THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE
LONDON SOCIETY OF COMPOSITORS, 1848-1906

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To Michael

and

With Sincere Thanks to the National Hospital for Nervous Diseases, Queen Square, London WC1.
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<tr>
<td>BL</td>
<td>British Library</td>
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<td>LSC</td>
<td>London Society of Compositors.</td>
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<td>np.</td>
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<td>OED</td>
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Introduction
In the period between the Great Exhibition and the...First World War, the printing industry underwent a dramatic transformation from a craft trade into a mass producing industry.1

The understanding [between management and workforce] follows from the realisation that the present craft unions are in direct line of historical continuity from the medieval guilds.2

I

The ACAS report on Industrial Relations in the National Newspaper Industry for the Royal Commission on the Press in 1977,3 stressed that the origin of craft union power in Fleet Street lay in the genesis of craft trade unionism in the printing trade, and emphasised that, "an understanding of the history of trade union organisation in the newspaper industry is vital to any comprehension of current attitudes on amalgamation and of inter-union relationships".4 A similar emphasis

is also to be found in Dr. Keith Sissons' study of industrial relations in Fleet Street. Concerning the idiosyncratic pay structure operating in the national newspaper industry, Dr. Sissons points out that present job demarcation originated in the 16th and 17th centuries and was reinforced in the 18th and early 19th centuries by small craft societies which were anxious to fill the gap left by the abrogation of paternalist legislation with their own regulations. Moreover, this emphasis upon the historical development of printing trade unions, and of the continuity within that development, is reiterated by recent journalistic studies of contemporary disputes in the industry. For example, Eric Jacobs, in his expose of the 1979 dispute on the Times is anxious to point out that our full appreciation of the situation lies in our comprehending the power of antiquity within the trade unions in newspaper production: only then can we grasp the labyrinthine complexity of negotiations which must foreshadow any agreement. In his more general study of management/union relations in Fleet Street, Graham Cleverley justifies the necessity of historical digression, for without the historical dimension we cannot understand the historic dominance of craft unions in the printing trade. Moreover, without that understanding we cannot comprehend how certain craft unions have

6. Ibid., pp. 70-1.
managed to improve upon a position of pre-eminence. Cleverley explains that among Fleet Street craftsmen

the sense of historical continuity is strong, and by and large the attitude and self-image of the craftsman are still those of his predecessors of a century or more ago....Notably for instance, the craftsman's self-image is not that of any employee. His view of the relationship with newspaper management is still that of an independent journeyman hiring out his services (via his union) on equal terms. 9

In his study, Cleverley also has unwittingly touched upon a force as influential as historical continuity itself, and one which has developed directly from the preservation of historic institutions in the printing trade: that of elaboration. There is, in fact, no line of descent from medieval guilds to current trade unions. 10 However, in the context of twentieth century industrial relations, it is acutely significant that both sides believe there to have been one.

It is clear then from these recent studies, that the salient years of development for the London printing trade were those covering the growth of craft trade unionism, when the craft and trade union became mutually indentifiable. The most powerful and important craft union within the printing trade was the London Society of Compositors founded in 1848. It is from this union that other organizations of skilled men in the printing trade took their lead, and from it also that new unions of semi-skilled men took their structural form. 11

11. See below, pp. 153-5.
Five years after the formation of the LSC, the Society of London Daily Newspaper Compositors joined with general and weekly news compositors, swelling the ranks of the London Society of Compositors. Then, from 1853-1906, the bulk of London's news compositors and book compositors worked and developed together, until a metropolitan dispute in 1906 separated the newsmen from the general body of craftsmen for all negotiations with employers concerning wage rates and working conditions. It was during the years 1848-1906 that London compositors, facing tremendous changes in all aspects of the metropolitan trade and experiencing the printing trade's first industrial revolution, negotiated highly significant and most advantageous agreements with master printers - agreements which were to prove significant to the printing industry of the twentieth century. Some explanation of the developments of these years does then seem to be in order. However, though Royal Commission, recent study and journalistic expose are at pains to emphasise the preservation and power of historical forces in the printing trade during those decades, none has addressed itself to providing an explanation. What is essential here, is not so much a realisation of the presence of the historic in the present, but rather an understanding of why certain institutions and traditions were preserved, what that tells us about the craft and what that might indicate for future development. The real question is then: why was the London Society of Compositors able to maintain its mode of organization and its continuity of custom and

tradition, and also to increase its level of control vis-a-vis employers during the printing industry's crucial period of development? It is to provide such an explanation that this thesis addresses itself.

Unfortunately, historical studies which focus upon the development of the London Society of Compositors are not really constructive here. The criteria governing discussion of trade unions in the printing trade were shaped by the historiographical context in which the study of trade unions as a whole initially arose. These were laid down by Beatrice and Sidney Webb in their History of Trade Unionism in 1894 and in Industrial Democracy in 1897,\(^\text{13}\) and it is only recently that any explanation outside that context has been forthcoming.\(^\text{14}\) However, there are grounds for criticism of the Webbs as historians of the LSC on both general and specific counts. Both their methodological approach and the veracity of their evidence in respect of the LSC are open to question.

The Webbs interpreted trade union history as the history of continuous organizations in the light of their understanding of the Fabian socialist view of social evolution. These preconceptions determined an erroneous phasing of trade union development on the road to socialism - a phasing which has

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\(^{13}\) Industrial Democracy is the more important of the two works, for A History of Trade Unionism pays only scant attention to the LSC. See Industrial Democracy, 1897, Part 1, pp. 3-37; Part 2, pp.152-353, 392-429, 453-507, 559-599; Part 3, pp.807-850.

laid them open to much criticism on methodological grounds.\textsuperscript{15} Evidently their interpretation can take no account of sectional diversity, nor is it really concerned with the origin of craft unions or with specific craft unions in the context of individual trades. Secondly, the specific criticism which questions the veracity of the Webbs' evidence arises from their statement in \textit{Industrial Democracy} concerning apprenticeship in composing, in which it is averred that by the 1890s apprenticeship regulations were falling into desuetude.\textsuperscript{16} This was not the case. In 1896, in the first Machine Scale a ratio of three apprentices to one journeyman was agreed by both masters and men.\textsuperscript{17} Furthermore, this agreement is of crucial significance: it was the first ever written agreement concerning the limitation of apprentices to which both employers and employees gave consent. The problem of supernumerary apprentices had dogged journeymen compositors since the 16th century,\textsuperscript{18} and its eventual limitation here, in direct contradiction of the Webbs' assertion, indicates all too clearly the

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textit{Industrial Democracy}, 1897, Part 2, pp. 464-68.
\item See Greg and Boswell, \textit{op.cit.}
\end{enumerate}
growing control of the London Society of Compositors. This erroneous assumption may simply have arisen from carelessness, though in view of the Webbs' treatment of craft unions and their tendency to diminish the influence of these organisations in favour of the new model amalgamated trade unions, this seems unlikely. John Child, in his discussion of this error by the Webbs states that their understanding of actual conditions in the composing trade was largely hypothetical, and that they had applied their knowledge of events in the cotton industry to composing.19 Evidently, this questions both the credibility of the Webbs and their position as trade union historians. Obviously, no explanation of the continuity of custom and tradition, of ideology, and of the level of craft control in the composing trade, which is grounded upon their work can be regarded as valid.

It is ironic then, in view of the above, that the interpretation which the Webbs have placed on the LSC, that of a backward-looking, exclusive, apolitical body, concerned only with the preservation of craft control and the protection of its members, has been inherited by later generations of trade union historians. This is much to do with, though not the responsibility of Ellic Howe, whose studies, The Trade. Passages from the Literature of the Printing Craft, 1550-1935, The London Compositor, The London Society of Compositors, and Newspaper Printing in the Nineteenth Century,20 together

20. 1943; 1947; 1948; 1943.
provide an invaluable collection of documents and a wealth of technical detail. They also stress the conservative character of the London Society of Compositors and emphasize its constitutionality and its sense of propriety. In so doing, Howe's work affirms, albeit unintentionally, the Webbian interpretation of the craft union of metropolitan compositors.

Such affirmation is taken one step further by Dr. I.C. Cannon in his thesis, "The Social Situation of the Skilled Worker: a study of the Compositor in London".21 A sociological study of twentieth century craftsmen, this thesis was prefaced by an historical prolegomenon whose length was justified by Cannon's stress on the importance of historical continuity in the trade:

In gathering material for an historical introduction it became evident that the present occupation is affected by the past in many ways, in particular, an ideology developed over the period which is still influential; the history therefore merited more than an introduction.22

Cannon's history does however suffer from a sociological determinism: today's craftsmen are yesterday's labour aristocrats, and the late 19th century is therefore focused upon as the period of status decline with attendant ideological and political effects. Thus, the origin of the growth of working class consciousness and the adherence to labour politics, evident among today's compositors are derived directly from

22. Ibid., p. 7.
status decline.23 This analysis is simplistic and superficial, and it does bring Cannon into some real difficulties. Concerning the Linotype for example: the innovation of the machine in London was certainly not, as Cannon stated, detrimental to the LSC.24 This study of devalued labour aristocrats of the twentieth century, despite the promise of its introduction, does not address itself to the implications and ramifications of historical continuity within the composing trade. Consequently, the effect of Cannon's interpretation is to affirm and reinforce the view of the London Society of Compositors as an exclusive, apolitical, isolationist organization during most of the second half of the 19th century.

The general trade union studies of the 1960s strove to revise the Webb interpretation and periodisation of trade union history, and this is particularly evident in the study of H.A. Clegg, Alan Fox and A.F. Thompson of British trade


unions since 1889. It is paradoxical then in view of this intention that their interpretation of the LSC is not substantially dissimilar from that portrayed by the Webbs in *Industrial Democracy* and *A History of Trade Unions*. Between the late 19th century and the late 1960s, the treatment of the LSC underwent not a revision but rather an affirmation: it moved from the context of methodology to that of historiography. When John Child wrote his *Industrial Relations in the British Printing Industry* in 1967, he did indeed take issue with certain assumptions of the Webbs' analysis. However, his study never set out to posit a substantial critique of their work. His comprehensive survey, covering the main developments in 17 unions over a period of more than three centuries provides an invaluable guide to the progress of the LSC. In historiographical terms however, the effect of Child's work was once more to endorse the Webbs' interpretation of the LSC. Circumscribed by a need for brevity, Child followed the Webb tendency to generalise the character and outlook of all members of the LSC from attitudes pre-eminent at the centre of the union during the period in which the London Society of Compositors became recognised as a craft union.


union which was extending trade union principles throughout the printing houses of the metropolis.

Collectively then, the studies of Ellic Howe, I.C. Cannon and John Child, along with the general trade union studies of the 1960s have reinforced rather than reformed the Webbian view. Further, in more recent years the debate surrounding the labour aristocracy has confirmed this interpretation. As the focus of debate has shifted from labour aristocrats per se, to differences between labour aristocrats and others, the position of the LSC within this elite stratum has been reaffirmed and the place of the LSC in trade union historiography corroborated. 27

By contrast, Dr. Jonathon Zeitlin's study which establishes the importance of sectional diversity in the formation of trade unions of skilled men, is the first to posit an approach in direct opposition to the interpretation of the elite stratum of craft unions. "Craft Regulation and the Division of Labour: Engineers and Compositors in Britain, 1890-1914", 28 questions the acceptance of a teleological model of the division of labour by historians of a widely differing methodology and ideology. 29 In so doing, it addresses itself to a construct of trade union historiography and simultaneously, it broaches those forces which collectively form the LSC's particular nature. Whilst Dr. Zeitlin's research and thesis draw invaluable methodological and histo-

27. See below, pp. 5-32.
29. Ibid., Introduction, p. xi, pp. 69-72.
riographical conclusions,\textsuperscript{30} his work is not concerned with the context of the composing craft as a whole during the second half of the 19th century, but rather with the composing trade in comparison with the engineering trade in the specific context of mechanisation vis-a-vis the dictates of a theoretical model of an elite stratum of craft unions.

In view of the above then, there is need for a study which attempts to explain the continuation and consolidation of historical institutions, ideological forces, and levels of control among compositors in the context of the printing trade itself.

Here, the sociological study of the compositors' chapel by A.J.M. Sykes, together with Dr. Cannon's work on the compositors' occupational community are both interesting and instructive.\textsuperscript{31} The framework of analysis of these studies is the current composing trade and historical continuity is discussed by way of explanation for the fixity of prevailing institutions in both an abstract and a concrete sense. These studies conclude that compositors' extraordinary ideological cohesion is generated and maintained by the compositors' chapel - that institution at the centre of a craft whose level of craft control has not diminished over almost five centuries. This singular ideological cohesion generates among compositors a cogent collective identity which is unique among skilled men. Further, as the chapel is the workshop nexus of

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., pp. 491-514

the trade union, it is this institution which makes the trade union of compositors anomalous to the wider trade union movement.\(^{32}\) It is in awareness of these studies that the continuity of both institutions and of ideology are examined below.

A further consequence of the established interpretation of the London Society of Compositors has been the tendency to treat its members in isolation from the milieu of the press itself. The LSC is not seen to fit within the purview of press history. However, recent study has suggested that some London Compositors do have a place in the history of the radical press. It is clear from the work of Dr. Pat Hollis on the unstamped press of the 1830s, that there were connections between production of these unstamped newspapers and the London composing trade.\(^{33}\) Did members of the London Society of Compositors contribute to the radical press in the later nineteenth century? Dr. Deian Hopkin's work on the newspapers of the Independent Labour Party illustrates the link between certain compositors, printers and publishers, and socialist newspapers journals and pamphlets, and prompts the question of connection between the socialist press and metropolitan compositors.\(^{34}\) The research and findings of this study of the London Society of Compositors corroborate these inferences,

\(^{32}\) Sykes, *op.cit.*; Cannon, *op.cit.*


suggesting that union compositors do have a place in the history of the radical press, for they indicate that union compositors were active in the production of minority political papers and journals in the second half of the nineteenth century. The specific nature of these publications was diverse, but they shared a common political stance of a radical and/or socialist nature. The evidence indicates that no break occurred between adherence to old style radicalism and then to socialism in the LSC, but rather that the radical tradition lent itself to the assimilation of socialist ideology.  

Here then, it is the wider context of the composing trade which proves fruitful and it is within the context of the craft in all its dimensions that the continuity of ideas, values and customs, and the origin and perpetuation of craft controls can be examined and explained. It is then to that...

35. The meaning of radical in the Victorian context remains controversial. In this thesis, it is used in the sense derived from popular democratic radicalism, which originated in the English revolution, was maintained in the ideology of the Commonwealthman, and then fused with Painite egalitarianism: see J. Walvin, "English Democratic Societies and Popular Radicalism, 1791-1800", unpublished D.Phil thesis, University of York, 1970; Edward Royle, Radical Politics, 1790-1960, 1977; E.P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class, 1963. This usage is consonant with the OED definition: "an advocate of radical reform or reform of any thorough political or social change" (Supplement to OED, Vol. 3, 1982), and with the definition given by J.O. Baylen and N.J. Gossman on p. 1 of Vol. II of the Biographical Dictionary of Modern British Radicals, Hassocks, 1984. Where the meaning "radical liberal" is intended, i.e. "one who holds the most advanced views on democratic lines and thus belongs to the extreme section of the Liberal Party", as defined by the OED, 1910, "Radical" is used.
context, to the milieu of the trade and the culture of the metropolitan compositor that we now turn.
In the middle of the nineteenth century, the institutions of the press in London were eighteenth century in appearance and character. The composing trade centred upon St. Paul's numbered perhaps 3,000 to 4,000 men, and its new union catered for roughly a third of those members. In the metropolitan printing trade, division of labour into compositors and press-men had occurred sometime during the 17th century, facilitated by the restriction of printing to the capital city (with the exception of one printer at Oxford and one at Cambridge) from 1566 until the end of the 17th century. Division of labour was not apparent in the sixteenth century trade, but when Joseph Moxon wrote *Mechanick Exercises* in 1683, he discussed the art of the compositor as distinct from the art of the pressman. Such a tendency was confirmed during the 18th century, when early labour organizations of compositors separate from pressmen were formed. During the later years of that century, the demands of a burgeoning newspaper press in

the capital finally institutionalised the division of labour.  

The composing trade's literary connections were well-famed and much prized: from the time of Gutenberg onward, the printing of books was renowned for having encouraged the progress of every branch of art and science. In the middle of the 19th century, a contemporary hailed printing as simply, "the most important invention that was ever introduced into the world". At this time, the composing trade still relied on book production, but it was coming to depend more heavily upon newspapers and government printing and to a lesser extent on periodical and jobbing printing.

Newspaper printing was expanding. In 1836, reduction of the newspaper stamp from 4d to 1d had given a tremendous boost which brought Reynolds's News, Lloyd's Weekly News, the People's Police Gazette, and the Chartist Northern Star to prominence. Now, at mid-century, the initial boom had passed and the remaining 1d stamp together with the Advertisement Tax and the Paper Duty were proving onerous and slowed further growth.

During the middle decades of the 19th century, government printing accounted for the greater portion of the metropolitan trade's business. The importance of government and parliamen-

39. See M. Harris, "The Structure, Ownership and Control of the Press, 1620-1780", pp. 82-97, in Newspaper History.


tary printing was such that it was in response to the parliamentary year that the composing trade traditionally organized its annual cycle. Unemployment and casualty of labour were therefore highest during the summer months and lowest in the late autumn, through Christmas and early spring. There were four kinds of government printing: contracts under the Queen's Patent covering the Authorised edition of the Bible, the Common Prayer Book, and the Statutes and Acts of the Realm; the proceedings of both Houses of Parliament; Parliamentary Debates sub-contracted by T.C. Hansard who held the contract for publishing them; and the remainder of parliamentary printing, undoubtedly amounting to the largest portion incorporating the proceedings and reports of Royal Commissions, miscellaneous papers, etc., whose distribution was controlled by the Stationery Office under the authority of the Treasury.

It was here then, within this milieu, that the compositor of the LSC lived and worked. Much of the context of his life still remains elusive. Living conditions, marital patterns, family life, leisure - in short all those aspect of life not determined by work are not really accessible. The world of work itself appears in union Reports which present but a

42. The Debates in their printed form were commonly known as Hansard.


44. See a "Note on Surviving Documents", below pp. 347-8.
Furthermore, official reports give no information as to union membership and until 1882, only cursory references to the most prominent Committee men are given. A livelier picture of all aspects of the trade at large emerges from the trade journals of the mid and late 19th century. Though unofficial, these circulars performed the function of an accepted journal of the trade. They carried detailed reports of General and Special Union Meetings, parliamentary news, reports of relevant legal cases, articles on economic theory, and current trends in philosophy, and they supplied both the gossip of the trade and a platform for the expression of opinion and the airing of grievances. During the period 1848-1906, the Typographical Protection Circular, the Typographical Circular, the London Press Journal, the Printers' Journal, the Fleet Street Gazette, the Printer, the

45. Records of the LSC are held at the Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick, (MSS.28), and at the St. Bride Printing Library. Documents in MSS. 28 used as a source for this thesis are as follows: LSC, "Minutes", 1861-2: MSS. 28/CO/1/1/11; LSC, Annual Reports, 1848-55, 1857-62: MSS. 28/CO/1/9/1/1; LSC, Annual Reports, 1864-69: MSS. 28/CO/1/9/2/1; LSC, Annual Reports, 1870-76: MSS. 28/CO/1/3/1; LSC, Quarterly Delegate Reports, 1848-62: MSS. 28/CO/4/2/1; LSC, Quarterly Delegate Reports, 1863-67: MSS. 28/CO/4/2/2; LSC, Quarterly Delegate Reports, 1868-72: MSS. 28/CO/4/2/3; LSC, Quarterly Delegate Reports, 1873-78: MSS. 28/CO/4/2/4; LSC, Quarterly Delegate Reports, 1879-83: MSS. 28/CO/4/2/5; LSC, Special Reports, (occasional): MSS. 28/CO/1/10/3; -/5; -/6. Documents from this collection are hereafter cited as Warwick MSS. 28/CO/-.

LSC Reports from the St. Bride Printing Library used as a source for this thesis are as follows: LSC, Annual Reports, 1877-1906; LSC, Quarterly Delegate Reports, Special Reports, and some copies of Annual Reports are bound in vols. entitled Trade Reports, 1877-1906.

46. After 1882 officers of the Society are printed in Annual Reports: see eg. LSC Annual Report, 1883, p. 7.
Printing Review, the Vigilance Gazette, the London Printers' Circular, the Printing News, and Fleet Street served the trade. These journals give a textural dimension to the composing trade in the second half of the nineteenth century, and together with official union reports they give a more comprehensive view of trends and developments within the Society during the nineteenth century.

It is appropriate here, in touching on the context of compositors' culture, to explain briefly the absence from this study of a salient feature of Victorian life, that of Religion. Compositors in the workplace were not so much irreligious as a-religious. It is not clear whether this disinterest toward spiritual matters was agnosticism or atheism, nor whether it sprang from republicanism, secularism, freethought or socialism. It is possible to speculate upon a compositor's religious affiliations outside the workplace; on social, economic and political grounds it is more likely that he was a member of a dissenting congregation than that he was a worshipper in the established Church, but as to what sect, it is impossible even to hazard a guess. In the workplace on the other hand, it is abundantly clear that religious convictions had no place and were of no consequence. Indeed, the culture in which compositors lived and worked in Victorian

London was one whose norms values and behaviour were deter-
mined rather more by chapel and craft, than by Church or by
Chapel.
The following thesis is divided into two parts: the first is concerned with the place of the London Society of Compositors in the historiography of Victorian society and with the origin, development and continuity of attitudes, values, powers, and controls within the LSC; the second discusses and explains developments within the London Society of Compositors during the second half of the nineteenth century. Part 1, Chapter 1 examines the relationship of metropolitan compositors to current explanations of the nature and development of British society in the second half of the nineteenth century. Chapter 2 in Part 1 explains the occupational techniques of the craft and discusses compositors' culture and ideology. Part 2, Chapter 3 is concerned with the development of trade unionism among compositors in two senses: firstly, in its structural form; secondly, in the sense of the meaning of trade unionism to compositors. The changing market situation of the second half of the nineteenth century and the impact of the Linotype composing machine upon the craft are dealt with in Part 2 Chapter 4. Politics and political ideology among compositors are examined in Chapter 5, and the relationship between these craftsmen and the political press is discussed. The final chapter is concerned with developments in the closing years of the nineteenth and in the early years of the twentieth century. This was a period of both genesis and fruition for the London Society of Compositors.
Part I
Chapter 1
The London Society of Compositors
and the
Historiography of Victorian Society
The decades 1848-1906, the period in which developments in the composing trade are to be analysed, are those which in the wider context of Victorian society were characterised by social peace, in contrast to the turbulence of the 1830s and the Chartist agitation. Prior to an examination and analysis of developments in the composing trade, it is necessary to discuss current explanations of this quiescence, and to consider their relationships to and implications for the composing craft during this period.

Explanations of the social peace and the containment of working class unrest in Britain in the second half of the nineteenth century, are many and various and they fall roughly into three groups. First, are the theorists who treat - positively or negatively - the interpretation of events which
focuses upon theories of citizenship developed by T.H. Marshall and R. Bendix in sociology and endorsed in social history by Harold Perkin in The Origins of Modern English Society. This view sees extension of the franchise as crucial, for it gives socially and economically unequal members of a society an equal participation in that society. It engenders a value consensus through which the working class subscribe to the prevailing political system and it encourages deference and adherence to bourgeois values and institutions. The possibility of conflict arising from these economic inequalities in Britain in the second half of the nineteenth century was therefore reduced by the Reform Act of 1867 and finally removed by the Parliamentary Reform and Redistribution Acts of 1884 and 1885. Alternative analyses bearing upon this interpretation have come first from those like A.P. Donajgrodski, Hugh Cunningham, and Richard Johnson, who see the consensus to be really social control through education, policing, religion, and leisure, and secondly, from adherents


2. 30 and 31 Victoria, c. 102; 48 and 49 Victoria, c. 3; 48 and 49 Victoria, c. 9, c. 10, c. 17

of H.F. Moorhouse's diametrically opposed political and economic interpretation which is based upon a critique of those historians and sociologists who have erroneously subscribed to the "consensus" view of extension of the franchise. Far from giving the vote to the majority of working class men, Moorhouse points out that the Reform Acts of 1867 and 1884 left over 50% of urban working males unenfranchised. Therefore, political and economic tensions within the prevailing political system were not defused by working class consensus to the system, for the working class remained severely limited in its electoral power till 1918. The underlying error of the consensus approach lies in its assertion without illustration of normative, internal constraints within the working class. Conversely, Moorhouse has looked at the structural, external, objective constraints which existed as barriers to working class enfranchisement. Instead of a moral consensus producing the stability of late 19th century Britain, Moorhouse posits rather a pragmatic acceptance which generated the apparent stability of Victorian society and he concludes that this well explains the "unnatural" moderation of the Labour Party before 1918.

With reference to the London Society of Compositors there are two main objections to the application of the theory of social consensus as an explanatory device for the stability of


the second half of the nineteenth century. Firstly, and most obviously, is the objection brought to light by Moorhouse that the theory is founded on an empirical error. Secondly, in applying this theory to 19th century society, Harold Perkin is seeking to render intelligible the first industrialised society: he seeks to explain the acquiescence of the working class in the governing system and the adherence of workers in industrialised trades to bourgeois ideals and values. The composing trade in London in the mid-19th century was, however, not an industrialised trade. From the craft's inception, compositors had experienced no industrial revolution in the composition of type. Until the introduction of the Linotype composing machines to printing offices in the capital in the early 1890s, the techniques of compositors remained substantially those of Caxton's day. An interpretation of English society in the 19th century which strives to explain the nature and development of an enfranchised working class in the period following the first major surge of industrialisation, cannot then be expected to explain developments in the composing trade. Finally, it must be said that Moorhouse's conclusions inform this study of London compositors.

Second in explaining the social peace of the second half of the nineteenth century, is the large group of historians and sociologists who endorse an explanation of British political, economic, and social events during this period by adoption of the concept of the labour aristocracy. The concept is used here as an explanatory device having ideological implica-
tions and this meaning of the labour aristocracy is derived from Marxist-Leninist social analysis. After 1850, the British working class seems to have come to terms with capitalist society. What accounted for this? Economic prosperity alone is insufficient to explain quiescence, for it presupposes a lack of motivating ideology and as the Chartist movement had shown, there remained some ideological potency within working class agitation. In this context, the upper stratum or 'labour aristocracy' of the working class was realised to have had a stabilising ideological function and it was this ideological function which was recognised to be the key to the social peace of later Victorian society. The concept derives from Lenin's writing in "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism" where he discusses the effects of export capitalism on the working class, i.e. the split in the working class between the "upper stratum of the labour aristocracy" and the lower stratum of the proletariat proper. In England, whose Imperialism was the most highly developed, this split had occurred earlier than elsewhere and its effects were singular. Lenin saw this upper stratum of "workers-turned-bourgeois, or the labour aristocracy" (which Engels had identified in 1881 as composed of "the worst of English trade

7. Ibid., p. 194.
8. Ibid., p. 283.
9. Ibid., p. 194.
unions"),¹⁰ as separated from the rest of the working class, as bourgeois in ideology and whose members were "the real agents of the bourgeoisie in the working class movement".¹¹ Lenin's corrupt stratum performed a moderating influence on the semi-skilled and unskilled working class, inhibiting the development of working class political agitation of a radical, revolutionary, or socialist nature. In Engels' view, British imperialism eased pressure on employers, created room for wage bargaining and allowed the continuation of old methods of control in industry:

The largest manufacturers, formerly the leaders of the war against the working class, were now the foremost to preach peace and harmony. And for a very good reason. The fact is that all these concessions to justice and philanthropy were nothing else but means to accelerate the concentration of capital in the hands of the few...¹²

Export capitalism thus gave stability, fixity and apparent permanence to the labour aristocracy. The legacy of the elite stratum's moderating influence was recognised as instrumental in shaping the gradualism of the twentieth century Labour Party.

