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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

The Development of Labour Politics in Southampton 1890 – 1945

by Graham Philip Heaney

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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON ABSTRACT FACULTY OF ARTS HISTORY Doctor of Philosophy

THE DEVELOPMENT OF LABOUR POLITICS IN SOUTHAMPTON 1890 –

by Graham Philip Heaney

The debate on the development of Labour politics has become more complex and it is accepted that local economic, social and political experiences are crucial to an understanding of the growth of Labour and the decline of the Liberals.

The majority of regional and local studies have concentrated on the north or London. This study tries to redress the balance by looking at how and why Labour politics developed in Southampton. The economic background is considered including the dominance of port related industry and the extent of trade union organisation. The influence of socialist groups and the character of local Liberalism is examined and it is argued that Labour had made a significant political advance by 1914.

Despite some wartime divisions, Labour was able to unite around the material interests of the working class and after the war consolidated its position developing a neighbourhood organisation and moving away from a purely trade union based organisation. Labour began to secure more working class wards but this was an uneven process. They faced opposition in the form of an anti-Labour alliance of Liberals and Conservatives first at local and then at parliamentary elections. Restrictions on the municipal franchise excluded parliamentary electors and this was likely to affect potential Labour voters in marginal wards.

Throughout the whole period Labour highlighted the material issues of unemployment and housing which helped to establish them as the party of working class interests.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AEU Amalgamated Engineering Union

AMWU Amalgamated Marine Workers Union

ASC and J Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners

ASE Amalgamated Society of Engineers

BSP British Socialist Party

BSU British Seafarers Union

DWRGU Dock, Wharf, Riverside and General Workers Union

FEST Federation of Engineering and Shipbuilding Trades

ILP Independent Labour Party

LSWR London and South Western Railway

NASOHSPD National Amalgamated Society of Operative House and Ship

Painters and Decorators

NSFU National Sailors and Fireman's Union

NTWF National Transport Workers Federation

NUGU National Union of General Workers

NUS National Union of Seamen

NUSSCBB National Union of Ships Stewards, Cooks, Butchers and Bakers

OBS Operative Bricklayers Society

PAC Public Assistance Committee

RMSP Royal Mail Steam Packet Company

SDF Social Democratic Federation

TGWU Transport and General Workers Union

TUC Trades Union Congress

WEWNC War Emergency Workers National Committee

Chapter One

Introduction

A study of the origins and development of Labour politics in Southampton has to be set in the context of the wide ranging debate among historians about the causes and consequences of this change. The first part of this Chapter will briefly survey the debate about Labour's growth and the second part will outline how a study of Southampton can contribute to this debate.

The Rise of Labour and the Decline of the Liberal Party

The replacement of the Liberals by Labour as one of the two main political parties was the most significant change in the political landscape of Twentieth Century Britain. Interpretations which have located this in long term economic and social changes leading to greater class divisions, have been very influential. According to Henry Pelling these changes united the country geographically, but growing industrial conflict particularly in the staple industries of the late Victorian period, and the growth of political participation by the working class led to the downfall of Liberalism. Eric Hobsbawm identified four features of the working class in the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries that he regarded as significant. Firstly, the working classes greatly increased in size. Secondly, there was an important change in the occupational composition of the working classes with the growth of those employed in mining, the railways and other forms of transport. Thirdly, there was growing integration and concentration of the national economy. In support of this he cites the increase in collective agreements negotiated nationally for industries such as shipbuilding, engineering, printing and footwear. Fourthly, there was the extension of the franchise and the growth of mass politics.² Hobsbawm acknowledges that regional and local identities existed but they were as a class increasingly separate from the rest of society. They often lived in different defined residential areas, and he suggests their social aspirations

²E.J.Hobsbawm, <u>Worlds of Labour</u>. Further Studies in the History of Labour. (London 1984) pp. 196-198

¹H. Pelling, <u>Popular Politics and Society in late Victorian Britain</u> (London 1968) p.120

and lifestyle were distinctive. He concludes'. "What all this amounts to is a growing sense of a single working class bound together in a community of fate irrespective of its internal differences".

For those who accept that long term economic and social changes were responsible for the growth of Labour politics debate focused on the timing of this development and the nature of class politics. Henry Pelling's study of the origins of the Labour Party showed how trade unions were being won over to independent Labour representation by the unwillingness of many Liberals to recognise a distinctive labour interest as a separate social or political force or to give working class representatives the chance to stand as candidates for parliamentary elections except on a very limited basis.⁴

Legal decisions that threatened the position of trade unions, most notably the Taff Vale case, persuaded many trade unions and their members that they needed a political voice and this helped the growth of the Labour Representation Committee.⁵

McKibbin emphasises the particular nature of the consciousness of class difference and says, "... the Labour Party was not based upon broadly articulated principles, but rather upon a highly developed class consciousness and intense class loyalties. The trade unions cultivated this consciousness and these loyalties; they also contributed to the disintegration of regional and traditional allegiances and to their supercession by allegiances imposed by class and occupation".⁶

Not all those who accepted that there had been a move toward a class-based

³lbid, p. 207

⁴H.Pelling, <u>The Origins of the Labour Party 1880-1900</u> (Oxford 1965)

⁵J.Saville, "Trade Unions and Free Labour: The Background to the Taff Vale Decision" in A.Briggs and J.Saville (eds), <u>Essays in Labour History</u> (London 1967)

⁶R.McKibbin, <u>The Evolution of the Labour Party</u> 1910 - 1924 (Oxford 1974) p. 243

politics agreed that it worked mainly for the benefit of the Labour Party. In particular, Peter Clarke in his study of Lancashire argued that the move toward class-based politics saw a significant change in the nature of Liberalism. A progressive New Liberalism based around an agenda of social reform provided the basis for a political challenge that drew in working class interests. From this point of view the Liberals adapted to the new class politics and their failure therefore has to be located in the serious divisions during the First World War, which continued after 1918 and undermined the credibility of the Party. Trevor Wilson was the major exponent of the idea that the War was the main factor in the decline of the Liberal Party. He argued that Liberalism was not well equipped to deal with the challenges posed by a War that involved mass conscription and an unprecedented level of state intervention in the economy to direct it to serve the needs of the War.⁸

Clarke's view that the Liberal Party successfully adapted by embracing New Liberalism has been seen as too sweeping a judgement that generalises from the particular experience of Lancashire. Other studies, for example of Wales and the north east of England, have suggested that traditional or 'old' Liberalism based on free trade, peace and retrenchment and linked to non-conformity continued to attract significant political support. David Powell has suggested that there was a tension within Liberalism that meant, even with the adoption of New Liberalism, conflict with Labour was likely. He says, "It followed that, while the Liberals were bound to welcome the early successes of the new unionism and to support Labour's demands for reform when Labour was clearly in a position of weakness, there was in the communitarian perspective of the New Liberalism a point beyond which the claims of Labour could not be conceded, because to do so would infringe unreasonably upon the liberties of other sections of the community (including, conceivably, other sections of the working

⁹D.Tanner, <u>Political Change and the Labour Party 1900 – 1918</u>, (Cambridge 1990) p. 7

⁷P.Clarke, <u>Lancashire and the New Liberalism</u> (Cambridge 1971)

⁸T.Wilson, The Downfall of the Liberal Party 1914 – 1935, (London 1966)

¹⁰K.Morgan, "The New Liberalism and the Challenge of Labour: The Welsh Experience, 1885 – 1929" in K.D. Brown (ed) <u>Essays in Anti Labour History</u>. (London 1974). A.W. Purdue, "The Liberal and Labour Party in North East Politics 1900 – 1914: the struggle for supremacy" in <u>International Review of Social History Vol. 36</u> 1981

class), which it was also the duty of Liberalism to uphold". Wilson's view that Liberal divisions during the war were the main reason for their decline has been challenged by McKibbin who pointed out that Labour too was divided by the War, but overall the Labour Party emerged stronger by 1918. Local studies have confirmed that although there were divisions within Labour ranks over the conduct of the War on issues like conscription and conscientious objection, Labour was able to unite to defend working class interests over working conditions, high food prices and rents. Although he does not share the view of McKibbin and Laybourn and Reynolds that Labour had begun to make an important political impact before 1914, and that the war experience confirmed that trend, Tony Adams agreed that the War was important for Labour. He says, "Again the War appears to have been a watershed bringing with it a reduction in the salience of local political tradition and the increased significance of economic experience in the explanation of working class politics". 14

Duncan Tanner acknowledges the importance of the War but denies that it produced a uniform working class or that it particularly helped Labour's appeal. Instead he suggests that the unity was achieved because certain issues around the welfare of the working class arose e.g. food prices, working conditions etc. and this helped to put Labour in a better competitive position. Tanner's general argument is that the different experiences of working people meant that there was no move towards a predominantly class based politics between 1900 and 1918. Economic and social experiences remained predominantly local and politics itself could determine electoral prospects. Labour's growth was uneven and they were not in a position to replace the Liberals before the War.

¹²R.McKibbin, op cit pp. 88-91

¹⁵D.Tanner, <u>op cit</u>, p. 372

¹¹D.Powell, "The New Liberalism and the Rise of Labour, 1886 – 1906" in The Historical Journal Vol. 29 No. 2 (1986) p. 373

¹³See for example J.Bush, <u>Behind the Lines East: London Labour 1914 – 1919</u> (London 1984) K.Laybourn and J.Reynolds, <u>Liberalism and the Rise of Labour 1890 – 1918</u> (London 1984)

¹⁴T.Adams "Labour and the First World War; Economy Politics and the Erosion of Local Peculiarity?" in Journal of Regional and Local Studies x (1990). For Adams the economic experience and pressures cut across occupational boundaries. (Ibid p. 41)

The challenge to the idea that changing class experiences gave rise to Labour politics has been taken further with the idea that the growth of Labour politics is part of a continuing tradition of radical politics. This seeks to deny that the growth of Labour signalled a break in political development in the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth century. Eugenio Biagini and Alistair Reid set out this position in a collection of essays. In their introduction they identify popular elements in Gladstonian Liberalism and the presence of radical Liberal elements in the early Labour Party as important features. They go on to say, "Once we place the mid and late Victorian working class Liberal and Labour activists back into their own political context in this way, enough continuity in popular radicalism can be demonstrated to make the search for social explanations unnecessary". 16

It is undoubtedly true that some activists within Labour politics came from Liberal backgrounds and they along with Labour voters may have felt a greater affinity with Liberalism. However, they did make a break with the Liberal Party and the argument that there was continuity in popular radicalism fails to explain why the Labour Party was formed.

Neville Kirk argues that between the 1890's and 1920's the forces of political change were overshadowing those of continuity. The important fact was the desire for independent Labour representation. He says, "First, the very act of placing the idea of independent Labour politics on the political agenda, and successfully translating that idea into concrete practice, contributed, in themselves, major political discontinuities: they offered fundamental challenges to organised Labour's and workers' mid and late Victorian accommodation to the domination of politics by the Liberal and Conservative Parties".¹⁷

¹⁶E.F. Biagini and A.Reid (eds) <u>Currents of Radicalism</u>. <u>Popular radicalism</u>, <u>Organised Labour and Party Politics in Britain 1850 – 1914</u>. (Cambridge 1991) p. 5

¹⁷N.Kirk, <u>Change Continuity and Class. Labour in British society 1850 – 1920.</u> (Manchester 1998) p. 196

It is clear that the development of Labour politics was an uneven process for Labour was not successful in establishing itself as a significant independent political force in all parts of the country. This has led to a number of detailed local studies which have set out to explain the economic social and political roots of Labour's growth. They have usually begun with an analysis of the economic structure of the area and sought to show how and to what extent it influenced the political developments in that locality. For example Bill Lancaster in his study of Leicester has shown how structural change in the boot and shoe manufacturing industry influenced local politics. As the industry moved away from artisan based modes of production towards a more factory based system, and competition from abroad forced cuts in production costs, industrial conflicts increased.

Labour was able to capitalise on the problems of unemployment caused by these changes and Labour's assertiveness at municipal elections made the more conservative element in the local Liberal Party reluctant to co-operate with the new Labour forces. Economic factors were not the only important ones. Leicester workers drew on older political traditions of radicalism and co-operation which stressed working class independence and they fed the demand for Labour representation. Lancaster's emphasis on the role of political culture in shaping the development of Labour politics is important. He goes on to say, "In short, working class communities possess both a structure and a nature. These two components, however, never exist in isolation from each other; they have to be seen as constantly interacting and reshaping each other". 19

Another study that emphasises the importance of political culture in the development of Labour politics is Joan Smith's study of Glasgow and Liverpool. She argues that differences in the occupational structure, residential pattern and political culture lay at the heart of their differences.

¹⁹lbid, p. xix

¹⁸B.Lancaster, <u>Radicalism Co-operation and Socialism. Leicester</u> <u>Working Class Politics 1860 – 1906</u>. (Leicester 1987)

Although both cities had sectarian divisions, in Glasgow Protestant workers were largely employed in skilled trades while Catholics worked in the unskilled occupations. In Liverpool by contrast there was direct competition between Catholic and Protestant workers in the unskilled labour market.²⁰ In Liverpool Catholics were concentrated in the Scotland Road area of the city while in Glasgow they were scattered throughout the central wards of the city.²¹ The political culture of Glasgow was based on a radical progressive Liberal tradition. This was built around the craft trade union, friendly societies and co-operative movement all of which supported notions of self help and independence. This Liberal tradition was potentially fertile ground for Labour politics for as Smith says. "In Glasgow it was possible to believe in the gradual development of socialism as working men left Liberalism behind and moved to Labour, and some to revolutionary socialism". 22 In Liverpool Liberalism was very weak and Tory democracy was dominant, built around the Working Men's Conservative Associations and the Orange Order. The main counter to this at least before the First World War was Irish Nationalism.²³

Michael Savage in his study of Preston has adopted a different approach to understanding the development of Labour politics. He rejects the ideas of working class consciousness or culture as being key influences on political attitudes. He argues that it is very difficult to identify the exact nature of working class consciousness in any period. Political actions are likely to be related to strategy and tactics at the time rather than any underlying values or beliefs about the areas of their life and therefore they may not exhibit any coherence.²⁴

For Savage, working class politics is rooted in the desire to reduce working

²⁰J.Smith "Labour Tradition in Glasgow and Liverpool" in <u>History</u> <u>Workshop</u> no. 17 Spring 1984 pp. 48-9

²¹<u>Ibid</u>, p. 49

²²<u>Ibid</u>, p. 50

²³<u>lbid</u>, pp. 45-7 and p. 39

²⁴M.Savage, <u>The Dynamics of Working Class Politics</u>; <u>The Labour Movement in Preston 1880 – 1940</u>, (Cambridge 1987)

class material insecurity within a capitalist market economy. Political activity consists of practical politics, concerned with reducing working class material insecurity and formal politics, the arena of traditional party politics. He identifies three basic types of practical politics. One based on mutual activity including attempts to set up co-operatives; a second 'economistic' one in which workers use their industrial bargaining power to get job security and a 'statist' one where the state is used to intervene to regulate the insecurity of working class life for example by restricting the hours of work or by providing forms of social welfare. Each of these forms of practical politics could take on collective or individualist forms. The type of practical politics that develops depends on the capacities of that particular community. This is related to the social structure, the mix of skills in the workforce and the gender composition as well as the spread and development of neighbourhoods. The successful political party is able to make links between the forms of practical politics that develop and the arena of more formal party politics. Each of the politics are politics.

In the rest of the study, Savage shows how practical politics developed in Preston. The local economy was based mainly on cotton spinning and weaving. The decline in spinning led to economic struggles which were skilfully exploited by local Conservatives who claimed to be able to regenerate the local economy. The shift away from the Conservatives at the turn of the century reflected the failure of the Conservatives to meet working class demands. As trades such as weaving became opened up more to women workers, the local Labour movement increasingly reflected those who most felt under threat from this. The concerns over women's employment continued into the early 1920's but the growth of neighbourhood organisation and women's sections gave rise to increased Labour support for urban amenities for working class areas.

Savage make the point that this shift from trade union orientated struggles toward neighbourhood based politics was a feature elsewhere.²⁷ His study

²⁵lbid, pp. 22-26

²⁶lbid, p. 62

²⁷<u>Ibid</u>, pp. 195-198

also stresses the importance of the local dimension in the development of Labour politics arguing that Labour's advance in the 1920's should be seen as the result of common local effects in different areas.²⁸

It is clear from this brief survey that there is no monocausal explanation of the rise of Labour. The range of local studies of the origins and growth of Labour politics have shown how local economic, social and political developments helped influence that growth in those particular localities. However, most of these studies have tended to concentrate on the north of England or on larger urban areas such as London, Liverpool and Glasgow. A lot less attention has been paid to towns in the south of England, possibly because they have not been regarded as particularly significant or distinctive for the growth of Labour politics.

One of the reasons for this study of Southampton is to help fill this gap and extend the geographical spread of studies. The justification for another local study is also in part, practical. Choosing a particular town enables a focus on the social, economic and political relationships that influenced the rise of Labour and the decline of the Liberals within a defined community. This emphasis on the local is an attempt to understand the uneven growth and development of Labour politics across the country. It also reflects the view of historians like Michael Savage who argue that the local dimension of political development was still important well into the twentieth century.²⁹

This study also covers a longer timescale than many other local studies, beginning with the origins of independent Labour political activity in the 1890's up to the formation of a majority Labour government in 1945 when Southampton returned two Labour MP's and, for the first time, the Labour Party won overall control of the Borough Council. This allows for a more comprehensive assessment of the development of Labour politics in the town.

²⁸<u>Ibid</u>, p. 187 and p. 179

²⁹M Savage, "The Rise of the Labour Party in Local Perspective." in Journal of Regional and Local Studies, Vol 10 No. 1 Summer 1993 pp. 1-3

The study begins with an examination of the structure of the local economy and the type and nature of employment in the town before going on to consider the development of trade unionism. This chapter covers the period from 1890 to 1914 while chapter six considers the same topics for the period from 1914 to 1945.

The reason for beginning here is that an important assumption underlying this thesis is that the way working people earned their living was a major influence on their position and role in society. Other studies have acknowledged the importance of this. Bill Lancaster began his study with consideration of the hosiery and boot and shoe industries in Leicester because, it was, "... a period when work, or lack of it, was the dominant feature of working class life". 30 Michael Savage maintained that the desire to reduce the insecurity of life in a capitalist market society was a prime motivation behind working class political activity. This is not to suggest that there is some automatic link between a persons economic situation and their political actions. Lancaster stressed the importance of the interaction between workers economic position and their political traditions and beliefs in influencing working class political activity. Savage argued that the type of working class politics that develops is influenced by the capacities of different groups of workers for collective action. This in turn was influenced by different forms of skill and workplace organisation and the extent of community and neighbourhood ties. Also there was the extent to which the local social structure helped or hindered the development of class alliances.31

The two chapters will describe the main areas of employment in the town, highlighting those which were dominant, and the extent of seasonal and casual employment among different occupations. By considering the extent and nature of trade union organisation some assessment of the potential for collective action can be made. This is important not only for the role of trade unions in the workplace but also for their influence on the growth of working class political activity. Laybourn and Reynolds for example, argued that organised trade unionism played a major role in helping the development of Labour politics in

³⁰B Lancaster, <u>op cit</u>, p. xix

³¹M Savage, <u>op cit,</u> p. 40-41

West Yorkshire. While they demonstrated some clear links it is important not to see the relationship in simplistic terms. David Howell in his study of the Independent Labour Party has shown how the growth of support for independent Labour politics took different courses in different unions. It was influenced by the attitude of the union leadership, the role of Labour activists and the response of ordinary members.³²

Political attitudes do not develop in a vacuum so the second chapter will set out the political background and the competition between the existing political parties, the Conservatives and the Liberals. By examining the cycle of municipal and parliamentary elections the emergence of a distinct Labour interest which sought representation outside of the established political parties can be traced. The conversion of the Trades Council to the cause of independent Labour representation and the influence of the Social Democratic Federation and the Independent Labour Party will be considered.

The loss of working class support by the Liberals is a theme of many local and national studies of political developments in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Therefore, particular attention will be paid to the impact of the demand for independent Labour representation on the Liberals. How they responded to this demand and the extent to which they could accommodate it will help in assessing the character of local Liberalism. Their potential to develop a viable progressive politics will be examined in particular in response to the claim by Duncan Tanner that it was an attractive option in Southampton for the Liberals and Labour, and that there were signs of a Liberal revival in the town by 1914.³³

The two chapters on unemployment and housing are intended to focus on issues which had a direct impact on working class communities and to examine if and how Labour was able to make use of these issues to gain political support. Other studies have suggested Labour was successful in doing this. Bill Lancaster argued that Labour improved its electoral performance in 1904/5 in Leicester because it was able to exploit working class concerns over

³³D Tanner, <u>op cit,</u> p. 191

³²D Howell, <u>British Workers and the Independent Labour Party 1888-1906</u>, (Manchester 1986) p. 277

unemployment and povety.34

In Leicester in the shoe making industry unemployment was the result of technological and market changes. There was competition from American imports and employers tried to cut costs and become more competitive. In Southampton the causes of unemployment and underemployment were somewhat different. In the port and port-related employment it was part of a regular cycle of job insecurity throughout the period. Consideration will need to be given to the effect this may have had on the political impact of unemployment in Southampton.

In another study, on Bristol between the wars, Whitfield has argued that Labour won the parliamentary seat of Bristol mainly on the issue of unemployment and that by 1924 Labour had become the main voice for the unemployed in east Bristol. During this period Labour claims to represent the unemployed did not go unchallenged. The Communist Party and the National Unemployed Workers Movement campaigned on their behalf and chapter eight will consider how successful Labour was in facing this challenge in Southampton. Labour also faced pressure from ratepayer interests keen to curb significant increases in expenditure on unemployment and this needs to be seen in the context of Labour seeking to expand its base of support into more marginal wards.

The problems of poor housing and the lack of affordable housing for the working classes continued throughout the period covered by this study. From the 1890's when the first attempts were made to tackle dilapidated housing through to the slum clearance programme and the building of new council houses between the wars Labour representatives campaigned on the issue.

This posed a challenge for the local Liberals before the First World War and the actions they took on this important social issue can be seen as one indication of how progressive they were prepared to be. If Labour portrayed the housing problem as a moral issue they had the potential to build alliances across the

³⁴B Lancaster, op cit p. 165

³⁵R Whitfield, The Labour Movement in Bristol 1910 – 1939 (Unpublished PhD University of Bristol 1979) pp. 227-228

class divide and there is evidence they had some success with this. More importantly if Labour could turn this into political support they had some hope of exerting real influence and enhancing their own credibility. Again there appears to be some evidence of success here especially in the inter war years.

Chapter Five considers the impact of the First World War on the development of Labour politics. While most historians argue that the war had an influence they disagree about its significance. Did it simply confirm an existing trend of Labour growth before the War or did it provide the impetus to overcome local and class divisions?³⁶ An alternative interpretation of Labours achievement during the war is that they were better able to compete as defenders of working class interests during the war.

The Labour movement in Southampton was divided by the War as it was elsewhere and this chapter will explore the extent and nature of those divisions. It will examine whether concerns over material interests like food prices, high rents and industrial matters helped create an underlying unity. Also was there any evidence of any greater sense of 'class feeling' during the war. The attitude of the Liberals and Conservatives toward Labour will be a focus particularly as Labour representation was required on a range of wartime bodies such as military tribunals, food control, war pension and other committees.

The impact of the war on the Liberals locally will be covered in order to assess whether the divisions at national level were reflected locally and if this affected their standing in Southampton.

Chapter Six charts Labour's consolidation as the second party of both national and local politics in Southampton between 1919 and 1938. the first part of the chapter considers the municipal and parliamentary elections in three phases. The first from 1919 to 1923 covers the immediate post war years up to the formation of the first Labour government. Labours performance at municipal

³⁶These two views are exemplified by Laybourn and Adams K Laybourn, The Rise of Labour. The British Labour Party 1890-1979, (London 1988) p. 46 T. Adams, loc cit p. 41

elections fluctuated but in parliamentary elections by 1923 they had clearly pushed the Liberals into third place. The second phase is from the defeat of the minority Labour government up to the formation of the second Labour government in 1929. The local significance of this is that in 1924 the Liberals in Southampton decided for the first time not to put forward candidates for the parliamentary election, and in 1929 Labour won both parliamentary seats for the first time defeating the Conservatives and Liberals. The final phrase saw defeat for Labour both nationally and locally in the parliamentary elections. At municipal elections Labour gained seats but not enough to take control of the council even when they obtained a greater percentage of the popular vote than their opponents.

The social basis of Labour support will be examined using a contemporary local survey of income and poverty and linking this to the voting patterns of the wards to draw some conclusions about the nature of Labour support. Evidence of Labour Party organisation and membership will help to complete the picture of Labours strengths and weaknesses.

Two obstacles to labours progress particularly at municipal level have been identified during this period. Chris Cook highlighted the growth of anti-Labour alliances across the country.³⁷ These combination of Conservatives and Liberals styled themselves as 'Independents', 'Citizens Associations', or 'Progressive' parties claiming to want an end to party politics in municipal affairs. Such an alliance was formed in Southampton in 1920 and continued throughout the inter-war period. This clearly made it more difficult for labour to win Borough Council seats. However, it is also important to see if this had an impact on the identity of the Liberals in particular and whether Labour was successful in challenging the ideas and policies of the Independents.

The second obstacle was the effect of the differences between the municipal and parliamentary franchises between the wars. Sam Davies in his study of

³⁷C Cook, <u>The Age of Alignment</u>. <u>Electoral Politics in Britain 1922 – 1929</u> (London 1975) pp 56-62

Liverpool acknowledged that its impact had been little researched.³⁸ Not all those on the parliamentary electoral roll were able to vote in municipal elections due to residence and other qualifications. The figures for those unable to vote varied within and between Boroughs but could be as high as 25%. This did not only affect the working class but Davies concluded from his evidence that Labour in Liverpool was more likely to be disadvantaged by this. Using the figures for the franchise for Southampton it will be possible to compare the extent of these exclusions from the municipal franchise and gauge their impact on Labours performance locally.

The final chapter considers Labour politics during the second world war and the immediate post war parliamentary and municipal elections. Labours role in municipal administration during the war and the extent to which the party was able to maintain its organisations during the war will be examined. The impact of plans for post war reconstruction nationally and locally and the course and conduct of the election campaign, for parliamentary and municipal elections will be considered. A brief overview of Labours performance at the Borough Council elections up to 1951 will be given in order to better understand the significance of Labours achievement in 1945.

³⁸S Davies, <u>Liverpool labour. Social and Political Influences in the</u>
<u>Development of the Labour Party in Liverpool 1900-1939</u> (Keele 1996) p. 119

Chapter Two

The Local Economy and Employment 1890 – 1914

The importance of understanding how working people earned their living has been highlighted in the introduction. It influenced how secure someone's income was, in what accommodation and where, people could afford to live and whether they had any collective means of protecting their interests.

The first part of the chapter will compare the occupational structure through the census in 1891, 1901 and 1911 and compare this with other port towns along with a brief explanation of changes to the format of the occupation classifications between each census.

A short section will sketch in the development of the port and the major influences on its growth before going on to describe the pattern of employment in the key port and port related industries. The final part includes an examination of the extent of trade union organisation and the state of industrial relations in the town.

The Occupational Structure of Southampton

This study of Southampton includes the area east of the River Itchen comprising Woolston, Bitterne and Sholing and Bitterne and PearTree. Prior to 1901 the figures for the occupied population of this area were aggregated within the rural districts of Hampshire. In the 1901 census groups of selected occupations were identified separately but a more detailed breakdown of occupations was only produced in the 1911 census. It is therefore difficult to accurately identify the occupied population in this area before 1911 and so there may be some under representation of occupations in the figures.

The occupational tables set out in Appendices One and Two have been based on the 1911 census classifications. This has involved some recalculation of occupational groups from the census of 1891 and 1901. The census classifications evolved during this period but it still retained elements of a hybrid between an industrial and an occupational classification in 1911. Some important detailed changes were made between each census. The number of

occupational headings increased from 347 in 1891 to 382 in 1901. As the classification became more detailed, people classed as general labourers in an earlier census were allocated to more specific occupations. The effect of this can be seen in Southampton. For example in 1901 6.83% of occupied males were classified as general labourers and 6.6% as dock or wharf labourers. In 1911 3.88% of occupied males were classified as general labourers and 9.17% as dock or wharf labourers. Appendices One and Two show the number and percentage of occupied males and females in various groups. The figures for Itchen are set out in Appendix Three. Below is a summary of the main occupational groups of occupied males.

Table 2.1 Summary of Occupied Males (%) – Southampton

| OCCUPATION | 1891 | 1901 | 1911 |
|-------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| General or Local Government | 2.83 | 3.35 | 3.83 |
| Professional | 4.86 | 3.65 | 3.59 |
| Commercial | 5.27 | 6.45 | 6.37 |
| Conveyance | 24.52 | 29.46 | 32.78 |
| General Engineering and Metal | 8.89 | 8.67 | 11.56 |
| Building | 9.93 | 12.36 | 9.17 |
| Wood, Furniture etc. | 3.61 | 2.32 | 2.29 |
| Dress | 3.91 | 3.19 | 3.03 |
| Food, Drink and Tobacco | 8.82 | 9.20 | 9.81 |
| Other and Undefined | 15.02 | 9.73 | 6.72 |

Source - Census of England and Wales

Clearly the biggest single group were those employed in transport and port related work. Building, the engineering and metal trades, food drink and tobacco and commercial occupations were the other main groups.

¹ N.R. Buxton & D.I. MacKay, <u>British Employment Statistics</u>. A <u>Guide to Sources and Methods</u>. (Oxford) 1971) pp. 17-21 <u>Census of England and Wales</u> 1901 and 1911

The main areas of female employment were domestic service, clothing, food drink and tobacco and professional occupations (mainly teaching). These are set out below.

Table 2.2 Summary of Occupied Females (%) – Southampton

| OCCUPATION | 1891 | 1901 | 1911 |
|----------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Professional | 11.59 | 10.70 | 9.74 |
| Domestic Service | 53.67 | 53.00 | 46.11 |
| Commercial | 0.57 | 1.67 | 3.58 |
| Print, Paper, Books | 0.50 | 0.63 | 1.69 |
| Textiles | 2.88 | 3.50 | 3.31 |
| Dress | 19.90 | 17.85 | 15.60 |
| Food, Drink, Tobacco | 6.32 | 8.03 | 13.21 |
| Other and Undefined | 2.34 | 2.24 | 2.84 |

Source - Census of England and Wales

The census may underestimate the number of women in occupations especially if they were engaged in part-time or temporary work. There is, for example, some evidence that the wives of seafarers might take employment only when their husbands were at sea.²

²V. Burton, <u>The Work and Home Life of Seafarers with Special</u> Reference to the Port of Southampton 1871 – 1921 (unpublished PhD University of London 1989) p.299

The figures for the occupied population in Itchen are shown in Appendix Three.

The available figures are limited and only directly comparable with Southampton for 1911. A summary of male and female occupations is shown below.

Table 2.3 Summary of Occupied Population – Itchen Urban District (%)

| | 18 | 91 | 1911 | | |
|----------------------------------|-------|--------|-------|--------|--|
| OCCUPATIONS | MALE | FEMALE | MALE | FEMALE | |
| Professional | | 8.40 | 1.77 | 11.19 | |
| Domestic Service | | 55.35 | 1.70 | 45.25 | |
| Commercial | 3.30 | 1.57 | 3.42 | 3.86 | |
| Conveyance | 26.85 | | 20.89 | | |
| General Engineering/Metal Trades | 17.79 | | 40.63 | | |
| Building | 12.86 | | 7.91 | | |
| Textiles | , | | | 3.01 | |
| Dress | 1.65 | 16.70 | 1.20 | 14.67 | |
| Food, Drink, Tobacco | 6.17 | 6.40 | 5.35 | 13.28 | |
| Other and Undefined | 24.76 | 10.29 | 3.95 | 4.55 | |

Source - Census of England and Wales

The pattern of employment in Itchen broadly follows that of Southampton. The most significant feature is the high percentage of males employed in the engineering and metal trades compared with Southampton. This can be accounted for by the presence of shipbuilding and ship repairing works on the eastern side of the River Itchen.

These figures highlight the limited range of employment and its links to the port, either directly or indirectly. The engineering and metal trades were concentrated in the ship repairing, and the smaller shipbuilding industry. The building industry was tied in to the expansion of the town which in turn was largely dependent on the growth of the docks. Those engaged in food, drink and tobacco were employed in guest houses, hotels, restaurants and public houses. Some catered for travellers passing through the port and some directly served the seafarers and other port workers. The town, however, lacked any significant alternative manufacturing or other industry and this was compounded

by the location of Southampton surrounded by a rural hinterland away from other areas of manufacturing. This also helped to limit the opportunities for women's employment.

The distinctive nature of Southampton's local economy can be further explored by comparing the structure of employment with other selected ports.

Appendices Four (A) and Four (B) show a summary of occupations for Southampton, Plymouth, Bristol, Liverpool and Hull for the census years 1891, 1901 and 1911. Tables 2.4 and 2.5 highlight the main occupations in these ports.

TABLE 2.4 SUMMARY OF OCCUPATIONS OF MALES IN SELECTED PORTS (% OF OCCUPIED)

| | Professional | Commercial | Conveyance | Engineering and Metal Trades | Building | Wood, Furniture etc. | Chemicals, Oil, Soap etc. | Paper, Print, Books etc. | Textile | Dress | Food, Drink, Tobacco | Other, General and Undefined |
|-------------|--------------|------------|------------|---------------------------------|----------|----------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|--------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1891 | 4.00 | - 07 | 04.50 | - 000 | 0.00 | 0.04 | 0.00 | 2 20 | 4 44 | 2 04 | | 15.02 |
| Southampton | 4.86 | 5.27 | 24.52 | 8.89 | 9.93 | 3.61 | 0.68 | 2.36 | 1.41 | 3.91 | 8.82 8.57 | 12.91 |
| Plymouth | 4.50 | 4.97 | 17.30 | 5.41 | 11.10 | 4.34 | 0.92 | 2.54 2.95 | 1.55 1.56 | 4.65 8.87 | 8.04 | 10.50 |
| Bristol | 5.49 | 7.48 | 16.61 | 6.71 | 9.65 | 5.03 | 1.12 | | | | | |
| Liverpool | 3.12 | 7.48 | 32.18 | 8.99 | 7.77 | 3.98 | 1.01 | 2.17 | 1.27 | 3.60 | 8.62 | 11.52 |
| Hull | 3.12 | 6.01 | 26.92 | 12.40 | 8.84 | 4.22 | 3.80 | 1.72 | 1.97 | 3.16 | 8.18 | 11.31 |
| 1901 | | | | | | | | 1.01 | | 0.40 | 0.00 | 0.70 |
| Southampton | 3.65 | 6.45 | 29.46 | 8.67 | 12.36 | 2.32 | 0.59 | 1.64 | 0.96 | 3.19 | 9.20 | 9.73 |
| Plymouth | 3.94 | 5.86 | 15.97 | 6.29 | 15.44 | 2.71 | 1.30 | 2.43 | 0.23 | 3.71 | 8.46 | |
| Bristol | 3.48 | 8.23 | 16.87 | 8.22 | 12.00 | 4.49 | | 3.24 | 1.90 | 8.21 | 11.45 | 7.47 |
| Liverpool | 2.71 | 9.04 | 31.75 | 9.07 | 10.04 | 3.75 | | | 1.42 | 2.97 | 9.89 | 7.97 |
| Hull | 2.54 | 6.61 | 28.73 | 11.71 | 9.55 | 4.59 | 3.93 | 1.64 | 1.55 | 2.85 | 9.04 | 8.91 |
| 1911 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Southampton | 3.59 | 6.37 | 32.78 | | | 2.29 | | | 0.89 | 3.03 | 9.81 | 6.72 |
| Plymouth | 4.01 | 6.60 | 17.19 | 8.48 | | 2.84 | | 2.71 | - | 3.82 | 9.86 | |
| Bristol | 3.49 | 9.55 | 17.92 | 9.90 | 8.60 | 4.28 | | 4.06 | - | 6.93 | 12.40 | |
| Liverpool | 2.94 | 9.27 | 33.37 | 9.18 | 8.14 | 3.77 | 2.42 | | | 2.99 | | |
| Hull | 2.43 | 6.96 | 30.90 | 12.98 | 7.39 | 4.30 | 5.32 | 1.60 | 0.97 | 2.59 | 9.56 | 6.04 |

TABLE 2.5 SUMMARY OF OCCUPATIONS OF FEMALES IN SELECTED PORT (% OF OCCUPIED)

| | Professional | Domestic Services | Conveyance | Engineering and ivietal Trades | Wood, Furniture etc. | Chemicals, Oil, Soap etc. | Paper, Print, Books etc. | Textile | Dress | Food, Drink, Tobacco | Other, General and Undefined |
|-------------|--------------|-------------------|------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|---------|-------|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1891 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Southampton | 11.59 | 53.67 | 0.57 | - | - | - | 0.50 | 2.88 | 19.90 | 6.32 | 2.34 |
| Plymouth | 9.39 | 47.10 | 0.71 | - | 1.03 | 0.74 | 1.18 | 4.13 | 23.20 | 6.55 | 4.41 |
| Bristol | 9.94 | 41.30 | - | - | 0.67 | - | 3.35 | 4.14 | 25.99 | 9.00 | 2.97 |
| Liverpool | 8.39 | 44.01 | 0.96 | - | 1.13 | 1.03 | 2.83 | 3.27 | 19.67 | 9.85 | |
| Hull | 9.29 | 48.75 | - | - | 0.66 | 1.63 | 3.54 | 5.90 | 19.29 | 7.64 | 2.62 |
| 1901 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Southampton | 10.70 | 53.00 | 1.67 | - | 0.42 | - | 0.63 | | 17.85 | 8.03 | |
| Plymouth | 8.28 | 45.65 | 1.62 | - | 0.83 | 0.70 | 1.50 | 5.21 | 23.25 | 8.13 | |
| Bristol | 7.37 | 33.41 | 1.29 | - | 0.52 | 0.51 | 5.58 | | | 15.38 | |
| Liverpool | 7.71 | 40.10 | 2.20 | 0.52 | 1.09 | 1.73 | | | 16.57 | 14.82 | |
| Hull | 8.95 | 42.05 | 1.48 | 0.49 | 0.71 | 4.93 | 3.19 | 5.26 | 18.19 | 10.78 | 2.04 |
| 1911 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Southampton | 9.74 | | 3.58 | 0.16 | | | | | 15.60 | 13.21 | 2.84 |
| Plymouth | 8.65 | | 2.84 | - | 0.90 | | | | | 10.46 | |
| Bristol | 7.11 | 29.56 | | | 0.65 | | | | 22.20 | 19.48 | |
| Liverpool | 7.38 | | | 1.16 | | 1.88 | | | | 17.63 | |
| Hull | 7.81 | 34.44 | 2.72 | 3.61 | 1.10 | 6.90 | 3.65 | 4.50 | 15.10 | 15.13 | 2.31 |

Plymouth differed from the other ports in having around ten percent of the male workforce employed in defence. The presence of the dockyard and its associated trades was a distinctive feature. In Plymouth, building, paper, print and books as well as clothing, employed a greater percentage of the male workforce than Southampton.

Bristol was an important commercial centre and this is reflected in the figures. Furniture making, clothing and boot and shoe making were also important. Liverpool was an established commercial centre too but it also had the largest percentage of males employed in transport and related industries. After 1891, Southampton ranked second after Liverpool for the percentage of the male

workforce employed in that sector. Hull was not very far behind ranked third for the percentage in the same sector. However Hull had a more established engineering sector as well as the processing of chemicals, oil and soap.

A closer examination of the transport sector helps to highlight again the distinctive features of Southampton. The proportion of the male workforce employed in the three main sectors is set out below. Also the percentage employed in the merchant service and the percentage of dock labour are set out.

<u>Table 2.6</u> Percentage of Male Workforce Employed in Transport Sector and in Categories Merchant Service and Dock Labour in Selected Ports

| 1891 | RAIL | ROAD | CANAL RIVER | MERCHANT | DOCK LABOUR |
|-------------|------|------|-------------|-----------|-------------|
| | | | SEA | SERVICE ① | |
| | | | | | |
| Southampton | 2.74 | 2.87 | 14.14 | 10.09 | 3.21 |
| Plymouth | 1.84 | 3.53 | 7.14 | 5.49 | 0.42 |
| Bristol | 2.17 | 5.30 | 4.65 | 2.35 | 1.89 |
| Liverpool | 2.34 | 6.51 | 16.10 | 6.73 | 8.23 |
| Hull | 4.64 | 2.64 | 15.81 | 6.61 | 6.29 |
| 1901 | RAIL | ROAD | CANAL RIVER | MERCHANT | DOCK LABOUR |
| | | | SEA | SERVICE | |
| | | | | | |
| Southampton | 3.40 | 3.84 | 10.93 | 10.73 | 6.11 |
| Plymouth | 2.72 | 4.77 | 3.73 | 3.41 | 0.82 |
| Bristol | 3.55 | 6.11 | 1.73 | 1.44 | 2.25 |
| Liverpool | 3.89 | 7.03 | 5.85 | 5.35 | 9.23 |
| Hull | 6.16 | 3.90 | 7.07 | 4.89 | 7.48 |
| 1911 | RAIL | ROAD | CANAL RIVER | MERCHANT | DOCK LABOUR |
| | | 1 | SEA | SERVICE | |
| | | | | | |
| Southampton | 3.28 | 4.07 | 11.70 | 11.30 | 7.98 |
| Plymouth | 3.29 | 4.79 | 2.55 | 2.37 | 1.57 |
| Bristol | 3.69 | 5.77 | 2.31 | 2.02 | 2.74 |
| Liverpool | 4.31 | 6.82 | 5.97 | 5.47 | 8.65 |
| Hull | 6.51 | 4.08 | 7.09 | 4.89 | 8.44 |

<u>NOTE</u>

① This figure for the merchant service is extracted from the previous column containing the total employed in canal, river and sea work.

Southampton stands out from the other ports in having the highest percentage of the male workforce employed in the merchant service. They were employed on the passenger liners and other ships that sailed from the port. Only Liverpool, which was also a passenger port, showed a significant number in the merchant service.

Although only around ten percent were employed in Southampton in the merchant service, seafaring was not a lifetime employment so many would have had the experience before moving on to other employment. The potential significance of this will be considered later when discussing the nature of employment in the town.

So far as female employment was concerned, domestic service was the major occupation for all ports but Southampton had a higher percentage of women engaged in this than the other ports. Bristol and Plymouth had more women employed in clothing than Southampton and Bristol also had tobacco and cigarette manufacture. Hull had employment of increasing numbers of women in chemical, oil and soap production. Southampton had limited opportunities for women's employment compared to other ports.

The dominance of the port and port-related industry can be seen through the occupational structure but the figures themselves do not show the relationship between port-related employment and non-port work, nor do they tell us much about the experience and nature of that employment. Before considering this a brief survey of the growth of the port will highlight the role of the railway and shipping companies and their relationship with the town.

The Development of the Port

Southampton still has an important natural advantage as a port, with a double tide that allows ships to arrive and depart at most states of the tide. With the development of adequate docks and the dredging of channels, it became possible for the port to cater for the largest ships afloat.³

The origins of the port can be traced back to the Middle Ages and it continued to develop slowly and intermittently through to the beginning of the nineteenth century. By this time, the existing Town Quay and Royal Pier were proving inadequate and the potential for expansion was being considered. The Harbour Commissioners, who controlled the existing facilities, only had limited borrowing powers and lacked the ability to invest in the provision of new docks. The London and Southampton Railway Company which was building a line from London had considered the possibility of constructing docks at Southampton but abandoned the idea. Encouraged by the development of the railway, a joint stock company was formed in 1835 to construct docks on the mudflats south of the town.

The company had to purchase the mudflats from the Corporation and there was some opposition to the sale in the town because of fears that the docks would pass out of the control of the town. The Harbour Commissioners were also concerned about the competition from the new docks. Despite these difficulties the foundation stone was laid in October 1838 and the new dock officially opened in August 1842.⁴

This development began the modern port of Southampton and showed some of the key features that were to shape its growth. There was the link with the railway, the reliance on investment from outside the town, for the company could not raise enough finance locally, and the town's gradual loss of control of the port. Initially it was thought Southampton would develop as a cargo port.

³F.J. Monkhouse (ed), <u>A Survey of Southampton and its Region</u> (Southampton 1964) pp.51-65

⁴A Temple Patterson, <u>A History of Southampton 1700-1914 Vol II The</u>
Beginnings of Modern Southampton 1836-1867 (Southampton 1971) pp 10-12

However, it suffered a significant disadvantage because there were no existing major centres of manufacture close by and the town had no significant manufacturing industry of its own.5

A more promising opportunity was to try and capture the mail and passenger traffic which was very competitive. The mails depended on government contracts and Southampton had rivals in Plymouth and London. The level of dock and railway charges and the changing requirement of passengers were also important considerations for the shipping companies using the port.

In 1843 Southampton won the contract for the American and West Indian mails and through the 1850s and 1860s the passenger traffic of the port developed. Ships sailed from Southampton to Spain and Portugal, Alexandria, Aden, India and Ceylon, as well as Australia, New Zealand, North and Central and South America.6

The docks continued to be developed slowly with the addition of number two dry dock in 1847, the Inner Dock in 1851, two further dry docks in 1859 and 1879 and the first quays along the Itchen River side of the docks in 1876.

In 1881 the Peninsular and Orient Shipping company ceased calling at Southampton because it was unhappy at the dock and railway charges at the port. The Union Steamship Company also threatened to leave, but following a period of negotiation and local lobbying, which saw the Chairman of the company replaced by a Southampton man, the Union Company stayed.⁷

⁵lbid, p.22

⁶J.Bird, The Major Seaports of the United Kingdom (London 1963) p.161. A Temple Patterson, A History of Southampton 1700-1914 Vol III Setbacks and Recoveries 1868-1914, (Southampton 1975), pp.1-2

In order to stay competitive as a port, Southampton had to develop its docks to accommodate the increasing size of ships. A new dock south of the existing area was constructed and opened on 26th July 1890 by Queen Victoria. The Empress Dock had been financed by a loan to the dock company and additional finance from the railway company. The cost of this development plus the need for further expansion put a severe strain on the dock company and the London and South Western Railway Company negotiated to acquire the docks. The transfer was agreed in October 1892.

This takeover of the docks was a recognition that significant capital investment in the port could not be obtained from local sources. It also confirmed the transfer of the docks out of local control. The port was however still vulnerable to the decisions of the shipping companies to move their vessels to another port.

Valerie Burton, in her study of Southampton seafarers, characterised Southampton as, "a port on sufferance". She said, "The pre-eminent importance of mail and passenger liner operations at Southampton reinforced its vulnerable status as a 'port on sufferance'; no more than three or four liner companies had the power to determine the fortunes of the port. Indeed the course of the port's development was largely a reflection of the policy decisions made by the large shipping companies".⁸

Towards the end of the Nineteenth Century concern about the future of the port was expressed by two prominent individuals, C J Owens, newly appointed manager of the London and South Western Railway Company, and Henry Wilding, the manager of the America Line Shipping Company. They both spoke to the Chamber of Commerce. Owens thought not enough was being done to encourage passengers to stay in the area rather than going straight to London. Also goods were passing through to be distributed by other centres losing the opportunity for Southampton to benefit. Wilding warned against complacency and boasts that Southampton was the "Liverpool of the South". He said that Southampton could not compete with Liverpool for the quantity of goods

⁸V. Burton, op cit pp. 49-50

handled but Southampton's advantages would be enhanced by ensuring competitive rail rates, developing coastal shipping and having adequate port facilities.⁹

With the start of the Boer War, Southampton became the main embarkation point for the military and their supplies. By 1902 the war was over and so was this temporary boost to traffic. The port could no longer take the largest vessels at any state of the tide. The North German Lloyd and Hamburg America lines withdrew their ships to Plymouth partly because of the lack of dredging and docking facilities but also because most of their passengers wanted to go to Europe. Those travelling to England could be disembarked at Plymouth and go by train to London with the ships continuing their journey to Cherbourg or Bremen.

The railway company therefore embarked on further investment with the building of the Trafalgar graving dock which opened in 1905 and the construction of the Ocean graving dock which began in 1907 and was opened in 1911. This last development was to cater for the ships of the White Star Line which transferred its transatlantic passenger services from Liverpool to Southampton to take advantage of the European emigrant trade.

The figures in Appendix Five show the value of imports and exports in selected ports with a summary showing Southampton and Liverpool in table 2.7. The value of imports and exports at Liverpool is significantly higher but Southampton was still in third place behind Hull and ahead of Bristol.

⁹Southampton Times, 12 March 1898 and 2 Dec 1899

<u>Table 2.7</u> <u>Value (in Pounds sterling) of Total Imports and Exports of</u>

<u>Merchandise 1897 – 1913</u>

| YEAR | SOUTHAMPTON | LIVERPOOL |
|------|-------------|-------------|
| 1897 | 22,833,455 | 192,370,782 |
| 1900 | 25,991,048 | 227,286,326 |
| 1905 | 30,467,108 | 277,580,959 |
| 1910 | 45,825,337 | 340,670,089 |
| 1913 | 53,569,213 | 370,779,413 |

Source: Annual statements of Trade of the U.K. Parliamentary Papers.

Appendix Six shows the arrivals and departures of passengers and troops at the port. The fluctuating numbers of passengers were often compensated by the movement of troops raising the total number of arrivals and departures. Appendix Seven contains figures for the number of items carried inward and outward by mails and parcel post. This helps to illustrate the importance of the passenger and mail traffic to the port.

This brief survey of the development of the port has illustrated some important features. There was a need to attract investment from outside the town to develop the docks and this eventually led to the takeover of the docks by the London and South Western Railway Company. The shipping companies could, and sometimes did, switch their ports of call if the port could not meet their requirements or according to the needs of passengers. Its dependence on these companies justified Burton's description of Southampton as a "port on sufferance". The railway and shipping companies were largely 'absentee employers'. Although they might have local offices, the companies were based outside the town. Their role in the town was largely an economic one. They took little part in the social and political life of the town.

The Nature of Employment in Southampton

Within the port industries of the docks, ship-repairing and seafaring there were divisions among the workforces based on skills and on the type of work undertaken. There were also seasonal and cyclical fluctuations affecting the availability of employment. Southampton therefore presents a quite complex picture compared to towns based on one or two industries that might be factory based.

Dock Labour

The problem of casual labour was much debated in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Philips and Whiteside, in their study of unemployment in the port transport industry, emphasise that it was not just employers who sustained the system of casual employment. "The casual system freed the docker from the necessity to work a continuous six day week at the same time offering him the opportunity of relatively high earnings for irregular spells of employment. To many men these arrangements had a strong appeal. A traditional almost pre-industrial rhythm of work and leisure persisted on the waterside, the more prized because it allowed the labourer a measure of control over the disposition of his time and effort". ¹⁰

There was no formal training for dock labourers and skills were learned on the job. Occupational distinction among the men and patterns of organisation were different in each port. This depended on the trade of the port, the organisation of the employers and the traditions of the workforce. ¹¹ Physical strength and aptitude along with personal contact were valuable and could help men to specialise in certain areas of work e.g. corn porters or deal porters.

The majority of dock labour in the port was casually employed. Exceptions included men employed by the London and South Western Railway Company on a permanent basis, at a fixed weekly wage, for loading and unloading

30

¹⁰G.Phillips and N.Whiteside, <u>Casual Labour</u>. <u>The Unemployment</u> <u>Question in the Port Transport Industry 1880-1970</u> (Oxford 1985) p.33

wagons. The men who loaded and discharged cargo from ships, employed by the shipping companies, were also permanent men. 12 The numbers of men casually employed fluctuated throughout the year. Evidence on the situation in Southampton was given by Thomas Morgan, Secretary of the Free Labour Association and Vice President of the Chamber of Commerce, to the Royal Commission on Labour in 1892. He gave figures for the number of men employed by the dock company on the first six days of each month from November 1890 to October 1891.

<u>Table 2.8</u> Number of Casual Men Employed by Southampton Dock

<u>Company on first six days of each month 1890 – 1891</u>

| | DATE | SIX DAYS | SIX | AVERAGE PER DAY |
|------|------|----------|--------|-----------------|
| | | | NIGHTS | OF 24 HOURS |
| 1890 | NOV | 1948 | 506 | 409 |
| | DEC | 1936 | 414 | 392 |
| 1891 | JAN | 1596 | 209 | 301 |
| | FEB | 1805 | 212 | 336 |
| | MAR | 1316 | 401 | 286 |
| | APR | 1203 | 285 | 248 |
| | MAY | 1304 | 472 | 296 |
| | JUNE | 2440 | 699 | 523 |
| | JULY | 3791 | 1896 | 948 |
| | AUG | 1883 | 492 | 396 |
| | SEPT | 1542 | 491 | 339 |
| | ОСТ | 1457 | 506 | 327 |

Source: Royal Commission on Labour Minutes of Evidence. Group 13 Vol 1 Parliamentary papers 1892 Appendix LXXVIII

¹²Royal Commission on Labour, Minutes of Evidence, Group B. Parliamentary Papers 1892, C6795 Question 12,260 to 12,265

The reason for the higher numbers employed in June and July was to cater for the volume of agricultural trade from the continent and the Channel Islands, particularly potatoes and other perishable items.¹³

Also giving evidence to the Royal Commission was Tom McCarthy a member of the Dock Workers Union Executive from London. He argued that wages and conditions in the port were poor and one of the reasons was the influx of labour from the surrounding countryside where agricultural wages were even lower. Men would wait at designated points in the docks, sometimes for many hours, hoping for the chance of work. Although more men were employed in June and July and they could earn more money because of the volume of traffic he argued the men were not always treated fairly. For example, he cited the practice whereby the decks of ships bringing in fruit could have 400 to 500 packages stacked on them and the men unloading were not paid until they started bringing out the cargo in the hold.¹⁴

The possibility of dock work could attract men who were unemployed from their own trades or it could be part of an annual cycle of employment. McCarthy quoted another example of men who cultivated small holdings at Sholing Common in the summer growing strawberries for the London market but working in the docks in the winter. He said, "some of these men told me that they could get nearly twenty-five pounds on the half acre and had they an opportunity of getting a little more land, or the local authorities chanced to give them a little more land They would not have to come into the docks in winter". 15

The basic pattern of the casual hiring of dock labour, the seasonal variation, and the limited security for some permanent dock labour continued right up to the First World War. Only during the War was there any attempt to regulate dock labour. Quite a lot of unskilled workers would have had some

¹⁵<u>Ibid</u>, question 12,276

¹³lbid, question 12,275

¹⁴<u>Ibid.</u> question 12,275 and 12,276

experience of casual dock work and some seafarers sought occasional work in the docks between voyages. This however could be a useful supplement rather than a necessity given the nature of seafaring employment in Southampton.

<u>Seafarers</u>

Seafarers were engaged and discharged for voyages by the liner companies as they were required. However, the liner labour force in Southampton was fairly stable. Valerie Burton says "The majority of the men who sailed on Southampton liners lived in the town and were regularly employed by the liner service". This contradicts a common image of the seafarer as an itinerant worker lacking any ties to family or community.

For seafarers in Southampton, a good work record and good conduct could virtually guarantee employment on subsequent voyages. This was important to a man with a family and a home to support especially with the lack of alternative employment available in the town. The threat of dismissal or a refusal to reengage was also a useful method of ensuring a compliant workforce.

As well as the chance of regular employment, wages on the liners for seamen and firemen were comparatively high compared to other ports particularly for those engaged on the North Atlantic routes. Using figures for 1912 Burton concluded that the wages of seamen and firemen compared favourably to that of skilled and unskilled workers in building and engineering.

¹⁶V.Burton, op cit p.74

<u>Table 2.9</u> <u>Seafaring and Non-Seafaring Wages in 1912. Southampton and</u>

Major Ports Compared

| • | SEAFA | RERS | BUILDII | NG | ENGINE | ERING |
|-------------|-------|---------|---------|-----------|---------|-----------|
| | | | WORK | ERS | WORKE | RS |
| | AB's | FIREMEN | SKILLED | UNSKILLED | SKILLED | UNSKILLED |
| London | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Southampton | 100 | 105 | 78 | 79 | 96 | 88 |
| Cardiff | 88 | 90 | 89 | 86 | _ | _ |
| Liverpool | 88 | 90 | 95 | 93 | 97 | 80 |
| Newcastle | 111 | 100 | 89 | 89 | 92 | 90 |

Base level London 100 Source – V.Burton, <u>op cit</u> p.90

There were two other important features of seafaring employment. Firstly the composition of the liner workforce changed over time. As ships became larger, the proportion of deck and engine crew decreased and the number of stewards increased. The characteristics of the occupational groups in that workforce were different. For example firemen required teamwork and strength to keep the ship's boilers fed with coal. They were isolated from the rest of the crew working in the bowels of the ship. Burton suggested this helped develop a sense of solidarity and elitism emphasising their difference from the rest of the crew and sometimes making them difficult to manage.¹⁷

Secondly, the cooks and stewards formed a distinct group. Although some women were employed as nannies or nurses, the majority of the workforce were men. The stewards were in regular contact with the passengers and the nature of the work required certain characteristics. They needed to have a pleasing and smart appearance some sense of refinement and an ingratiating manner. ¹⁸ The stewards tended to have a lower wage rate than other groups in the liner

¹⁷<u>Ibid</u>, pp.139-140

¹⁸lbid, p.145

workforce and made up their money through tips. 19

The census figures showed that employment in the merchant service was more important in Southampton than in other comparable ports (see table 2.6). However many more would have gone through the service as part of a life cycle of employment. Deck crew tended to consist largely of men under forty years of age with around one third under twenty five. It was essentially a younger man's occupation. Burton examined marriage registers from 1871 to 1921 and found that, whilst there was some occupational continuity between fathers and sons, those employed in seafaring came from across the working class. This led her to conclude that, "scarcely a family amongst the working class population did not have a friend or relative who was employed at sea or had been to sea. Seafaring far from being an alienating experience which polarised seafarers from shore dwellers, was the common unifying experience of the community".²⁰

The third element of the port industries was ship repairing and shipbuilding and this too was affected by seasonal and cyclical fluctuations.

Ship Repairing and Shipbuilding

Ship repairing relied on contracts for repairing, refitting and refurbishing from liner companies and work was largely scheduled for the winter. Ship repairing employed carpenters, boiler makers, shipwrights, painters, plumbers and coppersmiths. Some of those engaged in these trades like carpenters or painters could work in the building trade so there was a possibility of relieving seasonal variations in employment. If building work ceased for the winter men would find work in the shipyard. When contracts for ship repair ended men could return to building in the spring and summer.

In 1907, Harland and Wolff of Belfast established a branch of its ship repairing operation in Southampton working from the dock estate.²¹ The ship repairing and ship building works at Woolston on the east of the River Itchen changed

²¹A Temple Patterson, op cit Vol III p. 122

¹⁹<u>Ibid</u>, p.144 and 176

²⁰<u>Ibid</u>, p. 161 see also p.135, 138 and pp.182-189

hands on a number of occasions before being acquired by Thorneycrofts in 1904 to enable them to build larger vessels for the Admiralty than they could accommodate in their works at Chiswick.²²

There is little direct evidence locally about the employment practices in the ship repairing industry. Frances Ewer who has studied the port industries in the inter war period noted that ship repair workers could be employed daily, weekly or for several months until a particular job was completed. Transfer to new work was possible but if none was available men could be made redundant.²³

The minutes of the Southampton Engineering and Shipbuilders Association which was established in 1902 included firms engaged in shipbuilding and ship repair. Men engaged in one type of work could transfer to another and they do appear to have had permanent rather than casual workforces. A slump in trade was usually followed by a request for a reduction in piece rates and time wages. Negotiations between the employers and union representatives centred around issues such as the list of rates paid for piecework and there were also demarcation disputes between trades such as joiners and shipwrights. This necessitated written agreements about work to be carried out by the respective trades. ²⁵

Fluctuations in the building industry were related to the growth and development of the town and the docks. Mention has already been made about the potential for mobility between building and ship repairing for trades such as carpenters, painters and plumbers. Martin Dedman in a study of house building in Southampton noted that development was at a low level from 1890 to 1893

²²K.C.Barnaby, <u>100 Years of Specialised Shipbuilding and Engineering</u> (London 1964) pp. 48-51

²³R.F.Ewer, <u>Working Conditions and Labour Relations in Southampton's</u>

<u>Port Industries Between the Wars</u> (unpublished PhD University of Southampton 1987) pp. 110-111

Association, Southampton City Record Office D/SES.1/1.5 Sept 1902 and 19 Jan 1903

²⁵lbid, 31 March 1903, 16 June 1903

followed by a recovery to 1895 reaching a peak of activity in 1896-7. A decline then occurred to 1906 followed by an increase from 1906-1914.²⁶

This brief summary of the nature of employment in Southampton has highlighted the extent to which the port and port related employment was subject to seasonal and cyclical variation. The extent to which men employed in some trades were able to move into different sectors of the economy to escape these fluctuations has also been noted. The next part of the chapter will consider the extent of trade union organisation among Southampton workers and how the nature of employment might have affected them.

The Development of Trade Unionism

In his history of Southampton, Temple Patterson says that trade unionism was relatively weak at the end of the 1860s. Despite a brief outbreak of activity in the early 1870s there was no significant industrial unrest in the town from the mid 1870s until 1889.²⁷

Early in 1889, a branch of the National Sailors and Firemans Union was formed prompted by the success of the union in some northern ports. The men wanted increased pay but their officials urged caution about preparations for a strike. The Union Steamship Company and the South Western Steam Packet Company both made concessions to the men's demands. In January 1890 shipwrights working for the Royal Mail Company refused to work with non-union men. A union official came down from Newcastle and persuaded the non-union men to join and the other union men then agreed to return to work. The shipwrights followed this up in March with a demand for a wage increase from 32 shillings per week to 36 shillings. In return the companies offered an immediate increase of two shillings per week followed by an extra one shilling in June and the men accepted this. The carpenters and joiners also demanded an increase and they received the same offer as the shipwrights.²⁸

²⁶M.J.Dedman, <u>Housebuilding in Southampton 1878-1914. A study in local development and housing</u> (Unpublished MsC London School of Economics 1970) pp.3 and 28

²⁷A Temple Patterson, <u>op cit</u> Vol III p.80

²⁸<u>Ibid</u>, pp.86-7 <u>Southampton Times</u>, 18 Jan 1890

While this showed local unions were able to secure concessions over wages and persuade non-union labour to join them, the largely unskilled dock workers had no organisation. A brief attempt to form a labour protection league in the 1870s among dock workers failed when employers refused to recognise it.

Following the London Dock Strike of 1889, there had been some concern in the Dock, Wharf Riverside and General Labourers Union (DWRGLU) that Southampton had been prepared to take ships diverted from London during the strike. The union was developing in the regions and one of its roving organisers William Sprow was sent to Southampton early in 1890. In March of that year the union claimed to have between 800 and 900 members. In June at a meeting in Woolston to form a branch in the area, a delegate from the executive in London claimed there were over 2000 members in Southampton.²⁹

From June to September, a series of meetings were held and demands formulated and presented to the dock and shipping companies for improvements to wages and conditions. The first formal application to the companies on 20th June included demands for an increase from four pence to seven pence per hour for day work and from five pence to nine pence per hour for night work. They also wanted to be paid for meal breaks, to be paid one shilling per hour for work on Sundays or holidays and to have a guaranteed minimum of four hours pay when they were hired. In order to relieve the uncertainty of casual work they wanted a system for booking men in for the arrival of a ship. They could then be told what time they were expected to attend rather than wait around for the ships to arrive.³⁰

The employers refused to recognise the union and its officials for the purpose of bargaining and insisted they would only deal directly with their own men.

However, they also recognised the growing potential strength of the union and

²⁹A Temple Patterson, <u>op cit</u> Vol III p.88. <u>Southampton Times</u>, 28 June 1890.

³⁰ Southampton Times, 21 June 1890

in order to try and neutralise this they made partial concessions to the men's demands for increased pay.

On 19th August the dock workers union representatives in Southampton again presented a set of demands to the employers almost identical to that in June. Additional demands were for certain anomalies to be dealt with. The practice of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company of hiring men at six thirty in the morning to start at seven but not paying for that half hour was the subject of a demand that they be paid from the time of hiring. The union wanted men to be paid for removing cargo from the deck of boats rather than the company practice of paying only once the ship's hold began to be emptied. Finally they wanted men to be paid for their work immediately on finishing rather than having to return the next day to the cashier to collect it.³¹

The union set a deadline of 23rd August for a reply to their demands and on 26th a deputation led by William Sprow visited the offices of the various employers. They were informed again that the employers would not recognise the union in any way, however, later that day the employers simultaneously published notices announcing an increase in pay to the men. It was now to be six pence per hour for day work and seven pence per hour for night work. The other demands were not conceded.

Despite the refusal by the employers to negotiate or to recognise the union the concessions granted by the employers were interpreted by the local union officials as evidence of the success of their strategy. In the longer term winning recognition for the union might give the dock workers some control over who was employed and thus begin to modify the casual system.

The conflict over recognition came to a head when Sprow and officers of the local branch were refused entry to attend a meeting of men permanently employed by the Dock Company. They had tried to enter the dock by boat but were spotted and escorted out by dock policemen.

³¹Ibid, 23 Aug 1890

A meeting of dock workers was held and a printed handbill produced by Sprow was circulated calling on men to strike. Among the reasons stated for the strike were the employers' failure to recognise the union and the exclusion of union representatives from the meeting of permanently employed men.³² The decision of local officials to call a strike was to become a matter of controversy. Ben Tillet, the docks union leader, claimed Sprow had been given an instruction by the executive in London not to call a strike. The reason appears to have been concern that another provincial strike would seriously strain the union finances and that the union needed to consolidate after its rapid growth.³³

The strike began on Monday 8th September and ended five days later following scenes of mass picketing, the arrival of extra police and troops and a riot which resulted in the Mayor's boot and shoe shop being wrecked. Union officials including Tom McCarthy and John Burns came down from London to try and bring the strike to an end. The fact that it was an unofficial dispute which the executive in London refused to sanction meant there was no strike pay for the men who had lost a week's wages.³⁴

The defeat of the dock strike was a disaster for the DWRGLU in Southampton. Tom McCarthy admitted that the split with the executive in London and its failure to support the men was the reason the union in Southampton collapsed. They had not recovered by the time McCarthy gave his evidence to the Royal Commission on Labour.³⁵

In fact, dock workers trade unionism was unable to regain a foothold until 1906 because the employers swiftly took advantage of the situation to form a

³²<u>The Times</u>, 9 and 12 Sept 1890. <u>Southampton Times</u>, 13 Sept 1890. <u>Southampton Times</u>, 11 July 1891. J.Schneer, <u>Ben Tillett. Portrait of a Labour leader</u>, (London 1982) p.61

Sept 1890. The Hampshire Independent, 13 Sept 1890. The Hillustrated London News, 20 Sept 1890. Also. W.Sharp, The Southampton Dock Strike of 1890 (unpublished dissertation) Ruskin College Oxford 1974

³⁵Royal Commission on Labour, Q. 12,391

Free Labour Association. It was inaugurated on 30th October 1890 and around 1,200 men joined. Its objectives were to, "(a) maintain and increase the trade of the port by securing freedom of agreements between workmen and employers. (b) to prevent strikes and other serious hindrances to the welfare of the port, by promoting mutual discussion and consideration of all differences between workmen and employers". The Association had a sick fund and a savings bank and the organisation was divided into two sections, one for employers and one for the workmen. The latter was divided into subsections to ensure representation from men employed in various parts of the docks. The ruling council had a minimum of twenty members with equal representation from employers and workmen.³⁷

Some workmen complained that coal porters were gaining access to the docks without a 'ticket' from the Free Labour Association while other labourers were excluded. Two leading union activists complained that they were refused certificates to work in the docks after applying to the Association. Despite this, the first few months appeared to be successful for at the first annual meting of the Free Labour Association in March 1891 it was claimed they had over 2,000 members.³⁸

Although the defeat of the Dock Strike and its aftermath was a setback for trade unionism in the town there were some encouraging signs. During 1889-1890 the seamen, shipwrights and carpenters had challenged the employers over wages and the employment of non-union labour. The DWRGLU organiser Sprow attended meetings to encourage other workers to join their own unions or establish new branches. For example, he attended a promotional meeting for the Operative Bricklayers Society and the establishment of a new branch of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants in the town.³⁹ The Trades Council was formed directly as a result of the dockworkers' agitation and strike and was a recognition that trade unions in the town needed to combine to promote their interests.

