in the working conditions of local authority employees. The abstract category of jobs became the all important by-word, at the expense of conditions of employment and levels of pay.

As with the defence of services, the struggle to protect jobs faced difficulties in mobilising resistance. Reductions in employment conditions and job numbers were achieved under the threat of even greater reductions, and through piecemeal tactics such as the non-filling of vacancies, early retirement, and voluntary redundancy as opposed to wholesale compulsory redundancies. As with opposition to financial restraint, activity was localised, and focused on councillors, as those with the opportunity to save local authority jobs. The defence of jobs therefore became synonymous with the aims of the campaign against rate capping, explored in chapters Six and Seven.
Democratic Practice

Ultimately, the success or failure of the campaigns, both localised and broader activity, depended on the mobilisation and participation of labour movement officers, leaders, activists, members, and the broader populace. The extent to which such mobilisation and participation was effected, and the reasons for it, forms the central explanation propounded by this thesis. Essentially, the labour movement’s acceptance of, or failure to recognise, the limitations of bourgeois abstraction influenced such campaign practice.

Labour movement opposition to the introduction of a business veto, discussed in Chapter Six for example, was based on the principle of one person one vote, but failed to acknowledge the abstract nature of the equality afforded by universal suffrage. Similarly, the theoretical independence and equivalence associated with judicial, legislative, and executive functions of the state apparatus, by virtue of their abstraction from a society founded on inequality, was used as an argument for the independence of local government. The impact of such ideological forces on campaign practice are summarised here in reference to the struggles to overcome the more obvious elements of abstraction, and indicate how the concomitant research aim identified in the introductory chapter is addressed.

There is a paradox in the parallel development of struggles to defend the constitutional practice of local democracy and autonomy, based on the ability to raise local taxes and vary local service provision, alongside the struggle for democracy and accountability within the labour movement. This latter factor involved a threat to abstracted structures and practice through an interaction between various geographic and functional strata evident in the structures, organisation, and practices employed by the labour movement, and therefore the reciprocal interrelation and interaction between activist, councillors, full-time officer, leadership, membership, parliamentarians, and general public. In contrast, the defence of constitutional democracy involved the perpetuation of abstracted structures.

The struggle for democracy and autonomy within the labour movement is epitomised by relations between: Labour governments and Labour local authorities, discussed in Chapter Three; parliamentary leadership and local parties, discussed from Chapter Two onwards; and, local parties and Labour groups, also considered from Chapter Two onwards. Each of these relations, and the disputes that resulted, revolved around the honouring of manifesto commitments and the validity of mandates; while the first area, demonstrated in reference to South Yorkshire’s transport policy in Chapter Three, involved the added factor of local authorities financing variations in service provision through local taxes.
The struggle between Labour governments and local parties was evident in the 1960s, but acquired new significance with the PLP’s abandonment of the 1973 Party programme, and the acceptance of monetary economic theory. A particular feature of this struggle was the emergence of the CLPD, identified in Chapter Two, and its demands for greater accountability within the Labour Party; particularly between MPs and local parties, and between the PLP and LPAC. The struggles were accompanied by similar developments at the local level where attempts to make Labour groups accountable to local parties were undertaken. Significantly, the issue of democratic practice within the Labour Party demonstrates a paradox between the practice and principles of the PLP.

Chapters Three and Four, for example, record the PLP view that local Labour groups and parties could not be instructed by the national Party to carry out particular policies, and how disciplinary action was taken against local parties that adopted trenchant positions to oppose cuts in public expenditure; such as North East Derbyshire in the 1970s, and Manchester, Bristol, and Coventry in the 1980s. Similarly, Chapter Five notes that the PLP sought to influence local policy and practice in Liverpool in the 1980s to avoid confrontation with the Conservative Government. In effect, therefore, the PLP used central intervention to maintain the abstraction of Labour Group practice from local parties and manifesto commitments to local electorates.

These developments and struggles contributed to, and were consequences of, the growth of activism within the labour movement; first identified in Chapter Two. That such struggles sought to make the PLP accountable to activists within the Labour Party, and that activist movements within trade unions sought to secure lay control over local policy and practice, indicates the limitations of campaign practice. In sum, the move toward activism sought to overcome one aspect of abstraction affecting democratic practice within the labour movement, but resulted in another form of abstraction, described in chapters Four, Six, and Seven, whereby labour movement activists, councillors, and officers were separated from the labour movement membership and broader populace.

The concentration of opposition and resistance on councillors is noted in relation to the protection of jobs and services, but such practice acquired even greater importance in relation to non-compliance with the rate capping; discussed in Chapter Seven. Despite an early emphasis on participation and mobilisation, for example, the practice of non-compliance and the agreement of changes in that practice, took place through Labour groups, and at the LGCU Strategy Sub-Group. Furthermore, local support only had a significant bearing where councillors were selected on the basis of their commitment to policies; as Chapter Five notes in relation to Liverpool. In other
words, the focus and practice of the campaign emulated the abstract nature of constitutional democracy; a consequence of accepting the validity of bourgeois political democracy, theoretical equivalence, and abstracted state structures.

Attempts to overcome these abstractions were mitigated by the focus of structures and theoretical positions on the immediate objectives of defending jobs, services, and constitutional local democracy, rather than attempting to transcend constitutional practices through the establishment of enduring, broad based participatory structures. Tactics, such as publicity, parliamentary lobbying, demonstrations, and days of action, identified and discussed from Chapter Three onwards, offered means by which campaigning activity could surpass abstracted practice and develop links between parliamentarians, councillors, full-time officers, activists, and the broader membership and populace, but the links and activities developed proved to be transient. Similarly, the structures and tactics developed in and through campaign committees, delegate conferences, and annual party and trade union conferences in the campaigns of the 1970s and 1980s, identified and discussed from Chapter Three onwards, proved to be equally short-term.

The greatest potential to overcome the restrictions of abstraction were exhibited by Clay Cross in the 1970s, discussed in Chapter Three, Liverpool in the 1980s, discussed in Chapter Five, and the acceptance of sustained industrial action as a means of progressing the campaign, discussed in Chapter Seven. As Chapter Five records, for example, democratic practice within the Liverpool labour movement depended on the involvement of activists for the mobilisation and participation of labour movement members and broader populace through rallies, demonstrations, and mass meetings and sought validation and approval of activist decisions at general and mass meetings. In the final analysis, however, the structures and practices developed in Liverpool proved also to be transient and not representative of the broader labour movement.

The threatened resistance to Parliament through the use of industrial action, considered in Chapter Seven, indicates the extent to which the practice of bourgeois abstraction was threatened. For the tactic to be effective, however, an unprecedented level of mobilisation and participation was required through effective and durable representative structures. The development of structures within NALGO in the form of NDAMs and RCLGMs facilitated only activist involvement, however, too many of whom failed to undertake the ground work necessary to ensure that industrial action was a feasible option. Thus, although the tactic required a lead to be taken, the passing of worthy resolutions proved to be no substitute for disciplined organisation.