Obviously problems do arise in attempting to explain developments among London compositors in the light of this initial concept. Essentially, these are concerned with definition, ideology, influence, and imperialism. Firstly,

¹⁰. Ibid., p. 284.
¹¹. Ibid., p. 194.
definition: in discussing the labour aristocracy, it is not stated, though it is inferred, that skilled men of the industrialised trades formed that elite stratum. As was stated above, the mid-19th century composing trade had not experienced an industrial revolution and consequently, compositors are anomalous to any definition which takes industrialisation as axiomatic.

Secondly, concerning ideology: it is erroneous to assert that compositors adopted the ideology of their employers. Certainly, many compositors did accept the inevitability of capitalism in so far as they stressed the common interest of employer and employee in printing, but also and at the same time, there existed among members of the craft a political radicalism of a democratic nature which expressed a debt to Paineite radicalism, and this was antagonistic to, and not concurrent with the ideology of employers. In the 1830s, anti-government protagonists in the war of the unstamped press attacked not merely all manifestations of Old Corruption, but also, as Dr. Pat Hollis and Professor Joel Wiener have demonstrated in their studies of the unstamped newspapers, the evils and exploitation of the capitalist economic system.

In the London composing craft itself, though information remains scanty, there is evidence of adherence to this

13. See for example, subtitle of Typographical Protection Circular, Jan. 1849-Nov. 1853; "LSC, 25th Quarterly Delegate Report" in Typographical Circular, 1 May 1854, pp. 9-12; cf. 1 Feb. 1855, pp. 82-3 and 1 June 1855, pp. 113, 115; Printers' Journal, 4 Jan. 1868, p. 5-6; 9 June 1868, p. 293.

onslaught on the Government. Similarly, in the 1840s, there is evidence of involvement in Chartist publication. Visible adherents of political radicalism who expressed their political alignment through publication of unstamped newspapers and/or later Chartist papers and journals were Henry Hetherington, Robert Hartwell, John Catchpool, J.B. Leno, and G. Cowie.  

The third point concerns both definition and ideology. Compositors' own use of the phrase "Aristocrats of Labour" in reference to themselves, as for example in 1846 concerning the demise of the current trade newspaper:

> It would be a disgrace to a profession which has proved itself worthy of being ranked as the aristocracy of the working class to let it go down for want of support...  

is not evidence of the acceptance of employers' ideology, nor is it affirmation of the Marxist interpretation of the labour aristocracy. Rather, it has meaning within the compositors' own value system and within the value systems of other skilled trades. It refers, for example, to compositors' literary status and educational prestige, and it is within this context

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16. Typographical Gazette, June 1846, p. 37.
and not that of an imposed value system that it should be inter-
preted. 17

Fourthly, concerning the concept's stress upon the labour aristocracy's influence on the rest of the working class; it is extremely difficult to identify such influence emanating from compositors either in their own workplace, in the trade union movement or in the wider society. Firstly, in their own workplace; throughout this period there were few unskilled men to speak of in the composing room. There were labourers and warehousemen in the trade, but these were concerned with printing rather than composing. Apprentices there were, of course, except in newspaper offices which excluded apprentices throughout the 19th century, 18 but these are clearly not the "unskilled" under discussion. In newspaper offices there were two other types of labour apart from full time hands i.e., Supernumeraries and Assistants, but neither of these groups were semi-skilled or unskilled, both being journeymen compositors holding varying degrees of security of employment. 19 Secondly, it is difficult to identify compositors' influence on the rest of the working class through the trade union move­ment in the second half of the nineteenth century, as the compositors' Society was isolationist for the greater part of


the period and it did not establish permanent relations with other craft unions and organizations of lesser skilled men until the 1880s and 1890s. Influence may, of course, have operated in the wider society, in housing, marriage, social events, etc. but about this whole area of compositors' lives, we can only surmise. This leads us to question the position of compositors within the upper stratum of the working class. This anxiety is further endorsed by the composing trade's anomalous relationship to imperialism. Neither imperialism nor capital export and the development of new markets overseas were of any direct relevance to London compositors. The tremendous growth of the printing industry and of the press during the Victorian period was essentially a domestic phenomenon dependent upon an expanding home market. There may of course have been secondary effects of imperialism which affected the composing trade - a larger market for books and newspapers among the families of the British in India for example - but these were not of sufficient importance to prompt discussion either at Society meetings or within the trade's own journals. Certainly, the impact of imperialism and capital export on the printing industry cannot be likened

20. The census returns do not distinguish between compositors and printers, and as no membership list of the LSC in the 19th century survives, it has not been possible to examine demographic and social aspects of London compositors during this period. See "A Note on Surviving Documents", below pp. 34-8.

to the situation in engineering. Consequently, during the period of structural change in the composing industry, overseas competition could not be used by employers as a threat against the workforce.

In the wider context, the Marxist interpretation of the concept of the labour aristocracy has been controversial from its inception and it has been subject to interpretation by Marxist scholars. For example, Lenin’s analysis of imperialism in the context of the labour aristocracy differs in emphasis from that of Engels. Lenin was concerned with the years around the turn of the century and with the failure of socialism to prevent imperialist conflicts like the Boer War, because the favoured stratum in society i.e., the labour aristocracy, were chauvinistic and opportunistic. However, as R.Q. Gray points out in his study of the concept of the labour aristocracy, it is a problem for both interpretations that there was no direct correlation between imperialism and overseas investment.

In British historiography, the initial exponent of the concept of the labour aristocracy as an explanatory device was Professor Eric Hobsbawm in his essay, "The Labour Aristocracy


Professor Hobsbawm laid down six criteria for membership of the labour aristocracy. These were

i. the level and regularity of a worker's earnings;

ii. prospects of social security;

iii. conditions of work, including the way he was treated by masters and foremen;

iv. relations with the social strata above and below him;

v. general conditions of living;

vi. prospects of future advancement and those of his children.²⁷

To the labour aristocrat, these criteria would all be positive, though as Hobsbawm points out, they were in fact dominated by (i) on the grounds that, "the first is incomparably the most important and also the only one about which we have anything like comprehensive information".²⁸ Hobsbawm like Engels, identified the labour aristocracy in England before 1889 with the unionised trades, the circumstances of both reflecting strength preservation and identity.²⁹ Applying Hobsbawm's criteria to London compositors, it can be stated concerning (i) and (v) which refer to income, that the establishment flat rate of pay for a full time book compositor at mid-century was 33/- for 64 hours, and for news compositors,


²⁷ Ibid., p. 273.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 275.
who were paid on the piece, estimates are difficult, but 36/-
for the same hours seems reasonable though craftsmen on night
shifts for daily papers did earn considerably more than
this, and these high wage rates gained compositors a place
on Hobsbawm's table of aristocrats of 1865. However, as
frequent Royal Commissions suggest, and as trade journal arti-
cles indicate only too clearly, the trade was cyclical, depen-
dent until the later decades of the 19th century upon parlia-
mentary printing. Composing at mid-century was then rela-
tively insecure, payment could be irregular and the trade had
a degree of casuality in both book and news departments. It
is concerning precisely this aspect of employment that Dr.
Gray and Dr. Stedman Jones in their studies of Edinburgh and
London respectively, conclude that casual labour was the "key
factor distinguishing prosperous from poverty-stricken
trades". As Professor Alford has shown however, two devel-
opments affected compositors' income and purchasing power in
the later 19th century: (i) the number of compositors earning

30. LSC in conjunction with NTA, "Minutes", 16 Sept. 1845:
Warwick MSS. 28/CO/1/1/9.


32. Typographical Circular, April 1854-Sept. 1858, passim;
Printers' Journal, 2 Sept. 1867, p. 397; Fleet Street
Gazette, 14 March 1879, p. 9; The Printer, February,
1886, p. 74; Print, May 1896, p. 2, July 1896, p. 14;
B.W.E. Alford, "The London Letterpress Industry, 1850-
1914", unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of London,
1962, pp. 120-80.

33. Howe, London Compositor, pp. 227-32; see below, pp.117-
3.

34. R.Q. Gray, The Labour Aristocracy in Victorian Edinburgh,
Oxford, 1976, p. 88; G. Stedman Jones, Outcast London,
fulltime wages was increasing as the level of irregularity of employment and casualty of labour in the trade gradually declined; (ii) overall, the income of compositors declined in relation to other metropolitan trades. The latter was indicated clearly in compositors' proposals for a wage advance in 1890. Compositors claimed that their rate of 8d per hour put them below painters, decorators and establishment engineers who earned 8 1/2d an hour, barge-builders, cabinet-makers and lithographic artists who earned 9d, boilermakers and lithographic printers on 10d, shipwrights on 11d, stone-cutters, glass-makers and piece rate engineers on 1/-. Until the 1890s then, the level of earnings of a compositor on 'stab was declining vis-a-vis other trades, but within the composing trade itself, his earnings' potential was improving. Where news compositors actual earnings are concerned however, the situation is quite unclear. It seems likely that their earnings were rising in the later decades of the second half of the 19th century, but there is little concrete evidence for this. The Board of Trade's first report concerning wages and earnings, the General Report of the Manual Labour Class in the U.K., which was based on the wage censuses of 1886 and 1891, contained no information concerning metropolitan news

compositors as the survey received no returns from London
newspaper offices. Tables based on news compositors' earn-
ings elsewhere (provincial rates were lower than metropoli-
tan) show them to have been in receipt of the highest weekly
wages of all trades. These figures of course give no indi-
cation of the level of casualty and unemployment affecting
the London news trade. Overall then, considering both book
and news compositors, it must be said that their earnings are
somewhat problematical to Hobsbawm's criteria.

Concerning the remaining criteria of Hobsbawm's defini-
tion; though information remains scanty, it can be said with
reference to social security, that the composing craft's
provisions were considerable. From 1348 the Society's own
Provident Fund provided benefit for unemployment and
alongside this fund there were a number of Friendly Societies
available to compositors which strove to offset the impact of
economic hardship in time of need. Examples of these were the
Printer's Pension Fund, the Typographical Widow and Orphans'
Nominee Fund and the Sick Fund Union. Concerning Hobsbawm's
third criterion, conditions of work including the way the

38. Ibid., p. 120.
39. J. Child, Industrial Relations in the British Printing
41. Warwick MSS. 28/CO/1/1/10/1-2, p. 249.
42. Typographical Circular, 1 Jan. 1856, pp. 169-71; Print-
ers' Register, 1 March 1865, p. 9; Webb Collection of
Trade Union Documents, Printing and Paper Trades, Collec-
tion E Section A, Vol. XXXI, f. 102. Documents in this
Collection are hereafter referred to as Webb EA.
compositor was treated by master and foremen: for book compositors, these were deteriorating during the 1860s, 1870s, and 1880s, in response to increasing provincial competition and rising metropolitan costs, though conditions were to improve in the 1890s; for news compositors on the other hand, working conditions as far as can be gathered, were beneficial throughout the period.  

Finally, with reference to relations with the social strata above and below compositors, and the prospects of future advancement and those of their children; these criteria are concerned with social mobility in the composing trades and information concerning social mobility is limited to apprentices of the Stationers' Company and to the occasional reference in related documents to a journeyman who became a master printer. Apprentice Registers themselves do have limitations: members of the Stationers' Company in the second half of the 19th century were the most prosperous and prominent master printers and stationers of the trade, amounting to roughly between one third and one half of the City's master printers.  

Though the payment of premiums had fallen into desuetude by the mid-19th century, it is likely that apprentices of members of the Stationers' Company in the later nineteenth century were from families more affluent or more status conscious than the norm. Consequently, information concerning the social background of

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43. See below, pp. 163-210.

these apprentices cannot be regarded as representative of the trade as a whole. Moreover, the viability of information from these sources is prejudiced by the craft custom which allowed compositors who apprenticed their sons to members of the Stationers' Company to apprentice their eldest son without registration. The Registers may then give a severely distorted picture of apprenticeship at this time. However, despite the disadvantages of Apprentice Registers, it is evident that the road to mastership was still possible though narrow and difficult, and that the regard in which the trade was held by members of the social strata above and below it fluctuated throughout the period, the overall trend being downward till the 1890s. Specific fluctuations during the last twenty years of the period under discussion seem to have been responses to the innovation before Scale agreements of the Linotype and Monotype machines. There is evidence of two printers (we do not know whether they were masters, journeymen compositors or pressmen) apprenticing their sons to the Bar in the Victorian period. However, examples of such ardent social climbing were the exception rather than the rule during the second half of the 19th century. From Apprentice Registers it can be concluded that prospects of future advancement and those of compositors' children deteriorated

45. Mackenzie, ibid.
47. See below, Tables 1 and 2, pp. 337-8.
48. I am grateful to the late Dr. Dan Duman for this information.
during the middle decades of the 19th century, though they were to improve in its final years.

Evidently, there are a number of problems to applying Hobsbawm's criteria of the labour aristocracy to London compositors. More significantly however, it is the assumptions and inference of Hobsbawm's definition which cause fundamental difficulties to this study of the London Society of Compositors. Firstly, Hobsbawm's labour aristocracy were a mid-19th century creation, but Hobsbawm is ambiguous in stating exactly who the labour aristocracy were: were they the pace-makers of John Foster's analysis;\textsuperscript{49} or were they Goodrich's "old craft elite"\textsuperscript{50} or, were they more like E.P. Thompson's comprehensive stratum comprising craftsmen in both old and new trades?\textsuperscript{51} Definitely they were a product of the industrial revolution in England, for Hobsbawm says they were the labour aristocracy of the "modern working class".\textsuperscript{52} As is known, compositors experienced no industrial revolution with its concomitant restructuring of the relations of production in their trade. It is hard therefore, to recognise London compositors as part of the modern working class. Compositors are anomalous to any interpretation of the concept of the labour aristocracy which takes skilled men in industrialised trades as its starting point.

\textsuperscript{49} Foster, John, \textit{Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution, Early Industrial Capitalism in Three English Towns}, 1974, pp. 231-50.

\textsuperscript{50} C.L. Goodrich, \textit{The Frontier of Control}, 1920, pp. 40-1, 260-1.


\textsuperscript{52} Hobsbawm, "Labour Aristocracy", p. 272.
Secondly, and more importantly, Hobsbawm's view is crudely mechanistic. It suggests that high wages and improved economic conditions determined social, cultural, and political values of the elite stratum and following Lenin's analysis, Hobsbawm avers that this position determined ideology. In "Trends in the British Labour Movement since 1850", Hobsbawm states that the labour aristocracy enjoyed "special privileges" and were therefore "inclined to accept the views of its employers". Problems with this aspect of the theory of the labour aristocracy have been pointed out above. Further, they are highlighted in consideration of John Foster's study of workers in Oldham, Northampton and South Shields which develops and elaborates the ideological nature of the elite stratum and its stabilizing function. For Foster, the tendency of the labour aristocracy to accept and reflect the ideology of employers takes a definite form and is manifest among a specific stratum of workers, a labour aristocracy whose authority vis-a-vis the rest of the workforce is designated by their position in relation to new machinery in the workplace. Foster's labour aristocracy were the employers' pacemakers, deriving authority over the rest of the workforce from their ability to demystify and implement technically phrased instructions from above. With this authority went a conspiratorial collaboration with employers and an adherence to the

54. Ibid., p. 316.
employers' ideology. These labour aristocrats were rewarded in status and economic terms for an ambiguous work situation and a social isolation from the rest of the working class.  

Foster's new labour aristocracy were therefore quite distinct from the old craft elite. It is Foster's insistence that the key to the labour aristocracy lies in the innovation of new machinery in industry which makes untenable any consideration of London compositors in the light of his conclusions.  

Furthermore, this study's final departure from the Hobsbawm-Foster interpretation of the labour aristocracy derives from the assertion that employers engineered the system maintaining the labour aristocracy because it was to their advantage. The labour aristocrats were therefore, maintained as a highly paid elite stratum to control that much larger and potentially unruly semi-skilled and unskilled working class. In the composing craft, employers did not strive to perpetuate the authority of skilled craftsmen in opposition to inroads by the unskilled masses. On the contrary, as the Linotype's innovation shows quite clearly, compositors' employers wanted to break craft control and to employ unskilled men.

57. Ibid., p. 228.
60. Daily Telegraph, 17 Sept. 1894; Printing News, Oct. 1894, pp. 5-7, and sequential editions. For further discussion of this point, see below, pp. 200-3.
Foster's contentious conclusions were enhanced by his controversial claims concerning language; controversial, not least because of a general consensus of opinion that the whole area of language and class was far more complicated than Foster's analysis would allow.

Concerning the London Society of Compositors, three kinds of language can be identified as being used at varying times to promote differing ends. First, a heavy, pedantic language characterises the union's Annual and Committee Reports. Secondly, a rhetorical style, displaying solidarity and class consciousness is adopted to express concern at developments in other trades, or, to give force to compositors' wage demands. Thirdly, a militant tone, expressing defiance suggesting social revolution and most commonly identified with the war of the unstamped appears again in the 1890s in a restrained form in the pamphlets of those socialist compositors who saw "class war [as] inevitable under the present system of exploitation".

Foster's conclusions remain most valuable in the research they have generated, particularly the lines of inquiry pursued by Dr. Stedman Jones in his *Languages of Class* which

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61. See eg. Typographical Protection Circular, 1 May 1852, pp. 182-3, concerning a strike of Master Engineers.


approach the sophisticated relationship between language and class with a depth and caution which the subject deserves.

The "economism" of the Hobsbawn-Foster interpretation of the concept of the labour aristocracy has been much criticized by recent Marxist scholars, particularly the followers of Antonio Gramsci, who have sought to reduce mechanistic elements inherent in Marx's social theory and who, within the context of a labour aristocracy ideologically free from bourgeois attitudes and values, have given us some insight into the nature and operation of organic ideology within the working class and some understanding of the richness and vitality of working class culture.64

The most influential single development in Gramsci's thought has been the notion of hegemony which in seeking to resolve the reductionism inherent in the Marxist concept of ideology also explains how apparently antagonistic ideologies, eg. those of the ruling class, the working class, and the labour aristocracy, can co-exist. Hegemony functions through the civil society, i.e. through those organisms called private (voluntary organizations, thrift clubs, educational associations, etc.) and through political society, or the state. Ideologically, hegemony functions through a diffuse socio-

64. See for example, J. Clarke, et.al., eds., Working Class Culture: Studies in History and Theory, Birmingham, 1979.
cultural mediation. Gramsci's notion presents a more flexible and dynamic conception of the way in which relationships between the dominant and subordinate class are ordered, substituting consensus of all classes to the leadership of one class or group in place of absolute rule by a governing class. Gramsci's conception of the dynamic and shifting ordering of relationships between leading and other classes in society determined that the position of subordinate strata could rapidly change. The position of the labour aristocracy in England for example, could either be assimilated into the petty bourgeoisie or be eroded by inroads from the semi-skilled and unskilled working class. Its position therefore needed to be constantly fought for and maintained: hence defensive trade societies with vigorously protected policies of apprenticeship. Political liberalization was the means by which the ruling group integrated the potentially revolutionary working class into the capitalist economic political and social system and it was to this liberalization that the labour aristocracy actively subscribed. Through this process, the values and objectives of the leading class were not imposed upon the working class, rather they were adhered to by

a consensus. In Victorian Britain, this consensus maintained the hegemony of liberal ideas and values.\(^{66}\)

There are immediate problems both specific and general to acceptance of the notion of hegemony in view of the findings of this study of London compositors. In the general context, the application of this concept to Victorian Britain does place a crucial emphasis on political liberalization. Extension of the franchise in 1867 and 1884, together with the Trade Union Acts of 1871-75 which brought working men's organizations within the political pale, embodied the development of political liberalization by Victorian Britain's governing elite, but as was seen above concerning Moorhouse's criticism of the theory of social consensus advanced by Bendix, Marshall, and Perkin,\(^{67}\) that liberalization did not extend to manhood suffrage. If political liberalization did not incorporate participation and therefore integration, how valid is the notion of a hegemony of liberal ideas and values? More specifically, it is difficult to envisage Gramsci's concept operating on any level but the theoretical. It makes sense of the disparate and conflicting forces in society, but what evidence exists to indicate that the theoretical was at work in reality? Is there any evidence to support Gramsci's sophisticated construct at work in society at large, within the labour aristocracy as a whole or, for that matter, within


the London Society of Compositors? Certainly in the composing trade there were a good number of independent benefit and improvement societies to which many members of the LSC subscribed, but these can be as easily explained by craft tradition as by instances of the functioning of hegemony.

The findings of Geoffrey Crossick in his study of the artisan elite in Kentish London and of Robert Gray in his work on Victorian Edinburgh are important in this context.68 Both adopt the concept of hegemony, but both have re-interpreted and re-developed the notion in the light of their own findings. The labour aristocracy which Crossick found in Kentish London was initially determined by high income and security. Specific attitudes toward occupation, labour restriction and the employment of women for example, were determined by the labour aristocrat's ideology, and this ideology was itself shaped by a wider artisan culture which was independent of bourgeois norms and values. This wider artisan culture provided the framework in which meaning was attached to and importance accorded to status, independence and respectability. The labour aristocrat's status for example, was high within the elite of skilled workers, within the working class as a whole and within the local community.69 Independence meant not simply a negative freedom from patronage, but also and more significantly, a positive freedom to make decisions

about life-styles. Respectability was an ambiguous quality, meaning at one and the same time self-respect and the respect of others. The operation of hegemony and the independent working class's consensus to the dominating ideology, is a problem with which Crossick deals through the notion of accommodation. Accommodation articulates the operation of hegemony: it explains the consensus of adherents of the artisan ideology to the dominating capitalist economic political and social system, by a process of ideological mediation which Crossick sees to be more complex than has been previously acknowledged. Crossick called that process "fragmentation of experience". The labour aristocrat ideology was then, much concerned with the accommodation of many features of bourgeois Victorian society. This accommodation was allowed by "fragmentation of experience" which generated a disparate view of the economic, political and social whole. Therefore, in Kentish London a strike, for example, had no wider economic political or social meaning. As Crossick states:

> Politics would be split from economic issues....as in politics, so in trade unionism the need to fight was in order to establish a method of rationally proceeding. The system into which that rationality fitted was rarely challenged.

70. Ibid., pp. 136-8, 194-6.


72. Crossick, ibid., p. 134. The notion of accommodation is defined in F. Parkin, Class, Inequality and Political Order, 1971, pp. 88-96.

73. Crossick, op.cit., p. 130.

74. Ibid., p. 131.
Crossick found the political ideology of the labour aristocracy in Kentish London to be unrevolutionary and solidly supportive of the status quo. It gave cohesiveness to the capitalist system and brought to the bourgeoisie's exploitation of the workforce the endorsement of the influential stratum of the working class. It was expressed by the labour aristocracy's adherence to Liberal politics, was articulated in its radical form in Advanced Liberalism and its legacy shaped the gradualism of the twentieth century Labour Party.

Concerning this study of London compositors, Crossick's emphasis on the political moderation of the labour aristocracy is problematical. Compositors' political ideology incorporated a radical ideology which expressed opposition to the current status quo. This therefore prevents compositors' political ideology being identified as thoroughly unrevolutionary and supportive of the prevailing economic and political system. It is the diversity of compositor's political ideology which separates London compositors from that stabilizing hegemonic labour aristocracy Crossick found in Kentish London.

More fundamental to the whole concept of the labour aristocracy, is Crossick's definition of high earnings as the initial determinant of the position of the elite stratum. In this, Crossick endorses the mechanistic interpretation of the

77. Ibid., pp. 60-1, 118.
theory of the labour aristocracy. Furthermore, Alistair Reid's strictures upon the "sociological determinism" inherent in Crossick's study and conclusions cannot be ignored. In his view, Crossick has produced a stable, homogeneous, privileged social stratum having a particular influence over the wider working class by a process of grouping together certain workers in various industries who share common characteristics of skill and high earnings, with little regard for economic diversity and/or historical contexts. Whatever cultural and political customs and habits are found among these groups are therefore determined by their position as members of the labour aristocracy.  

The underlying questions which these criticisms bring forth are more fundamental than any previous concern over London compositors' anomalous position vis-a-vis the labour aristocracy. These hit right at the root of the concept. They are: how viable is a non-mechanistic concept of the labour aristocracy, and was there an identifiable stratum definable on any grounds other than high income which acted as a stabilizing entity? If the concept of the labour aristocracy must have a mechanistic element how useful - if at all useful - can it be?

Robert Gray's work on the labour aristocracy in Victorian Edinburgh reaches ambivalent conclusions which endorse this

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concern.79 Whilst accepting the basic Marxian concept of the labour aristocracy and explaining in depth the operation of hegemony,80 Gray's conclusions move away from an understanding of the labour aristocracy as a complete stratum which performs a moderating influence over the rest of the working class,81 to a more complex and sophisticated appreciation of the diversity of the industrial structure. He concludes from both documentary and statistical information that economic differentiation within a particular industry was of more immediate relevance to working men in that industry than structural and economic similarities making for an elite stratum within the national economic and social context. Further, he avers that the situation was more complex than the simple division between skilled and unskilled will admit or the occupational classification will allow, and also that within the skilled working class economic differences along with new forms of division of labour, hierarchies of specialisation, the distribution of authority and responsibility etc. affected income, security, and status in an individual craft or section of industry. These then must be considered in the discussion of each industry and they must preface any discussion of an

80. "Hegemony is a practice in which diverse social practices and elements of consciousness are ordered in a fashion compatible with the perpetuation of the existing forces of production...It may well be appropriate to refer to a hegemonic structuring of ideological consciousness than to a single hegemonic ideology": ibid., p. 5.
81. Ibid., p. 144.
Understandably, it is on these grounds that R.J. Morris accuses Gray of stretching the concept of hegemony.\textsuperscript{83}

In final consideration of this notion of hegemony then, it must be said that the concept remains problematical to the interpretation of the theory of the labour aristocracy, but that it has generated a good deal of valuable research into and knowledge of aspects of working class culture.

Jonathon Zeitlin has taken Gray's stress on economic differences between individual industries and the division of labour within a particular industry a stage further. His comparative study of engineers and compositors during the years 1890-1914,\textsuperscript{84} concludes that:

\begin{quote}
in no sense ... can skilled engineers and compositors in 1890 be conceived of unproblematically as 'labour aristocrats' in the sense intended by many users of the term \textit{i.e.}, as enjoying high and regular earnings and retaining unchallenged control over the organisation of production.\textsuperscript{85}
\end{quote}

His research indicated that it is the division of labour within each section of industry together with skilled workers' level of control of craft regulation, \textit{vis-a-vis} both market forces and the broader economic trends conditioning.

\textsuperscript{82} Ibid., pp. 88-9.