1890

 ³⁶<u>Ibid</u>, Appendix LXXXVI Rules of Southampton Free Labour Association
 ³⁷<u>Royal Commission on Labour</u> Q. 12,163. <u>Southampton Times</u>, 25 Oct

³⁸Southampton Times, 6 Dec 1890 and 21 March 1891 ³⁹Hampshire Independent, 30 Aug and 6 Sept 1890

The formation of a Trades Council had first been raised in May 1890 when the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners invited a speaker from the London Trades Council to address a meeting attended by ten other Societies. In August the House Decorators were calling for the establishment of a Trades Council.⁴⁰

In September a meeting was held at the offices of A J Dyer the editor of the Hampshire Independent. Dyer was a radical Liberal sympathetic to trade unionism who had supported the organisation of the dock workers. The meeting was attended by representatives from the operative bricklayers, plumbers, sailors and firemen, painters, boilermakers, dockers, brush makers, carpenters and joiners, coachbuilders and others. They agreed to form a Trades Council and to invite every society in the town to send two representatives to a meeting to draw up the rules for the organisation. The objects and aims were to encourage co-operation between unions, foster and strengthen all trade and labour organisations, to organise skilled and unskilled labour and to bring disputes to an amicable settlement whether they be between unions or employers and men. The first President was Ben Midgley of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, the oldest established union in the town and the secretary was George Wilson of the Boilermakers society while Mr Willis of the Painters Society was appointed vice-president.⁴¹

The Trades Council and its affiliated unions made only limited progress in organisation between 1890 and 1900. Although the number of affiliated branches had grown by the end of the period the number of affiliated trade unionists had fallen. Southampton's level of trade union organisation looks even poorer when compared with other ports, although most of these had established their Trades Councils some years before Southampton.

⁴¹Southampton Times, 4 Oct 1890 and 25 Oct 1890

⁴⁰D.Cairns, Southampton Working People, (Southampton 1991) p.15

Table 2.10 Number of Trade Unionists and Trade Unions Represented on Trades Councils at the End of Each Year.

<u>1894-1898</u>

| | 1894 | 1895 | 1896 | 1897 | 1898 |
|--------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| SOUTHAMPTON (1890) | | | | | |
| Trade Unions | 17 | 18 | 21 | 18 | 26 |
| Trade Unionists | 1,716 | 1,744 | 1,736 | 1,740 | 1,357 |
| PLYMOUTH (1890) | | | | | |
| Trade Unions | 14 | - | - | 12 | 12 |
| Trade Unionists | 1,518 | - | | 1,555 | 2,000 |
| BRISTOL (1873) | | | | | |
| Trade Unions | 46 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 |
| Trade Unionists | 10,415 | 10,400 | 13,027 | 10,540 | 11,215 |
| LIVERPOOL (1848) | | | | | |
| Trade Unions | 49 | 45 | 47 | 46 | 49 |
| Trade Unionists | 25,153 | 25,705 | 26,110 | 26,201 | 26,911 |
| HULL (1880) | | | | | |
| Trade Unions | 17 | 50 | 50 | 54 | 48 |
| Trade Unionists | 3,670 | 11,254 | 11,624 | 13,000 | 12,000 |
| PORTSMOUTH (1887) | | | | | |
| Trade Unions | 21 | 22 | 19 | 23 | 24 |
| Trade Unionists | 3,275 | 2.903 | 3,725 | 4,008 | 4,000 |

Source – Report of the Chief Labour Correspondent of the Board of Trade on Trade Unions 1898 with Comparative statistics for 1892-97 C9443

Parliamentary Papers 1899 XCII.

While the length of time the Trades Council had existed may have been a factor in Southampton's slow growth that alone is unlikely to be the reason. The Trades Council in Portsmouth was formed only three years earlier yet it had double the number of affiliated trade unionists compared to Southampton in 1898. Portsmouth was dominated by the naval dockyard and was not particularly fertile ground for trade unions. Hull showed a dramatic increase in affiliated unions and members from 1894 to 1895 although the reason for this is not clear. The dockworkers there had suffered a defeat following a bitter strike in 1893. This experience may have spurred other unions to affiliate.⁴²

Throughout the 1890's, there were no major local industrial disputes on the scale of the dock strike but there were a number of small scale conflicts over wages and conditions that occurred throughout this period. For example workers in the building trade took advantage of favourable times in the late 1890s, to press for increased wages but they were able to negotiate without resort to strike action. In 1897, boilermakers were in dispute over the conditions of employment for outdoor repair work. They wanted increases for certain classes of work and the dispute was settled by discussions between employers, a union representative and men from the various workshops concerned.⁴³

Unions in Southampton generally sought to negotiate the end to a dispute and sometimes accepted offers of conciliation by those outside of the dispute. During a joiners strike in 1893, the Mayor of Southampton convened a conference between the employers and the men's union to discuss the award of a pay increase. Despite the generally good industrial relations in the town there was a growing sense that organised Labour was becoming separated from the rest of society. To illustrate the point, in the early 1890s, a number of skilled unions held annual dinners and invited prominent citizens of the town

⁴³Southampton Times, 16 April 1898 and 18 June 1898. 22 Feb 1897

⁴⁴Ibid, 15 July 1893

⁴²See D.Howell, <u>British Workers and the Independent Labour Party</u> 1888-1906 (Manchester 1983) pp.118 and 120

and even employers as guests. The annual dinner of the carpenters and joiners in 1891 had a number of Liberal councillors as guests as well as an employer. There were loyal and patriotic toasts and toasts to the employer and the Trades Council. By 1896 this annual dinner was a purely trade union event with no prominent town guest or employers present.⁴⁵

Among some other unions, this practice continued. The fifth annual dinner of the local branch of the Postmen's Federation had officials of the Post Office present and the event included toasts to the Postmaster General and the Department. The first annual dinner of the National Amalgamated Union of Shop Assistants, Warehousemen and Clerks was presided over by the Town Clerk and guests included a manager of a local company and the vice president of Southampton Grocers Association. The local union branch formed in 1899 had its origins in the early closing movement which was supported by employers and had been guided by a number of middle class and radical liberals in the town. The movement was essentially moderate, eschewing tactics such as strikes for picketing and lobbying for legislation to improve the situation of shopworkers.

<u>1900 – 1914</u>

In 1900 the number of trade unionists affiliated to the Trades Council had slipped below one thousand. There was then a rapid increase to over three thousand followed by a slow decline to 1910. These figures and a comparison with other ports are shown overleaf.

⁴⁵<u>Ibid</u>, 18 April 1891 and 22 Feb 1896. See also Operative Plumbers. <u>Ibid</u>, 7 March 1891

⁴⁶Southampton Times, 17 Feb 1900

⁴⁷<u>Ibid</u>, 10 Feb 1900

⁴⁸For the early closing movement in Southampton see <u>Southampton</u> <u>Observer</u>,10 Jan 1891, 7 May 1892, <u>Southampton Times</u>, 3 Dec 1898, 29 April 1899 & 19 Aug 1905

Table 2.11 Number of Trade Unionists represented on each Trades Council

| YEAR | SOUTHAMPTON | PLYMOUTH | LIVERPOOL | HULL | PORTSMOUTH |
|------|-------------|----------|-----------|--------|------------|
| 1900 | 907 | 2,310 | 28,551 | 13,000 | 2,310 |
| 1901 | 2,700 | 2,454 | 38,562 | 14,325 | 2,454 |
| 1902 | 2,205 | 2,560 | 28,908 | 16,000 | 2,560 |
| 1903 | 3,605 | 3,502 | 29,000 | 16,000 | 3,502 |
| 1904 | 2,744 | 3,389 | 29,000 | 16,000 | 3,389 |
| | (21) | (23)` | (55) | (53) | (18) |
| 1906 | 2,755 | 4,420 | 33,500 | 13,000 | 4,100 |
| 1907 | 2,552 | 3,500 | 33,500 | 12,000 | 4,784 |
| 1908 | 2,366 | 4,045 | 37,500 | 16,000 | 4,600 |
| 1909 | 2.108 | 4,300 | 36,180 | 12,000 | 4,867 |
| 1910 | 1,963 | 4,500 | 42,000 | 15,000 | 5.100 |
| | (25) | (27) | (78) | (61) | (29) |

Note - the figures in brackets in 1904 and 1910 represent the number of unions affiliated to the Trades Council in those years. Figures for Bristol were not recorded.

Source – Report by the Chief Correspondent of the board of Trade on Trade Unions in 1902-4 cd 2838 Parliamentary Papers 1906 CXIII. Board of Trade Labour Department. Report on Trade Unions in 1908-10 with comparative statistics for 1901-1910, cd 6109 Parliamentary Papers 1912-13 XLVII.

The exact reasons for the fluctuations in numbers of affiliated trade unionists is not entirely clear. The growth to 1903 was due to new affiliations such as the Amalgamated Society of Mill Sawyers and the Shop Assistants and Warehousemen in 1901, and the reaffiliation of the Woolston branch of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers in 1901. Other new affiliations in 1903 were the Certified Class Teachers, Painters and House Decorators, Shipwrights and Postmen. ⁴⁹ the Trades Council also took the step of affiliating to the Labour Representation Committee in 1903. The background to that decision will be considered in the next chapter. The reduction in numbers after 1903 could be

⁴⁹Southampton Times, 21 Sept 1901 and 20 July 1901. <u>Southampton</u> Trades Council Annual Report for year ended 31 Dec 1903.

related to the impact of unemployment for the years from the end of 1903 to 1905 and from 1907 to 1908 which was particularly bad in Southampton.⁵⁰

The figures from the Board of Trade do not cover the period from 1911 to 1914 when there was a significant increase in trade union membership directly resulting from the industrial unrest of this period. The annual meeting of the Trades Council in January 1913 reported on activity in 1912 and it was said, "For the twelve months under review there was an increase of forty per cent of affiliated members compared with an increase of thirty five per cent during the previous year". ⁵¹ Using the 1910 figure in Table 2.11, and applying the percentage increase claimed, this gives estimated figures for affiliated membership of 2,650 for 1911 and 3,710 for 1912. The Trades Council claimed 38 affiliated societies covering 51 branches in 1913. ⁵²

Not all existing trade unions showed an increase in members during the period from 1911 to 1914. Appendix eight shows the membership of three unions, the carpenters, the engineers and the painters. The engineers appear to have been well organised in four branches with over 800 members since 1908 and stayed around that level to 1911. The carpenters and particularly the painters had significant increases in members from 1910 and 1908 respectively. A summary from Appendix Eight is shown below.

Table 2.12 Southampton Branch Membership. Selected Unions.

| | 1908 | 1909 | 1910 | 1911 | 1912 | 1913 |
|----------------------|------|------------|------|------|------|------|
| Engineers (ASE) | 811 | 775 | 823 | 817 | - | _ |
| Carpenters (ASCJ) | - | · <u>-</u> | 438 | 564 | | 618 |
| Painters (NASO HSPD) | 118 | - | - | 259 | 384 | _ |

The significant increases were among dock labourers and seafarers where trade unionism had been particularly weak in the past. A branch of the dock workers union had been re-established in the town in 1906 and in August of

⁵²Ibid, 22 March 1913

⁵⁰A Temple Patterson, Vol III op cit p.126. Southampton Times, 22 April

<sup>1905
&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup>Southampton Times, 25 Jan 1913

that year they claimed to have a membership of 350.⁵³ The branch made only slow progress in recruiting members over the next three years and they tried without success to get recognition of the union from the employers. In December 1910 the union journal, the Dockers Record, reported significant progress. "The months of drudgery have at last met with success; what was thought by some to be impossible is now accomplished, and Southampton is making a great effort to throw off the stigma that was cast upon it when it was dubbed the worst organised port of the Kingdom".⁵⁴

The root of the industrial unrest across the country that began in 1911 was the decline in real wages that had occurred from around the beginning of the century. The impact of this on Southampton was a series of strikes among dock workers and also seafarers but it also had the effect of finally breaking the grip of the Free Labour Association which had been set up in 1891. In June 1911 stevedores went on strike for higher wages. The dockers union sent Harry Orbell from London to negotiate but he first recommended the men return to work whilst their grievances were discussed. By this time, membership had grown to 1,700 and by the second week of July the men had won concessions. Daytime and overtime rates were increased by a halfpenny per hour. Men qualified for overtime from one o'clock on Saturday rather than six o'clock and night work was to be paid at a guaranteed four hours even if the men worked less than this. In August negotiations took place between the union and the London and South Western Railway Company on rates of pay and for similar conditions negotiated in June with the shipping companies.

⁵³<u>Dockers Record</u> Aug 1906, Modern Records Centre Warwick University MSS/126/DWR/4/4/1

⁵⁴<u>Dockers Record</u> Dec 1910, Modern Records Centre Warwick University MSS/126/DWR/4/4/1

⁵⁵H.A.Clegg, <u>A History of British Trade Unions Since 1889 Vol II, 1911-</u> 933 (Oxford 1985) p.24-25

^{1933 (}Oxford 1985) p.24-25

Southampton Times, 24 June 1911

⁵⁷<u>Ibid</u>, 8 July 1911

⁵⁸<u>Ibid</u>, 26 Aug 1911

gained a momentum. As negotiations succeeded membership increased. By the beginning of August the dockworkers had 3,500 members⁵⁹. By October the union was seeking to get a port tariff, fixed conditions of hours and pay for all sections of works in the docks, and they were pressing for recognition of the union. The Southampton Times commented, "The fact that the employers have discussed, and indeed are discussing the men's demands with representatives of the union indicates that a degree of recognition has already been granted".⁶⁰

The DWRGLU now claimed almost as many members as the Free Labour Association. At the annual general meeting of the Association in May 1911 there were 3,919 members on their books.⁶¹

However the participation of members in meetings such as the AGM had always been the subject of complaints about apathy or lack of interest. There were tensions growing within the Association between those who subscribed to the idea that workmen and employers had common interests and those that were sceptical about this. The secretary of the workmen's committee was among the latter for he said that he "....thought that during the year they had given the employers a little more trouble than for some time past". The men, he argued, wanted more money for their labour. "They were being pushed harder every day, and they wanted to know if the companies would grant the desired increase". One of the workmen's representatives, Mr Salaman, objected that not all men wanted an increase and his speech was interrupted by Mr Ware saying that the men wanting an increase was a fact. Concern at growing conflict was experienced at the Association's AGM in 1910. One of the

⁵⁹Ibid, 5 Aug 1911

⁶⁰Ibid. 21 Oct 1911

⁶¹ Ibid, 13 May 1911

⁶²<u>Ibid</u>, 11 May 1901; 26 June 1909 refers to lack of members taking advantage of benefit funds; 30 April 1910, Mr Salaman a workman representative, commented that so few working men took an interest in the Association

⁶³Southampton Times, 13 May 1911

workmen's representatives Mr Lisle spoke about. "....the dreadful class hatred that was growing among the workmen". He said that the antagonism between employer and employed had to be broken down. The Free Labour Association, however, was unable to prevent the growing conflict and it could be argued that it survived so long because independent trade unionism had been non-existent or too weak to pose a challenge and no substantive issues had been raised to provide a focus for opposition to the FLA. The Southampton Times could observe that Southampton, like London, was becoming a trade union port. The FLA ceased to exist after 1911 but the DWRGLU also had difficulty in sustaining its position. 65

The attempt to call a national strike by the Transport Workers Federation in support of London men in dispute with their employers led to sympathy action in Southampton. This was one of only a handful of ports, including Manchester, Bristol and Plymouth, to take part. It ended in a matter of days in June 1912 but the repercussions were felt afterwards.⁶⁶

The progress of the union in Southampton had been affected as the Dockers Record for September admitted, "We are hoping, however, that a revival will shortly take place and that we shall recover the lost ground".⁶⁷ Membership fell; the union had five branches at the end of 1911 but was down to four at the end of 1912.⁶⁸ The union admitted that at Southampton ".... It has always been a hard job to keep the men in organised condition".⁶⁹ They went on, "we are gradually educating the men into a belief in the power of trade unionism, and we hope that, instead of being notorious for their lack of unity, they will in the near

⁶⁶H.A.Clegg, <u>op cit</u>, pp 53-56. <u>Southampton Times</u>, 15 and 22 June 1912

⁶⁸DWRGLU Annual Report for 1911 and 1912. Modern records Centre MSJ 126/DWR/4/1/3

⁶⁴<u>Ibid</u>, 30 April 1910

⁶⁵<u>Ibid</u>, 12 Aug 1911. There are no reports of the FLA AGM after 1911 and no other reports of its activities in the local newspapers

⁶⁷<u>Dockers Record</u>, Sept 1912 Modern Records Centre University of Warwick, MSS/126/DWR4/2

⁶⁹<u>Dockers Record</u> Dec 1912 Modern Records Centre, MSS 126/DWR/4/4/2

future, be an example of solid trade unionism".⁷⁰ By the end of 1913, the union was cautiously welcoming discussions about the establishment of a clearing house system for dock labour similar to that in Liverpool for the union admitted "one of the great obstacles to effectively organising port workers is the periodical influx of labour that takes place; anything to counteract that could be of great benefit to the district".⁷¹

Like the dock workers, seafarers had not been able to sustain an effective organisation for much of this period. This was in part due to the hostility of the shipping federation toward Havelock Wilson's National Sailors and Firemen's Union (NSFU) but it also was affected by the autocratic style of Wilson's leadership of the union and the reputation of local branch officials. Also the NSFU did not cater for an important group of workers, the stewards. In March 1909 the National Union of Ship Stewards, Cooks, Butchers and Bakers (NUSSCBB) was formed in Liverpool by Joseph Cotter. The union was formed in response to concern about the increasing number of foreign cooks and stewards being employed on British ships. The anach was established in Southampton in August 1909 with the active assistance of the Trades Council and they initially recruited 70 members. By October the union was claiming 300 members.

The Trades Council was invited, by Arthur Cannon the secretary of the NSFU branch Southampton, to help develop the branch in 1910. Cannon admitted that the union had not been popular with the men because of alleged bad management at their London headquarters⁷⁵. The seaman's strike of 1911

⁷⁰<u>Ibid</u>, Dec 1912

⁷¹ Ibid, Dec 1913

⁷²Cotter had been sacked by Cunard for agitating over this issue. B.Mogridge, "Militancy and Inter-Union Rivalries in British Shipping, 1911-1929" in <u>International Review of Social History Vol 6 1961</u> pp.391-2

⁷³The Union Magazine, Sept 1909

⁷⁴<u>Ibid</u>, Oct 1909

⁷⁵Southampton Times, 7 Oct 1911 see also the. Burton, op cit pp.330-331. Claims were made that some local officials were corrupt

was to provide the major impetus for the revival of trade unionism among the liner crews.

Seafarers had received no increase in wages from 1890 to 1911. In 1911 the increase in trade brought intense competition among the shipping lines. Havelock Wilson had been urging international action against the shipping companies but support had not been forthcoming. Basil Mogridge claims that Wilson planned for a national strike and it officially began on June 14th 1911.⁷⁷ However, Southampton men on the liner Olympic came out on strike a few days earlier. The companies conceded wage increases to the men and the NSFU branch significantly increased its membership so that by July 1911 they claimed over 5,000 members.⁷⁸ The increased membership brought increased income and, under the rules of the NSFU, local branches were restricted in the amount of money they could hold and the rest had to be redirected to the union head office in London. Concerns about the management of finance by union headquarters had been one of the reasons for the poor reputation and low membership in past years so the local branch demanded information about the financial position of the union. Havelock Wilson's reaction was to obtain High Court writs against the chairman (Lewis) and secretary (Cannon) for the local funds. 79

The dispute led to the setting up of breakaway union, the British Seafarers Union, (BSU) in October 1911. The new union now run by local and fully accountable officials drew on mass defections from the NSFU branch, which continued, but in a severely weakened state.⁸⁰ There was widespread dissatisfaction within NSFU but although the BSU hoped to develop new

80V.Burton, op cit, p.334

⁷⁶V.Burton, <u>op cit</u>, p.325

⁷⁷B.Mogridge, <u>loc cit</u>, p.382

⁷⁸V.Burton, <u>op cit</u> p.332

⁷⁹Southampton Times, 7 Oct 1911

branches in other ports there was not enough support. Havelock Wilson mounted an aggressive campaign against the new union but he could not break its hold in Southampton.81 The BSU got the chance to establish a foothold outside of Southampton when the Glasgow branch of the NSFU led at the time by Emmanuel Shinwell broke away. The cause of the dispute between Shinwell and Wilson centred on Wilson's interference in a strike which he sought to end by agreeing terms which were not that favourable to the men. Shinwell was sacked and formed the breakaway Scottish Sailors and Firemen's Union which a few months later joined forces with the BSU in September 1912.82

Burton argues that the BSU was able to attract and hold members by a combination of better sickness, accident and death benefits than the NSFU, a style of trade unionism that was more democratic than the NSFU and one that recognised the concerns of the members that had built up during years of attrition between the liner companies and the men. Burton concluded that, "local loyalties to the union were strong - stronger than allegiances to a distant executive seemingly negligent of the rank and file. But the mens reaction against a centralised bureaucracy was underpinned by a commitment to a contrary democratic and radical form of unionism."83

The implications of this for the politics of the Labour movement locally will be explored in more detail in the next chapter. As far as the trade union movement was concerned the organisation of the seafarers and the dock workers was a significant event for it was the first time since the early 1890s that trade union organisation among these workers had been strong enough to be sustained.

For most of the period from 1890 to 1914 dock workers and seafarers had not participated in the Trades Council. Appendix Nine gives a breakdown of the number of branches and delegates for the affiliates to the Trades and Labour

⁸¹Southampton Times, 21 Oct 1911. V.Burton, op cit p.337

⁸²P. Slowe, Manny Shinwell; An Authorised Biography (London 1993) pp.

^{34-39. &}lt;u>Southampton Times</u>, 21 Sept 1912 ⁸³V.Burton, <u>op cit</u>, p.335-6

Council in the early years of the twentieth century. The DWRGLU affiliated almost as soon as they re-established their branch in Southampton but the NSFU was not affiliated at the time although they had been in the early 1900's. The BSU affiliated in 1912,⁸⁴ but a number of Trades Council members had been helping the NSFU branch to re-organise before that.

The most significant unions in the town in this period were the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters Joiners, the Engineers and Shipwrights followed by the Plumbers, Bricklayers, Painters, Shop assistants and the Teachers. They were to play an important role in shaping the political direction of the Trades Council in the early years of the twentieth century.

Conclusion

The occupational structure of Southampton showed the dominance of the port and port related industry and the limited alternative employment available. The development of the port confirmed its status as, in Valerie Burton's phrase, "a port on sufferance" dominated by absentee employers in the shipping and railway companies.

Significant areas of employment were subject to cyclical, seasonal and casual variation and seafaring was more significant for employment in Southampton that in other ports. Seafaring was relatively well paid compared to other occupations in the town and many men had been seafarers as part of a life cycle of employment. Trade union organisation was limited even compared to other ports. Following the defeat of the dock workers strike local trade unions did not engage in any major strikes during the 1890's but preferred to negotiate often after a short dispute. The assertiveness of trade unions saw them move away from an ideology emphasising inter-class collaboration, symbolised by the presence of civic dignitaries and employers at social functions, to one based on a notion of labour as a separate interest. Trade unionism in the port grew quickly as a result of national disputes but sustaining organisation particularly among the dock workers was difficult because they had so little experience of

⁸⁴Southampton Times, 23 March 1912

union organisation. The seafarers, by contrast were united by their dispute with the NSFU and by a local leadership that was trusted and knew how to respond to the needs of the members.

The political impact of the dock strike and the impact of the absentee companies of the political representation of the town will be considered in the next chapter.

Chapter Three

The Growth of Labour Politics 1890-1914

<u>Introduction</u>

At the beginning of this period the politics of the town were monopolised by the rivalry between the Liberal and Conservative parties. By 1914, Labour had began to make an impact as an independent force in municipal politics and Labour candidates had twice, unsuccessfully, contested parliamentary elections in 1895 and 1906.

There were two important features of the politics of Southampton at this time. Firstly, for the Liberals and Conservatives, municipal and parliamentary politics mainly operated in different spheres. Whereas in many industrial towns and cities, major local employers often had seats on the borough or city council, in Southampton the members were local small businessmen or professionals. The main commercial interests, the absentee shipping and railway companies showed little interest in municipal politics.

The political control of the Borough Council was Liberal until 1895 and Conservative thereafter. However, there is evidence that political conflict between the Liberals and Conservatives, whilst it existed at municipal level, was not always as intense as it was in parliamentary contests. After 1895 the mayoralty was shared by agreement between the parties and Liberals continued to be appointed as chairmen of council committees even when the Conservatives had a majority. Also not every ward was contested at the municipal elections each November. The party control of wards and uncontested seats are shown in Appendix Nine. In All Saints for example the Conservatives held the seat from 1890 – 1914 and were often unopposed. In

¹Details of the Offices held and membership of committee and sub committees of the Borough Council can be found in the Borough Council Yearbooks from 1890 − 1914 (an incomplete set in Southampton City Library) Political affiliations were identified where possible from local newspapers and copies of John Adam's Southampton Almanac for the years 1892 − 1898, 1901 and 1910 and Stevens directory of Southampton for 1891 also in Southampton City Library

Portswood, the Conservatives were the dominant party but a Liberal was elected from 1896 and continued, sometimes unopposed, until 1911. The Liberals did not have any completely safe wards, like All Saints for the Conservatives, but they regularly had candidates unopposed in Nichols Town and Bevois.

Secondly, when considering candidates for the parliamentary representation of this two member borough, both parties sought men who could represent the shipping and railway interests of the town, although this link became less explicit from 1906. Parliamentary contests were often close in Southampton and representation was shared between a Conservative and a Liberal member from 1888 to 1900. The Conservatives won both seats in 1900 but the Liberals won them both in the landslide of 1906 and retained them in 1910.

Four of the six Members of Parliament who represented the town from 1890 to 1914 had connections with shipping or railway interests. Alfred Giles was Conservative MP from 1874 to 1880 and 1883 to 1892. He was a civil engineer who acted as a consultant engineer to the Southampton Dock Company. He was also a director of the Union Steamship Company and became Chairman in 1883. Sir Francis Evans was Liberal MP from 1888 to 1895 and 1896 to 1900. He started his career as a civil engineer but from 1870 to 1884 went into business as a banker. He was a partner in the firm of Donald Currie and Company, managers of the Union Steamship Company. He became deputy chairman of the Union Company under Alfred Giles and he was also a director of the Dock Company in 1887.

Sir Barrington Simeon was Liberal Unionist MP from 1895 until he retired in 1906. He was a director of the London and South Western Railway Company which took over the running of the docks in 1892.²

Major General Sir Ivor Phillipps was Liberal MP from 1906 until he was defeated in 1922. He was a career soldier but was the elder brother of Owen Phillipps,

²M.Stenton and S.Lees, <u>Who's Who of British Members of Parliament</u>, Vol 2 1886-1918 (Sussex 1978) also A Temple Patterson, <u>op cit</u> Vol 3 pp.13, 65 and 74

the Chairman of the Royal Mail Steamship Company.3

The two MPs who had no connections with shipping or railway interests were Tankerville Chamberlayne and William Dudley Ward. Chamberlayne was Conservative MP from 1892 to 1895 and 1900 to 1906. He owned land east of the River Itchen at Woolston and was a keen patron of local sporting organisations. He claimed to champion the interests of working men and had a difficult, sometimes abrasive, relationship with the local Conservative Party hierarchy. Ward sat as Liberal MP with Phillipps from 1906 until he too was defeated in 1922. He was a barrister.⁴

Of the six unsuccessful Liberal or Conservative parliamentary candidates three had connections with dock, shipping or railway interests. Charles Burt, the second Liberal candidate in 1892, was, before he retired, a solicitor to the Union Steamship Company. He also managed the parliamentary business of the London and South Western Railway Company. Clarendon Hyde, the second Liberal candidate in 1900, was a barrister. He was also vice-chairman of S. Pearson and Sons, a well known firm of contractors that had been involved in building the Empress Dock in Southampton. Charles Tyrell Giles was one of the Conservative candidates for the January 1910 election. Giles was a barrister and son of Alfred Giles. In 1910 he was chairman of the Union Castle Shipping Company.⁵

Kenneth Balfour contested Southampton for the Conservatives twice in 1910. He served in the army before becoming MP for Christchurch in 1900 and was defeated in 1906. The other Conservative candidates were J V Aird in 1906 and Sir. G E Armstrong in December 1910.

³M.Stenton and S.Lees, Who's Who of British Members of Parliament Vol 3 1919-1945 (Sussex 1979)

⁴For Tankerville Chamberlayne see Stenton and Lees Vol 2 and Southern Daily Echo 19 May 1924. For Ward see Stenton and Lees Vol 3.

⁵Stenton and Lees Vol 2. For Burt see Temple Patterson <u>op cit</u> Vol III p. 78 and for Hyde see p.104. For Giles see also <u>John Adams Southampton</u> Almanac, 1910.

The four other unsuccessful parliamentary candidates included Henry Wilson who stood in 1895 as a Lib/Lab alongside Sir Francis Evans. Wilson was a shipwright, one of the founders of the Trades Council and a Liberal Councillor for many years in Northam Ward. James Ramsay MacDonald was the Independent Labour Party candidate in 1895 and C A Gibson stood for the Social Democratic Federation in a by-election in 1896. He was a member of the London Trades Council. In 1903 Harry Quelch of the SDF was selected and he contested the 1906 election. None of the independent Labour candidates who stood had any particular connections with the port industries and it was not until later in this period that any local candidates began to emerge. However, the candidatures of MacDonald and Quelch brought the issue of Labour representation to the forefront of local politics and marked significant turning points in the relationship between Labour and Liberals.

Local Political Organisation

The Liberals and Conservatives both had prominent local businessmen among their supporters. The Liberals for example had Edwyn Jones the owner of a major retail store in the town, W G Lankester, connected with the firm of Lankester and Sons engineers and ironmongers, and Jonas Nichols, a local builder. The President of the Liberal Association for much of this period was James Lemon who had been Borough Engineer from 1866 to 1878.

The Conservatives had A J Day, a partner in the firm of Day Summers, engaged in shipbuilding and engineering. He was president of the Conservative club in 1887. G T Harper a coal merchant and contractor had been chairman of the local party in 1885 and George Dunlop a ship broker and shipping agent had been one of the founders of the Chamber of Commerce.⁶

Support for the established political parties also depended on a network of political and social organisation. Political organisation and the contesting of

⁶Stevens Directory of Southampton 1887; A Temple Patterson op cit Vol III pp.50-51, 77 and 79

local elections for the Borough Council was organised on the basis of the electoral wards. There were also various political clubs around the town.

The Liberals had a range of clubs including the Southampton and South Hants Liberal Club, the Gladstone Working Men's Liberal and Radical Club and the Evans Working Men's Liberal and Radical Club in Northam. The Southampton and South Hants was the main Liberal Club in the town and the home of the local Liberal 'establishment'. The Gladstone Club was formed in 1888 and was to play an important role in trying to get a balanced parliamentary 'ticket' between the interests of Labour and the commercial interests of the town. By 1899 the club had nearly 450 members reaching a peak of 600 in 1902 before falling back to around 400 at the end of December 1915.7 The club had a political council and organised regular lectures in the 1890's on topics such as Poor Law Reform and Old Age Pensions, Co-operatives and Trades Unionism, the Leaven of Socialism, Where the MP is wrong and What liberalism has done for the nation.8 By 1902, the Southampton Times was commenting on the success of the social activity of the club but noting its political activity and influence was more in doubt. By 1911 they were having difficulty attracting younger members.9 The Evans Club in Northam had around 230 members in 1899 but this increased to over 400 by the end of 1900. This however appears to have been the result of an extension to the club to accommodate more members for billiards and other activities. 10 They had no direct representation on the Liberal Council, the central governing body of the Liberal Party in the town. 11

In addition to the Conservative Club, a working men's club was established in Northam, a predominantly working class area and Liberal political stronghold. In 1891 it claimed to have 20 members. The Conservatives also had the Primrose League which had branches in the area. In Southampton

⁷Southampton Times, 4 Feb 1899, 1st Feb 1902 and 4 March 1911

⁸<u>Ibid, 11Feb 1893, 1</u> Dec 1894, 7 May 1898 and 10 Dec 1898

⁹<u>Ibid</u>, 1 Feb 1902 and 4 March 1911

¹⁰Ibid, 22 July 1899 and 24 Nov 1900

¹¹Ibid, 17 Aug 1901

membership was 500 in 1886 and 778 in 1888. In Millbrook it was 401 in 1891 and in Bitterne 441 in $1886.^{12}$

The main newspapers serving the area all declared a political affiliation with the exception of the Southern Daily Echo. The Hampshire Advertiser and the Southampton Observer were Conservative. The Hampshire Independent was Liberal and its editor A J Dyer was a radical who helped in the formation of the Trades Council. The Southampton Times and Hampshire Express (hereafter the Southampton Times) was Liberal. It reported on labour and trade union matters and provided a forum for debate on labour questions and on the relations between Liberals and Labour.

Borough Boundaries and Social Background

The population of the town grew significantly between the census of 1891 and 1911. This was in part due to the extension of the Borough boundary in 1895.

<u>Table 3.1</u> Population of Southampton 1891 –1911

| 1891 | 1901 | 1911 |
|--------|---------|---------|
| 65,501 | 104,824 | 119,039 |

Source - Census of England and Wales.

The extension brought in areas to the north west and west of the town, which became, Banister, Freemantle and Shirley wards. The ward of Portswood was extended by adding the suburb of Bitterne Park east of the River Itchen. In 1910 there was a re-arrangement of the ward boundaries but the same number were kept. The old ward of St. James was absorbed within the boundaries of Town and St. Marys in the south of the town. One of the central wards, Nichols Town disappeared as the boundaries of Trinity, Newtown and Bevois were redrawn. The suburb of Bitterne Park was established as a separate ward from

¹²M Pugh, <u>The Tories and the People</u> (Oxford 1985) p.220 <u>Southampton</u> Observer, 31 Jan 1891 and 27 Feb 1892

Portswood and it was called St. Denys. The maps in Appendix Ten a and Ten b show the outline of the ward boundaries.

Information about the social composition of wards is limited but residential segregation of the working class from the rest of the town population appears not to have been that rigid.

The Board of Trade Enquiry into working class rents, housing and retail prices published in 1908 described the situation in Southampton. "The working class population of Southampton occupy houses in nearly all parts of the town. Large numbers live in the old part situated in the narrow area of the peninsula. Northam also accommodates a large number, these being generally employed in the engineering, shipbuilding and repairing yards along the Itchen. Of late years however, especially with the greater ease of transit by the electric trams, numbers of workmen's homes have been erected in the suburbs, and large estates have been developed where, 10 years ago, were cultivated fields". ¹³

This picture is confirmed by Valerie Burton's study of seafarers in Southampton. She notes that from information in the 1871 census Northam and Chapel, a district of St. Mary's, was occupied by a variety of workmen including shipwrights, sail makers, boiler makers, dockers, labourers, ships firemen and seamen. There was no marked segregation of artisans from the unskilled in these areas. There was a gradual spread of seafarers into the suburbs by 1921 but even then over fifty percent lived in the older parts of the town. There were variations in the pattern of residence between deck crew, engine crew and stewards. Stewards were the first to move into the suburbs in any numbers while the engine crew were concentrated in the predominantly working class areas of Northam, St. Marys and St. James wards and the eastern part of Trinity ward. Table 3.2 shows the proportion of different groups of seafarers living in different parts of the town in 1894 and 1913.

¹³Report of an Enquiry by the Board of Trade into Working Class rents, Housing and Retail Prices together with the standard rate of wages prevailing in certain occupation in the principal industrial towns of the U.K. <u>Parliamentary Papers 1908 CVII p.417</u>

Table 3.2

| | 1894 | 1913 |
|---|--|---------------------------|
| Deck Crew | 40 | 26 |
| Engine Crew | 47 | 41 |
| Stewards | 21 | 10 |
| | | ad (Trinity word) |
| *Includes Northam, Cha | apel (St Mary´s ward), Kingsia | nd (Triffity Ward), |
| *Includes Northam, Cha Crosshouse (St. James | | |
| | ward), Belvedere and Millbar | |
| Crosshouse (St. James | ward), Belvedere and Millbar | nk (Trinity ward). |
| Crosshouse (St. James | | nk (Trinity ward). |
| Crosshouse (St. James | ward), Belvedere and Millbar | nk (Trinity ward). bs* |
| Crosshouse (St. James Percentage of Seafarer | ward), Belvedere and Millbar s Resident in Western Subur | bs* |

Source - V.Burton, op cit p. 212

Specific information about the residence patterns of other occupational groups is limited. However, the Southampton Times noted that men employed by the Ordnance Survey lived in significant numbers in Bevois Ward. They included clerks, draughtsmen, engravers, photographers, calculators and mechanics. It was estimated that around 900 were employed there.¹⁵

The population of Woolston, east of the River Itchen grew significantly between 1901 and 1911. The establishment of Harland and Wolff's yard and Thorneycrofts in 1907 respectively show an influx of shipwrights and other

¹⁵<u>Southampton Times</u>, 4 Nov 1899, <u>Kelly's Directory of Southampton</u> 1890-91

shipbuilding craftsmen and labourers into these areas.¹⁶ In 1898 the area got its own local administration, the Itchen Urban District Council.

The parliamentary constituency of Southampton returned two members and its boundary extended beyond the town to include suburbs such as Millbrook, Freemantle, Shirley and Redbridge in the west to Bitterne, Sholing and Woolston east of the River Itchen. The map at Appendix Eleven shows the extent of the constituency.

The Liberals and Labour Representation Part One 1890 – 1900

Municipal Politics 1890 - 1895

The Southampton dock strike of September 1890 had a profound effect on the politics of the town. The strike and the accompanying mass picketing and riot came as a shock to the town's political and business elite who only recently, in July, had celebrated the opening of the new Empress Dock by Queen Victoria. The opening was seen by the local press as an example of the essential unity of the commercial interests of the port with that of the town's inhabitants.¹⁷

The strike was the culmination of the underlying discontent among the working class over wages and conditions of employment particularly in the docks but also in some other trades. Divisions also opened up within the ranks of local Liberalism about how to respond to the strike and its aftermath.

During the strike the dock workers had been supported by a number of middle class radical sympathisers including three Liberal councillors, A J Dyer., John Le Feuvre, J.P., and Thomas Payne J.P. Another supporter was Philip Domoney, chairman of the School Board and Secretary of Southampton Radical Association. Dyer was editor of the Hampshire Independent and had

¹⁶V.Burton, op cit p.208

¹⁷Southampton Times, 26 July 1890. <u>Illustrated London News</u>, 2 Aug 1890

helped facilitate the formation of the Trades Council in September 1890 by making his office available for meetings.

He was a supporter of Labour representation and in August 1890 he advocated it at a meeting of the Operative Bricklayers. He urged them to take an interest in the 'burning issues of the day' and said, "he hoped to see trade unionists display part of their powers at the elections in November and send a few staunch trade unionists to the Council". When the dock strike was over however, Dyer reflected on recent events and expressed concern at the way these 'new' unions operated. One aspect he found particularly disturbing was the attempt to compel men to join a union. In an editorial he said, "... but, evidently the latest among the organisations have much to learn from the older societies, and the New Unionism is in some respects out of touch with the elementary principles of freedom and justice". 19

The Southampton Radical Association was of the opinion that the recent events pointed toward the need for Labour representation. At a meeting to review the strike a resolution in favour of Labour representation was passed. It stated, "That this meeting is of the opinion that it is desirable in the interests of the Labouring population of the town that candidates whose sympathies are more in accordance with the progressive spirit of the age should be brought forward so that workers may be fairly and honestly represented in the municipality. All those present hereby pledge themselves to render such candidates all the support in their power to ensure their return to the Council on the 1st November". ²⁰

The call for candidates to stand representing the interests of Labour was coming from radicals within the Liberal Party but this prospect alarmed the local Liberal leadership and they were happy to have an opportunity to avoid contested elections in November 1890. The elections were due to be fought on new boundaries following a revision agreed by the Council and the Local Government Board in 1889. It appears that there was an agreement between

¹⁸Hampshire Independent, 30 August 1890

¹⁹<u>Ibid</u>, 20 Sept 1890

²⁰Southampton Times, 27 Sept 1890

the Liberals and Conservatives that because of the changes sitting councillors allocated to the new wards would be returned unopposed. A joint declaration was issued to the electors signed by James Lemon on behalf of the Liberals and Alderman James Barford for the Conservatives. It was issued on September 26th and made reference to the revisions of ward boundaries but highlighted the recent strike. "Having regard to the recent disturbances and the unhappy differences between capital and labour we earnestly trust that you will co-operate with the action of both parties in honourably carrying out the above resolutions and prevent any contested elections taking place in any wards. We feel that the town requires peace, and that political contests would accentuate these differences and tend to retard that good feeling and prosperity which we hope will soon prevail in the town of Southampton".²¹

The declaration produced dissent in Liberal ranks. The Southampton Radical Association complained that it had been made without properly consulting the Liberal Party. Trinity Ward Liberal Association passed a resolution declining to recognise the compact between the two party leaders saying that it disenfranchised the electorate. They also agreed to try and get a candidate to stand but failed. Bevois Ward Liberal Association were unhappy with their member Mr. Gayton, whose views on labour matters were not radical enough for members of the ward and they were therefore not inclined to support the decision to avoid contested elections.²²

In November there were contests in four ward, St. James, Bevois Town, Northam and St. Mary's. The rest returned members under the compromise. Three of the contests involved radicals who supported Labour representation. In St. James, Delmar Bicker-Caarten, who had been an active supporter of the dock workers stood against a Conservative, Thomas Walton. Bicker-Caarten was a Commission Agent and had come to Southampton in 1883. He was originally from London and had served at sea for sixteen years and held a

²¹<u>Ibid</u>, 18 Jan 1890, J.Lemon, <u>Reminiscences of Pubic Life in</u>
<u>Southampton 1866-1900 Vol I</u> (Southampton 1911) pp.227-229

²²<u>Southampton Times</u>, 18 Oct 1890. <u>Hampshire Independent</u>, 4 Oct 1890

captain's certificate. He was to play a prominent role in Labour politics standing as a candidate for Borough and Guardian elections on numerous occasins. ²³ In Bevois Town Robert Foot stood against the Liberal Edward Gayton. At Northam there was a vacancy contested by Henry Laver, a Liberal supported by the Radical Association, and H I Sanders a Conservative. In St. Mary's the Liberal Councillor William Bone was challenged by Alfred Burnett an independent Conservative. This appears to have been a personal decision not one sanctioned by the Conservative party which adhered to the compact.

Bicker-Caarten and Foot stood as 'Labour' candidates and the former had the support of the local officials of the dock workers union. Foot stood in opposition to the compromise over seats on the grounds that the ratepayers had not been consulted. Laver stood as a Liberal.

The results of the election are shown below.

| Fig 3.3 | Borough Council Election Results November 1890 | | | | |
|-------------|--|------------|-----------|-------------|------------|
| | St. James | | | Bevois Town | ٠ |
| T Walton | | 444 | E Gayton | | 397 |
| D Bicker-Ca | arten | <u>177</u> | R Foot | | <u>165</u> |
| | Majority | 267 | | Majority | 232 |
| | <u>Northam</u> | | | St. Mary's | |
| H Laver | | 338 | W Bone | | 250 |
| H I Sanders | ; | <u>335</u> | A Burnett | | <u>120</u> |
| | Majority | 3 | | Majority | 130 |

The Southampton Times noted that some Liberals had assisted Mr Walton in St. James and Henry Laver claimed that some Liberals had supported his

²³For brief biographical details see <u>Southampton Times</u>, 8 Oct 1898

opponent in Northam. The verdict of the Southampton Times was that "The recent troubles at the waterside have frightened many people who fought shy of what they termed class representatives". ²⁴ At a post-election meeting of the Radical Association, Bicker-Caarten, Foot and Laver were congratulated. One member suggested that, unless greater concessions were obtained for the interests of Labour, they should work to prevent the return of Liberal candidates. ²⁵ Although this suggestion was not adopted by the Radical Association, it illustrates the growing tensions within the Liberal organisations in the town.

The Southampton Times, in an editorial, tried to draw a conclusion to recent events by setting out the conventional Liberal position. "We yield to none in our desire to promote the legitimate rights of Labour... We should be glad to see working men taking part in the business of our Town Council's, Boards of Guardians, School Boards and other public bodies. To real labour candidates bona fide representatives of the working classes - no true Liberal ever has or ever will have any objection. The suggestion that there has ever been any opposition on the grounds of principle by Liberals or Liberal organisations to such candidates or the party which has nominated them, is unworthy of those who make it and too absurd to deserve even passing notice but the cause they represent will never be advanced by Radicals assailing Liberals and Labour candidates will always be placed in a false position when they are brought out in opposition to tried public men whose Liberalism is undoubted though they may not see eye to eye with the exponents of the most advanced trade unionism. The success of the popular cause - politically, socially and municipally – depends upon Liberals and Radicals acting together". 26

The implication of this statement was that any Labour candidate had first to be considered genuine and acceptable to the Liberals. Even then he would stand little chance of selection or election if faced with a man experienced in public affairs who was considered to have sound Liberal principles. With such a stringent test it was likely that the dilemma of standing independently of the

²⁴Southampton Times, 8 Nov 1890

²⁵Ibid, 8 Nov 1890

²⁶Ibid, 8 Nov 1890

Liberals would have to be faced.

The difficulty for disenchanted radicals like Bicker-Caarten was how to assert their independence without organisation or money. One possible source, the Trades Council, was not yet prepared to run Labour candidates. Also, following his experience at the elections in 1890 Bicker-Caarten was concerned about what he saw as the general apathy among the workers of the town. Despite his reservations about running in tandem with the Liberals this seemed to be the only viable option.²⁷ He stood for St. James ward again in 1891 and shared a platform with Henry Bee the sitting Liberal councillor for St. Mary's. Bee was a supporter of the Free Labour Association and Bicker-Caarten faced some criticism for sharing a platform with him. He defended his decision by saying that Bee was not personally a bad employer even though he supported the Free Labour Association.²⁸

Despite this electoral arrangement and support from a number of radicals he did not get the support of all potential Liberal voters. He was defeated by the Conservative Walter Beavis by 509 votes to 173. The Southampton Times had no doubt about the reason. "Still the prosy residents of St. James voted for Mr Beavis in preference to Mr Bicker-Caarten for the simple reason that the last named gentleman has prominently identified himself with the cause of labouring men". ²⁹

The following year he stood against an official Liberal candidate in Newtown ward and was defeated by 225 votes to 188.³⁰ Recognising he had some support, the Liberal Party made him their official candidate for a by-election later that month. However he lost to the Conservative despite the support of the radicals of the Gladstone Club.³¹ He clearly alienated some traditional Liberal voters and unsettled the local party leadership and could be considered a

²⁷Southampton Times, 10 Oct 1891

²⁸Ibid, 25 Oct 1891

²⁹<u>Ibid</u>, 7 Nov 1891 ³⁰Ibid, 5 Nov 1892

³¹<u>Ibid</u>, 26 Nov 1892 Each ward had one alderman elected from among existing councillors who then retired from their seat creating a by-election.

More mainstream Liberals sympathetic to working class concerns could get increased support. Following the election of Aldermen after the November elections a vacancy occurred in St. Mary's ward. The Liberal candidate was Henry Kitcher who was involved in the early closing movement seeking to reduce the hours of work for shop assistants. His opponent was Thomas Morgan secretary of the Free Labour Association. Kitcher had the support of the Liberal ward association, the radicals in the Gladstone Club and the Trades Council. The Southampton Times said that the election became characterised as a contest between 'trade unionism' and 'free labour'. Kitcher won a substantial victory even compared with the municipal election held about three weeks before. The results of the two elections are shown below.

Fig 3.4 St. Mary's Ward Elections 1892

| <u>MUNICIPAL</u> | | % | BY ELECTION | | % |
|-----------------------|-----|------|---------------------|-------|------|
| H Glasspool (Liberal) | 218 | 58.6 | H Kitcher (Liberal) | 367 . | 70.5 |
| H Burnett | 154 | 41.3 | T Morgan (Liberal | 153 | 29.4 |
| (Conservative) | | | Unionist) | | |
| majority | 64 | | majority | 214 | |
| Turnout 37.27% | | | Turnout 52.10% | | |

Source - Southampton Times 5 and 26 November 1892.

It is reasonable to conclude that the increased support for the Liberal candidate came from working men's votes. After the result a procession made its way to Gladstone Club stopping briefly outside the official Liberal Club in the High Street to ".... hoot with vigour" because some members of the club were thought to have supported Morgan. 32

³²Southampton Times, 26 Nov 1892

There was beginning to emerge in the early 1890s a distinctive 'Labour' vote that could be harnessed to the Liberal cause but there were already some signs that traditional Liberal voters might not endorse candidates too closely identified with that interest.

The Trades Council put forward two candidates for the School Board elections in 1892. They were Ben Midgley of the Engineers, a founding member and first president, and Henry Wilson of the Shipwrights but also an active Liberal. Midgley said they would represent working men not any sect or party.³³

Wilson was elected but Midgley just failed to win a seat. Wilson probably benefited from the fact he was a known Liberal.³⁴ The Liberals or Progressives as they described themselves probably lost votes to the Labour candidates but they could not even rely on the regular Liberal vote for this election because some were Anglicans and voted for the Church candidates at the School Board.³⁵

The attempt to come to an arrangement that Liberal and Trade Council candidates would campaign jointly for the Guardians elections in 1893 fell through. The proposal was that five Liberal and three Trades Council candidates would contest the eight seats. Dr. Aldridge a prominent local Liberal expressed his dismay at an election meeting that it had been abandoned. "The arrangement has been broken through and those who were guilty of it were traitors to the cause of the people of Southampton. (Applause)". ³⁶

The three candidates chosen by the Trades Council were Bicker-Caarten, John Exten and Charles Parmiter. Exten was a member of the Fabians, and both he and Parmiter were members of the Social Democratic Federation. Although the exact reason for the breakdown of the arrangement over seats is not clear, two of the candidates were socialists and they would not have been acceptable in place of 'tried public men whose Liberalism was undoubted'.

³³<u>Ibid</u>, 5 March 1892

³⁴Ibid, 12 March 1892

³⁵<u>Ibid</u>, 12 March 1892

³⁶Ibid, 1 April 1893

At the election only one Liberal was elected and the Southampton Times lamented the reason for the defeat. "A large number of votes were wasted, many working men simply voting for the three Trades Council representatives and not using their other five votes. There is not the slightest doubt that had the Liberal and Labour interests combined the majority of their candidates would have been returned".³⁷

The dock strike had been the catalyst for the promotion of Labour candidates but working men had mainly played a supporting role to the radicals in the Liberal Party advocating the Labour interest. It opened up a split between progressives and traditional or Gladstonian Liberals. The aspiration for Labour representation was to divide the Liberal Party in Southampton even further. It came to a climax with the selection for a second parliamentary candidate to run alongside Sir Francis Evans prior to the 1895 General Election.

Parliamentary Elections 1892 - 1896

In December 1889 Philip Domoney a member of Southampton Radical Association had written to the Southampton Times calling for the selection of a Labour candidate for the parliamentary election in Southampton. In June 1890 a letter from a correspondent signing himself with only the initials EMJ called for a Labour candidate but also appealed for funds and pledged a personal contribution of ten shillings a year. However, neither of these initiatives resulted in securing a parliamentary candidate before the 1892 general election.³⁸

The first practical steps towards funding a Labour candidate came from the Gladstone Liberal and Radical Working Men's Club. One of its members, John Randolph secured an invitation for James Ramsay MacDonald to speak at the Liberal Council, made up of representatives of the wards and Liberal Club,

³⁷<u>Ibid</u>, 8 April 1893

³⁸Ibid, 7 Dec 1889 and 14 June 1890

with a view to him becoming the second Liberal candidate. MacDonald was working as a freelance journalist and writer and as a touring Fabian lecturer. Also invited were R G Wilberforce the brother of Canon Wilberforce of Southampton. He had previously been a parliamentary candidate for Farnham in Surrey. Mr F E Barnes a London provision merchant was invited but subsequently withdrew his name.³⁹

At a meeting to address the Liberal Council in May 1894, Wilberforce won the vote by 94 votes to 65. MacDonald's supporters were unhappy about the result because they considered it was evidence that the Liberal Party had failed to compromise with the interests of Labour. 40 John Randolph said Wilberforce would be petitioned to stand down in MacDonald's favour. Wilberforce, concerned at the reports of the division of opinion wrote to the Liberal Council suggesting a further meeting but the Council decided to drop them both and invite F E Barnes to address them. 41

At the beginning of June, the Gladstone Club held a meeting attended by MacDonald and James Lemon, President of the Liberal Association. A claim was made by MacDonald's supporters that they had not been informed of the Liberal Council meeting of 10th May that had decided to drop Wilberforce and MacDonald and invite Barnes. During heated exchanges MacDonald said, "....Labour had a right to have a representative in the South of England and that Southampton was the place they were most likely to meet with success". 42

The meeting called to adopt Barnes as the Liberal Party Candidate, held about a week later was punctuated by heckling and an attempt by MacDonald's

³⁹D Marquand, <u>Ramsay MacDonald</u> (London 1977) pp.30-32 and 35. MacDonald had been adopted as prospective parliamentary candidate for Dover shortly after the 1892 General Election insisting he would fight it as a Labour candidate.

⁴⁰Southampton Times, 5 April 1894

⁴¹<u>Ibid</u>, 12 May 1894 ⁴²Ibid, 9 June 1894

supporters to revive his candidature but this failed. MacDonald had given assurances that he would accept the result of the Liberal Council meeting he attended with Wilberforce but because of the subsequent events he no longer felt bound by this.⁴³

The decision to select Barnes precipitated a split among radical Liberals. John Randolph wrote to the Southampton Times saying he thought the Liberal Party were in favour of Labour representation but in practise they opposed it. He went on, "....now we have got MacDonald we intend to stick to him. Liberalism in this town has cut itself off from the working classes and those who believe in progress can no more think of accepting Mr Barnes than voting for Mr Chamberlayne."

For MacDonald his experience in Southampton was pushing him to the point of making his break with the Liberals. The final trigger was a by-election in the Attercliffe constituency in Sheffield in June 1894.⁴⁵

Following this MacDonald wrote to Keir Hardie applying for membership of the Independent Labour Party on 15th July 1894. He said, "....I have stuck to the Liberals up to now, hoping that they might do something to justify the trust that we had put in them. Attercliffe has come as a rude awakening and I felt that during that contest that it was quite impossible for me to maintain my position as a Liberal any longer. Calmer consideration has but strengthened that conviction, and if you now care to accept me amongst you I shall do what I can to support the ILP". He admitted that he supported the object of the ILP but had doubted the methods. However, as Liberal Associations had not supported Labour representatives he now believed the prophesies of the ILP about

⁴³Ibid, 16 June 1894

⁴⁴Ibid, 30 June 1894

⁴⁵The sitting member had inherited his fathers peerage causing the byelection. The local Labour electoral association put forward Charles Hobson,
leader of Sheffield Trades Council but the Liberal's rejected him. The ILP
stepped in and ran their own candidate Frank Smith a London journalist.
MacDonald went to help in the campaign. See J. Brown, "Attercliffe 1894: How
One Local Liberal Party Failed to Meet the Challenge of Labour" in <u>Journal of</u>
British Studies Vol 14 No.2 May 1975

The following day he wrote to the secretary of the recently formed Labour Electoral Association in Southampton, A H Crisp accepting an invitation to contest the parliamentary seat. "I am fully aware of the gravity of the step which I am prepared to take but the action of the Liberal Council has made a contest imperative. The fact that your town has two members gave the Liberals an opportunity of running a purely Labour candidate. They might have done so without much damage to themselves locally and they would certainly have the gratitude of the Parliamentary leaders of their Party. They decided otherwise. Two commercial men are to champion what was once a progressive cause ... To go back to the Liberals, even if it was possible, would simply stultify ourselves; the further we go the wider will be the divergence between us until at last the change, of which there is ample evidence, which is breaking down the party wall between Liberalism and Toryism is accomplished and the political battle will be fought out by the "interests" as the one side and the wage earner on the other.... Our movement is neither a party nor a class movement but a national one and as such it must be represented in Southampton".47

MacDonald believed Labour was a separate interest that had to be represented politically just as the landed aristocracy and the commercial classes had. Neither party, particularly the Liberals, had done much to support Labour representation in Parliament so it was necessary for this to be pursued independently of the existing parties. This of course did not rule out the prospect of co-operation with the Liberals but 'Labour' would no longer be subordinate to them.⁴⁸

The Southampton Times claimed there was no decision to reject a candidate representing Labour interests on principle. "....the question is one of practical politics and could hardly be determined without regard to the probabilities

⁴⁶Lord Elton, <u>The Life and Times of James Ramsay MacDonald 1866-1919</u>, (London 1939) pp.68-69

⁴⁷Letter dated 16 July 1894 reprinted in <u>Southampton Times</u>, 11 Aug 1894

⁴⁸D.Marquand, op cit p.34 and 41

of success which no doubt largely influenced the decision of the Council". 49

The previous General Election in 1892 had been closely fought and the recent experience of the municipal elections made the Liberals anxious that a candidate too strongly identified with Labour would risk some of their middle class support.

Joyce Brown in her study of Attercliffe noted that pragmatic considerations about who was most likely to win the seat for them probably influenced most of the Liberal caucus members. However, conflict among Liberal leaders was a sign that they were failing to recognise a growing sense of class consciousness among workers. The non-progressive Liberals sense of their own class superiority meant they did not recognise the legitimacy of the demand for a Labour representative. The Liberal Party was unable to contain working class political aspirations but they could not defeat these aspirations.⁵⁰

This was reflected in Southampton when Barnes resigned his candidacy in December 1894 and the Liberals were forced to seek a new candidate. They made two unsuccessful attempts to recruit local candidates. James Lemon declined to stand as did Edward Bance, a local auctioneer, ex-mayor and Colonel of volunteers. On the eve of the election the Liberals adopted Henry Wilson the President of the Trades Council. The Southampton Times commented rather smugly, "Mr Wilson is well known as a bona fide working man; and in selecting him the Liberals of Southampton have given practical evidence of their sympathy for Labour". 51

Comparing the election addresses of the Liberal and ILP candidates highlights some similarities but also significant differences. The main elements of each are set out overleaf.

⁴⁹Southampton Times, 11 June 1894

⁵⁰J.Brown, loc cit p.52

⁵¹Quoted in Marquand, op cit p.37

Fig 3.5 <u>Liberal and ILP Election Addresses 1895</u>

<u>Main Issues Covered</u>⁵²

| EVANS (LIB) | MACDONALD (ILP) |
|---|----------------------------------|
| Support for old age pensions | Reform of Poor Law and Old Age |
| | Pensions. Comprehensive. |
| Extension of Factory and Workshops Act | Factory Act |
| Payment of MPs and election expenses | Payment of MPs and election |
| | expenses |
| Employers liability for accidents at work | Employers Liability bill with no |
| | Contracting out |
| 8 hour day for miners and trades where | An 8 hour day |
| majority in favour | |
| Abolition of House of Lords veto | Abolition of House of Lords |
| One man one vote | Adult Suffrage |
| Welsh Disestablishment | Self Government for Ireland, |
| | Scotland, England and Wales |
| | Measures to deal with |
| | unemployment |
| WILSON (L-LAB) | Trade Union conditions in |
| | Government employment |
| Most of the above plus | Abolition of tied houses and |
| | municipalisation of drink |
| | traffic |
| Reform of Poor Law | Graduated Income Tax |
| Home Rule for Scotland and Wales | Reform in Voter Registration Law |

MacDonald stressed his independence of the existing parties and also called for the public control of the means of production distribution and exchange. This was a long term objective and the proposals outlined were to be steps on the way to this objective. MacDonald's proposals went further than many radical Liberals would accept.

⁵²Ramsey MacDonald Papers' Public Record Office PRO 30/69/1724. Temple Patterson, op cit Vol 3 pp.100-101

For the Conservatives, Simeon strongly opposed Home Rule, Welsh Disestablishment and 'one man one vote'. Chamberlayne described himself as an independent Conservative and emphasised his support for the welfare of the working classes citing as one example his help in securing increased pay for telegraph clerks in Southampton.⁵³

The result of the election was a victory for the Conservatives Chamberlayne and Simeon.

| Fig 3.6 General | Election Result 1895 |
|-----------------|----------------------|
|-----------------|----------------------|

| · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------|--------------|--------|
| | Party | Plumper Vote | Result |
| Chamberlayne | Con | 234 | 5424 |
| Simeon | Lib U | 46 | 5390 |
| Evans | Lib | 405 | 5181 |
| Wilson | L-Lab | 30 | 4178 |
| MacDonald | ILP | 349 | 867 |
| | | | |

Turnout - 76.8%

The analysis of voting between the various candidates is shown below.

Fig 3.7 Analysis of Voting 1895

| | PARTY | VOTES | | |
|------------------------|-----------|-------|--|--|
| Chamberlayne/Simeon | Con/LU | 5133 | | |
| Chamberlayne/Evans | Con/LIB | 381 | | |
| Chamberlayne/Wilson | Con/L-Lab | 48 | | |
| Chamberlayne/MacDonald | Con/ILP | 128 | | |
| Simeon/Evans | LU/LIB | 158 | | |
| Simeon/Wilson | LU/L-Lab | 16 | | |
| Simeon/MacDonald | LU/ILP | 37 | | |
| Evans/Wilson | LIB/L-LAB | 3984 | | |
| Evans/MacDonald | LIB/ILP | 253 | | |
| Wilson/MacDonald | L-LAB/ILP | 100 | | |
| | | | | |

Sources Fig 3.6 and 3.7 – F.W.S. Craig British Parliamentary Election 1885 – 1918 (Aldershot 1974).

⁵³Temple Patterson, op cit Vol 3 p.100

Wilson polled just over one thousand votes less than Evans and the joint Liberal vote was just over one thousand less than the joint Conservative vote. The Liberals' adoption of a 'Labour' candidate does not seem to have helped the Liberal cause. The Southampton Times believed the Liberals had been beaten by the liquor interest and the ILP. Although the question of drink did feature in the election and was to play a part in the sequel to that election it was not clear that the ILP alone had lost Evans his seat.

The Liberals, angry at the defeat, mounted a petition against Chamberlayne and Simeon alleging wholesale treating during a costermongers procession in which Chamberlayne's carriage was involved, and at a meeting at the dock gates. The charges against Simeon were completely dismissed. Chamberlayne was not found guilty of treating but he was disqualified on the grounds that he did not," take all reasonable steps to prevent corrupt treating during the costermongers procession". ⁵⁴

The disqualification triggered a by election which the Liberals were determined to win. Following discussions which started at local level between MacDonald, Evans and the Liberal Chief Whip, MacDonald agreed not to stand. In return he was offered the chance to contest any by-election for the Conservative seat or to run in tandem with the Liberal at the next General Election. The local ILP were happy to agree to this but it appears to have been done without consulting the national party.

Despite MacDonald's withdrawal Evans had to face a second challenger, C A Gibson from the Social Democratic Federation. Although Gibson only got around a quarter of the votes given for MacDonald, Evans still only had a narrow margin of victory.

⁵⁴Southampton Election Petitions. <u>Parliamentary Papers</u> 1896 LXVII ⁵⁵D.Marquand, <u>op cit</u> p.39

Fig 3.8 Southampton By-Election 1896

| Sir F H Evans (Liberal) | | 5,555 |
|-------------------------|----------|-------|
| G Candy (Conservative) | | 5,522 |
| C A Gibson (S.D.F.) | | 274 |
| | Majority | 33 |

Turnout 76.1%

Socialists and Labour Representation: The Social Democratic Federation, the Fabians and the Independent Labour Party

John Adam's Southampton Almanac commented on political developments in the town in 1895 and said, "A new aspect of the social problem has been the energy with which the socialistic propaganda has been carried on in the town during the past year. The extreme opinions of the various socialistic parties have not however found many converts, but their more reasonable views on social reform have caused discussion among people of unbiased opinions". ⁵⁶

While it is clear that there was a growing demand from within the ranks of radical Liberalism for Labour to be represented, the case for independent Labour representation was also being made by the local branch of the SDF and a local Fabian group as well as among some trade unionists. The SDF branch in Southampton was established in 1891. In March the SDF Journal Justice reported, "There is every prospect of good work in this neighbourhood, and probably a branch of he SDF will be formed". ⁵⁷ By May it was claimed 50 members had joined the branch and local radicals were said to be showing sympathy. ⁵⁸ Among the founder members were Tommy Lewis who went on to play a prominent part in Labour politics in the town. He was born on

⁵⁶John Adam's Southampton Almanac 1895

⁵⁷Justice, 17 March 1891

⁵⁸Ibid, 16 May 1891

12 December 1873 in the St. Mary's district of Southampton. His father was a dock worker who came from Jersey in the Channel Islands. The family was poor and Tommy left school at eleven and worked as a watchmaker and jeweller in the town. He later became a Friendly Society official. ⁵⁹ Another was John Exten. He was the son of a shopkeeper and had been to Board School and then Grammar School. His early ambition was to become a Non-conformist minister but he found his way into the ranks of the socialists. He was also a member of the Fabians and, became the first independent Labour Councillor elected to the Borough Council in 1894. ⁶⁰

The SDF branch held regular open-air public meetings with speakers from London and other parts of the country. They had branch meetings for members and co-operated with the local branch of the Fabians which was formed in 1892. Despite some early resentment and friction they also worked with the local branch of the ILP established in 1894.

The picture of the SDF as a narrow and unattractive Marxist sect dominated by London-based figures put forward by Henry Pelling has been modified by later research including Paul Thompson's on London, Jeffrey Hill on Lancashire and Michael Crick whose history of the SDF included detailed study of Lancashire and Yorkshire. What these studies have shown is the importance of considering the relationship between the London leadership and members operating in the localities. They show how the SDF adapted more or less successfully to the circumstances in which they operated.