The evidence considered in Chapter Seven, and the developments outlined in earlier chapters, indicate that the tactic was unworkable due to theoretical and
analytical limitations that failed to recognise the inadequate structural development of local labour movements, or secure the commitment of the members concerned. Activists failed to recognise or overcome the nature of rate capping, as a long term constitutional and therefore abstract threat, as opposed to an immediate decimation of jobs and services. Similarly, issues of representation and delegation were not addressed and allowed activists at delegate conferences or other bodies to adopt untenable positions. In the final analysis, such practices replicated the abstract practice of democracy in society, where representatives in parliament or the council chamber take decisions according to their interpretation of the will of the people supposedly divined from elections. In other words, the extent to which activists were able or concerned to engage in dialogue with those that they sought to mobilise is an important factor for the explanation of the eventual demise of the campaign.

Ultimately, the tactical focus on councillors, and the determination of decisions for industrial action according to the commitment and analysis of activists, abstracted opposition and resistance from local labour movement practice. While the need for participation and mobilisation was recognised, the gap between the statements, aims, and actions of councillors, activists, and those they claimed to represent, was too great to deliver the commitment necessary for the effective execution of the campaign. This was essentially the result of activist failure to utilise and develop effective representative structures, particularly at the local level, through which the constituent elements could interact and the direction of the campaign be decided in accordance with membership wishes and resolve.

Particularly in the area of democratic practice is the interaction of labour movement principles and practice, in the development and use of campaign structures and tactics, important for the realisation of desired ends. An element of continuity is evident between the conceptual principles, structure, and tactics employed in opposing rate capping and in earlier labour movement campaigns, but the crucial factor identified in Chapter Seven, was the extent to which local labour movement representative structures and practice emulated the abstracted nature of state structures. Decisions relating to the campaign were taken by activists, councillors, and full-time officers, and therefore relied on the commitment and resolve of those groups. Paradoxically, the campaign’s aims of defending local government services, jobs, and local democracy were undermined by a failure to recognise the limitations of bourgeois democratic practice, and transcend it through representative local labour movement structures based on strict mandates and delegation.
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APPENDIX ONE

ABSTRACTION

Consideration the practice and processes of abstraction is undertaken because 'all theorising employs abstractions'[Gunn, 1989: 105], and because such usage affects and indicates the processes through which men and women attempt to understand, interpret and transform the practical social world. In other words, the kind of knowledge developed through the theoretical process is influenced by the way abstractions are employed and, at the same time, the process of theorisation conditions the way abstractions are used. For these reasons, it is necessary to explain what is meant by the term 'abstraction', how related practice shapes knowledge, and demonstrate how theoretical approaches abstract in different ways.¹

These goals are addressed over three sections entitled: Knowledge; Labour; and, Practical Abstraction. The first section provides a brief account of the type of abstractions used in the formulation of knowledge and associates them with the theoretical approaches discussed in the Introduction. The tendency toward formulating knowledge in terms of dualism and dichotomy is also addressed at this point. In the following section the concept of 'labour' is introduced, defined, and used to demonstrate how the process of abstraction can be practised in a manner which acknowledges the internal relations of a 'world in development and flux'[Held, 1980: 26] as opposed to separate and distinct categories. The style of theorising appropriate to this use of abstraction is also identified. Finally, those processes of abstraction that are evident in the practical world are identified and their implications explored.

Knowledge

The assertions made in the opening paragraphs require clarification. This is achieved by summarising: the forms of abstraction employed in the formulation of knowledge; their fit with particular theoretical approaches; and, the use of dichotomy

¹ Together with Appendix Two, the consideration of abstraction demonstrates the flaws inherent in theoretical approaches that depend upon a separation of theory from practice.
and dualism in abstraction and theorising. This section proceeds by defining and discussing the relative merits of specific forms of abstraction. In building on the conclusions of this discussion, the focus of attention then moves on to consider the compatibility of the practices identified with the findings of the Research Practice section. The process is concluded by considering the limitations inherent in those approaches that seek to interpret the practical social world in terms of dichotomy and dualism.

In the first instance, two forms of abstraction can be identified. Gunn, for example, distinguishes between 'empiricist' and 'determinate' forms[1989: 105], and Colletti makes a similar distinction between 'indeterminate or generic abstractions, as compared to the determinate specific ones.'[1975: 26] The difference between the two forms of abstraction lies, therefore, in their recognition of categories as generic or universal, rather than specific to a given epoch. As an example of empiricist or generic abstraction, Gunn cites Marx's description of 'Production in general' as an abstraction which 'fixes the common element and thus saves us repetition'.[op. cit: 105-6] 'This general category' Marx continues 'is itself segmented many times over and splits into different determinations. Some determinations belong to all epochs, others only to a few.'[1973: 85]

The discussion of the concept of 'labour', conducted in the next section, provides further illustration of the different types of abstraction. For the moment, however, consideration is afforded to the dangers that accompany the indiscriminate use of empiricist abstraction. The main danger is that identified by Dobb as 'hypostatising one's concepts'.[Colletti, op. cit: 26] In other words, the process of 'regarding the postulated relations as the determining ones in an actual situation'.[loc. cit.] In reference to economics, for example, Dobb argues that the abstraction of aspects of exchange relations from social relations of production 'is given an independent existence as though it represented the essence of reality, instead of a contingent facet of reality.'[loc. cit.]; a point explored further in the final section.

If this process of hypostatisation is considered in reference to the conclusions of the Research Practice section, the validation of categories and concepts employed in such a process requires clarification. Given the generalised and unreal nature of this type of abstraction, however, it defies reciprocal validation in reference to the practical world; a process of validation can only take place at the meta-theoretical level. A consequence of their general nature, therefore, is that hypostatised concepts can only be applied to empirical categories as an external means of validation.2

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2 This theme is developed further in Appendix Two with regard to the use of models and frameworks, and the separation of theory and practice.
Duncan and Goodwin explain how the unvalidated practice of abstraction distorts reality when they describe how, in relation to apparently general processes such as de-industrialisation, an 'artificial distinction between general and local emerges from a conflation of our mental processes of abstraction with what actually happens in reality.'[1988: 56] In other words, they identify a theoretical blind spot that results from the false distinctions made between general and local processes or between macro and micro.[loc. cit.] Unfortunately, this kind of conflation is all too evident in the literature that purports to explain aspects of phenomena related to this thesis.³ For the purposes of this discussion, however, attention is concentrated on one example.

Cawson and Saunders[1983] attempt to distinguish between state functions and politics according to given levels of the state, and therefore employ false distinctions of the kind referred to above.⁴ Such problems are evident in attempts to distinguish between the state's consumption and production functions, and are acknowledged by O'Connor[1973], Duncan and Goodwin[1982], and by Saunders himself when he admits that:

Since most state policies will involve some relevance for both production and consumption, it can be difficult to disentangle the two and to distinguish empirically between primarily-production orientated and primarily-consumption orientated interventions.[Duncan and Goodwin, 1988: 35]

Interpreting the practical world in terms of false dichotomy and dualism, prevents study of the interaction and interrelation of the elements involved. Thus, in addition to the problems of validating the categories employed, the separation of theory from practice obstructs interrogation of the practical social world. Some of these problems are associated with the practice of employing models and frameworks as a means of theorising, and are addressed in Appendix Two. Further consideration of the question of dichotomy and dualism is undertaken in the next section, however, where the consequences of Cawson and Saunders attempt to distinguish between production and consumption[op. cit.] is interrogated in reference to the category of labour as determinate abstraction. In particular, the validity of their correlation of class politics with production functions and sectoral politics with consumption functions is challenged.