\textsuperscript{85} Ibid., p. 167.
employers' ability to afford concessions, which collectively determine economic and ideological developments.\(^{86}\)

To conclude this consideration of the relevance of the Marxian concept of the labour aristocracy to London compositors then, it must be said that this move away from the concept of the labour aristocracy as a single stratum, together with the stress on sectional diversity as the key to understanding developments within each industry or industrial section during the second half of the 19th century are most welcome departures for there remain problems to the LSC's adherence to the initial Marxian concept of the labour aristocracy and these problems have not been removed or reduced by recent interpretations, elaborations or refinements of that original concept.\(^{87}\)

The third group of theorists who explain the social peace of late nineteenth century Britain are those who endorse the Anderson-Nairn critique of developments, that is, those whose interpretation of developments within the British working class does not consider the emergence of a labour aristocracy with a stabilizing ideology. Rather, it consists in a view of the working class for whom Chartism was the final expression of genuine old-style radical democratic energies and for whom its failure was a traumatic experience whose shock was permanent:

\(^{86}\) Ibid., pp. 335, 514.

\(^{87}\) It is to be noted that Professor Hobsbawm's latest article, "Artisan or Labour Aristocrat?", Economic History Review, 2nd Ser., Vol. XXXVII, no. 3, Aug. 1984, pp. 355-72, makes no further contribution to the debate.
"A profound caesura in English working class history super­vened".88 As a result of the prolonged withdrawal which followed, the working class emerged in the late 19th century having accepted the inevitability of capitalism and seeking only to defend and improve its position within that system. It therefore had an "immovable corporate class consciousness and almost no hegemonic ideology".89 A hegemonic class seeks to transform society in its own image and a corporate class to defend and improve its own position within a social order accepted as given, hence the working class's labourist ideology,90 its attachment to Liberal politics and the gradualism and moderation of the twentieth century Labour Party.91

Whilst Anderson's thesis is very attractive, freeing trade union and labour studies from the burgeoning mass of qualification and sophistication which characterises current interpretation of the Marxist concept of the labour aristoc­racy, there are significant problems preventing acceptance of this interpretation for London compositors. Firstly, concern­ing Anderson's crucial focus upon Chartism. The relationship of London compositors to Chartism appears to have been a nega-


89. Anderson, op.cit., p. 41.


tive one, yet a thorough consideration of developments underlying compositors' response to Chartism, shows that antipathy to Fergus O'Connor who paid below accepted rates to his compositors and pressmen on the Northern Star, coloured the LSC's official attitude to the whole movement. There were however, a number of individual compositors who were sympathetic to Chartism and who worked for the movement. Nevertheless, London compositors do remain anomalous to any interpretation of developments within British society during the second half of the nineteenth century which takes working class support for and agitation in the Chartist movement as axiomatic. More problematic however is the ideological assumption of the Anderson-Nairn critique. Because Victorian compositors' political ideology incorporated an ideology of political radicalism, the experience of metropolitan com­ positors in the second half of the 19th century cannot be totally and satisfactorily explained by a critique which is grounded upon the British working class's corporate class con­ sciousness.


94. See below, pp., 275-7.
A recent study which endorses Anderson's view is Alistair Reid's thesis on the shipbuilding industry.\textsuperscript{95} Notwithstanding the evident problems with the wider theoretical basis of the Anderson-Nairn thesis which Reid's study affirms, his conclusions concerning economic fragmentation and sectional diversity are of essential interest to this study of London compositors.

At the outset, Reid is concerned to test the conclusions of Gray and Foster regarding the division of labour and its concomitant distribution of authority in industry.\textsuperscript{96} He finds these conclusions wanting as this interpretation of the division of labour into skilled and unskilled on which authority is based, rests on the foundation of high earnings and security which are rarely found together in shipbuilding. When they are found together, the craftsmen concerned are not sufficiently influential to make any impression on their own industry, let alone on the working class as a whole.\textsuperscript{97} This finding leads Reid to question the notion of division between skilled and unskilled and to consider economic fragmentation and inter-trade competition as preliminaries to a more valid consideration of the experience of working people in the later 19th century.\textsuperscript{98} He concludes in favour of sectional diversity and in rejection of the theory of the labour aristocracy. Whilst of course not denying that the working class as a whole

\textsuperscript{95} Reid, \textit{op.cit.}

\textsuperscript{96} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. i-xxvi.

\textsuperscript{97} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 200.

\textsuperscript{98} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 202-19.
shared a common interest as the propertyless class, he con­
cludes that the experience of each industry, its own division
of labour, distribution of authority, relationship to market
forces etc., together determined what was relevant to crafts­
men in that industry, and that this relevance was not deter­
mined by the properties of a skilled elite across industry as
a whole, which functioned as a stabilising stratum over the
rest of the working class.\textsuperscript{99} Reid's conclusions here finally
dismiss the view of Henry Pelling, who in his criticism of the
Hobsbawm variant of the theory of the labour aristocracy,
asserted that as industry developed and as technology advanced
during the 19th century the working class became "more homoge­
neous".\textsuperscript{100}

For Reid, the placidity of the working class remained to be explained. In his interpretation placidity was not simply due to "prosperity" but also to the ideological developments of the later 19th century. Reid posited general economic improvement combined with the ideological paucity of Chartism after its failure in 1848 and the inability of late 19th century intellectuals to offer any sustained critique of capital­
ist society.\textsuperscript{101} Hence then, the acceptance of an apparently inevitable economic system characterised trade unions in the late 19th century. In shipbuilding itself Reid found not peaceful relations but rather continuous wage bargaining

\textsuperscript{99} Ibid., pp. 202-19, 431.

\textsuperscript{100} H. Pelling, \textit{Popular Politics and Society in Late Victo­
rian Britain}, 1968, p. 52.

\textsuperscript{101} Reid, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 231-2.
throughout the period, yet the framework within which that bargaining was carried out was one which accepted and did not oppose the capitalist system. Reid demonstrates the "labourist" nature of workers' wage bargaining through the language used in wage negotiation. Thus his study confirms the Anderson-Nairn thesis.

Further to Reid's conclusions here, he sees that all other explanations of the containment of working class agitation in the second half of the 19th century subscribe to a view of the working class which takes as axiomatic its revolutionary nature. Moreover, these explanations assume a direct relationship between economic/social circumstances and political agitation as this is the orthodox assumption of social history, and must therefore find barriers to the expression of economic or social grievances, eg. prosperity, or a controlling labour aristocracy, or social control through housing or policing etc., which prevent political agitation. This assertion obviously has profound historiographical implications. As Reid states:

A great deal of social history has been based on the premiss that looking at political events will pose the problems to be solved and that analysing the economic and social structure of the period will provide the solutions. As far as this historiographical procedure is concerned the conclusion of this thesis is largely negative.

102. Ibid., pp 232-3.
103. Ibid., pp. xx-xxii, 430-5.
104. Ibid., p. 434.
For politics, in the wide sense of popular movements this means that such movements should be examined as problematic instances of temporary and fragile alliance not predetermined by the existence of social or economic strata, and likely to involve sections of the population from outside the working class.\textsuperscript{105}

What confirms Reid in this conclusion is the division he found between economic and political issues among shipbuilders, a division helped by a non-interventionist state. There was no need then to seek a barrier which contained working class unrest and prevented economic and social agitation from intruding into the political sphere, simply because there was no danger of it spreading.\textsuperscript{106}

Leaving aside the important historiographical implications of Reid's thesis for the moment, it is clear that Reid's general conclusions based on economic fragmentation in favour of sectional diversity and in rejection of the labour aristocracy are of immediate relevance to this study of London compositors, for it is the conclusion of research on metropolitan compositors and the contention of this thesis that the singularity, the particularism of London compositors explains developments in the composing trade during the second half of the 19th century. Previous discussion has demonstrated why any explanation of developments within the working class in Victorian Britain which cannot take account of anomalous and

\textsuperscript{105} Ibid., p. 220. \\
\textsuperscript{106} Ibid., pp. 234-6.
unique groups remains problematic to London compositors and thus, for these reasons, Reid's interpretation cannot be adopted. However, Reid's research does remain to inform this study of the London Society of Compositors, because the fundamental nature and direction of his conclusions do free diverse industries and groups of working men and women from the strictures of a single theoretical explanation. This is an approach which is essentially sympathetic to this study of compositors. Further to this point, Reid's discussion of his findings among shipyard workers in the second half of the nineteenth century does throw light on the experience of London compositors. For example, the separation of political concerns from economic issues which Reid found among shipbuilders is quite similar to what is called in this study a "compartmentalisation" found among compositors. To many craftsmen, the relationship between economic and political matters, trade issues and national economic affairs was not clear. Only in the analysis of society presented by socialist compositors were economic, political, national and personal concerns portrayed as part of one whole. This division, this compartmentalisation, parallels the separation of concerns Crossick found in artisans in Kentish London, which he termed "fragmentation of experience" and which he isolated as the prerequisite of accommodation to the bourgeois

107. See eg. Typographical Circular, 17 Dec. 1854, pp. 66-7; LSC, Annual Reports, 1864-6, esp. LSC, Annual Report, 1866, pp. 41-2; Warwick MSS. 28/CO/1/9/1/1; LSC, Annual Reports, 1870-76: Warwick MSS. 28/CO/1/9/3/1; cf. T.J. Dunning, Trade Unions and Strikes; their Philosophy and Intention, 1860.

108. See below, pp. 211-60.
social system. However, as Reid found the notion of accommodation inappropriate in his analysis of Clydeside shipbuilders, the following study demonstrates that accommodation to a bourgeois social system was not really relevant to London Compositors.

In conclusion then, it can be said that Reid's study in affirming sectional diversity and rejecting the theory of the labour aristocracy as an explanation of the experience of the working class in the late nineteenth century, endorses an explanation of the London Society of Compositors which stresses uniqueness as instrumental in determining the structure, ideology and development of the metropolitan composing craft in the late nineteenth century.

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It is evident that recent historiographical analyses which seek to explain the social peace of Victorian England do not provide a thorough explanation of the development of the London Society of Compositors during the period 1848-1906. Firstly, the theory of social consensus does have crucial shortcomings. Secondly, the Marxist theory of the labour aristocracy and its elaborations do not provide an unproblematic explanation of the experience of metropolitan compositors during the second half of the nineteenth century. Thirdly, there are problems to the adoption of the Anderson-Nairn critique, but the conclusions of Alistair Reid's thesis which confirm this critique, clearly inform developments within the
London Society of Compositors. His conclusions are sympathetic to the findings of research on metropolitan compositors, which indicate that the craft's singularity was the pre-eminent influence upon the development of the Victorian trade union. The determinant of that singularity was compositors' craft ideology; it shaped compositors' idiosyncratic trade unionism. The outward expression of that ideology as well as its inward protector and reinforcer was the compositors' chapel. It is therefore, to this institution at the centre of the compositors' trade, that we now turn.
Chapter 2.
The Nature of the Metropolitan Compositor's Trade
The aim of this chapter which discusses the nature of the composing craft as it developed within the printing trade from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, is two-fold. Firstly, it explains the continuity of labour techniques and the occupational structure of the craft, and within that context it examines the pre-eminent institution of metropolitan compositors during the period. Thus, it explains the practical and ideological role and the functions of the compositors' chapel. Secondly, this chapter traces the growth and development of labour organizations among compositors prior to the formation of the LSC in 1848.
Craftsmen of the metropolitan composing trade in the middle of the nineteenth century shared customs and conventions, ideas and attitudes, which were derived from and grounded upon the two essential properties of their craft: firstly, control, evident primarily in control of the labour supply through apprenticeship; and secondly, independence, displayed most obviously in the form of compositors' rights, i.e. the right to propose wage increases and changes in working conditions, the right to hold meetings within the workplace independently of the employer and above all, the right of compositors to come and go as they pleased. These properties had been determined and then institutionalised by sixteenth century craftsmen, and the powers and freedoms which control and independence jealously preserved and protected were commonly referred to as the "privileges of the trade".

Joseph Moxon's description of the compositor's trade in his Mechanick Exercises published in 1683, is the first thorough exposition we have. It remains one of the clearest. The compositor, Moxon tells us, standing at his case composes the words of a given text in his composing stick until the stick is full. He then justifies his composition, that is he spaces the words and between each word he sets a blank or two blanks as required, until the line is full. When the composing stick is full, he empties it into a galley. When the

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galley is complete, he sets directions at the bottom of the page and adds the appropriate signatures, then he "ties up the page" with cord four or five times around the composed page and having fastened it, takes it to the correcting stone. Here he imposes his composition, that is he places the pages belonging to one printed sheet side by side so that when the printed sheet is folded the printed pages will be in the right order. Around the pages he places chase and furniture appropriate to the size of the work; folio, quarto, octavo and duodecimo all having different requirements. Finally, he "locks up the form", wedging wooden slats between the letters and the metal frame so that they will hold together, carries it to the press and lays it on the stone or bed of the press for the pressman to make a proof. The proof goes to the corrector and then back to the compositor who corrects his composition as required i.e. unlocking the form, replacing incorrect letters in each page and rejustifying as necessary. He then replaces the chase and furniture around the corrected pages and again locks up the form. From this a second copy is made. Corrections to this are made as and where necessary and from this, the final copy is made. When a form has been used for a complete print run and is no longer needed for a further impression, that is it does not need to remain as a "standing form", it is broken up, the letters are washed, rinsed and dried and the compositor (or his apprentice) then distributes the letters, that is, replaces them in their appropriate case.

2. Ibid, p. 239.
The compositor will have at his disposal upper and lower case type in various type faces, eg. Ruby, Pearl, Non-pariel, Minion, Brevier, Long Primer, Pica, English etc. and in a variety of type styles, for example, English, Roman and Italic. Depending on the wealth of the master printer and on the nature of the work of his printing house, there may also be available to the compositor Music, Greek, Hebrew and Syriac type. Knowledge of classical languages was obviously a powerful addition to a compositor's skills, though first and foremost he need be "no more than an English Scoller". William Savage, writing in 1840, assures us that by the nineteenth century "expedition is the most desirable qualification in a compositor".

Presswork, on the other hand, unlike composing had developed from a craft dependent on the old wooden press through the improvements of Stanhope, the modifications of Koenig and later Cropper, and the revolutionary inventions of Applegarth and Cowper, Thompson and Hoe, into a trade diversifying around three kinds of machinery producing three specialized forms of publication by the middle of the nineteenth century. Division of labour had followed this diversification: as a rule, printers engaged on newspaper press work were separated from those working on book and/or jobbing printing. The major im-

3. Ibid., p. 197.


petus behind the development of printing machinery came from newspaper proprietors, who sought to keep pace with an apparently inexhaustible demand for newspapers, following the freeing of the press from financial restrictions during the middle decades of the 19th century.

Koenig's Steam Press of 1810, though still a flatbed or platen press promised a reduction in the sheer physical strength required in a pressman using the old wooden press. Even with Stanhope's modifications two men were needed to work the press and a considerable amount of exertion was required for the production of every printed sheet. Koenig's Steam Press was installed secretly in the Times office in 1814. However, it was not until the innovation of the cylindrical press and the invention of the stereotype process that printing was revolutionised. Together these meant that an impression of hand-composed type could be taken onto a plaster-of-paris mold (later papier-mâché was used) which could then be shaped to fit a printing cylinder. This was a stereotype, and from it an impression could be printed. Applegarth and Cowper using the steam printing machine at the Times developed the cylindrical press from the prototype of 1814, adding to it Andrew Wilson's stereotyping process, an inking roller and a "perfecting machine" which enabled both sides of a sheet to be printed in quick succession. This basic machine could produce 2,000 to 2,400 impressions per hour and it was to dominate book printing for some decades. An increase in the number of impression cylinders meant that the number of copies printed per hour could be multiplied. This obviously lent itself to
newspaper printing. Expanding audiences meant a growing circulation and the use of 4, 6, or even 8 impression cylinders meant newspapers could meet this increasing demand. For example, the *Times* machine of 1827, similar in appearance to the machine invented by Colonel Hoe in America, had a double set of impression cylinders on either side of the machine producing roughly 4,200 copies per hour. This remained at the *Times* till 1848 when Applegarth and Cowper produced an 8-feeder i.e. an 8 cylinder machine capable of producing 12,000 copies per hour. Two of these, together with a 9 cylinder machine producing 16,000 copies per hour, were used at the *Times* from the mid-19th century. Hoe's modifications of Applegarth and Cowper's machine in the interests of compactness and efficiency made the later models of multi-cylinder machines *de rigueur* for a mid-century newspaper with an expanding circulation.

Further advances in newspaper printing machinery during the following decades were accompanied by similar though far less publicised modifications in printing machines for bookwork and general jobbing printing. In book production for example, Applegarth and Cowper's cylinder machine of the 1820's was gradually outmoded by machines made on the cylinder principle and mounted on parallel side frames. "The Wharfdale" was the first model of this type of machine and eventually its name became a generic term for this construction, applicable to later models like the "Bremner" and the "Graphic". Small scale commercial work on the other hand, increasingly tended to be produced by a treadle jobbing machine known variously as the "Cropper", the "Universal", the "Mitre", and the
"Liberty", which could produce about 1,000 copies an hour. Whilst speed was not essential to this form of printing, treadle power proved inconsistent and the machine's production was found to be more uniform if belt driven.

Meanwhile, the really significant advances continued to be made in the field of newspaper printing. Innovation here augmented previous developments keeping newspaper output abreast of increasing demand. In the 'fifties and 'sixties the Times had added two 10-feeder machines to its 8 and 9-cylinder presses, and Lloyds' Weekly News was using Hoe's machine. These cylinder presses were extremely high in labour costs. For example, each 10-feeder machine required the work of about 25 men. In 1866, John Walter, the proprietor of the Times, perfected the Walter Rotary Press which significantly reduced labour requirements by replacing the pressmen who removed printed sheets from the press with overhead machinery. Seven years later, Hoe perfected a Web machine which used a continuous roll or "web" of paper. This further reduced the labour required in feeding paper to the machine. Hoe's Rotary Press, as it was known, was relatively compact being far less cumbersome in its labour requirements and it was therefore less expensive to run than its predecessors. It could produce about 12,000 full sized sheets an hour, and in the fourth quarter of the nineteenth century was employed by several London morning papers including the Daily Telegraph, Standard, Daily Chronicle, and the Daily News. 

The composition of type, in contrast to these advances in presswork, remained untouched by mechanization. Through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as the printing industry grew and developed, the position of the compositor gained prominence. By the nineteenth century, the process of hand composition attained a crucial position in printing production, and consequently its craftsmen acquired pre-eminence as they held sway over a bottle-neck in production. Furthermore, as composition remained a hand-craft, no mechanization had disrupted the age-old organization of the labour force and no division of labour with its concomitant erosion of craft identity had taken place among metropolitan compositors.

The legislative framework in which the composing trade developed should be considered here for it was instrumental to the character of the nineteenth century trade.

From its inception, the composing trade had been recognised and regulated not by master printers and employers, but by central government. This is important. It was fundamental to the relationship which had grown up between master printer and compositor and was formative in the conception compositors had of themselves vis-a-vis other craftsmen. In 1566 and 1586, Star Chamber Decrees limited the printing trade to London except for one printer at each of the Universities. They restricted the number of printers in London, recommended a limitation on the number of journeymen coming to London from the provinces and overseas, and laid down a ratio for the
number of apprentices to journeymen. The aim of these
decrees was in fact political: to reduce the publication of
anti-government literature and bring the arena of production
within easier access of Crown control. In this the decrees
were not successful, but they did have far reaching social
effects, and in craft terms alone they were of enduring sig-
nificance.

In limiting the number of journeymen and apprentices and
in outlawing "turnovers", these Elizabethan Decrees conferred
legitimacy upon the attempts of journeymen rather than master
printers, to regulate the supply of labour to the composing
trade. At the same time, they affirmed the binding of
apprentices to master printers for the term of seven years,
and sanctioned the position and activities of present journey-
men thus heightening the exclusivity of the craft, and encour-
aging the bonds of kinship to tighten in this highly presti-
gious trade.

Apprenticeship itself was initially defined as servitude
of 7 years by an Order of the Common Council of London of

7. Star Chamber Decree of 1566: E. Arber, Transcripts of the
Company of Stationers, Vol. I, 1875, p. 322; Star Chamber
Decree of 1586: BL Lansdowne MSS. 905; cf. PRO State Pa-
pers, Eliz. I, 161, no. 2.

8. S.L.M. Craven, "Control of the Press in England, 1586-

9. "Turnover" was the name given to an apprentice who was
"turned over" from one master to another without ever
gaining his freedom: OED, 1917.

10. See also Journeymen's Petitions: PRO State Papers, Eliz.
I, 157 no.71; BL Lansdowne MSS. 48 f. 182; PRO State
Papers, Eliz. I, 161 no. 3.
Later in the sixteenth century the Stationers' Company regulated apprenticeship and it looked to the Crown for sanction of its powers, which were affirmed in 1586 in the Star Chamber Decree, and shortly before the interregnum by the Regulations Governing the Printing Trade of 1635. The Licensing Act of 1662 reaffirmed this control, though after 1695 the legislation fell into desuetude. During the 18th century, no legal limitation to apprenticeship existed, though the Elizabethan Statute of Artificers was invoked by compositors attempting to reduce the number of apprentices. After 1815, when this statute was repealed, both the length of apprenticeship and restrictions on the employment of apprentices by journeymen had only the force of custom in the compositing trade.

During the 17th century, when division of labour came to characterise the printing trade in London separating it into compositors and pressmen, the relationship which underlay regulation of the printing trade, ie. that between journeymen and a detached central authority of far greater power than master printers, remained fundamental to the compositors' craft. Crown prerogative over the printing trade was abolished in the

12. BL Lansdowne MSS. 905, clause 8; PRO State Papers, Charles I, 301, no. 105.
Interregnum with the removal of the Star Chamber, and following the Restoration, parliamentary regulation replaced royal authority. The Licensing Act of 1662, which again limited printing to a handful of master printers in London, required sureties of £300 against printers' involvement in unlawful printing and licensed both printers and patents for publication.\(^{15}\) In 1694, the Commons declined to renew the Act on both legal and trade grounds: the vagueness of its terms of prohibition and the provision for prosecution at common law led to confusion; the unnatural monopolies which the act conveyed were thought to be in restriction of trade. Expiry of the Licensing Act lifted restrictions on the number of printers and opened the way for provincial printing. However, government retained its control over the nature of material published by moving the onus of restraint from licensing to taxation and subsidisation. From the first Newspaper Stamp Act in 1712\(^ {16}\) to the Newspaper Duties Act of 1819\(^ {17}\) the printing trade was increasingly shackled by financial burdens which sought to restrict information to the wealthy and respectable strata of society. Meanwhile, during the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries a press favourable to government and Crown was floated and kept alive by Treasury subsidies.\(^ {18}\)


\(^{16}\) 10 Anne c. 18.

\(^{17}\) 60 Geo. III c. 9.

Throughout these decades, regulation of the printing trade was never relinquished by central government and delegated to master printers. Hence, the unique relationship between government and compositors continued: the final arbiter of journeymen's grievances in the composing trade remained not master printers, but central government.

The recognition of journeymen compositors' control of their trade and of their independence of employers during the 16th and 17th centuries, was unexceptional. Like other prestigious London trades, composing and printing were characterised by a relationship between printing house owner and printing house artisan based on respect: employee and employer were in fact both craftsmen in the same trade. During the industrial revolution the relationship characterising traditional crafts of necessity changed. Trades were mechanized and the process of production together with its concomitant labour relations were transformed into the more familiar ones of capitalist and worker. In composing this was not the case. Journeymen compositors did complain of the abrogation of paternalist legislation,\textsuperscript{19} and they protested against capitalist proprietors taking over the trade, but essentially, the composing craft and the relationships which characterised it in the 19th century were those of the 16th and 17th cen-

\textsuperscript{19} Derry, loc.cit.
turies. 20 Hence, master printers and compositors negotiated on equal terms throughout the years of the Combinations Act. 21 In 1805, for example an Arbitration Committee composed of masters and men was at work. 22 In the nineteenth century then, compositors' control and independence had not diminished since the 16th century trade. Moreover, by the Victorian period these powers had acquired the cumulative authority of three centuries, during which time they had surrounded themselves with the added mystique of custom and tradition.

At the centre of the craft was the compositors' chapel, an institution expressing both ancientness and continuity. The chapel was the repository of all custom and tradition which had developed and flourished from the craft's inception, sanctioned by the craft's privileged legal status. By the middle of the 19th century, in the metropolitan composing trade, the chapel had attained a force stronger than law.

The origins of the chapel are ancient and obscure, as is the derivation of the term. It has been suggested that the word "chapel" arose from Caxton's printing house which was situated in a chapel adjoining Westminster Abbey, but the term

20. It was resolved at a General Meeting of the trade in 1786 that any master, "not having a legal right to the printing business" could not be allowed apprentices, and that journeymen could not in any case work for him. This resolution was used specifically against John Walter, to prevent him printing the Times. Walter had never been apprenticed a printer: see Howe, London Compositor, p. 113.

21. CUPC, nos. 6, 11, 12, 17, 28, 31.

22. CUPC, no. 13.
is commonly used in France, which tends to cast doubt on this explanation. In the trade's earliest times, "chapel" was the name given to every printing house, but by the nineteenth century a union chapel was formed by members of a single craft (compositors or pressmen) working together in one office. From earliest times, the chapel was a display to master printers and to the rest of the world of the dignity of journeymen compositors, of their control of the printing trade and of their independence from the employer in the workplace. It was the symbol of their freedom: it signified that compositors could come and go as they pleased and more importantly, that they could meet together to discuss work issues, for example, methods of payment, types of font, standing form, etc. It was thus the expression of that control and independence which formed the foundation of the trade's occupational ideology.

All compositors had to be members of a chapel and contribute to chapel funds. The chapel met as frequently or as infrequently as circumstances dictated and here, work matters would be discussed. By custom, the procedure in many chapels may have been verbal. In others, the clerk of the chapel took minutes, but the bulk of these have not survived. This is greatly to our cost, for the most influential institution of the composing trade has left little indication as to its procedure except that which can be gleaned from Moxon's account, from the account of Thomas Gent in 1712, from two broadsides

of 1734 and 1808, together with four lists of chapel rules from the Victorian printing trade, and one set of composing chapel "Minutes" for the years 1888-1906. It is clear from this information that by the late nineteenth century, neither the form nor the concerns of the chapel had altered much since the seventeenth century. The "Minutes" document a specific concern with rules, benefits and fines. As with Moxon's account, they give no insight into the wider functions of the chapel, yet it is clear that the chapel was a potent ideologi­cal catalyst strengthening compositors' identification with the trade. Concerning the more abstract functions of the chapel then, some degree of extrapolation is unavoidable.

Within the chapel, there was equality not hierarchy of membership, the only exception being the Father of the Chapel (FOC), an official position which moved by rota having an organizational rather than an executive function, the FOC having no power to act on his own initiative. The chapel's authority was total, it being a maxim of the trade that "the Chapel cannot err". Chapel functions were diverse and


affected all aspects of a compositor's life. The chapel existed in the workplace both inside and outside of meetings. In its totality then, it was indeed pervasive.

The chapel's economic function is the most prominent and though it is not certain that its origin lay in economic issues, we can assume with a fair degree of certainty the economic drive of families within a limited trade who were anxious to keep both income and position, and therefore sought to control the labour supply through the trade's own institutions. The main control of the labour supply was exerted through apprenticeship. Apprenticeship of seven years was unnecessarily lengthy, but its function in reducing the threat of unskilled labour was of crucial importance to the trade, and its length had therefore become traditional. In newspaper offices, that threat was removed completely: apprentices had been prohibited from news offices from at least 1793. The strong family bonds which pervaded the composing trade stressed and enhanced the benefits of apprenticeship. Further, the beginning and ending of servitude had become ritualised by the chapel itself imparting an apparent immutabil-


ity to this overlong period of training. A mock christening or a knighthood with non-sensical chanting would accompany initiation; a procession with flowers and decorations would signify an apprentice's freedom.