In London the SDF ran candidates for the vestry and County Council elections

⁵⁹J.Bellamy and J.Saville (ed), <u>Dictionary of Labour Biography Vol 1</u> (London 1972) pp.215-217

⁶⁰Biographical details in the <u>Southampton Times</u>, 8 Oct 1898 ⁶¹H.Pelling, The Origins of the Labour Party 1880-1900 (Oxford 1965) pp.215-217. P.Thompson, <u>Socialists</u>, <u>Liberals and Labour</u>. <u>The Struggle for London 1885-1914</u> (London 1967) especially chapters 6 & 9. J.Hill "Social Democracy and the Labour Movement: the Social Democratic Federation in Lancashire" in <u>North West Labour History Society Bulletin</u> 1982-83 pp.44-53. M.Crick, <u>The History of the Social Democratic Federation</u>, (Keele 1994).

in 1895 with radical and trade union support. 62 In Lancashire too the SDF was flexible, campaigning on unemployment as the SDF did nationally but also taking part in electioneering and forming electoral arrangements with the Trades Councils and the ILP.63 Crick argues that there was no single coherent view about the relationship with trade unions within the SDF. The leader Hyndman was sceptical about the unions and particularly their leaders. The older established unions were seen as bulwarks of liberalism and new unions as too weak to make any impression on the economic conditions of the workers. A group around Harry Quelch thought trade unions embodied some of the principles of collectivism but helped capitalism to be tolerated. A third view held by people including Ernest Belfort Bax, saw the new unions in particular embodying socialistic principles. In the late 1890s the debate moved in favour of those wanting to work with the unions as Quelch moved closer to the prounion tendency. The growth of the SDF particularly in Lancashire also helped because many members were active in their unions and the unions were relatively strong.64

The attitude of the Southampton SDF was to be supportive to trade unions but they concentrated on arguing for independent socialist representation as a solution to the problems of workers. The SDF and the Fabians held joint meetings in support of the miners locked out by their employers in a dispute over wage reductions in 1893. One of these meetings was also attended by a number of radicals including Philip Domoney from the Radical Association and Mr Standing from the Harcourt Liberal Club.⁶⁵

Exten was secretary of the local Fabians and he saw the branch as complementary to the SDF, not in competition. He argued it was necessary to adapt to local circumstances and spread socialist principles in all directions and he took issue with Justice for referring to Fabians as "the more timorous and

63 J. Hill, loc cit p.51

⁶⁴M. Crick, <u>op cit</u> pp.77-79

⁶²P.Thompson, <u>op cit</u> pp.113-119

⁶⁵ Southampton Times, 15 July 1893 and 18 Oct 1893. They also collected money for local carpenters and joiners on strike over wages.

less convinced of our converts". ⁶⁶ The local Fabian branch brought together radicals who were becoming disenchanted with the Liberal Party such as Bicker-Caarten and socialists like Exten. Their aim was to recruit widely, "The society seeks recruits from all ranks, believing that not only those who suffer from the present system, but also many who are themselves enriched by it recognise the evils and would welcome a remedy". ⁶⁷

Although Exten was in favour of co-operation he was clear that Labour's interests could not be met by the existing political parties. In April 1892 he wrote, "It must be distinctly understood that the 'Labour movement' has aims and objects which are not adequately represented by the ordinary political parties that exist at present. The movement is the outcome of the awakening on the part of those who are the actual producers of wealth to the fact that they have no one on any of the public bodies who will devote their time and attention to the needs and desires of this vast section of the nation". 68

Once this principle had been accepted, political allegiances between the different socialist groups could be quite fluid. There were individuals like Bicker-Caarten who was a member of the Fabians in 1893 and also joined the SDF, but at the same time he was still a member of the Gladstone Liberal and Radical Club. In September 1894 he severed his connections with the SDF branch. Although the precise reason is unclear it was probably because he wanted to support MacDonald's candidature for the ILP which the SDF was opposed to. On the other hand the local Fabian branch passed a resolution dissolving itself and transferring its funds and local membership to the SDF. The decision, in April 1894, was taken because the London executive of the

⁶⁶Justice, 4 June 1892

⁶⁹Justice, 22 Sept 1894

⁶⁷Southampton Fabian Society Objects (leaflet). Webb Trade Union Collection COLL MISC75 Local Fabian Societies Collection Vol 5 British Library of Political and Economic Science

⁶⁸Southampton Times, 30 April 1892

⁷⁰Southampton Times, 28 April 1894

society was supporting MacDonald's candidature in Southampton as the second Liberal candidate and the Fabians locally were committed to independence from, not permeation of, the Liberal Party.

The ILP branch was set up after MacDonald's decision to join the party and contest the seat for the ILP. The branch had a number of ex-Liberals among its members including four members of the organising committee of the Gladstone Club, John Scullard, Thomas Hoban, John Randolph and E. Arnfield. Hoban and Randolph both returned to the Liberals after some months, Randolph following some unspecified quarrel with MacDonald. The SDF were suspicious that the ILP was just a vehicle to further MacDonald's Parliamentary ambitions. They resented the lack of consultation over his candidacy and they did not support his campaign calling instead on voters to abstain. Later Justice commented that, "The ILP candidate was opposed by our Southampton comrades because of the chameleon-like character of his candidacy". 71 Despite this, the SDF and ILP co-operated in 1894 and 1895 to highlight the question of unemployment holding joint meetings and sending joint deputations to the Mayor and the Guardians on the issue.72 Joshua Davidson reporting on activity in Southampton mentioned "the friendly rivalry of the ILP" at open air meetings.73

More importantly the SDF and ILP in Southampton did not compete electorally and regularly contested the same wards; Northam for the ILP and St Mary's for the SDF. Membership of the parties was likely to depend partly on which party canvassed electors or organised election meetings. Clearly the style of politics of the ILP was influenced by those radical Liberals who formed the party locally. Although there are figures for the ILP, there are no details of names or addresses of members so it is difficult to construct any picture of either party's membership. One possible clue lies in the social activities of the ILP branch. Fancy dress balls were organised including one for New Year's Eve 1897. One

⁷³Justice, 22 June 1895

⁷¹ <u>Justice</u>, 13 and 20 July 1895

⁷²Southampton Times, 9 and 16 Feb. 1895

of these attracted 80 people.⁷⁴ A Sunday lecture by Enid Stacy on Women in Politics was preceded by a tea and social evening attended by Miss Stacey and Ramsay MacDonald.⁷⁵ The ILP had a social club and a "well stocked library of high class literature" according to the Southampton Times.⁷⁶ A series of lectures was scheduled for Sundays in 1897, the first one being by Mr Alvin Howard on "Mr Browning's Poems". Other topics were Tom Paine and early radicalism, Robert Owen the pioneer of the labour movement, Francis Place and the growth of trade unions, Richard Carlisle and the freedom of the press, plus one on the co-operative movement and one on John Stewart Mill and radicalism.⁷⁷ These activities seemed to be aimed at the educated working man or woman and appeared to be intended to make membership a social as well as a political choice.

There is no information about the membership of the SDF except the figures given in Justice at the inauguration of the branch. The press reports of SDF activity concentrate on their street and open-air meetings and lectures from outside speakers, usually on directly political topics. The social life of the SDF was not reported, if it existed.

The ILP attempted to expand its activity in the late 1890s. In the spring of 1897 Joseph Clayton came down from Leeds to become an organiser in Southampton. In February 1898 he reported that the branch had 80 members, the only ILP club on the south coast, and a monthly newspaper. Membership returns to the annual conference show a slightly different picture.

⁷⁴<u>Ibid</u>, 14 Nov 1896 and 2 Jan 1897

⁷⁵ Ibid, 4 Jan 1896

⁷⁶ Ibid. 21 March 1896

⁷⁷<u>Ibid</u>, 13 March 1897 ⁷⁸ILP News, Feb 1898

Fig 3.9 Southampton ILP Membership

| YEAR | NO. OF MEMBERS |
|------|----------------|
| 1897 | 51 |
| 1898 | 55 |
| 1899 | 56 |
| 1900 | 60 |

Source - Independent Labour Party Reports of Annual Conference 1897-1899.

Electorally the party made steady progress in Northam ward which was a Liberal stronghold from 1890 to 1900.

Fig 3.10 Northam Ward ILP Vote

| <u>YEAR</u> | <u>VOTE</u> | % OF VOTE CAST |
|-------------|-------------|----------------|
| 1895 | 86 | 11.96 |
| 1896 | 56 | 6.97 |
| 1897 | 231 | 24.52 |
| 1898 | 317 | 42.43 |
| 1899 | 315 | 37.45 |
| | | |

In 1895 – 1897 and 1899, the ILP faced Conservative and Liberal opponents but in 1898 only faced a Liberal. They came third in 1895 to 1897 but in 1899 came second. Delmar Bicker-Caarten was the candidate from 1897 to 1899. The only other ward regularly contested was Newtown from 1895 to 1897. On each occasion the ILP came third with around 25% of the vote against both Liberal and Conservative opponents. The ILP intervention in 1896 cost the sitting Liberal councillor his seat and alleged Liberal voter apathy and the ILP did the same again in 1897.⁷⁹

⁷⁹Southampton Times, 7 Nov 1896 and 7 Nov 1897

Towards the end of this period, the ILP faced two problems. MacDonald had kept his connection with Southampton for it was anticipated he would contest the next general election in the town. In April 1899 the ILP attempted to open discussion with the Liberals about his candidacy but they were rebuffed and MacDonald transferred his interest to Leicester where he was nominated in October 1899.⁸⁰

The difficulty of sustaining a club, a newspaper and an organisation on such a small membership was becoming evident. They had difficulty sending membership subscriptions in and, early in 1898, Clayton was not now being paid as he commented that he could not afford to continue as honorary secretary even in the pleasant surroundings of Southampton. They faced another setback when the building which housed the club was sold and resulted in its closure in June 1899. Finally the monthly paper became embroiled in a long running libel case which necessitated an appeal for funds for the defence for Clayton and Bicker-Caarten. It arose from accusations published by Bicker-Caarten that the superintendent of the corporation wharf had profited from under-reporting the amount of gravel landed there. The superintendent sued for criminal libel and the case dragged on for two years. They did not in the end have to pay damages because there was enough doubt about the superintendent's conduct but they did face legal bills for their defence and this sapped the ability of a small branch to finance itself. Each

The SDF recorded the first success for independent Labour representation in 1894 winning St. Mary's in a three way contest.

81 ILP News, Feb 1898

⁸⁰B.Lancaster, op cit p.157 and 211 Footnote 34

⁸²For details of the dispute see <u>Southampton Times</u>, 12 Feb 1898, 27 Aug 1898, 17 Sept 1898 and 24 Sept 1898. Also, <u>Labour Leader</u>, 6 Nov 1897, 31 Nov 1897, 19 Feb 1898 and 28 July 1900. And D.Hopkin, "Local Newspapers and the Independent Labour Party 1893-1906" in <u>Society for the Study of Labour History Bulletin</u> 28 (Spring 1974) pp.34-5

Fig 3.11 St. Mary's Ward Municipal Election 1894

| J Exten (SDF) | 313 |
|-----------------------|-----|
| Hewitt (Conservative) | 244 |
| McDonnell (Liberal) | 105 |
| Majority | 64 |

The SDF put a lot of effort into the election. They sent an election address to every voter in the ward and members carried out a house to house canvas.⁸³ They were unable to win the seat the following year or hold on to it in 1897. Their electoral performance was more variable than the ILP in Northam.

Fig 3.12 St. Mary's Ward SDF Vote

| YEAR | VOTE | % OF VOTES CAST |
|----------|------|-----------------|
| 1894 | 313 | 47.28 |
| 1895 | 181 | 27.05 |
| Feb 1896 | 233 | 34.26 |
| Nov 1896 | 310 | 45.54 |
| 1897 | 291 | 37.69 |
| 1898 | 288 | 47.44 |
| 1899 | 210 | 29.91 |

In November 1896 and 1898 they also faced a Conservative opponent and their candidate was Tommy Lewis. In 1895, five candidates contested the seat including a Conservative, a Liberal, an Independent and a Ratepayers Association Candidate. The SDF candidate came second, six votes behind the Conservative. The Liberals held the seats in the ward until 1894 and from 1895 to 1898 the Conservative took all the seats. The Liberals only won it again in 1899 with George Parker, a well known Gladstonian Liberal. The vote for Lewis in 1896 and 1898 suggests he was picking up some support from Liberal voters though not enough to win the seat.

⁸³ Justice, 20 Oct 1894 and 10 Nov 1894

The Trades Council, Trade Unions and Politics 1890 – 1900

When the Trades Council was established, Labour representation was not one of its aims. However, the period saw a gradual move toward the support of candidates from the ILP and the SDF. The first Labour candidates to stand with the support of the Trades Council were Henry Wilson and Ben Midgley for the School Board in 1892.

In the early 1890's, the Trades Council supported Liberal candidates in municipal and general elections. At the 1892 General Election they endorsed Francis Evans and Charles Burt after they gave favourable replies to a ten point programme submitted by the Council. This included the eight hour day, state payment of MPs, manhood suffrage, triennial parliaments, the simplification of electoral registration, a universal election day, nationalisation of land and mining royalties and abolition of the hereditary principle of the House of Lords. Only one delegate dissented from the endorsement of the Liberals', the delegate from the Seamens and Firemens Union said his society would support the Tory Mr. Chamberlayne because he, ".... had been a good friend of his society ever since it was founded in Southampton".⁸⁴

The presence of Ramsay MacDonald as an ILP candidate divided the Trades Council and some individual unions. Attempts to invite MacDonald to address the Trades Council were supported by a branch of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners and the Building Trades Federation. Support for his campaign came from the General Labourers Union who contributed financially. Controversy surrounded a circular published by the Fabians listing a number of trade unionists as supporters. They included William Bonner and W Mills of the House Painters (Mills was secretary) W G Ferguson, Secretary of the Engineers and R. Ledger a trustee of that union and C H Crook vice president of the Typographical Association and Secretary of the Trades Council. John Exten claimed that two others from the Typographical Association D Lang and H

⁸⁴ Southampton Times, 25 June 1892 and 9 July 1892

Some unions clearly did oppose MacDonald including the Operative Bricklayers, and the Sailors and Firemen whose secretary was a staunch Liberal. In July 1895 a special meeting of the Trades Council endorsed a resolution in favour of the candidature of their president H G Wilson for the General Election when he stood as a Lib/Lab. Unfortunately the press report only records the fact of the resolution being passed and no details of delegates or voting were given so it is impossible to accurately gauge the views of individual unions.⁸⁶

The political situation for Labour representation was developing at this time and the loyalties of trade unions and individual trade unionists could be fluid. The Building Trades Federation supported MacDonald in the election in July 1895 but in October agreed to support the Liberal candidate in Northam," In consideration of his advocating the claims of the working class on the School Board, and his willingness at all times to help them"⁸⁷

The Trades Council supported three Liberals and one member of the SDF in the four divisions of St. Mary's for the Guardians election in 1896. The decision to support these candidates had been based on the replies received to a set of questions sent out by the Trades Council.⁸⁸

At the Municipal elections in the late 1890s, the Trades Council showed an increasing willingness to support Labour candidates. In 1897 they supported William Bonner in Newtown Ward and Delmar Bicker-Caarten in Northam in contests against both Liberals and Conservatives. Both stood as ILP candidates. In October 1899 Bicker-Caarten was supported by the

⁸⁵Letter from John Exten to the Fabian Society Executive Committee 6 July 1895. MacDonald Papers, PRO 30/69/1724

⁸⁶ Southampton Times, 13 July 1895

⁸⁷<u>lbid,</u> 12 Oct 1895 ⁸⁸lbid, 20 March 1896

Some Unions objected to the political direction the Trades Council was taking. In February 1898 the Secretary of the Amalgamated Toolmakers, Engineers and Machinists Society resigned complaining in his letter of ".... too much politics" on the Council.⁹⁰

The Woolston branch of the Engineers also withdrew from the Trades Council in a dispute over the activities of the ILP in organising meetings in support of the men locked out by their employers. The reason stated was," Solely because of the alleged socialistic proclivities of that body".⁹¹

Although a small proportion of the workforce was unionised and affiliated to the Trades Council by the late 1890's it was regularly supporting ILP and SDF candidates at municipal level. Some like William Bonner were active trade unionists respected for their work in the movement. Others like Bicker-Caarten were known for their activity on behalf of working men and in support of trade unionism, although he was not a manual worker himself. What they both contributed was a commitment to Labour politics increasingly independent of the Liberal Party.

The Liberals 1896 - 1900

The Liberal Party locally continued to ignore the demand for the representation of the Labour interest. The only working man selected by the Liberals for municipal elections was Henry Wilson. He contested Northam in 1896 and held it until 1905 when he transferred to St. Mary's and lost. He was the epitome of the 'respectable' working man, a Justice of the Peace, elder of his local church and local preacher. He served on the School Board and was an overseer of the Board of Guardians.

⁸⁹Southampton Times, 9 Oct 1897. <u>ILP News</u>, Oct 1899

⁹⁰ Southampton Times, 19 Feb 1898

The attitude of the Liberal Party was born in part out of hostility to the ILP and SDF and those on the Trades Council supporting them. The intervention of Labour candidates was seen to damage the Liberal Party. At the annual meeting of the Northam Ward Liberal Association in 1898, J C Burbage blamed Bicker-Caarten and Exten for losing the Liberals seven seats in various conflicts over the years and Wilson claimed he was being targeted by a 'clique' on the Trades Council because of his continued allegiance to the Liberal Party. ⁹²

Also among leading Liberals and many Liberal councillors was a belief that political partisanship should be subordinated to the best interests of the town. The municipal truce in November 1890 was one example but so was the acceptance of the idea of sharing civic positions. There was also agreement among most councillors of both parties on issues such as the municipalisation of the electricity supply, the tramway and the water company. In this climate, attempts to promote the representation of Labour as a separate interest were alien to the prevailing culture of local politics in the town. In 1899 the Southampton Times set out its hope for the future of municipal politics. "We are at one with those who contend that party politics ought not to play any part in municipal affairs. But as matter of fact they do and that aspect of the matter cannot altogether be ignored". 93

The Southampton Times believed that many of the reforms wanted by trade unionists such as the eight hour day, land reform, nationalisation of mining royalties and railways, the extension of workers compensation and universal suffrage were supported by many Liberals. If they needed persuading it should be done through the Liberal Party. The Party," might be made much more sympathetic and much more effective did the workers take a more earnest part in the organisation and work of the party in the constituencies". ⁹⁴ When the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants moved their resolution in favour of Labour representation at the 1899 Trades Union Congress the paper again

⁹²Ibid, 26 Nov 1898

⁹³Ibid, 28 Oct 1899

^{94&}lt;u>Ibid</u>, 3 Sept 1898

said, ".... that is an aspiration which we as Liberals are heartily in sympathy".

However they argued that the spirit of irreconcilability shown toward the Liberal Party would not achieve greater Labour representation. 95

When presented with an opportunity to act on this, local Liberals declined to do so. When the local ILP wrote to the Liberals about MacDonald's candidacy in April 1899 they refused to discuss the matter and proceeded to field two candidates of their own. ⁹⁶ By October 1899 they had selected Clarendon Hyde to run alongside Sir Francis Evans and the Southampton Times welcomed the outcome in terms which showed the true sentiments of the Party. "We have in Sir Francis Evans MP and Mr Hyde two very strong and able candidates. Both abundantly satisfy the conditions – which is an article of faith with Southampton people of all parties and no party – that the members of the constituency ought to be commercial men and they are both sound politicians". ⁹⁷

<u>Conclusion 1890 – 1900</u>

The Southampton dock strike can be regarded as a false start for Labour both in terms of trade union and political developments. It did not result directly in trade unions locally promoting Labour representation as Laybourn and Reynolds argue that the Manningham Mills strike did in West Yorkshire. The unions in West Yorkshire retained their organisation despite the defeat, whereas in Southampton the defeat effectively destroyed the dock workers union. The political impact was felt in the ranks of the Liberal Party as radicals attempted to assert the necessity of Labour representation. The strains within Liberalism locally became apparent as a radical candidate like Bicker-Caarten alienated some traditional Liberal voters who either refused to vote or voted against him. This pragmatic concern to ensure that middle class Liberal votes did not desert the party largely dictated the decision to reject MacDonald in 1895. In the context of closely fought parliamentary elections and a change

⁹⁵Ibid, 9 Sept 1899

⁹⁶Ibid, 8 April 1899

⁹⁷ Ibid, 14 Oct 1899

⁹⁸Laybourn and Reynolds, <u>op cit</u> p.43

from Liberal to Tory control of the Borough Council in 1895 this was understandable.

The failure of the Liberals to support Labour candidates at municipal or parliamentary level was a common factor in many localities behind the development of independent labour representation. The presence of groups like the ILP and SDF actively engaged in promoting independent representation and working sympathetically with trade unions gradually helped to build support within the town. The local ILP clearly grew out of the disillusionment of radical Liberals with the Liberal Party. In this sense they were part of a radical tradition but they also co-operated with the SDF and there was less of a rigid demarcation between the different groups. The success of the SDF in St. Mary's in 1894, although not sustained, gave a platform for, and practical evidence of, independent labour representation. As local Trade Unions became more confident about supporting independent labour the possibility of a reconciliation between Labour and Liberalism became more difficult. The decision of the Liberals to reject the possibility of running MacDonald alongside Francis Evans, and confirm their notion that the town had to be represented by commercial interests, did not hold out much hope of an accommodation to Labour interests.

Part Two 1900 - 1914

At the beginning of the new century, no Labour or trade union candidates sat on the Borough Council. Their only success had been in St. Mary's in 1894. In 1901 two independent Labour candidates won seats in Northam and St. Mary's and in 1903 the Trades Council affiliated to the Labour Representation Committee. By 1913 they had eight elected councillors. Two had been elected in Northam and one in St. Mary's but the other five represented the suburbs of Millbrook and Shirley. Not only was Labour able to field more candidates by the end of this period but they were winning in mixed class wards where they had not stood candidates in the past. Labour also secured seven seats in the Guardian's elections although two were unopposed because the other parties failed to find candidates. Again seats were won in the suburbs in Millbrook (2) and Shirley (1) as well as St. Denys, Freemantle, Newtown and St. Mary's.

Municipal and Parliamentary Politics 1900 - 1906

From 1900 to 1906, three important elements influenced the development of Labour politics in Southampton. Firstly there was the weakness of the Liberals locally. The inability to win back control of the Borough Council after 1895 had to some extent been compensated for by the arrangements to share municipal office but the Conservatives could, and did, ignore the Liberals when they wanted to. This led to concern about the relationship with Labour and tentative steps were taken to establish a progressive alliance and later a willingness to consider letting a Labour representative contest one of the parliamentary seats in the town.

Finally, the formation of the Labour Representation Committee in 1900 and concerns about the position of trade unions because of the Taff Vale judgement were reflected in a more assertive and confident Labour movement.

At the General Election of 1900 Sir Francis Evans lost his seat. Chamberlayne returned to the top of the poll for the Conservatives and Simeon standing as a Liberal Unionist retained his seat. The divisions over the conduct of and support for the Boer War aired at a meeting of the Liberal Federation in

Manchester in 1899 had been echoed locally. The Southampton Times was a reluctant supporter believing that the war might have been avoided. ⁹⁹ Sir Francis Evans had doubts about the war but he could not condemn it as unnecessary or unjust when staff of the Company of which he was a director had gone to fight. ¹⁰⁰ The town was also the main point of embarkation for troops to South Africa and it was the focus for public celebrations when Sir George Smith, dubbed the Hero of Ladysmith, arrived back. ¹⁰¹ At the General Election, Evans argued that contrary to Conservative claims, the war was not over and the Boers would have to be offered a just peace to end their resistance.

After the election the Liberals were depressed and divided for some time. Many ward associations were either dead or dormant. This was not entirely due to the Boer War. The Southampton Times commented in May 1901 that St.

Mary's ward had succumbed to apathy when ten years before it had been a stronghold of liberalism. Nearly a year later little had changed. In another editorial the paper declared, "the Liberal Ward Associations are in a moribund condition and for all practical purposes are almost useless". They went on, "That the Party stands in need of being aroused to greater activity in Southampton it would be folly to deny, and the more ardent Liberals in the constituency have for a long time been chafing at the apathy and utter indifference displayed by so many who might have been expected to show a bolder front in times of crisis". 104

At the beginning of 1905, the paper was admitting that the organisation of the Party still needed improving and complained, "For years we have constantly drawn attention to the process of disintegration which was invidiously but

¹⁰⁰Ibid, 10 Feb 1900

⁹⁹Southampton Times, 16 Dec 1899

¹⁰¹J. Lemon, <u>op cit</u> Vol II pp.240-244

¹⁰²Temple Patterson, <u>op cit</u> Vol III p.131

¹⁰³Southampton Times, 25 May 1901

¹⁰⁴Ibid, 15 Feb 1902

They argued that the rise of ratepayer associations had contributed to the decline of the Liberal Party organisation in the wards. Although this may have been true it signified a deeper problem for the Party. The rise of ratepayer associations had come out of criticism of the level of rates and the financial management of the Borough at the beginning of the Century. The Borough had municipalized the electric light and power company in 1896. They also purchased the tramway company in 1898 and invested in the system making it electrified in 1899. This, along with the building of a new road on the western side of town saw the debt of the corporation grow to around £400,000. This had all been presided over by Liberal councillors who chaired the Finance Committee from 1895 to 1899.

The protests by ratepayers led to a meeting in the Philharmonic Hall in 1901 which was attended by Liberal councillors George Parker and Dr. Aldridge. They voiced their own particular complaints and the meeting agreed to petition the Local Government Board for an inquiry into the finances of the council. It also agreed to set up a network of ratepayer associations on a "non-political basis" to ensure "better men" were sent to the council in November. EP Hennock has noted examples of ratepayer protests in Leeds in the 1840's and 1860's. He said that the 'economists' were often made up of, or represented, shopkeepers or publicans who saw themselves as representatives of hard pressed ratepayers. Norman McCord, on the other hand, has argued that ratepayer protests could attract a wider range of people than local businessmen or the wealthy middle class because working class property owning was

¹⁰⁵Ibid, 11 Feb 1905

¹⁰⁶ Temple Patterson op cit Vol III pp.111-114

¹⁰⁷Southampton Times, 22 June 1901

¹⁰⁸E.P.Hennock, <u>Fit and Proper Persons</u>, <u>Ideal and Reality in Nineteenth</u> <u>Century Urban Government</u> (London 1973) pp.196, 210 and 315

The independent candidates supported by the ratepayer associations had some success in the municipal election in 1901 winning two seats against the Liberals in Nichols Town and Newtown. At the same time as pressure was coming from ratepayers to bring council spending under control, radicals like Philip Domoney were arguing that the Liberals needed a policy that would get the support of working people. He said that the party had been vying with the Tories for their support of imperialism. The Southampton Times wanted to see a definite municipal programme which all Liberals in the town could support but it was clear that the Liberal Party was being pulled in different directions with no clear idea of where it was going. 111

Tentative steps towards creating a progressive alliance were taken over a byelection in St. Mary's ward in September 1901. The by-election was caused by
the resignation of Dr. Lauder who became Medical Officer of Health for the
Borough in 1901. Some Liberals approached John Exten the former SDF
councillor for the ward about the prospect of becoming a candidate. Exten had
left the SDF probably because of its rejection of affiliation to the Labour
Representation Committee. Exten had won the respect of many during his time
on the council and it was understood he would consider running as a nonpolitical progressive candidate if the Liberals did not run a candidate. One of the
Liberals in St. Mary's who supported the idea of Exten's candidacy, Mr Bushrod,
noted that there had been bad feelings between Liberals and the socialists
although he believed they shared common ideas. This, he argued would be an
opportunity to change things. 112

Exten had the support of some prominent Liberals like James Lemon. However, there was some dissent. A correspondent signing himself 'Northam Liberal'

¹⁰⁹N.McCord, "Ratepayers and Social Policy" in P.Thame (ed) <u>The Origins of British Social Policy (</u>London 1978) p.23-4

¹¹⁰Southampton Times, 19 Oct 1901

¹¹¹<u>Ibid</u>, 10 Aug 1901 ¹¹²**Ibid**, 29 June 1901

wrote to the Southampton Times to complain that, as a socialist, Exten had fought the Liberal Party for years. Socialism and Liberalism were different and could not be subsumed into one another. Mr Bushrod replied saying," whatever Mr Exten may be labelled with, his vote would always be progressive". Another correspondent, 'Progressive Liberal' said Social Democrats had done good work holding outdoor meetings and getting people interested in local and national affairs. Also, more pragmatically, he argued such an arrangement as proposed would help to get the Tories out of St. Mary's ward. ¹¹³

The Liberal Councillor George Parker who had been elected for St. Mary's in 1899 was less sure about the arrangement and made a last minute attempt to find a Liberal candidate but failed. He did attend a joint meeting in support of Exten held a week before the election. It attracted Liberal councillors including James Lemon, Councillors Radford, Parker, Cheverton and Dench, the radical Philip Domoney and representatives of Labour and the trade unions including William Bonner, John Scullard and Delmar Bicker-Caarten. Exten spoke of his changed political fortunes and of the people who were now supporting him.

He won the by-election and said he was returned as an independent progressive and would not join the official Liberals but would work with others to form a progressive group irrespective of party politics.

Fig 3.13 <u>St. Mary's Ward By-Election</u> <u>September 1901</u>

| J EXTEN (IND) | | 346 |
|------------------|----------|-----|
| C G THOMAS (CON) | | 199 |
| | Maiority | 147 |

Exten's optimism about being able to reshape the mould of Borough Council politics was definitely misplaced. In 1900 a group of younger Liberal and Conservative councillors had attempted to change the way the council was

¹¹³<u>Ibid</u>, 6 July, 20 July and 13 July 1901

run and agreed to meet and discuss the agenda before council meeting. The group then often voted together. Describing it many years later Alderman Blakeway, a Conservative Councillor said it was not a 'party' but a mutual improvement society. This was ended a short time later when the Liberal Party executive instructed Liberal Councillors not to attend. 115

The prospects of developing the progressive alliance in St. Mary's were dashed at the municipal elections in November 1901 when there was a split between radical and official Liberals over support for Tommy Lewis who was standing as an independent with Trades Council support. He was, unlike Exten, a member of the SDF and some Liberals would not have supported him. However, a correspondent signing himself Radical argued that Lewis was a progressive in municipal affairs and therefore some Liberals would not work for the Liberal candidate. The result was a victory for Lewis and the Liberal candidate came bottom of the poll. At the same election Bicker-Caarten won a seat at Northam from the Liberals with support from the Trades Council.

Exten, having failed in his desire to forge a progressive bloc on the Council, did not contest the seat in St. Mary's when he came up for re-election in 1903.

Labour candidates continued to challenge the Liberals with some success. In 1902 George Parker was defeated by Mr Walter of the SDF. In the same year Henry Wilson defeated William Bonner of the ILP but only by the narrow margin of six votes. The following year Bonner won the seat by just over 60 votes defeating J T Bayford, who had been returned unopposed in 1900. In 1904 Lewis retained his seat in St. Mary's defeating a Conservative opponent. Bicker-Caarten did not stand again and the new candidate Mr Jeans, a member of the Shipwrights Union, lost to the Liberal by 41 votes. Northam was now becoming a Liberal/Labour marginal seat instead of a safe Liberal seat.

¹¹⁴Hampshire Advertiser, 4 May 1940

¹¹⁵ Temple Patterson, op cit Vol III p.106

¹¹⁶ Southampton Times, 12 Oct 1901 and 26 Oct 1901

Labour did particularly well in the 1905 Borough Council elections with candidates standing in five of the seven contested wards. They held St. Mary's against a challenge from H G Wilson for the Liberals and won Freemantle as well as coming close in Northam and Newtown. The result was particularly encouraging because Labour candidates polled just over 36% of the votes cast while the Liberals got just over 26% and the Conservatives around 38% (see Appendices 13A and 13B).

All hope of a rapprochement between the Liberals and Labour was ended by 1905 because the Liberals could not come to terms with a more assertive and confident local Labour movement. The Southampton Times declared, "The speeches made at the Liberal and at the Labour Club on Wednesday night show pretty clearly that there must be a final parting of the ways between the Liberal and Labour forces in the Borough. This is not due to the fact that Liberalism has lost touch with Labour and is not prepared to do all that is reasonable for all classes of the community so much as that the Labour movement in Southampton is governed by members of the Social Democratic federation who have declared war to the death on Liberalism". 117

The speeches made on election night were the result of Labour's desire for a parliamentary candidate. Lack of funds had prevented the Trades Council from affiliating to the Labour Representation Committee in 1901 but their intention to do so was clear. In March 1902 the secretary of the Trades Council wrote to Ramsay MacDonald about arrangements for a Labour demonstration on June 7th. He said,".... and on this occasion we desire to have the need of direct Labour representation forced home on the workers of the district". The majority of the Trades Council wanted to run a parliamentary candidate and throughout May 1903 correspondence went between the secretary, James Laing, and MacDonald, about suitable candidates for Southampton.

MacDonald suggested they consider Alexander Wilkie of the Shipwrights or AW Raynor of the General Union of Carpenters and Joiners as he thought both

¹¹⁷Ibid, 4 Nov 1905

¹¹⁸Archives of the British Labour Party. General Correspondence and Political records pt I. The LRC 1900-1906 (Harvester Microfilm 1978); LRC 3/354 Laing to MacDonald 19 April 1901; LRC App/81 Laing to MacDonald 20 March 1902. For the decision to affiliate see LRC 8/344 Laing to MacDonald 5 May 1903

At the same time the Trades Council was seeking a candidate, the Liberals were considering their situation. They were anxious about the potential strength of the Labour vote. The Southampton Times reported on a meeting of the Liberal Council at the beginning of May1903. "The feeling was expressed that if it was found impossible to put forward two candidates who would be likely to receive the support of the Liberal and Labour voters the Liberals should adopt one candidate only, leaving the Labour Party to put forward to the other. The suggestion seemed to be generally approved". 120

In a reversal of the situation in 1900, when the Liberals rejected the overtures of the ILP over a parliamentary candidate, the Southampton Liberals approached the Trades Council to discuss the matter. It suggests the Liberals felt they were in a weak position. On 20th May Laing wrote to MacDonald to report that the Liberals were seeking to come to some "tacit understanding" with the Trades Council over the matter. MacDonald replied on 21st May urging caution. "I am sorry that you have decided to accept the Liberal Association invitation as all that will come of it will be that they will insist upon your presenting a candidate of a special type and even if you desire to run such a candidate you ought to come to that conclusion without reference to their desires or conditions. So far as this committee is concerned it cannot accept the candidature of any man who is not run purely as a Labour candidate". ¹²¹

MacDonald was saying that the Trades Council could choose someone acceptable to the Liberals but they must do so independently and not at their behest. He was, of course, engaged in secret discussions at this time with Herbert Gladstone the Liberal Chief Whip about trying to secure the opportunity for around thirty LRC candidates to contest the next General Election without Liberal intervention in those seats. Southampton, as a two

¹¹⁹LRC LB2/22 MacDonald to Laing 18 May 1903

¹²⁰Southampton Times, 2 May 1903

¹²¹ LRC LB 2/50 MacDonald to Laing 21 May 1903

member Borough, was listed among those seats where an arrangement might be possible. However MacDonald was anxious to ensure that there was no appearance of any alliance, agreement or bargain that would compromise the independence of the LRC. He was also aware of the hostility which any acknowledged arrangement would provoke in some areas. 123

At the end of June 1903 Laing wrote to MacDonald, "The Liberal Hundred in their own interest and owing to our determination to run a man without any compromise decided to nominate only one candidate". Writing again at the beginning of July to reassure MacDonald that no deal had been struck Laing said, "No one on this council thinks that the action of the Liberals is caused by any desire to see a Labour Candidate in the field and we know perfectly well that if they thought they could do better with two candidates they would have them, but they are hoping that our people will record one vote in favour of the Liberals". 124

The potential candidates now before the Trades Council included, A Wilkie of the Shipwrights, Raynor, Ben Tilett, W Stevenson of the United Builders Labourers and Dr Stanton Coit a member of the ILP and founder of the Ethical Societies who was later adopted as parliamentary candidate for Wakefield. However Laing failed to mention in his letter of 11th July to MacDonald that he had written to Harry Quelch of the SDF inviting him to put forward his name as a candidate. Quelch replied that he would be willing for his name to go forward but he would have to consult the executive of the SDF first. He also confirmed the basis of his proposed candidacy. "If I were to be selected I should go forward definitely on the class issue as a socialist and trade unionist without any ambiguity." Confirmation that he would attend a meeting came in a letter of 15th July. ¹²⁵

MacDonald 11 July 1903

¹²²F.Bealey, "Negotiations between the Liberal Party and the Labour Representation Committee before the General Election of 1906" in <u>Bulletin of</u> the Institute of Historical Research Vol 29 1956 p.269

¹²³A.Morgan, <u>J. Ramsay MacDonald</u> (Manchester 1987) p.32 ¹²⁴LRC 9/396 Laing to MacDonald 30 June 1903, LRC 9/397 Laing to

¹²⁵Letters reprinted in <u>Justice</u>, 24 Oct 1903

Quelch had come to speak in Southampton on a number of occasions in 1895. He was also likely to know something of the situation in Southampton because Tommy Lewis was a provincial member of the SDF executive having been elected in 1895, serving until 1904. Although MacDonald insisted on independence in the selection of a candidate Quelch's own background and his determination to contest the seat was to create problems with the LRC and was unlikely to endear him to the Liberals. Quelch had led the argument that the SDF should withdraw from the LRC at the SDF conference in August 1901 and he favoured socialist unity rather than the Labour alliance. He had recently fought a by-election in Dewsbury in 1902 and his candidacy was divisive although he had some support form the ILP and trade union activists. 128

The selection meeting in Southampton was set for 10th August and a special committee had short listed Quelch and Dr. Stanton Coit. There was a move to include H G Wilson by delegates to the Trades Council but he refused to be bound by a mandate from a joint conference of the Trades Council, the local SDF and delegates from unattached trade unions who were to select a candidate. As a Liberal the condition would have been difficult for him to agree to since it might put him in conflict with his own party.

Around fifty delegates attended the selection meeting which was addressed by Quelch and Ben Tillett who had been invited after Dr Coit dropped out. Tillett was not really interested in a parliamentary seat and said as much while praising Quelch. After questions Quelch won the ballot by 44 votes to 4 with one spoilt paper and a few abstentions. The Trades Council then organised a joint meeting of trade union members and the local SDF to formally adopt his candidacy. The proposal was moved by Mr Trott of the Carpenters and Joiners and seconded by Mr Casburn of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers. Mr

¹²⁶Justice, 10 Aug 1895. W.Kendall, <u>The Revolutionary Movement in</u> Britain 1900-1921 (London 1969) Appendix 2 p.306

¹²⁷ J.Bellamy and J.Saville (eds) <u>Dictionary of Labour Biography Vol 8</u> (London 1987) p.201

¹²⁸M.Crick, op cit pp.139-140

¹²⁹Southampton Times, 8 Aug 1903

Boocock of the Shop Assistants Union moved an amendment opposing, arguing that the selection of a socialist would result in the progressive vote of non-unionists and non-socialist trade unionists being withheld. Mr Alvey another member of the Shop Assistants Union seconded but the amendment received only seven or eight votes and Quelch was adopted. 130

Problems soon emerged over Quelch's candidacy as he refused to sign the LRC constitution. Three months after Quelch's selection MacDonald's exasperation became evident in a letter he wrote to the Trades Council in December 1903. He said the Trades Council as an affiliated body must have been aware of the conditions under which the LRC supported candidates. He went on, "if any mistake has been made you are to blame but so far as my committee is concerned it has been decided that unless Mr Quelch signs the constitution it cannot put him on the list". 131

The decision of the Trades Council to adopt Quelch was certainly a sign of their independence from the Liberals. The connection with Lewis who was a member of the SDF executive, was likely to have been an influence in his selection. Quelch was a national figure and his presence in Southampton would be likely to bring resources in terms of money and the support from the SDF. His candidacy could also be considered a compliment to the local Labour movement and help to enhance his appeal. 132

The decision was also affected by national developments as a circular letter from the Trades Council inviting members to Quelch's endorsement meeting in September made clear. "The meeting is the outcome of the efforts made by this council to carry out the expressed wish of the workers of Southampton for direct Labour representation in Parliament. The necessity of such action is demonstrated by the recent legal decisions affecting Trade Unions and is rendered imperative if the working classes are to offer effective resistance to

¹³⁰Ibid, 5 Sept 1903

¹³¹LRC LB3/195 MacDonald to Laing 22 Dec 1903

¹³²Bill Lancaster makes a similar point in relation to MacDonald's adoption in Leicester. B.Lancaster, <u>op cit p.157</u>

the concentrated attacks made against them by the employing class. It is only by our votes and through legislative action that we can hope to maintain and improve the position we have already won in the industrial world". ¹³³

The attitude of the Liberals towards Quelch's candidacy was likely to have a crucial impact on the future of Liberal/Labour relations. Quelch set out his own position regarding the Liberals at his adoption meetings. ".... their attitude towards the Liberal Party must necessarily be determined by the attitude of the Liberal Party towards them. The position of a 'class party' must be one of independence and in the line they would take that adopted by the Irish Party might well, perhaps, be emulated". ¹³⁴

The Liberals had already selected one parliamentary candidate Captain Hobart in August 1903. He accepted the nomination on the basis that only one Liberal candidate would be selected and Labour would choose their own candidate. A move to select a second candidate came in December 1904. In a reversal of the situation that occurred in 1894, it was the Gladstone Club that proposed seeking a second Liberal candidate, after a discussion lasting one and a half hours. A unanimous resolution in favour was passed on the grounds that the Labour Party was advocating Socialism and this was incompatible with Liberalism.¹³⁵

This decision caused a split in the ranks of the Liberals and led to Hobart's resignation. He said he only agreed to stand on the assurance that there was a definite understanding between the Liberals and Labour. He believed Quelch had done nothing to prejudice his candidacy and he therefore resigned on 16th January 1905. The secretary of the Liberal Council A J Cheverton also resigned because he strongly disagreed with the decision to run two candidates.¹³⁶

¹³⁶<u>Ibid,</u> 21 Jan and 4 Feb 1905

¹³³LRC 10/405/2 circular letter 14 Aug 1903

¹³⁴Justice, 24 Oct 1903

¹³⁵ Southampton Times, 10 Dec 1904

The local Liberals clearly felt the danger that their supporters might not vote for Quelch and that a Tory candidate would be elected. They received little sympathy for their decision from the secretary of the Home Counties Liberal Federation. He wrote to Herbert Gladstone on 15th December 1904 about the situation. "The Southampton idiots put in the local Liberal paper (The Southampton Times) last Saturday an account of their passing a resolution in favour of a second Liberal candidate! Hobart has written to the Association to say he will not stand if they adhere to the resolution. He has written to the Southampton Timesto the same effect. He did this after a consultation with Ponsonby and myself yesterday". He went on, "The President, an ass named Sims, is at the bottom of this mischief". ¹³⁷

The Trades Council and the SDF continued to support Quelch but it contributed to the 'parting of the ways' between Liberals and Labour following the 1905 municipal elections. The optimism of the 1905 election from Labour was not fulfilled at the General Election as the result below shows.

| Fig 3.14 | <u>1906 Ger</u> | neral Election | | · |
|--------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------|--------|
| | | <u>PARTY</u> | PLUMPER VOTE | RESULT |
| PHILIPPS | | LIB | 92 | 7032 |
| WARD | | LIB | 31 | 6235 |
| CHAMBERLAYNE | | CON | 144 | 5754 |
| AIRD | | CON | 54 | 5535 |
| QUELCH | | SDF | 1155 | 2146 |
| | | | | |

Source – F.W.S. Craig British General Election Results 1885 – 1918 (Aldershot 1974).

The analysis of voting is not completely available but Craig says the local press reported cross voting between Phillips and Quelch to be over 600.

¹³⁷Herbert Gladstone Papers British Library Additional MSS 46024 Folio 174 WM Cook to H.Gladstone 15 Dec 1904

The Liberal candidates emphasised Free Trade, one man one vote and the extension of workmen's compensation to seamen and firemen. Also a trades disputes bill restoring the right to combine in a union without fear of damages and better housing for the working classes. Chamberlayne advocated some of the same measures including workmen's compensation, better housing and opposition to the employment of foreign seamen in British ships. Aird talked in vague terms of supporting measures for the benefit of the working classes.¹³⁸

Municipal and Parliamentary Politics 1906 - 1914

The election victory of 1906 marked a high point for Liberal fortunes and gave satisfaction to those who had argued for standing two parliamentary candidates. The national swing to the Liberals had undoubtedly been important but an issue such as Free Trade would have a particular resonance with the voters of a port like Southampton. The Liberals also did well at the November municipal election securing 49% of the vote with the Conservatives on 33%, Labour on 10% and Independents on 6%. In 1906 the Liberals had 20 seats on the Borough Council, the Conservatives 25, Labour 4 and Independents 3. By 1913 the Liberals had been reduced to 7 councillors with 29 Conservatives, 9 Labour and 6 Independents plus one independent Liberal.

The Liberals retained both seats at the General Election in 1910 but clearly they were under threat at municipal level. The president of the local Liberal Party, Mr E T Sims acknowledged this dichotomy at the annual meeting in 1913. He noted that in St. Mary's Ward they performed badly locally but they did well there at general elections. Poor organisation and the lack of a clear and coherent policy were two important reasons. A Liberal sympathiser writing in 1908 asked for signs that Liberal associations were active. There was no municipal programme for the forthcoming election. 140

¹⁴⁰Ibid, 29 Aug 1908

¹³⁸Temple Patterson, <u>op cit</u> pp.133-4

¹³⁹Southampton Times, 5 April 1913

The Gladstone Club which had played a prominent role in Liberal politics in the town was losing members, many of them younger ones. Membership fell from around 600 at the beginning of the century to about 400 in 1910.¹⁴¹

Commenting on the local elections in 1910, the Southampton Times noted the poor performance of the Liberals in Southampton. "That the Liberals in Southampton have not done better is due in a great measure to the lack of cohesion for municipal purposes in the party itself. They have a long furrow to plough before they can hope to get on even terms with their opponents. ... The Liberal Party stands for no selfish or sectional interests but for the good of the whole community but instead of forcing a general action on these grounds with a sound and convincing municipal policy they fritter away their strength, and allow reactionary hordes and vested interests to capture their outposts and defeat them in detail". 142 By 1912 the situation had not improved, the party was still 'in a bad way'. 143

The Liberal Party chose instead to make arrangements with the Conservatives to prevent Labour candidates from winning seats. This was effectively formalising the co-operation that operated administratively in the Borough Council. The lack of three way contests in Northam and St. Mary's meant Labour was not as successful as it might have been given the strength of the vote and the closeness of some of the contests.

The shift to a Liberal/Conservative alliance against Labour began around 1905. The Conservative candidate in Northam, Mr Rice, thanked all those who supported him " Not forgetting the Liberals who worked very hard". ¹⁴⁴ He defeated Mr E Jeans the Labour candidate by 18 votes. In 1909 the local daily paper reported, "in St. Mary's ward the sitting Liberal member had the assistance of several Tory colleagues on the Council and in Northam ward there were several Tory helpers in the Liberal cause, in opposition in both cases

¹⁴¹Ibid, 4 March 1911

¹⁴²Ibid, 5 Nov 1910 ¹⁴³Ibid, 9 Nov 1912

¹⁴⁴Woolston Independent 4 Nov 1905

to socialist candidates. The fight was keener in these two wards than elsewhere". ¹⁴⁵ In St. Mary's the Liberal candidate George Parker was opposed by Charles Parmiter for the SDF. In Northam William Bonner was opposed by Mr Humby for the Liberals. Parmiter lost by over 200 votes but Bonner won by 63.

The correspondent for the Southampton Times who compiled their columns, 'Workman's Topics' under the pseudonym Trade Unionist wrote about the situation in 1911. He acknowledged that there had been mutual support between official Liberals and Tories when a socialist or Labour man stood in Northam or St. Mary's. He argued that although it kept Labour out it had not helped the Liberals because it familiarised Liberals with voting Tory. Some advanced Liberals would vote Labour in protest at the compact but it was all to the detriment of the Liberals.¹⁴⁶

Sheppard and Halstead in their article on Labour's municipal performance between 1901 and 1913 note that the Labour press at the time claimed that Conservative/Liberal alliances against Labour existed in 32 boroughs. They suggest this may have been an underestimate and that such alliances may have been an important factor in checking Labour's progress between 1906 and 1910. Laybourn and Reynolds note the existence of such alliances in Bradford and Halifax and they said, "Faced with the municipal and local challenge of Labour, the Liberal organisations in West Yorkshire preferred where necessary to join the Tories in a local alliance against Labour rather than to offer a more progressive form of Liberalism. This was similar to the situation in Southampton where outside of wards where Labour threatened, normal party competition usually took place. Laybourn and Reynolds also point out that, despite the anti-Labour alliance, the Liberals still lost seats often to the

148 Laybourn and Reynolds op cit pp. 149-150

¹⁴⁵Southern Daily Echo, 1 Nov 1909

¹⁴⁶Southampton Times, 18 Nov 1911

¹⁴⁷M.G.Sheppard and J.L.Halstead, "Labours Municipal Election Performance in England and Wales 1901-1913" in <u>Bulletin of the Society for the Study of Labour History</u> no.39 (Autumn 1979) p.42

Conservatives. Again, as the figures quoted earlier for the composition of the council showed, the Liberals in Southampton were losing to Labour, Conservative and sometimes to Independents.

The evidence shows Liberal/Conservative co-operation against Labour was systematic and sustained and this can be seen as a precursor to the anti Labour pact that was established in Southampton in 1920 with the formation of the Independent Party.

The evidence of Liberal decline suggests that Duncan Tanner's view, that some understanding between progressive forces was attractive to either Liberals or Labour in Southampton, and that there were signs of a Liberal revival before the war, is misleading. There was no basis for a progressive understanding because the local Liberals had no municipal programme to provide a basis for such an understanding. The Liberal Party locally was largely unenthusiastic for their own party's agenda for social reform.

Gillian Bulmer who has studied the local response to the Liberal Welfare Reforms said, "The pattern had been for the two MPs to make enthusiastic responses to Liberal legislation only when it had already been passed by Parliament. They rarely speculated on possibilities for future reform. In this sense Philips and Ward seem to have been representative of the old school of Edwardian Liberalism". 150

The Liberals on the Borough Council were divided over the introduction of the Education (Provision of Meals) Act when it was debated in 1907 and 1909. Labour members of the Council voted for it and campaigned on the issue at elections and the Trades Council annual report highlighted the 'delightful inconsistency' of some Liberals. The proposal to adopt the Act was endorsed by the Liberal Association in May 1910. Bulmer suggests that the change of

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¹⁴⁹D.Tanner, <u>op cit</u> pp 191-193

¹⁵⁰ G. Bulmer, The Impact of Liberal Welfare Reforms in Southampton 1906-1914 (Univ of Southampton Unpublished MPhil 1984) p.226

¹⁵¹G. Bulmer op cit pp.28-9. Southern Daily Echo 1 Nov 1909. Annual Report of Southampton Trade and Labour Council, year ending 31st Dec 1907

heart may have been a response to those general elections and the desire to be seen to be taking a more 'progressive' stance. The matter was debated in the Council at the end of May and defeated again but it was referred to the Education Committee who voted in favour of adoption in June. The debate was complex and involved arguments over the adequacy of voluntary charities against a levy on the rates, the extent of child malnutrition and the role of the state against the provision of self help. The main concern of the opponents of those measures was that it would remove responsibility from men to provide enough food for their families. Labour members had no reservations about the need for the Act and believed it should be made compulsory. This was one example of the way Labour intervened in social politics in a way that challenged traditional Liberalism. This will be explored further in the next chapter by looking at the issues of unemployment and housing.

During this period Labour was beginning to develop the capacity to become a permanent political force in the town. The organisation was evolving beyond a purely trade union or Trades Council base. When Quelch stood as a parliamentary candidate, most of the trade unions in the town supported him but, as we have seen in Chapter Two, the level of union organisation was relatively low. Michael Savage had suggested in his study of Preston that in the interwar years the local Labour movement can be seen to fall into four basic types one of which was the move from a predominantly trade union base to one based on neighbourhood organisation. It appears that in Southampton this transition was beginning before the war. A Labour Club was established in the town in January 1904. It was intended to provide a "rallying ground and headquarters for all those interested in the increasing progress of the Labour movement". It had various benefit clubs and a regular Sunday evening lecture. Woolston also had a Labour Club and both continued social and political activity. Lectures at the Southampton club included, 'the Housing

¹⁵²G.Bulmer, <u>op cit</u> pp.46-7

¹⁵⁴M.Savage, <u>op cit</u> p.195

¹⁵³Annual Report of Southampton Trades and Labour Council, 1907

¹⁵⁵ Southampton Trades Council Annual Report for year ended 31 Dec 1904

Question', 'Direct Action versus Political Action' and a debate on the benefit of a universal minimum wage. 156

A number of local Labour representation committees were set up in the town: They were not just for election purposes but were more permanent although they did sometimes change their boundaries. They often covered more than one electoral ward. For example the Millbrook and Freemantle LRC which was running in 1910 was extended to take in Shirley in 1913 but became Shirley and Millbrook LRC in 1914. 157 There were areas of Labour expansion from 1911 to 1913. Labour won all three seats in Shirley in consecutive years and two in Millbrook. These areas were mixed class wards which had seen the expansion in their working class population. One of the occupational groups that had expanded into the suburb were seafarers. They had become better organised in the town under the guidance of key members of the local SDF including Tommy Lewis, W Kenward and Emily Palmer. 158 The breakaway from the NSFU and the setting up of the BSU have been outlined in Chapter Two. The new union represented a more radical and democratic form of trade unionism while at the same time being concerned with the welfare of its members. Valerie Burton said of its Journal, the British Seafarer, "Its articles were pitched at a sophisticated readership but were within the understanding of a workforce whose consciousness had been formed over a decade and more of attrition between themselves and the liner companies and whose sensibilities were heightened by their experience, however passive, of community politics". 159

Figures like Lewis were well regarded for their work for trade unionism as evidenced in a testimonial in the Cooks and Stewards Union Journal. Local loyalty to the new union and Lewis was enhanced by his advocacy on behalf of the seafarers and their families involved in the Titanic disaster. The union led

¹⁵⁷Ibid. 29 Oct 1910, 22 Feb 1913 and 28 Feb 1914

¹⁵⁶Southampton Times, 11 Jan 1913

¹⁵⁸Kenward was a teacher and Emily Palmer sat on the Board of Guardians. For biographical details see <u>The British Seafarer</u> Vol no. 7 July 1913 and Vol no. 3 March 1913

¹⁵⁹V.Burton op cit p.335

¹⁶⁰The Union Magazine Oct and Nov 1909

by Lewis represented the seamen demanding representation at the Public Enquiry, which was granted, and lobbying, less successfully for representation on the relief committees at local and national level. The Social Democratic Party sought to draw out the political lesson of the disaster. Justice carried a front page headlined, 'The Titanic a Sacrifice to Millionairedom'. It criticised the shipping company for putting a record crossing of the Atlantic before the safety of the crew and passengers.

Ralph Morley, a local member and teacher, was the author of a local publication on the disaster. Justice reported, "The White Star business has been too good to be missed. Out came Morley's finely written manifesto 'The Titanic, an epitome of society'. This has been delivered to almost every household in Southampton". There is no comment on this in the local press so it is difficult to judge how it was received but it does not seem to have produced any reaction against the SDP which could have been accused of using the disaster for political gain.

Although Labour was developing the ability to become a permanent political force in the town, they continued to have disagreements with the Executive of the Labour Party over the selection of a parliamentary candidate and this prevented them from standing candidates in both 1910 elections. Tommy Lewis had been selected by the local Social Democratic Party as their candidate and the SDP wrote to the Trades Council in May 1908. The Trades Council sent out a circular letter in June asking affiliated organisations for their views whilst stating that delegates present at the Trades Council were unanimously in favour. The replies were considered in October and of 26 replying, 18 were in favour 3 opposed and 5 neutral. One of the branches originally opposed, the No. 1 branch of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners, subsequently changed their position and decided to support Lewis in his candidacy. ¹⁶³

¹⁶²Justice, 27 April 1912 and 5 June 1912

¹⁶¹Southampton Times, 27 April, 4 May, 18 May and 1 June 1912

¹⁶³Southampton Times, 19 June 1909

The Executive of the Labour Party refused to sanction the candidacy and although the Trades Council resisted this initially they were forced to dissociate themselves from his candidacy or risk being disaffiliated from the Labour Party. ¹⁶⁴ The Party was not prepared to see one of its affiliates endorse and support the candidate of another party.

Despite the setback it is clear that, by 1914, Labour had begun to erode support for the Liberals in particular in wards like Northam and St. Mary's at municipal level. If parliamentary elections alone were considered the Liberals could be seen to be in a much healthier position than they actually were. The traditional Liberal support for Free Trade was clearly important in a port like Southampton and Liberal voters would have been motivated by the campaign against the House of Lords in the 1910; it can only be speculated how a Labour candidate would have performed and how the Liberals would have responded.

At municipal level, the Liberal Party through its co-operation with the Conservatives, lack of a distinct municipal programme and poor organisation was being sapped of its strength. Although Labour was not yet in a position to exercise decisive power, they had made a significant advance since 1900.

¹⁶⁴<u>Labour Party Executive Committee</u> 16 Feb 1909, 7 July 1909, 31 Aug 1909 and 8 Oct 1909

Chapter Four Unemployment, Housing and Labour Politics 1890 – 1914

The issues of unemployment and the provision of housing for the working classes came to political prominence during the 1880s and 1890s. Social investigators described and analysed these problems and the press helped to bring them to the attention of the public. Politicians in the established political parties had to meet the challenge of this new agenda of social politics and representatives of Labour were often prominent in advocating the cause of the unemployed or the poorly housed.

Unemployment and Labour Politics

In the 1880s there was growing concern about the problem of unemployment brought about by the trade depression. Attempts were made by social scientists to define unemployment and study the reasons for it but there were no reliable statistics about the numbers of unemployed and the nature of unemployment varied across the workforce. Although, increasingly, social reformers saw unemployment as a problem of a disorganised labour market it did not preclude the idea that some of the unemployed were in that situation through their own fault. Some were deemed unemployable and this covered everything from physical or mental deficiency to alleged drunkenness, thriftlessness or idleness. Suspicion fell particularly on casual or irregularly employed workers such as dock labourers. Harris says, ".... in much contemporary literature on the subject the lowest stratum of casual labour was seen as not merely inefficient or improvident but as a degenerate class doomed to obsolescence like some primitive tribe".

Support for public employment was embraced by Liberal, Conservative and

²<u>lbid</u> p.48

¹J.Harris, <u>Unemployment and Politics</u>. A Study in English Social Policy 1886 – 1914 (Oxford 1972) pp.7-8

Nationalist backbench MPs. This became clear in debates following the unemployment riots in London in 1886.

Despite the reluctance of the Government to recognise any responsibility, the President of the Board of Trade, Chamberlain, issued a circular to local authorities allowing and encouraging them to provide public employment at times of distress. The Chamberlain Circular as it became known was the basis for the provision of work for the unemployed until the Unemployed Workmen's Act of 1905. However the circular was intended to deal with the respectable artisan in temporary distress rather than the regularly unemployed casual or seasonal worker.

In Southampton, unemployment and underemployment was a regular feature of the lives of dock labourers and those engaged in ship repairing and in the building trade. The Borough Council was aware of the problem and radical Liberals such as Alfred Dyer and Thomas Payne urged pre-emptive action. In November 1892, they moved a resolution in the Borough Council calling for the Works Committee to be authorised to carry out maintenance of the highway and footpaths to provide work for those unemployed. One important condition was stipulated that the men employed had to have been resident in the town for not less than six months. This was to ensure that men were not encouraged to come to the town because such work had been provided. At the same meeting the Council agreed to engage unemployed painters and labourers for the job of cleaning and painting iron railings around the park. Painters were to be paid 6d per hour and labourers 4d per hour. Dyer and Payne wanted the painters pay increased by half a penny and proposed an amendment to that effect but it was defeated.³

Dyer and Payne were known for their support of trade unionists and their amendment proposed the trade union rate of pay. The Council's rejection of this brought a protest from the House Painters Union and they were supported

³Southampton Times, 14 Dec 1892

by the Gladstone Club and the local SDF branch.4

Although Dyer and Payne urged the Liberal controlled Council to prepare for winter unemployment and distress they appeared reluctant to act when the problem was severe and then there was a heavy reliance on charitable relief. The original decision to provide work for unemployed painters seems to have been rescinded in January 1893 in favour of a decision to tender a contract for the work in the normal way. Despite a letter to the press from an unemployed man and correspondence to the Mayor, a discussion in the Council in January on unemployment produced little action. The Mayor was reluctant to call a public meeting and merely asked members of the Council to inquire in their wards about the situation. A suggestion that charitable action was necessary was made by various members but the discussions produced no firm recommendations.

The situation was transformed by severe weather in the first half of February 1893 which significantly increased unemployment and distress. A Distress Committee was set up and soup was provided for the unemployed. A subscription fund raised £250 with the money being spent on food for the unemployed as well as coal, bread and groceries which were distributed via tickets given to the recipients.⁷

The apparent reluctance of the Council to act until distress became severe was compounded by the fact that, because of the nature of the port industries, unemployment was a 'fact of life'. Remedial action might only be considered necessary if some other circumstance like adverse weather made it worse. The problem did exercise the minds of Liberals and one prominent councillor Dr Aldridge suggested in the autumn of 1893 that a registry of the unemployed should be established. This did not however solve the problem of what the unemployed would do. In response in a letter to the Southampton Times

⁴Southampton Borough Council Minutes and Proceedings of Council and Committees 23rd November 1892 Southampton City Record and Office SC2/1/29

⁵<u>Ibid</u>, 11 January 1893

⁶Southern Echo, 11 Jan 1893

⁷Southampton Times, 16 Feb 1893

J W Chappell Secretary of the Seamens and Firemens Union argued for reducing the hours of labour. "When all the overtime in Southampton has been stopped, and still unemployed are left, begin to see if all necessary work is being done" This was a general demand of the Labour movement to deal with the problem of unemployment but it took no account of the possibility that existing workers, working less hours, could improve their productivity. By the late 1890s therefore the demand for limitation of hours was being argued for as a general improvement in conditions rather than a main remedy for unemployment.

The response of the local Labour movement to the problem of unemployment had been rather muted in the early 1890s but in 1895 it became more vigorous. The main reason was the activity of the SDF and ILP branches so there was a new political impetus around labour questions. Also nationally the issue of unemployment was more prominent. Keir Hardie had made his first major speech in Parliament in February 1893 calling for public provision for the unemployed. More local authorities were providing relief works in the early 1890's but this was often inadequate to deal with the situation. West Ham Council petitioned the Government in February 1895 calling for the State to take responsibility for relieving the unemployed. The government responded by setting up a select committee to examine the extent of distress through unemployment and the powers of local authorities to relieve distress.

The SDF had a novel way of highlighting the issue. At the beginning of 1895 John Exten wrote a letter to the Southampton Times announcing that a collection on behalf of the unemployed, organised by a joint committee of the SDF and ILP would take place outside places of worship on Sunday 10th February. As well as the collection a demonstration or 'church parade' as it was called, followed the Mayor and dignitaries of the corporation to a civic service singing 'the Marseillaise' and 'the starving poor of old England'. This was designed to embarrass the council members and with the collection at

^{8&}lt;u>Ibid</u>, 28 Oct 1893

⁹J.Harris, op cit pp.84-89

¹⁰Southampton Times, 9 Feb 1895

places of worship to neatly subvert the normal conventions of charitable giving to a political purpose. The collection raised £25 which was spent on provision for 300 'pressing cases' who each got three two pound loaves, two pounds of sugar and a quarter pound of tea and half a pound of butter.¹¹

A deputation called on the Mayor from the SDF claiming that at least 400 men were out of work requiring relief. The Mayor called a meeting to consider establishing a distress fund and explained that he was aware of problems in Northam but his own enquiries suggested there were not exceptional problems elsewhere. SDF and ILP members attended the public meeting called by the Mayor and pressed for the Council to spend £500 on relieving distress. The proposer John Scullard pointed out that the Council had voted a sum for the Mayor to spend on a recent Royal visit and so there was a precedent for such action. Scullard wanted it to be independent of any private subscription for a relief fund. Scullard was making the point that the Council had a duty to act in its own right and should not just rely on charity.

Predictably the Liberal leader of the Council James Lemon and Alderman Payne argued that using money from the rates would deter people from contributing to a private subscription. Lemon also argued that using money from the rates meant money would be coming from the poor when it ought to come from the wealthy. Tommy Lewis, secretary of the SDF branch, said, "What the workmen of the town wanted was work, not charity It was the duty of the public officials to provide work for the citizens who were out of employ (sic) not only this year on account the frost but every year". 12

This anticipated some of what was to become the Right to Work Bill proposed by Labour in July 1907. This proposed that each local authority would set up an unemployment committee and that body would have to provide work or maintenance for the registered unemployed.¹³

¹¹Justice, 16 Feb 1895

¹²Southern Echo, 16 Feb 1895

¹³K.D. Brown, <u>Labour and Unemployment 1900-1914</u> (Newton Abbott 1971) p.83

Scullard was persuaded to withdraw his proposal on the basis that it would require council approval and would delay the planning of relief. A large committee was proposed by Canon Durst including the Mayor and Corporation the Guardians and the School Board. A number of individuals were added plus seven working men representatives which included Lewis (SDF) Randolph (ILP), Arnfield (ILP) and Bonner (trade unionist). The decision to co-opt them had little practical effect because of the size of the committee and the delegation to the Mayor to grant relief in extreme cases meant that their influence was limited.

From 1896 to 1903 the issue of unemployment does not appear in the index to the minutes of the Borough Council and there was no significant reporting of unemployment and distress in the local press although the pattern of seasonal and casual employment continued. This reflected a national trend for K D Brown in his study of Labour and unemployment says, "Concern was high in the middle 1880s and early nineties, but by 1897 the economy was entering a period of boom and the ILP national executive reported to the Party Conference that there had been a 'cessation of public interest in the problem'". 14

The problem of unemployment and distress re-emerged as a focus for public debate particularly in the years 1903–5 and 1908–10. With the end of the South African War in 1902 the port was adapting to the reduction of military traffic and the return of commercial trade. Temple Patterson declared the winter of 1903-4 as among the worst for distress in Southampton. However the winter of 1904-5 was only a little better according to the Southampton Times and in April," it is reported that employment is moderate only and worse than a year ago". An anonymous report on poverty in the St. Mary's district of the town completed in 1905-6 highlighted the problem in the docks. "Dock labour is a constant source of distress. It attracts wastrels and is very intermittent. The whole system of engaging dock labour is thoroughly bad ... " The report concluded, " conditions of dock labour are demoralising the character of those who subsist by it. If it were not for the casual dock labour it would not be impossible to

¹⁴Ibid, p.19

¹⁵Southampton Times, 22 April 1905

During this period the issue of unemployment was consistently raised by Labour representatives on the Borough Council and on occasions they received some support from the Liberals. At the end of January 1903 Tommy Lewis moved a proposal that the Borough Engineer make arrangements for the park railings to be painted by directly employed labour. The proposal was seconded by the Liberal Henry Wilson. He said that workmen abhorred charity and providing work would be an appropriate way of helping those in distress. Other members were going to refer it to the public lands committee which would have caused a delay so another Liberal. Councillor Gayton, proposed it be put out to tender immediately and this was agreed. When the tender price came back higher than the Borough Engineer's estimate Lewis moved that he be asked to carry out the work at that cost by direct labour. This was rejected and fresh tenders invited.