Labour

Consideration of the conceptual status of 'labour' fulfils three functions. First of all, the discussion acts as an adjunct to the previous section by providing further clarification of the issues discussed there. Secondly, it serves to identify the central

³ Distinctions between national and local politics, discussed in Chapter One, are a case in point.
⁴ The authors' approach was outlined in a joint article[1983], but Saunders[1982] and [1984] uses this approach in other articles. Responsibility for the approach is, however, afforded to both authors.
importance afforded to the category of 'labour' as the selected subject of the research programme. When taken as a whole, however, the discussion also demonstrates how, in reference to the concept of 'labour', the totalisation of empirical and philosophical levels of theory is effected.

As a first step in the fulfilment of these functions a clear definition of 'labour' needs to be provided. In meeting this requirement, the distinction between determinate and empiricist forms of abstraction are addressed once more and receive further elucidation. The next task entails the provision of an explanation of how the pitfalls of dichotomy and dualism are overcome by 'theorising that operates in terms of determinate abstraction'. [Gunn, 1989: 107] This is achieved by demonstrating how the problems identified in the theorising of Cawson and Saunders [1983] are resolved through an understanding of 'labour' as a constitutive and internal contradiction of capital. The conclusions drawn from this analysis therefore serve to indicate how the different perspectives identified within the labour movement in the 1980s can be interrogated and explained without recourse to dichotomy and dualism.

Perhaps the simplest definition of 'labour', in this context, is that of productive activity. To be more specific, 'useful labour' can be defined as 'productive activity of a definite kind and exercised with a definite aim.' [Marx, 1954: 49] Proceeding in this manner, however, runs the risk of hypostatising the concept as a general term without specific historical significance. Thus, Marx explains that although:

Labour seems quite a simple category. The conception of labour in general form - as labour as such - is also immeasurably old. Nevertheless, when it is economically conceived in this simplicity, 'labour' is as modern a category as are the relations which create this simple abstraction.' [1973: 103]

In other words, there is a danger that wage labour, where individuals are required to sell their labour-power as a commodity in order to survive, is identified with labour in general; whereby the 'specific form of modern productive work' is reduced 'to labour pure and simple'[Colletti, 1975: 28]

Gunn also expresses the required distinction in the following terms:

Labour as an empiricist abstraction is the genus under which historically specific forms of labour fall. Labour as a determinate abstraction is an historical (a capitalist) species of labour while remaining no less abstract than the genus for its part.[op. cit: 106] (original emphasis)

Thus, by conceiving of labour as a category that is historically specific, as wage labour, we are moving towards an understanding that recognises it as 'constitutive in practice of its social world'(original emphasis), and as having 'practical roots, practical effects' and 'practical existence as well'. [Gunn, ibid: 107] Further

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5 Selection of the research topic was influenced by my view that organised Labour and the processes of class struggle offer the most realistic opportunities for the transformation of the social world. Marcuse, for example, argues that Labour represents theory's ultimate ground. [Held, 1980: 240]
clarification of this assertion is provided by the example cited below, which
demonstrates how understanding the category of labour as determinate abstraction,
and therefore in a practically reflexive manner, avoids the pitfalls of dichotomy and
dualism.

First of all, there is a need to explain how the abstract category of labour is
understood as a constitutive force in the contradiction of capital. Bonefield, for
example, states this relation in the following terms: 'the fundamental contradiction of
capital is its dependence on labour as the substance of value, and hence surplus
value'. [1993: 119] The basis of the contradiction lies in the exploitative process
whereby 'The use value of labour-power for the industrial capitalist is that labour-
power creates more value (profit) in its consumption than it possesses itself, than it
costs.' [Marx, 1959: 351] In other words, labour is a constitutive force in the
contradiction of capital due to the unequal practical relation between capital and
labour; whereby capital needs labour in order to exist but the labourer receives less
than an equal share of the proceeds. An important aspect of this process is that its
continuation depends on the 'dull compulsion of the economic'[Eagleton, 1991: 114];
whereby people are forced to work because 'having no means of production of their
own, (they) are reduced to selling their labour-power in order to live'[Engels and
Marx, 1973: 67]

The significance of labour as determinate abstraction lies in the potential that the
contradiction holds for the development of an understanding of the role played by the
state in capitalist society; an understanding which avoids the dichotomies imposed by
Cawson and Saunders. [op. cit.] This potential can be acknowledged, again in
reference to Bonefield, through the recognition that:

The displacement of the contradictory unity of surplus value production (in its mode
of existence as formal freedom and equality) to the state specifies the state as a
moment of the social relations of production that preserves the condition's of
capital's existence: living labour. [op. cit: 119]
The state's 'mode of existence as formal freedom and equality' are discussed in the
following section, but for the moment attention is afforded to another aspect of the
state's role as 'a mode of existence of labour in capitalism'[Bonefield, ibid: 120],
namely that of reproduction.

The states role in this area can be understood as fulfilling two simultaneous
functions. In the first instance, the provision of a 'social wage' by the state, in the
form of welfare facilities, can be seen as a product of the demands of organised
labour; as 'the working through of the antagonistic tendency of the abstract category
of labour'[Bonefield, ibid: 119] At the same time, however, such welfare facilities can
also be seen as a subsidy to surplus value production by reducing the costs of
reproduction and thereby helping to limit the wage demands of those in work. To
attempt to understand these processes in terms of dichotomy or dualism would, however, be to fall into the same trap as Cawson and Saunders. The two processes can and should be understood, therefore, in terms of the internal relation; as capital's dependence on labour for its existence.⁶

When viewed from this perspective the type of dichotomy created by Cawson and Saunders[op. cit.], relating class politics to production functions and sectoral politics to consumption functions, becomes tenuous. Under their dualistic approach, for example, there is as much difficulty involved in attempting to decide whether the demands of trade unionists for improvements in the 'social wage' amount to class or sectoral politics, as there is in deciding which aspects of transport, housing or education provision amounts to a production or consumption function.

Dualistic simplifications result in obfuscation and are therefore of no help in attempting to understand the internal relations between demands for better transport facilities, or for improved welfare provision, and their subsidisation of capital accumulation. On the contrary, the imposition of dichotomy and dualism conceals these dimensions, prevents analysis of the very processes that hold the key to understanding the world in development, and therefore produce a distorted knowledge of the world. As was explained in the Research Practice Section of the Introduction, the solution to these problems lies with forms of theorising and critique that are practically reflexive and immanent in their mode of operation. Thus, only by evaluating conceptual principles in reference to practice, and vice versa, can the internal nature of 'The contradictory mode of existence of the state' and the 'contradictory constitution of the dependence of capital upon labour'[Bonefield, op. cit: 120], be identified and understood.

**Practical Abstraction**

To conclude this discussion consideration is afforded to two examples of abstraction that are evident in the practical social world: money as symbolised exchange value[Marx, 1973: 148]; and, the state's ratification of 'the mode of existence of exploitation as a social relationship of formal freedom and equality.'[Bonefield, 1993: 119] These particular examples are examined here due to their relevance to the subject matter of the thesis. In the first instance, the period studied encompasses a move by both Labour and Conservative governments from a measurement of local service provision in terms of employment levels, or employee - service user ratios, to a monetary evaluation. Secondly, the acceptance of abstracted political equality within the labour movement, as practised through the state,

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⁶ The discussion of the reasons for expanding service provision, undertaken in Chapter One, is informed by this approach.
influenced democratic practice and therefore the conduct and success of the campaigns studied.