The chapel's crucial role in enforcing apprenticeship to control the labour supply was supplemented by compositors' restrictions on the employment of women. Moxon tells us that in the 17th century the mere appearance of a woman in the chapel was most unusual, and even the presence of a compositor's wife was cause for comment. Female labour would of course undercut men's wages and erode the scale and therefore, from 1635 this customary prohibition of women in the composing room was given legislative sanction. "Girls, boyes and others in the composing room" were forbidden by the Regulations governing the printing trade in 1635. During the Interregnum this Star Chamber legislation was abolished, and thereafter the restriction of female labour regained its customary status. By the later Victorian period this prejudice against the employment of women continued in the guise of a woman's unsuitability to the trade on the grounds of physical strength:

She is not strong enough...she cannot stand it...There is a considerable number of females earning their living in London as wood engravers, and

31. Moxon, op.cit, pp. 359, 362.
32. PRO State Papers, Charles I, 301, no. 105, clause 18.
the employment is found much more suitable for them than the duties of compositor.33

Finally, as surety for the craft, the chapel enforced a proscription upon unskilled labour in the composing room. From the 16th century, book composition by unskilled labour was prohibited in London and the mere presence of an unskilled workman in the composing room was morally proscribed, though not legally prevented till 1635.34

In controlling the labour supply, the chapel was performing a trade union function; defending and protecting the trade. This role was endorsed in 1848 when the chapel came to perform labour control in an official trade union capacity. From then on, during the decades of the second half of the nineteenth century, the chapel-in-union power over the labour supply was extended and consolidated.35

Along with apprenticeship went maintenance of the scale: together these were the pre-requisites of control and independence which formed the foundation of the occupational ideology within the trade. The chapel strove to maintain the scale by upholding an agreed price for work. Moxon tells us that in 1683 the chapel was anxious to maintain piece-work rates (or day labour rates) and to preserve payment for Church holidays.


35. See below, pp. 97-128, 281-284.
which fell within the working week.\textsuperscript{36} The role of the chapel in wage negotiations during the late 18th and early 19th centuries is unclear, but by the late 1820s and early '30s, the chapel's control of the Society's financial deliberations at workshop level was prominent.\textsuperscript{37} Further, the chapel was the umbrella institution of companionships within one office. Companionships regulated the rate of pay and method of payment for an individual task.\textsuperscript{38} By the 1840s the chapel was playing a prominent financial role within the London Union of Compositors.\textsuperscript{39} When the LUC joined the National Typographical Association in 1845, the chapel was the pivotal institution maintaining the finance of both local and national organizations.\textsuperscript{40} Moreover, in houses which carried out Government printing, the chapel's function in wage negotiations was instrumental. Negotiations took a time honoured verbal not written form, and it appears that when an individual office gained a contract, negotiations between the chapel and propri-
etors would follow. These negotiations deliberated the rate of payment for composition of that contract.

In 1848 the chapel's role in maintaining the scale was given official backing. The chapel collected union subscriptions from its members and as well as this, chapel delegates received a report of Executive negotiations on matters of pay and scale proposals at every Quarterly Delegate Meeting. The chapel's role in financial matters grew and was elaborated upon in the rule revisions of 1871, 1874, 1881, 1885, 1886, and 1890, and in those of the 1890s and early 1900s.

The second function of the chapel was a disciplinary one: it regulated the trade both outside and within the workplace. In essence, its role in policing the whole trade was economic: its aim was to prevent masters and journeymen from undercutting the established rate of pay, or taking too many apprentices. To do this, the chapels of the trade had the help of an incorporeal and omnipresent spirit called "Miles's Boy" who

43. Rules of the LSC, 1848, Rule VI: Warwick MSS.
44. Ibid., Rule VII.
made constant rounds of London's printing houses. In particularly onerous times, Miles's Boy enlisted friends to ensure vigilance. Miles's Boy scoured the trade looking for "ratteries", ie. houses where men were working below accepted rates and/or where turnovers or too many apprentices were employed. He published black lists of offenders, for example, that citing, "a being called Michael Alder, Apprentice to Mr. Davies in Russell Court" who must be punished; "let his company be shunned by the apprentices". Miles's Boy's role was coercive and severe;

For too long have lenient measures prevailed: to pass over those wretches with silent contempt is doing nothing: vigorous measures should and vigorous measures must be adopted. Renovate yourselves and shake from you the beings who openly and injudiciously injure you: let them be held up to PUBLIC DETESTATION.

And he expressed the collective moral force of the trade in defending and protecting its gains against the recalcitrant individual. Miles's Boy was most active in the years of ineffective trade union organization at the turn of the 19th cen-

46. Ten circulars from Miles's Boy to the trade, or from "A Compositor" to Miles's Boy, dated either 1805 or 1806, or having no date, are to be found in the St. Bride Collections: CUPC, no. 2; St Bride Trade Colln., nos. 5, 6, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31.


49. Included in CUPC but not indexed: Anon., white ink on black paper.
tury and during the 1800s and 1810s. Following the establish­ment of trade societies which generated permanent protec­tive trade unions in the printing trade, Miles's Boy became redundant: he had fulfilled the chapel's need for protection and when that protection was carried out more effectively by the trade union organization, he slipped quietly from the reality into the mythology of the trade. Forty years later when the trade was under threat from composing machines Miles's Boy re-appeared, hurling invective against the adoption of those machines in unfair houses.50

Within the workplace, the chapel regulated the behaviour of its members. The appearance of a new compositor in a com­panionship would require that compositor to pay his "ben venu" - 16d in 1734, it amounted to 2/6d in the 1850s,51 - or to buy beer for chapel members.52 Fines were levied for swearing, fighting, drunkenness and untidiness and the funds thus collected went to chapel benefit, or to buy beer for chapel members.53 For more serious or persistent rule breaking the chapel could invoke more serious penalties: physical force in the form of beating could be sanctioned, and ostracism


52. For objections to this custom, see Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Ben Franklin, 1818, Vol.1, p. 69.

53. Howe, London Compositor, pp. 22-31
(partial or total) could be inflicted upon an offender, though the latter was rarely enforced. The recalcitrant or refractory would more likely find themselves victim to Ralph, the chapel ghost. Ralph was the expression of collective moral force within the chapel. His aim was to ensure conformity with chapel principles, with its rules and customs, and he did so by hiding the tools or by mixing the letters of the non-conformist:

Every chapel is haunted by a spirit called Ralph. When any man resists the decision of the chapel and it is determined to enforce it, Ralph or the spirit is said to walk, and whatever mischief is done to the resisting party to enforce submission, which is always performed secretly, it is invariably imputed to Ralph or the spirit.

Ralph was of course the good friend of Miles's Boy: together they enforced chapel authority both inside the workplace and throughout the trade.

Craftsmen compositors then, not employers, disciplined members of the composing trade through the chapel. In doing so, compositors expressed the control they held within the printing trade and their independence of the employer within the workplace.

The third function of the chapel was social, on both a regular and an occasional basis. Chapel drinks formed a customary part of the social aspect of the workplace and they engendered camaraderie and unity between chapel members. Once a year, the chapel would help organize the annual outing or

54. Ibid.
"wayz-goose". A compositor's marriage and the birth of a child would be accompanied by chapel ceremonial. A pass-round or a collection of money for a present and a bang-out from the composing room would accompany the end of a compositor's bachelor status. When a child was born to a member of the chapel, Moxon tells us that the father paid 1/- (if the child was a boy) or 6d (if a girl) to the chapel, and then drinks would be bought. Though the origin of celebrating a compositor's freedom was strictly occupational, the occasion was also the excuse for social festivities. Similarly, a compositor's retirement would occasion a pass-round and chapel ceremonial. Collectively, the social customs and celebrations of the chapel reflected the compositor's independence of his employer, an independence preserved by chapel benefits which extended outside and beyond the workplace.

Chapel funds would support an individual in time of illness or unemployment and in time of disaster these would be supplemented by a pass-round. A sudden death for example, would generate a chapel collection and a wreath would be sent to the funeral. Alongside these chapel funds which could be drawn on as necessity dictated, went independent Friendly Societies which operated through the chapel in so far as the

56. The origin of this term is unclear. Howe's suggestion that goose was traditional fare at this celebration seems realistic, but the OED does not agree: Howe, London Compositor, p. 26 n. 1.


59. Ibid., p. 173.
collection of their subscriptions was carried out through the channels of chapel collection. Before 1848, compositors had access to a Printers' Pension Fund, an Almshouse Fund, and a Provident Association, and in the 1850s, a Metropolitan Widow and Orphan Nominee Fund and an Office Sick Fund were established. When the LSC was formed in 1848 and collection of union funds was performed by the chapel, the benefit functions of the chapel became trade union functions.

Taken together then, the economic, disciplinary, social, and benefit functions of the chapel pervaded all practical aspects of a compositor's life. These functions moreover, had an ideological component: they reinforced compositors' control and independence, those foundations of the craft's occupational ideology. Over three centuries, through the chapel's frequent meetings and through its pervasive role at the centre of the workplace, that occupational ideology had developed a singular cogency. In Cannon's view, the chapel's ideological function has political implications: the democratic form and procedure of the chapel are conducive to political radicalism and the ideological cohesion which the chapel creates among its members, ensures the preservation and


continuation of this radicalism. In the historical context this thesis is very attractive: it makes sense of the adherence of a number of compositors to radical politics during the 1830s and the 1840s, and to a variety of radical political ideas during the later decades of the nineteenth century, which must have been generated by ideological convictions for it cannot have been prompted by financial considerations.

Given the paucity of information concerning the functions of the chapel to compositors in the nineteenth century however, Cannon's conclusions can only remain to inform interpretation of the powers of the chapel among Victorian compositors. More evident in the ideological context was what the chapel symbolized to men both within and outside the composing craft: to masters it expressed compositors' control and independence; to other trades and to the unskilled the chapel was an expression of compositors' exclusivity and singularity; to compositors themselves, it was an expression of an internal egalitarianism and an outward uniqueness. In sum, the chapel symbolized both egalitarianism and exclusivity. The chapel was both the central co-ordinating institution for the trade's practical concerns and the ideological epitome of the craft. In 1848, when the London Society of Compositors was formed, it secured its organization by grafting its foundation on to the chapel.

Then, compositors' occupational ideology together with the


chapel's meanings, symbols and functions became the core of the compositors' trade union ideology. As a result, the ideology of the London Society of Compositors attained the cohesion of a centuries old craft ideology and in return, craft privileges and traditions were newly enhanced and strengthened. In the 1850s and '60s for example, when the LSC regulated the trade in the absence of a master printers' association, it dealt with trade union problems on a pragmatic basis and in accordance with the control and independence of prevailing craft ideology. Prior to the mid-19th century, regulation of the trade on a pragmatic basis had been a function of the chapel. As the process of trade regulation by the LSC was successful, it became established, and this function became recognised as a trade union function. Chapel and trade union were becoming mutually identifiable, and as this happened both regulation of the trade and pragmatism became subsumed into the overall craft ideology. In 1848, the grafting of the trade union onto the chapel had allowed no watering down of craft ideology, no erosion by a new and possibly conflicting trade union ethos: craft ideology became trade union ideology in composing. Throughout the decades of the later 19th century, this identification was consolidated.

In conclusion then, it can be said that the ideological functions of the chapel together brought to compositors' craft ideology and craft consciousness a unique power and an excep-

65. LSC, Annual Reports, 1848-1850, 1853, 1854, 1858, 1859, 1860, 1862: Warwick MSS.28/CO/1/9/1/1; Annual Reports, 1864, 1865: Warwick MSS. 28/CO/1/9/2/1; cf. Typographical Circular, 18 Feb. 1858, pp. 405-12, 16 Mar. 1858, pp. 413-5, 418-9.
tional cohesion during the second half of the 19th century. Furthermore, it is here within the context of the cohesion and fixity of craft ideology during the Victorian period, that the significance of a seven year apprenticeship becomes fully apparent. The lengthy servitude ensured continuity of that power and cohesion: it allowed the transference of tradition, ancient rite and mystical ritual to impressionable young men, who, probably with family encouragement, came to identify themselves with the trade. Identification here means recognition of oneself as a member of a select powerful body of craftsmen: it also means recognition of and reverence for the chapel as the hallmark of that immutable craft.

Outside the workplace within the wider framework of artisan culture and in the more general context of metropolitan society, compositors' craft ideology lay at the heart of their attitudes and assumptions concerning wider social issues like social status, respectability, and temperance.

A compositor's understanding of social status for example, was inextricably bound up with compositors' collective ideology concerning their own literary tradition. Compositors' education and literacy, in a world where even the most exclusive artisans were not necessarily literate, are well known and were much prized:

the extensive utility of printing and the proximity of composing to the higher professions and Liberal Arts and Sciences, would seem to entitle it to a
Compositors' own status was then superior to all trades, they were, "the most advanced and intelligent branch of the working population" having a missionary role to play; "Printers should be found in the van not in the rear of the onward march of intellectuallity". The composing craft as a whole regarded itself as a profession rather than a trade during the middle of the 19th century: the Typographical Protection Circular and the Typographical Circular being devoted to the interests of the printing profession whose members were "gentlemen compositors".

The accepted view of the composing craft's status vis-a-vis other crafts during the second half of the nineteenth century is that of a downgrading with all the anxieties that this implies. From the middle of the 19th century to the 1890s, the income and educational components of compositors' status were being eroded as other trades surpassed compositors' wage rates and as literacy increased, aided by the 1870 Education

66. CUPC, no. 32.

67. Typographical Protection Circular, Aug. 1850, p. 94.

68. Typographical Protection Circular, July 1849, p. 28.

69. Warwick MSS. 28/CO/1/1/1, p. 185, 271; Typographical Protection Circular, 1 Jan. 1849, p. 2; 1 July 1849, p. 25; 1 Aug. 1850, p. 94; 1 Sept. 1850, p. 97; April 1851, p. 131; July 1853, p. 249; cf. the Typographical Circular's, subtitle, "A Journal devoted to the interests of the Printing Profession", April 1854-Sept. 1858.

However, this interpretation can be questioned on two grounds: firstly, a purely mechanistic interpretation is insufficient to explain a decline in compositor's status, given the composite nature of the meaning which compositors attributed to the concept; secondly, the direct impact of the 1870 Education Act is unclear, as compositors derived a good deal of their status superiority from the educational context of their trade, and a knowledge of Greek, Latin and Hebrew upon which that superiority was based was hardly becoming generalised among the working class at this time. Compositors themselves felt that status erosion had begun in the late 18th century, and the trade had gone downhill ever since. The rot set in when the system of outdoor apprenticeship became generalised within the trade. This system relieved the master printer from domestic responsibility for apprentices. To compositors it not only encouraged laxity among employers and lewdness among apprentices, it actively discouraged families from the professions and prestigious trades (eg. goldsmiths, shipwrights, silversmiths), from apprenticing their sons to the printing trade. It was seen by compositors as the major cause of their decline in status in the nineteenth century. As to the status of all compositors' apprentices during this

71. Printers' Journal, 16 Dec. 1865, p. 254; 23 Jan. 1866, pp. 18-19; 19 Mar. 1866, p. 61; 7 May-10 Nov. 1866, passim; Printers' Register, April 1865, p. 5; 6 Jan 1866, p. 8; 6 Feb 1866, p. 9; 18 June 1866, p. 8; Fleet Street Gazette, 20 Feb. 1874, p. 4; Alford, op.cit. p. 204; Cannon, op.cit., p. 85; B. Simon, Education and the Labour Movement, 1965.

72. CUPC, 8; St Bride Trade Colln., no. 24; BL Add.MSS. 27799, f.91.
period, there is no information, but there are Registers of apprentices to members of the Stationers' Company.\(^7\) The table on page 343 suggests a decline in the desirability of the trade among lower middle class and middle class occupations by about 10% over the period. However, this may suggest a greater status decline that was in fact the case, for members of the Stationers' Company tended to be from established book printing families, eg. the families of Waterlow, Rivington, Harrison, Eyre, Adlard, Unwin, Clowes, Truscott, that is precisely from that section of the London trade which was suffering the effects of provincial competition in these decades. Compositors themselves were still apprenticing their sons to the craft, and this generally is an indication of a trade maintaining rather than losing status. Some compensation for compositors' status decline was provided by the LSC Reading Room, which was by no means for the intellectually faint-hearted. Initially, newspapers and periodicals, histories of printing, and grammars in French, German, Latin, Greek and Hebrew formed the basic library holdings, but these soon expanded to include traditional and contemporary fiction, voyages, travels, theology, biography, philosophy and logic, along with Select Committee Reports on topical issues such as arbitration, the Crimea, Military Supply, etc.\(^7\)

73. Stationers' Company Apprentice Registers, 1847-62; 1863-77; 1878-Mar. 1890; April 1890-1901; 1901-10. For qualification of the reliability of these registers as a source for the composing trade, see above pp. 17-19.

Respectability, like status, had internal and external meanings: it was clearly a mixture of self-respect and the respect of others. Internally, it was derived from craft ideology, enhanced by the chapel whose reinforcement of control and independence accorded compositors a high degree of self-respect. Externally the respect of others had to be gained, most obviously in a visible sense. The complex nature of respectability can be seen clearly in the Typographical Circular's discussion of the proposed Library and reading room in February 1855:

in proportion as an improvement took place, should we advance in the social scale and by showing that we possessed a fair share of self-respect, command the respect of others.75

It was imperative that this respect accorded by others was striven for and won. Thus compositors strove to gain and to hold the respect of other prestigious trades and of a wider society. At the same time, they required the respect of less prestigious trades, commanded respect from semi-skilled and unskilled sections of the working class, and increasingly as the 19th century progressed, compositors expected respect from the swelling ranks of clerks whose pretensions to professionalism they despised. Moreover, the craft's own symbols of respectability, bound up with external interpretations of

75. Typographical Circular, 1 Feb. 1855, p.1. In 1847, a Typographical Mutual Improvement Society had been formed for the "intellectual advancement of all persons connected with the profession": People's Newspaper, 13 June 1847, p. 12; 1 Aug.1847, p. 11.
status, could bring attention that was not always welcome. In 1879, the *Printing Review* declared:

> there is another reason that sends a number of boys to the printing trade; it is so genteel. You can wear a frock coat and a tall hat and go to business with a black bag and an umbrella, just like a clerk.76

The composing trade's attitude to temperance during the mid and late 19th century was an offshoot of its understanding of respectability. The LSC's relationship to temperance was of necessity ambiguous: beer drinking was a part of chapel ritual, thus it was central to craft ideology and integral to a compositor's daily routine. In the trade then, opposition to drunkenness was quite distinct from the middle-class Temperance Movement with its acute moral zeal and its emphasis on complete abstinence. Within the composing trade, sobriety not abstinence was regarded as essentially respectable; emphasis on sobriety was a commonplace of trade circulars during the 1850s and 1860s. At the Annual General Meeting of the trade in March 1855, a proposal to move the Society's call-house from the Falcon Tavern - which only encouraged drunkenness

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among unemployed compositors - to a teetotal "comfortable respectable call-house" was adopted unanimously. 

The wider framework of working class culture during the second half of the 19th century then, makes sense of the meaning compositors accorded to concepts like status and respectability. The meanings with which those concepts are attributed were initially determined by craft ideology, maintained and affirmed in the chapel, and they were given final form through mediation in response to other groups within the wider artisan culture and in response to issues confronting that wider society.

In conclusion then, concerning the chapel: it has been shown how the chapel, functioning as both a practical and ideological institution, attained and maintained its crucial role in the compositor's craft from the 16th century, how it determined relationships with master printers and contributed to trade organizations of metropolitan compositors before 1848; secondly, it has been indicated how the chapel continued to reflect the singularity of the craft through the trade union in the second half of the nineteenth century, for in 1848 it became the institution of the compositors' trade union at

77. Typographical Circular, Mar. 1855, p. 89; cf. "What Drink has done for the Unions", 1889: Webb EA Vol. XXX, f. 183; "A House of Call; Police Committee, Guildhall, Sat. Mar. 13, 1847" in Typographical Gazette, April 1847, p. 226. The compositors' call-house was a room rented or owned by the Society which operated as the employment exchange for the trade. Unemployed compositors signed the call-book each day and employment was distributed in strict rotation, the first signatories taking the first available employment.
workshop level. These findings affirm certain conclusions of Alistair Reid's thesis. These conclusions contradict an assumption of economic similarity of certain groups within the working class which determines an affluent influential stabilising stratum whose role within society explains the social peace of late Victorian England, and assert that economic differentiation, i.e. the experience of an individual industry or an industrial section alone determined developments within that industry or section during the second half of the 19th century. Furthermore, it will be seen that the chapel was adopted by and assimilated into the new unions in the printing trade during the 1890s. In this way, the chapel dictated inter-union relations and determined the nature of industrial relations in the printing trade at the turn of the twentieth century.

II

In the late 18th century, during the first boom and diversification in newspaper printing, methods of production, rates of pay and conditions of work were regulated on the initiative of newspaper compositors. The first and the most significant agreement for the future of newspaper production was secured with newspaper owners in 1793. Thus daily newspaper compositors were separated from book compositors and apprentices were effectively outlawed from newspaper offices. One hundred and forty five compositors put their signature to the printed document of agreement.79

The Phoenix of Compositors formed on 12th March 1792, which met at the Hole-in-the-Wall Tavern on Fleet Street on the evening of the second Monday of every month is the first general journeymen's Society for which records remain.80 Its initial membership was probably about 600,81 though after the newspapermen's secession it must have been more like 400. The Phoenix adopted some of the organizational features of the Stationers' Company, originally the organization for all free members of the printing trade which had become an exclusive and elective organization of proprietors by the late 18th

81. An address to master printers from compositors concerning the revision of 1785 was signed by 539 journeymen: Howe, op.cit, pp. 74-5.
The primary aim of the Phoenix of Compositors was to protect its members from the vicissitudes of life. Following the payment of considerable entry fees and monthly subscriptions (£1 and 2/3d respectively), members were eligible for sickness benefit of 14/- per week. This Society was succeeded in 1801 by the more aggressive Union Society which was single-mindedly committed to wage-rate advances in the book trade. Due to increased prices in the latter years of the 18th century, compositors' real wages had fallen considerably. The Union Society aimed to restore compositors to their previous position. The Society framed the agreement of 1805 and negotiated the agreement of 1810, and then it disbanded. In 1805, advances were secured on the piece rates for each thousand ens (letters or their equivalent) of Minion, Pearl and Non-pariel type, Greek, Hebrew and Syriac letters, and payments for alterations and night-work were recognised by employers for the first time. Five years later, after labyrinthine negotiations further advances were secured on the piece rates for the composition of leaded and solid matter and for foreign languages. Payment for extras like Reviews and Indexes was agreed and the rate for night-work was increased. The form of the 1810 Scale was to remain substantially unchanged until 1891. Estimates of trade

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84. Howe, London Compositor, pp. 91-4.
85. Ibid.
size at this time remain elusive though the number of compositors in the Society can be assumed from the signatories to the wage agreements: 533 in 1805; 580 five years later. 86

In 1816, in the absence of a compositors' organization, masters forced a reduction in the price charged per thousand ens. 87 Compositors were unable to retaliate effectively and a strike in protest at the reduction proved abortive. The reduction remained. 88 This was seen by London compositors as a dangerous precedent, an encroachment on their traditional privileges and as an underhand agreement by master printers which took advantage of compositors' disorganization. In response, the London Trade Society of Compositors was formed in May 1816. 89 It aimed to maintain and to defend the Scale. It made provision for unemployment benefit and in doing so, touched upon a controversial issue within the London trade. There had long been an aversion to supporting the unemployed in certain sections of the London trade. 90 This no doubt prevented a number of compositors from joining the Trade Society, and was formative in the establishment of a rival organization - the London General Trade Society - ten years later. This

86. CUPC, nos. 10, 30.
87. Howe, op. cit., p. 188.
88. Ibid., p. 189.
body made no payment to unemployed men.\textsuperscript{91} About the wider functions of trade unionism however, both Societies were in accord: combination was for protection and defence and for the maintenance of craftsmen's privileges against the masters' combination.\textsuperscript{92}

Daily newspaper compositors remained apart from these general trade organizations. The News Society and the Society of London Daily Newspaper Compositors protected newsmen who worked on London dailies, but not those who produced weekly or periodical papers and journals. The latter were general not newspaper compositors and worked in offices which were part of the general trade. Little information remains concerning the newspaper Societies,\textsuperscript{93} though it is known that they were more affluent and therefore could be more generous to other Society men in need than their contemporaries in the general trade.\textsuperscript{94} Newsmen's Societies were highly developed in the preservation of control and in the maintenance of the independence of their trade. From the late 18th century newsmen's chapels had been both the hub of that control and the symbol of that independence.\textsuperscript{95} Both newsmen's Societies were involved in the compilation of the Report of 1820 which stated the mode of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{91} Warwick MSS. 28/CO/1/1/1, p. 236.
\item \textsuperscript{92} Warwick MSS. 28/CO/1/1/2, p. 196.
\item \textsuperscript{93} The papers of the News Society and the SLDNC have not survived. For further information on this point, see "A Note on Surviving Documents", below pp. 34\textsuperscript{96}.\textsuperscript{96}
\item \textsuperscript{94} "Some items of SLDNC expenditure, 1828-45": Webb EA Vol. XXXI, f.60.
\item \textsuperscript{95} St. Bride Trade Colln., no. 10.
\end{itemize}
working and the rate of pay operative in each metropolitan newspaper office, and thus provided the foundation of a metropolitan news scale.

In the late 1820s, attempts were made by the general trade Societies to form one union for all London compositors. The more affluent and ultra-exclusive news Societies were uninterested in these proposals but a union Committee formed between the LTSC and the LGTSC in 1831 proved so advantageous to the general trade, that three years later the two Societies amalgamated into the London Union of Compositors. The Union opposed the masters' organization which it saw as an encroachment on compositors' independence. Similarly, it decried master printers' tendency to substitute establishment flat rates of pay in place of the more lucrative piece rates as an erosion of compositors' traditional rights and privileges. Its declared aims were to "prevent malpractices" and to "regulate prices agreeably to the scale". Membership was open to all compositors of fair character working in and about London in any office where London rates were paid. A monthly subscription of 4d was to be "devoted entirely to trade purposes". In return, the Union provided 25/- per week to compositors out of


97. Warwick MSS. 28/CO/1/1/2, p. 88; MSS. 28/CO/1/1/3; St. Bride Trade Colln., no. 46.

98. LUC, Quarterly Reports, Sept. 1835, pp. 19-28: Warwick MSS. 28/CO/1/8/1/1.

employment and 5/- to provincial tramps coming to London. For the first time, union cards and numbers were issued to all new members. Within three months, the LUC had 1,580 members.101

Estimates of the size of the trade itself cannot be verified, but the Union Committee stated that 2,350 journeymen made up the London trade in March 1834. A report of 1839 indicated that the trade had 4,000 men and this seems reasonable in view of expansion following the newspaper stamp reduction of 1836. LUC Annual and Quarterly Reports suggest that in the late 'thirties, membership rose toward 2,000 but then in the depression of the early 'forties, it dropped back to 600. In buoyant times then Society membership of roughly one third to one half of the trade seems to have been realistic, and this accords with Professor Alford's estimate of 1,950 members out of 4,660 craftsmen in 1851.105

The London Union of Compositors remained the organ of general compositors until 1845. Like its predecessors and

100. Webb EA Vol. XXXI, f. 176. The provision concerning provincial tramps must have been ineffective for it was revoked in 1841.