This was an example of the reluctance of the Conservative majority in the Borough Council to employ direct labour. Some Liberal Councillors were also hostile and questioned the need for relief works. Mr Burford said "The rates were not paid (to) them to hand round to anybody who was hard up, but they were there as hard-headed business men". 19

Despite the opposition of a majority of councillors Labour could get some of its propositions passed. In November 1903 Lewis and his fellow ward Councillor Mr Walter moved a resolution calling on the government to bring in measures to deal with unemployment. Lewis had moved a similar proposal in March of that year but members of the council deliberately left making the meeting inquorate and preventing the resolution from being discussed. This time it was passed

¹⁶Report on Poverty in St. Mary's Southampton. Southampton City Record Office PR5/21/14

¹⁷Southampton Times, 31 Jan 1903

¹⁸<u>Ibid</u>, 14 Feb 1903

¹⁹Ibid, 31 Jan 1903

and sent to the President of the Local Government Board. For councillors concerned about the impact of dealing with unemployment on the rates the possibility of shifting the burden to central government was an attractive one.²⁰ Lewis also proposed a special committee to report on providing work for the unemployed and this was agreed.

A labour bureau was established and over 300 men were employed on a range of small scale relief works, painting lamp columns, railings and the outside of the municipal lodging house. Around £3,000 had been spent and Lewis and Walter's proposal to complete the artificial lake on the Common as relief work was heavily defeated. Even the Liberal Alderman Gayton who had been sympathetic toward relief work voted against because of the cost to the rates.²¹

With the aid of the SDF, the protests of the unemployed became more assertive. In December 1904 a deputation of 400 to 500 unemployed men went to the mayor and a smaller number attended the council meeting in November. The deputation couched its appeal for 'useful work' in terms of enabling workers to support themselves.²² Despite this, even the Southampton Times argued that unemployment was a universal problem and that, "there can be no doubt whatever that there are nearly always – and particularly during the winter months – many good and steady workmen out of employment but these are nothing compared with the incapables and wastrels who only work when they are forced".²³

By 1909 the Borough Council was requesting the various committees to identify small scale relief works for the winter. After 1910 the issue of unemployment was not debated by the Borough Council and there was little coverage in the local press. Although Labour representatives had some success in

²⁰Minutes & Proceeding of Council & Committees 25 Nov 1903 Southern Echo, 4 March 1903

Southampton Times, 13 Feb 1904

²²<u>Ibid</u>, 25 Nov 1905 ²³Ibid, 2 Dec 1905

persuading the council to adopt relief works there was always an underlying reluctance based on concern about the effect on the rates, and a suspicion that many of the unemployed were not genuine or deserving.

Although Liberals sometimes supported Labour proposals for relief, they rarely initiated any themselves. However, even for Labour the issue did not produce any dramatic electoral success. The years of campaigning through 1903/4 to 1910 produced a modest Labour performance. The impact of this activity around the issue of unemployment was possibly more long term, cementing Labour's reputation for defending worker's interests.

Although the Trades Council locally was active in supporting the campaign for the Right to Work Bill the issue did create frustration about the role of the Labour Party in Parliament. This surfaced over the issue of Victor Grayson's action in the House of Commons on behalf of the unemployed. Mr J Buckeridge of the Assurance Agents Society moved a resolution in support of Grayson at the Trades Council. The debate had members of the SDF on both sides of the argument and the motion was defeated by 16 votes to 9. Opposition was based in part on the notion that his action was counter productive.²⁴ The following month the Chairman of the Trades Council L S Jones put down a motion praising Keir Hardie's amendment to the government's proposal for dealing with unemployment tabled in October. He argued that the Labour Party in parliament should prevent other legislation from passing until the Right to Work Bill was passed. Direct action by the unemployed was a mistake because it would give the government the excuse to deal with them "with the bludgeon and the bayonet". Their role was to enforce the pledges of the Government or try to remove them from office. Some delegates were still unhappy about the action of the Parliamentary Labour Party and Reuben Taplin complained that they were becoming "too respectable" and urged they should block legislation and then 'stump the country'. At the end of the debate however the Trades Council carried Jones' proposal without dissent.²⁵

²⁴<u>Ibid</u>, 24 Oct 1908

²⁵Ibid, 21 Nov 1908

In Southampton, although unemployment was an important issue, it did not bring great political rewards for Labour. The nature of Southampton's economy meant that unemployment was a regular feature of many working men's lives, not just dock labourers, but carpenters, painters and bricklayers. Southampton was unlike Leicester or West Yorkshire where foreign competition and technological change brought unemployment to skilled and semi skilled workers who could normally expect fairly continuous employment and therefore provided a sharper focus for political agitation around the issue. ²⁶ The regularity of unemployment in the town bred a certain indifference among Liberal and Conservative councillors and they only felt the need to act when distress was considered exceptional. They could also fall back on the belief that although there might be some respectable working men unemployed many were undeserving. Even when accepting the need for relief, a paramount concern was for the effect on the rates.

Housing and Labour Politics 1890 - 1914

In November 1890 immediately after the municipal elections, a letter appeared in the Southampton Times from Delmar Bicker-Caarten who had unsuccessfully contested St. James ward. It recounted his experiences while campaigning for the election over the last two weeks. He wrote of the persistent poverty caused by shortage of work, money and food and argued that although some might blame the recent dock strike this only lasted a week and there had been plenty of work available clearing the backlog of cargo following the strike. The conditions he said were the accumulation of years of neglect. He ended the letter with a plea. "Will not some of our public men come forward to organise some means to relieve the distress? Will they not plead in the Corporation the cause of the people, and the right to live their lives under conditions that are at least decent and wholesome, and urge that we should follow the example of other towns and in the interests of the public health and morality of the whole town sweep the plague spots from our midst".²⁷

²⁷ Southampton Times, 8 Nov 1890

²⁶K. Laybourn and J. Reynolds, <u>op cit</u> pp.121-2 and B.Lancaster, <u>op cit</u> pp.163-165

Bicker-Caarten's letter had the derivative heading, "The Bitter Cry of Outcast Southampton". It echoed a pamphlet produced by Andrew Mearns, the Secretary of the London Congregational Union, in 1884 entitled 'The Bitter Cry of Outcast London'. Anthony Wohl argued that this pamphlet had a major impact at the time. "In its controlled indignation, passionate protest, and exact detail, Mearn's pamphlet could be rivalled only by the reports of the medical officers of health. Its portrayal of the widening gulf between rich and 'outcasts', its mixture of outraged Christian conscience and environmentalism, and lurid portrayal of sin and discomfort, neglect and despair made it one of the most effective pieces of Victorian reform literature". ²⁸

It was helped by the publicity it received from the Pall Mall Gazette and its editor W T Stead. There was also a new concern about social issues among the churches and a realisation that evangelism alone was not effective in many poor areas. Two prominent political figures, Joseph Chamberlain and Lord Salisbury, took an interest in working class housing. Chamberlain suggested in 1883 that housing reform would be the 'price' that propertied interests would have to pay to insure against more radical threats to their future. Salisbury advocated a Royal Commission to investigate the problem and this was reluctantly agreed by the Liberals.²⁹

The Salisbury Government passed the Housing of the Working Classes Act 1890 which consolidated existing legislation but also gave local councils the power to build. This was to be financed by borrowing from the Public Works Loan Board for approved schemes. The advocates of this part of the act envisaged schemes for the worst areas would be self-financing. The main problems identified by the Royal Commission had been overcrowding and high rents and it was not clear how the new act would reconcile the rehousing of those displaced at rents they could afford.

²⁹A.Wohl, <u>The Eternal Slum. Housing and Social Policy in London</u> (London 1977) pp.228-230 and 243-244

²⁸From the Introduction by A.Wohl to A.Mearns, <u>The Bitter Cry of Outcast London (Leicester University Press 1970)</u> p.18

³⁰S.Morton, "The 1890 Act and its aftermath in the era of model dwellings" in S.Lowe and D.Hughes (ed), <u>A New Century of Social Housing</u> (Leicester 1991) p.18

Following Bicker-Caarten's letter the problems of poor housing were debated in articles and letters in the Southampton Times. Some defended the role of the churches and their missionary work in the area, which Bicker-Caarten had said was almost absent. Others blamed Bicker-Caarten and 'other agitators' in the Dock Strike for causing the problem. It emerged from investigations by the Southampton Times that some of the property concerned was owned by the Corporation and the editorial demanded action from the Liberal controlled council. It is simply abominable that the Corporation, by example should encourage a state of things which it is manifestly their duty to remedy. The misery of the poor is largely due to the wretched character of their dwellings. Let us have a clearance of the slum, everywhere, and if it is true that some of the corporation property is among the worst in the town let it go first at any cost". 32

The concerns expressed in November and December prompted Edward Gayton a Liberal member for Bevois ward to propose that the Borough Surveyor and the Medical Officer of Health survey the number of dilapidated houses and tenements in the town and report to the Council.

Gayton's proposal was debated in January 1891 and one suggestion was that it should be referred to the Sanitary Committee. Another member Councillor Emmanuel (Conservative) was not happy at the report being published and sent to the full council claiming that it would harm the image of the town. "It was not desirable to advertise the existence of these slums in the town". The main reason was the fear that the report could highlight the links between the Corporation and those who leased property from it. The amendment to refer the matter to the Sanitary Committee was defeated by only one vote 12 to 11. The majority of Liberals voted against referral and in favour of the report coming to full council.

The report appeared in December 1893 having been delayed by, among other things the illness of the Borough Surveyor. It described the area covered

³²Ibid, 29 Nov 1890

³¹Southampton Times, 15 Nov 1890

and contained a detailed tabular appendix on the condition of individual properties which totalled 659 homes in 116 streets, alleys or courts and contained a population of 2,599. Given the difficulty of housing if large numbers of dwellings were cleared and the cost of large scale clearance, the report recommended concentrating on small areas and dealing with the Corporation property first.³³

The Council referred the Report to a joint committee of its Health and Works Committee but little action was taken until the autumn of 1894 when the death of a woman, Ellen Wren, in a lodging house in Simnel Street sparked renewed concern about the slum conditions in the town. The manner of her death, (she had died of suffocation and lay undiscovered in the attic of the property for some time before the landlord came across the body), produced a strong editorial in the Southampton Times demanding the building of municipal lodging houses. Within a few weeks there were moves to implement an improvement scheme under the 1890 Housing of the Working Classes Act. However Martin Doughty notes, "The history of events in 1894 prompts the inescapable conclusion that Southampton Corporation's adoption of a slum clearance scheme was at best grudging. The issue had been allowed to lie dormant for months, and it was only the public outcry over the Wren case which forced serious consideration of the report on Dilapidated Homes". 35

The Medical Officer of Health had already identified the worst area to be cleared, containing 128 homes and 898 people, but in order to reduce overcrowding they wanted to rehouse only 500 on the site. The area had a number of common lodging houses whose occupants could not afford expensive accommodation so any new development had to incorporate a lodging house provided by the council.

Between 1895 and 1897 delays in acquiring the land following approval

³³M.Doughty, <u>Dilapidated Housing and Housing Policy in Southampton</u> 1890 – 1914 (Southampton 1986) p.xiv

³⁴ Southampton Times, 22 Sept 1894

³⁵ M. Doughty, op cit p.xv

of the scheme increased costs significantly. James Lemon now in opposition argued that the municipal lodging house would be a drain on the rates. Further arguments continued into 1898 about cost and plans were revised to reduce the numbers rehoused again.³⁶

The second phase of rehousing included provision for two storey tenements. Again concern over costs led to delay and even Gayton, who had initiated the report into housing conditions now argued for delay and reconsideration of the scheme. He argued that the introduction of cheap trams had made provision of housing on sites in the centre of the town less important. The Doughty suggests that some members of the Council may have wanted to abandon the housing scheme altogether but the Local Government Board was overseeing the scheme and wanted them to fulfil their obligations to rehouse people from the cleared areas. By 1906 the Council had spent £77,652 on clearance and rehousing and a nominal surplus of £1,995 was turned into a deficit of £18,078 when interest and redemption charges on capital were included.

This prompted two independent councillors, McDonnell and Tebbutt to move at the Borough Council," that no further expenditure is necessary or advisable in connection with the Housing of the Working Classes Scheme in Southampton. It was passed by 33 votes to 7 with 5 abstentions. The majority of Liberals voted for the proposal but two Liberals Gayton and Evans voted along with 3 Labour and 2 Conservatives against it. Three Liberals Cheverton, Hutchens and Colonel Bance abstained.³⁹

The Liberals' failure to embrace housing improvements, with one or two exceptions, can be explained largely by their concern with the burden on the rates. As was noted in the last chapter, some Liberals sided with the ratepayer protests in the early 1900s, and the tentative steps towards a more progressive politics also quickly foundered for the lack of any coherent policies to base it on.

³⁶M.Doughty, op cit p.xx

³⁸ bid, p.xxii

³⁹Minutes and Proceeding of Council and Committees, 14 Nov 1906

Anthony Wohl has suggested that housing reform could appeal to those who feared revolution or felt a sense of guilt about the conditions of the poor or those whose horror of immorality and irreligion needed a focus. 40 However, none of these seemed to motivate the majority of Liberals to work more positively to tackle the poor housing conditions in the town. The Liberals in Southampton suffered a failure of imagination. The verdict of P J Waller on the Liberals in Liverpool, who failed to exploit the problems of slum housing against the Conservatives, might well also apply to the Southampton Liberals," the old Liberal concern for retrenchment clouded the new Liberal vision".41

In contrast Labour in Southampton sought to capitalise on the reluctance of the council to proceed swiftly with the second half of the rehousing scheme. Anthony Wohl suggested that the SDF never really took housing seriously as a political issue at a national level because it saw the problems of poor housing as a symptom of the economic system. Although Fred Knee, an SDF member was secretary of the Workmen's National Housing Council the SDF never officially supported the organisation. Instead, he says that local organisations and trades councils were more important in developing a strong commitment to housing reform in London. Paul Thompson suggests that the SDF's reputation on housing was based more on persistence than originality. 43

I want to suggest that this later judgement needs some modification in the light of the experience of Southampton. When two Labour representatives were elected to the Borough Council in 1901 they had the opportunity to witness the Council's handling of the housing issue. Labour sought to counter the argument that the scheme was a burden on the rates and they tried to mobilise support outside of the Labour movement for housing schemes.

⁴⁰A.Wohl, Introduction to A.Mearns, op cit, p.27

⁴¹P.J. Waller, <u>Democracy and Sectarianism</u>. A Political and Social History of <u>Liverpool 1868 – 1939</u> (Liverpool University Press 1981) p.233

⁴²A.Wohl, <u>The Eternal Slum</u> pp.331-2

⁴³P.Thompson, <u>Socialists Liberals and Labour: The Struggle for London</u> 1885-1914 (London 1967) p.128

The Trades Council report for 1906 claimed that the housing scheme amounted to less than a penny rate. They then went on to list the advantages, "no sane ratepayer will object to this when they recognise the beneficent results to the community. Good housing means more cleanliness, less disease, less vice and squalor". 44

The mechanism for developing the wider cross class and cross party support for housing schemes was the Southampton Housing Council formed in 1901. The exact origins of the organisation are not clear but it came out of a public meeting organised earlier but there appears to be no press reports of this. Among the committee members were two Liberal Councillors A J Cheverton and G W Dench and one Conservative Councillor J Radford. Among the Labour figures were Tommy Lewis, William Bonner, James Laing (Trades Council Secretary) and John Exten. The object of the Council was, "To induce the municipal authorities to provide good homes at cost rent". Councillor Radford was appointed Chairman and Tommy Lewis Secretary.

Mr C J Hair the architect of the council building scheme explained his proposals for rehousing people to the Housing Council then presented his proposals for the second stage of the rehousing scheme to the Borough Council. Letters of support came in at the same time from the Trades Council, a number of union branches and the Southampton Housing Council.⁴⁶

Labour was engaged in a co-ordinated response to show support for the scheme and put pressure on the Borough Council to act. Lewis wrote to the Trades Council in 1903 asking them to pass a resolution calling on the Council to erect dwellings in Simnel Street without delay.⁴⁷ The Housing Council took the initiative and contacted the Local Government Board about the delay

⁴⁵Southampton Times, 18 May 1901 and 22 June 1901

⁴⁴Annual Report Southampton Trades and Labour Council for the year ended 31st Dec 1906

⁴⁶See <u>Ibid</u>, 22 June 1901 and M.Doughty, <u>op cit</u> p.xxii and xxxv footnote 84 ⁴⁷Southampton Times, 7 Feb 1903

in the Housing Scheme and drew their attention to the fact that homes had been demolished some years ago and no replacement accommodation provided.⁴⁸

After the Borough Council had passed its resolution in 1906 calling a halt to further expenditure the Local Government Board (LGB) held an inquiry. The Council asked to be relieved of its responsibility for the remaining people displaced from Simnel Street. The Trades Council was represented at the inquiry by Lewis and Bonner and they successfully argued that there were insufficient working class houses in the town and the rents of those occupied were excessive. At the instigation of the LGB the Council then extended the municipal lodging house to meet the requirement to rehouse.⁴⁹

The Trades Council supported the Workmen's National Housing Council (WNHC) and its secretary Fred Knee came to speak on at least two occasions in 1908 and 1912, at a public meeting and a conference on housing both organised by the Trades Council. In 1910 the Trades Council passed a resolution calling on the Labour Party to promote fair rent courts which were part of a housing bill formulated by the WNHC. The proposer Reuben Taplin of the ASE from Woolston argued that wage increases were not keeping up with increased rents and if the property was improved as a result of a visit from a sanitary inspector the rent for tenants was often increased.⁵⁰

The problem of overcrowding and high rents provided a new impetus for the housing campaign. In his report for 1912 the Medical Officer of Health noted, "It is very evident that the financial condition of the labouring classes, even when in full work, will not allow them to pay the rents demanded. As a result custom appears to be that one tenant becomes responsible for the house and sub-lets to one or two others". He went on, "under the existing conditions the poorest have to share homes often worst type, and it is generally in these cases

⁴⁸M.Doughty, op cit p.xxv

⁴⁹Annual Report of Southampton Trades Council for the Year ended 31st Dec 1907. M.Doughty, op cit p.xxvi

⁵⁰Southampton Times, 4 June 1910

that the rents are excessive and the property controlled by the wrong sort of owner". 51

The Housing Council had lapsed sometime after 1907 and the Trades Council sought to revive it as a means of putting pressure on the Borough Council. Around 97 delegates representing around 50 trade unions attended a conference organised by the Trades Council. Also present were Dr. Lauder the Medical Officer of Health, Mr J Crowther Borough Surveyor and Councillor C J Hair architect of the first council housing scheme. From this a committee was established to form a new Housing Council. The aim of the new body was to collect and publish facts about the housing situation in the town but also to promote the building of new homes at rents affordable to the working classes. Doughty claims the pressure had some effect. "Serious consideration was given to these demands, and proposals for action under the Housing and Town Planning Act 1909 had advanced some way when war intervened in 1914". The Council was seeking approval for the use of land acquired at Hampton Park and Hollybrook but the government refused to sanction borrowing for public works. Serious consideration works.

Labour's response was not only to hold conferences and lobby the Council. At Woolston the ASE branch initiated a Tenants Protection Association to try to enforce fair rents. The discussion was around using trade union methods to regulate rents and it was argued that every one would have to agree on the rent that would be acceptable to pay if it was to succeed.

In Southampton the SDF worked constructively to create an alliance of trade unionists and sympathetic non-unionists to promote better housing. They mainly urged the Council to use its existing powers and did not adopt a more

⁵²Southampton Times, 20 April 1912

⁵³M.Doughty, op cit, p.xxix

⁵¹Annual report on the Health of Southampton for the Year 1912 (Southampton 1913) p.88

⁵⁴Annual Report on the Health of Southampton for the Year 1914 p.96

sophisticated policy such as in Glasgow where John Wheatley proposed using the surplus from the tramway operation to finance the construction of municipal cottages at cheap rents.⁵⁵ Although the Woolston ASE formed a tenants group, the Trades Council and the SDF do not appear to have tried to encourage more of them to develop. However, Labour representatives were the main advocates of housing reform and although they had limited success in practical terms they were able to use the issue to further differentiate themselves from the other political parties in the town.

Labour Politics 1890-1914

The preceding chapters have indicated that Labour was making progress before 1914. Although trade unionism in the town was relatively weak, by the late 1890's the majority of unions and their delegates affiliated to the Trades Council were prepared to support independent Labour candidates. Labour's period of most sustained advance at municipal level coincided with heightened industrial conflict in the period 1910-1913. One of the most significant features of this was the politicisation of seafarer's trade unionism through the activities of local socialists in revitalising the union and the conflict with Havelock Wilson over the control of union finances and the accountability of the union.

It is not however, suggested that this was the only reason for Labour's progress. As noted in Chapter Two, serious industrial conflict was not a feature of this period with the exception of the 1890 Dock Strike and the pre war industrial unrest affecting the whole country not just Southampton. The character of local Liberalism was also important. Throughout the period the Liberals were reluctant to concede anything to the proponents of Labour representation, whether they came from within or outside their own ranks. At municipal level it seems that the fear of alienating their middle class supporters was an important consideration. The culture of local municipal politics with cooperation between the two main political parties in administrating the town and a conception of local politics that seemed to eschew the representation of certain sectional

⁵⁵J.Smith "Taking the leadership of the Labour Movement: The ILP in Glasgow 1906-1914" in A McKinlay and R.J.Morris (ed), <u>The ILP on Clydeside</u> 1893-1932 (Manchester 1991) pp.72-3

interests reinforced this. The Liberals made only a half-hearted attempt at establishing a progressive alliance which quickly dissolved. Their decision in 1905 to work with the Conservatives against Labour ended any real prospect of a rapprochement between the Liberals and Labour. The lack of any distinctive municipal programme left them open to attack from Labour on the issues of unemployment and housing. Labour was able to mobilise pressure on both issues and this drove the Liberals further into the acceptance of a Conservative political agenda locally. The slow progress in housing schemes and the concerns to protect the rates allowed Labour to appeal to more radical and socially conscious Liberals and to portray the issue as one of concern for the town as a whole and not just the working classes, although they might ultimately be the beneficiaries.

The elements of a class-based politics had begun to emerge in the sense of McKibbins' trade union based intense class loyalty and it had deeper roots in areas like Northam and St. Mary's than in other parts of the town, but as has been noted above, Labour did not seek to rely on that alone for they tried to gain support by appealing to radical Liberal sentiment on a range of issues from housing to the feeding of school children.

Chapter Five

The First World War and Labour Politics 1914 – 1918

The Trades Council annual report for 1914 proclaimed that, "Southampton has the largest Labour representation upon local governing bodies of any town in the South of England, and it may be reasonably asserted that this is the result of the activities of the Trades Council". There was some justification for this assessment as Labour had 14 elected representatives, 8 Borough Councillors in Southampton, 5 Members of the Board of Guardians and one member of the Itchen Urban District Council. The Trades Council had played a major role in this but Labour's political progress had been shaped also by the SDF/BSP through prominent local figures like Tommy Lewis and Ralph Morley.

In 1914 the Trades and Labour Council were keen to have Tommy Lewis as their parliamentary candidate. However his involvement in the formation of the British Seafarers Union, which was not recognised by the Trades Union Congress, and his membership of the British Socialist Party meant that the Labour Party would not endorse his candidacy. The BSP applied for affiliation to the Labour Party in 1914 and their application was accepted in 1916. Lewis' name was put forward as their candidate for Southampton at the time the Party applied for affiliation and the Labour Party agreed to accept all those proposed as official candidates. This solved the problem that had effectively prevented Lewis standing as a Labour Candidate for the 1910 election.²

By 1914 Labour had gained an important foothold but were still unable to make a significant impact on the Conservative majority on the Council. To do this

¹Southampton Times, 24 April 1915

²R.McKibbin, op cit p.75. The BSP applied in June 1914 but no conference was held in 1915 so consideration was delayed until 1916. See also <u>Labour Party Executive Committee Minutes</u> 24 and 19 July 1914, 8 & 21 April and 30 June 1914 and organising and electoral subcommittee 29 June 1914

they would need to consolidate their position in working class wards and maintain their gains in the suburbs in the mixed class wards and extend them.

The declaration of war in 1914 and the course of the war had a significant impact on the political landscape of the country. Most consideration has been given by historians to its impact on the Labour and Liberal parties but there is disagreement over the extent and nature of that impact. Laybourn and Reynolds argue that Labour had made substantial progress in West Yorkshire before the war and that the war accelerated the process by which Liberal support was eroded. Although Labour was divided by the war they say, "Labour's political resilience, on the other hand, appears to have resulted from the inexorable growth of its working class support. Conversely Liberalism's loss of working class support, rather than conflict among leading Liberals was the fundamental difficulty which it faced".³

McKibbin questions how it would be possible to show that the war modified working class life and political attitudes and he only makes brief reference to the impact of the war in his study of the development of Labour politics from 1910 to 1924.⁴ He went further in 1976 arguing that the extension of the franchise in 1918 had more significance for the political development of Labour than the War.⁵

Julia Bush in her study of East London politics insisted on the importance of studying not just election results and the extension of the franchise but the continuities and changes of politics in the wartime period. "Only detailed evidence of the ways in which wartime politics involved both party activists and potential voters can provide a suitable basis for analysing the war's political

³Laybourn and Reynolds, op cit p.179

⁴R.McKibbin, op cit p.xiv

⁵R.McKibbin, C.Matthew and J.Kay, "The Franchise Factor in the Rise of the Labour Party" reprinted in R.McKibbin, <u>The Ideologies of Class. Social</u> Relations in Britain 1880-1950. (Oxford 1991) pp.66-100

impact and its contribution to the Labour Party's rise to power".6

Trevor Wilson in his study of the decline of the Liberal Party emphasised the importance of the war in that decline. He argued that the Liberals were never able to reconcile their central beliefs with the need to fight a modern industrialised war. For example, Asquith opposed conscription but acquiesced in its introduction in stages angering both those in the Liberal Party who opposed its introduction and those in the Party who saw it as an urgent necessity for the successful prosecution of the war. Labour was able to seize the opportunity provided by Liberal division. "The impact of the war on the nation's economy so increased the importance of trade unions and so stimulated their political consciousness, that it correspondingly enhanced the position of the Labour Party which had all along derived much of its limited importance form its association with organised Labour".⁷

Given the different interpretations of the impact of the war it is important to examine how the Labour movement responded in Southampton. How seriously divided was Labour over the war? How did they react to Labour's role nationally? Was the protection of working class interests a unifying factor in the Labour movement? This has to be seen in the context of the response of the Liberal Party too. Did they suffer serious divisions locally over the war? Did their organisation suffer as a result of the war?

Labour and the War 1914-18

Around the country, some within the Labour movement took a strongly anti-war stance. In Southampton the British Socialist Party and the Shirley and Millbrook Labour Representation Committee proposed that a protest demonstration should be held about the war. They asked the Trades Council for support but they rejected it. Even the BSP locally was divided. Ralph Morley, who was a member, argued at the Trades Council that it was not in the interests of the working class to allow Germany to dominate Europe.

⁶J.Bush, <u>Behind the Lines. East London Labour 1914-1919</u>. (London 1984) p.xxi

T.Wilson, op cit p.29

He argued that the cause of socialism was linked to that of the nation.8

Contrasting attitudes were expressed by two unions representing seafarers in Southampton, the British Seafarers Union and the Cooks and Stewards Union. The BSU through its journal expressed a sceptical but pragmatic view of the war. They argued that it could not be stopped now and the only thing to do was to press for the national organisation of the industries of the country to bring the war to an end as quickly as possible. It was not a people's war. "The workers of England, Germany, France, Austria and Russia have no quarrel with each other. It is a war of the ruling classes of Europe but unfortunately the men and munitions have to be provided by the workers. It will not be a short sharp war as some seem to imagine and the toll to be paid will be appalling". 9

The final sentence was prophetic and contrasted with the 'patriotic' tone of the Cooks and Stewards journal, The Marine Caterer. Their editorial in September 1914 said, "It is agreed that England is fighting along with plucky little Belgium and France for their very existence as nations. The role of the Kaiser must be bought to an end. This war must be the last in Europe. The outcome must be an alliance between France, England, Germany and Russia so that the peace of Europe will be secure for all time". 10 There was a hint of idealism in this statement in the idea that the combatant countries could be brought into an alliance. A similar idealism informed the view that working class action could prevent a war involving the working classes of European nations. This idealism was unfounded. By November the tone of the Marine Caterer had become more aggressive. "Plucky little Belgium is devastated. People are refugees in England and Holland or any countries where they can get protection. Homes ruined, many separated from their loved ones, perhaps never to see them again. And this is the Kaiser's ambition. Never since the world began has any individual had so many curses heaped upon his head. This demon in human form has set Europe on fire - we all hope that he will be among the many who will be consumed in the flames he has kindled and, along with his ilk, removed

⁸A Temple Patterson, <u>op cit</u> p.142

⁹British Seafarer, Sept 1914 ¹⁰The Marine Caterer, Sept 1914

The differences of opinion were reflected in the Trades Council with pacifists who opposed the war represented and also delegates who supported a strong patriotic stance. The bulk of members of the council were equivocal about the war but the organisation often adopted a critical and sceptical attitude towards the war. ILP members such as Fred Perriman and Len Brighton, who was a Trades Council delegate, took a leading role in protesting about conscription and defending conscientious objectors. James Laing, the long standing secretary of the Trades Council, and an employee of the Ordnance Survey was chairman of the local branch of the National Socialist Party. This organisation had been set up by H M Hyndman and his supporters who walked out of the BSP Conference in 1916 when they lost out to those supporting peace and internationalism. Other delegates who regularly espoused a patriotic line were Mr Chisham of the Painters, Mr Baldock of the Drillers Society and Mr Ledger of the ASE.

Two of the most controversial issues facing Labour were conscription and conscientious objection. In 1916 the Trades Council received a copy of a resolution from Birmingham Trades Council protesting at the Conscription Bill and they unanimously passed their own resolution of protest. When the Southampton and District Council Against Conscription wrote to the Trades Council about a raid on the organisation's head office by police, the council passed a resolution expressing disapproval of this "suppression of constitutional liberty". Tommy Lewis identified himself with the campaign against conscription chairing a no conscription conference involving around 60 delegates in May 1916. One of the concerns of those opposed to conscription was that it would open the way to industrial conscription, and there was also

¹¹Ibid, Nov 1914

¹²Southampton Times, 16 Dec 1916

¹³J.Bush, op cit pp.70-71

¹⁴Southampton Times, 15 Jan 1916

¹⁵Ibid, 24 June 1916

¹⁶<u>Ibid</u>, 27 May 1916

concern about individual liberty and conscience against the power of the state. However, it was possible to argue an alternative view from a position of trade union solidarity and democracy, that participation in the war was required. L S Jones a member of the Bricklayers Society joined the Royal Engineers and gave his reasons to the Trades Council. "I believe it is just as much the duty of every man to take his part in the national defence as it is for every man to be a loyal member of his union and take part in its struggle even when he is not altogether in agreement with the decision of the body of members". ¹⁷

One of the leading campaigners in support of conscientious objection was Len Brighton. He resigned from the Trades Council as a delegate for his union (which was not named), "....because his views on current topics were not in accord with members of his branch". 18 The following week he wrote to the Southampton Times about socialists being turned down by the military tribunals as conscientious objectors. "In Southampton as in other towns, men have been turned down because they are socialists, it is held, I suppose, that such a gueer creature as a socialist could not possibly possess such a thing as a conscience. I seek nothing but help to remove if I can, some of the criminal bitterness which has been shown towards certain people who have chosen a most difficult path in order that they may adhere to principles that are the heritage of the ages". 19 Toward the end of April 1916 he wrote to the Trades Council about the treatment of conscientious objectors and the Council agreed to pass a resolution of protest. Two delegates spoke against, one complaining that no young man should object to helping his country to win the war and Mr Baldock said more sympathy should be reserved for those killed in action. 20 The issue still caused friction when the war was officially over in December 1918. Councillor William Bonner protested that the secretary of the Trades Council James Laing had refused to send a letter of fraternal greetings to a conscientious trade union objector, the Council already having agreed to send a message to all former delegates serving in the armed forces. Laing responded

¹⁷Ibid, 25 Dec 1915

¹⁸<u>Ibid</u>, 1 April 1916

¹⁹<u>Ibid</u>, 8 April 1916 ²⁰lbid, 29 April 1916

that he did not believe in the conscientious objector. Lewis seeing the potential for a divisive row, and knowing of Laing's long service to the Trades Council, defended his right to hold that point of view.²¹

The potential for a serious split in the Labour Movement was there but never manifested itself because the different elements of the Trades and Labour Council could unite around issues affecting the welfare and material interests of the working class. Julia Bush has shown how pro and anti war Labour representatives combined to defend workers' interests over war bonuses for municipal employees, high food prices and unemployment caused by the war in the East End of London.²² In Southampton the Trades Council took up the problem of high food prices in January and February 1915 supporting resolutions demanding the fixing of prices and the government control of supplies. At a conference on food prices held in Portsmouth in March 1915 Ralph Morley, who supported the war, urged that workers should take industrial action if the government failed to take strong measures to deal with the problem. Mr Chisham another strong supporter of the war defended the engineers who were on strike on the Clyde from the charge of being unpatriotic. He argued that their action showed the Government what would happen if they did not act on working class grievances. 23

The Trades Council supported the War Emergency Workers National Committee giving financial support when it could, exchanging information with them and taking part in campaigns. In March 1915 they sent one guinea as a donation and Laing the Secretary wrote to J J Middleton Secretary of the WEWNC, "Our members are all conscious of the very good work your committee are doing and regret that it is not possible to vote a larger sum". 24 The Trades Council held a special meeting in July 1915 to hear Mr Egerton Wake speak about the aims and policy of the Union of Democratic Control. This organisation was formed in 1914 and brought together Liberals and

²¹Ibid, 7 Dec 1918

²²J.Bush, <u>op cit</u> pp.54-55

²³Southampton Times, 6 Feb 1915, 6 March 1915 and 16 June 1915 ²⁴Letter from J.Laing to J.J.Middleton 1 March 1915 WNC 19/2/18

socialists, including Ramsay MacDonald who wanted democratic control of foreign policy and the establishment of an international body that would secure a lasting peace. The Trades Council agreed to consider affiliation but it is not clear that they actually did this. A branch was established in the town but no Trades Council members were listed as officials of the organisation. The impact of the UDC locally appears to have been limited and only a few reports of the organisation's meetings appeared in the Southampton Times. ²⁶

While there are a number of examples that show Labour united around issues affecting the material interests and welfare of the working class, there is disagreement about how far this can be interpreted as a decisive shift toward class politics. A lot of debate about the impact of workplace relations and the development of class politics had centred on the experience of Glasgow and the shop stewards movement. James Hinton's study saw the struggle against dilution of skill and the development of shop stewards organisations as part of a radicalising process that posed an alternative to existing Labour politics. Iain Maclean and Alistair Reid have argued that the resistance to dilution and other government policies to promote the war effort was based on a conservative defence of craft practices.²⁷ Reid argued that the fact government was prepared to grant concessions to Labour helped produce a more favourable response to state intervention among unions, and this in turn helped the appeal of the Labour Party which favoured greater state intervention in its programme.²⁸

Tony Adams suggests that the experience of state intervention during the war was not considered so favourably by working people as Reid suggests.²⁹ It is clear from numerous local examples that the Treasury Agreement in 1915,

²⁵D.Marquand, op cit p.183

 ²⁶Southampton Times, 3 July 1915, 18 Dec 1915 and 25 March 1916
 ²⁷J.Melling, "Work Culture and Politics on 'Red Clydeside'; the ILP during the first World War" in A.McKinlay and R.J.Morris (ed) op cit pp.84-89
 ²⁸Ibid, p.87

²⁹T.Adams, "Labour and the First World War: Economy Politics and the Erosion of Local Peculiarity?". In <u>Journal of Regional and Local Studies X</u> (1990) p.30

between union leaders and the government agreeing to compulsory arbitration and the relaxation of trade practices was not always accepted at local level. This agreement came after the strike of engineering workers on the Clyde in 1915 when union leaders were summoned by the government to discuss industrial relations. The agreement was given legal status by the Munitions of War Act.³⁰

There were collective and individual acts of defiance against the wartime system of industrial control. In Southampton in 1915, 1,700 men employed at Thorneycroft's shipyard went on unofficial strike for a week over the importation of men released from the services to carry out work in the yard. They were not union members and the existing union men refused to work with them. The union managed to reassert its authority and instructed the men to return to work which they did.³¹ The men involved were later fined for their actions by a Munitions Tribunal.³²

There were numerous acts of individual defiance of the system. A fitter from the shipyards in Southampton was fined by the Munitions Tribunal for poor timekeeping. He claimed that the lack of time off and the long hours were the reason for this. At the tribunal he argued, "when you are working Friday night, Sundays and nights in the week a day off does a man a bit of good". The unions had their own system of discipline and this was often the first recourse to action over bad time keeping. In one reported case the union committee had already dealt with a man's case before it reached the Tribunal. His employer described him as,"an exceptionally good workman when the firm could get him to stick at it". In order to reinforce the lesson, he was fined by the Tribunal.

The growth in trade union membership and power that occurred during the war

³⁰H.A Clegg, op cit pp.118-121

³¹Hansard Parliamentary Debates, 28 Sept 1915

³² Southampton Times, 20 Oct 1915

³³lbid, 28 Sept 1915 ³⁴lbid, 10 June 1916

gave opportunities to press demands for wage increases. The shipbuilding and engineering trades sought increases for time rates and piece work in the spring of 1915. Although they did not achieve all of their demands they got most of what they wanted and the labourers were recognised by the employers for the first time in a joint claim.³⁵ A further claim was pursued in 1916 and this was referred to the Chief Industrial Commissioner and then rejected by the Governments' Committee on Production. A mass meeting of the men in June instructed their executive to get this decision reversed by any means and by October the employers began to concede further increases in wages.³⁶

Unofficial stoppages of work occurred in the docks among labourers over pay issues and they secured increases. In 1917 an arbitrator awarded a 7.5% increase to quaymen and stevedores employed in the docks. The new rates were nine pence half penny per hour for stevedores (six pence halfpenny before the war) and eight pence halfpenny for quaymen (five and a half pence before the war). Men were able to gain concessions that would have been considered impossible before the war. Coal Porters working for Messrs Rea and Company complained about the lack of regular work and following negotiations between the Admiralty, the Company and the Dockers Union, secured an agreement for a guaranteed minimum for men who reported regularly at the call stands and work was not available. The local paper stated "....the concessions to the coal porters marks a new departure in this class of business ... so far as this district is concerned". **38**

The British Seafarers Union campaigned consistently over the issues of insurance for seafarers and compensation for them and their families if their ship was sunk. Wage levels and concern over the introduction of foreign seamen were the other main issues dealt with. More than any other union in the town they sought to draw wider political lessons from the issues raised by the war. So for example they commented critically on the Government's action against workers on the Clyde in 1916. "The action of the government with

³⁸<u>Ibid</u>, 19 July 1915

³⁵lbid, 20 March 1915

³⁶Ibid, 24 June 1916

³⁷Ibid, 19 June 1915 and 19 May 1917

regard to the Clyde workers is a pretty sure sign of what is likely to happen when workers get to close grips with the master class. When the real fight comes they will give no quarter, and the workers should take to heart the lesson that is being given to them today. They must thoroughly organise themselves in their trade unions, and also politically as well. Glasgow at any rate ought to have learnt the lesson and at the next general election they should know what to do". 39

This was an explicit reference to the need for Labour to have independent representation and was reinforcing the sense of separateness and class awareness. Bernard Waites in his study of english society from 1914 – 18 pointed out that class awareness was often expressed in terms of a 'them' and 'us' dichotomy. 'They' could be profiteers, those in authority trying to impose their will on workers or anyone avoiding the burdens of war. It did not always imply an acceptance of a class-based society but it could become the focus for class conflict. An example from Southampton was the reaction to the government's attempts to limit the sale of alcohol. At the Trades Council Len Brighton called it a class measure "It was to be class prohibition and it was the thin end of the wedge to secure control of the workers during after work hours". He argued that it would not affect employers or people who could afford to have alcohol at home and people with money who had wine cellars. The resolution of protest was passed with only one dissenter. An example from Southampton was the class.

Labour's sense of class awareness could be reinforced by the reaction of other political and social groups to Labour demands. Labour's criticism and scepticism about the war had its impact on the attitude of the other two political parties particularly when the issue of Labour representation on Military Tribunals arose. The local Tribunals were set up under the Military Service Act to hear cases for exemption from military service. They were required to have Labour representatives but a long running argument developed in Southampton over who those representatives should be. The tribunal consisted of 15

³⁹British Seafarer, May 1916

⁴¹Southampton Times, 3 April 1915

⁴⁰B.Waites, <u>A Class Society at War England 1914-1918</u> (Leamington Spa 1987) p.224

nominations the Labour group asked for 5 members but after a vote they were allocated 3. The argument was fuelled by one of the Conservative members of the Borough Council who said that they should be careful to choose the right sort of Labour representative, implying that they had to be supporters of the war. Tommy Lewis and William Bonner were nominated by the Labour group but rejected by the Council whereupon the Group announced they would withdraw from the meeting as their nominees had been vetoed. The Council hurriedly appointed Labour councillors Richards and Stancomb in their absence and H G Wilson, who was not a Councillor, as the third Labour representative. The Labour Group demanded the right to choose its own nominees and Richards and Stancomb refused to accept their appointments and resigned. Stancomb was a supporter of the war and had attended recruiting meetings but he did not let this override the main issue. The Borough Council then appointed two other trade unionists considered reliable and patriotic to the vacant posts, Mr Chisham of the painters and Mr Gladdis of the shipwrights. The Southampton Times was critical of the action of the Borough Council over the appointment of Labour members. Having quoted sections of the relevant local government circular they went on, "the interpretation placed upon some of the extracts from the circular as given above with the object of barring certain members of the Labour Party in the Council from election to the new body is not justified in our opinion by the circumstances in support of it". 42 The opinions of individual unions differed on this matter but the Trades Council as a whole were not prepared to accept that they had been ignored by the Borough Council. The shipwrights and ship constructors were prepared to accept Wilson who was one of their members, as a representative and they wrote to the Borough Council confirming this. The Painters however were not prepared to accept Mr Chisham, and Mr Dene secretary of the central branch informed the Borough Council supported by letters from Southampton East and Woolston branches. However he appears to have continued as a member and left the Painters Union.⁴³

members and when the matter came before the Borough Council to decide

⁴³Southampton Times, 24 June 1916

⁴²<u>Ibid</u>, 12 Feb 1916 see also 4 March, 25 March and 22 April 1916. County Borough of Southampton Minutes and Proceedings of Council and Committees 1916-17, 8 March 1916

In Bristol, patriotic Labour figures were appointed to the local tribunal but there does not seem to have been the same argument about Labour's right to appoint their own nominees. In Poplar, Bethnal Green and Shoreditch there was some conflict with Labour over the Borough Council's refusal to accept Labour nominees who were not regarded as wholly patriotic. In Shoreditch the Council initially tried to exclude Labour representation altogether.⁴⁴

The struggle to get representation on the military tribunal provided an emotive focus for Labour and broadly helped to unite the local Labour movement. However this should not obscure the fact that Labour had representatives on a range of bodies which had not entailed such a struggle. Labour representatives served on the Food Control Committee, War Pensions, Local Employment and Profiteering Act Committees. A number of trade union representatives sat on the munitions tribunals. By the end of the war Labour representatives were able to have much greater influence than they had before.

Labour was able to remain united despite differences in its ranks over conscription and conscientious objection because the fundamental issues of working class welfare helped to create class unity. Labour united around a sense of identity and independence that transcended differences about the war.

Although Labour was keen to take up opportunities locally to participate in administration the Trades Council was critical of the parliamentary party's participation in the coalition government in 1915. A resolution was debated opposing the decision of Labour MPs to join and supported by a narrow margin of 12 votes to 11. Supporters of the war such as Chisham argued Labour's inclusion was a victory for the Party. Mr Ledger of the ASE could see no difference between Labour taking up positions of responsibility locally and Labour joining the Cabinet and he quoted the example of Tommy Lewis being appointed Chairman of the Board of Guardians. The BSU saw it quite differently. "The presence of these gentlemen in the cabinet will do a great deal to stave off very necessary criticism of the government's action. No doubt this

⁴⁴R.Whitfield, <u>The Labour Movement in Bristol 1910-1939</u> (unpublished PhD University of Bristol 1979) p.134. J.Bush, <u>op cit pp.58-60</u>

was the idea of the wily statesmen when they admitted Labour into the sacred ranks". 45

When Henderson was forced to resign after his visit to Russia in May 1917, because of his support for a united socialist conference in Stockholm, local reaction was very supportive of him. Harry Vincent of the railwaymen moved a resolution at the Trades Council that Labour members of the Government should resign (other members of the coalition had not followed Henderson). Although the full vote was not recorded apparently only four delegates voted against the proposal. 46

By March 1918 the BSU saw signs of hope that the Labour Party nationally was beginning to take a more independent line over the question of war aims: "official Labour is beginning to detach itself from its slavish support for the government and the issue of Labour's War Aims while it will not make possible an immediate armistice and the discussion of peace termswill provoke discussion among the people of the countries concerned".⁴⁷

Despite this criticism of official Labour attitudes there was no desire to replace the Labour Party as the vehicle for working class political aspirations. This became evident from the reaction to the Leeds Convention held in June 1917, particularly the fourth resolution passed calling for the establishment of workers and soldiers councils. Fred Perriman and Len Brighton of the local ILP attended and so did Tommy Lewis. There is no record of how they voted at the conference but it may be assumed they supported the resolutions. However, at a meeting of the Trades Council which discussed a proposal to call a conference to establish a local Workers and Soldiers Council, the chairman A J Thompson prefaced the debate by noting,"he knew a large number of delegates were opposed to the proposals of the Leeds Convention. He hoped

⁴⁶Southampton Times, 18 August 1917

⁴⁷British Seafarer, March 1918

⁴⁵Southampton Times, 26 June 1915. <u>British Seafarer</u>, July 1915

⁴⁸K.Coates, <u>British Labour and the Russian Revolution the Leeds</u> Convention; a report from the Daily Herald (Nottingham no date)

they would do nothing to split the Council and hamper the good work they were doing". Mr Kenward of the Class Teachers moved, "That the Council declines to associate itself with the proposed Council of Workers and Soldiers delegates". Kenward was a trustee of the BSU and an ally of Lewis but he regarded the Workmen's and Soldiers Council proposal as divisive and the Leeds Convention as unrepresentative of workers organisations.

Lewis felt that existing bodies had not been effective on issues such as food prices, pensions for soldiers and sailors and civil liberties and he suggested the proposal for a Workers and Soldiers Council should be passed to the local council for civil liberties. After further discussion the proposal was defeated by 17 votes to 15 and Kenward's resolution was passed by 19 votes to 14.⁴⁹ This mirrors the situation in other areas. Although a conference was held in Bristol to consider the formation of a local Workers and Soldiers Council, Whitfield says, "....the idea of Workers and Soldiers Council sank without trace". ⁵⁰ In the East End of London there was popular hostility to attempts to organise Workmen's' and Soldiers Councils but Bush did not see this as the reason for their failure. "The real cause of its failure was disagreement among the socialists themselves over the nature and purpose of the councils". ⁵¹ The attempts to hold a conference on Workers and Soldiers Councils in Southampton failed when the owner of the Kings Theatre, a potential venue, refused to make it available and it transferred to Portsmouth. ⁵²

In 1918, Labour opened its ranks to individual members, adopted a socialist objective and prepared a report on reconstruction after the war. This document, The New Social Order, drew on the experience of wartime collectivism and suggested that under democratic control a better society could be created. Common ownership and calls for the conscription of riches as an ideal to be worked for echoed the real experience of military and industrial conscription that had been deemed necessary for national survival. There seemed to be no fundamental disagreement even from the more patriotic elements of Labour

⁴⁹Southampton Times, 7 July 1917

⁵⁰R.Whitfield, <u>op cit</u> p.158

⁵¹J.Bush, <u>op cit</u> p.79

⁵²Southampton Times, 11 Aug 1917

about the aim of the Party. As early as 1915 the journal The Marine Caterer, a strong supporter of the war, was expressing views that would be embodied in clause four of the Labour Party constitution. "One of the most important things that the present war has taught the democracy of this country is that the state control of the means of production and distribution is the only rational method by which to carry on the business and industries of the country". ⁵³

Confirmation of the underlying unity of the local Labour movement can be found in the choice of parliamentary candidates. Tommy Lewis was adopted and endorsed as a candidate and a conference of 40 affiliated organisations met to hear Fred Perriman of the ILP speak and answer questions. Lewis was well known in the town and his adoption was no surprise. Perriman was known for his anti-war stance but this was apparently no impediment to his selection as the second parliamentary candidate. There was a brief hint of a threat of a patriotic Labour candidate when the local branch of the Workers Union agreed to adopt Mr Chisham (formerly of the Painters Union) as prospective independent Workers Candidate. It is not clear how much support he had but his candidacy came to nothing and he withdrew "for personal reasons" in June 1918.⁵⁴

This was the first occasion Labour had selected two candidates. This suggests a new level of self confidence and a willingness to take on the existing political parties without hoping to attract some split voting for a single candidate. Also the choice of two candidates known for their sceptical views of the war suggests that despite disagreements over aspects of the war a fundamental unity existed within the organised Labour movement. There was no need to seek a 'balanced ticket' of pro and anti war candidates because of the mature way the debate was conducted within the local Labour movement.

⁵³The Marine Caterer, April 1915

⁵⁴Southampton Times, 30 March 1918. Southern Daily Echo, 7 Feb 1918 and 7 June 1918

The Liberals in Southampton During the War

The impact of the war on Labour has been covered in considerable depth. This reflects the significant coverage given by the local press, particularly the Southampton Times, compared to the other two parties. As normal party political activity was effectively suspended and the two main political parties supported the war there was much less comment on their activity. However it is important to see what effect the war did have particularly on the Liberal Party in Southampton in the light of the debate about the decline of the Liberal Party.

The formal political truce that came into effect at the outbreak of the war meant that normal party political competition officially ceased for the duration and no election contests were held. It is important to remember however that the Conservatives and Liberals had developed an understanding, although not always adhered to, about sharing of committee chairmanships. That had been extended to trying to avoid three way contests against Labour candidates before the war. So the wartime political truce would not have been difficult for them to agree.

Shortly after the declaration of war in 1914, a joint meeting of the local executives of the Liberal and Conservative parties agreed to actively promote recruitment for Lord Kitcheners' army. The absence of the Labour Party was explained by Col E K Perkins, a Conservative who said they had been approached but declined to be involved in the meeting. ⁵⁵ Leading Liberals such as A J Cheverton joined in meetings with local Conservatives. The only Labour Councillor reported as joining in this activity was Dr Stancomb.

The war forced the Liberals to compromise some of their cherished principles about the liberty of the individual, about the limited role of state intervention and also about free trade and internationalisation. This can be detected in the sense of unease about some of the actions of the Government. Although there does not appear to have been any direct opposition to the war from local

⁵⁵Southern Daily Echo, 26 Aug 1914

Liberals this sense of unease was sometimes communicated by the Southampton Times in its editorial comments. For example they agonised over conscription. "Tremendous necessities involve disagreeable courses or worse consequences and however much we may regret a departure from a principle which has long been a source of pride to the nation for many generations to hold too fast to some things, glorious as they may be might entail a shameful loss to all. We fervently hope that conscription may yet be avoided, but there is something in the argument advanced at a meeting of the local Trades Council, and which has been differently expressed in the words; our voluntary system is in danger of being made the instrument of a peculiarly and often degrading form of moral compulsion. Far better to have the real thing". ⁵⁶

The fall of Asquith did not produce any significant reaction among local Liberals. However, James Lemon, a past president of the local party, did write to the Southampton Times. He declared that Asquith had been the subject of a well organised conspiracy and he was critical of some of Lloyd George's actions. He went on, "In conclusion I wish the cabinet a fair field and may the Prime Minister not meet with the under current of intrigue with which his predecessor was assailed. The Government is a stop gap one and cannot last". 57 Lemon appeared to see Lloyd George's government as a necessity but expected a return to a traditional Liberal government eventually.

Despite the reservations expressed by Lemon about national events, the Liberals remained united. More serious for the Liberals was the state of their organisation. The Southampton Times in a revealing comment on the General Election in 1918 suggested that the second Liberal MP Dudley Ward did not think a victory would reflect the health of the Party locally. In December 1918 an editorial stated, "We can appreciate the remarks of Mr Dudley Ward that his return to Parliament will depend more on goodwill than organisation but we would venture to remind the members of the Liberal executive that we have not

⁵⁷<u>Ibid</u>, 16 Dec 1916

⁵⁶Southampton Times, 15 May 1915

Many comments on the wartime situation and on party organisation were retrospective. Cheverton argued in March 1920 that the wartime coalition caused party organisation to stagnate over 5 or 6 years. He also said, "Some time ago the Liberal Association decided to sever its activities from municipal politics, in so far as representation upon the various local bodies was concerned, and the result has been in my opinion a disastrous one". 59

While it was true that political organisation was neglected for the duration of the war the problems of Liberal organisation had been evident before the war as Chapter Three has shown. The wartime co-operation between Conservatives and Liberals was an extension of what already existed. However, during the war the Government often insisted that Labour representatives should be included on various bodies set up for the purpose of wartime administration. It was therefore not possible to exclude Labour from taking a more prominent role in local administration. The decision by the Liberals to co-operate with the Conservatives against Labour before the war and the lack of interest shown by the Liberals in social welfare issues before the war meant they were not well placed to take on the mantle of defending working class interests. Their attempt to portray themselves as shorn of party faction merely drove them into the arms of the Conservatives.

The 1918 General Election

When the election was called the two sitting Liberal members Colonel Ivor Phillips and William Dudley Ward received an endorsement as coalition candidates. The two prospective Conservative candidates withdrew but the local Unionist Association decided to fight one seat and chose Colonel E K Perkins as their candidate. Conservative Central Office was not happy about this potential threat to the coalition candidates and Sir John Barraston, one of the joint principal agents, wrote to Perkins and the local Party. Perkins argued that he was a supporter of the coalition but the purpose of the election was to

⁵⁸<u>Ibid</u>, 7 Dec 1918 ⁵⁹<u>Ibid</u>, 6 March 1920

Southampton since 1906 and probably found it hard to accept the requirement to defer to the sitting Liberal MPs. There was certainly some personal animosity towards Dudley Ward for Perkins and his agent offered to stand with and support Colonel Phillipps if Ward stood down. A J Day a prominent Conservative declared that Ward,"had been an absolutely useless representative of the town". Ward was the 'junior' member and he did not have the shipping connections of Phillipps. Also, his parliamentary responsibilities kept him in London and there were complaints that he only visited the constituency infrequently. There appears to be no more substantial evidence to back the claim Day was making. The Times noted that this potential split in the coalition vote caused considerable ill feeling between the Liberals and Conservatives particularly when the Conservative agent placed advertisements encouraging voters to support Perkins and Phillipps as the coalition candidates. ⁶¹

The election was fought against a background of hostility towards Germany and toward those such as conscientious objectors, who were not considered to have played their part in helping to win the war. The Labour candidates Lewis and Perriman were both prominent in criticising many aspects of the war. They faced hostile questioning from audiences about their attitude toward making Germany pay for the war and the deportation of aliens. Lewis in particular, was dogged by a remark he allegedly made describing the sinking of a hospital ship as an 'incident of war'. His critics drew the implication that this was not an appropriate way to refer to 'brutal murder'. Perkins the Unionist candidate sought to exploit the Labour candidate's criticism of the war. His election address said, "Beware of the pacifist who sails under the colour of socialism. Vote for the man whose Patriotism is above suspicion and support the local Unionist Coalition Candidate".

⁶⁰Southampton Times, 3 Nov 1918

⁶¹ The Times, 14 Dec 1918

⁶²Election Address of Col. E.K. Perkins, Southampton Labour Party Archive

Lewis's record of work on behalf of seafarers probably overcame any objections that might have been made about his political stance. Both candidates could claim the backing of the Secretaries or other officers of 28 trade unions locally (full list in appendix 14). Labour also drew in support from disillusioned Liberals. The Times reported in December 1918, "In the last few days many ministers of religion have taken their stand on the Labour platform and men who formerly were ardent Liberals have also given their support for Labour". 63 The names of these ministers of religion were not recorded but it is possible that they felt that Labour's emphasis on internationalism and reconciliation after the war was more in line with the Christian ethic. Some evidence of Liberals voting for Labour emerged a couple of years after the election. In 1920 Mr P M Randall a member of the Liberal Association for 10 years admitted that he had voted Labour at the 1918 election mainly because he disagreed with the coalition and Labour policy was the one he had least objection to. Another member Mr John Stephens felt many Liberals would vote Labour if Labour fielded a good candidate. An unidentified officer of the Liberal Association also apparently admitted voting for Labour because he believed that Party had a programme and the coalition did not.⁶⁴ Even if Liberals did not vote against the coalition they could still make their position clear. Mr E T Sims the president of the Liberal Association declined to attend a meeting in support of the two coalition Liberal Candidates in November 1918. When a member of the audience asked about his non-attendance. Colonel Bance who chaired the meeting explained, "Mr Sims did not quite believe in the coalition government (loud applause). He would be as true a Liberal as ever (hear, hear) - but he did not find it convenient to be there on the present occasion". 65 Sims appears to have not wanted the coalition to continue once the war had ended.

The result of the election was a victory for the coalition Liberals, but Perkins the Independent Unionist came a close third.

⁶³The Times, 14 Dec 1918

1918

⁶⁴Southampton Times, 21 Feb 1920 and 27 March 1920, <u>Ibid</u> 23 Nov

<u>Table 5.1</u> 1918 General Election Result

| Sir I Phillipps | Co Lib | 26,884 |
|-----------------|--------|--------|
| W D Ward | Co Lib | 16,843 |
| E K Perkins | Con | 15,548 |
| T Lewis | Lab | 7,828 |
| F Perriman | Lab | 6.776 |

Turnout 49%

Source: F.W.S. Craig British Parliamentary Election Results 1918-1945 (Glasgow 1969). The Poll was a low one for only 40,577 electors voted out of just over 75,000 on the register.

There were around 16,000 absent voters but only around 4,500 of them actually voted. The analysis of voting showed that Colonel Perkins had a significant number of 'plumpers' voters who used only one candidate as shown below.

<u>Table 5.2</u> <u>Voting analysis 1918</u>

| | ' <u>Plumper Votes'</u> | |
|-----------|-------------------------|------------|
| Phillipps | Co Lib | 942 |
| Ward | Co Lib | 365 |
| Perkins | Con | 4910 |
| Lewis | Lab | 654 |
| Perriman | Lab | <u>222</u> |
| Total | | 7093 |

Cross Voting

| Phillipps/Ward | Co Lib/Co Lib | 15,935 |
|--------------------|---------------|--------|
| Phillipps/Perkins | Co Lib/Con | 9,381 |
| Phillipps/Lewis | Co Lib/Lab | 348 |
| Phillipps/Perriman | Co Lib/Lab | 278 |
| Ward/Perkins | Co Lib/Con | 377 |
| Ward/Lewis | Co Lib/Lab | 112 |
| Ward/Perriman | Co Lib/Lab | 54 |
| Perkins/Lewis | Con/Lab | 686 |
| Perkins/Perriman | Con/Lab | 194 |
| Lewis/Perriman | Lab/Lab | 6,028 |

Source: F.W.S. Craig op cit

The figures for cross voting suggest that Perkins had some success with his attempt to claim the coalition vote with Phillipps. Both Labour candidates secured around 10% each and the slightly higher vote for Lewis can be attributed to his local profile as a candidate. The election performance of Labour needs to be seen in the context that the last Labour candidate stood in 1906 and no candidate came forward in 1910 so there was little for Labour to build on. The atmosphere of the campaign plus the low turnout of electors were also unlikely to favour the Labour candidates.

Conclusion

During the war Labour faced serious divisions over issues like conscription and conscientious objection, however Labour was able to unite around issues such as food, prices, wages and conditions in the workplace and the right of Labour to choose its own representatives. Throughout the war Labour maintained its political organisation and Labour representatives were able to gain experience as members of a range of local bodies.

Chapter Six The Local Economy and Employment 1914 – 1945

At the end of Chapter Two it had been established that the occupational structure of Southampton showed the dominance of the port and port-related industry. Much of this was subject to seasonal and cyclical variation including dock work, seafaring, ship repairing and building. The development of the port was dominated by the shipping companies and the railway company, absentee employers who had their base outside the town.

Trade union membership was limited because of the collapse of the Dock Workers Union and the establishment of the Free Labour Association by the employers. The Seafarers Union also remained weak because of the hostility of the Shipping Federation. The most significant unions on the Trades Council were the Carpenters, the Engineers and the Shipwrights. It was only with the industrial unrest of 1910-1913 that the docks and seafaring saw a revival of trade unionism.

This chapter will consider to what extent the occupational structure and the nature of employment changed from 1914 to 1945 and what impact there was on trade unions and industrial relations.

The Occupational Structure

In Chapter Two it was noted that the census classification for 1891, 1901 and 1911 was based on a mixture of industrial and occupational categories. In order to provide some comparability between the censuses the 1911 classification was used as a basis for Appendices 1 to 4 and this entailed some recalculation of the numbers in some occupations. From 1921, an occupational classification was used for the census which produced a complete break in the series of census figures. Although there were some changes it is still possible to make comparisons between the censuses of 1921, 1931 and 1951.

The occupational structure set out in Appendices 16, 17A and 17B is based on a summary of the occupational tables from the census. The largest single group was employed in Transport and Communications and this reflects the continuing importance of the port. Metal workers were mainly employed in ship repairing and ship building in 1921 and 1931. The reduction in numbers in 1931 reflects the depression in trade and the fact that fewer ships were being overhauled. In the late 1930s, aircraft engineering and motor vehicle production were beginning to become important and the summary of main groups of occupied males in table 5.1 below therefore has a selective comparison with the 1951 census. By 1951, motor vehicle production accounted for 6.1% of the 18.5% of those occupied as metal workers. The increase in the numbers employed in building was partly reflected in the programmes of slum clearance and the building of new council homes in the north and west of the town. There was also a significant extension of the docks between 1926 and 1933 and the building of a new civic centre complex in the early 1930s.

Table 6.1 % of Occupied Males in Southampton

Main Groups

| | 1921 | 1931 | 1951 |
|------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Metal Workers | 14.32 | 10.28 | 18.55 |
| Textile/Dress | 1.26 | 1.04 | 0.74 |
| Food/Drink/Tobacco | 1.40 | 1.32 | 3.35 |
| Wood/Furniture | 4.50 | 4.34 | |
| Building | 2.65 | 4.24 | 8.48 |
| Painters/Decorators | 2.85 | 2.83 | - |
| Transport and Communications | 26.80 | 26.15 | 23.69 |
| Commercial | 9.15 | 12.18 | 14.00 |
| Public Administration | 2.48 | 1.55 | 8.15 |
| Professional | 2.41 | 2.37 | 4.11 |
| Personal Services | 2.83 | 3.56 | _ |
| Clerical | 4.92 | 7.28 | • |
| Other and Undefined | 24.46 | 22.86 | - |

Source - Census of England and Wales 1921, 1931 and 1951

The comparison of male occupations in selected ports in Appendix 17A shows that port employment in Transport and Communications was only slightly less than Hull and not so far behind Liverpool. Within the category of those employed in Transport and Communications, Southampton had more men employed in the merchant service compared with the other selected ports and this is illustrated in Table 6.2. This is a similar pattern to that already shown in Chapter Two.

<u>Table 6.2</u> % of Occupied Males in Transport and Communications by Sector 1921

| | RAIL | ROAD | WATER | OTHER | MERCHANT | DOCK |
|-------------|------|------|-------|-------|----------|--------|
| | | | | | SERVICE | LABOUR |
| SOUTHAMPTON | 1.47 | 3.99 | 17.63 | 3.71 | 11.97 | 5.38 |
| PLYMOUTH | 1.73 | 3.50 | 3.53 | 2.72 | 2.38 | 1.02 |
| BRISTOL | 3.16 | 5.78 | 5.19 | 3.05 | 1.95 | 3.00 |
| LIVERPOOL | 2.93 | 7.22 | 14.70 | 5.35 | 7.10 | 7.31 |
| HULL | 4.22 | 4.38 | 16.00 | 2.50 | 7.49 | 8.12 |

1931

| | RAIL | ROAD | WATER | OTHER | MERCHANT | DOCK |
|-------------|------|------|-------|-------|----------|--------|
| | | | | | SERVICE | LABOUR |
| SOUTHAMPTON | 1.17 | 4.61 | 16.56 | 3.79 | 10.22 | 6.07 |
| PLYMOUTH | 1.51 | 4.15 | 2.74 | 3.01 | 1.74 | 0.91 |
| BRISTOL | 2.64 | 6.17 | 4.14 | 3.21 | 1.72 | 2.19 |
| LIVERPOOL | 2.30 | 7.01 | 13.34 | 5.65 | 6.38 | 6.67 |
| HULL | 3.40 | 5.01 | 15.38 | 3.00 | 6.45 | 8.89 |

Source - Figures from Census of England and Wales 1921 and 1931

The proportion of females employed in Southampton increased slightly from 26.02% in 1921 to 27.57% in 1931 but in 1951 it had fallen to 23.04%. The main occupations for females are set out overleaf in table 6.3.

<u>Table 6.3</u> % of Occupied Females in Southampton – Main Groups

| | 1921 | 1931 | 1951 |
|------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Textiles/Dress | 7.93 | 4.31 | 2.10 |
| Food/Drink/Tobacco | 1.92 | 2.05 | 6.65 |
| Metal Work/Electrical | 1.96 | 1.91 | 6.16 |
| Transport and Communications | 2.04 | 1.74 | 5.66 |
| Professional | 9.22 | 8.07 | 14.57 |
| Commercial | 15.10 | 17.05 | 31.01 |
| Personal Services | 43.05 | 43.01 | 19.29 |

By far the largest single group were women employed in domestic service. In 1921 4,781 were employed and in 1931 it was 5,420 making up 28.3% and 27.9% respectively of the female workforce. The majority of females in commercial occupations were employed as shop assistants.

Opportunities for women's employment had increased temporarily during the First World War. For example the corporation tramway employed women from July 1915 and fifty jobs were advertised. Women also had employment at the gas works and in the government rolling mills at Weston on the east of the River Itchen. This plant provided brass and cupro-nickel strips for small arms ammunition. Out of a total workforce of 1,800, 650 were women. After the war a number of firms became established in Southampton and provided employment for women. British American Tobacco at its Millbrook factory in Southampton produced cigarettes and employed mainly women working in the cutting and leaf rooms. Before the Depression in the 1930s around 600 of the 800 staff employed were women. Pirelli, the cable manufactures, set up their Southampton works in 1914 and initially employed around 100 workers but this quickly rose to 2,000 during the war. Before the Depression the figure had gone back to around 900. Women in the Southampton plant worked on coil

¹A.Rance, <u>Southampton An Illustrated History</u> (Horndean 1986) pp.141-2 ²P.Ford, Work and Wealth in a Modern Port (London 1934) pp.46 and 43-

winding, braiding and wrapping machines and shared this equally with men.3

Although there were some new opportunities for women's employment in this period the predominance of personal service can be illustrated by comparing female employment in this category with that of other ports. This is set out in the table below.

<u>Table 6.4</u> % of Females Employed in Personal Services in Selected Ports

| | 1921 | 1931 |
|-------------|-------|-------|
| SOUTHAMPTON | 43.05 | 43.01 |
| PLYMOUTH | 38.37 | 40.25 |
| BRISTOL | 26.55 | 31.26 |
| LIVERPOOL | 28.86 | 30.92 |
| HULL | 30.07 | 35.50 |

Source - Census of England and Wales 1921 and 1931

Bristol, Liverpool and Hull had greater number of women employed in Textiles and Dress, Food, Drink and Tobacco and Print and Paper than Southampton in the same occupations.