Both of the areas referred to demonstrate the manner in which "Bourgeois society....makes the dissimilar comparable by reducing it to abstract quantities." [Adorno and Horkheimer, 1997: 7] Money, for example, is the medium of exchange, universal equivalent, through which commodities relate to each other, 'that which expresses the relation of equality between all exchange values'[Marx, op. cit: 189] In other words, it represents a separate, external, third party expression of the relation between individual commodities.[Marx, ibid.]

Furthermore, through processes of abstraction accountancy techniques transform commodities into value symbols, exchange values; an ideal measure limited only by imagination.[Marx, ibid.] Such processes are evident in the arguments over, and practice of, local government finance during the period studied. In particular, the calculation of central funding allocation in reference to preconceived formulae, and the manipulation of such formulae through creative accountancy techniques during the 1980s, indicates the extent to which this area of activity was detached from the practical social world.

Similarly, the way 'crucial social and economic differences and relations between social groups...are transformed into legal relations of supposedly individual and equal citizens'[Duncan and Goodwin, 1988: 39], is evident in two spheres that have relevance to the conclusions of this thesis. First of all, 'In the political arena...all men and women are abstractly equal as voters and citizens; but this theoretical equivalence serves to mask their concrete inequalities within "civil society."'[Eagleton, 1991: 125] In the second instance, the juridical principle of all individuals being equal before the law transmutes, among other relations, the inequality between employer and employee into an apparently equal contractual relation.[Duncan and Goodwin, op. cit: 40]

In order to preserve the appearance of equality, however, both these spheres have to remove conflict and decision making processes from the practical social world. Thus, the political and legal structures of the state perform this function through the council chamber, parliament, and law courts, whereby responsibility for certain political and economic decisions are transferred from supposedly equal citizens to elected or appointed representatives. Labour movement reliance upon, together with its acceptance and replication of their abstracted nature, for example, form central facets of the explanation provided in this thesis for the conduct and success of the campaigns studied.

A fundamental paradox between the two processes of abstraction considered here is that monetary abstraction has been used to negate the evaluation of services in terms of human worth, while the revolutionary principle of general human equality is
preserved through political and legal state structures which mask the real inequalities that pervade society. In specific terms, the formal legal relations between the supposedly equal parties of employer and employee disguise the reality that in selling the 'right of disposition' over labour-power the worker forfeits the right to self-determination, to liberty, during the period of work.[Nicolaus, 1973: 46] Similarly, as the guarantor of abstract equality in the form of electors, or as legal citizens, the state serves to legitimise 'the mode of existence of exploitation as a social relationship of formal freedom and equality.'[Bonefield, op. cit: 119]

The matters discussed in this appendix demonstrate the importance of avoiding dichotomy or dualism in the formulation of knowledge. In other words, the exploration and interrogation of interrelations holds the key to developing a comprehensive understanding, and therefore knowledge of the events studied. Forms of conventional abstraction, for example, presuppose a distance between subject and object[Adorno and Horkheimer, op. cit: 7]; they separate theory from practice by formulating concepts in an environment that is detached from, and therefore unable to interact with, the practical social world they seek to interpret. Such processes also have implications for the formulation, understanding and practice of theory, and are therefore considered in the subsequent appendix.
APPENDIX TWO

THEORETICAL PROCESSES

This discussion of theoretical practice complements the assertions made in Appendix One by identifying and discussing forms of theorising that are inimical to the rigorous interrogation of subject matter. In particular, attention is afforded to theoretical practice that precludes reciprocal interaction and validation between categories employed and the practical social world that the theory purports to explain. The first section considers conventional attempts to define theory, identifies limitations exhibited by those definitions, and thereby illustrates the characteristics of orthodox theorising. In sections entitled 'Causality', and 'Models and Frameworks' specific examples theoretical practice that correspond to conventional definitions of theory are interrogated and specific weaknesses demonstrated. Taken as a whole, therefore, appendices One and Two contribute to the explanation of research practice begun in the introductory chapter.

Theory

A multiplicity of interpretations are evident in attempts to provide definitions of the term 'theory'. Judge, Stoker and Wolman, for example, assume that by identifying characteristics that are attributable to a given theory, i.e. normative, deductive, inductive, empirical, or prescriptive qualities, they are providing a definition of 'theory'. [1995: 1-4] Such a descriptive approach is of limited use, however, because a given theory might exhibit more than one of the stated qualities, and any one characteristic is applicable to many different theories or forms of theoretical practice. Judge et al therefore fail to say what theory is. In relation to this thesis, theory is understood as a set of explanatory concepts [Silverman, 1993: 1], but with a recognition that the probity of a given theory depends on the way the concepts relate to each other, and to the practical social world they seek to explain.

The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary (NSOED), for example, provides two definitions that demonstrate fundamental flaws inherent in orthodox approaches to
theoretical practice. Descriptions of theory as: 'the knowledge or exposition of the
general principles or methods of an art or science, as distinguished from
practice'[NSOED, 1993: 3274]; and, 'a system of ideas or statements explaining
something, especially one based on general principles independent of things to be
explained'[loc. cit.] are similar to the definition adopted for this thesis, but exhibit a
diametrically opposed approach to the interaction of categories. The common and key
element of both definitions is their dependence on a moment or process of separation.
In the first definition, for example, general principles or methods are held to be
separate from practice, and in the second, ideas or statements are considered to be
separate from the things they explain.¹

This process of separation is of vital importance, because it is on this movement
that the external or internal operation of a given theory depends. Where theory and
practice are separated, for example, the validity of categories is either assumed or
affirmed externally, but in both cases the consequence is an inability to identify or
challenge value systems that prevail in society. This, point is demonstrated in the
following sections where specific examples of external forms of theorising are
identified and interrogated. These discussions begin with the second NSOED
definition, and explore the implications of its mode of separation for theoretical
explanations that depend on the identification and exposition of causal relations.

Causality

The definition of theory as the separation of ideas or statements from the thing
explained implies a causal approach. This is evident, because where causal relations
are applied the avoidance of a tautological explanation is only achieved if that which
explains is reciprocally independent and distinct from that which it explains.[Gunn,
1989: 94-5] For some theorists this kind of separation does not appear to be
undesirable, but the reader is never told whether the theorist is aware of the limitations
affecting a process that leaves unaffected the terms between which the relation of
explanation obtains. In such circumstances, the theoretical objectives are limited to
ones of monological explanation because causality does not arise 'in the objects and
their relationship, but solely in inescapable subjective thought.'[Adorno, 1973: 248]

In contrast, an internal approach seeks to affect and constitute the related terms and
therefore afford the opportunity for the understanding and the meanings of the terms
to be challenged.[Gunn, op. cit: 94-5] By proceeding in an internal manner, and

¹ The NSOED also defines theory as: hypothesis confirmed or established by observation or
experiment and accepted as accounting for known facts; formulation of abstract knowledge or
speculative thought; systematic conception of something; or, unsubstantiated hypothesis.[1993: 32-4]
Each of these definitions imply a separation from practice, but are not interrogated here for reasons of
brevity.
measuring conceptual principles and practice in reference to each other, a theory or critique is able to expose and explore 'The contradictions' that Marcuse considers to exist 'between that which is and which is possible and ought to be'. [Held, 1980: 75]

Recognising and exploring the interrelation between terms therefore allows a more comprehensive explanation than does their enforced separation.