103. The LUC Annual Report for 1839 gave the number of men in London offices as 1,343; Howe, op.cit., p. 298. G. Cowie's Printers' Pocket Book for that year lists 280 offices.

104. Warwick Ms. 28/CO/1/8/1/1.

contemporary newspaper Societies, it was concerned with main-
taining compositors' control and independence through control of the labour supply, adherence to the Scale, and the provi-
sion of friendly benefits. It would have endorsed the earlier Union Society's view that its role was to fight off masters' excesses and to "maintain its rank above mechanical and manu-
ufacturing employments". During the trade depression of the early '40s, the London Union strove with limited success to prohibit the general introduction of typesetting machinery to London. The machines which produced an output roughly three times that of the hand compositor, operated on the key-
board principle and required hand justification and distribu-
tion. In view of their cost, they were not really economical unless cheap labour could be used for the attendant tasks. In Union houses where the Scale prevailed, compositors were able to prevent this dilution of craft labour. In consequence the machines were used in secret in non-Union houses, but never in the mainstream of London's printing offices.

Within the context of the established trade societies of the 1830s and 1840s, compositors' involvement in radical pub-
lication can be examined. The unstamped press of the early 1830s, stigmatized by Lord Ellenborough as the "pauper

106. CUPC, nos. 20, 34.
press", and typified by Hetherington's Poor Man's Guardian, Berthold's Political Handkerchief and Cleave's Weekly Police Gazette, attracted both those compositors committed to the irreverent expression of democratic and republican politics, and those who championed the demand for abolition of the newspaper stamp - a stamp which at 4d kept the press the preserve of the middle and upper classes. Perhaps more surprising and definitely more significant for this study however, is the evidence which indicates that these papers were produced in the knowledge of and with the support of the leadership of the London Union of Compositors. A Union Meeting called in October 1832 to discuss the rate of pay for unstamped newspapers judged them to be an important consideration to London compositors: collectively, they brought work to over a hundred men. The papers were produced by craftsmen of the established trade, a few of whom are known. Henry Hetherington was a craftsman compositor, an ex-apprentice of T.C. Hansard of the famous parliamentary printing family, and in the 1830s he owned and worked his own presses.

John Cleave printed for himself and for others. George Berger, Benjamin Steill, Richard Lee, William Strange, G. Cowie, and T.C. Hansard, who collectively printed and published the unstamped, were all members of the established printing trade. They all had offices, machinery, and type in buildings situated within the heart of the London trade. In this overcrowded area men worked in cramped offices in face-to-face conditions. Close knit craft identity thus fostered was strengthened by a network of family and kinship bonds which had characterised the trade since its inception. So it was that in 1831, William Carpenter, John Cleave and William Strange, all printers and publishers of the unstamped, had presses and printing offices at 21 Paternoster Row. Next door, Benjamin Steill had his bookselling and publishing business and at number 93, James Watson had his press. In nearby Shoe Lane, John Cleave worked as a printer. Henry Hethrington's office backed onto Holborn in the early 'thirties. Benjamin Cousins' printing house was situated adjacent to Hetherington's in Lincoln's Inn Fields. In 1835 Hetherington was to be found in the Strand near George Berger's bookseller's shop and Cowie's printing office.

The story of the unstamped press' war against the oppression of successive Whig governments, and an analysis of the

113. Hollis, ibid., passim.


social and political impact of the pauper press have been discussed in detail elsewhere. Here, in the context of radical political ideas within the Victorian composing trade, it remains necessary to evaluate the contribution - if any - which the unstamped press made to these ideas.

The class conscious aspect of the unstamped papers remains a subject of controversy between Dr. Hollis and Professor Wiener in their analyses of the pauper press. Wiener's view, that those newspapers constituted a new working class press conducive to the emergence of Chartism, is not substantiated by Hollis' conclusion that in so far as a working class or new analysis of society did exist in these papers, it was confined to the writings of Henry Hetherington and Bronterre O'Brien, other publicists reflecting the old analysis, that is, they protested against the social, political, and economic evils epitomised in "old corruption" and their approach lacked any clear distinction between middle class and working class radicalism.

Later radical publications in which compositors of the LSC were involved suggest an affinity between producers of the unstamped and those of Chartist journals. Furthermore, it can be said concerning these radical papers and journals of the period 1848-1906, that a class analysis of society alone did not prevail in this literature, though it did predominate. After the mid-19th century, a class conscious analysis of society gained increasing currency in the composing trade and

during the late 1880's and 1890's, some socialist compositors did express an adherence to a class analysis of society in their writings and publications. 118

The expression of radical ideas is also evident in the composing trade's own trade circulars during the 1840's. Here, assumptions of craft control and craft exclusivity are expressed alongside articles on economic co-operation and egalitarian political philosophy. The Compositor's Chronicle (1840-43), 119 the Printer (1843-5), 120 and the Typographical Gazette (1846-7), 121 had connections through publication and vending with the publicists of the unstamped, most notably William Strange, and they emulated that outspoken tradition, albeit in a restrained tone, in a style which was active and dynamic, intended to jolt complacent journeymen out of their apathy and to serve as a reminder to employers of the presence, size and organization of their workforce. 122 Trade circulars advocated the spread of trade unionism amongst compositors: combination was after all for the protection and defence of those "gentleman compositors" 123 who were "the

118. See below, pp. 236, pp. 250-4; 257-9, 314-7.
120. The Printer, 1 Nov. 1843-1 June 1845, printed and published by R. Thompson: Warwick, no. 2818.
122. Hollis, op.cit., p. 310.
123. Warwick MSS. 28/CO/1/1/1, passim.
means of propagating knowlege". But at the same time, they were constructive, forward looking, and egalitarian, advocating "an era when the masses are becoming their own rulers", supporting the struggle of the working man against the capitalist, and condemning oppressive legislation which prevented amelioration of the working classes.

In January 1845 the London Union of Compositors associated with the nationwide compositors' organization, the National Typographical Association. Members of the London Union had balloted overwhelmingly in favour of this move. In the early 'forties the LUC's capital funds proved hopelessly inadequate to meet the exigencies of rising unemployment. Plummeting confidence in the union led to falling membership which threatened the union's disintegration. Moreover, there was no promise of improvement. More and more of those offices which had expanded during the late 'thirties in the wake of the Newspaper Stamp Reduction were now experiencing overemployment as production entered a plateau and as new compositors, apprenticed shortly after 1836 were made free. In the

124. The Printer, 1 Nov. 1843, p. 16.
125. Ibid.
126. Typographical Gazette, 1 June 1846, pp. 33-6; 1 July 1846, pp. 56-7; 1 Dec. 1846, pp. 152-3; 1 Mar. 1847, pp. 201-02.
mid-'forties then the Northern Union's suggestion of a nationwide association for protection and defence which did not require a sacrifice of local autonomy, seemed to London compositors the answer to their prayers. The London Society of Compositors - which is what the London Union became - elected a Committee to serve as the South Eastern District Board of the National Typographical Association at an Annual General Meeting on 22 January 1845. Five boards served the interests of compositors throughout the country. These were; the South Eastern, South Western, Midlands, Northern and Western. Sixpence a week was required from compositors in full employment, proportionally less for those in part-time work and nothing from unemployed members. Initially, this loose federation prospered; membership rose and funds grew. Each member Society gave a proportion of its subscriptions to the NTA, and these monies formed an employment fund which provided unemployed compositors with a nationally regulated unemployment benefit of 7/- per week. At the same time, a central authority would control strikes and disputes, thereby countering the weakness of localism which had so often proved detrimental to compositors in a trade dispute. Tramp relief, long a contentious issue in London was abolished in favour of an out of work allowance of 7/- a week. This was greatly

132. Child, op.cit., p. 82.
approved of by London compositors as it was thought to remove the threat of an influx of tramps from the provinces.\textsuperscript{133}

However, the NTA's effective apprenticeship restrictions exacerbated unemployment in London. During 1846 an increasing number of offices were closed to the trade for being "unfair" houses, that is, employing more apprentices than was allowed by the compositors' Society.\textsuperscript{134} Consequently, a growing number of strike hands became dependent on NTA funds. Double subscriptions temporarily ensured the payment of strike benefit, but their collection aroused tensions among the employed and these were aggravated by squabbles over the use of funds. Throughout the winter of 1846, conditions deteriorated: masters retaliated by price cutting and by employing unapprenticed boys, and in Edinburgh they blacklisted union labour altogether. In Spring 1847, in response to the introduction of composing machines 26 hands left Lloyd's office. This placed an intolerable strain on unemployment funds.\textsuperscript{135} London compositors saw a solution to their own desperate plight in the production of a newspaper - not a trade circular but a working man's newspaper - which would employ unemployed men and whose revenue from sales would offset production costs. The newspaper was to be established on the co-operative principle and financed on co-operative lines. Its organization was to be left to a subcommittee of the trade.

\textsuperscript{133} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{134} LSC in conjunction with NTA, \textit{Quarterly Delegate Reports}, April-Dec 1846: Warwick MSS. 28/CO/1/8/2/1.

\textsuperscript{135} LSC in conjunction with NTA, "Minutes": Warwick MSS. 28/CO/1/1/10 p. 216.
Executive. John Catchpool, the recent editor of the metropolitan trade's Typographical Circular, was a prominent member of this subcommittee. The LSC's paper was called the People's Newspaper. Its first edition appeared on Sunday 30th May 1847. Under the motto "Vox populi vox Dei" the paper carried metropolitan, provincial and foreign news, police reports, law reports, book and theatre reviews, "news and gossip of the week", and City intelligence. Editorials expressed the debt to Paineite radicalism, advocating a pluralistic, democratic solution to the problems of society. They promoted co-operation, religious toleration, and a reduction in the hours of labour and denounced taxation which oppressed and exploited the working man along with the inequality of wealth. Columnists like 'Silverpen,' 'philo,' and William Howitt, praised the paper — it was "for the people" and "a new organ of political power" — and they urged readers to embrace co-operation and education, and to


139. People's Newspaper, 30 May, pp. 6-7; 6 June, p. 7; 13 June, pp. 6-7; 4 July, pp. 6-7; 25 July, p. 7; 13 Aug., pp. 6-7

140. 30 May 1847, p. 7.
agitate for the franchise, the first step in emancipation. Edward Youl added a messianic note with his contributions which prophesied destruction of the aristocracy and the priesthood along with all the sluggards of Old Corruption. It is impossible to point to the dominance of one unifying body of ideas in the People's Newspaper. The paper reflected ideological heterogeneity; aristocrats and capitalists were both to blame for the present evil state of society.

Financially, the paper was less than a success. Despite revenue from advertising the newspaper was perpetually short of cash. It was under-capitalised: the People's Newspaper Company could not amass enough funds through its collective organization as sufficient shares were never taken up. This impecuniousness was exacerbated by unpopularity, as London chapels hostile to the venture withheld their subscriptions. Insufficient capital brought mounting debts and by the fifth issue the future of the People's Newspaper was in jeopardy. In July, less than two months after the newspaper's first issue, it owed £300. Other members of the NTA - particularly the Edinburgh Society - were incensed at the London men's initiative and furious at what they saw as the utter waste of precious funds which could have been used as unem-

141. Ibid.
142. 13 June, p. 8; 27 June, p. 5; 11 July, 1847, pp. 6, 11.
143. PRO BT 41 555/3046.
144. LSC in conjunction with NTA, "Minutes": Warwick MSS. 28/CO/1/1/10, 1-2, pp. 216-7.
145. Ibid., p. 217.
ployment benefit. On August 10th, the NTA District Board disassociated itself from the enterprise. By the 19th, the LSC realising the failure of its venture sold its shares to external concerns. The newspaper faded into oblivion. The paper caused controversy in London, but this was as nothing compared with the rising furore it engendered in the National Association. Contention flared between London compositors and provincial boards of the NTA. In an attempt to calm tempers the LSC sent out an address to all delegates of the National Association explaining their circumstances and defending the People's Newspaper. This document illustrates most clearly the nature of the London Society of Compositors during the 1840s: self-interested and independent, innovative and progressive. In setting up the People's Newspaper, London compositors insisted that they had not acted in contravention of the NTA's rules, for Rule Number 2 urged them to, "advance the interests of the profession and improve the social condition of members" and that, they argued, was precisely what they were doing. If the newspaper had been a success it was estimated that it would have saved the Association £1,000 per annum. Ultimately, the London craftsmen gave vent to their underlying motivation:

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146. Ibid.
147. Ibid., pp. 175, 177, 181, 217.
All who are acquainted with London men must be aware that there prevails among many of them a strong objection to the maintenance of the unemployed.149

The Society of exclusive, protectionist, London compositors had felt increasingly uneasy amid a national association which in its view could neither respect metropolitan tradition nor recognise metropolitan autonomy.

Within the LSC itself however, the newspaper's failure did have significant effects. The People's Newspaper venture had been something in the nature of an experiment: economic ideas outside the accepted preserve of either Friendly Society or trade union had been applied to the immediate economic context and had failed miserably. As a consequence, the popularity of ideas which promised immediate solution to age old problems like unemployment, through the adoption of new economic creeds, for example, collectivism or co-operation, plummeted. Along with them, the progenitors and promoters of these ideas, prominent in the London Society during the years when it was part of the NTA, fell in popularity. Thus it was unlikely that such avant garde ideas would surface within the London Society of Compositors in the near future. Of the compositors who served on the South Eastern District Board of the NTA - Edwards, Oliver, Bicknell, Johnson, Sorbie, Beckett, Reeves, Hartwell, Kenny and Roberson, - only Edwards was re-elected onto the Executive of the new LSC in February 1848.150

149. Warwick MSS. 28/CO/1/1/10, 1-2, p. 216, cf. p. 239.
150. LUC in conjunction with NTA, "Minutes": Warwick MSS. 28/CO/1/1/3, p. 166.
None of the men who had formed the subcommittee responsible for the *People's Newspaper* - Catchpool, Lloyd, Ross, Surcotte, Manning and Bowering, - were returned.\(^\text{151}\) In their stead, craftsmen concerned predominantly with trade propriety and craft exclusivity gained Executive positions. The pre-eminence of these men at just this time has served as prejudicial to future interpretation of the nature and attitudes of compositors during the later nineteenth century.

During the late summer of 1847, controversy over the *People's Newspaper* had obscured a general financial deterioration affecting both the London Society of Compositors and the National Typographical Association.\(^\text{152}\) An increasing number of London chapels withheld subscriptions from the metropolitan society and its authority drastically diminished when strike pay was suspended on September 17th. Some strike hands turned to raising funds independently of the compositors' union.\(^\text{153}\) Proposals for secession from the NTA were made with increasing urgency at delegate meetings of the London Society during the autumn of 1847. By December, the Committee accepted the proposal for secession and at an Annual General Meeting the following February, it was passed unanimously.\(^\text{154}\) On 29 February 1848, London compositors re-formed

\(^{151}\) Warwick MSS. 28/CO/1/1/10, 1-2, p. 166. Edward Edwards served as Secretary of the LSC from 1848 to 1856: LSC, Annual Reports, 1848-56.

\(^{152}\) Warwick MSS. 28/CO/1/1/10, 1-2, pp. 184, 214-5; 9th, 10th, 11th Quarterly Financial Statements in LSC/NTA, Annual Reports: Ibid., pp. 154-5, 182-3, 207-08.

\(^{153}\) Ibid., p. 199.

\(^{154}\) Ibid., pp. 231-2, 242-3.
themselves and drew up regulations governing the independent, autonomous, metropolitan organization of the London Society of Composers.155

Part II
Chapter 3

Trade Unionism, 1848-1892
The men did go ahead of their committee, for the men believed that the Masters really offered them too little - that was the plain fact. The committee were very desirous of doing everything that would prevent anything approaching to a strike; that was the policy of the committee.... However, the action of the men was more trenchant and they got it immediately, while I believe we should have had to wait a little longer to get it by our policy.1

The London Society of Compositors, formed at a Special General Meeting of the trade held at the Mechanics' Institution Holborn, on Tuesday, 29th February 1848, was established to protect and regulate the wages of labour in accordance with the London Scale of Prices, the News Scale, that for Parlia-

1. Evidence of Henry Self to the Royal Commission on Trade Unions, 1867, 10th Report, para. 553: PP, 1867-8, Vol.XXXIX.
mentary Work, and to uphold "such customs and usages as belong to the profession". Membership was open to every compositor who had served a seven year apprenticeship and who worked in London or within a fifteen mile radius of the capital and was in receipt of the London Scale of Prices. The entrance fee was 5/- and weekly subscriptions were proportionate to earnings; 2d per week for those earning more than 15/- and less than 20/- a week, 3d for those earning more than 20/- and less than 30/-, 4d a week for those earning 30/- and over. No subscription was to be paid by those earning less than 15/- a week. A compositor's membership entitled him to strike pay; unemployment benefit and financial aid during periods of part-time employment were available to him through the Society's Provident Fund. Management of the LSC was vested in a Committee answerable to General and Quarterly Delegate Meetings. The Committee was composed of 12 compositors all of whom had worked as journeymen in London for over 5 years. The Committee, whose members were elected every 6 months and who could serve indefinitely, was appointed from representatives of houses which were nominated by chapel delegates at Quarterly Meetings. In 1874, the period of Committee office was extended to 12 months and retirement for a year was required.

3. Ibid., Rules III and IV.
4. Ibid., Rule III.
5. Ibid.
7. Rules of the LSC, 1848, V and IX.
after 2 years of consecutive service. Delegates were appointed in each chapel to represent every twelve members. Where membership was less than twelve, one delegate represented the chapel. Following a rules revision of 1865, the ratio was changed to one delegate for every 6 chapel members. No member could serve as Committeeman and chapel delegate at the same time. Delegates served for three months, during which time in their collective capacity at Quarterly Meetings they voted on Committee recommendations, and in their individual offices, they heard disputes between chapel members and reported disputes concerning rates of pay or working conditions to the Committee. The Committee then took up these matters and deliberated on questions arising, for example: the rate and method of pay for stereotyped matter which compositors had to include within a newly composed page; the rate for 'fat' or reprinted matter; payment for night work, etc.

The Committee also had authority to decide how an issue was to be determined, i.e. by discussion and vote at a General Meeting, by discussion and vote at a Delegate Meeting, or by a comprehensive ballot of the trade. Initiation of policy by Committee and/or delegates was not defined in the initial

8. *Rules of the LSC*, 1874, Rule XIII.
rules, though both bodies were presumably free to initiate policy as long as their proposals met with the approval of a General Meeting.

In 1848 the membership of the London Society of Compositors comprised general and book compositors, compositors who worked in periodical and weekly news houses, together with a handful of daily newsmen. The Society of London Daily Newspaper Compositors looked after the interests of daily newsmen till 1853 when the SLDNC merged with the LSC. Then, a News Committee of the LSC was set up to preserve the interests and protect the Scale of all newsmen. The Committee was composed of a member from every morning and evening paper along with a delegate from each weekly. Two members of the general Committee sat on the News Committee, and reciprocally, two news Committee men sat on the general Executive. The business and procedure of union meetings i.e. General Meetings, Quarterly Delegate Meetings, and Annual General Meetings, together with the work of subcommittees were circulated to printing houses of the Society. Initially these reports were in longhand, later on, printed form became the norm. These official Reports do have problems: the "Minutes" of General Meetings are only available for 1861 and 1862; Reports of Quarterly Delegate Meetings are for the most part limited to Agendas and Quarterly Financial Statements; Reports of Annual General Meetings, though incomplete, are more informative, but they give coverage of only the most prominent events and develop-

14. See Below, n. 32.
ments of the year. Collectively, official reports supply no
information as to names of members and, before 1882, only
cursory references to prominent Committeemen are given.

Newspapers of the trade are a helpful source of information
here. Though sporadic, trade journals do supply news about
all aspects of the compositors' trade. Working conditions,
educational concerns, social events and Fleet Streep gossip,
as well as union policy and deliberations fill their columns,
written in a more informal style than that of their official
counterparts. Taken together, union reports and trade jour­
nals provide a more comprehensive view of the London Society
of Compositors during the second half of the nineteenth
century.

The first years of the new LSC were prosperous: by the
end of 1850 alone membership had reached 1,800 and funds stood
at £984.14.10. During these initial flourishing years how­
ever, signs of tension became evident. The first Executive of
the Society was made up of moderate, cautious, men who were
both elitist and isolationist and not inclined to strike

15. See Introduction, n. 47.

16. After 1882, officers of the Society are printed in the
Annual Reports, e.g; LSC, Annual Report, 1883, p. 7.

1853; the Typographical Circular, Apr. 1854-Sept. 1858;
London Press Journal, Nov. 1858-Jan. 1859; Printers'
Journal and Typographical Magazine, Jan. 1865-Mar. 1869;
Fleet Street Gazette, Feb.-May 1874; Printing Review,
Jan.-Dec. 1879; the Printer, Nov. 1883-Aug. 1888;
Vigilance Gazette, May 1888-Feb. 1889; London Printer's
Circular and Vigilance Gazette, May 1889-May 1890. For a
full description and publication details, see Appx. A.

18. Cumulative figures printed in 1906 showing the progress
action. This Committee's members had lived through the fiasco of the National Typographical Association and they knew only too well the adverse effects which long-term strikes could bring to a trade society; strikes drained a Society of its funds and could bring disintegration. There was some justification for the view that striking hurt only men, not masters. On the other hand, compositors working in an office where non-union practices like the employment of supernumerary apprentices were customary, and who felt their earnings were depressed and their status eroded as a result of the Society's apparent toleration of these practices, took a rather different view of strikes than that of the Executive. Moreover, this feeling that the Committee did not accurately represent the journeymen of the LSC, was furthered by the day-to-day experience of craft members, and by the peculiar relationship existing between Committee and chapel delegates. As problems arose, a compositor or a number of compositors would take grievances to the Father of the Chapel. He would solve the matter if he could, or if not, would make the situation clear to delegate representatives of the chapel.\(^{19}\) They in turn would deal with the matter or if it was a Scale issue they would report it to the Committee. However, the jurisdiction of the Committee as distinct from that of the delegates was not always clear. Furthermore, areas of responsibility had not been defined by the rules of 1848 and this encouraged resentment of the Committee by delegates, particularly by

19. The FOC may well have been a delegate himself as the two offices were not mutually exclusive: Rules of the LSC, 1848, Rules V, VI.
those who felt themselves representative of a chapel based egalitarian trade whose decisions were subordinate to those of a centralised Committee. This feeling of resentment was generalised among the journeymen in certain chapels who had experienced an unfavourable Committee decision, against which the rules allowed no appeal. Feelings of antagonism amongst members were heightened by the fact that the Committee could prevent the continued discussion of a settled issue for six months. In the first place, the Committee determined how an issue was to be decided, i.e. by a General Meeting or by a Delegate Meeting or by a ballot, and then the rules prevented re-discussion of the issue for the next six months. Only the signatures of 100 men could convene a General Meeting and even then, the six-month restriction prevailed. Moreover, tensions arising from the above were exacerbated by the nature of the Executive's official posts, which having no time limit tended to become sinecures. A rules revision in 1882 provided for the removal of officers following a vote of no confidence, but this provision does not seem to have been used throughout this period. Between 1848 and 1892 the Society had only five Secretaries, one of whom, Henry Self, served for 12 years and for the four years prior to his term as Secretary, held the office of Chairman of the LSC.

20. Ibid., Rule VIII.
21. Ibid., Rule XXII.
22. Ibid., Rule XXIII.
23. Rules of the LSC, 1882, Rule XLIV.
24. LSC, Annual and Trade Reports, 1848-92.
What did the union do for its members?

The aims of the London Society of Compositors were essentially protection and defence: to protect its members against enroachment upon their levels of control and independence primarily through strict adherence to apprenticeship limitation, adherence to restrictions on non-union labour, and defence against erosion of income; and simultaneously, to provide financial benefits during the vagaries of the trade cycle and in the event of disaster or misfortune.

During the early years of the Society, the effects of a succession of disputes which arose from the wholesale rejection of both unionised labour and the London Scale of Prices by some employers, proved fundamental to the success of the young metropolitan Society. Proprietors of the Morning Post newspaper dismissed their compositors early in January 1851 and replaced them with non-union compositors from Edinburgh and Glasgow who were willing to work over 10 hours a day for 28/- a week, "wholly in opposition to the London practice". Later, on October 1st 1852, all 32 compositors on the Liberal newspaper, the Evening Sun, were given a fortnight's notice. On October 14th, the men were discharged and like their counterparts on the Morning Post were replaced by non-union men. The dismissed compositors immediately turned to the SLDNC and the LSC for support. Both Societies provided unemployment benefit, and established defence committees to co-ordinate

25. Typographical Protection Circular, Feb. 1851, p. 117.

policy and procedure during the dispute. A boycott of the Sun was urged. Printed hand-outs explaining the compositors' case called for the co-operation of publicans and coffee house owners in the boycott. In November, a joint defence committee was formed under the direction of W. Maclean of the SLDNC and during the winter months, placards and posters asked for support from trade unions outside the printing trade. Black lists of offending compositors were circulated to London's printing houses. In the early spring of 1853 messages of support came in from the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, the London Carpenters and Joiners, Bricklayers, Bookbinders, Stone-masons, Cabinet Makers, Gilders, Piano-Makers, Wheelrights, Masons and Tailors. During that turbulent spring, the LSC and the SLDNC merged to form one union. Close co-operation and the smooth running of the boycott eroded old antagonisms. The News Department within the amalgamated Society remained autonomous - its chapels and Trade Committee dealing with infringements of the News Scale of 1820 - but for more general matters, for the protection and defence

28. St. Bride Trade Colln., nos. 67, 73.
31. Typographical Protection Circular, Nov. 1852, pp. 210, 212.
of the trade, the general and news compositors now combined their interests in the re-formed LSC.\textsuperscript{33} This was to prove a turbulent, long-lasting and highly significant alliance, and initially it gave a great boost to the journeymen in dispute. At length, the proprietor of the \textit{Evening Sun} capitulated. He reinstated the original compositors at accepted union rates.\textsuperscript{34} Following the merger of trade societies, the union's triumph at the end of so protracted a dispute gave the new Society of Compositors an immediate fillip. The merger itself was psychologically advantageous for the newsmen were regarded as the cream of the composing trade whose work was more intense and demanding than that of ordinary composition and whose earnings could be considerably higher than those of their counterparts in the book trade. Newsmen were traditionally more exclusive than book compositors, and were revered by them for their success against proprietors. In the late 1850s then, metropolitan compositors were strong and confident and they gave a stability to the LSC which was to remain the hallmark of succeeding decades.

Protection of wage rates by defence against masters' encroachment on the Scale in individual houses was carried out in two stages: initially the chapel(s) affected took their case to the Committee; then the Executive conducted the proce-

\textsuperscript{33} LSC, \textit{Annual Report}, 1853, (np.)

\textsuperscript{34} The exact date is unclear. The LSC's Jubilee publication, \textit{A Brief Record of Events} (1898), suggests the employer capitulated before the merger (p. 72) but the contemporary \textit{Typographical Circular} suggests the dispute continued till 1854: \textit{Typographical Circular}, April 1854, p. 4.
dure of the dispute. In 1853, the Committee dealt with disputes concerning piece rates versus establishment rates at the offices of Vizitelly, Barclay, Reynell & Weight, Stevens, Saville, Edwards, Waterlow, Wardsell and Keely and Cox & Co. In 1855, compositors' pay for "standing matter", i.e. reprint material, came under pressure and the Committee defended disputes arising from this issue at the office of Bells' Weekly Messenger and in the printing houses of Jack, Harrison, Holyoake, Secombe, Steven and Waterlow. The Committee's administration and execution of individual wage disputes was supplemented by its role in collective bargaining. Periodically, proposals for a wage advance were put forward by chapel delegates. Following a favourable delegate ballot, those proposals were adopted as a general wage advance and presented by the Committee in the form of a memorial to a general body of employers.