Overall, throughout this period, the Southampton economy began to show greater diversity. By 1937, around 4,000 workers were registered as insured in the motor, cycle and aircraft group as classified by the Ministry of Labour in the Southampton exchange area.⁴

⁴M.P. Fogarty, <u>Prospects of the Industrial Areas of Great Britain</u> (London 1945) p.414

The Development of the Port

Around thirty shipping lines used the port of Southampton sailing across the North Atlantic, to South America, the Cape and the Far East and there was also the cross channel trade. The main liner companies based in Southampton were the Cunard Steamship Company, Canadian Pacific Ocean Services and the White Star Line sailing the North Atlantic routes. The Royal Mail Steam Packet Company and the Royal Mail Line sailed to Central and South America. The Union Castle Line went to South Africa and Australia and the Southern Railway Company sailed to Europe and the Channel Islands.⁵

Before the First World War, the last major development was the Ocean Dock opened in 1911. In 1923, the Southern Railway Company applied to Parliament for sanctions to extend the docks westward with a proposed investment of £10 million.⁶ The Southern Railway Act was passed in 1924 and work commenced in 1926 with final completion in 1933 although the first ships were able to berth at the new docks in October 1932. The new docks were the largest civil engineering project at a British port and the design for a long quay, over 7,500 feet meant the optimum use of quay space for berthing ships. Also it could accommodate the largest vessels without having to further adapt or extend the docks.⁷ At the western end of the new docks, a new graving dock was constructed. This was built to cater for a new Cunard liner under construction on the Clyde. The dock was 1,200 feet long and 135 feet wide and around 1,000 men were employed for two years on the project in addition to the contractors and sub contractors who employed many more men in the construction of the new docks.⁸

⁶One Hundred Years of Southampton Docks 1838-1938 (Southern Railway 1938) p.26

⁷S.Bird. op cit p.163

⁵R.F. Ewer, <u>Working Conditions and labour Relations in Southampton's Port Industries Between the Wars</u>. (Unpublished PhD University of Southampton 1987) p.3

⁸A.Rance, <u>op cit p.145</u>; <u>One Hundred Years of Southampton Docks</u>pp.27-29 – Southampton Dock Extension and Graving Dock, Supplement to Shipbuilding and Shipping Record July 27 1933

The Pattern of Employment

The census provides an essential picture of the numbers of occupied males and females and the distribution of occupations in the town. This section will highlight the broad economic trends during the period and the effect of the cyclical and seasonal pattern of economic activity in key areas of port related work.

During the First World War the port was taken over by the Admiralty for the transport of men and materials to the continent. The war also provided a boost for local ship repairing and shipbuilding. J I Thorneycroft built destroyers for the navy and also repaired around fifty ships, at its peak the Woolston Yard was employing 6,000 men.⁹

The post war slump affected firms like Thorneycroft which saw orders being cancelled and very few new orders for ships in the early 1920s. Another local firm Day Summers and Company reduced its workforce from around 1,000 during the war to 700 afterwards. The depression in shipbuilding finally led to the closure of the firm in 1928. The economic difficulties of the town were not helped by the fact that, even in 1921, the port was not able to resume normal commercial business because of Admiralty restrictions. It was not until 1923 that regular normal passenger services were resumed.

Following the post war slump passenger traffic grew slowly. The increase in passenger traffic meant more work in ships during the overhaul season in the winter. The years 1924 and 1925 were the best for the overhaul of the big liners since the war.¹²

The depression saw a major reduction in dock employment especially in 1931-32. The fall in passenger numbers was however greatest in 1933-34 for

⁹P.Ford, op cit pp.37-8. K.C. Barnaby op cit pp.70-1

¹⁰K.C. Barnaby, op cit, pp.81

¹¹P.Ford, op cit p.39

¹²R.F. Ewer, op cit pp. 217-220

¹³lbid, p.31

those arriving from or going to foreign destinations outside Europe. The ship owners had already been economising and carrying out only the most necessary maintenance but the merger of Cunard and White Star brought about a reduction in the numbers of vessels. By 1935 only three vessels were likely to provide work on overhaul rather than the usual six.¹⁴ The smaller shipbuilding and engineering firms also suffered. They constructed and repaired yachts and high speed motor boats. One of these firms Camper and Nicholson had been employing around 700 people in 1919 but by the time of the depression this was reduced to 500. Fogarty says that the number of insured workers in ship repairing fell by nearly 20 per cent between 1923 and 1927.¹⁵

The reduction in shipping saw the number of seamen insured at Southampton fall from 15,300 in 1928 to 11,600 in 1937. One of the ways companies tried to overcome the slump in passenger numbers was to develop cruising. This meant longer trips for ships and seamen and overhauls were sometimes undertaken abroad.¹⁶

By the late 1930's a significant recovery in shipping was underway. One sign was the improved position of ship repairing and building. In January 1937, The Hampshire Advertiser was reporting "The leading Shipbuilding and repairing establishments in Southampton are busier than for years past, and with the yacht yards also enjoying a considerable measure of prosperity it is safe to say that 9,000 men are finding employment through these avenues at the present time".¹⁷

The Second World War brought a further expansion in the numbers employed in shipbuilding, ship repairing and marine engineering. In their post-war survey of the region, which included Eastleigh, Romsey, the New Forest and Hamble, Ford and Thomas gave the following figures for the numbers of insured workers

¹⁵M.P.Fogarty, <u>op cit</u> p.411 and 412

¹⁷Hampshire Advertiser 16 Jan 1937

¹⁴Hampshire Advertiser, 13 Oct 1934 and 7 Sept 1935

¹⁶Ibid, p.411 and 413. Hampshire Advertiser, 5 Jan 1935

employed in these three sectors:-18

| Years | Numbers |
|-------|---------|
| 1939 | 9,076 |
| 1943 | 15,052 |
| 1945 | 13,145 |
| 1946 | 12,450 |

Alongside the longer term economic factors affecting the local economy during this period, the seasonal and casual nature of employment, particularly among port related workers, continued to be an important feature.

Dock Workers

Before the First World War there was no real regulation of dock employment in Southampton. Although the Railway Company did employ permanent men, most dock workers were engaged on a casual basis. The important role played by the port in the first World War has already been noted. The ending of commercial business on the outbreak of war caused some immediate unemployment among dock workers. By the end of 1914, the problem of a lack of dock labour had begun to be recognised and recruitment of dock workers in to the army was prohibited. However, there were still problems in ensuring adequate labour for the docks nationally and in 1915 the government set up mobile transport battalions made up of selected soldiers, some of them experienced in dock work. They provided additional labour when it was needed and they worked in London, Southampton and parts of the west coast. 19 The other important new development was the establishment of a Port Labour Committee in Southampton to oversee a registration scheme using brass tallies. The Committee consisted of eight employers, two workers and the local Labour Exchange officer. After the war, during the 1920s, there were accusations from ex-servicemen's organisations and from dock workers that the scheme was not operating properly. In 1925 it was reconstituted with five representatives from the employers, five from the Transport and General Workers Union with an independent Chairman. It was renamed the Port Registration Committee and

¹⁹G.Phillips and N.Whiteside, <u>op cit</u> p.113

¹⁸P.Ford and C.G.Thomas, <u>A Survey of the Industrial Prospects of the Southampton Region</u> (Oxford 1950) p.23

There were two categories of dock worker, stevedores or shipmen who handled goods off and on ships, and quaymen who moved goods on the quayside. The former were considered the more skilled and they worked alongside the crane drivers and winchmen. There were tally clerks and checkers supervising the cargoes.

The shipping companies engaged their own stevedores and each company was allocated a specific number of tallies. The Union Castle Company had 300, the White Star Line 300, the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company 100 and the Southern Railway had 600. The men who got the tallies were known as 'preference men'. They got called for work in rotation so they could be guaranteed some work. After that there were around 600 more casual men, known as 'shedmen' and they were only likely to get work with the railway company when all their preference men were engaged. However, they could also take their chance of obtaining work at one of the shipping company call stands. In addition the railway company employed 200 permanent men and the Union Castle company between 60 and 100 permanent men.²¹

The number of registered dock workers fluctuated between 2,500 and nearly 3,000 between the wars. This is illustrated in table 6.5.

Table 6.5 Number of Registered Dock Workers in Southampton

| YEAR | NUMBER |
|------|-----------|
| 1919 | 2,500 (1) |
| 1920 | 2,913 (2) |
| 1925 | Not known |
| 1930 | 2,888 (3) |
| 1932 | 2,444 (3) |
| 1938 | 2,539 (3) |

Sources:-

^{1.} P.Ford Work and Wealth in a Modern Port (1934) p.40

^{2.} Lascelles and Bullock <u>Dock Labour and Decasualisation</u> (1924) p.189

^{3.} Phillips and Whiteside op cit p.215

²⁰F.Ewer, op cit, pp.59-62

²¹Ibid, pp. 105-107

However, Ewer points out that the number of dock workers recorded as insured by the Ministry of Labour in the period May to October 1930 averaged 4,509.²² One of the reasons that non-registered dock workers continued to get employment was because the call stands for various employers were dispersed. Tally holders might fail to get work at one of the call stands and then not be able to get to another stand in time to have a chance of getting work.

Some men specialised in certain cargoes like timber, grain or meat. Other cargoes such as hides, or fertiliser would be avoided if possible because they were regarded as dirty cargoes. ²³ Demand for labour was high during the late spring and into summer and even then there were troughs and peaks of demand. Percy Ford estimated that around 400,000 tons of potatoes arrived in June dropping to 10,000 or even 4,000 tons in July. The fruit trade was at its peak in September and October and wool was landed in October and continued to arrive for some months afterwards.

Seafarers

The employment of seafarers was subject to seasonal variation much as it had been in the period before the First World War. The normal pattern was for the transatlantic liners to be laid up for the winter months for their overhaul. The depression in the 1930s, saw a decline in the number of transatlantic voyages. Seafarers were usually engaged and discharged at the end of each voyage and the figures for the number of engagements in Southampton illustrate the decline in the 1930s.

²²lbid, p.29

²³P.Ford, op cit pp.71-2

Table 6.6 Annual Engagement of Seamen in Southampton 1928-35

| YEAR | NO. OF ENGAGEMENTS |
|------|--------------------|
| 1928 | 121,569 |
| 1929 | 118,428 |
| 1930 | 111,439 |
| 1931 | 90,461 |
| 1932 | 73,658 |
| 1933 | 72,176 |
| 1934 | 70,322 |
| 1935 | 74,321 |

Source: - Extract from R F Ewer op cit p.340

From 1936, seamen had six monthly engagements but even under the old system men would be regularly re-engaged for each voyage on what were called 'running agreements'. A North Atlantic trip would take around 17 days with 4 days in port, for which men were not paid. The men might have between ten and twelve trips a year on this route. Voyages to South Africa were longer, around seven weeks, and the turnaround time was longer too, around 12 days. Men might get five or six trips a year on this route.

The effect of the depression in terms of a decline in the number of seafarers insured at Southampton has already been noted. As well as this reduction another longer term trend also affected seafarers. The size and composition of the liner's crews changed. The large liners mostly converted to burn oil as a fuel after 1930 and this reduced the number employed in the engine room. ²⁴ Ford suggested that a coal burning ship might require around 120-140 firemen while a ship burning fuel oil would only need around 40 to 50 men. ²⁵ This reduction was matched by a corresponding increase in the number of stewards and catering staff who directly looked after passengers. Burton says that, in 1921, over 70% of the liner's crew were made up of stewards, waiters and cooks. ²⁶ The trend towards larger vessels was confirmed when the Queen

²⁴F.Ewer, <u>op cit</u>, p.24 and 340

²⁵P.Ford, <u>op cit</u>, p.64

²⁶V.Burton, op cit p.81

Mary came into service. The ship was 82,000 tons and required a crew of 2,000.

Ship Repairing

Employment for those in the ship repairing trades fluctuated on a weekly basis during part of the year and was also subject to an annual cycle. There was a weekly turn round of ships during the main sailing season from March to October. The White Star liners came in on a Saturday and left the following Wednesday. Cunard ships came in on Tuesday or Wednesday and left again on Saturday. There was pressure to ensure no delay in the turn round of vessels so any necessary repairs for the next voyage could mean intensive work including overtime. The overlapping of ships arriving as one was about to depart could create demand for extra workers. A period of very intensive work could be followed quickly by little work once a ship departed especially if an incoming vessel required only minimal attention.²⁷

From April to September running repairs were carried out on liners and during the 1920s ships might also be brought in for a mid-season overhaul. The major overhaul of liners took place during the winter from November to February. Work on a vessel might last for two to three weeks employing hundreds of men including engineers, boilermakers, electricians, painters, carpenters, french polishers and general labourers. Ewer quotes the employer's figures for the average weekly numbers employed each quarter from 6 April 1927 to 28 March 1928 as 2,509, 2,418, 2,466 and 3,690. The highest number employed was in January when the figure was 4,652.²⁸

Some of the work on ships involved importing specialist labour from outside the town. Companies such as Waring and Gillows and Robsons of Liverpool would be engaged for particularly skilled or highly decorative work and they would bring their own employees with them.

²⁷P.Ford, op cit p.67

²⁸F.Ewer, op cit p.229

The practice of men moving across different sectors of employment was noted in Chapter Two. This continued throughout this period and Percy Ford made explicit reference to it in his study of Southampton's economy. Painters, carpenters, plumbers and electricians would move between the building trades in the summer and the shipyards during the winter. Seamen and stewards might also find unskilled work in the ship repair yards acting as assistants to joiners or electricians.

Absentee Employers

Throughout this chapter, reference has been made to many of the companies that operated in the local economy, the shipping companies, the Southern Railway company, the major ship repairing and building firms Thorneycrofts and Harland and Woolf, as well as British American Tobacco and Pirelli. Ford commented on this feature of the town's economy. "At present the majority of the greater businesses are either non-local in origin or are non-locally controlled. The large ship repairing firms, the tobacco factory and the electrical firms are examples of this, while retail development has not been left untouched by this development." He went on to make a further point that, unlike a port such as Newcastle, local men did not build up large businesses based on manufacturing exporting or shipping. The bulk of Southampton's local business was small."in consequence it shows a smaller proportion of very large and large fortunes than in other ports where manufacturing or import or export houses run by local men are prominent. In the sense implied, Southampton is a gate for traffic and wealth rather than a point of its origination." The town had already lost control of the Harbour Board under an act of 1911 which reconstituted the board of 25 members and left the Borough Council with only seven members whereas previously they had a majority.

This confirms that, despite some diversification of the local economy,
Southampton still retained the main characteristics of a 'port on sufferance'
described by Burton. The implication of this for many of the workers in the town
was that their terms and conditions of employment were subject to agreements

²⁹P. Ford, <u>op cit</u> p.85

³⁰<u>lbid</u>, p.23

negotiated nationally so the scope for local action could be limited.

Trade Unionism and Industrial Relations

Despite the general growth of trade unionism during the period 1890 – 1914 the problem of sustaining organisation among workers in casual and seasonal trades remained. The problems of seafarers' trade unionism, with rivalry and conflict between the locally based BSU and the NSFU, was to be resolved with the demise of the BSU. The multiplicity of unions operating in the ship repairing and ship building industry often led to sectional and demarcation disputes. Local trade union and industrial experiences could therefore be a divisive rather than a unifying factor among the working class population. However, there was, in the General Strike some evidence that local workers could overcome sectional differences to support a wider notion of class solidarity with the miners.

The inter-war years show a clear pattern with a number of disputes involving workers in the port and port-related industry occurring before 1929 and almost none thereafter. The main disputes are set out in appendix 18.

The longest dispute in this period was the joiners strike which lasted from December 1920 until August 1921. The employers had granted a wage increase from April 1920 in order to make pay for shipyard joiners comparable to that in the building trade. The boom in shipping after the war came to an abrupt end and the employers declared they would reduce wages by the exact amount of the increase granted in April. The dispute involved around 10,000 men nationally of which around 1,200 were in Southampton.

As the dispute dragged on, work was lost at the local ship repair yards. The local Federation of Engineering and Shipbuilding Trades Committee was concerned about the distress being caused among other workers by the dispute and eventually the National Federation of Engineering and Shipbuilding Trades pressed the joiners to end the dispute. The terms for ending it included phasing in the decrease in wages in three instalments and guarantees about the

re- engagement of men involved in the dispute.³¹ The dispute strained local relations between the joiners and other unions to the extent that the local FEST were prepared to agree with employers locally to complete work on ships in Southampton if orders came in. The national FEST could not sanction this but worked to persuade the joiners to end their strike.

On two occasions in 1922 and 1924, action by the national leadership of shipyard unions curtailed disputes involving Southampton men.

In 1922, the dispute was over the Shipbuilding Employers Federation proposal to withdrew the flat rate war bonus in two stages. This was rejected and a national strike began on 29 March. Negotiations continued and the unions were prepared to consider a smaller reduction in three phases. A delegate conference of the FEST decided to submit this to national ballot of members. This produced a majority against of just over 5,000 but in a turnout of only 30% of those eligible to vote. This did not represent a two thirds majority necessary for continuing the strike so a return to work was ordered.³²

Two years later, in 1924, a more direct conflict arose between men in Southampton and their national unions. The local FEST applied for an increase in wages of ten shillings in addition to a national claim for the same amount. The men in Southampton came out on strike and the employers refused to discuss the national claim while the Southampton men, totalling around 7,000, were out on strike. The employers also threatened to refuse work at other ports to men in unions on strike at Southampton. The national executive of the FEST negotiated a formula with a strike committee at Southampton but a mass meeting of men rejected it. The Ship Constructors and Shipwrights Association took a more robust line and ordered their members back to work. When they refused the union closed down the Southampton branches. In order to try and end the dispute each of the unions in the FEST held separate ballots on the terms of the formula agreed by the national executive and the local strike committee.

³¹F.Ewer, <u>op cit</u> pp.327-28

³²The Labour Gazette, March 1922 p.106 and May 1922 p.203. F.Ewer, op cit p.329

However, even this produced a majority against but again the unions, except the coppersmiths who officially supported their Southampton strikes, declared the majority was not large enough to continue the strike. The order to return to work was issued and again refused so the employers began a lockout on 12th April 1924. The dispute was finally settled following the intervention of the chairman and secretary of the TUC who prepared a joint recommendation with the local strike committee. This was for a conference with employers to consider unifying the rates of pay between London and Southampton and each union had to submit a list of readjustments to achieve this. This was accepted by the men at Southampton and both the strike and the lockout were ended.³³

This dispute highlighted some of the problems facing trade union action. There was clearly a tension between local and national objectives in the case of the FEST. This was likely to be resolved in favour of the national union because they were clearly prepared, in most cases, to enforce their will on the local branches if the authority of the strike committee could not help to bring the dispute to an end. The Southampton men's determination to pursue their grievance may have been the result of the failure of the national unions to press home the dispute in 1922. The union's reluctance to continue sanctioning the strike was the fear of incurring an unsustainable bill for strike pay.³⁴

A further blow to local union autonomy and a weakening of seafarers trade unionism was the demise of the British Seafarers Union. The position of the BSU in Southampton was its strength but also ultimately its weakness. As long as the Southampton seafarers stayed loyal to the BSU, because the liner crews were largely local, there was little the employers or the NSFU could do about it. However, if the union was to have a future it would have to expand. The Cooks and Stewards were organised in a separate union from the NSFU, led by Joseph Cotter. Cotter had fallen out with Havelock Wilson of the NSFU and embarked on a strike over wage cuts in 1921 which failed. He then sought to amalgamate his union with the BSU. At the same time the National Transport Workers Federation supported this proposed amalgamation because they were

³⁴F.Ewer, op cit p.342

³³The Ministry of Labour Gazette, May 1924 pp.157-8

happy to support this rival to Wilson's union. Wilson had refused to help the miners and his hostility to the Labour Party had also alienated the NTWF.³⁵ The new union was now called the Amalgamated Marine Workers Union.

Wilson sought to counter the threat of this new union by agreeing with the shipowners the introduction of a certificate, the 'PC 5', which would ensure that men could only get employment if they could produce the certificate. This allowed the NSFU to control recruitment because to get a PC 5 men had to have paid their dues to the NSFU.

The final destruction of the AMWU came about when Wilson was able to have the merger that formed the AMWU declared invalid in the courts. Accusations were made that the ballot on the merger held by Cotter had been fraudulent and other declarations relating to the merger had been false. It proved impossible to disentangle the finances of the two organisations so the AMWU risked being accused of spending the Cooks and Stewards funds illegally. The union was effectively crippled and folded in 1927.³⁶

The effect on seamen trade unionism was damaging. After 1929 the local organiser of the union now called the National Union of Seamen proclaimed Southampton, "the most backward port in the Country". The union had been expelled from the TUC for supporting company unionism in the Nottinghamshire coalfield and therefore they were excluded from the Trades Council right up until 1931.

The General Strike of 1926 was an illustration that the intense class loyalties referred to by McKibbin as a feature of the working class, could operate in Southampton alongside the defence of the interests of particular groups of workers. On the first day of the strike dock workers, coal porters and coal trimmers were all out on strike. The majority of tramway men estimated at 80%,

³⁵B. Mogridge, <u>op cit</u> pp. 394-397

³⁶ Ibid

³⁷F.Ewer, op cit p.89

who were municipal employees were on strike.³⁸ The Southampton Strike Bulletin reported, "The response to the call to action in Southampton as elsewhere has been greater than was anticipated and the difficulty is not to get workers out but to restrain those who have not been called".³⁹

When the strike was called off, dockworkers refused to return until guarantees were given about the reinstatement of strikers. Work on ship repair and shipbuilding did not resume until 15 May while unions and employers negotiated over similar matters. While these workers were able to secure their positions the tramwaymen on strike were replaced and around one hundred failed to secure reinstatement. Labour members of the Borough Council were angry at the attitude of the Independent majority on the Council and initially they tried to disrupt the business of the Council in order to highlight the men's situation. They failed to secure reinstatement for the men and they were still being excluded from employment on the tramway in 1927. There was also no sympathetic industrial action in support of their claim to be reinstated. The manner in which the TUC ended the strike meant that individual unions had to make the best arrangements they could to safeguard their members.

The defeat of the strike also highlighted the limitations of industrial action for political purposes. The distinction between the industrial and political side of the movement was becoming more evident. The annual report of the Trades Council for 1928 was admitting the disparity. "Whilst there has been considerable activity on the political side there has, unfortunately been little movement so far as the industrial side is concerned". ⁴³

⁴⁰Southern Daily Echo, 13 May 1926 and 15 May 1926

³⁸Archives of the TUC, Southampton Trades and Labour Council to W.Citrine 5 May 1926

³⁹Archives of the TUC, Southampton Strike Bulletin No. 6 May 1926

⁴¹<u>Ibid</u>, 19 May 1926 ⁴²F.Ewer, op cit p.338

⁴³Southampton Trades Council and Southampton Labour Party Annual for 1928

The switch of emphasis from industrial towards political matters can be seen through the minutes of the Trades Council in the 1930s. Throughout this decade the Council was considering unemployment, debating the menace of fascism and supporting the Republicans in Spain, and there was conflict over the role of Communist delegates at the Trades Council. Trade union officers locally were at various times through the inter-war years elected to serve on the Borough Council. From biographical details of local council candidates it has been possible to identify twenty union officials who served on the Council. They came from a wide range of unions including the Engineers (2), the Painters (2), Transport and General Workers (3), the General and Municipal Workers (3), the Bricklayers (1), the Plumbers (2), the Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers (1), the Bakers and Confectioners (1) and the Railwaymen (1). They may have been better placed to take time out to serve as elected councillors but it also indicates some shift from industrial to political matters. By the early 1930s the Trades Council appeared to recognise that it had a diminished role but attempted to make a virtue of it. "More and more does the Council tend to become the coordinating centre for the collecting and circulating of information on behalf of the Trades Union Congress, this we suggest is one of the most important phases of the Council's work, and one that is much appreciated by the members of our affiliated branches".44

From 1928 onwards, the most important unions on the Trades Council in terms of affiliated ranches were the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU), the Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers (ASW), the Amalgamated Engineering Union (AEU) and the National Amalgamated Society of Painters and Decorators (NASPD).

⁴⁴Southampton Trades Council 42nd Annual Report for 1933

<u>Table 6.7</u> <u>Number of Affiliated Branches to Trades Council (selected Unions)</u>

| | AEU | TGWU | ASW | NASPD |
|------|-----|------|-----|-------|
| 1928 | 5 | 11 | 7 | 3 |
| 1929 | 5 | 11 | 7 | 3 |
| 1931 | 5 | 8 | 7 | 4 |
| 1932 | 6 | 8 | 7 | 4 |
| 1933 | 6 | 8 | 7 | 4 |
| 1934 | 6 | 8 | 7 | 4 |
| 1935 | 5 | 9 | 6 | 4 |
| 1936 | 3 | 10 | 6 | 4 |
| 1937 | 3 | 10 | 6 | 4 |

Source - Trades Council Annual Reports 1928-37

The number of branches gives some idea of the relative strength of the unions. The AEU membership may have been higher than the number of branches suggests. In 1939 and 1941 James Matthews noted from a survey of union membership that, "The AEU is probably the most important single union in the Southampton district. In the aircraft industry alone its membership outnumbers that of all other unions taken together". The numbers he quotes for membership were; Sept 1939 - 3,368; Sept 1940 - 3,888; Aug 1941 - 3,975. Although this figure covers areas outside the town, it reflects the gradual diversification of the economy of the area that was noted earlier and highlighted by Fogarty.

During the inter-war period, the local economy of Southampton was affected by the economic fluctuations that produced the post war boom and slump and by the depression in the 1930s. Underlying this were the seasonal fluctuations in ship repairing, dock work and seafaring. This plus the casual nature of much dock work meant significant groups of workers in the town faced the prospect of

^{45"}Effect of Industrial Evacuation on Trade Union Membership" (Southampton Area) typescript <u>Alderman James Matthews Papers</u> Southampton City Record Office D/Mat 10/3

moving between employment sectors, like painters or carpenters, or seeking other alternatives such as seafarers working in the docks.

Attempts by unions to defend their members' position were largely unsuccessful because wage reductions were enforced although they might be staged. In some cases the unions at national level were unwilling to support members who tried to resist changes in wages or conditions. Seafaring unionism was weakened by the defeat of the BSU and the effective isolation of the NSFU until the early 1930s.

The failure of the General Strike finally showed the limits of industrial action and from the late 1920s there appears to be a clear shift among trade unions away from industrial to political activity. This can be seen in the diminished industrial role of the Trades Council and in the fact that a significant number of trade union officers moved into the role of Labour councillors.

Chapter Seven

The Consolidation of Labour Politics 1919 – 1938

Municipal and Parliamentary Elections 1919 – 23

In April 1919, Labour took control of the Itchen Urban District Council which covered the eastern suburbs of Southampton at Woolston, Pear Tree and Sholing. The whole council was up for election and Labour won 12 of the 15 seats. Their success came as a surprise not only to commentators in the press but also to the local Labour Party. The local press suggested that the reason for Labour's victory was a desire to reject the 'old crowd' and elect a new council. Tommy Lewis thought it was down to Labour putting forward a definite programme. Labour's opponents suggested that they had benefited from the lack of unity among the non-Labour members who were competing for seats, 1 There appears to be some truth in this because Labour stood one candidate for each seat whereas the non-Labour candidates stood as independents or as individuals with no party labels. This resulted in 11 non-Labour candidates for the 5 seats in Woolston, 7 for the 5 seats in Pear Tree and 7 for 5 seats in Sholing. Labour undoubtedly benefited from the disarray among opposition candidates but Labour had also built a clear political identity around concerns over issues like high food prices, rent levels and industrial conditions during the war. Labour repeated its success at the Board of Guardians elections in Southampton also held in April. Labour increased their representation from 7 seats to 12 out of a total of 26. The remaining members were divided between 5 Conservatives, 4 Liberals and 5 Independents.²

At the Borough Council elections in Southampton in November 1919, Labour took 3 seats and held on to 3 seats gained before the war increasing its representation to 12. They gained Town ward and St. Mary's from the Conservatives and St. Denys from the Liberals. The Liberals also lost a seat to the Conservatives in All Saints ward. The composition of the council after the

²<u>lbid</u>, 11 April 1919

¹Southampton Times, 11 April 1919

Table 7.1 Composition of Southampton Borough Council
November 1919

| | Councillors | Aldermen | Total |
|---------|-------------|----------|-------|
| Con | 19 | 11 | 30 |
| Lab | 12 | 0 | 12 |
| Ind | 6 | 1 | 7 |
| Lib | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Ind Lib | 1 | C | 1 |

The clear losers were the Liberals who now only had one elected councillor and one alderman. This success for Labour locally was repeated across the country in the 1919 municipal elections. For example Labour gained 7 seats in Bristol increasing their representation to 14, 10 seats in Liverpool and 9 in Plymouth.4 Labour's credibility as a party had been helped by its wartime experiences and now the party posed a threat to both the Conservative and Liberal Parties if they engaged in three way contests with Labour. Chris Cook has pointed out that the reaction to the Labour victories of 1919 was to see the formation of electoral pacts between the Conservatives and Liberals in many towns and cities. These arrangements could take different forms from a formal amalgamation of the Conservatives and Liberals for municipal purposes to a pact between the two separate parties to ensure a united front against Labour. Sometimes the electoral arrangement would be broken after a while only to be re-established again. In Sheffield the Conservatives and Liberals came together under the banner of a Citizens Association to fight elections on non-party lines. A similar municipal alliance operated in Bristol. In Wolverhampton and Coventry the Conservative and Liberal Parties came to arrangements about their respective

³<u>Ibid</u>, 24 Nov 1919

⁴C.Cook, <u>The Age of Alignment</u>. <u>Electoral Politics in Britain 1922 – 1929</u> (London 1975) p. 51

parties standing candidates to ensure a united front against Labour.5

In Southampton, the Conservatives and Liberals came together to form an Independent Group on the Borough Council in opposition to the Labour Party.

In September 1920, 39 of the 42 non-Labour members on the Borough Council published a joint statement announcing an end to 'party politics' in municipal affairs. It stated, "We the following members of the County Borough Council have honourably and unanimously agreed that, so far as we are concerned, Party Politics should no longer be a fact in municipal life.

We believe the great majority of the ratepayers will welcome the change and trust that, at the approaching Municipal Elections, they will support the non party candidates.

We have conferred with Representative Organisations which are interested in the prosperity and welfare of the town viz-the Chamber of Commerce; members of the Rotarian Club; the Middle Classes Union; Comrades of the Great War; Ward and Ratepayer Associations etc. and find that they approve of this policy.

Opportunities will be given to us at various ward meetings to explain more in detail our views on this subject and we appeal to the Ratepayers generally to do all in their power to assist us in carrying out now and in the future the policy of No Politics in Local Public Life".⁶

The leader of the new Independent Party was Alderman Sidney Kimber who was a Conservative. In his autobiography Kimber said of the Independent Party, "The object of the municipal organisation being to counteract any extreme action or unfair class legislation and to promote the welfare of all

⁵C.Cook, <u>op cit</u>, pp. 56-60

⁶Southampton Times, 11 Sept 1920

classes for the good of the town and its inhabitants generally".7

The creation of the Independent Party was the final confirmation of the anti-Labour pact that had operated between the Conservatives and Liberals since 1905. The claim of those signing the declaration that they were acting to remove politics from municipal affairs was disingenuous. What was objected to was a certain form of politics. Labour used municipal politics to promote the Labour Party and made no real distinction between municipal and parliamentary politics. Kimber said of Labour,"... their attitude was and has ever been a propagandist National Labour Party".⁸

The Conservatives were the dominant force in the new party. The Liberals joined not just because they were being threatened by Labour and the Conservatives. There was increasingly little real distinction between the attitude and policy of the two parties locally. Chris Cook commenting on the decline of the Liberal Party says that this was due to the fact that traditional Liberal concerns such as education, denominational issues and temperance did not have the same relevance after the War. "In general however, with much of the old religious cleavage gone, there was little at municipal level to distinguish Liberals and Conservatives. The Party labels had in many cases become empty of real content - bottles with bits of old labels but with no inspiring liquor left".9 The lack of distinctive municipal policy from the Liberals in Southampton was a noted feature before the War and was much lamented among some sections of the Party as well as from the editorial columns of the Southampton Times. The lack of a distinct identity was also beginning to become apparent in parliamentary politics. In March 1920 in an interview with the Southampton Times one of the two coalition Liberal MPs, Dudley Ward, declared, "...the difference between Liberals and Conservatives are infinitesimal compared to the measure of their agreement in the fundamental faith of constitutional progress". 10 This was not an opinion shared unanimously in local Liberal ranks

⁷Sir Sidney Kimber, <u>Thirty Eight Years of Public Life in Southampton</u> 1910-1948 (Privately Published 1949) p. 194

⁸lbid, p. 194

⁹C.Cook, op cit, p. 79

¹⁰Southampton Times, 13 March 1920

but its opponents appeared to be in a minority. E T Sims an ex-president of the local party did not agree with the national coalition with the Conservatives and A J Cheverton argued in March 1920 that the decision not to contest municipal seats on a political basis had been disastrous for the Party, providing no incentive for political activity and organisation.¹¹ The tension created by the cooperation with the Conservatives at local and national level was to pervade Liberal politics in the town throughout the 1920s.

The alliance of Liberals and Conservatives at local elections meant that Labour was unlikely to be involved in three way contests against their main opponents and therefore they faced a more difficult task in winning seats. The election for the Borough Council in November 1920 was the first fought by the newly formed Independent Party and the first after the extension of the Borough and the absorption of the Itchen Urban District Council. This resulted in the creation of four new wards returning three members each. The proposal to extend the borough had been first mooted by Sidney Kimber in 1918. Labour members on the Southampton Borough Council supported the proposal to extend the borough and William Bonner, a Labour member for Northam, sat on the subcommittee drawing up the detailed proposals. The Labour Chairman of the Itchen Urban District Council, Reuben Taplin, agreed to the absorption and as part of this, the Borough Council undertook to promote the purchase of the Floating Bridge across the Itchen and Northam Bridge, both of which were long standing Labour demands. 12 Given Labour's success in winning the Itchen Council, it is likely that Labour saw the extension of the borough as an opportunity to increase its strength on the newly enlarged Borough Council. The Southampton Times, although sceptical about the new alliance between Conservatives and Liberals, said it was "...not opposed to the idea of a stand being made against the efforts of the socialists to seize the reins of power at this somewhat critical stage of the town's history in view of the heavy

¹¹Ibid, 6 March 1920

¹²Southampton Borough Council Minutes and Proceeding of Council and Committees 1919-1920, 2 Jan 1920. S.Kimber, op cit, pp. 103-111

At the election, Labour failed to make any gains and the Independents won all 12 seats in the new wards covered by the extension of the borough. Councillor T McDonnell, Secretary of the non-party organisation said after the election, "The clear majority which the non-party members now hold in the County Borough Council will unquestionably be used for unity of action in preventing wasteful extravagant and irresponsible expenditure that has caused so much feeling not only in this town but throughout the country for the past year or two". 14

The theme of economy was enthusiastically taken up by the Independents, who were, of course, mainly Conservatives, and by local ratepayer associations and bodies like the Middle Classes Union. They monitored the activity of the Borough Council and the Board of Guardians. In 1921 they formed a Municipal Vigilance Committee, "... to watch all proposed local expenditure and secure its postponement or abandonment where such is possible without detriment to the public welfare". To try to counter arguments that the Independents were against improving housing or education with their policy of economy some candidates for election subtly varied their message. Mr J H Wood Independent Candidate for Bitterne and Sholing, one of the new wards, declared at an election meeting, "In bringing about necessary improvements there was an economical way and an extravagant one". 16

This emphasis on economy was not just a concern about expenditure itself, it had a wider political resonance. Ross McKibbin has argued that the Conservatives promoted a broadly deflationary economic strategy which involved cutting government expenditure and adopting fairly orthodox financial management of the economy. However, he suggests that while this operated largely in the political interests of the professional and commercial middle class

¹³Southampton Times, 18 Sept 1920

¹⁴<u>Ibid</u>, 6 Nov 1920

¹⁵<u>Ibid</u>, 9 April 1921

¹⁶Ibid, 30 Oct 1920

a crucial factor was the attitude of these groups towards the working class. He goes on to say, "... for the Conservative predominance was, in reality, based not on economic self interest but on ideologically determined class stereotypes and conventional wisdoms which mobilised, first, nearly all those who were not working class and then much of the working class as well". 17 The working class were seen as constantly in conflict with their employers and appeared to be using their power for their own interests against that of the rest of the community. For example Councillor Pearce speaking at a meeting of the Middle Classes Union in November 1919 said, "The best way we can help with industrial unrest is to be prepared for war... What a certain noisy section of the workers are out for is not social betterment. They are out for anarchy and revolution (hear, hear)". 18 The Independents sought to portray themselves as not anti working class but opposed to socialism or extremism. Mrs Foster Welch the Independent candidate for Newtown said she was out to fight extremists not labouring men and women. She argued that she would be a better representative because Labour Party candidates were limited in their freedom to vote by their allegiance to the Labour Movement rather than the community as a whole. She declared, "Surely it is better to have people on the Council who could vote with free hands". 19

Labour lost ground in the early 1920s in the face of the municipal alliance and the agitation of groups like the Middle Classes Union. At the election for the Board of Guardians in 1922, the Middle Classes Union campaigned with the Independent Party candidates on a platform of reducing expenditure. The effect was to reduce Labour representation from 12 to 3, and only 6 of the previous 26 members of the board were returned.²⁰ On the Borough Council they suffered a net loss of seats to the Independents who gained seven in 1921 and 1922 to Labour's three. Labour won the remaining seat in Northam and picked up one in each of the Itchen Wards. (See Appendix 19).

18 Southampton Times, 24 Nov 1919

¹⁹<u>Ibid</u>, 2 Oct 1920

¹⁷R.McKibbin, The Ideologies of Class, op cit, p. 270

²⁰A.J. Vinson, "Poor Relief, Public Assistance and the Maintenance of the Unemployed in Southampton Between the Wars". in <u>Southern History</u> Vol 2 1980 pp. 188-9

Although the decision of the Liberals to join the Conservatives in a municipal alliance had some effect in halting Labour's progress, they were allowing the Conservatives to set the political agenda and it was to have an impact on their parliamentary election performance.

In the 1922 General Election Labour doubled their number of voters from 1918 and the Liberals came bottom of the poll (see Appendix 20). Tommy Lewis was the only official Labour candidate and his vote went up from 7,828 in 1918 to 14,868 in 1922. It is not clear why there was no second candidate in the election, for Fred Perriman had been re-nominated along with Lewis in 1919. It is possible that he left the area before the election and there was not sufficient time to select a new candidate. The Party may have chosen not to select a second candidate as Dr E H Stancomb was contesting the election. Stancomb had been a member of the ILP before the War but shortly after the 1918 election local doctors agreed to give him support as an independent for the League of National Health.²¹ Stancomb polled 14,193 votes and around half of these were shared with Lewis.

Although Lewis' performance appears rather modest it has to be set in the context of the Liberal collapse. In 1918 as Coalition Liberals they took just over 59% of the total vote but in 1922 this had slipped to just over 22%. The Southampton Times carried correspondence suggesting that Labour had attracted the votes of radical Liberals and Labour's campaign had emphasised that there was no difference between the Liberals and the Tories. The editorial column denied that there was no difference but felt that locally it had an impact. "Political history hardly supports that chunk of argument, on general lines, but it is no use trying to conceal the fact that in this part of the country, at any rate, Liberals have combined with Tories in opposing Labour, so far as local government elections are concerned... in our opinion, expressed time and again, it has weakened Liberalism as a fighting force and drained the Liberal Party as a distinctive, definite and effective unity". 22

²²Ibid, 25 Nov 1922

²¹Southampton Times, 21 Oct 1922

One leading Liberal, Cheverton thought that Dr Stancomb had drawn votes from Liberals but he also acknowledged that the coalition had damaged the Liberal Party. "... although every endeavour has been made to bring the two sections of the Liberal Party together again, there were many Liberals who declared they could not vote for the two candidates on account of their support for the Coalition."23 Both Liberals Philipps and Ward, declared themselves to be admirers of Lloyd George at their adoption meeting. Philipps was however not committed to supporting Lloyd George or Asquith in advance of reunification. The work of reorganising the Liberal Association to fight an election had begun earlier in the year but unity was still fragile as the Southampton Times reported. "The Chairman (Cheverton) observed that at the first meeting they voted against any reference to objectives and it was still advisable to maintain that attitude. They do not desire to accentuate any differences" 24 By July reorganisation had been completed in 14 out of 17 wards but apart from appointing ward officers progress was patchy. The report to the executive committee of the Liberal Association said that Town ward had a secretary but no chairman, Trinity ward had the same and Portswood had both a chairman and Secretary. Elsewhere there were problems. "In regard to St Mary's however, they had not made much progress ... they did not seem to be progressing with regard to Freemantle, Millbrook and Shirley wards". 25

Disillusionment with the Coalition, divisions within the Liberal Party and poor organisation all played their part in the Liberal defeat but Labour was also promoting its own agenda some of which was potentially attractive to radical Liberals. Lewis' election address for 1922 included a call for the revision of the peace treaties, disarmament and support for the League of Nations. On the domestic front he supported work or maintenance for the unemployed, paid for by the national exchequer, support for measures to improve housing, making particular reference to the lack of adequate housing locally, removing taxes on food and extending the franchise to women on the same basis as men. He acknowledged concern over economy in public expenditure but concluded

²⁵<u>lbid</u>, 8 July 1922

²³<u>Ibid</u>, 18 Nov 1922

²⁴Ibid, 11 March 1922

education, particularly because of its value, should be excluded from cuts in spending. He said in his election address, "I am in favour of all economy in national expenditure which does not interfere with the full mental and physical development of the people". ²⁶

The decision of Baldwin to call a quick election on the issue of the introduction of Protection united the Liberals and could have provided a platform for a Liberal recovery in Southampton. As a port the town depended on trade from around the world and Free Trade had always appeared an unquestioned faith in the town. The Southampton Times was aware of the potential advantages but urged the Liberals to work hard because, "... while Colonel Perkins and Lord Apsley will have the Protectionists behind them in solid phalanx, the Free Traders will be ranged under the Liberal and Labour banners". ²⁷

The Labour candidates Tommy Lewis and Reginald Sorenson, a Free Church minister and local councillor in Walthamstow, insisted in their manifesto that free trade was not the issue. "The Labour Party does not accept the pretence that the issue is between Free Trade and Protection, believing that neither can solve any of our grave social problems". 28 It was argued that Free Trade without the revision of peace treaties, a national effort to tackle unemployment and the provision of adequate housing was inadequate. Locally, Labour mounted a strong attack on the Liberals. Lewis portrayed Liberal unity as a cynical manoeuvre to get back into power. At a mass meeting at the Coliseum, Robert Williams secretary of the Transport Workers Federation spoke, arguing that Labour was now the natural home for radicals who had outgrown Liberalism. "All the best brains of the Liberal Party were coming into the Labour Party. That was where they belonged. He himself would never apologise for the fact that he was cradled in Liberalism, but he realised the hollow mockery, pretence and humbug of the Liberal Party. ... Let Liberals think of the converts to Labour: Ponsonby, Trevelyan, the brothers Buxton, E D Morel and within the last week Addison had announced that he reposed no confidence in reunited Liberalism

²⁶Labour Party manifesto for Tommy Lewis 1922

²⁷Southampton Times, 17 Nov 1923

²⁸Papers of Reginald, Lord Sorenson. Manifesto of Lewis and Sorenson 1923 SOR/2/A House of Lords Record Office

The result of the election left the Liberals bottom of the poll again but they had increased their share of the vote slightly from 22.6% in 1922 to 26.9% in 1923. Labour had also increased its share of the vote to 33.3%. The Southampton Times sought to portray the result as a vindication of Free Trade as most voters had supported the two parties opposed to Protection. They also acknowledged that Labour did very well largely at the expense of Liberalism. "... Liberals who have got into the Borough Council by forswearing their political allegiance municipally have been detected in the commission of very illiberal deeds in collusion with Tories of the deepest dye. ... if these things are of no account, how is it when a revival of Liberalism is being proclaimed in the country generally, and this election has yielded such remarkable proofs of it the Southampton Liberals are still in the cart". 30 While this did have an impact locally, the malaise was probably deeper. Chris Cook argues that the Liberals ran a sterile negative campaign that offered nothing to win back the working class industrial vote and Labour was able to capitalise on this.³¹ The Liberals were living on past achievements and there was some evidence of this locally. At a party meeting to discuss the present position of Liberalism in September 1923 one speaker insisted that Liberal policy was the same as it had always been and that there was no difference of principle between Lloyd George and Asguith. The Party had always legislated for the whole community whereas Labour favoured their own class as did the Tories. 32 A further problem for the Liberals was their failure to win over younger voters. At a Liberal Party executive meeting in January 1924 one executive member acknowledged this: "One came into touch with Liberals, but on asking what about the younger members of the family one was told they had gone 'Labour'. Why? Because there had been very little to attract them to the Liberal Party."33

³⁰Ibid, 8 Dec 1923

³³<u>lbid,</u> 12 Jan 1924

²⁹Southampton Times, 1 Dec 1923

³¹C.Cook, <u>op cit</u>, pp. 148-9

³²Southampton Times, 29 Sept 1923

The issue of Free Trade did not seem to play to the advantage of the Liberals in the way it had done in the past. The Times predicted a Tory win and noted that the Liberal scare of dear food had not appeared to affect the majority of women voters. Apsley and Perkins argued that dominion and colonial trade would increase thus offsetting any potential reductions elsewhere.³⁴

Municipal and Parliamentary Elections 1924 - 1929

Labour's share of the municipal vote had been on a plateau of around 40% from the early 1920s. In 1924 it dropped to 36%, probably as a result of the defeat at the general election which was held a few days before the municipal poll. It then rose steadily to over 50% despite a drop in 1927. Between 1923 and 1927 Labour made 13 gains and suffered 4 losses making a net increase of 9 members on the Borough Council. Labour consolidated its position in St. Mary's and in Town ward as well as making gains in all of the Itchen wards that formed the extension to the Borough; Bitterne and Pear Tree, Bitterne and Sholing, Woolston and St. Nicholas. Although Labour performed well, challenging and beating the Independents for the share of the popular vote at municipal elections on two occasions, the Independents regularly had uncontested seats which they held. The number varied from 3 in 1924 to 9 in 1927. (See appendix 21).

Labour campaigned for improvements to housing conditions, regularly pressing the Council to ensure the building of more homes and to deal with the problems of insanitary housing. They argued for improvements to school buildings and more provision of secondary education. Tommy Lewis acknowledged however the problem that the cry of 'economy' would always be used against them. In November 1927 he wrote, "our opponents too have always been able to successfully use the "bogey" of the rates and frighten the people into the belief that if Labour ruled the Borough Council the rates would rise tremendously". 35

This was to continue to be problem which Labour would have to confront but, as has been suggested by McKibbin, it represented a wider hostility to the working

1927

³⁴The Times, 5 Dec 1923

The Test, A Monthly Review of Labour Affairs in Southampton, Nov

class based on a fear of militant trade unionism and the growth of a 'socialist' Labour Party. The 1924 election gave full vent to the exaggerated fears about a communist threat to British society. While this was expressed through groups like the Middle Classes Union some people joined more extreme right wing organisations such as the British Fascists. This organisation was quite active in Southampton during the 1920s, and included three Borough Councillors among their leading local members. They were Lieutenant Colonel W E Pittard Independent Councillor for Millbrook, A K Barlow Independent Councillor for St. Denys and Mrs Bessie Leach Independent Councillor for All Saints from 1924. Pittard took over as local area commander from Barlow and Mrs Leach was area commander of the women's unit in 1925 and 1926. ³⁶

They were concerned about the threat to property from the alleged socialist menace and they were ultra patriotic emphasising the importance of the national community, 'the country' against class interests. They organised parades for events such as Empire Day and held propaganda meetings as well as social events. One of the biggest meetings they were involved with was in September 1926 when 2,000 people came to the Coliseum to hear the rightwing Tory MP Commander Oliver Locker-Lampson organiser of the 'Clear out the Reds' campaign. The meeting attracted important local political figures to the platform including Alderman Sidney Kimber, Alderman McDonnell and Lord Apsley one of the two Conservative MPs for the town. The chairman and speakers were escorted on to the platform by a guard of honour provided by the local British Fascist members and the organisation's colours were "prominently displayed behind the speakers". Although there is no suggestion that figures like Kimber or McDonnell were Fascists those on the right of the Conservative Party were prepared to associate with them and of course, three members served on the Borough Council during the early to mid 1920's. Richard Thurlow's verdict on the British Fascists was that they were, "An unarmed paramilitary group, their role in practice proved to be a cross between an adult boy scout movement and a slightly more sinister defence force and strike breaking organisation". 37 Within Southampton the influence of the organisation is difficult to assess but some of its members were part of a Conservative

³⁶Southampton Times, 30 May 1925, 10 Oct 1925 and 28 March 1925 <u>The Fascist Bulletin</u> 13 June 1925 and 11 July 1925

political group that ran the council and their presence indicated a strong ideological opposition to Labour.

The decision of the Liberal Party to allow the formation of a minority Labour Government divided the Liberals locally. There were those who enthusiastically welcomed the new government and those who wanted to insist on Liberal independence and strike a more critical note about the new government. The former were represented by Mr S J Line an ex-president of the Liberal Association. He gave notice of a motion to the to the executive of the Association in February 1924. "That this meeting of the Executive Committee of Southampton Liberal Association expresses its satisfaction at the overthrow of the late Conservative Government and cordially approves of the action of the Liberal Members of Parliament who helped to bring about its defeat. Further, the committee welcomes the advent of the present government believing that its policy as foreshadowed by Mr Ramsay MacDonald (now Prime Minister) in his recent speech at the Albert Hall, will be one that all Liberals can heartily support". 38 Line argued that MacDonald's speech could have been given by any Liberal statesman without any discredit. Line subsequently withdrew his motion following a disagreement over the exclusion of a Southampton Times reporter, who normally attended such meetings, on the instructions of the chairman. An alternative resolution was passed which became Liberal policy. It said, "That the meeting of the Executive committee of the Southampton Liberal Association thanks Mr Asquith for his wise and courageous leadership, expresses gratification at the defeat of Protection and the fall of an incompetent Tory government, and declares its steadfast determination to resist every attempt to destroy private enterprise and establish a socialistic organisation of industry; and to continue to press for a policy of international peace based upon the League of Nations and for a continuous effort at home to remove existing social evils and injustices, to decrease unemployment and to raise the standard

³⁸Southampton Times, 9 Feb 1924

of life for the mass of the people". 39

The new Labour Government adopted a cautious programme but it was intended to show that Labour could be trusted to govern. Ramsay MacDonald was however determined to govern on his own terms and offered no concessions to the Liberals. They were challenged to vote against various Labour measure knowing that they could bring the Government down but then have to face a general election whose outcome was uncertain. Cook argues that MacDonald's strategy of moderation paid off even though the Government only lasted until October 1924. MacDonald wanted to put himself and Labour in a position to inherit the leadership of the old radical tradition thus making the Liberals superfluous. A correspondent to the Southampton Times writing under the pseudonym 'Modern Labour' summed it up saying, "The political fight of the future is between the wealthy classes concentrated in the Conservative Party and the middle and working classes ranged behind the Labour Party. It is for the remaining Liberals to choose their side". 41

By the time the election was called, the Liberals had not secured candidates and the Southampton Times sounded a warning. "It will be unfortunate if the coming election proves to be a fight in which Conservatives and Liberals unite to defeat Labour, for Liberalism still has or should have a message and mission of its own, differing widely from the principle of Toryism".⁴² At this stage the lack of candidates was not due to any conscious political decision not to contest the seats, it was down to the fact that a selection process had not been organised.

However, it appears that the Liberals considered standing only one candidate if the Conservatives would agree to drop one of theirs. This was refused by the

⁴²<u>Ibid</u>, 11 Oct 1924

³⁹<u>Ibid</u>, 16 Feb 1924

⁴⁰C. Cook, op cit, p. 213

⁴¹Southampton Times, 1 March 1924

The official Liberal position in this election was decided at a meeting of the local Liberal Association and the Chairman A J Cheverton proposed the resolution. "That the Parliamentary Committee having fully considered every aspect of the local situation recommend the Southampton Liberal Association to take no part in the forthcoming General Election in this constituency and leaves it to the individual members of the party to vote according to their judgement"44 The resolution was passed unanimously but the debate revealed serious divisions within Liberal ranks and a substantial group prepared to support the Conservatives. Mr A C Howard who seconded the resolution said he did so with mixed feelings, but, "speaking for myself again, I sing God Save the King, I do not sing The Red Flag (applause). I say that one has a right to sing The Red Flag but to me it is disloyal..... I would not support anyone who would destroy the basis of our constitution (applause)". Fred Trim argued that they had three courses of action, to do nothing and help the socialists, to actively support the socialists or support the forces of order and decent government. "As patriotic men and women they had only one course open to them - to support the forces of law and order". This was echoed by Councillor Mrs Morris who said, "She would not vote for the Conservative candidates but what they represented at this juncture, and everyone who voted against them – and those who did not vote would really be voting against the constitutional candidates - would be giving a vote against Liberalism (cries of 'no')". Councillor Laughland stated that if they should support the Conservatives it was very likely that Liberals would obtain a great part of the principal positions in the new Government, but if they returned the Labour Party "our people will have no positions at all". 45

Strong feelings were also expressed on the other side of the argument. Mr Lapworth said, "I have never yet met an honest Tory unless it is Lord Robert Cecil whose work for the League of Nations has been good. I would sooner

⁴⁵Ibid, 18 Oct 1924

⁴³Ibid, 18 Oct 1924

⁴⁴Southampton Times, 18 Oct 1924

vote for one socialist than ten Conservatives put together". Mr McHardy blamed the Liberals on the Borough Council for the current problems of the Party" From the speeches they had heard that evening they might almost think that they were at a Conservative meeting instead of a Liberal gathering". Some, unhappy with the situation and the attitude of their party colleagues pledged to spoil their voting papers or go and work, or if possible vote, in constituencies with a Liberal candidate.⁴⁶

The Southampton Times tried to put a positive slant on the events claiming that the Liberal Party had been very open and candid, as a political organisation about the important decisions and the reasons why they did not field any candidates. The only comfort they could draw was that the recommendation of the Party was not the result of any formal pact with the Tories. However, this was somewhat undermined by the fact that a number of people identified as Liberals signed the nomination papers for the Conservative candidates who described themselves as the Constitutional Candidates. Both Councillor Fred Trim and Councillor Laughland openly supported Apsley and Perkins by attendance at their election meetings.

The decision by the Liberals really marked the end for independent Liberalism in the town. Councillor Laughland's belief that the Conservatives would allow the Liberals a role in government seemed to be harking back to the days of the coalition but it was certainly an about turn compared to 1923 when the Liberal Party had been fighting for Free Trade against the threat of Protection. This was an example of how the Liberals, in municipal politics in particular, had come under the ideological influence of the Conservatives and how this had now influenced their attitude to parliamentary politics.

The Tory candidates made concerted efforts to win over the Liberal vote. They placed a number of full page and half page advertisements in local newspapers. One in the Southern Daily Echo carried a headline stating that Lieutenant Colonel Spranger, one of the Liberal candidates in Southampton in 1923, had

⁴⁶Ibid, 18 Oct 1924

⁴⁷Ibid, 25 Oct 1924, Hampshire Advertiser 25 Oct 1924

sent Perkins and Apsley a telegram with best wishes for their victory at the election. It went on ".... he is prepared to put COUNTRY BEFORE PARTY and support the Constitutional Cause". ⁴⁸ A direct address was made to Liberal voters through a full page advert in the Southampton Times headed "Liberals and the Election. How to Vote". It went on to quote Councillor Trims three choices. "In Councillor Fred Trims' opinion there is only one course open to Liberals to support the forces of law and order." The rest of the advertisement featured selected quotes from Liberals under the heading 'What your Leaders think'. ⁴⁹

As well as trying to win over Liberal voters the Conservatives emphasised the 'red scare'. Cook has noted, "As the campaign progressed this concentration on Russia and the Bolsheviks became increasingly pronounced". Two examples of advertisements placed in the Southern Daily Echo illustrate this. One was headed:

"An appeal to the Electors of Southampton UNDER WHICH BANNER? THE RED FLAG OF MOSCOW or THE UNION JACK OF OLD ENGLAND"

It portrayed Russia as a place with no freedom of speech where tyranny ruled and from where trained agitators were sent to disrupt the British Empire. It concluded, "It is realised by the leading men and women of the Constitutional Party that the grave responsibility resting on the electors is nothing less than the decision of the fate of our country. There is nothing whatever in this election but strong, stable British government on one side and anarchy and red ruin on the other. If the communist grip (sic) for world power cannot be stopped now it cannot be stopped later". ⁵¹ A couple of days later the theme was repeated in another advert headed "The Issue Britons or Bolsheviks – Which?" On one side were ten negative points about Bolshevism and on the other side ten positive points about the British Empire.

⁴⁸Southern Daily Echo, 28 Oct 1924

⁴⁹Southampton Times, 28 Oct 1924

⁵⁰C. Cook, <u>op cit</u> p. 297 ⁵¹Southern Daily Echo, 25 Oct 1924

The result of the election was a clear victory for the Conservative candidates but Labour's vote also increased. It is not of course possible to say with any certainty what Liberal voters did with their votes. Some may have abstained but some voted for the Labour or Conservative candidates. McKibbin has suggested that nationally the Liberal vote split about three to two in favour of the Conservatives in 1924. Some indication of the way the Liberal vote may have split can be obtained by comparing the voting in 1923 and 1924 General Elections. The Southampton electorate in 1924 was 78,776 compared to 76,873 in 1923 and the turnout in both elections was similar, 66.6% in 1924 and 66.3% in 1923. Set out below is a comparison of the party votes for the two Labour and Conservative candidates at both elections. This excludes the votes split between candidates of different parties and also those only voting for one candidate of either party.

Table 7.2 Party Vote for Two Candidates 1923 and 1924

General Elections.

| CANDIDATES | 1923 | 1924 | INCREASE |
|--------------------------|--------|--------|----------|
| Apsley and Perkins (Con) | 19,738 | 29,668 | +9,930 |
| Lewis and Sorenson (Lab) | 16,042 | 21,121 | +5,079 |

The Liberal Party vote for both candidates in 1923 was 12,965. If it is assumed that most of the party vote for Conservative and Labour from 1923 stayed with those parties, and the majority of the Liberal voters from 1923 actually cast a vote in 1924, nearly twice as many Liberal voters went to the Conservatives as to Labour. This was a sharper split in Southampton than nationally as suggested by McKibbin. Cook notes that in boroughs with tradition of cooperation between Liberals and Conservatives the Liberal vote swung heavily towards the Conservatives. He also argues that the vote was influenced by the social composition and political inclination of rank and file Liberals in the constituency rather than the advice of individual Liberals however prominent. 53

⁵³C. Cook, op cit, pp 327-8

⁵²R. McKibbin, The Ideologies of Class p. 261

The experience of Southampton seems to confirm Cook's observation about Liberal/Conservative cooperation and it suggests the majority of Liberal voters were in fact more conservative. Their local leaders appeared to reflect this.

At the 1929 general election, Labour faced two parties again as the Liberals had decided to contest the election. The decision of Liberal leaders in Southampton to support the Conservatives against Labour in 1924 allowed the Conservatives to portray a vote for the Liberals as a wasted vote. The Conservatives recognised that a three way split might lose them the parliamentary seats and they tried to encourage Liberals to vote for them in 1929. The Liberals responded to this by placing an advertisement in the local press rebuking the Tory candidates for their tactics. "These are tactics of defeated and discredited men. None of our friends will be deceived. We are on the EVE OF A MAGNIFICENT VICTORY". 54 That statement proved to be little more than wishful thinking. The result of the election was that the Liberals were bottom of the poll as they had been in 1923. Both their candidates polled fewer votes in 1929 than they had in 1923 and their share of their vote fell from 26.9% in 1923 to 17.9% in 1929. The electorate was enlarged as a result of the enfranchisement of women over 21 years of age so direct comparison with earlier elections is difficult. However it does appear that the Liberals were able to reclaim at least some of their vote which had gone to support the Conservative candidates in 1924. It seems unlikely they attracted many votes from Labour because of their cooperation with the Conservatives in 1924. Also they made no attempt to appeal specifically to working class voters. They had never sought to pursue a radical agenda around social reform and at this election they made little mention of Lloyd Georges plans for tackling unemployment. The local Liberal candidates talked about Free Trade and the local option for licensing laws⁵⁵. The Conservative vote fell from 58.1% in 1924 to 38% in 1929. Labour's vote was up from 41.9% in 1924 to 44% in 1929.

Labour was obviously assisted by facing two opponents at this election but even so Labour's victory was not expected. The Southern Daily Echo commented, "One of the sensations of the election has been Southampton's complete

⁵⁴Southern Daily Echo, 29 May 1929

⁵⁵<u>Ibid</u>, 15 May 1929, <u>The Times</u>, 22 May 1929

turning over to Labour"56. The newspaper commented that Labour's victory had been due to three things. The electorate was losing its fear of Labour policy, that the newly enfranchised women voters had used their votes against the Conservatives who had introduced it, and both the successful candidates were local

Labour's performance at municipal elections certainly suggested a growing confidence in them and while this can be a useful indication of the potential for Labour support in future general elections it probably was an underestimate. The franchise for municipal and parliamentary elections was different and some people were disqualified from voting in municipal elections but eligible to vote in parliamentary elections. The extent of this and its implications in Southampton are explored in more detail later in this chapter. Labour was successful in persuading the Independents on the Borough Council to build more homes in exchange for Labour support for the building of a new Town Hall. The problem of poor housing had been evident for some time and the controversy over the new Town Hall which arose first in 1925 and then again in 1928, gave Labour the opportunity to press home their case for more housing ⁵⁷

By 1929 Labour was securing more of the popular vote in municipal elections but this is probably an underestimate of their potential support at a general election. Also they had secured some real political concessions on the housing issue on which they had campaigned for many years.

With regard to the voting figures for the 1929 election it does appear that Labour had the support of more of the new voters, who were mainly women, than the Conservatives and Liberals. Comparison with 1924 is complicated by the extended franchise and the fact the Liberals did not stand any candidates that year. The table overleaf shows votes for each candidate in 1923, 1924 and 1929. along with the number of people voting at these elections.

 ⁵⁶Southern Daily Echo, 1 June 1929
 ⁵⁷This is covered in more detail in Chapter Eight

Table 7.3 Candidates Votes in General Elections 1923-1929.

| | CON | <u>LAB</u> | <u>LIB</u> | NO's VOTING |
|------|--------|------------|------------|-------------|
| 1923 | 20,453 | 17,208 | 13,724 | 51,676 |
| | 20,249 | 16,679 | 13,657 | |
| | | | | |
| 1924 | 30,703 | 22,183 | - | 53,203 |
| | 30,201 | 21,768 | - | |
| | | | | |
| 1929 | 27,898 | 32,249 | 12,966 | 73,477 |
| | 26,801 | 31,252 | 12,836 | |

It has already been suggested that Liberal voters overwhelmingly chose to support the Conservatives in 1924 but many returned to the Liberals in 1929. It is assumed that the Liberals were less successful in attracting new voters because evidence of this was referred to earlier in this chapter. ⁵⁸ If it is also assumed the Conservatives lost around 8-10,000 votes back to the Liberals they appear to have gained only around 7-8,000 new votes while the Liberals probably gained between 2 and 3,000 new votes. The Labour vote increased by around 10,000 votes from 1924 and by around 14,000 votes from 1923. A smaller number of Liberal voters switched to Labour in 1924 and it is assumed many of these stayed with Labour in 1929 because they were more likely to have been the ones frustrated by the Liberals' support for Conservatives at municipal and parliamentary level.

The other factor mentioned by the Echo was the fact that both Labour candidates were local men. Lewis had contested the parliamentary seat four times before and in 1929 he almost doubled his individual 'plumper vote' from 612 in 1924 to 1,101 in 1929.⁵⁹ Lewis and Morley had both been active in trade union and Labour Party organisations since before the first world war.

Labour's success in the 1929 election was a significant achievement albeit on a minority vote. They had built on their progress at municipal level and had been

⁵⁸See <u>Southampton Times</u>, 12 Jan 1924

⁵⁹The plumper vote is where an elector only votes for one candidate and do not use their second vote in the two member seat.

able to attract more of the newly enfranchised voters than their opponents. The fact that they had been successful in campaigning on the housing issue may have been significant for the new working women voters. The Labour Party women's sections were active in the campaigns on housing and this may have helped the new voters identify more readily with the Labour candidates. Also it is clear from the previous chapter that the spate of industrial disputes in the 1920s had been essentially defensive and the general strike in 1926 failed, also the local seamen's union the AMWU had been crushed. By the later 1920s, the local Labour movement was recognising that political activity probably provided the best means for furthering working class interests, and this was reflected in Labour's success in 1929.

Municipal and Parliamentary Elections 1930 – 1938

Chris Cook says that the municipal pacts between Liberals and Conservatives prepared the way for parliamentary cooperation against Labour as well as forcing the radical working class Liberal vote into the arms of Labour.⁶⁰ There is certainly evidence of the former and some evidence of the latter occurring in Southampton. However this was to go a stage further with the 1931 General Election. The lesson of divided opposition to Labour was not lost in 1931. The Liberals in Southampton met Mr Craven Ellis the Conservative candidate to suggest that he and Mr Whitehouse one of the Liberal candidates in 1929 should run together. Craven Ellis indicated that a second Conservative candidate was being considered and an agreement might not therefore be possible. 61 The Times thought an arrangement was possible to run one Conservative and one National Liberal as apparently this was also being considered at Oldham and Stockport. All these seats were held by Labour. "In this way it might be possible to win for the National Government the five seats which are at present held by the Socialists". 62 The Conservatives decided in the end not to proceed with the arrangement. Their chairman Brigadier Jack explained bluntly, "The Conservatives in Southampton have no confidence in Mr

⁶²The Times, 14 Oct 1931

⁶⁰C. Cook, op cit p. 56

⁶¹Hampshire Advertiser, 3 Oct 1931

Whitehouse as a National Candidate. It is useless to ask why this is so. It just happens to be so". 63 The Liberals had selected Whitehouse about a year before but they capitulated to the Conservatives demand and told him they could no longer consider his candidacy. They went on to endorse Sir Charles Barrie who was acceptable to the Conservatives and he was recommended along with Craven Ellis to a joint meeting of Liberals and Conservatives. Brigadier Jack saw it as a significant event. "For the first time he believed in the history of Southampton the Conservative and Liberal Associations had met in Joint session to adopt joint candidates". 64 They set up a joint committee to run the election and the party agents helped in each others' offices. They went further for The Times claimed that the agreement was working so well that the parties were considering fusing to ".... Remain a National Party in the real sense of the word". It was said to be the first constituency to do this. 65

Both Labour candidates opposed the formation of a National Government and argued that Labour as a minority government had been prevented from doing what they had wanted. At their adoption meeting the seconder was Mr Perren who declared, "As a life long Liberal I have much pleasure in seconding. I decline to be led into the trap set by people who for half a century advocated Free Trade and threw it over in five minutes". 66

The result of the election showed that, on an increased turnout, Labour's total vote dropped by just over 17% while the Conservative vote was up nearly 100% on 1929. Stevenson and Cook argue that the middle class vote for the National Government was greatly increased. This together with the collapse of the Liberals and the united front facing Labour were, they considered, more important than the loss of the working class vote. Labour's working class vote in Southampton was clearly affected because at the municipal election in November Labour held on to only two of the six seats they were defending.