The extent to which causal relations are used as a means of explanation can be obtained by referring to two examples; the first of which involves Judge et al's narrow definition of empirical theory being concerned with establishing causal relationships. [1995: 2] Despite admitting that their definition is a narrow one, Judge et al provide an indication of the diverse use of causal explanations by citing examples of the deductive approach to empirical theory that emanate from opposite ends of the political, if not theoretical, spectrum. Public Choice theory, for example, is depicted as starting from an economistic premise that all individuals seek to maximise utility, and as attempting to deduce causal relationships from that premise to explain political behaviour.[loc. cit.] Similarly, some Marxists attempt to deduce causal relationships based on 'the premise that capitalism cannot guarantee its own reproduction because it has prerequisites that the market cannot secure and produces conflicts which need to be regulated.[Judge, et al, ibid: 2-3]

A second example of the use of causal relationships is provided by Duncan and Goodwin's consideration of attempts to explain variations in local service provision.[1988] In discussing the 'demographic approach' to explaining local variations in service provision, for example, they expose weaknesses associated with a dependence on quantifiable data to construct causal relations. First of all, a circularity is evident whereby the use of quantifiable data conditions the research findings.[Duncan and Goodwin, ibid: 14] Secondly, a reliance on quantifiable data excludes questions about: the distribution of power; the role of the state in that distribution; and, the processes involved in policy formation.[loc. cit.] These conclusions bear analogy with those of the introductory chapter of this thesis, in relation to studies conducted by Dahl and Hunter, and therefore serve to demonstrate the weaknesses of theoretical approaches that depend on separate validation of empirical and meta-theoretical categories.

For Duncan and Goodwin, however, concerns are directed at the shift from correlation to causation[ibid: 12], rather than the inherent flaws in using causal relationships as means of explanation. They recognise that the data used by the demographic approach conditions the findings, but fail to realise that the weakness affects all explanations that employ causal relations, because the terms and categories are prevented from interaction and validation as part of the theoretical process. Duncan and Goodwin are therefore content to refer to specific social relations that
existed in Sheffield as a determining factor in the higher than average levels of council housing built in that area. [ibid: 57-61] Thus, while they do not depend on, or offer causality as the sole source of explanation, they do afford it a role in the theoretical process and thereby encompass the limitations identified.

In other words, because causality or a causal relation is a ‘subjective idea’ imposed on the practical world it seeks to explain, it amounts to a false picture of reality. The enforced separation of the term that explains from that it seeks to explain, is a product of human abstraction which denies interaction between related terms, and between them and the practical social world. This form theoretical practice therefore risks a tendency toward dogma and doctrine because, as a consequence of their separation, the terms employed, the value systems of the researcher, and those of the practical social world are not open to reciprocal challenge during the theoretical or critical process, but are maintained as external truth claims.

**Models and Frameworks**

Following on from the previous discussion of theoretical practice that relies on the separation of ideas or statements from that which is explained, it now remains to identify and explore the inherent weaknesses that affect the practice of theory as something distinguished from practice. In other words, this section explains what is meant by the phrase ‘separation of theory and practice’, when used in this thesis, and demonstrates the theoretical weaknesses associated with such separation. This is achieved by referring to the use of models and frameworks which, though described by Judge, Stoker, and Wolman as ‘more relaxed interpretations of theory’ [1995: 3], provide tangible examples of the separation of theory from practice. As a first step in this process, however, the meaning and usage of the term ‘practice’ needs to be understood clearly.

In this thesis, the term ‘practice’ refers to the practical social world inhabited and shaped by human beings. Separation of theory from practice therefore implies a separation of theory from the concrete social world that the theory claims to interpret or explain. When practice is understood in this manner, the process of applying a theory as a means of explaining or interpreting particular phenomena, though a form of practice in itself, is not sufficient to overcome the separation of theory and practice. The decisive factor is that where theory and practice are separated the relation of correspondence is external.

For theory and practice to be united, a theory must acknowledge its presence in the practical social world it seeks to explain. Where this unity is not achieved the theory, as Horkheimer argues, will be unable to: ‘make a question out of the way in which society proffers, as ideologies, categories whose seeming obviousness suggests that
they only have to be understood to be endorsed'. [Gunn, 1989: 97] As the introductory chapter explains, the concomitant processes of practically reflexive theorising and immanent critique overcome the separation of theory and practice by operating in an internal manner. In this thesis, for example, such processes are evident in the reciprocal interrogation of campaign practice, conceptual principles, aims, and values.

In contrast, the consequences of separating theory from practice can be demonstrated, by considering the use of theoretical models and conceptual frameworks as aids to theoretical practice. Theoretical models, for example, construct: 'representations or stylised and simplified pictures of reality' that 'include the most important components or categories'. [Judge et al, op. cit: 3] The external selection of categories and components, and abstracted representations of reality, amount, however, to a separation of theory from the social world it purports to explain. In other words, where a version of reality is constructed in order to facilitate research the link between the resultant theory and the practical world is inevitably tenuous. Hence, Neumann's assertion that models try to grasp a reality as yet unrealised. [Held, 1980: 62]

Nevertheless, the value of theoretical models is a contested issue. Judge et al, for example, take the view that models can contribute to explanation and understanding. [op. cit: 3] By selecting 'important' categories or components that constitute a particular model, however, researchers risk presupposing what they are attempting to show and therefore of falling prey to the circularity of validating findings in relation to the methods employed. Furthermore, because models represent only a simplified or stylised version of reality, the process of validating a model's findings embodies an external relation between theory and practice.

In other words, the relation of correspondence between the model's findings and the practical social world it seeks to explain, is between separate and distinct terms that do not interact to define or transform each other. As a consequence of this separation, the value system of the researcher can influence the selection of criteria, but remains unchallenged outside the theoretical and critical processes. Similarly, the use of models means that value systems operating within the practical social world are safe from identification and challenge, because, as Neumann contends, it is impossible to derive the boundaries of a given social order from the analysis of prevailing trends within another system. [Held, op. cit: 62]

Cockburn's model of the capitalist state provides an example of the limitations inherent in such theoretical practice. Despite taking account of the roles of social reproduction and ideological domination [Duncan and Goodwin, 1988: 33], for

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2 Examples of such circularity are discussed in the introductory chapter and are elaborated in Judge's discussion of the disputes over research practice within pluralism. [1995]
example, Cockburn's model is based on tenets identified in the early writings of Marx: the state as specific to the mode of production; the state as an instrument of class domination; and, repression as a characteristic function of the state. [Cockburn, 1977: 41-2] The model adopted by Cockburn, however, is based on observations that were developed during the nineteenth century; a period without universal suffrage, ostensibly working class parties in parliament, and labour movement involvement in the state. [Duncan and Goodwin, op. cit: 33]

As a result, her model fails to take account of these developments, and therefore represents the state as a given thing; as opposed to a historically emerging, changing and contradictory class relation. [loc. cit.] In other words, Cockburn hypostatises the concept of the capitalist state and employs external categories and criteria against which to evaluate its performance. Her approach therefore precludes any interaction and interrelation between the identified tenets and the practical social world that they are supposed to explain.