On certain issues, Executive tardiness aggravated the rift developing between the Committee and the more militant rank and file. "Farming", the sub-contracting of work by masters to non-union houses, was one such issue. Farming was generally accepted to be an evil of the trade; it kept "rat holes" in business, kept hours long and acted as a restraint on wages. From its introduction into the book trade from weekly press offices at the end of 1851, the system was denounced by book compositors and the Typographical Protection

35. LSC, *Annual Report*, 1853 (np.)
Circular demanded its abolition. The Committee did nothing. Vainly the Circular denounced "this passive doctrine as disgracefully peurile....the system should be pronounced against and not seemingly approved of through inertness".

In the late 'fifties, it became obvious that the current Executive had adopted much of the style and tone of its predecessor - the original Committee with Edward Edwards as Secretary. When W. Cox, and after him William Beckett, served as Secretary, government of the Society retained the caution of the late 'forties and early 'fifties and became characterised by a tendency to isolation from other societies, and by an emphasis upon constitutational procedures in internal matters. The Executive of these years was a defender of journeymen's privileges when disputes with employers arose, though on occasion its concentration on legitimate procedure was detrimental to union interests in trade affairs. In 1859, a petition signed by 100 members suggested the Committee had forgotten the Society's unemployed, and urged that Executive pressure be put on employers to reduce the hours of labour thereby providing work for most craftsmen of the trade. In this period, union prosperity and trade stability gave the seal of approval to this increasingly isolationist lead-

38. Ibid.
39. Ibid., p. 167.
40. W. Cox was Secretary from 1856 to 1858; Beckett was Secretary from 1858-64: LSC, Annual Reports, 1848-65.
41. LSC, Annual Reports, 1850-62.
42. LSC, Annual Report, 1859.
ership. In some quarters of the LSC, hostility to the Executive grew, especially among chapel oriented compositors who found this manner of government stifling. Robert Hartwell, for one, felt the atmosphere of the LSC quite oppressive. A compositor who had worked through the 'thirties, then a Chartist printer, and later sub-editor of George Potter's BeeHive, Hartwell was incensed at the political apathy of the leadership of the Society of which he had been a member. Evidently he found the LSC with its "especial horror of any measure having a political complexion about it", too claustrophobic for comfort.

In 1866, chapel claims for an increase in the book piece rate of 1/2d per 1,000 ens, a minimum establishment rate of 36/- for a week of 58 hours, increased overtime and Sunday rates and a rise in the price of corrections, came before the Committee. Such claims were neither outlandish nor unprecedent ed. Compositors justified their proposals by referring to the increased cost of living, "the working man is now called upon to pay from 15 to 20 per cent more than he did a few years back."

 Moreover, compositors in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Manchester, Liverpool, and Birmingham had gained both pay

increases and improved working conditions before the London memorial was even drawn up. In London in late 1865, chapel representatives had formed a Special Committee on the Advance of Wages. They had drawn up a draft memorial and circulated this for comment to all chapels in the union. Replies from the chapels were returned by December 15th. In the autumn of 1865, correspondents to the Printers' Journal condemned the Committee for its "conservative and apathetic behaviour" over this wage claim. However, no move was made by the Executive until January 1866, when a memorial was drawn up and submitted to the Master Printers' Association. On the masters' refusal to accept the compositor's terms, the Committee asked non-union compositors in London for support. Rank and file craftsmen demanded that more pressure be exerted on the MPA: the situation was serious and the men were determined that their claims were justified. On May 14th the Committee met employers to discuss those proposals to which master printers had objected. No comprehensive agreement was reached. Reconsideration continued in correspondence. As the summer of 1866 got under way, an article in the Printers' Journal gave


vent to frustration among the compositors' rank and file and poured scorn on the suggestion of yet another meeting of the trade to discuss proposals:

The advance wages question has moved yet another step! Precious slow baby this. Takes a good deal of sweetmeat and coaxing to get it on its legs....meantime our Bluenoses must beware of the Radicals amongst us for the latter are determined to have the whole hog or none! 52

At the meeting of the union which took place on 4th July, compositors voted against the Committee's recommendation of accepting the masters' amendments of 1/4d per 1,000 ens and a basic establishment wage of 33/- 53 A pamphlet entitled Shall We Strike? circulated the trade. 54 The trade journal saw the masters' situation as "never more precarious" and that of the union as "never so strong". 55 In September, the Society voted for double subscriptions as a defence against the coming strike. 56 In view of the circumstances, the attitude of employers became more conciliatory. Early in October, the influential house of Spottiswoode made known its decision to accept the Society's proposals independently of the MPA. 57 Eventually the masters capitulated: on October 29th came news of their agreement. The 1866 Wage Advance gained London com-

52. Printers' Journal, 2 July 1866, p. 146
55. Printers' Journal, 16 July 1866, p. 156.
57. Printers' Journal, 10 Nov. 1866, pp. 240-1.
positors a rise of 1/2d per 1,000 ens, an establishment rate of 36/- for a week of 60 hours, overtime at 3d an hour, Sunday work at 6d per hour extra and increases for corrections and the composition of Roman Founts.58

Defence of wage rates was complimentary to the Society's policy of control of the labour supply throughout this period. In 1848 at the formation of the Society, membership was restricted to those who had served (and had proof of their servitude) a seven year apprenticeship, or who had a right to the trade by patrimony.59 This of course excluded all women from the LSC. Prohibition of female labour was customary within the composing craft in the 19th century.60 It was not of course that women compositors in principle were objected to: no, indeed, it was only because their pay was lower than men's that they gave cause for alarm. To give them union membership would be to sanction that lower pay scale and that might threaten the hallowed Scale.61 Occasionally, it was declared that women compositors would be welcomed into the LSC if, and only if, they were paid according to the London Scale

59. Rules of the LSC, 1848, Rule II.
60. See above, pp. 59-60.
Alongside the restriction of female labour, the Society attempted to prohibit turnovers by abolishing their status. Excessive apprenticeship and turnover labour did however remain problems to journeymen as they had to the composing trade for centuries. In 1850, solution to the apprenticeship problem was thrown open to members of the Society. Edward Edwards in his prize winning essay, *The Disease and the Remedy*, optimistically urged that unity of association was the answer,

All we have to do, as workmen, is to struggle earnestly and undauntingly to strengthen (association) and hasten its perfection; bringing our unitedness to bear in defence of existing wages and apprentice limitation.64

In the second half of the 19th century, as unionism spread within the London composing trade the problem of apprenticeship was brought under control. The *Annual Report* for 1889 indicates that the ratio had increased from 1 apprentice to 3 journeymen in 1847, to 1 apprentice to 4 1/2 journeymen in the late 1880s.65 In the Machine Scale agreement of 1896 compositors at last secured a written agreement of masters fixing a minimum ratio of 1:3.66

63. Rules of the LSC, 1848, Rule XVII.
At this time there existed within the trade a number of exclusive employment societies committed to safeguarding the employment of their members. These societies or clubs, for example, "The Herrings", "The Three Bells", "The Caxtons", "The Lyons", and "The West End" were known as Gifts. Each had around 50 to 70 members. For subscriptions of 1d or 2d per week, Gift members were guaranteed unemployment benefit when out of work, but also, and more significantly, they were assured of the promise of further work, for employed members were pledged to find work for less fortunate members of the Gift. Certain Gifts had arrangements with specific printing houses by which the houses initially called on them when compositors were required. The union itself would only be approached by representatives of these houses if the Gift was unable to supply sufficient hands. Gifts were controversial both in the London printing trade and outside the capital. Provincial compositors recognised them as a direct bar to their gaining employment in London. A correspondent to the Scottish Typographical Circular in 1862 complained of the unfairness of the labour market in London: "There is in existence what are called 'gifts', but their proper name should be monopolies...". Similarly, staunch trade unionists within the LSC saw Gifts to be undermining the union and eroding its sway. Yet the relationship between the LSC leadership and the Gifts had long been equivocal for a number of reasons, primar-


68. Webb EA Vol. XXXI, f. 244.
ily because it was thought by a good number of compositors that trade unionism within the craft had grown out of the Gift system.69 Hence any suggestion of abolition met with hostility from the traditionalists, a powerful force to be reckoned with in a trade where tradition was pre-eminent. Moreover, the LSC had no legislative authority to abolish independent societies existing within the composing trade but outside the union. Eventually, in 1893, a ballot of the Society prohibited union members from holding membership of a Gift.70

The problems which both apprenticeship and Gifts presented to compositors' control of the labour supply were exacerbated by casual labour. Casuality was endemic to the printing trade in the 19th century: it had characterised metropolitan composing in the 17th century,71 and persisted within a seasonal trade which took its lead from the parliamentary year. During the second half of the 19th century as the importance of parliamentary printing declined, the level of casualty as a whole fell,72 but in newspaper printing the system flourished. Here, restrictions on casuals who were either "smounters", i.e., men who worked full time on one paper but in their spare time on another,73 or "grass hands", i.e.


70. LSC, Annual Report, 1893, p. 37.


73. Moxon, op. cit.
temporaries without security of employment,\textsuperscript{74} were vigorously enforced by the chapels who were solely responsible for their employment. Grass hands for example, were paid not by the employer but by the companionship.\textsuperscript{75} The LSC strove unsuccessfully to outlaw this invidious system: recommendations that grasses should be abolished were ignored.\textsuperscript{76}

The London union's response to any threatened diminution of its control over the labour supply was reflected in the Society's policy on tramping. The LSC saw the tramping system as a permanent threat to its control, one which would effect insidious erosion by encouraging a steady stream of provincial compositors to come to London.\textsuperscript{77} Initially the tramping system had been established for the alleviation of unemployment, so that a journeyman thrown out of work in one town or city could gain employment in another. A member of one typographical society was entitled to tramp relief on his travels in search for new work by virtue of his tramp card, which indicated that whilst in employment he had paid the necessary subscriptions.\textsuperscript{78} Among the trade generally, difficulties arose concerning both reciprocal benefits and differing amounts of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{74} C.T. Jacobi, \textit{The Printers' Vocabulary}, 1888, p. 54.
\item \textsuperscript{76} Howe, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 462.
\item \textsuperscript{77} LUC, \textit{Report of Committee to the Compositors of London on the proposed N.T.A.} (nd.): Warwick MSS. 28/CO/1/1/8.
\end{itemize}
subscription and relief. Moreover, the system was generally acknowledged to be open to abuse, but it was retained in many skilled trades during the 19th century because of the solution it proffered to the ever present problem of unemployment. In London, in the composing trade of the early 19th century, there was as we have seen, a tradition of opposition to any kind of unemployment relief. Vestiges of this remained in some quarters and here, the attitude to tramp relief was thoroughly hostile: craftsmen reluctant to support their own Society members when out of work were not at all charitable toward unemployed provincial men. Moreover, it was felt by London craftsmen that once an initial concession was made to provincial men, the stream of provincial compositors would fast become a torrent. The London Society had long favoured emigration rather than tramping, both to alleviate unemployed compositors and to relieve the depressed labour market in the metropolis. As early as 1849 the Typographical Protection Circular declared, "we say substitute emigration upon as large a scale as the profession can afford". Moreover, resentment toward provincial Societies heightened in the years immediately following repeal of the newspaper stamp, for the


82. Typographical Protection Circular, 6 June 1849, p. 23; Webb EA Vol. XXX1, ff. 76, 228.
metropolitan Society experienced stagnation of trade in the late 'fifties, whereas their provincial counterparts enjoyed the boom which repeal brought in its wake.\textsuperscript{83} This did not encourage the LSC to improve the amount of benefit for provincial tramps coming to London in the late 'fifties.

Country compositors received 5/- on their arrival in the capital (6/6 if they arrived on Saturday) and in return, London tramps received 5/- in the provinces.\textsuperscript{84} London men going on tramp were given a lump sum as well as tramp relief by their Society. In the 1860s this sum amounted to between 10/- and 30/-; in the 1870s to between 5/- and 20/-\textsuperscript{.} If a compositor returned to London within six months, this amount had to be repaid.\textsuperscript{85} In 1862, when proposals were put forward by provincial societies for 1d per mile national tramp relief, London men took the opportunity of withdrawing from any involvement with provincial schemes for tramp relief.\textsuperscript{86} Throughout the 'sixties and 'seventies, the LSC continued to pay country tramps 5/-.\textsuperscript{87} In 1881, the long running highly problematical issue was eventually solved when reciprocity of provincial and metropolitan tramp relief was abolished, and Removal Grants of between 10/- and 40/- replaced loans and

\textsuperscript{83} See below, Figs. 1, 2, 4, pp. 33-34; A. J. Lee, The Origins of the Popular Press, 1855-1914, 1976, pp. 68-9; Tables 1, 2, 4, 5; See below, pp. 165-71.

\textsuperscript{84} LSC, Annual Report, 1855: Warwick MSS. 28/CO/1/9/1/1; Webb EA Vol. XXXI, ff. 229-30.

\textsuperscript{85} Webb EA Vol. XXXI, f. 229.

\textsuperscript{86} LSC, Annual Report, 1862: Warwick MSS, 28/CO/1/9/1/1; Webb EA Vol. XXXI, ff. 108-10.

\textsuperscript{87} Webb EA Vol.XXX1, f. 229.
grants to London compositors wishing to leave the capital and settle elsewhere.\textsuperscript{88}

Overall, the London Society of Compositors protected the craft's control of the labour supply and defended its members against an influx of unskilled labour or a stream of provincial craftsmen by apprentice restrictions, the prohibition of female labour, regulations concerning tramping and aid to emigration. As the second half of the 19th century developed, the Society's control of the labour supply became more effective as apprentice restrictions were observed by both masters and journeymen, Gifts gradually disappeared from the London craft, and tramping no longer eroded restrictions on the labour supply nor constituted a permanent drain on financial resources.

The union provided benefits for its members which initially were quite similar to the sickness and funeral emoluments available through Friendly Societies.\textsuperscript{89} In the early LSC, benefit provision was the responsibility of two separate funds: the Trade Fund and the Provident Fund. The Trade Fund was formed by union subscriptions collected by Fathers of the Chapels. The Trade Fund paid strike benefit for 15 weeks amounting to between 13/- and 25/- depending on a craftsman's subscriptions.\textsuperscript{90} After 1852, it paid members com-


\textsuperscript{90} Rules of the LSC, 1848, Rules VI and XIII.
pensation for loss of tools by fire. It was the job of the FOC in each chapel to administer the payment of these benefits from union funds. The Provident Fund on the other hand, was a semi-independent body under the aegis of the union aimed to provide against unemployment. Individual Society members could be members of the Provident Fund upon the payment of 1/- entrance fee and subscriptions of 2d per week. As well as these voluntary contributions, the union ensured the Provident Fund of the amount of one fourth of the union's financial subscriptions every quarter. The Fund was run by a committee of seven, five of whom were to be appointed annually from the Society's AGM and the remaining two of whom were to be LSC Committee members. In 1848, the Provident Fund paid unemployment benefit amounting to:

£3 in each half year; i.e. from January to June £3, and from July to December £3, to be paid in sums not exceeding 8 shillings, nor less than one shilling per week. Thirteen weeks to elapse between the completion of the first payment of £3 and the resumption of the second payment of £3.

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91. LSC, Annual Report, 1852, et seq.: Warwick MSS. 28/CO/1/9/1/1.
92. Rules of the LSC, 1848, Rules XIII and XIV.
93. Its antecedents lay in the London Union of Compositors; see the Printer, Jan. 1844, pp. 33-5.
95. Rules of the LSC, 1848, Rule II.
96. Rules of the London Compositors' Provident Fund, 1848, XII.
97. Ibid., Rule I.
Each claimant had to sign the Society's call-book every day he was unemployed. If he was in part-time work earning less than 10/- a week, the Provident Fund made those earnings up to 10/- on receipt of the signature of the FOC of the house where the craftsmen was employed. Any member over 13 weeks in arrears with his subscriptions was eligible for the Funds' benefits.

Benefits available to members of the Provident Fund changed during the first decade of the Fund's existence, though full details of these changes are not available till the 1860s. It is clear though that during these years funeral benefit, emigration aid, and medical insurance in the form of endowments to hospitals and dispensaries, were added to the benefits available to Provident Fund members.

In 1863, the Provident Fund merged with the general union fund, all subscriptions being collected by the FOC within each office. Subscriptions were between 2d and 6d depending on earnings, and the annual amount of unemployment benefit had been reduced to £5.4.0 paid in amounts of up to 8/- a week for

98. *Ibid.*, Rule VIII.
100. Provident Fund reports do not begin till 1860: Warwick MSS. 28/CO/1/12/1.
101. LSC, Annual Reports, 1854, 1855, 1856 and 1857: Warwick MSS. 28/CO/1/9/1/1.
103. LSC, Provident Fund Report, 1863: Warwick MSS. 28/CO/1/12/1.
a maximum of 13 weeks, unless the fund's assets exceeded £4,000, when the weekly benefit automatically rose to 10/-.

By 1866, funeral allowance stood at £5 for a member of 5 years' duration, with an extra £1 for each extra year to a maximum of £12. Similarly, emigration allowance amounted to £5 for a member of 2 years' standing with an extra £1 for each extra year up to a maximum of £10. These benefits remained unchanged till 1871 when additional unemployment benefit was paid as soon as the reserve fund reached £3,000.

In 1874, the maximum annual unemployment pay was increased to £9.12.0 or 16 weeks at 12/-. Subscriptions were increased to a maximum of 7d in 1871 and were increased again in 1881 to a maximum of 8d. Unemployment benefit remained unchanged throughout the 1880s. After proposals and trial schemes during the early 'seventies, superannuation became available to certain members of the union in 1876/7. Compositors over the age of 55, who had paid union subscriptions for 20

104. Ibid.
105. LSC, Provident Fund Report, 1866: Warwick MSS. 28/CO/1/12/1; Webb EA Vol. 31, f. 222.
106. LSC, Provident Fund Report, 1866.
107. LSC, Provident Fund Report, 1871; Webb EA Vol. XXX1, f. 222.
108. Webb EA Vol. XXX1, f. 223.
109. Ibid., ff. 219-20.
110. Ibid., f. 220.
111. There is some discrepancy over dating here. Official LSC Reports gives 1876/7 for implementation (Annual Report 1876/7), whilst the Webbs' researchers suggest superannuation was available in 1874: Webb EA Vol. XXX1, f. 223.
years and who were unable to earn over 15/- a week were entitled to 4/- per week. A member of 25 years' standing received 5/-. Any craftsman totally incapacitated from following his trade was entitled to 4/- a week if he had been a member for 15 years, 5/- a week for 20 years' membership and 10/- a week if he had been a union member for 30 years.112

By the 1880s then, the LSC's benefits provided unemployment and strike pay, emigration and removal allowances, compensation for loss of tools by fire, medical insurance in the form of donations to medical charities, superannuation and funeral benefits.113 From 1886 the Society employed its own surgeon.114 On top of these benefits, the Society provided a well used library and reading room.115 In addition, through the chapel structure members of the London Society of Compositors had access to a burgeoning array of independent Friendly Societies; for example, the Printers' Almshouse Fund, the Typographical Widow and Orphan Nominee Fund, the Compositors' Permanent Sick Fund116 and the Printers' Pension Society.117

113. LSC, Annual Reports, 1870-89; Webb EA Vol. XXXI, f. 224.
114. LSC, Annual Report, 1886 (back page), et seq.
117. See above, p. 16.
These benefits attracted and retained membership. As the graphs on pages 337 and 338 show, the early decades of the Society's existence were ones of overall prosperity: membership grew, the proportion of the union to the size of the trade increased and funds in hand became substantial.

In the 1860s and 'seventies then, whilst the composing trade was still subject to the cycle of the parliamentary year and whilst it was becoming increasingly vulnerable to the demand and supply of the commercial market, its craftsmen members were seemingly well protected by their membership of the union.
In the third quarter of the 19th century, the concept of trade unionism was undergoing change among members of the LSC: its meaning was evolving. In great measure, this was the result of regulation of the trade by the LSC working alone in the absence of a Master Printers' Association, together with the union's increasing capacity to provide for its members. The Society came to be regarded by its rank and file during this period as an organization not merely for defence, but as one which had gained and which held the initiative in trade matters. In the aftermath of the Second World War, Dorothy M. Sessions writing of the progress of the Master Printers' Association in the 20th century, explains prevailing attitudes among master printers during the later decades of the Victorian Period:

Competition in the printing trade was as keen then as it is now, and the larger firms had a tendency to regard one another as mortal enemies, whilst the smaller printers were 'hardly worthy of considera-
tion.'

The implications of this absence of unity among master printers for the union's development, and for the meaning of trade unionism to members of the LSC throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, cannot be overstated. During

these years an internecine spirit prevailed among master printers. The masters' organization formed during the early 'fifties had been of finite duration: its aim being to conclude the dispute of 1852/3, after which it disbanded. Later in the decade, the outcome of the Arbitration Committee discouraged further attempts at unity at least for the time being. This Committee established in 1856 was composed of three master printers, three compositors and a barrister, and it came to grief within two years over a decision allowing standing advertisements to be given to piece hands and paid for at 'stab' rates. This decision contravened a regulation of the trade which had been in force from the Society's foundation, i.e. that piece workers should not be employed on the 'stab for a period of less than a fortnight. The Society's representatives therefore appealed against it in the Court of Exchequer. Here, Judges Watson and Channell found in favour of the compositors. As a result employers' representatives withdrew from the Arbitration Committee. In 1866, a temporary organization of master printers was formed to deal


120. Rules of the LSC, 1848, Rule X.


122. LSC, Annual Report, 1858; Typographical Circular, March 1858, pp. 418-20. The decision is important; it secured piece hands' rights to the benefits accruing from standing forms and its effect on the payment for wrappers (outer covering of a publication) at the time, and upon general advertising ever since, has never seriously been challenged: Howe, London Compositor, p. 268.
with the 1866 Wage Advance, and this organization remained through the late 1860s eventually breaking down in 1870 over compositors' claims for a reduction in hours and a piece rate increase. This dissolution occurred during negotiations which preceeded a reduction in hours and an advance on piece-work rates of a further 1/2d per 1,000 ens, secured in 1872, more commonly known as the 9-hour Agreement.

Inherently competitive, master printers were prone to dispute and division and this had important implications not simply for future unity among proprietors, but more significantly, for the LSC's Executive. After 1870, the LSC Committee was left free to negotiate Scale changes and improvements in working conditions with individual master printers. At first this freedom was regarded as an irksome responsibility, not always welcome to the Committee, and not always appreciated by masters or men of the trade. Negotiations with individual printing houses made for an apparently endless stream of work and for diversity of agreements. As time went on however, decision making in trade matters became an accepted Committee function. It was characteristic of the LSC during this period that the procedure and legality of judgements in this sphere were given the sanction of a court of law. In the 1850s, Committee deliberation had sufficed to fill the gap presented by an absence of master printers: in the 'seventies and 'eighties the LSC Executive affirmed the legitimacy of its

proceedings by appeals in a court of law. In the early spring of 1870, Law and Defence of Scale costs amounted to £80.16.3, £6.12.8 of which were lawyers' expenses. By 1877, solicitor's fees alone amounted to £103.9.10 for litigation in Defence of the Scale. In the early 1890s, union initiative together with compositors' judicious exploitation of the rivalry between master printers came to fruition in the Book and News Advance of February 1891. In the past, Scale agreements had taken the form of revision to and amendment of the Scales of 1810 and 1820, but in 1891 these Scales were overhauled, amalgamated, and redrafted in favour of the workforce. The Scale of 1891 included: an increase of 2/- per week on establishment flat rates in book and news departments bringing the weekly rate for 54 hours to 38/-; advances on the price per 1,000 ens for various modes of piece-work; an increase in overtime pay and Sunday rates; an interpretation of the weekly news scale to the benefit of compositors; and finally, and most significantly, it affirmed the right of a piece-companionship to appoint its own clicker.

The master printers who agreed to this new Scale were those of the Printing and Allied Trades' Association formed on

125. LSC, 89th Quarterly Report, April 1870, p. 2.
126. LSC, Annual Report, 1877, p. 2.
128. Ibid. The "clicker" was the elected head of the companionship; not to be confused with the employer's overseer or foreman.
November 8th, 1890. The committee of this new body included the most prestigious names in the London trade: H. Vane Stow, W.C. Knight Clowes, Philip Waterlow, Cecil Harrison, Walter Hazell, George Unwin, and G.F. McCorquordale. Despite their prominence however, these men were the representatives of a group of 38 master printers at a time when London's printing offices numbered between 1,300 and 1,400. They cannot then be seen as representative of employers as a whole. Indeed, tensions and antagonisms among master printers continued during these years: Charles Awdry of W.H. Smith and Son for example, felt that a masters' combination could be too oppressive of the workforce and he declared his intention to become a member of the Printing and Allied Trades' Association only if it declared a policy toward the unions which was defensive but not aggressive. The decades from 1870 to 1890 have rightly been termed those of "regulation by union rule". Certainly, union domination in trade matters during this period proved crucial to the development of the LSC during the second half of the 19th century.

129. Printing and Allied Trades' Association (P.A.T.A.), 8 Nov. 1890 to Aug. 1894; continued as Master Printers and Allied Trades' Association, Aug. 1894 to 1894; continued as Federation of Master Printers and Allied Trades, 1901 to 1904; continues as London Master Printers' Association: Members Circulars and Monthly Record, St. Bride Printing Library.

130. P.A.T.A. Members' Circular, 19 Nov. 1890, p. 2.


and highly significant in the evolution of compositors' concept of trade unionism.

As has been shown, the situation prevailing in the 1850s and 1860s encouraged the LSC to make unilateral decisions in trade disputes. The union's developing power and autonomy in this area gave impetus to assertiveness in the whole sphere of trade related issues. For example, it determined the LSC's reaction to the Hornby v. Close decision in 1867.\(^\text{134}\) In response to this ruling which jeopardized trade union funds, representatives of the LSC attended a conference of trade unions in London called by George Potter and the London Working Men's Association to discuss the situation, recommend proposals, and to consider the legal situation of trade unions.\(^\text{135}\) The conference was held in direct contravention of the advice of certain labour leaders who discouraged trade union interference in legal and political matters at this time.\(^\text{136}\) The conference appointed a committee to wait on the Commission of Inquiry into trade unions so that 'calumnious' information could be refuted and proper evidence could be given to the Commission.\(^\text{137}\) The conference contributed to

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135. Gosden, *op.cit.*, p. 9
both the findings of the Royal Commission on Trade Unions and in the longer term, to the success of the campaign for trade union legislation. In matters of a strict craft nature, and in those having a much wider trade union significance then the LSC was taking the initiative: this was a departure from a policy of defence and protection which had characterised the union at mid-century. It increased the confidence and strength of the union not only to its own members and inter alia to other skilled working men, but more importantly, to employers. In the continued absence of an organized body of master printers this aggressive policy was more thoroughly developed. In the 1880s, particularly following C.J. Drummond's appointment to the Secretaryship that initiative was channelled to new ends. During this decade, it was successfully directed at non-union houses and toward the problematic system of government printing.