⁶⁴Ibid, 17 Oct 1931

⁶⁶Hampshire Advertiser, 17 Oct 1931

⁶³Hampshire Advertiser, 17 Oct 1931

⁶⁵The Times, 16 Oct 1931 and 23 Oct 1931

⁶⁷J. Stevenson & C. Cook <u>The Slump</u>, <u>Society and Politics During the</u> Depression (London 1979) p. 112

In 1935 Labour recovered some of its lost ground taking 40.7% of the total vote compared to 32.5% in 1931. The Liberals and Conservatives continued to work together. Sir Charles Barrie spoke at a social event prior to the election. "It was a happy arrangement that existed between the two political parties locally, and he was confident that by their standing firm as one big organisation for their cause the results would be overwhelming success". Councillor Powdrill Deputy Chairman of the Liberal Association added his comments. ".... it would be a pleasure to the Liberals of Southampton to work with the Conservatives during the next few weeks to the election and he hoped their efforts would be rewarded with a big majority for the National Government". ⁶⁸

Two years after the election a small group of Liberals met and decided that a Liberal Party organisation independent of the Conservative Party should be formed. Its president was A J Cheverton and by 1938 it had established branches in Bevois Ward and at Bitterne Park.⁶⁹ There is no evidence that they attempted to stand any candidates at the municipal elections but they found enough people to establish and sustain a small organisation. The bulk of the Liberals however continued to support the alliance with the Conservatives.

During the 1930s the Independents continued to stress the theme of economy and in 1934 changed their name to the Ratepayers Party. The theme of economy was part of the national campaigning of the Conservative Party. A national leaflet entitled the 'Battle of the Boroughs' distributed in Southampton in 1934 said that socialist councils meant high rates and reduced efficiency. The Ratepayers Party manifesto in 1938 said, "In looking to the future it is essential that matters involving increases in expenditure should be subjected to the most searching examination and that rigid economy should be exercised in all department...."

Labour had to address the 'economy' issue because many electors including those from the working class paid rates. Also, to take control of the Borough

⁶⁸Hampshire Advertiser, 26 Oct 1935

⁰⁹lbid, 12 Feb 1938

⁷⁰Election leaflet Oct 1934, Southampton Labour Party Archive ⁷¹Manifesto of the Ratepayer Party 1938, Southampton Labour Party Archive

Council, Labour had to extend its support to areas outside predominantly working class wards. During the 1930s the local Labour Party produced a series of speakers' notes to help candidates and party workers deal with a range of issues and give them some help to put across Labour's arguments. The notes for 1933 set out the problem, "If we can convince electors that a Labour council would give good value for money paid in rates, extension of municipal enterprise will become a possibility. So long as electors are induced to think of the payment of rates as an unjust burden which should be reduced, so long will they oppose any extension of municipal enterprise."

Labour candidates often acknowledged the need for economy while at the same time advocating spending. The Labour candidate for Bevois ward in 1935 justified spending money on relief works for the unemployed. "Proper economy at all times is a good thing but it is a bad policy to cut down work. Providing schemes of a useful character Wise spending that would improve employment and stimulate trade and business would have my support, but I should be strongly opposed to extravagance." Mr E J Squibb fighting a byelection in Shirley ward in 1937 said that Labour councillors came from backgrounds where money was limited so they could be trusted to administer the Council budget carefully. "Most Labour Councillors have by nature to be careful of money, and are by no means extravagant with public funds."

Some of the impact of the economy argument was lessened by the fact that, under the leadership of Alderman Kimber, the Council developed a new civic centre which was opened in 1932 and a new sports centre opened in 1938. Even Kimber acknowledged the difficulty facing his own schemes in his autobiography. ".... I had considerable experience of the members of the Council and their ways. Opposition to expenditure – no matter how wisely – was inherent in the majority". ⁷⁵

⁷⁵Sir Sidney Kimber, <u>op cit</u> pp. 135, 165 and 168

⁷²Labour Party speakers Notes Municipal Election 1933 p. 5 Alderman James Matthews Papers. Southampton City Record Office D/Mat 22/1

⁷³Election address for George Feltham for municipal by-election Bevois ward 21 May 1935. Southampton Labour Party Archive

⁷⁴Election address of E J Squibb for municipal by-election 19 Jan 1937. Southampton Labour Party Archive

The strong anti-Labour rhetoric continued to be a feature of the Ratepayers Party. Their manifesto in 1935 posed a rhetorical question,"whether Southampton should be abandoned to the Socialist Party, whose aim is not to govern with fairness and justice, but to exploit the community in a spirit of class prejudice with the object of destroying the foundations upon which the life and well being of all our people are built up". In 1938 they pledged to prevent socialism being introduced surreptitiously through municipal activity. "The Ratepayers Party will spare no effort to frustrate this design and to protect the true liberties of the people in the Municipal sphere, safeguarding the principal of individual enterprise which is an essential and vitalising factor in the well being of the community."

During the period from 1930 to 1938 Labour made 13 gains from the Independents/Ratepayers and they in turn took 8 seats from Labour leaving a net gain of 5 for Labour. At the same time Labour took over half of the total municipal vote in five of those eight years and by 1938 the composition of the Borough Council was as follows;

Table 7.4 <u>Composition of the Borough Council – 1938</u>

| | Councillors | Alderman | Total |
|------------|-------------|----------|-------|
| Ratepayers | 28 | 14 | 42 |
| Labour | 23 | 2 | 25 |

Further evidence about the nature of Labour support can be found by considering the social composition of the wards and comparing this in particular to the electoral performance.

⁷⁶Manifesto of the Ratepayers Party 1935 Southampton Labour Party Archive

⁷⁷Manifesto of the Ratepayers Party 1938 Southampton Party Archive

The Social Composition of Municipal Wards

In his study of Liverpool, Sam Davies used local directories that listed the occupation of heads of households to consider the occupational characteristics of wards. This information does not exist in this form for Southampton. However, one source does offer an opportunity to consider the social composition of wards in the inter war period, Professor Percy Ford's study of Southampton, Work and Wealth in a Modern Port, published in 1934. this study involved a survey of income and poverty using mass interviews of the type developed by Charles Booth for his survey of London. Ford's survey was conducted in the autumn of 1928 and covered 21,538 families with children. His classification of eight income grades was based on one used by Booth. 79

Table 7.4 shows the percentage of families in each income class and the definition of each class is also shown as described by Ford. Whereas Ford groups together classes VII and VIII in his table, for the purpose of this analysis they have been separated using information from the Southampton Civic Survey published in 1931. The table provides an approximation of the social mix of each ward at almost the mid point of the inter war period. However it does only cover families with children.

⁷⁸S. Davies, <u>Liverpool Labour. Social and Political Influences on the Development of the Labour Party in Liverpool.</u> 1900 – 1939 (Keele 1996) pp. 201 - 205

⁷⁹P. Ford, <u>Work and Wealth in a Modern Port</u> (London 1934) pp. 95 – 6 (hereafter P. Ford Work and Wealth....)

Table 7.5 Percentage of Families in Income Classes

| | INCOME CLASS | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------|--------------|------|------|------|------|-------|------|---|--|
| WARD | I-IV | V | VI | VII | VIII | TOTAL | | INCOME CLASSES | |
| TOWN | 20.1 | 34.9 | 33.1 | 10.1 | 1.8 | 100 | 1&11 | Casual Labour income 20 | |
| ST MARYS | 44.7 | 17.5 | 27.6 | 9.4 | 0.8 | 100 | | and under 30 shillings. | |
| NORTHAM | 16.0 | 41.2 | 37.4 | 4.3 | 1.1 | 100 | | | |
| TRINITY | 30.0 | 21.6 | 40.2 | 6.7 | 1.5 | 100 | 111 | Intermittent and seasonal | |
| NEWTOWN | 1.6 | 26.8 | 54.5 | 13.3 | 3.8 | 100 | | income 20 and under 40 shillings. | |
| ALL SAINTS | 6.5 | 19.6 | 49.2 | 22.0 | 2.7 | 100 | | | |
| BEVOIS | 2.0 | 27.6 | 43.0 | 14.9 | 12.5 | 100 | IV | Small regular earning | |
| BANISTER | 1.1 | 7.6 | 40.6 | 34.7 | 16.0 | 100 | | income 30 and under 42 shillings. | |
| FREEMANTLE | 10.5 | 18.7 | 49.6 | 18.6 | 2.6 | 100 | V | Regular standard earnings | |
| MILLBROOK | 18.0 | 16.7 | 48.1 | 16.0 | 1.2 | 100 | | income 30 & under 42 shillings. | |
| SHIRLEY | 8.6 | 17.8 | 46.6 | 22.1 | 4.9 | 100 | VI | Skilled income 50 and | |
| PORTSWOOD | 2.8 | 17.2 | 32.5 | 28.9 | 18.6 | 100 | • | under 80 shillings. | |
| ST DENYS | 1.4 | 21.4 | 52.4 | 23.1 | 1.7 | 100 | VII | Supervisory and clerical | |
| BITTERNE & PEARTREE | 11.4 | 23.0 | 48.2 | 14.5 | 2.9 | 100 | | income 100 shillings and over. | |
| BITTERNE & SHOLING | 9.8 | 48.2 | 35.2 | 5.7 | 1.1 | 100 | VIII | Middle class income 100 shillings and over. | |
| WOOLSTON | 9.7 | 20.3 | 55.4 | 12.5 | 2.1 | 100 | | | |
| ST NICHOLAS | 9.0 | 22.1 | 50.5 | 15.3 | 3.1 | 100 | | | |
| TOTAL | 12.5 | 24.1 | 43.5 | 15.7 | 4.2 | 100 | | | |

Source: P. Ford, <u>Work and Wealth in a Modern Port</u> (London 1934) and P. Ford (ed), <u>Southampton Civic Survey</u> (Oxford 1931).

If the figures from table 7.4 are compared with the pattern of voting as indicated by the party control of council seats in the wards in Appendix 19 some conclusion can be drawn about Labour's political support. Some wards returned Labour Councillors on a regular basis during the period and set out overleaf is a list of wards and the number of times a Labour Councillor was elected for that ward.

Table 7.6 No. of Times Labour Councillors Elected in Southampton wards

1919 – 1938

| WARD | NO. OF TIMES ELECTED | RANKING |
|----------------------|----------------------|---------|
| NORTHAM | 20 | 1 |
| ST. MARYS | 17 | 2 |
| BITTERNE & PEAR TREE | 14 | 3 |
| TOWN | 12 | 4 |
| ST. NICHOLAS | 10 | 5 |
| MILLBROOK | 8 | 6 |
| TRINITY | 6 | 7 |
| WOOLSTON | 5 | 8= |
| BITTERNE & SHOLING | 5 | |
| ST. DENYS | 4 | |
| NEWTOWN | 4 | 10= |
| SHIRLEY | 4 | |
| FREEMANTLE | 1 | 13 |
| BEVOIS | 0 | |
| ALL SAINTS | 0 | 14= |
| BANISTER | 0 | |
| PORTSWOOD | 0 | |

From this Table and from Appendix 19 it is possible to identify four types of wards; 1. Safe Labour, 2. Wards that change over time, 3. Marginal wards and 4. Safe Independent/Ratepayers wards.

This produces the following breakdown of wards.

1. Safe Labour

Northam St Nicholas

St. Mary's Trinity

Bitterne and Pear Tree Woolston

Town

2. Change over Time

3. Marginal 4. Safe Independent/Ratepayers

Millbrook All Saints

Shirley Banister

Bevois

Freemantle

Portswood

The four wards in category two all moved towards Labour and St Nicholas could be classed as a safe Labour seat from 1932 as could Town ward from 1935. Three other wards changed categories over time. Bitterne and Sholing moved from safe Independent/Ratepayer (4) to marginal (3) in the 1930's. Newtown moved from safe Independent/Ratepayer (4) to change over time (2) in the 1930's and moved toward Labour. St. Denys was safe Independent (4) from 1922 to 1934 but was marginal (3) from 1919 – 1921 and 1935 to 1938.

Comparing this with the income categories in the wards, it appears that class was an important factor in voting in wards at both ends of the spectrum. Northam was the only ward to elect a Labour councillor every year throughout the period and it had returned Labour councillors before the first World War. In terms of its social composition just over 78% of families were in income classes V and VI. Ford also suggested the ward was distinctive. "The population is very homogenous ... The ward has a social atmosphere of its own, a great

number of families never having lived outside of it, a condition of immobility due partly to the fact that most of the ward lies between the river and the railway line". There was a lot of house sharing in the ward but this was gradually alleviated by residents moving into council houses. Four of the six Labour councillors who represented the ward during this period come from the Carpenters Union The most popular member however was Harry Vincent, first elected in 1913 and a member of the National Union of Railwaymen. He regularly polled between 70 and over 80 per cent of the vote and was twice unopposed.

St. Mary's ward had the highest proportion of workers in income classes I to IV. Ford noted, "Many of the labourers in this ward have less regular work than in Town ward where a large number of permanent men and tally holders live." The ward had seen Labour activity since the mid 1890s and it was the political home of Tommy Lewis but it was not wholly secure for Labour until the late 1920's. Town ward contained some marked contrasts with slum areas each side of the main High Street, which ran north to south through the ward, as well as council houses occupied by those on better incomes. There were also lodging homes for seamen, and shopkeepers who could make a reasonable income also resided in the area.

Of the safe Independent/ Ratepayers wards Bevois had two diverse sections according to Ford. ".... a well to do residential district in which homes are occupied by the owners and managers of town businesses and professional men etc. and a working class area." The wards of Banister, Portswood and All Saints had among the highest percentage of families in income class VII and VIII. Banister was probably the most affluent with 50% of families in income classes VII and VIII. Ford described Portswood as, ".... mixed containing areas of well to do persons and a series of streets are of (sic) the upper grades of clerical and supervisory labour, but also has some streets of a poor type."

⁸⁰P. Ford, Work and Wealth in Southampton. An essay in Civic Economy (University of London PhD 1935) p. 293 (Hereafter P. Ford, Civic Economy....)

⁸¹Ibid, p. 290

The adjacent wards of Bitterne and Pear Tree and Bitterne and Sholing showed contrasting political patterns. The former was ranked third in terms of the number of times Labour councillors were returned compared to eighth for the latter. In terms of social composition both had similar percentages of families in income classes I to IV but the position was reversed for income classes VI and VII. Bitterne and Pear Tree seems to have been a slightly more affluent ward. Ford noted that Bitterne and Sholing was said to have more seafarers, other than stewards, and that it was a traditional occupation for many families. According to Frances Ewer the wage rate for ordinary seamen in 1925 was just over 25 shillings and this would have put them in Ford's income class V.82

In the absence of conclusive evidence about the difference in Labour electoral performance in the two wards, one can speculate about the possible reasons. The turnout in elections was, on average, higher in Bitterne and Pear Tree than in Bitterne and Sholing. The ward had a popular local doctor as one of its Labour councillors for a number of years and his wife subsequently won and then held a seat in 1935 and 1936. Labour's choice of a local candidate from a middle class background may have been influential in a more affluent ward. He would be likely to draw support from both the working class and middle class.

One of the keys to Labour success appears to have been their ability to attract the support of workers in income category VI which included skilled workers. In St Nicholas for example they accounted for just over half of the families in the ward. There also seems to be a correlation between the growth of council housing in the ward, which brought an influx of people from the centre of the city, and the growth of Labour support. Over a thousand properties were developed between 1926 and 1930 and Labour won the three council seats in consecutive years from 1928 turning what had been a safe independent ward effectively into a safe Labour ward.

^{82&}lt;u>lbid</u>, p. 295, F. Ewer, op cit p. 314

Wards such as Woolston had a high percentage of families in income Class VI.

Many of the men would have worked at Thorneycroft's shipyard. As the political allegiance of the ward shifted over time towards Labour in the 1930's they probably voted Labour on an increasingly regular basis.

Millbrook and Shirley were marginal wards and Labour won seats more often in Millbrook. Ford said of this ward. "Millbrook includes groups of large homes, some old large homes, now depreciated and inhabited by working class families, council houses and new houses purchased by better off working people." Shirley had a mixed population according to Ford. "Much of Shirley ward consists of fairly modern houses inhabited by upper grades of dock and shipping company employees, but there are older areas of poverty and congestion." Shirley also had the second highest increase in population of any ward in the city between 1921 and 1931 amounting to 55%. Unlike St. Nicholas, much of this expansion was private housing although some council housing was built.

St. Denys was only truly marginal for two short periods. The ward was located either side of the River Itchen and Ford described it as containing two different groups. On the west side railway and transport workers lived and on the east commercial workers and members of the merchant service in the higher income grades were resident.⁸⁴

While social background can provide some explanation for voting patterns it is clear from this brief analysis that it is unlikely to be the only explanation. Studies of Labour politics often try to draw conclusions about the importance of industrial conflict and the development of Labour policies. John Marriott in his study of the East End of London compared trends in Labour voting with industrial conflict. He concluded, "The evidence does suggest that in this period a relationship existed between the industrial and political activity of trade unions

⁸³ lbid, p. 294

⁸⁴lbid, pp. 293 - 4

so that as one declined the other increased. The precise causal connection is difficult to define."85 He charted a fall in Labour voting during periods of industrial militancy and a rise during recession or when industrial conflict declined. In Bristol Whitfield suggested that from 1919 to 1921 workers regarded trade union struggles and Labour Party work at General Elections as complementary but the defeat of the General Strike was decisive for it, " finally put an end to the notion that trade unions could provide an alternative channel for the assertion of the working class political presence."86 The experience of Southampton was that at municipal level the Labour vote varied between 36% and 41% between 1919 and 1924, and then rose in 1925 and 1926 when dockers, seamen and shipyard workers were in disputes to 45% and 53% respectively this suggests that the relationship Marriott identified in the East End did not apply in the same way and his caveat about precise causal connections needs to be taken into account. The 1926 municipal vote in Southampton was the first time the Labour Party secured a majority of the votes cast. Although Labour only gained one seat they also lost one through an uncontested election in Freemantle. However the Labour vote showed dramatic increases in a number of wards. For example in Bitterne and Sholing, Labour's share of the vote increased from 36% in 1924 to 49.5% in 1926. In Woolston the Labour vote increased from 34% in 1925 to 49.8% in 1926. In Town the vote increased from 46% to 54% from 1925 to 1926. It is unlikely that these increases can be explained by specifically local factors and it appears therefore that the Labour vote came out as a reaction to the failure of the General Strike. There was also the fate of the tramwaymen locally who had been sacked by the Borough Council. Labour councillors had taken up their cause and the municipal election would have been an opportunity to register a protest about their treatment.

There is further evidence of a more formal separation of industrial and political matters in Southampton. In his book on Trades Councils, Alan Clinton refers to the efforts of the TUC to formulate model rules for trades councils making a

⁸⁵J. Marriott, <u>The Culture of Labourism</u>. <u>The East End Between the Wars</u>. (London 1991) p. 119

⁸⁶R. Whitfield, op cit p. 206 and 288

distinction between electoral and industrial functions. He notes there was little enthusiasm for adopting these model roles except at Eccles, Redcar and Southampton. By 1929 the report of Southampton Labour Party and Southampton Trades Council were printed as separate reports albeit within the same publication. By 1932 the Trades Council was publishing its own separate annual report with no reference to Labour Party business. The minutes of the Trades Council meetings for the 1930s show that they had liaison meetings with the Labour Party and some key members of the council were Borough Councillors. However local government issues were rarely raised at the Trades Council. The main political issues were unemployment, which was a focus in the 1920s, as well as the role of communists within the Trades Council and the political situation in Spain.

Laybourn and Reynolds point to the number of Labour councillors in Bradford as an example of the organic link between the trade unions and the Labour Party but it can also be seen as a move away from the primacy of industrial action towards political activity that was more community based. Trade union officials obviously possessed both representational and administrative skills that would help in their role as Labour councillors. If they were working full time for their union they could perhaps more easily take time to attend council meetings which were normally held during the working day. The figures for the number of trade union officers elected as councillors is shown overleaf.

⁸⁷A. Clinton, <u>The Trade Union Rank and File. Trades Councils in Britain</u> 1900 – 1940 (Manchester 1977) p. 142.

Party in West Yorkshire during the inter-war years. 1918 – 1939 (Bradford 1987) p. 51

Table 7.7 Number of Trade Union Officers elected as Labour
Councillors in Selected Years

| YEAR | NO OUT OF TOTAL LABOUR COUNCILLORS | PERCENTAGE |
|------|---------------------------------------|------------|
| 1919 | 6 OUT OF 11 | 54.55 |
| 1927 | 4 OUT OF 12 | 33,33 |
| 1928 | 8 OUT OF 16 | 50.00 |
| 1929 | 9 OUT OF 20 | 45.00 |
| 1931 | 7 OUT OF 16 | 43.75 |

Before 1914 only three of the eight Labour councillors elected from 1911 were trade union officials. The success of trade union officials in being selected as candidates is significant when comparing the backgrounds of Labour candidates in this period. Out of a sample of 114 Labour candidates from 1919 – 1938, whose backgrounds can be identified, 20 were trade union officials making up just over 17.5% of the total.

Having suggested that social background has to be considered along with other contingent political factors in explaining Labour voting, consideration also needs to be given to one potential impediment to voting at municipal level that may help to explain Labour's difficulty in making progress during this period.

Although 1918 had seen an extension of the parliamentary franchise, not all of these could vote in municipal elections. Sam Davies has investigated this in relation to Liverpool and believes it could be a factor in Labour's poor performance there. He said, "A significant proportion of the population was enfranchised for parliamentary elections but disenfranchised at local level during the inter war years to an extent that has been little investigated." 89

The sort of people excluded from the municipal franchise according to Davies were sons and daughters and other family members who lived with the owner or occupier, servants who lived in the house of the owner or occupier and tenants of furnished premises. Also, until 1926, a voter had to prove residence in a ward six months prior to registration although this was later reduced to three months.

⁸⁹S. Davies, <u>op cit</u> p. 119

The franchise for parliamentary and municipal elections was not equalised until 1945.

In Liverpool, Davies showed that the percentage of parliamentary voters disenfranchised at municipal level fluctuated from 20% in 1919, 16.5% in 1928, 29.1% in 1931 and 27.2% in 1938. Other boroughs showed significant variations including 8.3% for Cardiff, 19.5% for Bristol, 12% for Hull and 25% for West Ham. Even within Liverpool the percentage of excluded votes could vary from 22.9% to 31.2% between parliamentary divisions as well as between electoral wards. He suggests that the political significance of this is hard to quantify but, "Nevertheless, it seems likely that the exclusions from the municipal franchise would have disadvantaged Labour more than the Tories on the assumption that working class electors were more likely to be prospective Labour rather than Tory voters."

For Southampton the municipal and parliamentary franchise figures were published in the municipal year book and diary and they are available for the years 1919 to 1921, 1923 and 1925 to 1928. The summary figures for Southampton are shown in Appendix 22. The figures are divided between male and female electors and it is clear that most females enfranchised for parliamentary elections in 1918 also qualified to vote in municipal elections. However, significant numbers of males on a wider parliamentary franchise were excluded from municipal elections. After 1928 with the extension of the female parliamentary franchise the number of women excluded from voting for the Borough Council increased.

The average percentage of excluded voters after 1928 is around 25%. This is at the higher end of the scale in comparison with the examples cited by Davies for Liverpool and other towns. Male exclusions were slightly higher averaging nearer to 30%. This however marks significant variations within wards over time and between individual wards. The following tables give a summary of the

⁹⁰<u>Ibid</u>, pp. 120, 121, 124

⁹¹<u>Ibid</u>, p. 121

position for selected wards before and after the extension of the female franchise in 1928.

Table 7.8 Percentage of Parliamentary Voters Excluded from

The Municipal Franchise

| WARD | 1919 | 1922 | 1925 | 1927 |
|----------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Northam | 20.88 | 29.88 | 28.87 | 28.65 |
| Town | 24.70 | 39.46 | 40.94 | 36.14 |
| Woolston | - | 26.84 | 24.91 | - |
| Bitterne & Pear Tree | - | 24.01 | 32.45 | 21.68 |
| Millbrook | 17.47 | 25.00 | 25.15 | 25.05 |
| Bitterne & Sholing | - | 24.08 | 23.14 | 21.57 |
| Bevois | 18.05 | 26.07 | 24.54 | 22.19 |
| Banister | 15.24 | 22.43 | 21.70 | 20.79 |

| WARD | | 1929 | 1932 | 1935 | 1938 |
|------------------------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Northam | Male | 32.38 | 33.01 | 33.03 | 33.13 |
| | Female | 16.07 | 25.98 | 17.25 | 15.39 |
| Town | Male | 44.91 | 50.88 | 46.56 | 45.14 |
| | Female | 26.39 | 26.00 | 24.34 | 21.51 |
| Woolston | Male | 30.88 | 30.33 | 30.39 | 32.99 |
| | Female | 21.04 | 21.54 | 20.74 | 20.22 |
| Bitterne and Pear Tree | Male | 27.57 | 24.56 | 23.34 | 25.50 |
| | Female | 17.54 | 17.31 | 18.42 | 16.38 |
| Millbrook | Male | 26.95 | 29.05 | 26.60 | 25.34 |
| | Female | 19.45 | 20.62 | 19.84 | 18.19 |
| Bitterne and Sholing | Male | 24.98 | 24.62 | 24.59 | 21.91 |
| | Female | 15.46 | 16.80 | 16.92 | 15.10 |
| Bevois | Male | 24.86 | 29.70 | 27.97 | 27.85 |
| | Female | 24.97 | 26.85 | 25.54 | 24.75 |
| Banister | Male | 25.81 | 29.57 | 29.56 | 30.81 |
| | Female | 30.03 | 37.87 | 34.70 | 33.26 |

The tables show some significant variation between wards. Town ward consistently had the highest percentage of male parliamentary voters excluded from the municipal franchise. The exclusions clearly seemed to work against working class voters in particular. While it may not have prevented Labour winning in wards with a substantial working class population, its impact is likely to have been greatest in marginal and mixed class wards where potential Labour voters were likely to face exclusion.

Labour Party Membership and Organisation

Michael Savage in his study of Preston argued that during the inter-war period a trend toward neighbourhood politics could be identified and it is suggested that in Southampton, Labour politics was moving away from organisation based on trade union branches to one based on neighbourhoods and electoral wards. This is not to deny the trade union link which underpinned Labour politics but to argue that Labour sought to widen its political base by establishing local neighbourhood organisation.

Before the First World War only the western suburbs of the town in Millbrook, Shirley and Freemantle had any local Labour Representation Committees. The new constitution of the Labour Party in 1918 admitting individual members really required a new form of organisation. By 1919, eleven of the thirteen wards in Southampton had established ward committees. Only All Saints and Banister had no branch of the Labour Party listed for that year. By the late 1920s the whole town had some Labour ward organisation and even in 1931 Labour maintained a ward organisation in 15 out of 17 wards and again only All Saints and Banister were without organisation. There are no detailed membership

⁹²Southampton and District Trades and Labour Council and Labour Representation committee 28th <u>Annual Report</u> 1919.

⁹³Southampton and District Trades and Labour Council and Labour Representation Committee 36th <u>Annual Report</u> 1927, 37th <u>Annual Report</u> 1928 and 38th <u>Annual Report</u> 1929, Southampton Labour Party 40th <u>Annual Report</u> 1931

figures for the Labour Party in Southampton in the 1920s so it is difficult to accurately test Christopher Howard's claims that Labour organisation at constituency level was poor. ⁹⁴ It does seem that membership growth was slow in the early years after the war. Tommy Lewis admitted that membership had not grown much but that most of the town's trade unions were affiliated when he spoke at the party's annual general meeting in 1921. ⁹⁵ By the late 1920s membership and activity had grown. A confidential report on preparations for the 1929 General Election said, "During the past three or four years the size and activities of the Party have increased very considerably. It is difficult indeed almost impossible to pick any night in the week when some form of activity is not being indulged in by a ward organisation." The same report also acknowledged that despite this there were problems, in particular the high turnover of ward secretaries which made it difficult to get consistent work done on election organisation.

Information on party membership is available for the 1930s and early 1940s and this is shown in Appendix 23. By the 1930s the Party was trying to recruit a percentage of its electoral support in each ward. A target of 15% was suggested for the end of 1937 along with a more ambitious suggestion for a five year plan to aim for 30% organisation of Labour voters as a minimum for all wards. 98

John Marriott's study of the East End of London between the wars noted that political activity in terms of electoral turnout and party membership was often lowest in safe Labour seats.⁹⁹ The Labour Party membership in Town, St.

⁹⁹J. Marriott, op cit p. 166

⁹⁴C. Howard, "Expectations born to Death; Local Labour Party Expansion in the 1920's" In J. Winter (ed), <u>The Working Class in Modern British History</u> (Cambridge 1983) p. 81

⁹⁵Sout<u>hampton Times</u>, 15 Jan 1921

⁹⁶Southampton Labour Party Parliamentary General Election 1929 Southampton Labour Party Archive

⁹⁸Southampton Labour Party Report on Membership and Organisation in 1936. Southampton Labour Party Archive

Mary's and Northam was among the lowest and all three wards regularly returned Labour councillors. Their membership represented under 10% of the Labour voters. However, the ward of St Nicholas had the highest membership in the mid 1930s yet at the same time it was a safe Labour ward. St Nicholas was a new community based significantly around the new council housing and it may be that the Labour Party put more effort into recruiting and organising in this new political territory. Marriott's other suggestion that the lack of commitment to Labour was related to the social and political culture of unskilled labour needs qualifying in the light of Southampton's experience. Northam's workers were largely skilled or semi skilled on regular incomes so would not fit this pattern. Also wards like Woolston which had a majority of skilled workers had a low membership. Trinity ward with just over 50% of families in Ford's income classes I to IV had a much higher level of party membership than Woolston

Looking beneath the broad trends of Labour voting reveals inconsistencies and anomalies which it is difficult to explain. What it does suggest however is that beneath the growth in Labour voting, different combinations of factors were responsible. For example in Northam membership was relatively low yet Labour was returned consistently during the period. The allegiance to the Labour Party was expressed through voting rather than by joining the organisation, and given the homogenous nature of the ward as classified by Ford, it seems possible that Labour voting was being assimilated as part of working class identity in this area. The process was uneven and would not necessarily operate in the same way elsewhere in the town.

The shift towards a neighbourhood base for Labour politics also opened up the possibility of attracting women to the Labour Party. The pre-war party organisation in Southampton had been dominated by male based trade unions although one prominent woman, Emily Palmer, had made her mark as a member of the Board of Guardians.

After the war Emily Palmer claimed that women had played an important part in Labour's election result in 1923: "one of the finest and most compelling things of

the campaign was the army of women who had been attracted to the movement. It was very largely due to the hard work of women that so large a vote had been given for the (Labour) candidates of Southampton." Evidence about the extent of Labour organisation for women comes largely from the late 1920s and early 1930s. From 1927 to 1931 Southampton Labour Party had seven or eight women's sections. Those existing throughout the years included Town, Trinity, Newtown, St. Denys, Shirley and Millbrook. St. Nicholas had a section in 1927 and the two Bitterne wards in 1931. The latter could have been a development from the Itchen women's section which had operated from 1927 – 1929. Figures for membership for the women's sections are only available for some for the year 1930 and 1931.

Table 7.9 <u>Membership of Labour party Women's Sections</u> 1930 - 1931

| WARD | 1930 | 1931 |
|-----------|------|------|
| Town | - | - |
| Trinity · | 142 | 125 |
| Newtown | 41 | 33 |
| St. Denys | 54 | 96 |
| Shirley | - | 50 |
| Sholing | - | 31 |
| Pear Tree | - | 20 |
| Millbrook | - | - |

Source – Southampton Labour Party Summary of Membership and Contributions. Southampton Labour Party Archive.

¹⁰⁰Southampton Times, 29 Dec 1923

¹⁰¹ Southampton Trades Council and Southampton Labour Party Annual Reports 1927 - 31

The Shirley group was initially formed in 1925 and at the first meeting representatives from Millbrook, Freemantle, Town, St. Deny's and Woolston attended. With a lack of reporting of their activities and limited evidence of their work it is difficult to judge how far they pursued an agenda around issues such as birth control or the right of women, especially married women, to continue working, or how far they just became an additional support to Labour's general campaigning. Emily Palmer was certainly involved in the birth control debate. She spoke at the 1924 conference of Labour women and argued birth control was essential for the abolition of poverty. The Labour Party had, "a responsibility to take the lead in this important reform whether it was popular or not." She added that if Labour would not take up this cause on behalf of working class women someone else would. 103

At the Labour Women's conference in 1923 she had argued that it was a matter of social justice that women had a right to be economically free. This was in the context of debate about the London County Council proposing to sack married women teachers in 1922.¹⁰⁴

In practice at local level the Labour Party saw women's sections as a useful adjunct to political organisation. The confidential report on organisation for the 1929 general election set this out. "... it should be borne in mind that the activities and responsibilities of the women's groups are very different from that of the ward associations. Whereas the Women's Groups deal almost entirely with social work for the raising of funds etc., work which is not uncongenial to those taking part in it, the ward associations are more concerned with the dry detail work of organisation." This implies less of role than that suggested by Emily Palmer in 1923. The local Labour movement was male dominated and

¹⁰²Southampton Times, 7 Feb 1925

Quoted in P. Groves, <u>Labour Women</u>. Women in British Working Class Politics 1918 – 1939 (Cambridge 1994) pp. 87 and 89

¹⁰⁴lbid, p. 129

¹⁰⁵ Southampton Labour Party Parliamentary General Election 1929 Southampton Labour Party Archive

there is little evidence that the interests and concerns of women specifically influenced the Labour Party locally except perhaps in the area of housing which will be considered in another chapter.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored how Labour politics was consolidated in Southampton in the inter-war years. It did this partly because Labour was the only alternative to the Independent Group, formed by the alliance of Conservative and Liberal councillors on the Borough Council in 1920. This was not just a tactical response to Labour's good performance in the 1919 municipal elections. It had deeper roots going back to the formal co-operation between the two parties in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century over the sharing of municipal offices, and the electoral arrangements designed to avoid if possible three way contests with Labour from 1905. It also had an ideological dimension. It set the Liberals and the Conservatives firmly against Labour and tied the Liberals into a Conservative agenda of 'economy' at municipal level.

This was not too difficult to achieve because the Liberals had for some time lacked any distinctive municipal programme. The Liberal support for the Labour Government in 1923 produced divisions within the Party locally but the decision of leading Liberals to support the Conservative candidates in 1924 proved even more disastrous. Apart from a brief return to three party politics in the 1929 election this really marked the end of independent Liberalism and by 1931 the Party was happy to amalgamate with the Conservatives throughout the 1930s.

Labour was expanding its base of support in a number of working class wards like Northam, St Mary's and Town and it also began to win a majority of the total vote at municipal elections. They did this in 8 of the 13 years between 1926 and 1938. Labour had to work hard to combat the 'economy' arguments of the Independents and they sought to position themselves as the party of municipal competence arguing for more efficient use of the rates and introducing the idea of municipal trading as a way of increasing revenue.

Although the Party links to trade unionism remained, the organisation of the Party moved from a trade union based to a neighbourhood based organisation.

The Party seems to have made limited attempts to organise and appeal to women voters. The women's organisation seems to have been used mainly for traditional electioneering. This appears to reflect the limited female involvement in the workplace and the dominance of male employment.

Chapter Eight

Unemployment, Housing and Labour Politics 1919 - 1945

A number of studies of Labour politics in this period have seen the issues of unemployment and housing as important for the growth and development of the Labour Party. Whitfield has suggested that one of Labour's parliamentary candidates in Bristol in 1924 won his seat largely on the issue of unemployment.¹ He also said that housing was the other issue on which Labour was able to make political capital.² John Marriott in his study of West Ham sought to remedy what he saw as the relative neglect of the politics of unemployment and to understand how the unemployed influenced not only the poor law but the dominant Labour political tradition.³

While Labour locally continued to espouse the cause of the unemployed, and to press for more and better housing, they faced a potential challenge from more militant sections of the unemployed in particular. At the same time Labour was trying to appeal to a wide constituency and trying to counter claims by its opponents that it was financially irresponsible and 'extreme' in its policies. This created tensions and threatened an alternative political direction for the unemployed outside of the Labour Party. The response of the Borough Council, Church and voluntary organisations in the 1930s to promote self-help and charitable welfare for the unemployed produced official hostility from the Labour movement but also a recognition that they could be popular.

On housing, Labour presented the issue as one of civic and social responsibility to provide decent housing rather than as a class issue although working class and poor households would mainly benefit from the new homes provided. Again Labour faced a brief challenge from some more militant protests over housing shortages but unlike its experience with unemployment, Labour was able to use its political influence on the Borough Council to secure more housing.

¹R.Whitfield, <u>op cit</u> p.228

²lbid, p.229

³J.Marriott, op cit pp.122-3

Unemployment and Labour Politics

The level of unemployment in Southampton was affected by the seasonal and casual nature of dock work, ship repairing and seafaring as well as the economic downturn of the 1920s, and the slump of the 1930s. From 1921 until 1925 the percentage unemployed in Southampton never fell below 11% with a peak estimated at 19.6% in 1921. From 1930 to 1936 again the percentage never fell below 11% with a peak of 21.6% in 1932. The average number of unemployed ranged from an estimated figure of 9,500 in 1921 to 6,100 in 1925. In 1930 the figure was 7,500 climbing to 13,900 in 1932 and falling to 7,200 in 1936. The trend in unemployment compared to the national average was similar, although there was a slight difference caused by the trade cycle. The port industries showed a slight delay in the onset of the depression by about a year and similarly the recovery was also delayed by about a year.

At the end of the First World War the Government introduced out-of-work donations to cover those in the armed forces who would be demobilised and initially unable to find work. The scheme was extended to civilians and in the early part of 1919 nearly 1,000 dock workers were receiving donations in Southampton because the demilitarisation of the port was not proceeding smoothly.

Locally, the attitude to out of work donations was not favourable. The local branch of the Charity Organisation Society criticised them as lavish and indiscriminate expenditure of money. The Southampton branch of the National Association of Discharged Soldiers and Sailors (NADSS) condemned the scheme as no better than charity and the Borough Council worried that donations would dictate the labour market.⁵

Bentley Gilbert argued that the Government conceded an important principle when introducing the donations. "In effect society was admitting that an adult man unable to find employment had a right to make a claim upon it. This

⁵I<u>bid</u>, p.182

⁴A.J. Vinson, "Poor relief, public assistance, and the maintenance of the unemployed in Southampton between the wars" in <u>Southern History Vol 2</u> 1980 p.211

obligation grudgingly admitted at first as a temporary dispensation became fixed". Organisations like the Trades Council resented the Government's later decision to end donations because it forced the unemployed onto poor relief. The Guardians in Southampton and South Stoneham, which covered the Itchen parishes, were also alarmed at the potential impact on the rates.

The issue of who paid for the unemployed was to be an important one during the period. For both the Labour Party and the Boards of Guardians the financial burdens of supporting the unemployed were considered to be a charge that should be borne by national government, and therefore taxpayers, rather than local ratepayers. In the early 1920s the Southampton and South Stoneham Boards of Guardians had substantial overdrafts and pressure from ratepayer associations mounted to reduce the scales of relief. In South Stoneham the parish councils and ratepayer groups argued that scales of relief could be higher than the maximum agricultural wage for the area and the unemployed were being paid for doing nothing.

Attempts to reduce the scale of relief in 1922 brought protests and demonstrations from the employed. Three hundred joined in a protest outside the West End Institution during a Guardians meeting and the Board adopted a lower scale but did agree to disregard the first ten shillings of a disability pension. They did not support a proposal from one member, Mrs Shaw, that the unemployed should be granted a hundredweight of coal.⁷

At the election for the Board of Guardians in 1922 the anti Labour majority on South Stoneham was strengthened. Two members of the unemployed were elected but they were ineligible to sit on the board because they had received relief in the last twelve months. After short speeches from them at the first meeting of the new Board the clerk declared them ineligible and that therefore there were two vacancies.⁸

⁸<u>lbid,</u> 1 April 1922 and 29 April 1922

⁶B.B.Gilbert, <u>British Social Policy 1914-1939</u> (London 1970) p.6

⁷Southampton Times, 18 Feb 1922 and 25 Feb 1922

The Southampton Board of Guardians had 11 Labour members out of 26 and they formed the largest group on the Board. The Conservative-dominated Independent Group on the Borough Council criticised the Board about what they regarded as the liberal scales of relief that threatened a substantial increase in the poor rate. The election in 1922 was fought by the Independents as a campaign for economy against socialist 'excessive expenditure'. Labour was reduced to four members on the new board but the reaction to the economy campaign also saw six of the non-Labour members lose their seats in what the Southampton Times called a 'clean sweep'. 9 Defeat for Labour seemed to indicate that there was no enthusiasm even among working class voters who were ratepayers, for maintaining the existing scale of relief. The Southampton Times wondered who would now argue the case for special relief for the unemployed. "The Labour candidates foresaw that another question upon which the ward elections would turn was the maintenance of the existing scale of relief to the unemployed. They published a joint circular in which a strong emphasis was placed upon that issue, and if it is claimed that the victory of the opponents of Labour is an indication that the workers themselves do not approve of so heavy an outlay on special relief, who will be there to resist that argument effectively". 10

The Labour Party was caught between the apparent electoral unpopularity of generous scales of relief and the demands of more militant sections of the unemployed for more effective action. While expressing sympathy for the unemployed demonstrators and attempting to ensure they got a hearing the Labour Party did not support more militant tactics, in part because of a distrust of Communist involvement in the activities of the unemployed.

A conference on unemployment organised by the Trades Council and Labour Representation Committee was disrupted when a group of fifty unemployed from Woolston demanded to be allowed into the conference. A suggestion that a deputation from them be heard was rejected but Councillor Tommy Lewis suggested six of the unemployed be allowed to attend the conference. The rest

⁹<u>Ibid</u>, 18 March 1922

of the unemployed rejected this and occupied the conference hall. The meeting was adjourned amid accusations that the demonstration was " a 'stunt' got up against those who were working hard in the Labour movement". ¹¹

One of the criticisms levelled by the unemployed was the time taken to organise a conference on the subject by the Trades Council. The trade unions had however been active on the question of unemployment and advocated relief works in deputations to the Borough Council from 1921. This led to the Borough Council establishing a special committee to deal with the question of relief works. Although some schemes were implemented, not all qualified for grant aid from the Government as relief works. Also proposals for relief works raised concerns within the Borough Council about costs. Labour was concerned that schemes should pay participants the proper trade union rates for the job.¹²

The local Labour Party's political strategy in the 1920s carried forward into the 1930s, was to insist that unemployment was a national problem that should be dealt with by central government. In his election address for the 1922 general election Lewis advocated relief work or maintenance for the unemployed be paid for by the Government. In a joint address with Reginald Sorenson in 1923 they called for large scale relief works including afforestation, erecting and repairing school buildings, developing transport links (road, rail and canal) land reclamation and the development of small holdings.¹³ At the same time Labour tried, mostly successfully to steer the unemployed into 'constitutional' protest. Deputations were supported and resolutions moved on behalf of the unemployed. They were assisted in this by the fact that the unemployed themselves never developed a strong organisation of their own in the town. The National Unemployed Workers Movement (NUWM) remained relatively weak

¹³T.Lewis General Election Manifesto 1922. Lewis and Sorenson Election Manifesto Sorenson Papers SDR/2/A House of Lords Records Office

¹¹<u>Ibid</u>, 6 May 1922

¹²A.J. Vinson, "Unemployment Relief Works in Southampton Between the War: A Case Study" in W.Minchington (ed) Exeter Papers in Economic and Social History 12 (1979) pp.69-71 and p.73

and the official trade union movement gave no encouragement to the unemployed to organise. Indeed, they were always concerned that the unemployed should not pose any threat to those already in work.

From 1926 to 1929 the percentage unemployed was in single figures ranging from just under eight to just under ten per cent. Unemployment relief was not so prominent on the agenda of the Southampton Board of Guardians.

In the 1930s the Trades Council was reluctant to adopt a proposal from the TUC that associations of the unemployed should be set up. Instead they agreed to establish a number of advice bureaux where information on unemployment and transitional benefit along with rent and rates would be given. This met with only limited success as the Trade Council annual report for 1932 concluded. "....the number of applicants seeking advice were not as great as was expected, but we feel sure that valuable service has been given to the unemployed in this way". 14 The most likely reason for the original decision was concern that any new organisation might become dominated by the Communist Party. A deputation from the NUWM and the ILP had met the executive of the Trades Council in January 1932 urging them to adopt an eight point programme. This included industrial links between the unemployed and employed, to work for the abolition of the means test, to organise deputations to the Public Assistance Committee, free meals and boots for the children of the unemployed and no eviction from council houses for non-payment of rent. The Trades Council was already being advised by the TUC not to deal with matters raised by Communist Party organisations and it was therefore easier to set up the advice bureaux as a way of responding to the problems of the unemployed. 15

Between 1932 and 1934, deputations from the unemployed supported on occasions by large demonstrations appeared at the Borough Council and they sometimes showed their frustration at the Labour Party. In 1934 the Labour Party was accused of being ineffectual after one deputation was refused a

¹⁴Southampton Trades Council 41st Annual Report 1932

¹⁵Southampton Trades Council Executive Committee 14 Jan 1932 <u>Southampton Trades Council Minute Book Sept 1929 – Dec 1934</u>. D/TU/1 Southampton City Record Office

hearing – leaflets were thrown down onto the assembled members and Tommy Lewis made an unsuccessful attempt to suspend standing orders to allow the deputation to be heard. Some of the unemployed accused Labour of hiding behind standing orders rather than helping the unemployed. The frustration of the unemployed was understandable for they were less concerned about constitutional proprieties. However Labour was in a minority and the Independents felt they would hear nothing new from another deputation.

While the reluctance of the Trades Council to countenance any real organisation of the unemployed provided an opportunity for the NUWM to capitalize on the discontent of the unemployed they posed no real threat to the Labour group. On only one occasion in 1933 did the NUWM put up any candidates for the municipal elections, in Woolston and Bitterne and Pear Tree. Mr McJames a shipwright in Woolston got 21 votes and Mr Prinn a bootmaker got 38 votes in Bitterne and Pear Tree. 17

If the Labour Party and the Trades Council could afford to ignore the demands from the left on behalf of the unemployed the response of the Borough Council and the various churches and charitable bodies posed more of a dilemma. This community response was more sophisticated than that of bodies like the Charity Organisation Society in the 1920s for it acknowledged that unemployment was not necessarily the fault of the individuals affected.

In the autumn of 1932, the Mayor convened a meeting of representatives from social service organisations and the churches to discuss providing facilities for the unemployed. A resolution was penned declaring that the time had arrived for "....definite steps to be taken in order to provide facilities for helping the unemployed by means of the establishment of certain centres for physical training, handicrafts, recreation, reading, discussion etc". A Committee was appointed to carry out the resolution, co-ordinate existing schemes and start new ones.

¹⁶Hampshire Advertiser, 29 Dec 1934

¹⁷Ibid, 4 Nov 1933 and 28 Oct 1933

Some churches had already established unemployed men's clubs and they came together with the new scheme initiated by the Mayor to form the Central Unemployed Fellowship Committee. A report on one of the clubs explained, "Please don't associate this with the old time soup kitchen and then form your own conclusions! In the unpleasant sense of the word there is no 'charity' about it at all, the members of this unusual club pay for what they have just as members of more expensive clubs; if one may stretch the analogy". The club provided a meeting place for unemployed men with a common room and billiard tables. Upstairs was a reading room with newspapers and magazines and lunch was provided in a canteen.¹⁸

The Trades Council was invited to send its secretary to a meeting of the Central Unemployed Fellowship but after some delay in replying they voted not to take any action on the invitation. The exact reason for this is not clear but at the same meeting the Council were informed by the Town Clerk that permission had been refused for them to hold collections for a flag day for the unemployed. Having had this request turned down they may have been reluctant to participate in a scheme which had the blessing of leading members of the council.

Labour's dilemma over the 'welfare' approach to unemployment is illustrated by their response to the Mayor's Welfare Scheme established in 1933. The Mayor Alderman Fred Woolley said, "its object was to provide opportunities for voluntary work and at the same time assist the most needy workers with clothing and boots". 19 Two committees were established, a work committee and a welfare committee and an appeal was made for volunteers from among the unemployed to offer their services to the work committee for one or two days. Those who did would be eligible for help from the welfare committee. The Mayor wanted local employers to organise collections among their employees. Lists of subscribers were published and a range of local organisations held events including whilst drives, dances, football matches, fashion contests, suppers, lunches and dinners. Among those taking part were the Town Ward Ratepayers Association, the YWCA, the Rotary Club, Freemantle Women's

¹⁸Ibid, 29 Oct 1932

¹⁹Ibid, 7 Jan 1933

Conservative Association, Southampton Fire Brigade, the Staff of Tyrrell and Green (a department store) and Portswood Independent Municipal Association.²⁰

The dilemma for the Labour movement was the insistence in the scheme that the applicant had to undertake voluntary work to qualify for assistance. This challenged the idea that the unemployed had a right to support and had echoes of the task work provisions of the poor law. The Trades Council protested that the scheme directly opposed trade union principles, that the use of voluntary labour on work schemes harmed the interest of the employed and the unemployed. "Furthermore by the operation of the means test employed workers are in many cases maintaining their unemployed relatives as to be asked to contribute to the welfare scheme is a direct insult to the clearly overburdened workers of Southampton".²¹

A consultation exercise among trade union branches by the Trades Council produced a majority of 10 out of 15 responding, against the scheme. Two branches, the Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers No. 2 branch and the Southampton East branch of the Painters commented that they could not condemn individual men from making use of the scheme although both were against it in principle. The furnishing trade union supported the scheme and said they, "could not object to any people philanthropically inclined attempting to ameliorate the condition of the unemployed providing they did not take over the obligations of the community". Although some trade unions and trade unionists might object to this form of welfare its proponents thought the workless would welcome the scheme and some undoubtedly did. The Hampshire Advertiser quoted a mechanic from Swaythling. "I hope the scheme will be in operation in time to allow us to earn some warmer clothing for our children before the cold spell starts. If your readers who are in comfortable circumstances could only see the conditions under which we have to live, I am

²⁰<u>Ibid</u>, 4 and 11 Feb 1933, 11 and 25 March 1933

²¹Ibid, 11 Feb 1933

²²Ibid, 11 Feb 1933

sure they would give as generously as possible to the fund". 23

Labour faced real difficulty in campaigning on the issue of unemployment because ratepayer organisations and the Independents could mobilise effectively to defeat Labour over increased expenditure by the Guardians as happened in 1922. Working class voters as ratepayers would not automatically vote for increased expenditure on the unemployed. The mobilisation of the unemployed by the NUWM posed a potential challenge to Labour who were committed to constitutional politics. They therefore often supported the demands of deputations to be heard at meetings of the Council or the Public Assistance Committee but they distanced themselves from the organisation of such demonstrations.²⁴

The difficulty faced by Labour can be seen from the controversy around scales of relief in the early 1930s. The Ministry of Health threatened to send in a commissioner to administer the Public Assistance Committee unless transitional benefit rates were reduced. Tommy Lewis was prepared to argue that, as the PAC had tried to find a compromise but failed, they might just as well let the Ministry take over to ".....do the dirty work themselves". Another possible option was to run the public assistance scale at a cost of £8,000 a year but neither the Independents or Labour advocated this. The PAC was forced to surrender but large demonstrations in October 1932 produced a small concession from the PAC. They agreed to extend winter coal allowances for public assistance recipients to transitional claimants. The produced a small concession from the recipients to transitional claimants.

The electoral impact of this is difficult to assess. At the November 1932 election, Labour won only one seat but they gained a majority of the total votes cast for the first time since the 1929 municipal elections. Both Labour and the

²³Ibid, 14 Jan 1933

²⁴Southern Daily Echo, 19 Oct 1932

²⁵A.J. Vinson, 'Poor Relief, Public Assistance'pp.197-8 ²⁶Ibid. p.198

The transfer of unemployment relief to the Unemployment Assistance Board commencing in 1935 seemed to take this controversial area of social policy out of political controversy but the scales of relief produced waves of protest.

Labour was able to attack the Government and the PAC joined in the criticism. Labour criticism continued in 1936 that the Government was not making the maintenance of the able bodied unemployed a national charge and again the PAC largely agreed with this criticism. With the fall in unemployment and the easing of pressure on the rates the political tensions between the renamed Ratepayers Party and Labour also ceased and a more bipartisan approach emerged in the working of the PAC. 29

Housing and Labour Politics

The provision of adequate housing for the working classes in Southampton was an issue almost continually on the agenda of local politics from 1890 to 1945. From the earliest interventions in 1890 Labour representatives had highlighted the problem of poor housing and pressed the Borough Council to use existing legislation to tackle the issue. Labour argued that it was the responsibility of the state through local or central government to provide adequate housing and, at least in Southampton, there was no attempt to establish alternative mutual or cooperative provision or develop public utility societies.

One of the key political issues for the Borough was how to ensure that there was an adequate supply of houses to meet the needs of a growing population and how to deal with the poor condition of housing in some parts of the town.

During the inter war period the population grew from 160,994 in 1921 to 176,007 in 1931. In 1920 the old Itchen Urban District was added to the borough. Within the overall increase of population the distribution between

²⁹Ibid, p.202

²⁷Southern Daily Echo, 2 Nov 1932

²⁸A.J. Vinson, 'Poor Relief, Public Assistance'p.201

wards varied considerably. The broad pattern was that the central and southern wards near the docks lost population and the suburbs gained as the table below shows.

<u>Table 8.1</u> <u>Southampton Wards – Population Change 1921 - 1931</u>

| WARD | 1921 | 1931 | + or - No's | + or - % |
|---------------------|--------|--------|-------------|----------|
| TOWN | 11,733 | 10,123 | - 1,610 | - 13.72 |
| ST. MARY'S | 12,989 | 10,761 | - 2,228 | - 17.15 |
| NORTHAM | 11,594 | 9,900 | - 1,694 | - 14.61 |
| TRINITY | 9,065 | 8,084 | - 981 | - 10.82 |
| NEWTOWN | 8,759 | 8,072 | - 687 | - 7.84 |
| ALL SAINTS | 9,706 | 8,365 | - 1,341 | - 13.81 |
| BEVOIS | 8,331 | 7,583 | - 748 | - 8.97 |
| BANISTER | 8,318 | 8,809 | + 491 | + 5.90 |
| FREEMANTLE | 8,239 | 7,354 | - 885 | - 10.74 |
| MILLBROOK | 10,843 | 13,087 | + 2,244 | + 20.69 |
| SHIRLEY | 11,182 | 17,342 | + 6,160 | + 55.08 |
| PORTSWOOD | 9,771 | 11,374 | + 1,603 | + 16.40 |
| ST. DENYS | 9.095 | 9,650 | + 555 | + 6.10 |
| BITTERNE & PEARTREE | 8,960 | 10,912 | + 1,952 | + 21.78 |
| BITTERNE & SHOLING | 9,882 | 12,670 | + 2,788 | + 28.21 |
| WOOLSTON | 8,187 | 7,837 | - 350 | - 4.27 |
| ST. NICHOLAS | 4,340 | 14,084 | + 9,744 | + 224.51 |

Source - Census of England and Wales 1921 and 1931

Very few houses had been built during the First World War. From 1915 to 1919 less than 200 were built compared to an average of 240 per year in the five years before 1914. This led to a situation of serious overcrowding and this was confirmed by the Medical Officer of Health Dr Lauder in his annual report for 1919. He said "the number of overcrowded tenements is now considerably greater. No action, however, can be taken except in extreme cases owing to the

impossibility of obtaining any other accommodation and the fact that the result of any such action would be only the transference of the overcrowding from one house to another. It is the sleeping accommodation that is in many cases the difficulty, there being no sufficient bedrooms to ensure proper decency or to prevent serious overcrowding".³⁰

The lack of building and the problem of overcrowding meant that there was greater demand for houses let as lodgings. Dr Lauder pointed out that, "Owing to the dearth of houses and the great demand there is for housing accommodation the rents now charged for rooms in houses let in lodgings have been so increased as to render the present by-laws practically inoperative, the rents having been increased in some cases nearly 100%". The even if accommodation could be afforded there were other problems finding a place to live. A letter from "demobbed" in a local paper in June 1919 complained that furnished apartments were being let on the stipulation that there were to be no children. This he claimed was discriminating in an unpatriotic way against exservicemen and their families and he believed drastic action was needed.

During the war soldiers had been billeted so, "now it is time for the Government to commandeer all unoccupied rooms for demobilised men who require rooms for their wives and children". 32

The militant stance was echoed by other ex-servicemen in the town. Frustration at the apparent lack of action by the Government or the Borough Council led in 1920 to a group of ex-servicemen occupying six privately owned homes that had been left empty. Negotiations between the men occupying the property and the owners was presided over by the Mayor and an agreement was reached that they could stay and pay rent for six months. The local branch of the National Association of Discharged Soldiers and Sailors also gave an undertaking that they would not illegally occupy homes in Southampton.³³

32<u>Southern Daily Echo</u>, 5 June 1919

³⁰Annual Report on the Heath of the County Borough of Southampton and the Port of Southampton for the Year 1919. R.E. Lauder MOH p.76

³³Southampton Times, 13 and 20 Nov 1919

The concern about a shortage of accommodation after the war was recognised nationally. The local Government Board issued a circular in 1918 requesting that housing schemes for the working classes be submitted to them as soon as possible. Southampton set up a subcommittee of the Borough Council and set about identifying and acquiring suitable sites. However when sites and schemes had been identified there was opposition from within and from outside the council to their development. The Southampton and District Ratepayers Association wrote a letter to the Borough Council protesting at proposals for housing schemes at Hampton Park and Holybrook Estate.³⁴

The concern of ratepayers associations and Independent councillors was that the financial burden of providing housing would fall mainly on the rates. Prominent members of the Independent majority on the Council regarded private enterprise as best placed to provide for housing need. The Labour Party did not believe that private enterprise was adequate to deal with the problem but they were also sensitive about the potential loss to ratepayers of large scale housing schemes.

In December 1919 Tommy Lewis moved a resolution at the Borough Council meeting protesting at the Government's proposal to provide a subsidy for private builders. The resolution called for a national housing scheme that would provide "(1) That the capital necessary for Housing schemes should be supplied by the National Government, and a grant in aid in one or other form at least sufficient to prevent the schemes involving any charge on the rates". A restriction on 'luxury' building and priority for building materials to be secured for house building was also demanded. Debate on the resolution was carried forward to the meeting on 21 January 1920 and it was accepted by 27 votes to 11. This was clearly a success for Labour but the majority of Independents felt they could support it because it relieved the ratepayer of the cost of the schemes.

Labour urged the Borough Council to take up schemes to build new homes

³⁴Southampton Borough Council Minutes and Proceeding of Council and Committees, 5 and 26 March 1919

under the Addison Act and by 1922 just over 600 had been erected by the Council. However, the Government's housing plans ran into difficulty and a programme that had been heralded as providing 'homes fit for heroes' became the victim of Treasury financial restrictions. By 1923 the Medical Officer of Health was reporting a depressing situation. "The housing conditions in the Borough are apparently very much the same as in the past few years, and although during the year 383 houses were erected by private enterprise it is estimated that the population in the same period increased by 1,500 which would practically absorb the new accommodation provided." In 1924 the Medical Officer of Health could report a nominal surplus of houses but he went on, "Many of the homes erected, however, are of a fairly large type and beyond the means of the ordinary working class family, and the fact that the surplus mentioned above has apparently made little appreciable difference in the demand for, or in the overcrowding of, many homes in the Borough emphasises the urgent necessity for the provision of houses at a comparatively low rental". ³⁷

The introduction of the Chamberlain Act in 1923 granted a subsidy to houses built by private enterprise which reached a required standard. This was more in keeping with the philosophy of the Independent Group and Alderman Kimber moved a proposal that a subsidy of £150 be given to builders who provided homes to the required standard. He also argued that land acquired for housing schemes should be offered to those prepared to build homes under the scheme. The total number of houses built under the Chamberlain Act was 1,250. However the biggest impact was made by the Wheatley Act of 1924.

This legislation, passed by the first Labour Government, plus a local

Annual Report on the Health of the County Borough of Southampton, 1923, p.70

Annual Report on the Health of the County Borough of Southampton,

³⁵Annual Report on the Health of the County Borough of Southampton, 1938 p.160

^{1924,} p.60

**Southampton Borough Council Minutes and Proceedings, 18 May 1923

**39 J.H. Hazlett, "The Emergencies of Peace – Council Housing in

**Southampton 1919 – 1939* (unpublished BA Dissertation Birmingham University

Jan 1995) p.11

controversy helped Labour to seize the initiative and extract concessions from the Independents on the Borough Council over the provision of homes. Concern had been growing for some time about poor housing conditions in certain parts of the town and the Medical Officer of Health had already expressed the view that many new homes were unaffordable for working class families.

In October 1923 the local branch of the NSPCC wrote to the Borough Council urging them to build more homes and deal with the serious overcrowding in the district. In November a joint Committee of the Trades and Labour Council and Southampton Co-operative Society sent a resolution from a women's conference they held drawing attention to the same issue of overcrowding and the need for more houses.⁴⁰

In 1925 the Southampton Housing League was set up. It was a Christian-based organisation designed to investigate the housing problem and to work individually and collectively to improve conditions so that every family could have a separate dwelling. The first meeting was presided over by the Reverend W.R. Chitty, the rural dean, and supporters included Church of England and Non-conformist ministers. The Bishops of Winchester and Southampton sent messages of support as did the two local Conservative MPs Lord Apsley and Colonel Perkins. One of the speakers was Alderman Harry Barnes of the London Housing League. Also present was C J Hair who had been a Conservative then Independent Councillor for All Saints from 1911 to 1924. He was an architect who had been responsible for some of the housing schemes before the war. Labour had continued to raise the issue of adequate housing at the municipal elections and at the Borough Council and the renewed pressure from other organisations was to help Labour to win concessions from the Independents.

The Borough Council had been considering the question of erecting a town hall. The matter had gone to a town meeting in 1923 and the Southern Daily Echo reported, "At the recent Town's meeting at which the whole question was

⁴⁰Southampton Borough Council Minutes and Proceedings 17 Oct 1923 and 14 Nov 1923

⁴¹Southampton Times, 7 March 1925

debated, there was considerable evidence of strong feeling on the part of a large section of the local public that more homes should be provided before the Town Hall scheme was definitely tackled. The decision now taken serves to throw into even bolder prominence the urgency of the housing problem in its particular applicability to the Borough".⁴²

Labour stepped up its campaigning on housing highlighting overcrowding and poor conditions in a local paper published by the ILP. The first issue in May 1927 carried a prominent article about the housing problem. They followed it up in October and November in the run up to the municipal elections. The women's section of Town Ward carried out their own survey of housing conditions in the ward and sent them to the Borough Council.

The debate over the Town Hall re-emerged in 1928. The Council had identified a suitable site but the Labour Party insisted that a lack of housing be addressed. Three private meetings were held between representatives of the Labour Party and the Independents. The evidence of the Housing League and the previous controversy over the Town Hall scheme meant Labour had a level of potential support for its stance across the town. The agreement was that the Council would provide 2,000 homes to be completed and occupied by 31 October 1931. In exchange Labour agreed to support the proposals for a Town Hall.⁴⁵

Labour had made housing the main focus of its municipal election campaign in 1927 and gained seats in St. Mary's and Town ward. The Borough Council started considering slum clearance in 1927 and put together a scheme for Threefield Lane and Five Courts in Town ward in 1929. With the Greenwood Act of 1930 local councils acquired powers to declare clearance areas and improvement areas. The Independents however always seemed to be reluctant

⁴²Southern Daily Echo, 2 Jan 1925

⁴³The Test. A Monthly Review, Southampton ILP May 1927

⁴⁴Ibid, Oct and Nov 1927

⁴⁵Sir Sidney Kimber, op cit pp.125-6 and J H Hazlett op cit, p.15

to proceed as far or as fast as they might with housing schemes. They disliked the idea of compulsory purchase of private property and wanted to see greater compensation for property owners. The Government rejected this and the Independents found that they were among the last to adopt a scheme for slum clearance among the Borough Councils.⁴⁶

As well as differences over the scale and speed with which new housing should be provided the Labour Party and the Independents had different conceptions of the role of public housing. For the Independents, public housing was a temporary measure which would end when the private sector could provide sufficient housing. Public housing was also to be managed as a private undertaking and rent levels were expected to be unsubsidised. For the Labour Party, public housing was essential because private enterprise had consistently failed to ensure adequate housing for the working classes. Rents should be set at affordable levels even if this meant they had to be subsidised and the management of this housing was seen as a social service not a commercial undertaking.

When the first council houses became available shortly after the First World War there was a huge demand. Over 500 applications were received for the first 70 homes in Itchen. The rent levels were expected to be 10 shillings plus 2 shillings for rates although Itchen Councillors favoured an inclusive rent of 10 shillings. The suggested rents for homes in Hampton Park in Southampton were much higher at 17 shillings and sixpence and one pound per week plus rates. The Labour Party pressed for rents of 15 shillings and 12 shillings and six pence and eventually it was agreed that rent inclusive of rates would be set at the original figure. Alderman Kimber was unhappy at this compromise complaining that the cost would be borne by the ratepayer. Kimber believed that the better houses should command higher rents. The financially better off would occupy these houses releasing cheaper accommodation in the private sector for those who could not afford the new houses.⁴⁷

⁴⁶J.H. Hazlett, <u>op cit</u> pp.23, 25 and 26

⁴⁷Southampton Times, 17 April 1920, 15 and 22 May 1920 5 June 1920

The high rents however led to an inevitable problem of arrears and by May 1921 the Superintendent of St. Michael's lodging house, who was responsible for rent collections was asking for instructions from the Council. Two tenants were evicted for arrears.⁴⁸ Tenants increasingly sought to sub-let in order to gain extra income to pay the rent. A move to allow a single relative or lodger to sublet, provided an investigation proved there would be no overcrowding, was proposed by two Independent Councillors in June 1921 but it was defeated.⁴⁹

By June 1922 a policy of seizing possession if arrears were over £5, and no reasonable reduction was likely, was agreed. Also, tenants subletting in contravention of the tenancy agreement would face eviction. By July 1922 arrears in total were around £960. By October the council was approaching the Ministry of Health requesting permission to reduce rents. Some reductions were agreed but evictions still took pace. Labour took up the cases of individual tenants and so did trade union branches usually by writing letters on their behalf. In April 1923 arrears had risen to around £1,582.

Labour's defence of tenants was not an entirely new phenomenon. Labour had assisted in the setting up of the Itchen Tenants Defence League before the War and the organisation affiliated to the Labour Party in 1919. The Trades Council helped to publicise tenants rights through a handbook they produced.⁵² Gradually through a combination of pressure from the Labour Party plus the economic reality of housing tenants on low incomes the Council was forced to change its position.

Demand for housing continued to rise and by September 1923 there were 3,000

⁴⁸Southampton Borough Council Minutes and Proceedings 20 May 1921

⁴⁹<u>Ibid</u>, 22 June 1921

⁵¹<u>Ibid</u>, 2 March 1923 and 7 March 1923

⁵²Southampton Times, 29 November 1919

applicants on the waiting list. As the Council had ceased building the list was closed.⁵³ By October 1924 the Council were considering applications for subletting, and agreeing on occasions, subject to a rent reduction for the subtenant.