The use of conceptual frameworks as an aid to theorising presents a different problem to that of theoretical models, because the description and identification of phenomena can only count as fact within a given framework. [Gunn, op. cit: 109] The point at issue here, however, is that what counts as fact depends on how the phenomena are theorised. Thus, although conceptual frameworks can provide a language and frame of reference through which reality can be examined and lead theorists to ask questions that might otherwise not occur [Judge et al, op. cit: 3], the crucial question is whether this framework is constituted by an a priori, external, allocation of categories, or by the practical social world as a whole.

In similar fashion to the defence of theoretical models, the value attached to constructed conceptual frameworks is premised on their heuristic nature. [Cawson and Saunders, 1983; Judge et al, op. cit.] As has already been noted in reference to theoretical models, however, there are major problems with forms of theory that depend on 'a reality as yet unrealised' for the formulation of questions. [Held, op. cit: 62] Thus, by defending the use of models and conceptual frameworks, Judge et al fail to recognise that the reality being examined is the creation of the researcher, not the practical social world.

The 'Dual State Thesis', propounded by Cawson and Saunders, for example, rests on an a priori allocation of functions between national and local states, and on the assumption that given functions produce, in a causal way, specific political processes. [Duncan and Goodwin, op. cit: 35] The reality constructed by separating central functions and politics from local versions, relies on a separation of theory from practice which denies any interaction between categories. Similarly, the manufactured reality rests on an understanding of capital and labour as externally
related dichotomy. Instances of class politics acknowledged within the framework are restricted to issues of production, where organisations representing opposing sides meet, and the implications of the internal relation between capital and labour for the pervasion of class struggle are thereby obfuscated.

As has been explained, this thesis overcomes the separation of theory and practice, and the separation of explanatory terms, through the concomitant processes of practically reflexive theorising and immanent critique. To paraphrase Horkheimer, this means that the existent is confronted, in its historical context with the claims of its conceptual principles, in order to criticise the relation between the two and thus to transcend them.[Held, op. cit: 183] By operating in this way, the implications and consequences of the labour movement’s conceptual principles are unfolded and its practice reassessed in the light of the said implications and consequences. The theory or critique therefore operates from within the practice of the social world it seeks to explain, and avoids the imposition of irrelevant criteria of observation by the researcher.[Held, ibid: 184]

In this thesis the process, described above, is evident in the identification of conceptual principles, aims, and values espoused by the campaigns studied. The criteria identified are then interrogated to examine the impact they had, together with other influences, on the development of the campaigns. In this manner, campaign practice is interrogated in reference to principles, aims, and values, and through the exploration of their practice conceptual principles are similarly interrogated. Theory therefore operates within the practical world it seeks to explain and is able to validate all categories, both empirical and philosophical, employed within the framework of the practical social world. By operating in a critical manner, that is to say by assessing the validity of categories against each other and against their manifestations in the practical world, the theoretical process overcomes the mystification of general abstractions.
APPENDIX THREE

PRIMARY SOURCES

The presentation of the sources, catalogued below, is structured according to the organisations from which they originate, as opposed to their presence in the particular sets or collections of records accessed. This is an inclusive list that indicates the range and breadth of primary sources consulted in the course of the research programme; sources not cited in the thesis are therefore identified here.

ASSOCIATION OF LONDON AUTHORITIES/ASSOCIATION OF METROPOLITAN AUTHORITIES

Letters

Papers
17 April 1985, entitled: Proposition from the AMA and ALA, (regarding solution to impasse over rate capping);
'background' to concerns expressed in letter, 22 March 1985, over 'the impasse reached by members of the Association because of government policies in respect of local government finance'.

Press Briefing
29 October 1985, Solution to Liverpool Budget Crisis.

CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT

Letters
From Patrick Jenkin, Secretary of State for the Environment to:
David Blunkett, Chairperson LGCU, 21 February 1985 - 20 March 1985;
Jack Cunningham, Shadow Secretary of State for the Environment,
Norman Willis, General secretary of the TUC, 3 April 1985.

Press Notices
19 June 1980: Local Authority Current Spending 1980-81;
4 August 1981: Local Authority Current Expenditure 1982-83.
LABOUR PARTY

Letters
From Jack Cunningham, Shadow Secretary of State for the Environment to:
Patrick Jenkin, Secretary of State for the Environment, 14 January 1985 -
12 April 1985;
members of Liverpool Labour Group, 21 November 1985.

Motions
To:
the Local Government Sub-committee of the NEC, by Eric Heffer MP, March 1985,
and by David Blunkett, Leader of Sheffield City Council, undated;
Parliament - Resistance to Rate-Capping, 25 and 26 March 1985;
Liverpool DLP, 5 September 1985, and 27 February 1986;
NEC welcoming Liverpool's decision to balance budget, undated.

Minutes
Liverpool Labour Group, 26 January 1986.

News Release
NEC, 7 January 1985.

Reports and Papers
NEC Statement on Rate Control, 23 November 1983;
Merseyside County Council Labour Party, untitled discussion document prepared by
Keva Coombes, Leader of the Council and Labour Group, and presented to the

LIVERPOOL CITY COUNCIL/LABOUR GROUP
Campaign Working Party - Terms of Reference and Composition, undated.

'Campaigning for Jobs and Services', undated booklet.


Bulletins
Local Government Campaign Bulletin, issues one to three January 1984;
Liverpool Council Worker, 1985;
Liverpool News.

Letters
Draft Letter from Liberal Leader to Prime Minister, November 1980.

From Campaign Unit to all stewards, labour movement organisations, and trade union

From Chair of Finance Committee to Liverpool NALGO Branch, 23 October 1985.

From Chief Executive to Liverpool Branch NALGO, 5 December 1985.
From City Solicitor to:
Liverpool Branch NALGO, 9 January 1984;
Secretary Liverpool Branch NALGO, 17 December 1985.

From Director of personnel and Management services to:
NALGO Branch Secretary, 13 December 1983;
NALGO Branch Chairperson, 13 March 1984;
all departmental stewards and staff representatives, 12 February 1986;
Secretary Liverpool Branch NALGO, 12 February 1986.

From Office of Leader of the Council to:
all District and Regional Trade Union Offices, 18 October 1983;
full time trade union officers, 13 February 1984 and 22 February 1984;
officers of Labour Group, DLP, full-time trade union officers, and JSSC executive,
28 March 1984;
Liverpool Branch of NALGO, 21 May 1984;
all City Council stewards, 2 September 1985;
Chairperson Liverpool Branch of NALGO, 7 March 1986.

**LIVERPOOL JOINT SHOP STEWARDS COMMITTEE**

**Leaflets**
Demonstration: 19 November 1983;
Jenkin Visit - Demonstration, 7 June 1984;
‘Liverpool Charter Petition’, undated;

**Press Releases**

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT CAMPAIGN UNIT**

**Briefings and Bulletins**
February 1984 - April 1985

**Letters**
To Patrick Jenkin, Secretary of State for the Environment,

From North Tyneside Labour Group Campaign Organiser, 2 April 1985.