Drummond's appointment to the Secretaryship of the London Society of Compositors in summer 1882 affirmed the shift from the cautious isolationist leadership which had characterised the union in the mid-19th century. Unlike the more stoical of his predecessors, Drummond was a doer and an opportunist: he knew how the LSC worked, having been its under-Secretary since 1878, and he used that knowledge to serve the compositors' union. But Drummond was also an autocrat; a doer on his own terms. He was no egalitarian, he did not promote democratic leadership of the LSC and, whilst his nature and abilities

139. LSC, Annual Reports, 1878-82.
brought him to prominence in the composing trade of the 1880s and secured him success against a disorganized array of master printers, his personality generated animosity within the union itself for Drummond epitomised all which the democratic rank and file found unacceptable in the LSC. On certain issues however, Drummond was both aggressive and successful, and for some time that success was sufficient to counteract discontent.

In the Annual Report of 1882, the LSC's leadership made clear its intention to reduce the growing numbers of non-Society men in the trade. By 1884, this 'missionary work' on behalf of the union had become Society policy and it went hand-in-hand with an attack on 'unfair houses', that is, houses infamous for their non-recognition of the London Scale. At the offices of the Morning Post for example, the proprietor, Sir Algernon Borthwick met an LSC deputation headed by Drummond and negotiations concerning hours, pay, and working conditions began. The ensuing agreement incorporating Borthwick's acceptance of the London Scale opened the newspaper's office to union hands for the first time in 34 years. Hopes ran high that the Times and the Globe, "the only two remaining daily papers produced unfairly", would become Society houses. Within the year, 15 printing firms had been unionised. Following this first flush of triumph, the Fair

140. LSC, Annual Report, 1882, p. 21.
142. Ibid., p. 19.
143. Ibid., p. 20.
Houses policy became an integral part of LSC policy and in 1901, the task of taking the Fair Houses policy to new and non-union houses was given over to a full time Organiser.¹⁴⁴

The spread of Fair Houses was integrated with an attack on the insidious system of payment in government houses, that is, printing offices carrying out government contracts. By the 1880s, parliamentary printing was of less significance to the composing trade than it had been in the mid-19th century. By this time, the growth of newspaper, book, and periodical printing which developed in the third quarter of the nineteenth century offset the crucial role parliamentary printing had played to the composing trade. However, its importance remained considerable and the size and value of its contracts substantial. In the light of recent successes of the Fair Houses policy, the non-recognition of the London scale by government houses seemed all the more invidious to the union. Previous attempts by the LSC to pressurise the Stationery Office into adopting the London Scale had not been successful. In July 1881, a memorial to the Treasury had underlined the evils attendant upon the system: low wages preponderated in government houses and excessive apprentices and turnovers were employed to keep costs to a minimum.¹⁴⁵

The Treasury politely declined to discuss the issue with representatives of working men. Rates of pay, it stated, were matters which must rest between masters and men, and in any

¹⁴⁵. LSC to Treasury, 22 July 1881: St Bride Trade Colln., no. 96.
case, "it is evident that the Stationery Office can only recognize the responsible heads of firms entering into contract". In August the nature of Stationery Office Schedules of Prices for Parliamentary Printing Contracts was raised in the House of Commons. Arthur Arnold, acting for the Parliamentary Committee of the TUC asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Lord Frederick Cavendish, if he was aware that the prices paid are "not in accordance with the recognised scale of prices ... and [are] therefore calculated greatly to reduce the wages of men employed in the trade". Cavendish replied that indeed he was aware of the situation: in fact, the Treasury was dealing with it at this very moment. In the Autumn of 1884, delay in the circulation of Parliamentary Papers to members of the House again raised the question of Government Printing Contracts in the Commons chamber. Leonard Courtney, then Secretary to the Treasury, denied that monopoly of contract held by firms like Eyre and Spottiswoode made for sluggardly production of reports, but at the same time he made it clear that in future, contract renewals would be open to public competition. Drummond leapt at the opportunity this presented:

if we show sufficient determination, a large amount of the Government work hitherto produced unfairly

146. Treasury to LSC, 8 Aug. 1881: St. Bride Trade Colln., no. 97.


can be produced by the London scale. The importance of this matter cannot possibly be overestimated.\footnote{150}

In the same year, the Treasury entered into negotiations with the London Society of Compositors concerning the diversity of terms and payment covering such contracts. In the agreement which followed, the London Scale of Prices became the basis of the pay structure for government printing contracts.\footnote{151} In 1886, the printing contract for Commons work held by the non-union firm of Eyre and Spottiswoode, was broken up and placed with the union houses of Darling and Harrison.\footnote{152} The capture of this contract by Fair Houses marked a crucial step in sanctioning union houses as contractors of government work, and in extending the London Scale of Prices within printing offices of the metropolis.

The collective effect of trade regulation by union initiative, the Fair Houses policy, missionary work and the regulation of government printing during the 1880s was an immediate boost in union size in relation to the metropolitan trade.\footnote{153} More importantly these successful policies boosted the confidence of craftsmen compositors in their own trade union and most significantly, they enlarged and affirmed the LSC's authority in what are generally regarded as employers'

\footnotesize{\begin{itemize}
\item \footnote{150} Ibid., p. 27.
\item \footnote{151} "Government Printing Contracts, Old and New Schedule of Prices": LSC, Annual Report, 1886, p. 23.
\item \footnote{152} LSC, Annual Report, 1886, pp. 30-2; The Printer, Feb. 1886, p. 74.
\item \footnote{153} See Figs. 2 and 3, pp. 338-40.
\end{itemize}}
areas of control. Union determination of rates of pay, working conditions and control over the supply of labour, had developed initially from union responsibility for the settlement of trade disputes in the absence of master printers, but during the '70s and '80s they became recognised as union, not employer functions. Secondly, these developments were complementary to the LSC's shift from a position of isolation toward identification with trade union bodies of metropolitan and national stature. In the 1850s and 1860s, the LSC's relationship to other Societies and unions was not one of permanent alliance, but rather took the form of occasional grants and loans: by contrast, by the late '70s and 1880s the LSC had become a member of the TUC and had established tentative affiliation with the London Trades' Council. This process of alliance was to prove of primary significance to the LSC's development in the later years of the Victorian period. Over the decades 1848-92 then, the LSC consolidated its authority within the composing trade, and enhanced its position within the trade union movement.

In the wider society, developments generated circumstances more conducive to the growth of trade unions than at any other time since the collapse of Chartism. The Royal Commission on Trade Unions of 1867-9 had extricated working


men from those much publicised nefarious activities within the Sheffield knife and saw grinding trades. Once and for all, the report had declared the respectability of trade unions and set them free from the incubus of coercion, secrecy, and intolerance. Moreover, its recommendation that the legal and financial position of trade unions be clarified as soon as possible contributed directly to the effectiveness of the labour laws campaign which followed in the late 'sixties and early 'seventies, and to the provisions of the Trade Union Act of 1871, by which trade unions were brought within the political pale and their funds secured. The Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act along with the Employers' and Workmen Act which followed in 1875 affirmed this new legal status. Together they removed any remaining ambiguity concerning trade unions as conspiracies at common law and redefined civil contracts between employer and employee on an equal basis.

In the practical political dimension, the Parliamentary Reform Act of 1867 and the Parliamentary Reform and Redistribution Acts of 1884 and 1885, together changed the physiognomy of the British electorate. What proportion of journeymen com-
positors were enfranchised by this legislation is not clear, but it did encourage agitation for workingmen MPs amongst com-positors\textsuperscript{160} and to the large and as yet unenfranchised body of working men and women, these statutes indicated the shape of things to come.\textsuperscript{161}

By the mid-1880s the cumulative effects of these wide ranging legal and political changes were beginning to make themselves felt throughout British society. The dismantling of barriers preventing legal status and political representa-tion set in train gradual changes in society which collec-tively made for a more benign disposition toward trade unions. Relaxation of hostile attitudes toward working men in Victo-rian society was further encouraged by a Royal Commission Report on the Depression of Trade and Industry of 1886, which extricated trade unions from any blame for the severe depres-sion of the late 'seventies and early 'eighties.\textsuperscript{162} To members of the London Society of Compositors, the collective effect of these changes in British society, together with the success of the LSC's aggressive policies and the growth and development of their trade union were crucial. For many craftsmen compos-itors, trade unionism came to be seen not merely as a synonym for protection and defence, but within that wider society, as a vehicle for change.

\textsuperscript{160} See the \textit{Printer}, Aug. 1885, p. 39; E.S. Beesly, \textit{Programme for Trade Unions}: Webb EB Vol. CXX, item 41; Cole and Filson, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 583-92.

\textsuperscript{161} \textit{Printer's Journal}, 2 Nov. 1868, p. 209.

\textsuperscript{162} Royal Commission appointed to look into the Depression of Trade and Industry, 1886, \textit{2nd Report}: \textit{PP}, 1886, Vol. XXII.
During the later 'seventies and throughout the 'eighties when the LSC was expanding both its sway and its scope, a growing dissatisfaction among the grass roots of the Society became evident. The rank and file militancy which Henry Self so clearly identified as fundamental to the outcome of the 1866 Wage Advance, grew to prominence during these decades. This agitation advocated democratic constitution of the Executive and opposed autocratic officers of the Society. The movement for change had deep roots and it was brought to prominence by events of the 1880s which exacerbated tensions already running high within the union's rank and file.

Dissatisfaction among journeymen with the union's structure, organization, and Committee was almost traditional within the LSC. Discontent had grown from the early days of the Society when a skeletal rule book had given authority to both chapel and Committee without defining spheres of autonomy, and had created union officers with unlimited powers. To many members of the LSC, the root of the whole problem lay in the form of Committee election. Bi-annually, delegate meetings elected 6 chapels from which representatives would be sent to form the Committee. This clumsy system favoured large chapels at the expense of the small and created a system with wide possibilities for corruption. By the early '70s, there was a growing and vocal movement within the LSC demanding revision of the system of election. In the early '70s the
Committee refused to circulate full and detailed reports of their activities to the membership, defending this decision with the assertion that comprehensive knowledge of Executive activity would prove "detrimental to the trade". John Funnell from the chapel at Davy and Sons castigated the Committee for this decision, and articulated the feelings of a good number of rank and file members when he declared in the Fleet Street Gazette:

the days of secrecy in connection with trade unions are fast disappearing. We have nothing to gain by it, but everything to gain by publicity. Publicity means confidence and fearlessness in a just case....it means an extension of knowledge of the principles of the trade.163

Despite Funnell's urgings, no attempt to revoke this decision was made. In that same year, revision of the rules held out the promise of a change in Executive election and restriction of the Committee's powers, but when the revision was published in September, it made no attempt to reform the structure or functions of the Executive and its officers.164

At this time then, compositors who were thoroughly disenchanted with the leadership of the Society, looked to Drummond hopeful of reform. Those who anticipated that Drummond's successful policies against non-union houses and unfair governmental contracts would be matched by a more egalitarian approach to internal matters, were however, soon disappointed. In 1884, a further revision of the rules was published.

163. Fleet Street Gazette, 23 May 1874, p. 9.
164. Rules, Sept. 1874, Rule XII.
Despite the urgings of some delegates that the idiosyncratic election structure be replaced by a ballot of the trade, no substantial change was made in the existing system.\textsuperscript{165} Drummond's positive leadership and inventive policies in external matters departed from the old-style government of caution, but they were coupled with an autocratic attitude to internal affairs.

Entrenched alienation from the leadership of the Society gained new vigour in the 1880s from compositors embittered by the Executive's handling of the economic depression of the late 'seventies and early 'eighties. In the later 'seventies a cumulative depression hit the composing trade. In 1879 the depression reached its nadir when 1 out of every 3 compositors was unemployed, signing the Society's call book.\textsuperscript{166} In the face of the severe depression, the union's benefits proved quite inadequate. In 1880, trade began to improve and at this time, the opinions of men who had experienced both the depression and the Society's inadequate benefits became prominent. In 1881, the maximum unemployment benefit was 12/-, as it had been in 1867, and strike pay at 25/- had not been increased since 1855.\textsuperscript{167} On top of these inadequate benefits, the payment of half-pay provident benefit aroused ill feeling among craftsmen. In 1871, a revision of the rules governing bene-

\textsuperscript{165} Rules of the LSC, Nov. 1884, Rule XII; LSC, Report of special committee appointed to inquire into...duties powers and mode of electing committee with a view to its reconstruction, 1884: St Bride Report, no. 18964.


fits had provided that any member receiving three years' successive unemployment pay, "shall only be entitled to half pay for the two following half years" and carried the controversial clause that,

should there be reason to believe....that any person has avoided receiving the full amount in any one of the three years, with a view to evade being placed upon half-pay, it shall be competent for the committee to deal with such members as they may see fit.168

Throughout the severe and deepening economic hardship of the late '70s this rule was vehemently opposed and its punitive provisions were condemned.169 "Half pay prov." was also a motive force behind the formation of the Compositors' Discussion Association in autumn 1877, which promoted the discussion of new solutions to economic problems outside the forum of official union meetings.170 The Compositors' Discussion Association faced fierce hostility from some sections of the Society; dubbed "Scorpions" and "Communists," its members were accused of forming a political caucus and plotting the overthrow of the current Executive.171 The Association seems


rather to have been a small group, committed to economic reform and to the abolition of the half-pay provident benefit. It assumed the Committee's incompetence in acting as a force for change simply because the Executive was composed of men who viewed modernity with suspicion, "who were strongly opposed to moving with the times".\footnote{172}{Printing Review, 7 Jan. 1879, p. 8} As a pressure group however, the Association had little effect: half-pay provident benefit remained on the rule book. Moreover, in 1882, Drummond's appointment as Secretary seemed to exacerbate rather than ameliorate the situation. During the early 'eighties, a good deal of frustration arising out of the circumstances attending unemployment was turned to anger and directed at the Committee's salaried officers who were seen to be the stumbling block to the increase in both payment and frequency of unemployment benefit, who rigidly defended the payment of half-pay provident benefit and who added insult to injury by continuing with the publication of the names of members in arrears. To men thrown out of work and unable to pay subscriptions from the pittance provided by half-pay provident benefit, this was the final ignominy.\footnote{173}{See eg. LSC, 153rd Quarterly Delegate Report, Jan.1886, p. 18.}

This hostility was aggravated by the Executive's inability to restrict the growth of pernicious systems of work within the trade. Drummond might have been spreading the London Scale as no Secretary before him had done, but he proved as unsuccessful as his predecessors against 'piece-
'stab' and systematic overtime. A subcommittee set up to look into the latter reported from chapel responses that systematic overtime, i.e. overtime work built into the normal cycle of production, was practised in the majority of offices, and moreover, that its financial rewards were looked forward to by masters and journeymen. Consequently, the Committee made no attempt to restrict systematic overtime though its limitation would have redistributed the supply of work in favour of the unemployed. Speaking for the whole Committee, Drummond averred

In our opinion there is little hope of dealing with a reduction in the working day to 8 hours, so long as we are willing to extend the present 9 hour day by excessive and systematic overtime.174

Some craftsmen evidently felt quite differently however. James Blackwell, compositor of the LSC and member of the Social Democratic Federation, made clear his protest at the Executive's inertia concerning trade matters in Justice on 30 October 1886, "we are represented by men who are too timid to speak boldly for our rights".175 Referring specifically to the issue of systematic overtime he commented, "our representatives, it would seem, fail to see the importance of this matter".176


176. Ibid.
Piece-'stab was a system by which payment by the piece and payment by the hour were combined in the same office. The system was advantageous to the employer as it allowed time consuming work to be paid by the piece and more lucrative work to be paid by the hour, that is on the 'stab. Compositors understandably saw the system as an encroachment upon their privileges. Moreover, it was recognised as being deleterious to craftsmanship as it reduced incentive, and as conducive to claims for higher wages. It was decried by trade journals which saw it as a cause of emnity between men working side by side in the same office. As early as 1874, a correspondent of the *Fleet Street Gazette* denounced the system as "insidious", one which "if not easily checked will gain too great a foothold to be stamped out without a severe and vexatious conflict with employers". Bound up with piece-'stab were compositors' claims to the fair distribution of copy, which necessarily worked against the piece-'stab system, and the right to retain appointment of the companionship's clicker in preference to a proprietorial overseer. Despite protests from both journeymen and trade journals the system spread within the metropolitan book and general trade in the


1870s and 1880s. Drummond's Committee made no attempt to restrict piece-'stab and it was not until the Linotype Agreement of 1896 that the system was brought under control.\footnote{181}

Opposition to Drummond on economic grounds was then fairly extensive. It focused on the issue of provident benefits, the printing of arrears and the Committee's failure to restrict piece-'stab and systematic overtime. In the mid 1880s, it was heightened by a growing personal animosity to Drummond among the Society's rank and file. This personal dislike was provoked by a manner which could be arrogant and dictatorial and was fostered by Drummond's interpretation of his role as Secretary. In 1885, for example, he made clear to the Society his position under law as the representative of the LSC, who alone could initiate proceedings against members for fraudulent dealings with union funds.\footnote{182} Late in 1885 and in April 1886 Drummond used this apparently laudable capacity for the prosecution of two members of the Society for embezzlement of sums of less than £5.\footnote{183} Prosecutions like these did nothing to avert his increasing unpopularity, nor to counter the alienation of a large section of the rank and file of the Society from the Secretary. Drummond's secretaryship

\footnote{181. "Daily News Scale" clauses 4 and 5, and "Book Scale" clauses 3 and 4 in Rates and Rules for working Composing Machines in London, agreed....on July 27, 1896: Howe, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 502-8.}

\footnote{182. LSC, \textit{Annual Report}, 1886, p. 23.}

had become a by-word for "one man government". Thomas Binning, pamphleteer and member of the LSC, saw him as a "weak-kneed, pettifogging self seeker", and *Justice* lambasted "C.J.D." for failing to deal with pressing issues of the trade because he was too busy scheming "how to increase his staff of subordinates or his own income".

In the early 1880s, promoters of reform within the LSC recognised delegate meetings as providing a platform where grievances could be publicised and where opposition to the Executive could be articulated, for it was here that Executive decisions came before delegates for endorsement. Quarterly Delegate Meetings then became a forum where opponents to the Society's Executive gathered, where their case gained publicity and where their hostility was channelled into delegate resolutions.

In April 1886, Edwin Hall was voted onto the LSC Committee as a representative of the chapel of Waterlow and Sons. Hall was a founder member of the Vigilance Association within the LSC, the organization spearheading the movement for reform of the Executive, reform of the Society's rules and abolition of the half-pay provident benefit. Also on the Committee at that time were Fred Willis and John Galbraith who had been

186. *Justice*, 16 Nov. 1889, p. 3.
members of the Compositors' Discussion Association of the late 'seventies.189

In February 1887, a delegate meeting voted in favour of expunging the rules and provisions concerning half-pay provident from the rule book.190 The Committee did not accept the resolution, instead it put the question to a ballot of the trade membership and the proposal failed.191 In response to delegate protests that this action was unconstitutional, the Committee averred that a ballot - though rarely used - was really the only way to settle major questions.192 The issue had then to lay fallow for 6 months. Early in 1888, the proposal to expunge the rule enforcing half-pay provident benefit was again put to a ballot of the membership and this time it gained a majority.193 This was the first major triumph for the Vigilance Association. It was followed shortly by another success concerning arrears. The Annual Report for 1888 printed no list of members in debt to the Society.194 At the Quarterly Delegate Meeting in May 1888, a proposal to reform the constitution of the finance Committee and to replace the

189. LSC, Annual Reports, 1885, 1886; Printing Review, 12 Dec. 1879, p. 184.

190. Rules 1871, Rule III, Section B; Rules 1874, Rule XXVIII, Section B; LSC, 156th Quarterly Delegate Report, Feb. 1887.


appointment of scrutineers by election from the floor, brought Committee refusal to discuss the issue as it inferred Executive dishonesty and, "could only have been placed upon the paper to embarrass the Committee". Later in that same month, courtesy of the Vigilance Association, the *Vigilance Gazette* appeared. It competed openly with the *Printer*, a relatively conservative trade journal and avid supporter of Drummond's leadership of the Society. For the first time the composing trade had two circulars, one supporting the Committee and the other advocating those policies of its more militant rank and file. The *Vigilance Gazette* gained a rapidly expanding audience at the *Printer*'s expense. The *Printer* for its part, responded firstly by ignoring its opposition, then by hurling abuse:

> the real purpose with the Vigilants being that in a very jolly and Bacchanalian orgy certain members may formulate their personal spleen, albeit not often redeemed with a modicum of ability.

In July, a proposal for Committee election by ballot of the Society abolishing, "the present dual method of constituting your committee" was adopted at a delegate meeting. At the Annual General Meeting for 1888, held in March 1889, this


196. *Vigilance Gazette*, May 1888-Feb. 1889; continues as *The London Printers' Circular and Vigilance Gazette*, May 1889-May 1890. For printing and publication details, see Appx. A.


198. LSC, 162nd Quarterly Delegate Report, July 1888, p. 17.
resolution was affirmed by a ballot of the trade. Members of the Vigilance Association were jubilant. Edward Hall and E.T. Thomlinson, both members of the Vigilance Association were now on the LSC Committee and they turned their attention to provident benefit allowance and revision of the LSC's rules. In 1886, payment of the provident benefit had been extended from a 16 week maximum to a 31 week maximum. This gave added credence to the Vigilance Association's continuing demand for wholesale revision of the scheme, a demand given new impetus following the extension of "prov" for another six weeks later in 1889.

Just at that time, in Autumn 1889, some militant craftsmen of the LSC were active in the organization of new unions of the semi-skilled in the printing trade. During the summer, semi-skilled workers in the printing industry, spurred on by the Great Dock Strike, began agitating for increased wages and improved working conditions. After the settlement of these initial grievances, semi-skilled workers began to organize

201. LSC, Annual Report, 1889, (np., verso last page); London Printer's Circular and Vigilance Gazette, May 1889, p. 1.
203. LSC, Annual Report, 1889, p. 23.
themselves into new trade unions. Developments were reported in the Liberal-Radical daily Star, which under the influence of journalists like H.W. Massingham took up the cause of new unionism in the printing trade. The response of members of the LSC to these new unions indicates not only the growing prominence of militant compositors, but also the widening divergence between the activities of these men and those of the official union leadership. It is the contention of some studies of the LSC that the compositors' union as an entity was helpful to these struggling organizations of working men. In fact, this is an oversimplification of events.

Printers' labourers who began their strike at Spottiswoode's on August 26th 1889 for a weekly wage of 20/- for 54 hours and overtime at 6d an hour were helped during the progress of the strike and later during the formation of the Printers' Labourers' Union (PLU) by LSC members George Evans,


George Evans was by far the most important, becoming first Secretary of the newly formed PLU in September 1889. The Printers' and Stationers' Warehousemen, Cutters and Assistants' Union which held its first meeting on 4 November 1889 in room at 337 The Strand, was helped by compositors Henry Hobart and by George Walden, Treasurer of the Printers' Labourers' Union. The structure of the LSC was influential in the organization of both new unions. As the official historian of NATSOPA - the descendent of the NTA - comments, "from the beginning the new union...emulated the older Societies in basing itself on the 'chapel' system". These new unions in the printing trade adopted an organizational structure which was fifteenth century in origin. It was not the official Executive of the LSC however, which nurtured these new unions, but rather men of a more socialistic stamp. George Evans was an active socialist propagandist. Henry Hobart (of whom more later) was a member of the Social Democratic Federation. Both the Printers' Labourers' Union and the Printer's and Stationers' Warehousemen, Cutters and Assistants' Union initially met in rooms lent to them by the SDF, or belonging to Justice, the

208. Justice, 21 Sept. 1889, p. 3.
211. Moran, op.cit., p. 18.
212. Ibid., p. 13.
SDF's newspaper. 214 Though Hobart was a Committee member of the LSC during the 'nineties, there is no indication that unionism among the semi-skilled and unskilled in trades affecting the composing craft was welcomed or even supported by the LSC leadership. Nor was aid, financial or otherwise, either advocated or forthcoming from the Executive during the summer and autumn of 1889. 215

In the autumn of 1889, Drummond's waning popularity hit a new low. At the TUC conference held in Dundee in September, Newstead and Thomlinson were delegates representing the LSC. 216 To their surprise they found the Society's Librarian A.G. Cook at the Conference, and to their indignation they discovered that he was there at Drummond's request, was supporting reactionary policies in direct contravention of LSC resolutions, and worse still, that he was supplying the Liberal trade union MP Henry Broadhurst with confidential information about the LSC. 217 The Vigilance Gazette made capital out of these developments and from this incident on, animosity to the Secretary escalated, for Drummond's support of Broadhurst's policies was well known and much disapproved of in more militant sections of the Society. 218 Cook and

216. LSC, 166th Quarterly Delegate Report, 1889, item 3.
Drummond had been allies at one time but the relationship had soured and now Drummond sought to extricate himself from a compromising friendship.\textsuperscript{219} Meanwhile, Cook's behaviour only increased the suspicion toward him; at a Quarterly Delegate Meeting in November, he feebly explained his presence at Dundee as a representative of the London Trades' Council not the LSC.\textsuperscript{220} Receiving further censure from the Society, Cook's bitterness at Drummond's behaviour increased. To spite Drummond, Cook made public the Secretary's secret acceptance of an offer from the Linotype Company to take up the Secretaryship of that firm.\textsuperscript{221} Drummond, controlled and condescending, declared his hope that bygones would be bygones, and as to the Linotype Company's offer, it was true that he had been offered the post, but he must be frank and tell members that acceptance could not be made without misgivings. No, indeed, when he and Cook were still friends, before all this unpleasantness, he had expressed the worry that, "the members will say I have turned traitor and sold myself to the capitalist".\textsuperscript{222} Cook had reassured him with the words, "That wouldn't trouble me...I would accept tomorrow if I had the chance and they might say what they please".\textsuperscript{223} Anyway, whatever he said, it really did not matter now. Generosity of spirit led Drummond to overlook Cook's breach of confidence;

\textsuperscript{219} Vigilance Gazette, Nov. 1889, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{220} Ibid., p. 12.
\textsuperscript{221} Ibid., p. 13.
\textsuperscript{222} Ibid., p. 5.
\textsuperscript{223} Ibid., p. 6.
surely now was the time to "shake hands and bury the hatchet." From the delegates he asked only for that, "Justice and Fair Play one Englishman has a right to expect from another." Drummond's slippery conduct incensed some delegates, bringing another motion of censure on his behaviour at their Quarterly Delegate Meeting in February 1890.

Further extension of the provident benefit in October of 1890 and in the spring of 1891 brought fresh calls for total benefit revision. Just at this time developments concerning an advance of wages brought tensions between the rank and file and the union leadership to a new high. A ballot of the trade on provisions of the proposed scale had taken place in November 1890, preceding a conference with employers in January 1891. Concerning this ballot, there arose allegations of dishonesty and fraud, precipitating demands for an explanation of the Committee's conduct, and a pamphlet entitled, "The Executive Exposed" by "P.H.S." called for the Executive's resignation. The Committee explained its behaviour in a printed circular and a vote by the membership was taken of acceptance. The result of this vote of confidence was favourable, but it was objected to by 30 members of

224. Ibid., p. 7.
225. Ibid., p. 6.
228. LSC, Annual Report, 1890, pp. 19, 21-2.
229. LSC, Adjourned Annual General Meeting, Report, April 1891, p. 2; LSC, Trade Reports, 1891.
the Society on the grounds that the ballot was not constituted in line with Society rules and its outcome was null and void.\textsuperscript{230} The Committee averred that these accusations were groundless and the contention continued. The cumulative effect of these developments, coming on top of the success of the Vigilance Association together with Drummond's unsuccessful trade policies and his plummeting popularity, proved too much for the Secretary. He resigned his office just after the Annual General Meeting of 1891.\textsuperscript{231} Drummond was replaced as Secretary of the London Society of Compositors by C.W. Bowerman in the Autumn of 1892.\textsuperscript{232}

The hostility and animosity toward Drummond from a growing section of the rank and file in the London Society of Compositors, has been identified by H.A. Clegg, Alan Fox, and A.F. Thompson in their study of British trade unions since 1889, as exemplary of the tensions between old and new trade unionism.\textsuperscript{233} As has been shown, the background to these developments was far more complex than this analysis suggests. Adherents to the new unionism within the LSC joined opponents of Drummond whose unpopularity was of long standing, based in economic issues, and fired by personal antipathy. The struggle between old and new unionism may have polarised hostili-
ties in the Compositors' Society, but it cannot be identified as causal.