Labour resisted conditions imposed for letting to prospective tenants in 1925. The Council concerned at the arrears problem proposed that new housing be let to ex-servicemen in constant employment who had a minimum income of two pounds and ten shillings per week. They would also have to show evidence that they paid their rent regularly. As part of the negotiations with the Independents over the Town Hall Labour got restrictions on eligibility removed, the waiting list was opened again and the allocation sub-committee was given full discretionary powers.⁵⁴

By April 1932 the housing waiting list was again closed. In September out of a total of 10,675 applications received by the Council, 2,694 had been selected as tenants, 2,005 could not be traced, 901 were not entitled or had submitted a duplicate application and 2,675 cases were awaiting investigation.⁵⁵

Although many tenants benefited from the new council homes there is evidence that some tenants resisted being moved. Hazlett says, "Working class defiance was expressed most vocally in October 1935 when two hundred residents of Kingland presented a petition to the Council. They voiced their 'great indignation' at the demolition of their property and their removal to suburban estates away from the workplace and family roots". ⁵⁶ There were also some concerns expressed from the middle classes who lived in areas close to council estates and resented the influx of 'slum dwellers'. Some Labour councillors thought the petition was 'a bit of electioneering' by Councillor Young an Independent member for Trinity ward. The ward's only Labour Councillor was

⁵³Southampton Borough Council Minutes and Proceedings 7 Sept 1923

⁵⁴J.H. Hazlett, op cit p.56

⁵⁵<u>Labour Party Speakers Notes. Municipal Elections 1932</u> D/Mat/22/1 Southampton City Record Office

⁵⁶J.H. Hazlett, op cit p.56

up for re-election in November 1935 and Labour was supporting the slum clearance scheme. They also argued for rehousing and redevelopment schemes in the lower half of the town.⁵⁷

The transfer of working class families to the suburbs of Southampton did take people further from work but also from shops and other amenities. Only gradually did the Council acknowledge the need for community facilities. The Labour Party in Bitterne and Sholing made representations about getting a community hall and local Labour policy was to regard the management of council housing and the development of community facilities as essential. In 1937 the party policy for the municipal elections stated, "Large estates must be provided not only with social services but also recreational facilities. Estate management must be conceived of as a social service and not merely a financial mechanism". ⁵⁸

It is difficult to draw firm conclusions about the effect of the building of council houses on electoral politics. However, the one ward to be substantially transformed by the building of council homes, St Nicholas, shows a strong correlation between their development and the growth of the Labour vote. The ward returned Independent members to the Borough Council from 1920 until 1927. Labour then won seats in 1928, 1929 and 1930 and, except for 1931, continued to hold all three seats up to the Second World War. Development of council housing commenced in 1926 initially with 442 houses built up to 1928. Three further phases of building to July 1930 saw another 722 constructed making a total of 1,164. They accounted for the most significant development in the ward. In other wards such as Shirley, St. Denys and the two Bitterne wards along with Woolston, housing schemes were generally smaller and the political pattern of voting less clear to discern.

58 Labour Party Notes for Speakers Municipal Elections 1937. D Mat

⁵⁷Southern Daily Echo, 16 Oct 1935

^{22/2(}ii)
⁵⁹S.G. Stanton, <u>Housing Schemes Carried out in the County Borough of Southampton</u>, (Southampton 1931) p.97

Housing proved to be a more successful issue for Labour to exploit than unemployment. The problem of poor housing was one around which it was possible to mobilise a wider constituency of support. Labour got support from Churches, the local paper and many citizens and exploited this particularly in relation to the negotiations over the provision of a new Town Hall. They were able to press the Independents to make use of existing legislation to provide new homes and they were able to point to the 1924 Housing Act as an example of practical legislation passed by a Labour Government.

Unemployment was a constant feature of Southampton's local economy given the irregular patterns of work in much of the port industries. The trade unions were reluctant to organise the unemployed and the activity of the NUWM meant bodies like the Trades Council and the Labour Party attempted to distance themselves form the more direct protests that were organised. There was little evidence of electoral support for the unemployed. In the 1920s the Independents successfully argued against generous scales of relief and mobilised a strong lobby around a policy of economy. Even in the 1930s at the height of protest over the means test unemployed worker candidates did poorly but there is some evidence Labour may have benefited from reactions against the means test.

Chapter Nine

The Labour Party and Politics 1939 - 1945

The importance of the experience of the wartime period for the victory of the Labour Party at the 1945 General Election is acknowledged. However there is disagreement over how to interpret developments during the war. Steven Fielding, Peter Thompson and Nick Tiratsoo in their book on the Labour Party and popular politics in Britain in the 1940's identify two broad interpretations. One was a consensus school suggesting that a 'people's war' involving all classes brought a new sense of national purpose and solidarity. The experience of fighting a total war showed what could be achieved by directing the resources of the country toward that end and it convinced many people that there could be no going back to the mistakes of the1930s. Labour benefited because they had a radical programme that met people's aspirations. Labour eventually lost power because it lost momentum and direction and became the victim of the problems of the post-war economy.

The other view also recognises the importance of the war but argues that the working class were radicalised by the alliance with Russia against fascism and the increased role of the state. This raised expectations and confidence in people's capacity to create a better future. The Labour government's victory reflected this but instead of capitalising on this radicalism Labour's reforms became bureaucratic and they failed to transform the economy.¹

Within these two broad interpretations, questions are raised around how far wartime experiences created greater solidarity, what evidence there was of working class radicalism and what consensus there was about welfare, reconstruction and employment.

The picture can be difficult to discern because most normal party political activity was suspended during the war. Reporting of news was limited by wartime censorship as well as shortage of newsprint.

¹S.Fielding, P.Thompson and N.Tiratsoo. "<u>England Arise!" The Labour Party and Popular Politics in 1940's Britain (Manchester 1995) pp.1-2</u>

The three political parties agreed at national level that any parliamentary seat that became vacant would be retained by the previous MP's party and from 1940 this was extended to municipal elections. There were two uncontested by-elections in Southampton in 1940. In the first Sir John Reith who had been appointed as Minister of Information took over from Sir Charles Barrie who offered to step down. Reith was a Liberal and there was a need to find a seat held by a National Liberal for him to take over. There was a suggestion that the ILP might put forward a candidate but nothing came of this.² In November 1940 Reith accepted a peerage and Dr Russell Thomas was chosen as the Liberal National Candidate without any threat of a by-election.³

Although a truce was agreed for municipal elections there was still some controversy over appointments to positions between Labour and the Ratepavers. However one area, the appointment of Aldermen was subject to an agreement between the parties and concluded by the outbreak of war in 1939. For many years Labour had complained about the imbalance in the number of Aldermen. In 1938 Labour had 2 and the Ratepayers had 14. This significantly increased the Ratepayers' majority on the Borough Council where they had 28 elected councillors to Labours 23. A more proportional division of Aldermanic seats would not have given Labour a majority but more fairly represented the strength of the respective parties. The agreement reached was that the number of Labour Aldermen would be increased by 6 by filling casual vacancies held by the Ratepayers Party alternately with Labour and Ratepayer nominees until Labour reached the figure of six. Labour Aldermanic vacancies would be automatically filled by a Labour nominee. Labour acknowledged that it was a compromise and accepted that the majority group had to have a working majority.4

Southern Daily Echo, 20 Sept 1939

²<u>Hampshire Advertiser</u>, 27 Jan 1940. <u>The Times</u>, 29 Jan 1940. <u>The Times</u>, 11 Nov 1940.

Having secured a concession on the appointment of Alderman, two other issues of representation caused dissent. They were the appointment of the Mayor and the Chairmanship of Committees. In November 1939 the Labour Group nominated Alderman Lewis for the Mayoralty. Alderman Vincent speaking in support argued that in terms of seniority he deserved to be nominated. He also argued that Labour had secured a majority, albeit a small one, of the votes at the last municipal elections in November 1938. Alderman Woolley, leader of the Ratepayers Party, stressed his personal admiration for Lewis and suggested he would welcome a time when it would be possible to have an understanding over the nomination of Mayor but he stressed this was only his personal opinion.⁵ The Ratepayer group nominated one of their own members who defeated Lewis on a straight party vote by 41 to 23.⁶

The issue arose again in November 1940. Labour did not propose a nominee but they insisted on a vote and Councillor William Lewis from the Ratepayers Party was elected by 36 votes to 24. Tommy Lewis said Labour had a right to expect a nominee for Mayor and said he believed public opinion was on Labour's side. He sought to contrast the spirit of wartime co-operation with the Labour Party being invited into Government and the response of the Ratepayer Party. "I cannot say that this attitude has been adopted here. On the contrary I find that a section of the Council is doing everything possible to prevent collaboration". The Ratepayers Party was obviously sensitive to this particular criticism for in 1941 Lewis was invited to nominate a Labour member for the office of Sheriff, effectively the Deputy Mayor. He declined and emphasised his reasons. "We felt that the question of chairmanship of Committees was of equal, if not greater importance than the filling of the offices of Mayor and Sheriff.⁸ This suggests Labour was not interested in the Mayoralty for its own sake but as a route to recognition of Labour's legitimacy as a party. The Ratepayers Party were reluctant to concede positions to Labour on existing

⁵<u>Ibid</u>, 9 Nov 1939

⁶Southampton Borough Council Minutes and Proceedings of Council and Committees 9 Nov 1939

⁷Southampton Daily Echo, 9 Nov 1940

⁸<u>lbid,</u> 11 **N**ov 1941

committees, but did give representation on special bodies established as a result of the war. Labour had a nominee on a special three-member emergency committee set up in 1939 to deal with urgent matters of civil defence. They also had four members on the food control committee which had six Ratepayer Party and five retail trade members.

Labour demands for more and fairer representation were in line with a desire for the nation to work together in the face of a national crisis. The formation of a coalition government with Labour ministers holding important portfolios contrasted with the reluctance of the Ratepayers Party in sharing power. Labour wanted to nominate the deputy chairman to committees and also threatened to challenge for committee chairmanships if no action was taken. Labour was however being careful not to demand a disproportionate share of power. In 1942 they put forward a list of nominees to chair a range of committees including Water, Public Lands, Maternity and Child Welfare, Health, Works, Fire Brigade and the Watch Committee. Many of these were concerned with welfare or services of particular importance in wartime.

Labour's nominees were also often well qualified for their posts. A local general practitioner Dr. Sakoshansky, was proposed for the Maternity and Child Welfare Committee. Alderman Vincent for the Watch Committee (he was a Justice of the Peace) and Mrs Victoria King for the Health Committee. All the Labour nominees were defeated and the retiring chairmen elected. Even the propositions that Alderman Lewis be vice-chairman of Education and Councillor Mrs Cutler a vice-chairman of the Public Assistance Committee were defeated.⁹

The refusal to agree Labour nominees for traditional committees contrasts with the Ratepayers' acceptance earlier in 1942 of Councillor Matthews as Vice-Chairman of the new Town Planning and Development Committee. This was established to oversee the redevelopment of the blitzed city centre in February 1942. Given that the town hoped to get government support and the need for some consensus on possible redevelopment it may be that the Ratepayers

⁹<u>Ibid</u>, 19 and 20 Nov 1942

¹⁰J.Hazegawa, <u>Replanning the Blitzed City Centre</u> (Buckingham 1992) p.52

were willing to concede a role for Labour on this Committee.

Labour had some success in securing more representation particularly on bodies established as a result of the wartime situation but although an electoral truce existed the Labour Party never accepted the notion of a political truce. Despite the difficulties the Party attempted to maintain its local political organisation and members were encouraged to debate policy and look towards renewed activity after the war.

In 1941 the executive of Southampton Labour Party stated, "The general feeling of the Executive Committee was that the General Committee should meet as regularly as possible, with a view to maintaining contact with, and the interest of, the membership". 11 They even managed to organise large scale social events occasionally such as a trip to the New Forest involving around 200 people. The main aim was to get the membership together and maintain interest in the work of the party. 12

The difficulties of wartime did have an effect and the party General Committee met every two months, instead of every month in 1943. Poor attendance at meetings of the Labour Group were a problem in October 1942 and at the Party annual general meeting in 1943 the press reported that membership was at 'rock bottom' due to changes of address and wartime circumstances. 13 Public meetings also got small attendances even with Members of Parliament from outside Southampton coming to speak. 14 Despite this the Labour Party continued to look forward and plan for the post war local elections, setting up a sub committee to look at the matter. 15

The Party believed it had a real chance of victory at the municipal elections and they were preparing for possible elections in May or November 1945. The sub

¹⁵lbid, 21 **M**arch 1944

¹¹Southampton Labour Party Executive Committee Minutes 12 May 1941. Southampton Labour Party Archive ¹²Ibid, 20 Aug 1941

¹³Ibid, 10 Oct 1942, Southern Daily Echo, 25 Feb 1943

¹⁴Southampton Labour Party Executive Committee 12 March1943

committee reporting on this noted. "The whole scheme including the selection and placing of candidates must be dominated by their aim and real unity of action is required for this purpose". 16 In order to raise the profile of candidates the reports suggested wards should give councillors the opportunity to make reports or speeches on local matters on party policy and then take care to prepare short reports for the local newspaper. 17

Labour began to consider the appointment of a full-time agent and party secretary at the end of 1944. Although they agreed to invite applications no appointment was made until May 1945 when Councillor H.J. Willcock was appointed election agent for a six week period for a salary of £50.¹⁸

In February 1945 the local party executive discussed ward organisation. Three wards needed reorganising, Town, St Mary's and Northam. Three others had a nucleus of organisation or were making progress, Trinity, Newtown and Freemantle. Pear Tree was being reorganised and Portswood had a new secretary while Sholing was singled out for attention because it was considered to have electoral possibilities. Millbrook, Shirley, St Denys, Woolston and St Nicholas were considered to be making good progress or in need of little help. By April, 21 members had been enrolled in St Mary's and 15 in Town. This did not reach pre-war levels but was an improvement on 1944 when membership was in single figures.¹⁹

¹⁹Ibid, 26 Feb 1945 and 24 March 1945

¹⁶Southampton Labour Party Executive Report of Subcommittee appointed to consider local elections 27 April 1944. Southampton Labour Party Archive

¹⁷<u>Ibid</u> ¹⁸<u>Southampton Labour Party Executive Committee</u> 26 May 1945

The General Election of 1945

The coalition government which had presided during the war formally came to an end on 23 May 1945 when Churchill resigned and asked for a dissolution. A caretaker Government consisting mainly of Conservatives with some National Liberals, a few non-party men and any Independent Liberals who wanted to remain was formed. The dissolution took place on 15 June and the election was held on 5 July.

At the beginning of 1945 tensions within the coalition began to mount but following the surrender of German forces on 7 May Churchill took the initiative. He wrote to the other party leaders suggesting they remain in the government until the war with Japan was over. The alternative was to withdraw immediately so the election could be held in July. The suggestion of prolonging parliament still further was new as was Churchill's suggestion of a referendum to ask if Parliament should be renewed or not.

Attlee favoured an autumn election as there would be more time to compile an accurate electoral register. Electors in the services would have more time to consider the issues and service candidates would also have more time to make themselves known to their constituents. He rejected the idea of a referendum as alien to the British parliamentary system.²⁰

There were undoubtedly some political calculations being made by the parties about the timing and impact of a general election. Labour were not keen on an early election, partly for the reasons stated by Attlee but also they were concerned Churchill would capitalise on the euphoria of victory and win an election on his reputation as a war leader, this time at the head of a Conservative Government. Churchill argued that postponing a dissolution until the autumn would, in effect, produce a sustained election campaign making it impossible for the coalition to achieve anything.

²⁰R.B. McCallum and A. Readman, <u>The British General Election of 1945</u> (Oxford 1947) Chapter One pp.1-23

The General Election in Southampton

For all the political party's, election campaigning was made difficult by the fact that the movement of population made old records obsolete. The new electoral register also left people off if they were returning to their homes after wartime evacuation. The total number of electors on the register was 95,898; this compares with 110,047 for the last general election in 1935. Reporting on canvassing during the election, Labour's agent noted, "Canvassing was not very extensive due to shortness of time, our war weakened organisations and to the fact that no electors lists had been published since 1938; our own records were far from accurate due to changes etc. brought about by the war". All Saints, Trinity, Portswood and the top end of Shirley were well canvassed as were Sholing, Woolston and most of Pear Tree. Apart from this all the wards west of the Itchen received some attention from canvassers and the estimate was that 22,000 people were contacted in total. This was around 23% of the electorate.

Given the difficulty of fighting an election so soon after the end of the war the statistics of the election compiled by Labour's agent were impressive. There were 26 indoor meetings including two well attended ones at the Guildhall. 65 outdoor meetings were held at places like the docks, shipyards and other workplaces. 90,000 election addresses were distributed along with 80,000 final appeals; 30,000 free leaflets plus another 10,000 specialist leaflets on various topics. On election day the Party ran 13 committee rooms around the town to cover 26 polling stations and mass knocking up of potential supporters was organised throughout the day. Over 60 cars were available to help take people to the polling stations.²²

In terms of canvassing, most attention was concentrated on wards where Labour did not have any local councillors ie. All Saints, Trinity and Portswood. Woolston and Sholing were more marginal and only Bitterne and Pear Tree had three Labour Councillors. The strongest Labour wards Town, St Mary's and

²¹Southampton Labour Party Agent's General Election Report 1945, 5 Sept 1945, Southampton Labour Party Archive

Northam had suffered badly from bombing and they also had the weakest organisation. However, the vote there was unlikely to switch to the Conservatives. The important factor was to ensure they turned out on election day.

Labour's campaign nationally had sought to contrast Churchill the war leader with Churchill the leader of the Conservative Party and they were helped in this by a notorious radio broadcast by Churchill at the beginning of the campaign. He attacked socialism as being inseparable from totalitarianism and argued such a system would entail a political police, a Gestapo. Even allowing for the polemics of an election this charge against the Labour Party, whose members had recently had a share in Government, must have appeared to most of the electorate as unbelievable. The theme was taken up by Conservatives throughout the country who attacked 'socialism' in abstract terms rather than concentrating on the programme of the Labour Party. McCallum and Readman in their study of the 1945 election highlighted the importance of the broadcast. "Mr Churchill's first broadcast and Mr Attlee's reply the following night were pivotal events in the history of the election. They exercised a profound influence on the subsequent development of the campaign and perhaps on the final verdict of the electorate". 23

The local Labour parliamentary candidates Tommy Lewis and Ralph Morley made a conscious effort to appeal to the whole electorate. At their adoption meeting Morley said, "He also felt very confident that they would get the votes of the salaried workers – the people who were working in the Post Office, the Civil Service, the technologists and administrators – because they recognised that the programme the Labour Party were putting forward was a reasonable and practical programme...." In order to emphasise this appeal a mass meeting on the eve of polling was organised around a series of five minute addresses from people from a range of backgrounds on the theme of 'Why you should vote Labour'. They included a merchant seaman, a docker, a shipbuilding employee, an aircraft worker, a doctor, a teacher, housewife and small shopkeeper, a nurse, a member of a youth club and a representative from

²⁴Southern Daily Echo, 11 June 1945

²³R.B. McCallum and A. Readman, op cit p.142

Throughout the campaign the Labour candidates emphasised the importance of meeting the need for more housing. At meetings the candidates talked specifically about this and it featured strongly in their election literature. ²⁶ The establishment of a national health service, securing employment, family allowances and pensions also featured.

Labour's main opponents in Southampton were the two sitting MP's William Craven Ellis and Dr Russell Thomas. Craven Ellis was a Conservative who described himself as the National Candidate, Russell Thomas was the Liberal National Candidate. Group Captain Fulljames was the Southampton Liberal Party Organisation candidate.

The bulk of Craven Ellis's election address was devoted to his '21 points'. The first described his service to the constituency over 14 years. The second was 'economic security with liberty'. Number three was his support for Churchill. Some emphasised traditional Conservative concerns like keeping Britain strong (no.6), keeping down war costs and easing the National Debt (no.7) and sound monetary policy (no.8). Others reflected the ideas for social reform outlined by Beveridge such as full employment (no.10), adequate pensions (no.18) comprehensive national insurance and health services (no.13), family allowances (no.20) and help for ex-servicemen and women (no.13). Craven Ellis had his own proposals for providing cheap housing (no.11) and he also wanted gratuities paid to merchant seamen at the same rates as the other services.²⁷

Craven Ellis, although mentioning Churchill, appeared to be trying to distance himself from the Conservative Party for nowhere on his election address did the party name appear. Craven Ellis and Thomas tried to portray their candidature as supporters of the national interest. Thomas criticised Labour for breaking national unity by leaving the coalition and sowing the seeds of political strife at a

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²⁵Ibid, 4 July 1945

²⁶<u>Ibid</u>, 15 June, 20 June and 22 June 1945

²⁷Craven Ellis election address 1945 Southampton City Library cuttings file 1-15 I F

crucial time. Craven Ellis characterised the contest as one between nationalisation and free enterprise and he also criticised Labour for not supporting rearmament before the War.²⁸

The Liberal candidate Group Captain Fulljames was a career officer in the RAF who had recently retired after 29 years service. He lived in Southampton and was supported by the independent Liberal Party organisation which had been established shortly before the War by those Liberals unhappy at the local amalgamation of Liberals and Conservatives. His manifesto fully supported the implementation of the Beveridge Report.

He declared his intention was to see the defeat of the Conservative Party. People sympathetic to the Conservatives and Labour both expressed concern that his candidacy might split the vote but he insisted he had a distinctive contribution to make and would not stand aside.²⁹

The result of the election was a victory for both Labour candidates. The figures were:-

| R. Morley (Lab) | 37,556 |
|-----------------------------|--------|
| T. Lewis (Lab) | 37,054 |
| W. Craven Ellis (Nat) | 24,367 |
| Dr. W.S.R. Thomas (Nat Lib) | 22,650 |
| R. Fulljames (Lib) | 8,878 |

The turnout was 68%, slightly higher than 1935 when it was 67.4%. The swing to Labour in Southampton was 18%, higher than the national average of 12%. Plymouth and Portsmouth also recorded swings of 18%. In London it was between 17% and 18% and in the West Midlands 20%.³⁰

Labour's organisation was difficult to maintain during the war but they succeeded in mounting an effective campaign. However there is some doubt that the campaign itself produced the Labour victory. Fielding, Thompson and

²⁸Southern Daily Echo, 4 July 1945

²⁹<u>Ibid</u>, 29 May 1945 and 15 June 1945 ³⁰McCallum and Readman, <u>op cit</u>, p.264

Tiratsoo said that, "....a majority of voters had decided how they were going to vote well before the start of the campaign. Despite the considerable energy expended on party rhetoric, most people were left unmoved by manifestoes, meetings and broadcasts". Public opinion had been moving against the Conservatives from the evidence of a series of by-elections from 1943, despite the electoral truce, and the fact that none of the political parties officially supported these candidacies. 32

The National candidate in Southampton, Craven Ellis, reflected the view that the electorate were not that interested in the campaign. Speaking at an open air meeting he said, "He found that with the exception perhaps of meetings at the Dock Gates very little interest was being taken in the elections. He took the view that the electors of Southampton had already made up their minds". ³³ He thought however that this was a sign of a victory for Churchill.

In searching for the roots of this change Jim Fyrth claimed that the war created a new mood and desire for a better society building on a range of progressive ideas such as those contained in the Beveridge Report.³⁴ Others such as Fielding et al have been more cautious stressing that, although the general principles of the report were supported, there was little detailed knowledge of how the proposals would work. There were also significant doubts about whether the Government would implement it.³⁵

Local reaction to the Beveridge Report was favourable. The local daily paper carried a report with a response from a local canteen worker. "This will spell salvation for many of those serving in the forces. From conversations I have had with them I know how anxiously they feel about the future. For them this

³²P. Addison, <u>The Road to 1945</u> (London 1977) pp.249-50

33 Southern Daily Echo, 20 July 1945

³⁵S. Fielding et al, op cit p.34

³¹S. Fielding et al, <u>op cit</u> p.66 Also McCallum and Readman <u>op cit</u> p.269

³⁴J. Fyrth "Days of Hope. The Meaning of 1945" in J. Fyrth (ed) <u>Labours</u> Promised Land – Culture and Society in Britain 1945 – 1951 (London 1995) pp.4-5

is something definite which brings within the realms of possibility promises which were vaguely made in the last war and never fulfilled. The report is certainly up against vested interests and the question is: Will the Government be big enough to overcome them". Other reactions from a clergyman, housewife, head teacher and police officer were also largely favourable.

The trade unions played an important role in disseminating and debating the Beveridge Report. The Hampshire and Isle of Wight, Wiltshire and Dorset Federation of Trades Councils organised a conference involving 2,000 delegates from the three counties in January 1943. The conference heard details of the proposals in the report and passed a resolution approving the principles of the report and calling for its prompt introduction. The relevant motion was moved and seconded by Tommy Lewis and Ralph Morley.³⁷

The local Trades Council had already welcomed the report, but Lewis who had a long involvement with the Friendly Societies noted that many people felt the non-profit making societies were more humane in their treatment of people than an organisation under state management.³⁸

The Conservative's apparent reluctance to endorse the Beveridge Report and the public feeling that it might not get implemented probably helped to reinforce the political swing against the Conservatives that developed in the early years of the war. ³⁹ Also the prospect of Labour governing the country was less threatening than the Conservatives attempted to portray it. Labour had experience of office as they had been part of a coalition government. Some of the foundations of the post war welfare state had been laid down with the 1944 Education Act and the Beveridge Report and the public expected a post-war government to build on this. Labour faced no significant political challenge in gathering in the 'radical' non-Labour vote although in Southampton it is interesting to note that the Liberal candidate polled 8,000 votes (6.81%) in 1945.

³⁶Southern Daily Echo, 2 Dec 1942

³⁷<u>Ibid</u>, 25 Jan 1943

³⁸<u>Ibid</u>, 21 Dec 1942

³⁹P. Addison <u>op cit</u>, pp. 218-228

The last time an independent Liberal stood in 1929 he got nearly 13,000 votes (9%). So despite such a long period without Liberal candidates a core of voters still identified with the Party.

The Municipal Elections 1945

Labour's electoral success was confirmed in the elections for the Borough Council in 1945 when they took control for the first time. Labour won 13 seats from the Ratepayers Party, many for the first time ever, including Bevois (one seat) All Saints (one seat) and Portswood (three seats). The reason for the large number of contested seats was because with the resumption of elections all members whose terms of office would have expired in 1939 and all those coopted to vacancies since the suspension of elections had to seek re-election.⁴⁰ This gave Labour a unique political opportunity and undoubtedly contributed to the scale of their victory. A full table of the results is shown in Appendix 23.

Labour claimed that, with the election of two Labour MP's and a Labour Government, a Labour Council would be able to work with the new government to regenerate the town. One of Labour's key themes during the campaign was the need for housing. The manifesto of the local party stated clearly, "First things will be put first and housing will be pre-eminent". 41 Councillor Mrs Cutler speaking at a meeting in Freemantle in support of the Labour candidate said, "If people desired the Government's policy of housing to be carried out locally they must have a council comprised of members willing to take advantage of the powers conferred on them".42

Another important issue was the redevelopment of the blitzed city centre. This became a matter of controversy in the local elections with Labour accusing the Ratepayers Party of self interest because of delays and changes to the proposed scheme. Labour made public ownership of the area concerned one

⁴⁰Southern Daily Echo, 21 Sept 1945

⁴¹Southampton Present and Future. The Policy of Southampton Labour Party 1945. Southampton City Library. Southern Daily Echo, 4 Oct 1945

of the demands of their election programme.⁴³

The redevelopment had been under consideration during the war and Labour favoured an enlarged and ambitious redevelopment but the Ratepayers wanted a more modest proposal. Disagreement came to a head in June 1945 when the Ratepayers sought to apply for dispensation for members who had an interest in land or property to be acquired who would normally be disqualified from voting. Labour bitterly opposed this but lost the vote.

During the election Ratepayer Party candidates tried to resurrect a pre-war attack on Labour claiming they wanted to control the Council on 'political' lines and that the Ratepayers represented"not one section of the community but all sections". ⁴⁴ Labour was accused of wanting to nationalise the town centre thus allowing it to remain derelict for longer than necessary. ⁴⁵

Although the detailed arguments about the city centre redevelopment may have evaded most people the process of bringing forward plans and consulting government departments had been going on since 1941. Not all the delays were the responsibility of the Borough Council but the argument over dispensation on voting did not reflect well on the administration. Labour was also able to challenge any claim that they did not represent the whole community because their candidates were drawn from a wide range of backgrounds. They included a boilermaker, a locomotive driver, a geological surveyor, a draughtsman, a civil servant, a shopkeeper and four female candidates described as housewives. 46

As noted earlier Labour's achievement in winning control of the Borough Council was helped by the fact that some wards had more than one seat vacant. However Labour would still have had an overall majority if only one

⁴³J. Hasegawa, <u>op cit</u> p.64

⁴⁴Southern Daily Echo, 17 Oct 1945

⁴⁵Ibid, 26 Oct 1945

⁴⁶ Ibid, 24 Oct 1945

seat had been contested in each of the wards. In order to assess Labour's achievements in 1945 it is necessary to briefly scrutinise the party's fortunes in the years immediately after.

Table 9.1 shows the total votes and seats for each party from 1945 to 1951. By 1949 Labour had lost its overall majority although they still retained the chairmanship of the various council committees.

Table 9.1 Votes and Seats 1945 – 51

| TOTAL VOTE | 1945 | 1946 | 1947 | 1949 | 1950 | 1951 | | |
|--------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--|--|
| Ratepayers | 26,598 | 22,102 | 33,814 | 34,976 | 35,668 | 36,646 | | |
| Labour | 43,052 | 21,777 | 28,380 | 32,401 | 30,017 | 27,964 | | |
| Communist | | 57 | 131 | | | | | |
| Independents | 5,556 | | | | | | | |
| TOTAL SEATS | (1) | | | | | | | |
| Ratepayers | 26 | 19 | 24 | 34 | 37 | 38 | | |
| Labour | 41 | 48 | 41 | 34 | 31 | 30 | | |
| Independents | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | | | |

(1) This figure represents the change in aldermanic seats after the 1945 election in Labour's favour plus one Labour gain in the 1946 election.

Table 9.2 shows the Party control of seats in the wards for each year from 1946 to 1951.

Table 9.2 Municipal Elections 1946 – 1951

| | 1946 | 1947 | 1949* | 1950 | 1951 |
|------------------------|------------------|------|-------|------------------|------|
| | | | D.D.0 | - D-D | |
| ST DENYS | RP | RP⁰ | RP⁰ | RP | RP |
| BEVOIS | RP | RP | RP⁰ | RP | RP |
| PORTSWOOD | RP⁰ | RP⁰ | RP⁰ | RP | RP |
| SHIRLEY | RP | RP⁰ | RP⁰ | RP | RP |
| TRINITY | LAB | LAB | LAB | LAB | LAB |
| ST. MARY'S | LAB | LAB | LAB | LAB | LAB |
| TOWN | LAB | LAB | LAB | LAB | LAB |
| MILLBROOK | LAB | RP⁰ | LAB | RP⁰ | RP |
| NEWTOWN | LAB ^X | RP | LAB | RP⁰ | RP |
| NORTHAM | LAB | LAB | LAB | LAB | LAB |
| FREEMANTLE | RP | RP⁰ | RP⁰ | RP | RP |
| ALL SAINTS | RP | RP | RP | RP | RP |
| BANISTER | RP | RP | RP | RP ² | RP |
| BITTERNE AND PEAR TREE | LAB | LAB | LAB | RP° | LAB |
| WOOLSTON | LAB | LAB | LAB | LAB | RP⁰ |
| BITTERNE AND SHOLING | LAB | RP | LAB | LAB ^X | LAB |
| ST. NICHOLAS | LAB | RPº | LAB | RP° | RP |

- * The 1948 elections were postponed from November to May 1949 to facilitate a change from November to May for Borough Council Elections.
- Unopposed return
- Ratepayer Party gain
- X Labour Party gain
- ² Two seats contested

If, for this period, the wards are classified by the same categories as was used in Chapter Seven some idea of the pattern of change can be seen.

| 1. | Safe Labour | 2. | Change Over Time |
|-------|------------------------|-------|------------------|
| (2) | Trinity | (4/3) | St. Denys |
| (1) | St. Mary's | (4) | Portswood |
| (2/1) | Town | (3) | Shirley |
| (1) | Northam | (4) | Freemantle |
| (1) | Bitterne and Pear Tree | | |
| (2) | Woolston | | |
| | | | |
| 3. | <u>Marginal</u> | 4. | Safe Ratepayer |
| (4/2) | Newtown | (4) | All Saints |
| (4/1) | St. Nicholas | (4) | Banister |
| (4/3) | Bitterne and Sholing | (4) | Bevois |
| (3) | Millbrook | | |

() Figure in brackets is the classification for the period 1919-1938 from Chapter Seven.

All the wards in category 2 moved from Labour to Ratepayer and St Nicholas moved from safe Labour to marginal. The number of safe Labour wards increased and were concentrated in the older working class communities in the central southern part of town. Woolston, where a large number of workers from the shipbuilding and ship repairing industry lived, also became a safe Labour seat. It appears there was some consolidation of Labour support in predominantly working class wards but St Nicholas, with a significant amount of council housing, became marginal.

In 1946 Labour held its position. Although they lost Portswood, Labour gained Newtown. Portswood was a ward Labour had never won before 1945 and its loss was to some extent to be expected. It also showed that a swing to Labour in 1945 was not quickly dissipated. In 1947 the situation had changed, Labour lost six seats at the municipal elections. Local Labour figures put the defeat

down to national rather than local factors.⁴⁷ The local paper thought that the reasons for the election results were, "....a growing revulsion against restrictions and a deteriorating standard of living".⁴⁸ The fuel shortage and severe winter weather at the beginning of 1947 clearly had some impact on the mood of the people as did the financial crisis in August.⁴⁹

The Labour Council found it difficult to press ahead with the housebuilding programme because of Labour shortages in the building trades and the redevelopment of the city centre was also delayed. The frustration of the local party was evident from a letter they sent in 1947. "....it is becoming increasingly difficult to keep the people with the Labour Government and, in Southampton, the Labour Council because of the increasing cost of living, austerity etc...."

Although there is some evidence that the class base of Labour's support was being consolidated after 1945 it is clear that this was an uneven process. St Nicholas which had been safe before the war now became marginal and even Woolston was lost in 1951. Labour had won in 1945 because it had successfully appealed to a wide range of people from different backgrounds. It could only remain in control politically by recreating that sort of alliance.

⁴⁷<u>Ibid</u>, 8 Nov 1947

Midd, 3 Nov 1947

W. Marron, Labour in Dower 1045 51 (Oxford

Chapter Ten Conclusion

This study has set out to explore why and how independent Labour politics grew from 1890, when the first identifiable 'Labour' candidates stood for election to the Borough Council in Southampton, to 1945 when the Labour party, for the first time, controlled the Borough Council and for the second time elected two members of parliament for the constituency.

Most studies of the development of Labour politics now acknowledge the diversity of working class experience that influenced this. Links between trade unionism and independent Labour politics were important but the way in which that relationship developed varied within different unions and in different localities as David Howell has shown in his study of the ILP.

In the period up to the First World War trade unionism in Southampton was relatively weak even compared to other port towns. The nature of the local economy made trade union organisation difficult. The casual and seasonal nature of dock work was one feature of this but relatively skilled workers in ship repairing were also subject to seasonal variations in employment. The defeat of the Southampton dock strike in 1890 effectively destroyed independent trade unionism in the docks until around 1906 and it took the industrial unrest of 1911 before the dock workers union grew significantly. However, after this it still proved difficult to sustain membership and organisation. Seafarers trade unionism remained weak for most of the period, until 1911 when the BSU was formed.

There was no significant industrial unrest in the town between 1891 and 1911 although a number of small scale disputes involving local employers did take place. Southampton had no equivalent of the Manningham Mills strike in West Yorkshire which put a prominent local liberal employer in conflict with their workers. Similarly there was no parallel with the situation in Leicester where changing work practices and unemployment in the boot and shoe industry also put liberal employers in conflict with the workforce.

However, there is evidence that trade unions and trade unionists were recognising that there was a distinct Labour interest that was not being adequately represented by the existing political parties. The Trades Council decision to put forward two Labour candidates at the 1892 School Board elections challenged the normal basis on which these elections were fought between Church and Progressive candidates. During the early 1890's the Trades Council and trade unions supported Liberals who promoted working class interests. By the mid 1890s they were also supporting independent Labour candidates. At the end of the 1890s tensions on the Trades Council between Liberals and proponents of independent Labour representation became evident because many members now regarded the Liberals as indifferent, or even hostile, to Labour interests. By 1903 the impact of the Taff Vale case on trade unions was being cited by the Trades Council as the main reason for supporting a Labour candidate for parliament.

The outbreak of industrial unrest between 1911 and 1913 had an important impact on Southampton. Seafarers unionism was revived and transformed because of the strike, organised by Havelock Wilson, but also as a result of the subsequent conflict between the local branch of the NSFU and the London Headquarters, which led to the formation of the BSU. The initial revival of seaman's unionism in Southampton was assisted by leading activists in the SDF/BSP and when the local branch of the NSFU broke away to form the new union these activists formed the leadership of the BSU. This created the capacity for seafarers to be more politically engaged with the local Labour movement.

Other trade unions such as the dock workers and the painters saw membership increasing and affiliated membership of the Trades Council reached a peak in 1913. The other significant development was the apparent demise of the Free Labour Association after 1911. The absence of any reports of its activities or its annual general meeting after that date suggest that it succumbed to the revival of trade unionism in the docks. There was certainly a heightened sense of class antagonism emerging within the Free Labour Association in its last year.

The growth of support for Labour among trade unions can be traced at key moments from 1890 to 1918. In 1894 the Trades Council was divided with only a minority supporting Ramsay MacDonald. They later went on to endorse H G Wilson, one of their founding members, as the second Liberal candidate in 1895. By 1903 a clear majority of trade unions were supporting Harry Quelch's candidacy. This was significant because they had an opportunity to select a candidate who would have been endorsed by the Labour Representative Committee. Instead they chose to emphasise their independence not only from the Liberals but also from the LRC. Tommy Lewis's abortive attempt at a parliamentary candidature in 1909 drew support from 18 out of 26 trade unions canvassed by the Trades Council. By 1918 all the affiliated trade unions on the Trades Council supported the two Labour candidates Tommy Lewis and Fred Perriman.

The conversion of the trade unions to the support of independent Labour was a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition for Labour success. The process of change was a gradual one and one of the influences on that process was the activity of the SDF and the ILP. Martin Crick has described the SDF as more open and flexible than its critics have suggested, engaging in local campaigns on unemployment and housing and working with trade unions. This was certainly the experience in Southampton where, despite some tensions over Ramsay MacDonalds candidacy, they worked with the ILP campaigning on unemployment and they did not compete against each other electorally. The role of these activists was important because they often operated in two roles; as dedicated trade unionists as well as socialist activists. That experience coupled with their support for working class interests such as the relief of the unemployed or support for municipal housing schemes could be influential in persuading others to support independent Labour representation.

The character and development of local Liberalism was an important influence on the growth of Labour politics in Southampton. In the early 1890s radical Liberals were sympathetic to trade unions and to the dock workers during their strike. However there were tensions within Liberal ranks over representation of the Labour interest. The majority of Liberals were uneasy

about this because they saw Labour as just one of the interests to be represented and they regarded the notion of representation based on an appeal to one class as divisive. There was also some concern, even among those sympathetic to Labour, that the more strident and militant new unions, in seeking to compel men to join unions, were placing themselves in opposition to Liberal principles.

The failure of Liberals to select 'Labour' candidates was a common factor leading to disillusionment with them and this has been highlighted in studies by Henry Pelling, Joyce Brown, Bill Lancaster and David Howell. In Southampton the rejection of Ramsay MacDonald by the Liberals was a turning point for him personally, and for a number of radical Liberals who left the party to form a local branch of the ILP. The Liberals decision was largely influenced by pragmatic considerations for Southampton was a closely fought two member parliamentary seat and they did not believe they could win with a 'Labour' candidate. A new relationship between Liberals and Labour might have developed after the 1896 by-election but the Liberals made no attempt to accommodate Labour interests and in 1899 rejected any idea of fielding a 'Labour' candidate at the next general election. The Liberals believed that there was no need for any concessions to Labour because it was asserted that 'commercial men' who were 'sound politicians' should represent the town.

The conservative nature of local liberalism had its roots in a distinctive feature of local politics. A culture of municipal co-operation developed between the Conservatives and Liberals after the Conservatives gained control of the Borough Council from 1895. Liberal members were given an opportunity to become chairmen of often important committees. Local Liberal leaders and the towns Liberal MPs had no interest in the ideas of New Liberalism and the Liberals lack of enthusiasm for some of their government's own legislation such as the feeding of school children gave Labour campaigning opportunities to exploit. Further opportunities to attack the Liberals for their failure to support for working class interests arose over the provision of municipal housing and help for the unemployed. The details of these are set out in Chapter Four.

Duncan Tanner acknowledged that the Liberals in Southampton were not 'Progressive' but he did suggest that some sort of understanding between the progressive organisations would have been attractive because of the Liberals continuing strength in several mixed middle class wards. He also argued that a Liberal revival was underway by 1914.

His portrayal of the situation in Southampton is wrong. It fails to recognise how deep the split between the Liberals and Labour had become. Tentative steps to establish a progressive alliance in 1901 quickly foundered because many Liberals could not agree to support avowed socialists like John Exten or Tommy Lewis. The breach between Liberals and Labour in 1905 stemmed in part from an earlier decision of the Trades Council to adopt a socialist, Harry Quelch their parliamentary candidate. He was unlikely to be acceptable to many traditional Liberals to run in tandem with their candidate because he was a socialist and it was feared that some Liberal voters would desert and the Tories could win a seat.

Hostility between Liberals and Labour was compounded by the fact that during the municipal elections in 1905 Liberals had supported a Conservative candidate against Labour in Northam. Sheppard and Halstead highlighted evidence of co-operation between Liberals and Conservatives against Labour candidates between 1906 and 1910. In Southampton there is clear evidence of co-operation in 1905 and circumstantial evidence for this in 1904 in Northam and St Marys. This suggests that Liberal/Conservative co-operation began earlier in Southampton than in other boroughs. The impact of this was certainly detrimental to the Liberals at municipal level. As some contemporary Liberals observed, where they did not stand candidates it encouraged their supporters to vote Tory and this could become a habit. It allowed Labour candidates to emphasise their own distinctiveness and to portray the Liberals and Conservatives as no different from each other.

Tanners evidence for a Liberal revival; that the Liberal association was being reformed and ward groups were urging a more radical municipal policy is unconvincing. There had been regular demands from the Southampton

Times for Liberal reorganisation and a definite municipal programme since 1901 but very little had been done to revive the fortunes of the party. The one positive feature for the Liberals was that they held both parliamentary seats from 1906 but, given the importance of free trade in Southampton, the Liberals parliamentary success was not surprising.

The Trades Council declaration in 1914 about having the largest Labour representation on elected bodies of any town the south of England was a reflection on what they had achieved. By 1914 Labour had overtaken the Liberals on the Borough Council with eight elected councillors to the Liberals three (plus four aldermen). They were beginning to consolidate their position in Northam ward and had a foothold in St Marys and they achieved success in the western suburbs of Shirley and Millbrook. The experience of Southampton tends to support those historians who argue that Labour had begun to establish itself before the First World War (e.g. Laybourn and Reynolds on West Yorkshire, Tom Woodhouse on Leeds and Bill Lancaster in Leicester).

The First World War posed a real challenge for Labour in Southampton for, as elsewhere, there were divisions over the conduct of the war, the attitude toward conscientious objection and conscription. However, these differences never undermined the determination of the Trades Council and trade unions to defend working class interests. Labour kept its political organisation intact and argued for their right to be represented on wartime bodies.

The war did not mark a dramatic change in Labours fortunes in Southampton but confirmed existing trends. The growth of trade union support for Labour has already been mentioned and their support for the two Labour candidates in 1918 is confirmation of this. Labour was also confident enough to field two candidates for the first time and there was no concession to 'patriotic' sentiments as both candidates had been sceptical about and critical of the war.

The Conservative/Liberal co-operation during the war confirmed the earlier trends of municipal co-operation over the administration of the Council from the mid 1890s, to the anti-Labour alliances in electoral contests from around 1904/5. The Liberal Party in Southampton was in a weak state already and divisions within their parliamentary leadership during the war were not the cause. However these divisions did contribute to the difficulties faced by the party in the immediate post war years when there were arguments about support for the coalition and the lack of success in reviving the Party.

During the inter-war years there was evidence that Labour was consolidating its support in working class wards but this was an uneven process. In the centre of the town Northam and St Marys became safe Labour wards along with Bitterne and Pear Tree in the eastern suburbs. Four other wards saw a marked growth in Labour support including St Nicholas and Town ward, both of which became relatively safe for Labour from 1932. A further sign of the growth of support for Labour was the fact that in eight of the twelve years from 1926 to 1938 Labour won a majority of the votes cast at municipal elections.

There is also clear evidence of a surge of Labour support at the municipal elections following the General strike for their share of the vote went up to over 53%. This also marked the end of a tide of industrial disputes that took place during the 1920s, John Marriott in his study of the East End suggested a relationship existed between industrial activity and Labour voting, such that as one declined the other rose, although he was unsure about the precise causal connection. There does appear to be some relationship, although not totally similar, in Southampton if the figures of Labour voting in Appendix 21 are compared with Appendix 18 on strikes. A trend away from industrial action during the mid 1920s to political activity and Labour support in the late 1920s and beyond can be identified. This was reinforced by the fact that the Trades Councils industrial activity was much less important due in part to the growth of national bargaining over terms and conditions. There was also a formal separation of industrial and political activity on the Trades Council by 1932. The fact that a significant number of trade union officials were Labour councillors may be evidence of the link between trade unions and Labour, as

suggested by Reynolds and Laybourn in their inter-war study of West Yorkshire but it is also open to a different interpretation suggesting political activity was becoming more important for them.

Cook argues that Labour became the beneficiary of the radical and working class Liberal vote during the 1920's. The Liberals in Southampton were in a very weak position following the 1919 municipal elections with only one elected councillor and one alderman. Their decision to enter a formal anti-Labour pact at municipal level in 1920, while it was a common feature of municipal politics at the time, did nothing to improve their position. The newly formed Independent group was dominated by the Conservatives so Liberals could not expect to be able to exert much influence.

The question of whether these anti-Labour alliances were a cause or consequence of Liberal decline can be difficult to answer. However, in Southampton they had existed, less formally to oppose Labour candidates before the First World War. There is evidence from sources sympathetic to the Liberals indicating that their failure to contest elections on a party basis, the lack of any defining Liberal policies locally and co-operation with the Conservatives had been undermining their political identity for some time. The decision of the Liberals not to contest the 1924 General Election along with leading members support for the Conservative candidates really marked the end for independent Liberalism. There was already sympathy for the Labour government among some Liberals and this decision helped to push them into outright support. As Cook points out these alliances also paved the way for co-operation at parliamentary level and this developed in Southampton from 1931. The alliances were also accompanied by a remarkable degree of class rhetoric directed in opposition to Labour across the country.

While the decline of the Liberals helped to make Labour the main opposition to the Conservatives the pact between them and the Liberals eliminated three-way electoral contests and made it harder for Labour candidates to win seats. Another important obstacle was the exclusion from the municipal

franchise of some parliamentary voters. The research by Sam Davies on Liverpool highlighted the problem and suggested it could have a disproportionate effect on working class voters. Research on Southampton confirms the nature of the problem and indicates the scale of exclusions varied between wards and over time. In the safe Labour ward of Northam exclusions of male voters ranged between 29% and 33%. In the safe Independent ward of Banister exclusions were between 20% and 30%. The highest range was in Town ward which varied between 24% and 51%. The impact of these exclusions tended to be higher in the working class wards and were most likely to have political significance in marginal wards.

The other feature of the municipal elections that affected political fortunes was the annual cycle. A three or four year cycle of elections could have given Labour an opportunity to take control of the council before 1945 if that election had coincided with one of the years in which Labour polled well. The fact that more than one seat in each ward was contested in 1945 helped to give Labour bigger majority that it might otherwise have had.

The overall picture of Labour gradually building its support among Trade Unions and extending this to the working class and beyond was a complex and uneven process. It was the result of the decisions and attitudes, conscious and unconscious, of many individuals. It was in no crude sense determined. If, for example, the Liberals had endorsed MacDonald in 1894 the outcome for Labour locally and nationally would have been different. This has been an attempt to explain how and why in the context of Southampton Labour grew and the Liberals declined.

This study of Southampton is a contribution toward understanding the uneven growth and development of Labour politics across the country. It also highlights the value of examining this growth and development outside of what are regarded as the heartlands of Labour support.

| | 1891 | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------|-------|--------|-------|--|
| | MA | \LE | FEMALE | | |
| OCCUPATIONS | NO'S | % | NO'S | % | |
| Gen or Local Government | 532 | 2.83 | 28 | 0.35 | |
| Defence | 185 | 0.98 | - | - | |
| Professional | 912 | 4.86 | 921 | 11.59 | |
| Domestic Service | 313 | 1.67 | 4262 | 53.67 | |
| Commercial | 988 | 5.27 | 46 | 0.57 | |
| Conveyance | 4597 a | 24.52 | 39 | 0.49 | |
| General Engineering/Metal Trades | 1668 | 8.89 | 7 | | |
| Building | 1862 | 9.93 | 9 | | |
| Wood, Furniture, etc. | 677 | 3.61 | 37 | 0.46 | |
| Chemicals, Oil, Grease, Soap etc. | 128 | 0.68 | 3 | | |
| Print, Paper, Books | 443 | 2.36 | 40 | 0.50 | |
| Textiles | 266 | 1.41 | 229 | 2.88 | |
| Dress | 734 | 3.91 | 1581 | 19.90 | |
| Food, Drink, Tobacco | 1653 | 8.82 | 502 | 6.32 | |
| Gas, Water, Electric | | | | | |
| Other and Undefined | 2814 | 15.02 | 186 | 2.34 | |
| Total Occupied | 18743 | | 7941 | | |

Includes 1892 Merchant Service and 603 Dock/Wharf Labourer а

APPENDIX 2

OCCUPIED POPULATION - SOUTHAMPTON

| | 1901 | | | | 1911 | | | | |
|------------------|-------|-------|----------|--------|---------|--------|-----------|-------|--|
| | MALE | | FEMALE | | MALE | | FEMALE | | |
| OCCUPATIONS | NO'S | % | NO'S | % | NO'S | % | NO'S | % | |
| General or Local | 1078 | 3.35 | 50 | 0.44 | 1392 | 3.83 | 209 | 1.60 | |
| Government | | | | | | | | | |
| Defence | 488 | 1.51 | - | - | 444 | 1.22 | - | - | |
| Professional | 1173 | 3.65 | 1198 | 10.70 | 1304 | 3.59 | 1266 | 9.74 | |
| Domestic | 671 | 2.08 | 5931c | 53.00 | 760 | 2.09 | 5990f | 46.11 | |
| Service | | | | | | | | | |
| Commercial | 2074 | 6.45 | 187 | 1.67 | 2315 | 6.37 | 466 | 3.58 | |
| Conveyance | 9461a | 29.46 | 72 | 0.64 | 11903d | 32.78 | 88 | 0.67 | |
| General | 2784 | 8.67 | 11 | | 4200 | 11.56 | 21 | 0.10 | |
| Engineering/ | | | | | | | | | |
| Metal Trades | | | | | | | | | |
| Building | 3971 | 12.36 | 1 | | 3330 | 9.17 | - | - | |
| Wood, Furniture | 746 | 2.32 | 47 | 0.42 | 834 | 2.29 | 90 | 0.69 | |
| etc. | | | | | | | | | |
| Chemicals, Oil, | 191 | 0.59 | 11 | | 252 | 0.69 | 24 | 0.18 | |
| Grease etc. | | | | | | | | | |
| Print, Paper, | 527 | 1.64 | 71 | 0.63 | 542 | 1.49 | 220 | 1.69 | |
| Books | | | | | | | | | |
| Textiles | 310 | 0.96 | 392 | 3.50 | 326 | 0.89 | 431 | 3.31 | |
| Dress | 1026 | 3.19 | 1998 | 17.85 | 1102 | 3.03 | 2027 | | |
| Food, Drink and | 2956 | 9.20 | 899 | 8.03 | 3565 | 9.81 | 1717 | 13.21 | |
| Tobacco | | | | | | | | | |
| Gas, Water, | 272 | 0.84 | - | - | 426 | 3 1.17 | 7 - | - | |
| Electric | | | | | | | r_{i} : | | |
| Other & | 3125b | 9.73 | 3 25 | 2.24 | 4 24406 | 6.72 | 369 | 2.84 | |
| Undefined | | | 1 | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| Total Occupied | 32106 | 3 | 1118 | 9 25.9 | 9 3630 | 6 | 12990 | 26.43 | |

- a Includes 3445 Merchant Service and 1962 Dock and Wharf Labourers
- b Includes 2129 General Labourers
- c Includes 4447 Domestic Indoor Servants
- d Includes 4104 Merchant Service and 2899 Dock and Wharf Labourers
- e Includes 1409 General Labourers
- f Includes 4374 Domestic Indoor Servants

APPENDIX 3

OCCUPIED POPULATION - ITCHEN URBAN DISTRICT

| . [| 1901* | | | | 1911 | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------|-------|----------------|---------|--------|----------|-------|--------|--|
| • | MALE | T | FEMALE | E | MALE | MALE | | | |
| OCCUPATIONS | NO'S | % | NO'S | % | NO'S % | | NO'S | % | |
| General or Local | - | - | [- | - | 95 | 1.63 | 21h | 1.62 | |
| Government | * | 1 | | | \! | | | | |
| Defence | - | - | - | - | 49 | 0.84 | - | - | |
| Professional | - | | 80d | 8.40 | 103 | 1.77 | 145 | 11.19 | |
| Domestic Service | - | - | 527e | 55.35 | 99 | 1.70 | 586 | 45.25 | |
| Commercial | 120a | 3.30 | 15f | 1.57 | 199 | 3.42 | 50k | 3.86 | |
| Conveyance | 975b | 26.85 | - | - | 1214 | 20.89 | - | - | |
| General | 646 | 17.79 | _ | _ | 2361 | 40.63 | - | - | |
| Engineering/Metal | | | | | | | | | |
| Trades | | | | | | | | | |
| Building | 467 | 12.86 | - | - | 460 | 1 | | - | |
| Wood, Furniture etc. | 63 | 1.73 | - | - | 79 | 1.35 | 17 | 1.31 | |
| Chemicals, Oil, Grease etc. | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | |
| Print, Paper, Books | 17 | 0.46 | 12 | 1.26 | - | - - | - | | |
| Textiles | - | - | - | - | - | - | 39 I | | |
| Dress | 60 | 1.65 | 159 | 16.70 | 70 | 1.20 | 190 | | |
| Food, Drink and | 224 | 6.17 | 7 61 | 6.40 | 311 | 5.35 | 172 | 2 13.2 | |
| Tobacco | | | | | | | | | |
| Gas, Water, Electric | - | - | - - | | | | - - | - | |
| Other & Undefined | 899c | 24.76 | 989 | g 10.29 | 9 230 | 0 3.95 | 5 59 | 9 4.5 | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| Total Occupied | 3630 | , | 952 | 2 19.05 | 5 5810 |) | 1295 | 5 17.6 | |
| | | | | | | | | | |

^{* 1901} Figures are Grouped Occupations, not all are shown separately

a Only Commercial or Business Clerks

1911 Census Grouped Occupations

h

Includes Telegraph, Telephone Service Hospital and Institution Service

b Includes 364 Merchant Service and 239 Dock and Wharf Labourers k

c Includes all other Occupations

d Only Teaching

e Includes 19 Charwomen 90 Laundry and Washing Service

f Only Commercial or Business Clerks

g Includes all other Occupations

Includes Law Clerks (Professional)
Includes Dealers in Dress (Dress)

| | | 101 | $\overline{-1}$ | οТ | N N | - | | 73 | 6 | 47 | 97 | <u>8</u> | T | 72 | 2 | 65 | 99 | 8 | |
|-------------------------|--------|-------|-----------------|----------|---------|---------------|-------|-------|-------------|-------------|---------|-----------|------------|-------|-------------|--------------|-------------|-----------|-------|
| er General and Undefine | 440 | 15.02 | | - 1 | 11.52 | 11.31 | | | - 1 | | 7.9 | ω 03 | | | ω | 5 | 5. | 9 | |
| , Water, Electric | Gas | 1 | - | - | ı | ı | | 0.84 | 0.79 | 1.49 | 0.58 | 0.76 | | 1.17 | 1.24 | 1.23 | 0.87 | 0.93 | |
| d, Drink, Tobacco | F00 | 8.82 | | 8.04 | 8.62 | 8.18 | | 9.20 | 8.46 | 11.45 | 9.89 | 9.04 | | 9.81 | 9.86 | 12.40 | 10.47 | 9.56 | |
| SS | Dres | 3.91 | 4.65 | 8.87 | 3.60 | | | 3.19 | 3.71 | 8.21 | | | | 3.03 | 3.82 | 6.93 | | 2.59 | |
| əli | Text | 114 | 1.55 | 1.56 | 1.27 | 197 | | 96.0 | 0.23 | | 1.42 | | | 0.89 | 1.95 | | | 0.97 | |
| er, Print, Books etc. | bape | 2.36 | 2.54 | 2.95 | 217 | 172 | | 1.64 | | | | . 1 | | 149 | 271 | | | 1 60 | · I |
| s, Leather, etc. | Skin | | 0.52 | 1.32 | | 890 | | | 0 24 | ! C | . 1 | 0.65 | | ١. | ١, | 1 20 | ٠, | 0 74 | |
| nical, Oil, Soap etc. | Cher | 890 | 0.92 | 1 12 | 5 | 2 6 | | 0.59 | | | - 1 | • 1 | • • | 0 69 | 4 65 | | | | |
| d, Furniture, etc. | 00VV | 2 64 | | 5 03 | | 5 5 | | 2 32 | | 1 10 | | 7.70 |) | 2 29 | | 4.04 2.04 | <u>ا</u> در | | f |
| 6ui | bliua | C | 13.95 | - σ | • 1 | • 1 | 0.0 | 10 36 | | | | 0.04 | • 1 | 0 17 | 10.0 | 0.64 | 0.00 4.4 | 7 00 | • 1 |
| sebriT IsaM\Qninee | rign∃ | | 0,0 7,03 | 27.7 | 5 0 | | 12.40 | 0.67 | | 0.27 | | 44.07 | • 1 | 14 50 | • | | 9.80 | o la | |
| 60 | Tidai | | - 60 6 | 4 | • | 1 1 | 2.13 | | , 4 | 2.33 | ' | , , | <u>o</u> . | | , | 1.29 | | | /C. |
| e) suce | vnoJ | , | 24.52 | | | 32.18 | 26.92 | 8 | ָ אַ | <u>ج</u> اج | 16.0 | 31.7 | 28.73 | 100 | 1 17 | | 7 3 | ומ | 30.70 |
| nercial | Comn | | 5.27 | 18.97 | 7.40 | 7.48 | 6.01 | į | _ I | S | | တဖြ | 6.61 | - 19 | اف | 9 | တ်ပြ | 20 0 | 90.00 |
| services | Dome | | | ٠. | 1.12 | | 0.76 | - | - 1 | | 1.43 | | 0.69 | 1_ | 7 | 1.94 | | | 0.94 |
| lsnois | Profes | | 4.86 | 4.50 | 5.49 | $\overline{}$ | 3.12 | | 3.65 | | 3.48 | 2.71 | 2.54 | | 3.59 | 4.01 | 3.49 | | 2.43 |
| əc | nəfəQ | | 0.98 | 10.62 | | ı | 1 | | 1.51 | 9.73 | 0.48 | 0.28 | 0.26 | | 1.22 | 10.41 | 0.52 | ı | ı |
| al or Local Govt | Jene£ | | | 1.96 | 1.78 | 2.11 | 1.48 | | 3.35 | 2.09 | 1.89 | 2.20 | 1.60 | | 3.83 | 3.31 | 2.48 | 2.78 | 1.89 |
| | | 1891 | Southampton | Plymouth | Bristol | Liverpool | Hall | 1901 | Southampton | Plymouth | Bristol | Liverpool | Hall | 1911 | Southampton | Plymouth | Bristol | Liverpool | Hull |

| % of Females Occupied | | | • • • | | 32.58 | 27.32 | | 25.99 | 30.03 | 28.68 | 30.91 | | | 26 43 | | | • 1 | 31.68 | 26.35 | |
|----------------------------|---|-------|-------------|----------|---------|-----------|-------------|-------|-------------|----------|---------|------------|--------|-------|-------------|-------------------|-----------|---------|-----------|----------|
| Other General and Undefine | | | 4.41 | 2.97 | 6.24 | | | 2 24 | 2 93 | | 4.57 | | | 2 84 | | | • • | ĊΪ | 2.31 | |
| Gas, Water, Electric | | , | | 1 | , | 1 | | 1 | ' | , | 1 | | ١ | | | ١ | ١ | ' | ı | ļ |
| Food, Drink, Tobacco | | 6.32 | 6.55 | 9.00 | 9.85 | 7.64 | . 1 | 8 03 | 2,00 | 15 38 | | 17.04 | | 12 01 | | | 19.48 | | 15.13 | |
| Dress | | 19.90 | 23.20 | 25.99 | 19.67 | | • 1 | 17 RF | | | 16.57 | | - 0 | | | | 22.20 | 15.27 | 15.10 | |
| əlitxəT | | 2.88 | 4.13 | 4.14 | 3 27 | | | 2 50 | | | | | 2.70 | | | | 4.61 | 4.65 | 4.50 | |
| Paper, Print, Books etc. | | 0.50 | 1.18 | 3.35 | | 2 54 | | 000 | 0.0 | | ဂါဇ | ر ار | 3.13 | | | ∞ | 8.17 | 4.15 | 3.65 | 1 |
| Skins, Leather, etc. | | | ı | 1 | 0.70 | 0.7 | 1 | | ı | , , | | 0.48 | , | | 1 | 1 | i | ' | , | |
| Chemical, Oil, Soap etc. | | , | 0.74 | | 4 0.2 | - 1 | - 1 | | | 0.7 | | | 4.93 | | 0.18 | 0.70 | 0.59 | - | (C | |
| Wood, Furniture, etc. | | | 1 03 | 0.67 | 2 4 | | 0 0 0 | 9, | | | -· I | | 0.71 | | 0.69 | 0.90 | 0.65 | | - 1 | : |
| gnibling | | ١. | | | | - | | | ١ | | ۱ | 1 | ١ | | 1 | 1 | , | 1 | | |
| Engineering/Metal Trades | | | | | 1 | | | | 1 | 1 | | 0.52 | 0.49 | | 0.16 | ı | , | 1 16 | 2 64 | |
| gnidai∃ | | ١ | 1 | | • | ı | 1 | | | , | | 1 | • | | ı | 1 | ا ا | | | |
| Conveyance | | | ' ' | | , 0 | 0.95 | • | | 0.64 | 1 | ı | 0.93 | 0.67 | | 0.67 | ı | | 1 22 | - | <u> </u> |
| Commercial |) | 0.57 | | | | 0.96 | ı | | 1.67 | 1.62 | 1.29 | 2.20 | 1.48 | | 3.58 | <u> </u> | | 4 0 | ه اد | 7.17 |
| Services |] | E2 G7 | 33.07 | 1 | 41.30 | 44.01 | 48.75 | 34 | 53.00 | 45.65 | 33.41 | 40.10 | 42.05 | | 46.11 | 41 25 | 20 56 | 23.00 | 04.10 | 34.44 |
| Isnoiessional | 1 | 00 77 | | 8.08 | | 8.39 | 9.29 | | 10.70 | 8.28 | 7.37 | 7.71 | 8.95 | | 9.74 | 8 65 | 2 7 0 7 | - 1 | 7.30 | 7.81 |
| efence | 3 | | ' | , | ı | 1 | 1 | | , | | | | , | | ı | | | 3 | - | , |
| Seneral or Local Govt | 5 | | 1 | ' | ı | 1 | 1 | | 0.44 | 0.31 | 0.40 | 0.76 | 0.42 | | 1 60 | 2 6 | 0 0 | 0.73 | 1.36 | 0.82 |
| | | 1891 | Southampton | Plymouth | Bristol | Liverpool | Hall | 1901 | Southampton | Plymouth | Bristol | l ivernool | 1000 E | 1911 | Southampton | South Fall Profit | PIYMOUILI | Bristol | Liverpool | Hall |

ENDIX FIVE VALUE OF TOTAL IMPORTS AND EXPORTS OF MERCHANDISE -SELECTED PORTS 1897 – 1914* (In pounds sterling)

| YEAR | SOUTHAMPTON | PLYMOUTH | BRISTOL | LIVERPOOL | HULL |
|------|-------------|-----------|------------|-------------|------------|
| 1897 | 22,833,455 | 1,675,097 | 11,599,597 | 192,370,782 | 48,087,946 |
| 1898 | 23,015,263 | 1,716,430 | 12,469,253 | 198,897,093 | 52,424,207 |
| 1899 | 24,038,641 | 1,611,048 | 12,633,212 | 207,475,826 | 51,546,927 |
| 1900 | 25,991,048 | 1,769,121 | 12,729,259 | 227,286,326 | 53,618,380 |
| 1901 | 28,057,904 | 1,395,538 | 13,748,110 | 237,390,518 | 52,800,743 |
| 1902 | 32,146,816 | 1,531,192 | 14,067,437 | 236,020,631 | 51,799,849 |
| 1903 | 30,327,773 | 1,639,599 | 14,905,945 | 243,579,898 | 52,655,977 |
| 1904 | 29,018,141 | 1,660,343 | 14,087,432 | 262,463,869 | 50,958,123 |
| 1905 | 30,467,108 | 1,786,275 | 14,776,044 | 277,580,952 | 53,548,572 |
| 1906 | 34,682,257 | 1,675,649 | 16,008,034 | 297,050,161 | 61,119,814 |
| 1907 | 39,029,002 | 1,736,977 | 17,042,985 | 326,250,366 | 70,396,921 |
| 1908 | 38,157,776 | 1,412,745 | 16,417,222 | 282,439,334 | 61,555,008 |
| 1909 | 42,116,457 | 1,578,254 | 17,651,453 | 298,217,839 | 66,672,983 |
| 1910 | 45,825,337 | 1,633,095 | 19,295,918 | 340,670,089 | 73,234,653 |
| 1911 | 47,216,924 | 1,763,997 | 19,574,442 | 336,439,017 | 71,453,677 |
| 1912 | 52,110,062 | 1,660,774 | 21,615,332 | 373,365,515 | 80,346,407 |
| 1913 | 53,569,213 | 1,783,023 | 22,057,621 | 370,779,413 | 84,604,417 |
| 1914 | 38,182,775 | 1,293,577 | 21,189,298 | 338,232,100 | 67,839,670 |

^{*} Figures from annual statement of the Trade of the UK with Foreign Countries or British Possessions:-

| Parliamentary Papers 1902 | XCVII | cd 1173 |
|--------------------------------|--------|---------|
| Parliamentary Papers 1907 | LXXIII | cd 3529 |
| Parliamentary Papers 1912 – 13 | LXXXVI | cd 6336 |
| Parliamentary Papers 1914 – 16 | LXV | cd 8069 |