**Minutes**
Management Committee Meetings 4 June 1984 - 15 April 1985;
Management Group Meetings 18 December 1984 - 12 March 1985;
Meeting with the Secretary of State for the Environment, 4 February 1985;

**Local Authority Motions**
Submitted to Council budget meetings 7-8 March 1985, by authorities involved in the campaign against rate capping.
Papers and Reports
January 1985, entitled: Groupwork Report: Conclusions and Applications, issued to campaign officers and public relations officers;
16 January 1985, entitled Programme of Work, presented to Management Committee;
4 February 1985, entitled The Local Authority Case, presented at the meeting with the Secretary of State for the Environment, 4 February 1985;
12 April 1985, entitled The Way Forward, submitted to Strategy Sub-Group;
15 April 1985, entitled Government Returns, submitted to Management Committee;
16 April 1985, entitled: Possible Deficit Budgeting, prepared by David Blunkett;
19 April 1985, entitled: No Rate Tactic Prospects and Problems, prepared by David Blunkett;
Undated, entitled: Not Making a Budget, author not identified;
Undated, entitled: Rate Support grant - 1985/86, issued to all unit subscribers and campaign teams.

Press Release
4 February 1985

MERSEYSIDE TRADES UNION AND LABOUR MOVEMENT CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE

Leaflets
Re: demonstration 19 November 1983;
'Merseyside Fights back' Rally and Organisational Conference, February 1984;
'Half Day Stoppage 28 February and Rally and Conference, 27 February 1984';
Organising Council Statement, 4 April 1984;
'National Fightback Conference, June 1984;
'Support Liverpool City Council/Victory to the Miners', February 1985;
Activists Meeting, February 1985.

Letters
To all shop stewards committees, February 1984, and March 1985.

Minutes
Merseyside in Crisis Organising Meeting 4 November 1983 (forerunner of MTULMCC).

MTULMCC:

NATIONAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

Constitution and Rules Booklet

Bulletins and Circulars
National:

Liverpool City Branch:
Letters
From Assistant General Secretary, Service Conditions to:
Branch Secretaries in Hit List authorities and Metropolitan Counties, 23 January 1984;
Branch Secretaries in Hit List authorities and Metropolitan Counties, 2 February 1984;
Liverpool Branch Chairperson, 31 May 1984.

From Deputy General Secretary to Liverpool Branch Chairperson, 3 April 1984.

From District Organisation Officer to all Branch Secretaries, 27 October 1983;

From General Secretary to:
Secretaries of Local Government Branches, District Councils, Sectional and Professional Societies, 15 September 1981;
Branch Secretaries in Hit List authorities and Metropolitan Counties, 30 April 1984;
all members of the Liverpool City Branch involved in not co-operating with the District Auditor, July 1985.

From Liverpool Branch to:
Leader of Liverpool Labour Group, 3 April 1980;
all members, 30 June 1980;
NALGO District Organisation Officer: 24 October 1983, 9 November 1983, and 8 March 1984;
Secretary Liverpool Trades Council, 9 November 1983;
Assistant General Secretary, Service Conditions, 14 November 1983;
NALGO Research Section, 22 November 1983;
NLGC members and national officers, 18 January 1984;
J Straw Labour MP and opposition spokesperson on Environment, 10 February 1984;
members, 26 March 1984;
councillors opposing Labour Group budget, 29 March 1984;
all NALGO local government branches, April 1984;
Deputy Leader of Labour group, 2 April 1984;
Secretary of North West and North Wales District Council, 2 April 1984;
Assistant General Secretary, Service Conditions, 9 April 1984;
all members of the NEC, 13 April 1984;
Islington NALGO Branch, 29 June 1984;
Chair of Finance Committee, 2 August 1985, 10 October 1985, 11 October 1985 and 10 March 1986;
Labour Party Conference Delegates 1985;
District Officer, October 1985;
District Officer, 18 October 1985;
Avon County Branch, 17 January 1986
Director of Personnel and Management Services, 26 March 1987.

To Liverpool City Branch from:
Glasgow District Branch, February 1984;
South West District, 14 March 1984;
Sefton Branch, 15 March 1984
Merseyside County Branch, 19 March 1984;
Norfolk Branch, April 1984;
West Midlands NALGO, April 1984;
Islington Branch, 23 June 1984;
Knowsley Branch, 6 November 1985;
Avon County Branch, 9 January 1986;

Minutes
Liverpool City Branch:
Branch Executive Council, January 1979 - October 1987;
Campaign Committee, 14 December 1983 - 16 September 1985;
Finance and General Purposes Committee, 11 October 1979 - 22 May 1986;

London Hit-List Branches, 10 August 1983.

North West and North Wales District Council Meeting, 3 December 1983.

National Delegate Advisory Meetings - Rate Capping:

Rate Capping Liaison Group Meetings:

Motions/Agordea
Liverpool Branch SGM, 26 June 1980;
Liverpool Branch SGM, 10 March 1981;
Liverpool Branch SGM, 6 March 1984;
GLC/Metropolitan Liaison Committee, 24 August 1985;
Liverpool Branch EGM, 24 September 1985;
Liverpool Branch SGM, 26 March 1986.

Papers and Reports
NLGC:
'Public Expenditure Cuts - National Strategy for Reconvened Group Meeting',
15 September 1981;
'Campaign In Defence of Local Government', 20 March 1984;
'Campaign in Defence of Local Government: Rate Capping and Penalties Industrial
Action Strategy', 7 December 1984;
National Delegate Advisory Meeting Report to Rate Capping Liaison Group Meeting,
27 February 1985.

Liverpool City Branch:
'The Rate, the Cuts and the Government', 11 February 1980;
'The Fight Against Cuts and Redundancies in Liverpool', Branch Negotiators,
17 June 1980;
'Capitalisation: Summary of Major Points', 19 September 1985;
'Liverpool NALGO - Notes on the Legal Position', 26 September 1985;
'Stonefrost Report: A Summary', 1 November 1985;
'The Liverpool Crisis - an explanation for other NALGO Branches', undated;
'Liverpool's Budget 1986-87: Balancing the Books', undated;
'From a Deficit to a Legal Budget: How was it Done', undated;
'Liverpool's Crisis: The Legal Background', undated;
'Capitalisation: Setting the Context', undated;
'Capitalisation: Explaining the Implications', undated;

Liverpool City Branch Organiser:
'No Redundancy Agreement 1980-81' to District Organisation Officer;
Meeting 1 April 1984 between full-time trade union officers, JSSC executive, DLP officers and Councillors, addressed to District Organisation Officer;
Events 5-12 September 1985 addressed to District Organisation Officer.

Merseyside County Branch:

Press Releases
Liverpool Branch:
Support Council Stance, 4 February 1985;
Strike 29 March 1984, 5 March 1984;
Budget Analysis 1985-86, 15 January 1985;
Call for balanced budget, 14 November 1985.

NATIONAL LOCAL AUTHORITIES CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE
Draft affiliation form, undated.
Draft Constitution, undated.
List of authorities participating at inaugural conference held 30 March 1985, undated.

Letters
advising of first meeting in Sheffield, 13 April 1985, undated;
publicising NLACC, undated.

Minutes
Sheffield, 13 April 1985;
Leicester, 2 May 1985;

Report
Northern Region Affiliation Report, undated.

TRADE UNION CONGRESS

Letters
To Patrick Jenkin, Secretary of State for the Environment, from Norman Willis, General Secretary, 1 April 1985, and 3 April 1985.
Local Government Committee

Minutes
Local Government Committee, 5 December 1983.

Papers and Reports

MISCELLANEOUS
Agenda for mass meeting of NUT members, March 1984.

City of Sheffield Information Pack: Rates, Services and Jobs, undated.

Transcript of Interview with Secretary Liverpool City Branch, 23 February 1984.

Letters
To Colleagues, TGWU, March 1984;
To all organisations from Communist Party of Great Britain, 14 March 1984;
To Regional Officials of NUPE, NALGO, GMBATU, TGWU, NUT, District Secretary of DLP and Liverpool Bishops, from CSEU, 9 April 1984;
To all local authority stewards from GMBATU full time officials, 15 November 1985.

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Draft Statement, 17 October 1980;

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Hand-written records of meetings between Liverpool City Councillors and full-time trade union officials 28.2.84, 24.1.85, and of a meeting with the CSEU, MPs and Liverpool Bishops 4.5.84;

Motions
NUPE, calling for balanced budget on basis of AMA recommendations, 1985;
TGWU, calling for balanced budget on basis of AMA recommendations, 1985.

Reports
'A Less Painful Route through Stonefrost', David Blunkett, 18 November 1985;
APPENDIX FOUR

INTERVIEWS AND QUESTIONNAIRES

Interview questions for Trade Unionists

1. In general terms can you describe what you see as the most important developments that affected local government trade unions during the 1970s and 80s?

2. How far did such factors influence the approach of GMBATU/NALGO in Liverpool during the campaigns for more resources?

3. What do you consider to be the most important characteristics of GMBATU/NALGO structure in Liverpool during the period?

4. What was the significance of the role played by GMBATU/NALGO activists/Officers in JTUCs at local, district, and national levels?

5. How far was the alliance of trade unions and local authorities, and therefore the campaign in Liverpool, shaped by the involvement of trade union activists in the local Labour Party?

6. Which authorities were most active during the anti rate capping campaign and why?

7. What do you consider to be the main differences between the tactics and approach adopted by the Liverpool labour movement and other 'left' Labour authorities involved in the campaign?

8. How far was the labour movement the prime agent of the campaign in those authorities?

9. How do you think the national leadership of the Labour movement viewed the prospect/use of industrial action to pursue the aims of the anti rate-capping campaign?

10. Do you think that there was an important difference between the approach of local activists and national leadership?
Interview questions intended for Byrne, Blunkett and Livingstone (with the exception of question eight which was intended for Byrne only)

1. In general terms, can you describe how you see the Labour Party's approach to local government, and related issues changing during the 1970s and 80s?

2. The campaign to defend local government involved, to varying degrees, both the industrial and political wings of the labour movement. Would you draw any distinction between the tactics/approaches adopted by each wing?

3. Which authorities were most active in the campaign and why?

4. How far was the labour movement the prime agent of the campaign in those authorities?

5. How do you think the national leadership of the labour movement viewed the prospect/use of industrial action to pursue the aims of the anti rate-capping campaign?

6. In 1984 national Labour Party figures (Cunningham and Straw) were involved in arranging meetings between Liverpool representatives and the Secretary of State. Was such intervention common practice or part of a desire to avoid confrontation?

7. What do you consider to be the main differences between the tactics and approach adopted by the Liverpool District Labour Party, the Liverpool Labour Group, and other 'left' Labour authorities involved in the campaign?

8. How far was the alliance of trade unions and local authorities, and therefore the campaign in Liverpool, shaped by the involvement of trade union activists in the local Labour Party and vice-versa?

9. Do you think there was an important difference between the approach of local activists and national leadership?

Questions sent to Blunkett

1. In "Democracy in Crisis..." (p. 168) you argue that "The hit list of Labour controlled authorities were forced into national action...because the parliamentary Labour Party offered no lead." This process is described as resulting from the leadership's fear that defiance of legislation could undermine its future authority. Why do you think the Parliamentary leadership "Failed", as you put it: "...to distinguish between....illegal action and....dissent in defence of both an important constitutional convention and of people whose interests the Labour Party existed to support"?

2. Local Labour Parties, shop stewards and some community groups are described as the real driving force behind the anti-rate capping campaign in Sheffield. (pp. 178-9) This description suggests that there are differences in the approaches of local activists and national Leaders. What reasons would you give for their differing approaches and would you attribute any extra significance to the role played by local authority trade unionists in Sheffield's anti-rate capping campaign or in the Sheffield Labour Party at the time?

3. Was the Sheffield joint union campaign group, established in January 1985, the initiative of the Labour Group or did a local authority joint trade union committee
exist prior to this campaign group? The fact that such a group was not formed until January 1985 suggests a certain weakness in the organisation of Sheffield's local authority unions; particularly when compared to Sheffield Trades Council. Would you agree with this assertion and, if so, what were the consequences for the campaign in Sheffield?

4. Liverpool's 1984 campaign for more resources is characterised as representing a close alliance between the local Labour Party and the local authority's work-force. The alliance was at that time maintained through regular meetings between councillors, officers of the local authority Joint Shop Stewards Committee, and mass meetings of the work-force. Was such unity evident in other authorities during the anti-rate capping campaign (please identify!) and what effect did the presence or absence of such links have on the way their respective campaigns developed?

5. You claim that by 16 May 1985, five out of the seven authorities who were still deferring a rate decision were doing so by tactical manoeuvring. Who were the two authorities not dependent on tactical manoeuvres and what factors, such as trade union support, contributed to their resolve?

6. "Democracy in Crisis..." does not discuss the role anticipated for industrial action in the anti-rate capping campaign. Livingstone, for example talks about ten to twenty authorities refusing to set a rate with the support of local authority trade union industrial action. NALGO's national strategy also made provision for industrial action. Was this ever a realistic part of the campaign in Sheffield, or elsewhere, and how did the national Labour Party and trade union leadership view the prospect of such a development?

Questions sent to Livingstone

1. In your book "If voting changed anything..." you describe the national Labour Party leadership as distancing itself from the GLC until opinion polls showed the GLC and its policies to be popular. Would you agree that the Labour leadership adopted a similarly cautious approach to the anti-rate capping campaign and how would you explain the leadership's behaviour in these matters?

2. How far was the strategy of between ten and twenty local authorities refusing to set a rate with the support of local trade unions prepared to take industrial action to defend jobs and services, a realistic option for the rate-capped London boroughs? Which Boroughs did you expect to be successful in this tactic and what was the response of national Labour Party and trade union leaders to this approach?

3. David Blunkett, in his book "Democracy in Crisis", identifies local Labour Parties, shop stewards and some community groups as the political driving force behind the anti-rate capping campaign in Sheffield. In which, if any, London boroughs do you think such factors were prominent and what was the importance of the role played by shop stewards in the Labour Parties of those boroughs and in their wider anti-rate capping campaigns?

4. Liverpool's successful campaign for more resources in 1984 was based on a close alliance between the Liverpool Labour Party, Liverpool Labour Group and the local authority trade unions. The alliance, was at that stage, maintained through regular meetings between councillors, officers of the local authority Joint Shop
Stewards Committee, shop stewards, and mass meetings of the work force. Can analogies be drawn between Liverpool and any of the London boroughs (please identify!) in the prominence of the labour movement in their campaigns, and how far do you think such an approach contributed to, or detracted from, the success of their campaigns?

5. "...the rate-capping campaign failed because it remained mired in the shadow boxing of parliamentary and council chamber politics, with the work-force being wheeled on as a stage army when required." These concluding remarks from chapter 9 of your book are a damning assessment of the campaign. What approach, with the benefit of hind-sight, would you have taken given the time-scale involved in preparing and activating the campaign?