APPENDIX SIX SOUTHAMPTON DOCKS – ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES 1894 – 1913*

| YEAR | PASSENGERS | TROOPS | TOTAL |
|------|------------|---------|---------|
| 1894 | 199,468 | 8,891 | 208,359 |
| 1895 | 209,084 | 21,407 | 230,491 |
| 1896 | 214,424 | 25,637 | 240,061 |
| 1897 | 203,817 | 38,486 | 242,303 |
| 1898 | 189,372 | 50,829 | 240,264 |
| 1899 | 208,280 | 90,303 | 298,583 |
| 1900 | 213,465 | 132,421 | 345,886 |
| 1901 | 201,114 | 151,592 | 352,706 |
| 1902 | 244,113 | 243,873 | 487,986 |
| 1903 | 248,654 | 77,952 | 326,606 |
| 1904 | 238,837 | 89,909 | 328,746 |
| 1905 | 228,892 | 65,823 | 294,715 |
| 1906 | 225,919 | 60,355 | 286,274 |
| 1907 | 259,574 | 67,021 | 326,595 |
| 1908 | 268,549 | 54,581 | 323,130 |
| 1909 | 277,067 | 51,827 | 328,89 |
| 1910 | 304,045 | 47,968 | 352,01 |
| 1911 | 326,454 | 42,680 | 369,13 |
| 1912 | 315,179 | 58,635 | 373,81 |
| 1913 | 378,917 | 51,430 | 430,34 |

^{*} Figures from Southampton Chamber of Commerce Annual Report 1913 - 1914

APPENDIX SEVEN <u>SOUTHAMPTON – MAILS AND PARCELS POST 1892 – 1913* (NO OF ITEMS)</u>

| YEAR | INWAI | RDS | OUTW | ARDS | TOTAL |
|------|---------|--------|---------|--------|---------|
| * | MAILS | PARCEL | MAILS | PARCEL | |
| | | POST | | POST | |
| 1892 | 33,123 | 6,622 | 48,479 | 9,953 | 98,177 |
| 1893 | 49,067 | 6,980 | 53,753 | 11,911 | 121,711 |
| 1894 | 48,182 | 6,459 | 65,052 | 13,108 | 130,801 |
| 1895 | 50,716 | 6,770 | 68,256 | 14,856 | 140,598 |
| 1896 | 74,226 | 8,446 | 79,861 | 16,029 | 178,562 |
| 1897 | 68,272 | 10,201 | 86,292 | 16,894 | 181,559 |
| 1898 | 62,837 | 12,589 | 89,328 | 17,896 | 182,650 |
| 1899 | 82,446 | 11,670 | 93,027 | 17,494 | 204,637 |
| 1900 | 85,761 | 21,954 | 116,374 | 30,976 | 255,065 |
| 1901 | 84,026 | 27,211 | 116,023 | 46,497 | 273,757 |
| 1902 | 110,307 | 38,052 | 131,333 | 52,503 | 332,245 |
| 1903 | 114,248 | 29,447 | 137,104 | 53,084 | 333,883 |
| 1904 | 45,014 | 26,547 | 159,830 | 49,397 | 280,788 |
| 1905 | 45,273 | 27,453 | 162,802 | 46,024 | 281,552 |
| 1906 | 50,935 | 28,278 | 159,226 | 40,092 | 278,531 |
| 1907 | 50,859 | 26,568 | 191,197 | 38,163 | 306,787 |
| 1908 | 45,195 | 21,631 | 190,822 | 34,976 | 292,624 |
| 1909 | 47,426 | 19,802 | 196,215 | 35,505 | 298,948 |
| 1910 | 49,060 | 17,237 | 206,586 | 38,758 | 311,641 |
| 1911 | 45,805 | 14,954 | 260,776 | 40,414 | 351,949 |
| 1912 | 62 | 870 | 280 | 0,353 | 343,223 |
| 1913 | 69 | ,217 | 278 | 3,022 | 347,239 |

^{*} Figures from Southampton Chamber of Commerce Annual Report 1913 - 1914

APPENDIX EIGHT

SELECTED UNIONS-SOUTHAMTON BRANCH

MEMBERSHIP

Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners

| YEAR | | BRANCH | | | | | | | | | | |
|------|-------|--------|---------------|---------------|----------|-------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | No. 1 | No. 2 | N o. 3 | N o. 4 | Woolston | Total | | | | | | |
| 1901 | 228 | 123 | 42 | - | - | 393 | | | | | | |
| 1902 | 204 | 104 | 42 | _ | - | 355 | | | | | | |
| 1907 | 170 | 120 | 44 | 54 | 110 | 498 | | | | | | |
| 1910 | 130 | 110 | 44 | 41 | 113 | 438 | | | | | | |
| 1911 | 136 | 144 | 87 | 63 | 134 | 564 | | | | | | |
| 1913 | 130 | 170 | 101 | 66 | 151 | 618 | | | | | | |

Source – ASC and J Annual Reports Warwick Modern Records Centre
MSJ 78/ASC4J/4/1/11-15

Amalgamated Society of Engineers

| YEAR | BRANCH | | | | | | | | | | |
|------|-------------|-------------|----------|----------|-------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | Southampton | Southampton | Woolston | Woolston | Total | | | | | | |
| | | No. 2 | - | No. 2 | | | | | | | |
| 1891 | 321 | · <u>-</u> | _ | | 321 | | | | | | |
| 1897 | 335 | _ | 129 | _ | 464 | | | | | | |
| 1898 | 300 | - | 132 | | 432 | | | | | | |
| 1899 | 316 | _ | 167 | - | 483 | | | | | | |
| 1901 | 318 | - | 199 | - | 517 | | | | | | |
| 1904 | 293 | 100 | 169 | - | 517 | | | | | | |
| 1905 | 276 | 124 | 190 | *** | 590 | | | | | | |
| 1907 | 268 | 185 | 260 | - | 713 | | | | | | |
| 1908 | 275 | 204 | 254 | 84 | 811 | | | | | | |
| 1909 | 249 | 192 | 250 | 84 | 775 | | | | | | |
| 1910 | 252 | 216 | 224 | 131 | 823 | | | | | | |
| 1911 | 248 | 253 | 193 | 123 | 817 | | | | | | |

Source: ASE Annual Reports Warwick Modern Records Centre – Board of Trade Library

APPENDIX EIGHT cont'd

NATIONAL AMALGAMATED SOCIETY OF OPERATIVE HOUSE AND SHIP PAINTERS AND DECORATORS

| YEAR | BRANCH MEMBERSHIP |
|------|-------------------|
| 1889 | 36 |
| 1890 | 98 |
| 1891 | 69 |
| 1892 | 68 |
| 1893 | 59 |
| 1894 | 62 |
| 1895 | 63 |
| 1905 | 94 |
| 1906 | 94 |
| 1907 | 109 |
| 1908 | 118 |
| 1911 | 259 |
| 1912 | 384 |

Source – NASOHSPD Annual Reports Warwick Modern Records Centre – Board of Trade Library

APPENDIX NINE PARTY CONTROL OF WARDS 1890 – 1913

| WARD | 1890 | 1891 | 1892 | 1893 | 1894 | 1895 | 1896 | 1897 | 1898 | 1899 |
|------------|-------|------|-------|-----------|------|-------|-------|-------|------|-------|
| TOWN | CON* | LIB | LIB | CON | CON | LIB | CON* | LIB * | CON | CON |
| ST JAMES | CON | CON | CON* | CON | CON* | CON | CON* | CON* | CON* | LIB |
| ST MARYS | LIB | LIB | LIB | LIB | SDF | CON | CON | CON | CON* | LIB |
| ALL SAINTS | CON* | CON | CON* | CON | CON* | CON* | CON* | CON* | CON | CON* |
| TRINITY | LIB * | CON | LIB * | CON | CON* | CON | CON* | CON | CON | LIB |
| NORTHAM | LIB | LIB | LIB * | CON | LIB | LIB | LIB | LIB | LIB | LIB |
| NICHOLAS | LIB * | LIB | LIB* | CON | LIB | LIB | LIB | LIB | LIB | LIB |
| TOWN | | | | | | | | | | |
| NEWTOWN | LIB * | LIB | LIB | LIB | CON | LIB | CON | CON | IND | LIB |
| BEVOIS | LIB | LIB | LIB* | LIB | LIB | LIB* | LIB | LIB* | LIB | CON |
| PORTSWOOD | CON* | CON | CON* | CON | CON* | CON | LIB | CON* | CON | LIB* |
| BANISTER | | | | <u>.L</u> | .1 | CON 2 | CON | CON | CON* | CON* |
| | | | | | | LIB 1 | | | | |
| FREEMANTLE | | | | | | CON 2 | CON | CON | CON | CON* |
| | | | | | | LIB 1 | | | | |
| SHIRLEY | | | | | | CON 2 | LIB * | LIB | CON | LIB * |
| | | | | .* | | LIB 1 | | | | |

Uncontested Seat

LIB LIBERAL

CON CONSERVATIVE

LAB LABOUR

ILP INDEPENDENT LABOUR PARTY

SDF SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC FEDERATION

SOC SOCIALIST

IND INDEPENDENT

RA RATEPAYERS ASSOCIATION

Note: Gaps occur where it has not been proved possible to confirm the Party affiliation of the Councillor

APPENDIX NINE Cont'd

| | 1900 | 1901 | 1902 | 1903 | 1904 | 1905 | 1906 | 1907 | 1908 | 1909 |
|------------|-------|-------|-------|------|------|------|------|-------|-------|-------|
| TOWN | LIB | | CON* | CON | CON | CON* | CON | CON | CON* | CON* |
| ST JAMES | CON | LIB | CON* | CON* | LIB | CON* | CON | CON | CON* | CON* |
| ST MARY'S | CON | IND+ | LAB | LIB | soc | LAB | LIB | SOC | CON | LIB |
| ALL SAINTS | CON | CON* | | CON | CON | CON* | | CON* | CON* | CON* |
| TRINITY | CON | LIB | LIB * | CON | CON | CON | CON | CON | CON* | CON* |
| NORTHAM | LIB * | IND + | LIB | LAB | LIB | CON | LAB | LIB | CON* | LAB |
| NICHOLAS | LIB | IND | LIB* | LIB | LIB | LIB* | LIB | LIB * | LIB * | LIB |
| TOWN | | | | | | | | | | |
| NEWTOWN | LIB | CON | CON | LIB | CON | LIB | LIB | LIB | CON | LIB * |
| BEVOIS | LIB | IND | CON | IND | LIB* | LIB | IND | R.A. | LIB * | CON* |
| PORTSWOOD | CON* | CON* | LIB | CON* | CON* | LIB* | | CON* | LIB * | CON* |
| BANISTER | CON* | CON* | | 1 | CON* | | | CON* | IND * | IND * |
| FREEMANTLE | CON | LIB | CON | LIB | LIB | LAB | LIB | CON | LIB | LIB |
| SHIRLEY | LIB | CON* | | LIB | CON* | CON | CON | LIB | CON | CON |

- + Both Candidates were Labour Representatives
- * Uncontested Seat

LIB Liberal

CON Conservative

LAB Labour

ILP Independent Labour Party

SOC Socialist

IND Independent

RA Ratepayers Association

Note: Gaps occur where it has not proved possible to confirm the party affiliation of the Councillor

APPENDIX NINE Cont'd

| WARD | 1910 | 1911 | 1912 | 1913 |
|------------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| TOWN | CON * | CON * | CON * | |
| ST. MARY'S | CON | CON | CON | SOC |
| ALL SAINTS | CON* | CON | CON * | CON* |
| TRINITY | CON | CON * | CON | CON |
| NORTHAM | LIB * | CON | LAB | LAB |
| NEWTOWN | IND | IND | LIB * | CON |
| BEVOIS | RA | IND | IND | LIB |
| PORTSWOOD | CON | CON * | CON * | CON |
| BANISTER | | IND | | |
| FREEMANTLE | CON | IND | CON | CON |
| SHIRLEY | LIB * | LAB | LAB | LAB |
| MILLBROOK | CON | ILP | LAB | CON |
| ST. DENYS | LIB | IND | LIB | CON |

* Uncontested Seat

LIB Liberal

CON Conservative

LÅB Labour **

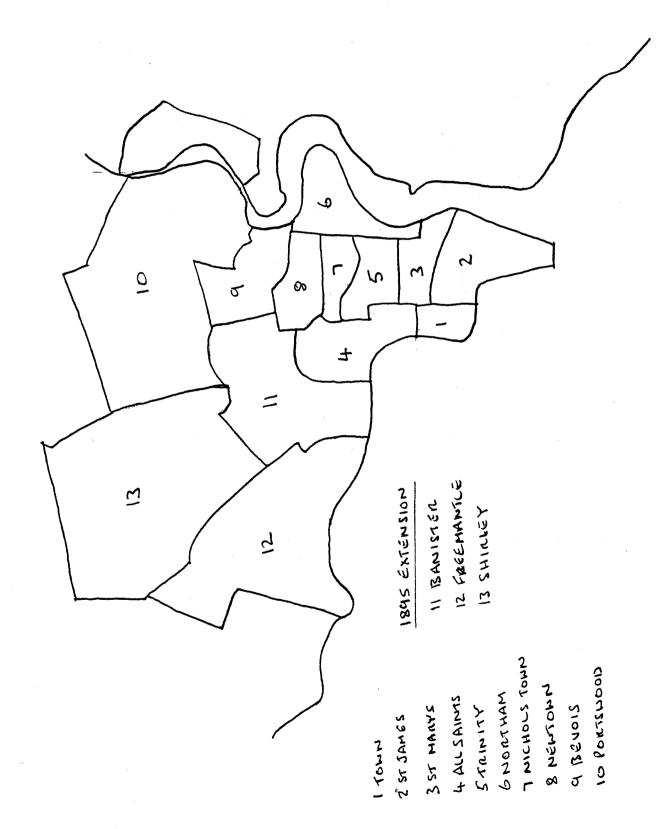
ILP Independent Labour Party

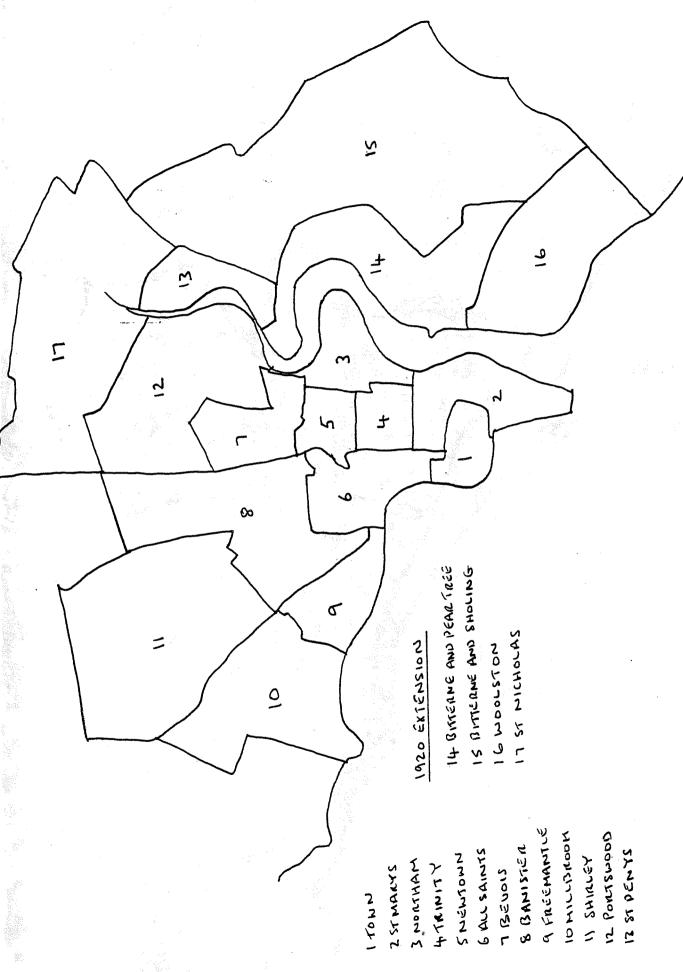
SOC Socialist

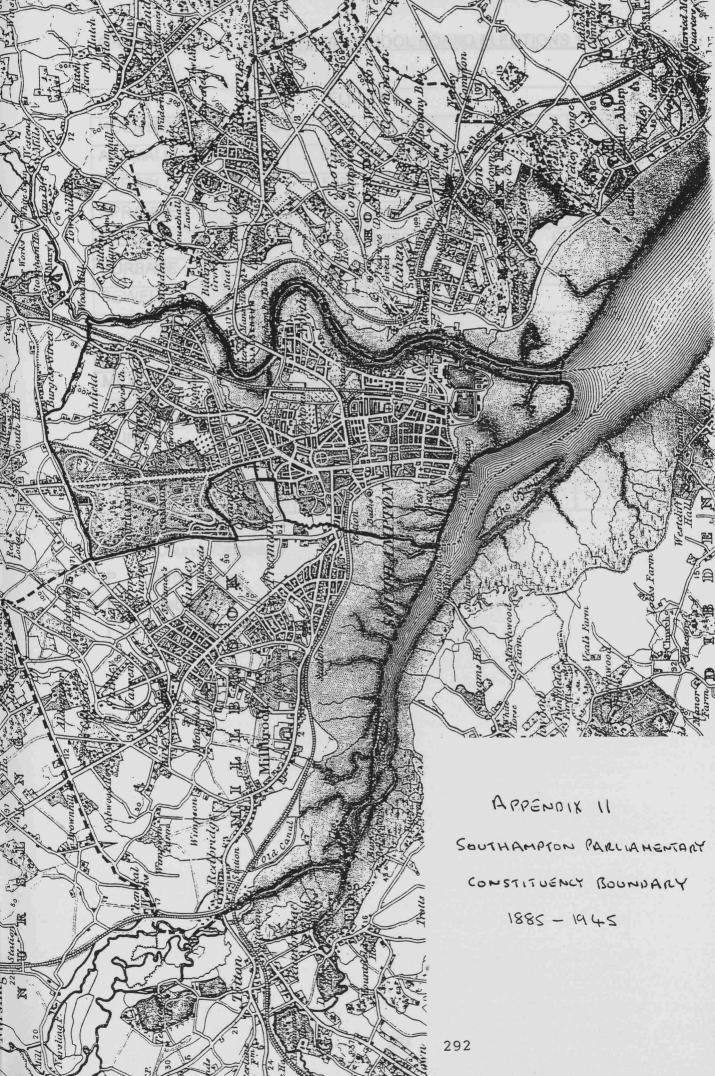
IND Independent

RA Ratepayers Association

Note: Gaps occur where it has not proved possible to confirm the party affiliation of the Councillor







APPENDIX 12 RESULTS OF SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS 1892

| | | ELEC | TED | | |
|----------|---|--------|-------------|---|------|
| HOSKYNS | С | 5608 | WILSON | L | 4239 |
| ASHMALL | С | 5467 | DOMONEY | Р | 4232 |
| PERRIN | С | 5378 | PERKINS | С | 4177 |
| SPRANGER | С | 5007 | ALDRIDGE | Р | 4054 |
| WEBB | С | 4886 | MISS BRADBY | С | 3763 |
| BURBAGE | 1 | 4759 | JURD | С | 3718 |
| SEWELL | 1 | 4644 | | | |
| | • | | | | |
| | | NOT EI | ECTED | | |
| MIDGLEY | L | 3660 | SCOTT | 1 | 1904 |
| OWEN | Р | 3128 | MCDONNELL | | 1756 |
| HUNT | Р | 3116 | RICHARDS | Р | 1531 |
| SMITH | Р | 2238 | PARKER | 1 | 1743 |
| THOMPSON | P | 2139 | | - | |

- C Church Candidate
- P Progressive
- L Labour
- I Independent

APPENDIX 13A PARTY SHARE OF THE VOTE IN MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS 1901 – 1913

| | Total Votes | % Share | % Share | % Share | % Share | % Share | % Share |
|------|-------------|---------|---------|--------------|-------------|---------|---------|
| | Cast | Labour | Liberal | Conservative | Independent | RA | Prog |
| 1901 | 5894 | 13.92 | 48.72 | 24.14 | 13.19 | | |
| 1902 | 4406 | 21.65 | 41.19 | 34.92 | 2.22 | | |
| 1903 | 7332 | 10.63 | 49.05 | 34.46 | 5.83 | - | |
| 1904 | 6161 | 12.69 | 43.90 | 43.40 | | | |
| 1905 | 4550 | 36.21 | 26.68 | 37.09 | | | |
| 1906 | 7044 | 10.36 | 49.02 | 33.77 | 6.54 | | |
| 1907 | 6558 | 12.62 | 40.30 | 35.68 | 2.04 | 9.34 | |
| 1908 | 3158 | 18.58 | 36.51 | 44.90 | | | |
| 1909 | 4111 | 14.03 | 54.22 | 23.20 | 8.53 | | |
| 1910 | 7992 | 13.42 | 29.32 | 31.54 | 12.09 | 13.60 | |
| 1911 | 9256 | 24.49 | 13.45 | 28.46 | 33.58 | | |
| 1912 | 6869 | 29.05 | 18.60 | 35.15 | 17.10 | | |
| 1913 | 10046 | 30.17 | 16.88 | 40.19 | 5.24 | | 7.5 |

APPENDIX 13B <u>MUNICIPAL ELECTION CONTESTS, LABOUR</u> <u>CANDIDATES AND PARTY VOTES 1901 – 1913</u>

| | | | NO. OF | | | | INDEPENDENT | RA | PROG. |
|------|----|--------|----------------------|----------------|------|------|-------------|------|-------|
| | | | SUCCESSFUL LABOUR | LABOUR VOTE | VOTE | VOTE | VOTE | VOTE | VOTE |
| | * | -DATES | CANDIDATES | | | | | | |
| 1901 | 8 | 2 | 2 | 821 | 2872 | 1423 | 778 | | |
| 1902 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 954 | 1815 | 1539 | 98 | | |
| 1903 | 10 | 2 | 1 | 780 | 3597 | 2527 | 428 | | |
| 1904 | 9 | 2 | 1 | 782 | 2705 | 2674 | | | |
| 1905 | 7 | 5 | 2 | 1648 | 1214 | 1688 | | | |
| 1906 | 10 | 3 | 1 | 730 | 3453 | 2379 | 482 | | |
| 1907 | 9 | 2 | 1 | 828 | 2643 | 2340 | 134 | 613 | |
| 1908 | 4 | . 2 | 0 | 587 | 1153 | 1418 | | | |
| 1909 | 5 | 2 | 2 1 | 577 | 2229 | 954 | 351 | | |
| 1910 | 8 | 3 | C | 1073 | 2344 | 2521 | 967 | 1087 | 7 |
| 1911 | 10 | 5 | 5 2 | 2267 | 1245 | 2635 | 3109 | | |
| 1912 | | 3 5 | 5 2 | 1996 | 1278 | 2415 | 1180 | | |
| 1913 | 10 |) 6 | 3 | 3031 | 1696 | 4038 | 527 | 7 | 754 |

^{*} Southampton had 13 Municipal Wards

APPENDIX 14 LIST OF TRADE UNION OFFICERS ENDORSING A TRADES COUNCIL AND LABOUR REPRESENTATION COMMITTEE APPEAL TO SUPPORT LEWIS AND PERRIMAN 1918

Amalgamated Society of Engineers, R. Taplin District Secretary, F. Wilson District President.

Amalgamated Society of Railway Vehicle Workers, J. Cox District Secretary and E.C. Member.

Amalgamated Society of Toolmakers, A.E. Harris Secretary and E.C. Member.

Amalgamated Society of Wood Cutting Machinists, J.H. White, Secretary.

Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners, Councillor A.E. Goulden, District Delegate.

Amalgamated Union of Bakers and Confectioners, A. Caws, Secretary.

Boilermakers, Iron and Steel Shipbuilders, A.J. Patterson, District Delegate.

British Seafarers Union, A. Cannon, General Secretary.

Dock, Wharf and Riverside Workers Union, W. Paul, District Delegate.

Friendly Society of Iron founders, A. Thompson, Secretary.

General Union of Carpenters and Joiners, J. Everard, Secretary.

National Union of Railwaymen, Councillor H. Vincent, President, W. Webb, Secretary.

National Union of General Workers, W. Cook, Secretary.

National Union of Brass Workers, W.J. Powell, Secretary.

APPENDIX 14 cont'd

National Union of Clerks, L. Witt, Secretary.

National Union of Ship Stewards, Cooks etc, F. Franklin Secretary.

National Union of Insurance Agents, G.R. Taylor, Secretary.

National Union of Prudential Agents, J.W. Baverstock, Secretary.

National Union of Ship and Home Painters, Councillor W. Bonner district Delegate, C.W. Dene E.C. Member.

National Federation of Women Workers, Miss Franklin, Secretary.

National Federation of Railway Crafts Union, I.W. Johnson, President.

Postmens Federation, W.J. Heaton, Secretary.

Shop Stewards Committee, Wm Merritt President, A.W. Price, Secretary.

United Patternmakers Association, E.A. Morten, Secretary.

United Operative Plumbers, M. Connor, District Secretary.

United Operative Bricklayers, C. Elsey, Secretary.

United Builders Labourers, L. Freemantle, Secretary.

U.K. Society of Coachmakers (Eastleigh Branch), C.P. Perkins, Secretary.

Source: Southampton Trades Council and Labour Representation Committee.

Parliamentary Election Results

1892 - 1910

| Election | Electors | Turnout | <u>Candidate</u> | <u>Party</u> | <u>Votes</u> | <u>%</u> |
|-----------|------------|------------|--------------------------|--------------|--------------|----------|
| 1892 | 13,717 | 77.1 | T Chamberlayne | С | 5,449 | 26.8 |
| | | | F H Evans | L | 5,182 | 25.6 |
| | | | C Burt | L | 4,920 | 24.3 |
| | | | A Giles | С | 4,734 | 23.3 |
| 1895 | 14,725 | 76.8 | T Chamberlayne | С | 5,924 | 27.5 |
| | | | Sir J S B Simeon | LU | 5,390 | 25.0 |
| | | | Sir F H Evans | L | 5,181 | 24.1 |
| | | | H G Wilson | L/LAB | 4,178 | 19.4 |
| | | | J R Macdonald | LAB | 867 | 4.0 |
| By - Elec | ction – Un | seating of | Chamberlayne on Petition | | | |
| 1896 | 14,919 | 76.1 | Sir F H Evans | L | 5,555 | 48.9 |
| | | | G Candy | С | 5,522 | 48.7 |
| | | | C A Gibson | SDF | 274 | 2.4 |
| 1900 | 16,505 | 72.6 | T Chamberlayne | C | 6,888 | 29.4 |
| | | | Sir J S B Simeon | LU | 6,253 | 26.9 |
| | | | Sir F H Evans | L | 5,575 | 23.9 |
| | | | C G Hyde | L | 4,625 | 19.9 |
| 1906 | 17,613 | 80.1 | I Philipps | L | 7,032 | 26.4 |
| | | | W D Ward | Ĺ | 6,255 | 23.4 |
| | | | T Chamberlayne | C | 5,754 | 21.5 |
| | | | J Hard | C | 5,535 | 20.7 |
| 5 | | | H Quelch | SDF | 2,146 | 8.0 |
| 1910 | 20,205 | 83.5 | I Philipps | L | 8,878 | 26.5 |
| (JAN) | | | W D Ward | | _ 8,830 | 26.4 |
| | | | K R Balfour | C | 7,394 | 23.6 |
| | | | C T Giles | C | 7,841 | 23.5 |
| 1910 | 20,205 | 80.0 | I Phillipps | ı | 8,496 | 26.5 |
| (DEC) | | | W D Ward | | 8,449 | 26.4 |
| | | | K R Balfour | (| 7,55 | 23.6 |
| | | | Sir G E Armstrong | (| 7,535 | 5 27.5 |

L – LIBERAL

C - CONSERVATIVE LU - LIBERAL UNIONIST

L/LAB – LIB – LAB LAB – LABOUR

SDF - SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC FEDERATION

APPENDIX 16 OCCUPIED POPULATION – SOUTHAMPTON

| SELECTED OCCUPATIONS | | 1921 | (1) | | 1931 (2) | | | | |
|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|----------|-------|-------|-------|--|
| OCCUPATIONS | MAL | E | FEMA | LE | MAL | E | FEMA | LE | |
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | |
| Metal Workers | 7403 | 14.32 | 96 | 0.56 | 6018 | 10.28 | - | - | |
| Electrical Apparatus Makers | 878 | 1.69 | 235 | 1.39 | 1136 | 1.94 | 235 | 1.20 | |
| Textile Goods & Dress | 652 | 1.26 | 1339 | 7.93 | 609 | 1.04 | 837 | 4.31 | |
| Food, Drink, Tobacco | 724 | 1.40 | 325 | 1.92 | 776 | 1.32 | 399 | 2.05 | |
| Wood & Furniture | 2326 | 4.50 | 105 | | 2543 | 4.34 | 161 | 0.82 | |
| Paper Printers Bookbinders etc. | 584 | 1.13 | 281 | 1.66 | 599 | 1.02 | 166 | 0.85 | |
| Builders, Bricklayers etc. | 1371 | 2.65 | - | ** | 2484 | 4.24 | - | - | |
| Painters & Decorators | 1476 | 2.85 | - | - | 1659 | 2.83 | - | - | |
| Mixed & Undefined Materials | 1635 | 3.16 | - | - | 748 | 1.27 | - | - | |
| Transport & Communications | 13851 | 26.80 | 345 | 2.04 | 15306 | 26.15 | 339 | 1.74 | |
| Commercial Occupations (excluding clerks) | 4730 | 9.15 | 2551 | 15.10 | 7130 | 12.18 | 3311 | 17.05 | |
| Public Administration | 1286 | 2.48 | 230 | 1.36 | 910 | 1.55 | - | - | |
| Professional (excluding Clerical Staff) | 1249 | 2.41 | 1558 | 9.22 | 1392 | 2.37 | 1572 | 8.09 | |
| Personal Service | 1463 | 2.83 | 7269 | 43.05 | 2084 | 3.56 | 8352 | 43.01 | |
| Clerks, Draughtsmen & Typists | 2547 | 4.92 | 1786 | 10.51 | 4261 | 7.28 | 2485 | 12.79 | |
| Warehousemen, Storekeepers & Packers | 698 | 1.35 | 234 | 1.38 | 994 | 1.69 | 431 | 2.21 | |
| Stationary Engine Drivers etc. | 690 | 1.33 | - | ** | 741 | 1.26 | - | - | |
| Other Undefined | 5508 | 10.65 | 215 | 1.27 | 7375 | 12.60 | 684 | 3.52 | |
| Retired, Not Gainfully Employed | 8239 | | 47994 | | 6183 | | 50990 | | |
| Total Occupied | 51671 | | 16884 | 26.02 | 58516 | | 19417 | 27.57 | |

⁽¹⁾ Aged 12 Years or Over

Source: Census of England and Wales 1921 and 1931

⁽²⁾ Aged 14 Years or Over

APPENDIX 16A SUMMARY OF OCCUPIED POPULATION SOUTHAMPTON 1951

| SELECTED OCCUPATIONS | MAL | E | FEMA | LE |
|-----------------------------|--------|-------|-------|-------|
| : | NO'S | % | NO'S | % |
| CHEMICALS AND ALLIED TRADES | 324 | 0.55 | 143 | 0.67 |
| ENG' SHIPBUILDING & | 11,245 | 19.28 | 1,313 | 6.16 |
| ELECTRICAL | | | | |
| VEHICLES | 3,560 | 6.10 | 474 | 2.22 |
| CLOTHING | 277 | 0.47 | 340 | 1.50 |
| FOOD, DRINK & TOBACCO | 1,959 | 3.35 | 1,418 | 6.65 |
| MFR OF WOOD AND CORK | 645 | 1.10 | 136 | 0.63 |
| PAPER & PRINTING | 713 | 1.22 | 188 | 0.88 |
| BUILDING AND CONTRACTING | 4,949 | 8.48 | 182 | 0.85 |
| GAS, ELECTRICAL & WATER | 1,787 | 3.06 | 131 | 0.61 |
| TRANSPORT & | 13,814 | 23.69 | 1,207 | 5.66 |
| COMMUNICATIONS | | | | |
| DISTRIBUTIONS TRADES | 7,000 | 12.00 | 5,920 | 27.78 |
| INSURANCE, BANKING AND | 1,167 | 2.00 | 690 | 3.23 |
| FINANCE | | | | |
| PUBLIC ADMIN & DEFENCE | 4,771 | 8.18 | 1,072 | 5.03 |
| PROFESSIONAL SERVICES | 2.445 | 4.19 | 3,105 | 14.57 |
| MISC' SERVICES | 2,171 | 3.72 | 4,541 | 21.31 |

Source - Census 1951

Appendix 17A

| Hull | Liverpool | Bristol | Plymouth | Southampton | 1931 | Hull | Liverpool | Bristol | Plymouth | Southampton | 1921 | |
|-------|-----------|---------|----------|-------------|------|-------|-------------|---------|----------|-------------|--------|---|
| 8.83 | | 9.24 | 10.65 | 10.28 | | 12.35 | 9.02 | 11.06 | 12.86 | 14.32 | | Metal Workers |
| 1.11 | 1.47 | 1.30 | 2.01 | 1.94 | | 0.91 | 1.31 | 1.00 | 1.63 | 1.69 | | Electrical Apparatus Makers |
| 1.11 | | | 1.19 | | | 1.34 | 1.68 | | | 1.26 | | Textile Goods & Dress |
| 2.01 | 1.51 | 2.61 | 1.15 | 1.32 | | 2.19 | 2.33 | | | 1.40 | | Food, Drink & Tobacco |
| 4.21 | 3.88 | 4.53 | 3.42 | 4.34 | | 5.28 | | 5.69 | | - | | Wood & Furniture |
| 0.92 | 1.29 | IN | 1.09 | 1 | | 1.04 | 1.16 | | | _ | | Paper, Printers, Bookbinders |
| 4.09 | 4.85 | | | | | 3.14 | | ω | | | | Builders Bricklayers etc. |
| 1.72 | _ | 2 | 2.01 | 2.83 | | 1.60 | _ | 12 | - | N | | Painters & Decorators |
| 0.94 | 0.57 | lo | 0.53 | | | 1.84 | | To | 1.96 | ω | T | Mixed & Undefined Materials |
| 27.36 | 28.31 | 16.22 | 11.43 | 26.15 | | 27.12 | | | 1 | _ | | Transport & Communications |
| 10.93 | 11.25 | 14.06 | 10.48 | 12.18 | | 8.94 | 8.53 | 10.97 | 1.15 | 9.15 | | Commercial Occupations (excluding Clerks) |
| 1.04 | 1.22 | 1.28 | 22.34 | 1.55 | | | | 3.00 | 28.69 | 2.48 | , | Public Administration & Defence |
| 1.83 | 2.07 | 2.68 | 2.16 | 2.3/ | 2 | 1.5/ | 1 9 | 7.79 | 9 2 2 | 2.4 | | Professional (excluding Clerical Staff) |
| 2.80 | 3.98 | 3.20 | 3.76 | 3.30 | | 2.22 | | 20.0 | | 200 | 3 | Personal Service |
| 0.31 | ∠اد | 1 - | 4.21 | ٠. | 1 | U | | 0 | 2.00 | 4.92 | 3 | Clerks, Draughtsmen and Typists |
| 1./0 | Ņ |) (| 2 .00 | T_ | T | CB.1 | <u>. I.</u> | | - د | <u>ـا ـ</u> | ۱. | Warehousemen, Storekeepers and Packers |
| 77.1 | 1- | | 0.04 | | | _ | 1 | 3 5 | | | ١. | Stationary Engine Drivers |
| 10.30 | | _ | | 12.00 | | 10.04 | 3 - | \neg | Π. | ج ا ج | 10 0 U | Other Undefined |

| Hull | Liverpool | Bristol | Plymouth | Southampton | 1931 | Hull | Liverpool | Bristol | Plymouth | Southampton | 1921 | · . |
|-----------|-----------|---------|----------|-------------------|--------------|-----------|-----------|-------------------|----------|-------------|-------|---|
| 3.18 | 1.64 | 0.28 | ı | 0.44 | | 4.00 | 1.59 | 0.58 | ı | 0.56 | | Metal Workers |
| ı | 0.71 | | • | 1.46 | | 1 | 0.39 | , | 1 | 1.39 | | Electrical Apparatus Makers |
| 6.16 | 8.03 | 9.90 | 9.52 | 4.31 | | 8.60 | 9.87 | 14.25 | 14.10 | 7.39 | 5 A | Textile Goods & Dress |
| 3.34 | | 7.08 | | ,, | | 5.15 | | 10.28 | I | _ | | Food, Drink & Tobacco |
| 3.34 3.27 | 2.61 | 6.32 | 1.49 | | | 3.42 | 3.04 | 8.59 | 2.03 | | | Paper, Printers, Bookbinders |
| , | | | | | | | , | | 1 | | | Mixed and Undefined Materials |
| | • | , | | - | | 1 | | , | 1. | , | | Builders, Bricklayers etc. |
| Ī. | 1 | 1 | ŀ | , | | , | ١. | | , | 1 | | Painters & Decorators |
| 1.22 | 1.83 | 1.07 | | 1./4 | | 2.09 | | - | - | | | Transport & Communications |
| 16.44 | 15.72 | 11.59 | 22.19 | 17.05 | | 14.34 | 14.63 | 9.78 | 17.90 | 15.10 | | Commercial (excluding Clerks) |
| - | | ŀ | | | | 0.64 | 0.91 | 0.93 | 1.20 | 1.30 | | Public Administration & Defence |
| 6./1 | | ٤١٤ | | 0.00 | | 6.88 8 | 9 9 | | | 1 | 3 | Professional (excluding Clerical Staff) |
| 35.50 | 30.92 | 31.20 | 40.25 | 43.01 | | 30.07 | 20.00 | 20.00 | 30.07 | 43.03 | 200 | Personal Service |
| Г | جَا | ٤١٤ | 5 2 | 12.78 | | 0.94 | | 0.47 | 0.40 | 0.07 | 40 67 | Clerks, Draughtsmen and Typists |
| 4.91 | ·σ | 0 | .T. | 7 7 7 | \mathbf{T} | 0.07 | | 0 0 0 0 | | 1 . 30 | 7 | Warehousemen, Storekeepers and Packers |
| • |], | | , | Ţ | | | Į, | ſ | ŀ | ا | | Stationary Engine Drivers |
| 0.12 | | 0.70 | 7 7 7 |) () () (| 3 73 | - / 4 | 4 74 | 2 5 | 2 .00 | 1 00 | 1 27 | Other Undefined |
| 0.00 | 0.00 | 0 0 | 0.40 | 0.02 | 0 83 | | 킬 | | ع إذ | 7 6 | 0 83 | Wood and Furniture |
| 0.10 | 30.48 | 26.27 | 25 27 | 25.57 | 27 57 | 1,00 | 27 82 | 22 7 ₆ | 25.57 | 90.50 | 26 02 | % of Females Occupied |

APPENDIX 18 STRIKES AND LOCKOUTS INVOLVING SOUTHAMPTON PORT WORKERS 1919 – 1938

| YEAR | TRADE GROUP | | | DATE | DURATION | NO. OF |
|------|---|---------|----|----------|----------|----------|
| | | | | | (DAYS) | MEN |
| | | | | | | INVOLVED |
| 1919 | Joiners | 24.3.19 | - | 14.6.19 | 84 | 80,000 |
| | Joiners | 9.8.19 | - | 13.10.19 | 55 | 800 |
| | Tug Boatmen | 9.5.19 | - | 14.6.19 | 31 | N/A |
| | Iron Founders | 27.9.19 | - | 18.10.19 | 19 | 45 |
| 1920 | Electricians | 21.2.20 | - | 28.2.20 | 7 | N/A |
| 1921 | Seamen (Catering) | 6.5.21 | - | 3.6.21 | 19 | 10,000 |
| | Southampton Men | | - | | | 3,000 |
| | Joiners | 1.2.20 | - | 27.8.21 | 232 | 1,258 |
| | Shipyard Workers (mostly electricians in 7 districts) | 4.5.21 | _ | 21.5.21 | 16 | 1,000 |
| 1922 | Engineers (AEU) | 13.2.22 | - | 8.5.22 | 49 | 160,000 |
| | Southampton Men | | - | | , | 1,000 |
| | Shipyard Workers | 29.3.22 | - | 8.5.22 | 33 | 80,000 |
| | Southampton Men | | - | | | 5,000 |
| 1923 | Boilermakers | 16.2.23 | - | 24.11.23 | 106 | 10,000 |
| | Seamen | 6.4.23 | - | 9.4.23 | 3 | 172 |
| 1924 | Dock Workers | 16.2.24 | - | 26.2.24 | 9 | 100,000 |
| · | Southampton Men | | - | | | 3,000 |
| | Marine Engineers (AEU) | 20.2.24 | - | 23.5.24 | 78 | 700 |
| | Shipyard Workers | 23.2.24 | - | 23.5.24 | 75 | 7,000 |
| 1925 | Seamen | 12.8.25 | -, | 12.10.25 | 53 | 5,000 |
| 1926 | General Strike | 4.5.26 | - | 19.5.26 | | , |
| 1927 | Boilermakers | 5.11.27 | - | 8.11.27 | | 500 |
| 1929 | Seamen (not all ports) | 29.6.29 | - | 3.7.29 | 5 | 1,500 |
| · · | Dockworkers (not all ports) | 3.7.29 | - | 5.7.29 |) 3 | 3 10,000 |
| 1934 | Plumbers | N/A | - | 31.5.34 | N/A | 32 |

N/A figures or dates not available

Sources: From F. Ewer, op cit p.326

PARTY CONTROL OF WARDS 1919 - 1945

| APPENDIX 19 E7 | PAKIT CONTROL OF VICTOR | | | | | | | | 1001 | 4008 | 1020 |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------|--------------|-------------------|-------------|----------------------|-----------------|----------|---------------|-------------|----------|
| | 1919 | 1920 | 1921 | 1922 | 1923 | 1924 | 1925 | 1926 | 1927 | 1920 | 0761 |
| ç | IABX | QN | LAB | ND ~ | IND | ND ND | ONI | <u>N</u> | <u>N</u> | | |
| or Deliys | | CIV | Ω - ΔΩ | CN | # QN | QNI | # QNI | # QNI | # QNI | # QN | 2 |
| Bevois | ON S | | | | # CINI | #QN | # QNI | # QN | # QNI | # QNI | S |
| Portswood | # CON | ב | בו בו | | | CIN | CINI | CN | # QN | # QNI | LABX |
| Shirley | LAB | LAB | ~ QN | _ _ _ _ | באו | בובר ביים ביים | | <u> </u> | | IARX | LABX |
| | CON | <u>N</u> | <u>Q</u> | QNI | <u>N</u> | # QN | # QN | <u>ש</u> | באם | ۲ <u>۱</u> | |
| راه س | Y B X | I AB | ND~ | ND~ | LAB | S | LABX | LAB | LABX | LAB | LAB |
| St. Malys | \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ | ! [2 | CNI | ~ QN | <u>N</u> | QN N | IND | LABX | LAB X | LAB X | LAB |
| | V 0 - | | | | I AR | CNI | <u>N</u> | LAB | <u>R</u> | ONI | LAB |
| Millbrook | LAB | ואם | ONI | ב | <u>.</u> | | ‡ <u>C</u> 2 | CZ | # CN | QNI | <u>N</u> |
| Newtown | CON | <u>Q</u> | <u>S</u> | | QN | ב צ | # CN . | | # O V | 1 AB | AB |
| Northam | LAB | LAB | LABX | LAB | LAB# | LAB | LAB | LAB | ± 20 21 | בן ני | <u>ן</u> |
| | 200 | CN | CN | # QN | LAB× | ΔNI | # QNI | #~ QNI | # Q | # Q Z | 2 |
| Freemantle | 200 | | ‡ <u>CIV</u> | # | #CN | QN | # QNI | #QNI | # QNI | # QN | <u>Q</u> |
| All Saints | CON | 2 | ‡ Q | | # C. | # CIV | # 02 | # QNI | # QNI | #QNI | # QN |
| Banister | CON# | Q N | | # ON | ‡ Q | ‡] | | | 2 | av - | 4 A B |
| Ritterne and Pear Tree | | IND 3 ~ | LABX | # QNI | LABX | LAB | LABX | LAB | ND ~ | 5 | |
| | | IND 3 ~ | IABX | # QN | QN | <u>N</u> | S | <u>N</u> | 2 | | LABX |
| VVOOIStori | | | # 014 | # 014 | # CNI | QNI | # QN | 2 | # QN | LABX | 2 |
| Bitterne and Sholing | | IND 3 ~ | ‡ (1) | בו בו בי בי בי | | | CN | QN | # QN | LABX | LABX |
| St Nicholas | | ND 3 ~ | # <u>ON</u> | # 2 2 | ב ב ב | 2 | | | | | |

R.ASSN = Ratepayer Association

IND = Independent

LAB = Labour

-= Other Gain from Independent

*= Other Gain from Labour RP = Ratepayer Party

> (3) Number denotes seats contested X = Labour Gain ~= Independent Gain #= Candidate returned unopposed

_|≥ 304

APPENDIX 19 cont'd

| | 1930 | 1931 | 1932 | 1933 | . 1934 | 1935 | 1936 | 1937 | 1938 | 1945 |
|------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|--------|------|---------|------|---------|--------|
| St Denys | # QNI | <u>QN</u> | QNI | QNI | RP | LABX | PA P | RP 2 | LAB | LABX |
| Bevois | <u>N</u> | # QNI | ND Q | <u>N</u> | RP# | RP | RP | RP | A B | LABX |
| Portswood | <u>N</u> | # QNI | IND | # QNI | RP | RP # | RP | RP | A P | LAB X3 |
| Shirley | <u>QN</u> | QN | LAB | IND | RP | RP ~ | ВP | RP 2 | RP | LAB X2 |
| Trinity | <u>N</u> | ~ QNI | LAB | <u>N</u> | RP | LAB | RP | LABX | LAB | LABX |
| St. Mary's | LAB | LAB | LAB# | LAB | LAB | LAB | LAB# | LAB | LAB# | LAB |
| Town | R. ASSN * | R. ASSN | LAB | LABX | LABX | LAB | LAB | LAB | LAB# | LAB |
| Millbrook | QN | QNI | LAB | QNI | RP | LAB | LABX | RP | LAB | LAB 2 |
| Newtown | LAB | <u>N</u> | <u>N</u> | LAB | LABX | RP | LAB | RP~ | AP P | LAB |
| Northam | LAB | LAB | LAB | LAB | LAB | LAB | LAB | LAB | LAB | LAB |
| Freemantle * | QNI | <u>QN</u> | IND | QNI | RP | RP | RP P | RP | RP# | LABX |
| All Saints | ONI | # QNI | # QNI | # QNI | RP# | RP | RP | RP# | RP | LABX |
| Banister | QNI | # QNI | # QNI | # QNI | RP# | RP# | RP # | RP | RP# | RP 3 |
| Bitterne and Pear Tree | ND QN | ND ~ | LAB | LABX | LAB | LAB | LAB | LAB | LAB | LAB |
| Woolston | QNI | QNI | LAB | LABX | RP | LAB | RP 2 | ND | LAB | LAB X2 |
| Bitterne and Sholing | <u>QN</u> | ~ QNI | LABX | LABX | LABX | RP~ | RP ~ | LAB | A A | LABX |
| St. Nicholas | LABX | ND ~ | LAB | LAB | LABX | LAB | LAB | LAB | LAB | LAB 3 |

~= Independent/RP Gain

X= Labour Gain

NOTE:

-= Other Gain from Independent

*= Other Gain from Labour

From 1934 The Independent Party was renamed the Ratepayer Party #= Candidate Returned Unopposed (3) Number denotes seats contested

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ANALYSIS OF VOTING IN TWO MEMBER SEATS SOUTHAMPTON 1918 – 1945

| Date | Candidate | Party | Votes | Date | Candidate | Party | Votes |
|------|--------------------|-----------|--------|----------|--------------------|---------|--------|
| 1918 | Phillipps | Co L | 942 | 1922 | Perkins | С | 495 |
| | Ward | CoL | 365 | | Aspley | С | 216 |
| | Perkins | С | 4,910 | | Lewis | Lab | 7,079 |
| | Lewis | Lab | 654 | | Stancomb | Ind | 2,838 |
| | Perriman | Lab | 222 | | Phillipps | NL | 167 |
| | Total Plumpers | | 7,093 | | Ward | NL | 83 |
| | Phillipps/Ward | Co L/Co L | 15,935 | | Total Plumpers | | 10,896 |
| | Phillipps/Perkins | Co L/C | 9,381 | | Perkins/Apsley | C/C | 19,462 |
| | Phillipps/Lewis | Co L/Lab | 348 | | Perkins/Lewis | C/Lab | 235 |
| , | Phillipps/Perriman | Co L/Lab | 278 | | Perkins/Stancomb | C/Ind | 1,494 |
| | Ward/Perkins | Co L/C | 377 | | Perkins/Phillipps | C/NL | 292 |
| | Ward/Lewis | Co L/Lab | 112 | 1 | Perkins/Ward | C/NL | 76 |
| | Ward/Perriman | Co L/Lab | 54 | | Apsley/Lewis | C/Lab | 124 |
| | Perkins/Lewis | C/Lab | 686 | | Apsley/Stancomb | C/Ind | 365 |
| | Perkins/Perriman | C/Lab | 194 | <u> </u> | Apsley/Phillipps | C/NL | 148 |
| | Lewis/Perriman | Lab/Lab | 6,028 | | Apsley/Ward | C/NL | 36 |
| | Total | | 40,486 | | Lewis/Stancomb | Lab/Ind | 7,105 |
| | | | | | Lewis/Phillipps | Lab/NL | 259 |
| | | | | | Lewis/Ward | Lab/NL | 48 |
| | W. W. | | | 1 | Stancomb/Phillipps | Ind/NL | 2,013 |
| | | 1, | | - | Stancomb/Ward | Ind/NL | 378 |
| | | | | + | Phillipps/Ward | NL/NL | 8,69 |
| | | | | | Total | | 51,62 |

| Date | Candidate | Party | Votes | Date | Candidate | Party | Votes |
|--|-------------------|---------|--------|------|------------------|---------|--------|
| 1923 | Apsley | С | 276 | 1924 | Apsley | С | 532 |
| | Perkins | С | 172 | | Perkins | С | 173 |
| ,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,, | Lewis | Lab | 598 | | Lewis | Lab | 612 |
| | Sorensen | Lab | 93 | | Sorensen | Lab | 234 |
| | Spranger | L | 132 | | Total Plumpers | | 1,551 |
| | Dixey | L | 111 | | Apsley/Perkins | C/C | 29,668 |
| | Total Plumpers | | 1,382 | | Apsley/Lewis | C/Lab | 309 |
| | Apsley/Perkins | C/C | 19,738 | | Apsley/Sorensen | C/Lab | 194 |
| | Apsley/Lewis | .C/Lab | 71 | | Perkins/Lewis | C/Lab | 141 |
| | Apsley/Sorensen | C/Lab | 46 | | Perkins/Sorensen | C/Lab | 219 |
| | Apsley/Spranger | C/L | 129 | | Lewis/Sorensen | Lab/Lab | 21,12 |
| | Apsley/Dixey | C/L | 193 | | Total | | 53,203 |
| | Perkins/Lewis | C/Lab | 145 | | | | |
| | Perkins/Sorensen | C/Lab | 79 | | | | |
| | Perkins/Spranger | C/L | 56 | | | | |
| | Perkins/Dixey | C/L | 59 | | | | |
| | Lewis/Sorensen | Lab/Lab | 16,042 | | | | |
| | Lewis/Spranger | Lab/L | 218 | | | | |
| | Lewis/Dixey | Lab/L | 134 | | | | |
| | Sorensen/Spranger | Lab/L | 224 | | | | |
| | Sorensen/Dixey | Lab/L | 195 | | | | |
| | Spranger/Dixey | L/L | 12,965 | | | | |
| | Total | | 51,676 | 1. | | | |

| Date | Candidate | Party | Votes | Date | Candidate | Party | Votes |
|------|--|---------|--------|------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|------------|
| 1929 | Lewis | Lab | 1,101 | 1931 | Craven-Ellis | С | 873 |
| | Morley | Lab | 291 | | Barrie | NL | 481 |
| | Thirlestone & Boltoun | С | 714 | | Lewis | Lab | 511 |
| | Cunningham-Reid | С | 485 | | Morley | Lab | 183 |
| | Whitehouse | L | 187 | | Total Plumpers | | 2,048 |
| | Lamsley | L | 174 | | Craven-Ellis/Barrie | C/NL | 53,603 |
| | Total Plumpers | | 2,952 | | Craven-Ellis/Lewis | C/Lab | 141 |
| | Lewis/Morley | Lab/Lab | 30,668 | | Craven- Ellis/Morley | C/Lab | 82 |
| | Lewis/Thirlestone & Boltoun | Lab/C | 52 | | Barrie/Lewis | NL/Lab | 81 |
| | Lewis/Cunningham- | Lab/C | 33 | | Barrie/Morley | NL/Lab | 104 |
| | Lewis/Whitehouse | Lab/L | 103 | | Lewis/Morley | LAB/LAB | 25,692 |
| | Lewis/Lamsley | Lab/L | 292 | | Total | | 81,751 |
| | Morley/Thirlestone & Boltoun | Lab/C | 85 | | | | |
| | Morley/Cunningham- Reid | Lab/C | 19 | 1935 | Analysis not availab (Estimated) | le – Ballot Pap | ers 75,686 |
| | Morley/Whitehouse | Lab/L | 73 | | Craven-Ellis | Nat | 44,896 |
| | Morley/Lamsley | Lab/L | 116 | | Barrie | NL | 43,697 |
| | Thirleston & Boltoun/Cunningham- Reid | C/C | 25,874 | | Lewis | Lab | 39,751 |
| | Thirlestone & Boltoun/Whitehouse | C/L | 781 | | Morley | Lab | 30,028 |
| | Thirleston & Boltoun/Lamsley | C/L | 392 | | | | |
| | Cunningham- Reid/Whitehouse | C/L | 175 | | | | |
| | Cunningham- Reid/Lamsley | C/L | 215 | | | | |
| | Whitehouse/Lamsley | C/L | 11,647 | | | | |
| | Total | | 73,477 | 7 | | | |

| Date | Candidate | Party | Votes |
|------|---------------------|---------|----------|
| 1945 | Morley | Lab | 903 |
| | Lewis | Lab | 1,318 |
| | Craven-Ellis | С | 2,236 |
| | Thomas | NL | 342 |
| | Fulljames | L | 3,886 |
| | Total Plumpers | | 8,685 |
| | Morley/Lewis | Lab/Lab | 34,903 |
| | Morley/Craven/Ellis | Lab/C | 253 |
| | Morley/Thomas | Lab/NL | 583 |
| | Morley/Fulljames | Lab/L | 914 |
| | Lewis/Craven-Ellis | Lab/C | 136 |
| | Lewis/Thomas | Lab/NL | 94 |
| | Lewis/Fulljames | Lab/L | 603 |
| | Craven- | C/NL | 19,949 |
| | Ellis/Thomas | | |
| | Craven- | C/L | 1,793 |
| | Ellis/Fulljames | | |
| | Thomas/Fulljames | NL/L | 1,682 |
| | Total | | · 69,595 |

| ELECTION | ELECTORS | TURNOUT | CANDIDATE | PARTY | VOTES | % |
|----------|----------|---------|-----------------|-------|--------|------|
| 1918 | 75,334 | 49.0 | Sir I Phillipps | Co. L | 26,884 | 36.4 |
| | | | W.D. Ward | Co. L | 16,843 | 22.8 |
| | | | E.K. Perkins | С | 15,548 | 21.0 |
| | | | T. Lewis | Lab | 7,828 | 10.6 |
| | | | F. Perriman | Lab | 6,776 | 9.2 |
| 1922 | 75,316 | 61.3 | E.K. Perkins | С | 22,054 | 23.9 |
| | | | Lord Apsley | С | 20,351 | 22.0 |
| | | | T. Lewis | Lab | 14,868 | 16.1 |
| | | | Dr. E.H.M. | Lab | 14,193 | 15.4 |
| | | | Stancomb | | | |
| | | | Sir I Phillipps | L | 11,576 | 12.5 |
| | | | Rt. Hon. W. | L | 9,318 | 10.1 |
| | | | D. Ward | | | |
| 1923 | 76,833 | 66.4 | Lord Apsley | С | 20,453 | 20.0 |
| | | | E.K. Perkins | С | 20,249 | 19.8 |
| | | | T. Lewis | Lab | 17,208 | 16.9 |
| | | | Rev. R.W. | Lab | 16,679 | 16.4 |
| | | | Sorensen | | | |
| | | | F.J.G. | L | 13,724 | 13.5 |
| | | | Spranger | | | |
| · | | | C.N.D. Dixey | L | 13,657 | 13.4 |
| 1924 | 78,776 | 66.6 | Lord Apsley | С | 30,703 | 29.3 |
| | | | E.K. Perkins | | 30,201 | 28.8 |
| | | | T. Lewis | Lab | 22,183 | 21.1 |
| | | | Rev. R.W. | Lab | 21,768 | 20.8 |
| | | | Sorensen | | | |
| | | | | š | | |

| ELECTION | ELECTORS | TURNOUT | CANDIDATE | PARTY | VOTES | % |
|----------|----------|---------|---------------------|-------|----------|------|
| 1929 | 103,653 | 69.5 | T. Lewis | Lab | 32,249 | 22.4 |
| | | | R. Morley | Lab | 31,252 | 21.7 |
| | | | Lord | С | 27,801 | 19.4 |
| | | , | Thirlestone | | | |
| | | | and Boltoun | | | |
| | | | A.S. | С | 26,801 | 18.6 |
| | | | Cunningham- | | | |
| | | | Reid | | | |
| | | | J.H. | L | 12,966 | 9.0 |
| | | | Whitehouse | | | |
| | | | A.T. Lamsley | L | 12,836 | 8.9 |
| | | | | | F. (000 | |
| 1931 | 107,376 | 75.2 | W. Craven- Ellis | Nat | 54,699 | 33.9 |
| | | | Sir. C.C. | NL | 54,269 | 33.6 |
| - | | | Barrie | | | |
| | | | T. Lewis | Lab | 26,425 | 16.4 |
| | | | R. Morley | Lab | 26,061 | 16.1 |
| | | | | | | |
| | 11004 | 07.0 |)M O | Not | 44,896 | 30.0 |
| 1935 | 110,047 | 67.9 | W. Craven- Ellis | Nat | 44,690 | 30.0 |
| | | | Sir. C.C. | NL | 43,697 | 29.3 |
| | | | Barrie | | | |
| | | | T. Lewis | Lab | 30,751 | 20.6 |
| | | | R. Morley | Lab | 30,028 | 20.1 |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

(Resignation of Barrie)

1940 Rt. Hon, Sir. J.C.W. Reith, Nat. Unopposed

(Elevation of Reith to the Peerage – Lord Reith) 1940 Dr. W.S.R. Thomas, NL Unopposed

APPENDIX 21

SHARE OF THE VOTE IN MUNICIPAL ELECITONS AND UNCONTESTED SEATS WON BY LABOUR PARTY AND INDEPENDENT/RATEPAYER PARTY IN SOUTHAMPTON 1919 – 1938

| YEAR | LABOUR | IND/RATEPAYER | UNCONTESTED WINS | |
|------|-----------|---------------|------------------|---------------|
| | SHARE OF | SHARE OF VOTE | LABOUR | IND/RATEPAYER |
| | VOTE % | % | * | |
| 1919 | 37.88 (2) | 54.20 (1) | | |
| 1920 | 41.35 | 57.04 | | |
| 1921 | 39.46 | 54.25 | 0 | 2 |
| 1922 | 38.78 | 64.28 | 0 | 7 |
| 1923 | 40.86 | 55.11 | 1 | 5 |
| 1924 | 36.07 | 63.92 | . 0 | 3 |
| 1925 | 45.28 | 54.71 | 0 | 8 |
| 1926 | 53.34 | 46.65 | 0 | 5 |
| 1927 | 46.68 | 52.35 | 1 | 9 |
| 1928 | 54.04 | 45.95 | 0 | 6 |
| 1929 | 52.53 | 47.46 | 0 | 1 |
| 1930 | 43.11 | 55.58 | 0 | 1 |
| 1931 | 35.77 | 62.07 | 0 | 4 |
| 1932 | 53.96 | 46.03 | 1 | 2 |
| 1933 | 52.10 | 48.87 | 0 | 3 |
| 1934 | 52.01 | 47.98 | 0 | 3 |
| 1935 | 53.49 | 46.50 | 0 | 2 |
| 1936 | 44.30 | 51.88 | 1 | 1 |
| 1937 | 48.11 | 51.05 | 0 | 1 |
| 1938 | 50.37 | 49.54 | . 2 | 2 |

NOTES:

1. Combined vote of Conservative 34.92%, Liberal 9.27% and Independent 10.01%

APPENDIX 22 NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF PARLIAMENTARY VOTERS EXCLUDED FROM THE MUNICIPAL FRANCHISE IN SOUTHAMPTON

| DATE | | NUMBER | . % | DATE | | NUMBER | % |
|----------|--------|--------|-------|------|--------|--------|-------|
| 1918 (a) | Male | 12,977 | 34.14 | 1930 | Male | 15,693 | 30.01 |
| | Female | 62 | 0.24 | | Female | 12,324 | 22.83 |
| | Total | 13,039 | 20.59 | | Total | 28,017 | 26.36 |
| 1919 | Total | 13,105 | 18.01 | 1931 | Male | 15,919 | 30.15 |
| 1920 (b) | Total | 12.298 | 16.82 | | Female | 12,598 | 23.07 |
| 1921 | Total | 12,161 | 16.26 | | Total | 28,517 | 26.55 |
| 1922 | Male | 11,633 | 26.93 | 1932 | Male | 16,238 | 30.42 |
| | Female | 23 | | | Female | 12,610 | 22.95 |
| | Total | 11,656 | 15.47 | | Total | 28,848 | 26.63 |
| 1923 | Male | 10,396 | 23.78 | 1933 | Male | 15,997 | 29.94 |
| | Female | 30 | 0.09 | | Female | 12,771 | 23.03 |
| | Total | 10,426 | 13.64 | | Total | 28,768 | 26.42 |
| 1925 | Male | 11,895 | 25.90 | 1934 | Male | 15,782 | 29.54 |
| | Female | 24 | 0.06 | · | Female | 12,720 | 22.89 |
| | Total | 11,919 | 14.78 | | Total | 28,502 | 26.15 |
| 1926 | Male | 11,334 | 24.85 | 1935 | Male | 15,593 | 28.97 |
| | Female | 17 | 0.04 | | Female | 12,586 | 22.38 |
| | Total | 11,351 | 14.12 | | Total | 28,179 | 25.60 |
| 1927 | Male | 11,024 | 24.17 | 1936 | Male | 15,338 | 28.36 |
| | Female | 9 | | - | Female | 12,554 | 22.11 |
| | Total | 11,033 | 13.71 | | Total | 27,892 | 25.16 |
| 1928 | Male | 10,905 | 23.80 | 1937 | Male | 15,752 | 28.60 |
| | Female | 12 | 0.03 | | Female | 12,462 | 21.78 |
| | Total | 10,917 | 13.52 | | Total | 28,214 | 25.13 |
| 1929 | Male | 14,678 | 28.60 | 1938 | Male | 15,682 | 28.13 |
| | Female | 11,468 | 21.91 | | Female | 12,294 | 21.21 |
| | Total | 26,146 | 25.22 | | Total | 27,976 | 24.60 |

(a) Bitterne, Pear Tree, Sholing and Woolston were in the parliamentary constituency but not the municipal borough until 1920

(b) Borough extended but St. Nicholas Ward excluded as this was in Winchester Parliamentary Division

APPENDIX 23 SOUTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL ELECTION RESULTS – 1945

| Town | Mrs R.M. Stonehouse | Lab | 657 |
|------------|---------------------|----------|-----|
| | H. Johnson | R.P. | 188 |
| | | Majority | 469 |
| | | | 550 |
| St. Mary's | E.G. Last | Lab | 552 |
| | W. Darrock | Con | 218 |
| | | Majority | 334 |
| Trinity | A.G. Stevenson | Lab | 845 |
| , | G.H. Barendt | R.P. | 428 |
| | Lab Gain | Majority | 417 |
| Newtown | G. Bignell | Lab | 830 |
| | E.J. Downer | R.P. | 417 |
| | | Majority | 413 |
| Bevois | Mrs L.B. Barnard | Lab | 905 |
| | A.H. Powdrill | R.P. | 876 |
| | Lab Gain | Majority | 29 |
| | | | |
| All Saints | N.D. Rowe | Lab | 717 |
| | S.J. Lane | R.P. | 518 |
| | Lab Gain | Majority | 199 |

| Freemantle | Mrs M.W. Earley | Lab | 947 |
|------------|-----------------|------------------|------|
| | S.H. Foy | R.P. | 904 |
| | Lab Gain | M ajority | 243 |
| Donistor | F. Dibben | R.P. | 1114 |
| Banister | | R.P. | 1075 |
| (3 seats) | G.A. Waller | | 1005 |
| | E. Barrow | R.P. | |
| | E. Storror | Lab | 985 |
| | G.A.N. Scriven | Lab | 976 |
| | E.M. Lyons | Lab | 889 |
| · | L. Cooper | Ind | 377 |
| | G. Hulse | Ind | 329 |
| | H.G. Welch | Ind | 317 |
| | | Majority | 129 |
| Millbrook | R.W. Jones | ^ Lab | 2645 |
| (2 seats) | J. Parker | Lab | 2556 |
| , | A.W. Axton | Ind | 1190 |
| | W.E. Tickle | R.P. | 959 |
| | | Majority | 1445 |
| | | | 0440 |
| Shirley | R.J. McGurk | Lab | 3113 |
| (2 seats) | J.E. Hentage | Lab | 3305 |
| | R.R.H. Hammond | R.P. | 2611 |
| | Mrs O.R. Bonner | R.P. | 2555 |
| | 2 Lab Gains | M ajority | 702 |

| Portswood | H. Lane | Lab | 1367 |
|--------------------|------------------|------------------|------|
| (3 seats) | S.L. Hawkins | Lab | 1352 |
| | C.L. Brighton | Lab | 1296 |
| | C.E.H. Prince | R.P. | 1269 |
| | R. Hughes | R.P. | 1667 |
| | G.M. Hardwell | R.P. | 1181 |
| | R. Fulljames | Ind | 1076 |
| | H. Barron | Ind | 865 |
| | W.E. Filer | ind | 816 |
| | 3 Lab Gains | Majority | 98 |
| | | | |
| St. Denys | W.G. Bishop | Lab | 1932 |
| | W.A.J. Newly | · R.P. | 1142 |
| | Lab Gain | Majority | 790 |
| | | | |
| Bitterne & Sholing | E.J. Langlois | Lab | 3536 |
| | J.H.G. Barber | R.P. | 1951 |
| | Lab Gain | M ajority | 1585 |
| | | | |
| St. Nicholas | Mrs V.F. King | Lab | 3246 |
| (3 seats) | H.T. Willcock | Lab | 3114 |
| | W. Greenaway | Lab | 2510 |
| | Mrs M.E. Tidbold | R.P. | 2239 |
| | Mrs A. Foster | R.P. | 1717 |
| | Mrs A.L.Gillies | R.P. | 1431 |
| | | M ajority | 1017 |
| | | | |

| Woolston | J. Boyle | Lab | 1557 |
|-----------|-----------------|----------|------|
| (3 seats) | T. Crathers | Lab | 1557 |
| | S.M.G. Mitchell | Lab | 1409 |
| 1 | J.E. Mitchell | R.P. | 762 |
| | A. Gilich | R.P. | 644 |
| | A. Pitches | Ind | 600 |
| | L.T. Richards | R.P. | 555 |
| | 2 Lab Gains | Majority | 795 |

UNOPPOSED RETURNS

| Northam | Mrs M. O'Higgins | Lab |
|-----------------|------------------|-----|
| | E.J. Squibb | Lab |
| Bitterne & Pear | Mrs B.M. | Lab |
| Tree | Sakoschanky | |
| | R.H. Cutler | Lab |

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