Charles Bowerman, Drummond's successor, was an experienced administrator of the LSC, having served as Secretary to the News Department since 1889. He was committed to reform of the LSC, was more amenable to Vigilants in the union and was a keen advocate and promoter of amicable relations between book and news sections of the LSC. The Vigilance Association for its part, disbanded. Formed for, "abolishing the iniquitous half pay provident scheme" and to "effect an improvement in the method of election of the Trade Committee", it had achieved its aims. A Reform League of the LSC was formed in the autumn of 1892, and its policies were ostensibly those of the Vigilance Association, but as the LSC's Executive under Bowerman's leadership embarked on a policy of democratic revision of the rules, the League gained few adherents and disintegrated in the winter of 1892.

* * * *

The decades from 1848 to 1892 were ones of tremendous change, development and democratisation for the LSC. The composing craft from its inception had been profoundly democratic, and as the union membership's dissatisfaction with

their leadership came to prominence, the need for the Execu-
tive to reflect the desires of the Society's rank and file became pressing. By the 1890s, the LSC had evolved from a hierarchical isolationist organization into one which which promoted democratic policies toward its own members and toward other unions, which strove to ease and not to exacerbate the burden of employment and which, most significantly, reflected the chapel based, egalitarian character of the composing trade. Aggressive trade unionism, coming fast on the heels of a prolonged period of trade regulation by union rule had increased the strength and confidence of compositors in their own trade union. In the final quarter of the nineteenth century, compositors were increasingly aware that the LSC was emerging as one of the strongest and most influential trade unions in the national context. From this vantage point, continuing deficiencies in the internal structure of the LSC - its undemocratic nature, meagre benefits, arrogant, leadership - long unacceptable in some quarters, must have appeared all the more intolerable. The leadership which succeeded Drummond was more representative of the union's rank and file. The atmosphere it generated at the centre of the Society was one conducive to reform: militant on trade issues, democratic as opposed to elitist toward other organizations of working men, and well disposed to new unionism. Among compositors, those processes which collectively extended the union's control of their trade and strengthened the independence of its members

238. The prominence of the LSC in relation to other trade unions is a commonplace of Annual Reports during the 1880s: LSC, Annual Reports, 1881-91.
generated a new departure in trade union consciousness. Trade unions were coming to be recognised as having a role to play in the wider society. Through these decades, that compartmentalisation of issues which characterised the mentality of many compositors during the middle decades of the 19th century, was being eroded. In some quarters this development was hastened by the socialist ideology which was sympathetic to ideas broaching the relationship between economic, social, and political issues. More generally, this erosion of compartmentalisation was quickened by parliamentary reform together with those legal changes which made for a new attitude toward trade unions in society. Also, this development stemmed from the activities of the Vigilance Association:

The object of the Vigilance Association is to awaken the members of the LSC to the necessity of taking a more active interest in trade union matters if they would have our Society keep pace with the Trades' Unions of England.239

It was a development which anticipated trade union involvement in national politics. In its most advanced form, among a few socialist compositors, the responsibilities of trade unionism to national politics were specific in scope and crucial in effect; witness involvement in the formation of the new unions of the semi-skilled. In its more general form however, this awareness was of a decidedly labourist nature, apprehended as both a realisation and acceptance of the contribution which trade unions could make to the wider fabric of society.

On December 3rd, 1866, the London Society of Compositors refused to attend a demonstration of trade unions in favour of the Reform Bill. It did so on the grounds that the LSC was established for trade not political purposes. By the 1880s, developments in British society created a situation more benignly disposed to trade unions, and within that context, the nature, outlook and leadership of the LSC reflected a political consciousness and a social awareness. Even the _Printer_, that politically cautious journal reflected the changing circumstances:

This old nonsense about keeping trades unionism free from politics will not bear a moment's notice. We can't keep free from politics - we don't mean party - however much we may wish it, for the simple reason that every privilege [trade unions] now enjoy has been won by political action...if we are to see working men taking their fair share of the legislative and municipal work of this country...the trades unionists must be foremost in the fight.  

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241. The Printer, Feb. 1885, p. 3.
Chapter 4

The Changing Market Situation, 1848-1896
The period 1848-1896 is characterised by the Victorian press boom. Indeed, the decades following repeal of the Stamp Act are well known as those during which the press was democratised and the printed word became commonplace. The demand for newspapers, quarterly and periodical reviews, religious tracts and penny pamphlets was seemingly boundless both in terms of circulation and diversity. Sports reports, moral and immoral tales revealing the scandalous and the spectacular, children's stories with their acutely didactic tone and women's magazines celebrating homely domesticity all fed an apparently insatiable demand and catered to an increasing audience wanting reading matter of all kinds. These burgeoning publications were all dependent to a greater or lesser extent upon advertising which at this time was acquiring a startlingly variable character, incorporating a spectrum from
the well-intentioned and informative, through the disingenuous and the spurious to the overtly fraudulent. In the London newspaper industry, the nature and impact of this prodigious expansion, of the change in financing, structure and ownership, and of the meteoric rise of advertising differed from the provincial pattern. Moreover, the impact of the industry's salient developments upon compositors were neither directly correlated to the impact in the industry, nor were they uniform: book and daily newspaper compositors for example, were affected quite differently by developments in the industry throughout this period. This chapter then considers developments in the London press industry during the period 1848-1896, it examines the differing fortunes of varying sections of compositors and it explains why metropolitan hand compositors as a body were able to assimilate machine composition and to emerge with an enhanced, rather than a diminished, level of craft control over typesetting.

I

The beginning of the newspaper industry's growth is signified on the one hand by repeal of the Newspaper Stamp Act in 1848-1855 and on the other hand by the rapid growth of the London press. The repeal of the Newspaper Stamp Act in 1855 had an immediate impact on the industry. The cost of producing a newspaper was reduced, which in turn led to an increase in the number of newspapers being printed. This in turn led to an increase in the number of compositors being employed in the industry. The rapid growth of the London press also had an impact on the industry. The demand for newspapers increased, which in turn led to an increase in the number of newspapers being printed. This in turn led to an increase in the number of compositors being employed in the industry.

1855\textsuperscript{2} and on the other by the appearance of the 2d \textit{Daily Telegraph}. When that paper was launched on June 29th 1855, it declared, "our mission is to extend to this country the benefit of a cheap and good daily press".\textsuperscript{3} It supplied a long standing need. When Cobden had complained in 1850 that:

there can be no daily press for the middle or working classes; who, below the rank of a merchant or wholesale dealer can afford to take in a daily newspaper at 5d?\textsuperscript{4}

he gave voice to a feeling which had been held by working men for decades. Within three months, the \textit{Daily Telegraph}, living proof that, "an unfettered press would not of necessity become a licentious one",\textsuperscript{5} halved its price. The first penny paper was born. The appearance of the \textit{Daily Telegraph} is renowned as a watershed in English press history: symbolic of the birth of a free press, the first phase of the new journalism and the take off of the Victorian press boom.\textsuperscript{6} The \textit{Daily Telegraph} is thus synonymous with expansion. In London however, both in the industry and among compositors, circumstances were not those of immediate prosperity. To an extent, the discussion and treatment of the issue of repeal of the

\textsuperscript{2} 17 & 18 Vict. c. 27.
\textsuperscript{3} \textit{Daily Telegraph}, 29 June 1855, p. 3, Leader.
\textsuperscript{5} \textit{Daily Telegraph}, 17 Sept. 1855, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{6} This is axiomatic to the work of S. Koss, \textit{op.cit.}, and to the essays by Raymond Williams, A.J. Lee, P.R. Mountjoy and John Mason in \textit{Newspaper History}, pp. 41-50, 117-129, 265-280, 281-293.
Newspaper Stamp have served to obscure developments in the London printing trade at this time. The campaign for repeal, conducted so ably by the Association for Promoting the Repeal of the Taxes on Knowledge under Milner Gibson's adept leadership, was fought as a political issue whose dynamism was derived from moral fervour. The moral responsibilities of government and the evident egalitarianism of the measure have, therefore, conditioned any discussion of the repeal of the 1d stamp.\(^7\) Enlightenment of the people was the overriding consideration here, not the benefit of repeal to the printing trade, the growth of publication or the augmentation of profits, though these latter had been considered by members of the London Society of Compositors and had been used as persuasive arguments both against newspaper proprietors who opposed repeal,\(^8\) and in the hope of gaining support for an issue seen by many members of the London trade as one essentially grounded on moral conviction.\(^9\)

Moreover, the interpretation of repeal in a national economic and political sense has served to gloss over developments in London. Thus recently the late Dr. Alan J. Lee, focusing on the economic effects of repeal, has postulated


8. Cobden's view was that, "nearly all the newspapers are against it": quoted in Collet, *op.cit.*, p. 82.

that throughout the country, capital for investment in new newspaper ventures was freed from financial shackles. Lee follows H.A. Shannon whose studies of the first joint-stock companies indicated the burgeoning growth of newspaper and press businesses in the decades following repeal. The late Professor Stephen Koss on the other hand, has concentrated on the political consequences for a country whose press was suddenly freed from economic constraints. Both Professor Koss and Dr. Lee have taken as axiomatic the general increase in titles and the vast growth in circulation of established newspapers and their rivals. The effect of repeal on the metropolitan trade and its workforce has not been their concern: it has not been studied simply because it has been assumed to be self-evident. A second look at the figures presented in Lee's work on the popular press, indicates quite clearly that tremendous growth of the newspaper industry took place in the provinces: in London, by contrast, growth was only modest. Within a year of repeal, in terms of daily newspapers alone, 12 new provincial papers had been established and by the end


12. S. Koss, op.cit., Ch. 3.

13. As Dr. Berridge points out though there exists a general problem concerning the calculation of circulation after repeal: Berridge, op.cit.,p 102-8.
of 1861, another 14 had been founded. In London, comparable figures are 1 and 3: the Daily Telegraph, Morning Star, Morning News and Standard respectively. One of these, the Morning News replaced the old Morning Chronicle which was unable to adapt to the new circumstances following repeal. The Morning News, however, only lasted till 1860. It was followed nine years later by the demise of the Peace Party's much vaunted Morning Star. New metropolitan evening papers - the Pall Mall Gazette, the Glow-Worm, and the ½d Echo - were not so much an immediate product of repeal, as a result of the economic optimism of the mid-60s; all were established between 1865 and 1868.

Of course, there were casualties in the provinces. In August 1856, the Typographical Circular commented that some provincial proprietors had overreached themselves and launched too many newspapers onto an already saturated market: one of the Nottingham newspapers had collapsed, "simply because there is no need". Generally though, growth in the provincial press was considerable and permanent. David Ayerst well describes the revolutionary impact repeal made on the Manchester Guardian. Moreover, it was in the provinces that

15. Lee, op.cit., p. 69. See also, Tables 5, 6.
17. Lee, op.cit., p. 69, Tables 5, 6.
the technical advances of telegraph, railway and printing machinery were really felt. From London, news could be telegraphed to provincial centres. Within minutes, advances in printing machinery enabled the news to be printed and distributed to a growing audience. By the late 1860s, of such consequence were the provincial newspapers that they were able to establish their own Press Association for the supply of news from the metropolis.\textsuperscript{20} Of course, London newspapers still supplemented provincial ones as and when required, and through the increasing speed of trains and the growth of W.H. Smith's wholesale newspaper empire, these could be supplied ever more quickly to an expanding audience.\textsuperscript{21}

In London in 1855 circumstances in the composing trade were not propitious. The London Society of Compositors' Annual Report for 1855 spoke of the "prevailing stagnation of the trade".\textsuperscript{22} In November, a Quarterly Delegate Meeting commented on the current depression which it said was, "more severe than the trade had experienced for some years",\textsuperscript{23} and in January 1856 the Typographical Circular commented that,


\textsuperscript{22} LSC, Annual Report, 1855, (np.).

\textsuperscript{23} LSC, Quarterly Delegate Report, 27 Oct. 1855; Typographical Circular, 1 Nov. 1855, p. 154.
"expectations have not been in any degree verified and the cause we believe is commercial prostration".\textsuperscript{24} The figures for unemployment benefit endorse this pessimistic outlook. In 1855, £1,197 was disbursed in unemployment benefit. This was the largest amount since the Society's foundation in 1848, and it was not surpassed till 1866.\textsuperscript{25} Moreover, in the offices of the \textit{Morning Star} and the \textit{Evening Star}, compositors were faced with wage cuts. Despite employers' egalitarian claims, declaring these newspapers to be the first free press which strove, "for the promotion of every measure for the public benefit",\textsuperscript{26} the offices of these papers were closed to the union from June 1856 and the companionships threatened with replacement by non-union men if rates of pay below the London Scale of Prices were not established.\textsuperscript{27}

Whilst expansion in the metropolitan daily newspaper industry was only gradual, London's weekly news, general, and periodical printing houses during the late 1850s were marked by growth and optimism. Available figures relate only to weekly newspaper production, and here the immediate impact of repeal was slight, but by 1860 this section of the London publishing trade was growing. In 1854, 125 weekly papers were published in London. By 1856 this figure had only risen to 132, but by 1860 it had reached 179.\textsuperscript{28}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{24} \textit{Typographical Circular}, 1 Jan. 1856, p. 171.
\item \textsuperscript{25} LSC Financial Circulars in \textit{Annual Reports}, 1855, 1906.
\item \textsuperscript{26} \textit{Morning Star}, 7 Mar. 1853, p. 2, Leader.
\item \textsuperscript{27} \textit{Typographical Circular}, 2 June 1856, p. 217.
\item \textsuperscript{28} \textit{Mitchells' Newspaper Press Directory}, 1854, 1856, 1860.
\end{itemize}
Growth in London's weekly newspapers continued in the 1860s, stimulated by provincial competition which spurred a similar surge in the production of books and periodicals. These developments generated the establishment of an increasing number of new printing offices in London in which production costs were reduced, allowing publications to be produced cheaply. Cheap publications found a growing audience, diversity of publication followed, competition further increased and so the situation escalated. This was the real beginning of the London publishing boom of the second half of the 19th century. Later the keenness of competition was given added sharpness by the movement of some large London book publishing houses to the provinces. Hazell Watson and Viney for example, moved to Aylesbury in 1867 where overheads and wages were lower than in London. The growth in weeklies was matched by an increase in the number of trade papers and periodicals which served a wide and general readership. In the later 'sixties similar expansion characterised that section of the London industry producing heavyweight political monthly and quarterly reviews, whose growth in both

29. LSC, Annual Reports, 1855-70.


circulation and influence developed from the middle of that
decade.\footnote{32}

Overall, escalating production and fierce competition
supplied an audience of seemingly permanently elastic propor­tions. Professor Alford and Dr. A.J. Lee both point to growth
in population, material prosperity, and increasing time for
leisure and reading, all of which extended, "not so much the
range of literacy as the degree",\footnote{33} and made for that ever
expanding audience. Demands for increased circulation meant
increasing production and greater profits leading to re­
investment and diversity in production. The situation was
self-generating. Competition was severe and the pressure to
reduce prices to meet this competition was compelling. Pub­
lishing in London in the 1860s was a risky business, and it
was to get riskier. Bankruptcy was commonplace. For the suc­
cessful few though, profits were increasing and so was the
size of the business unit. This was the initial period of
change in the organization and structure of ownership: it was
a time of take-over when the small office, unable to compete
with its larger rival which was benefitting from economies of
scale, either collapsed or was taken over.\footnote{34} Eventually,
these circumstances were to nurture the pioneers of cheap
literature - Harmsworth, Newnes, and Pearson - whose empires

\footnote{32}{John Mason, "Monthly and Quarterly Reviews, 1865-1914", pp. 281-93 in \textit{Newspaper History}.}

\footnote{33}{Alford, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 150-1; Lee, "Structure, Ownership and Control of the Press, 1855-1914", \textit{Newspaper History}, p. 120}

\footnote{34}{Alford, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 168-70; Lee, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 120.
were to dominate the London publishing industry well into the twentieth century.

To compositors, one result of this burgeoning commercial press in London in the 'sixties was a reduction in the composing trade's crucial dependence upon parliamentary printing. Indeed, until these years the composing craft had regulated its own annual cycle to the demands of the parliamentary year; parliamentary activity was the cause of trade seasonality and it determined the level of casual labour in the composing trade.\textsuperscript{35} The process was however a gradual one. It was a long time before parliamentary printing faded from significance to the London composing trade, and for some years the craft was victim to the vagaries of both the parliamentary year and the commercial trade cycle.

More significant for this study however, was the effect of this pervasive and escalating growth on London compositors. Whilst market changes brought a surge in demand for compositors in the growing number of new offices, proprietary attempts at cost-cutting within these offices and amongst the rest of the weekly news, book, and periodical trade strove to produce an ever increasing number of publications at an ever decreasing price. These were the years when farming, under-cutting, systematic overtime, and the system of piece-'stab became endemic with the metropolitan trade.\textsuperscript{36} Amongst

\textsuperscript{35} See above, pp.

\textsuperscript{36} Alford, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 82, 162, 168-9. A later census of offices where the piece-'stab system was in force showed that in roughly 320 offices, 3,102 hands were on stab and 2,079 were on piece; LSC, "Census", 1877: Webb EA Vol. XXX1, f. 309.
compositors themselves, drastic changes in the market situa-
tion and proprietal attempts to adjust to new circumstances
during the late 'fifties and early 'sixties, re-activated and
exacerbated the old antagonism between general compositors and
daily newsmen which had been dormant since their amalgamation
in 1853. The former, fighting off masters attempts to reduce
wage levels, saw the daily news compositors who were untouched
by these effects of frantic competition, to be prosperous
affluent and complacent. The latter, whose newspaper scale
was gradually being underwritten by revenue from advertising
enjoyed a security unattainable by their counterparts in the
general trade. In February 1874, daily news compositors
proposed an increase in the piece rate for all founts of 1/2d
per 1,000 ens, an increase in the rate for Sunday work, and an
assurance of a more even flow of work. Daily news composi-
tors saw nothing exceptionable in this claim which followed
the successful advances of newsmen in the provinces and they
had the support of the Fleet Street Gazette which saw the
London newsmen's claim as "just and reasonable". The
response of the general compositors may well be imagined.
When the memorial for advance was submitted to the book trade
for approval, opposition was immediate. General compositors,
incensed by the daily newsmen's claim, dismissed the proposi-
tions as "simply preposterous" stating that the average weekly

37. LSC, Annual Reports, 1853-74; Lee, op.cit., p. 119.
38. Fleet Street Gazette, 28 Feb. 1874, p. 5; 28 Mar. 1874,
p. 3; St. Bride Trade Colln., nos. 93, 106, 107.
earnings of a daily newspaper compositor were already 48/-, whilst the establishment flat rate of pay in the general trade remained at 36/-. In defence, the newsmen justified their claim by reminding general compositors that they had gained no general increase in 1866 or 1872, in fact, they said, they had received no such pay-rise since the scale of 1820. As the issue grew increasingly acrimonious, newsmen hoping to reach a sympathetic audience in the general trade, began a series of articles in the Fleet Street Gazette emphasizing the speed, accuracy, and intensity of work which their craft demanded. It was to no avail. A Special Delegate Meeting, convened to discuss the memorial, threw out the daily newsmen's claim and hints that a strike might be called in the general trade if news compositors continued to press for their advance followed. In the late spring of 1874, the newsmen dropped their proposals. Evidently feeling against daily news compositors ran sufficiently high in the LSC to discourage their continued agitation. The Society's Annual Report comments that the daily newspapermen's advance movement failed as the nature of the opposition was "intransigent" and, "to have pressed matters to the extreme would have been very dangerous".

What is clearly in evidence here is exacerbation of the old tension between general and daily newsmen; general compositors ran sufficiently high in the LSC to discourage their continued agitation. The Society's Annual Report comments that the daily newspapermen's advance movement failed as the nature of the opposition was "intransigent" and, "to have pressed matters to the extreme would have been very dangerous".

41. Fleet Street Gazette, 11 April 1874, pp. 6-7.
42. Fleet Street Gazette, 28 Mar. 1874, p. 10.
43. LSC, Annual Report, 1887, (np.).
itors traditionally referred to the news department as the "sanctum sanctorum" of the composing trade. The antagonism had been given new edge by the increasingly divergent market forces affecting the daily newspaper and general sections of the trade. Further, during the late 'sixties and early 'seventies the circumstances of non-news compositors were aggravated by a general increase in the wage levels of other skilled men throughout the capital. Animosity between general and daily news compositors was not helped during these years by the separate Committee meetings of the two departments, by separate delegate meetings, and by increasingly scanty reports form the news Committee to the General Meetings of the Trade. The trend during this period was to segregate rather than to integrate general compositors' and newsmen's affairs: to the book compositor both market situation and union organization served to support increasingly affluent daily news compositors whilst compounding the adverse circumstances of craftsmen in the general trade.

During these years, transformation in the London publishing industry went hand-in-hand with intense rivalry and competitiveness among proprietors. News proprietors, unlike their counterparts in the general trade, did not suffer from

44. LUC, Quarterly Reports, Dec. 1833, pp. 21-2: Warwick MSS. 28/CO/178/1.
45. Alford, op.cit., pp. 204, 207.
46. LSC, Annual Reports, 1854-70.
Always innured to the fight to gain and hold audiences however, they were traditionally competitive. It is to be noted that newspaper proprietors were notoriously secretive about the earnings of compositors in their own houses. The Board of Trade’s later survey of income and hours of workers in all trades which was based on the Wage Census of 1886, received no returns concerning earnings of news compositors in metropolitan news offices. This may well have been the period when the idiosyncratic pay scale in Fleet Street originated.

In the general trade during the third quarter of the 19th century, vicious competition was evident; Professor Alford comments that rivalry between proprietors in the general printing and book trade was severe at this time.

Both general and news compositors, affected so differently by the changing market forces of the metropolitan printing industry during this period, were however able to turn the situation of proprietors to their own advantage, helped in the first instance by proprietorial aversion to management procedure. This malaise was particularly prevalent in newspaper offices where book-keeping was a rarity and double-entry


accounting unknown, but neither newspaper owner nor general printing proprietor was really well briefed in office practice. More importantly, both daily newsmen and book compositors were adept at exploiting the weaknesses of their respective proprietors. Newsmen were keenly aware of newspaper owners' terror of strikes. Nothing, after all, is so unsaleable as yesterday's news. It was usual, therefore, for news compositors' demands in an individual house to be conceded without trouble. In newspapers then, contrary to conventional wisdom, the piper not the payer called the tune. General compositors on the other hand were faced with masters who individually attempted to exploit their workforce, but who collectively were obsessed not with reducing their workforce, but with eliminating each other. General compositors of the LSC, always able to present a united front to these squabbling and mutually hostile proprietors, and well experienced in administration and regulation of the trade in the absence of a body of master printers, used this disorder to their own advantage.

In the late 'seventies, onto this situation of transition of the metropolitan printing industry, came severe economic depression of the workforce. The forces generating and perpetuating the depression were both long and short term: changes in the industry which reduced demand for compositors,

together with the annual down-swing in the cycle of parlia-
mentary printing coincided with the metropolitan industry's
vulnerability to wider economic forces. New offices which had
sprung up in London during the late 'fifties and 'sixties
stimulating a rapid demand for compositors were now supplied
with a full complement of craftsmen, and together with this
the increase in the number of printing houses was slowing; in
the thirty years between 1842 and 1872, printing offices in
London increased between two and three times; in the the
thirty years following 1872 the overall increase had fallen to
52% and in the immediate ten years between 1872 and 1882, the
figure is only 17%. Straitened circumstances affecting book
and periodical compositors were further compounded by the num-
ero of apprentices coming to freedom every year. Secondly,
book offices in London suffered competition from provincial
book production and the tendency of metropolitan book publish-
ers to move out of the capital to the provinces where over-
heads were lower was established during this decade. This
trend significantly increased the level of unemployment among
London's book compositors. Thirdly, during the late
'seventies the national economy entered that downward spiral
which was to prove the onset of the Great Depression. The
LSC's Annual Report for 1877 blamed current high unemployment
on general depression caused by war in Europe, complicated by

52. See Table 3, p.344. The increase was over three-fold
according to the absolute number of entries in Kelly's
Directories, but these numbers are probably inflated by
duplication.

trade depression in the United States. In these circumstances precisely those forces which had allowed and fostered the metropolitan publishing boom, i.e. growing material prosperity of an expanding population with increasing time for leisure and reading, were the immediate victims of economic stringency. As witnesses to the Royal Commission on the Depression of Trade and Industry pointed out, depression in publishing was not a fundamental factor in the down turn of the economy, it was rather a secondary effect, generated by the slump in other sectors of the economy. By 1879 the amount disbursed by the LSC in unemployment pay was in excess of £5,318, over six times the amount for 1875, and in the autumn of that year, compositors signing the Society's call book each day averaged 427. Moreover, certain master printers, anxious to reduce costs in the hope of surviving this depression, imposed wage cuts. Funds for "defence of the scale" amounted to £1,327: the highest amount since the 9-Hour movement of 1872. Finally, during the winter of 1879 and the spring of 1880 the demand for parliamentary printing was lighter than usual, and this was followed by an early dissolution of parliament. This exacerbated circumstances prevailing in the composing trade, providing little relief

54. LSC, Annual Report, 1877, p. 5.
from unprecedented levels of unemployment.\(^5^9\) Collectively, the forces generating and perpetuating depression in the composing trade during the late 'seventies produced a trough both chronic and prolonged. During the worst months of 1879, the LSC was disbursing almost £200 per week in benefits of one form or another, and in an effort to meet financial demands, £3,000 worth of government stock was sold.\(^6^0\) When this nadir was passed, complete recovery took some years. As has been shown above, in the mid-'eighties, the union and its members were still suffering from the effects of this depression, and from measures of economic stringency imposed during the late 'seventies.\(^6^1\) Further, effects of the slump were profound in a psychological sense: the *Printing Review* and the Compositors' Discussion Association both advocated reformed organization and revivified leadership of the union, which suggest a new and growing, but as yet unaligned political awareness, which came to prominence within the LSC during that crisis of 1879.\(^6^2\)

Daily news compositors were not affected by the acute depression of the late 'seventies. The department's expenditure for 1879 totalled only £18.2.11, an amount which both reflects, "the good relations which have existed between the


\(^{60}\) See Fig. 2, Fig. 4, below p. 338, 341; LSC, *Annual Report*, 1879, p. 7.

\(^{61}\) See above, pp. 142-5.

\(^{62}\) See below, pp. 234-5.
news department and their employers", \textsuperscript{63} and which clearly illustrates the widening breach between the fortunes of general compositors and daily newsmen at the end of that decade. Moreover, the control which daily newspaper compositors wielded vis-a-vis proprietors and their ability to settle wage claims favourably without disruption of production, promised an enhanced prosperity as advertising revenue acquired growing prominence in newspaper financing.

In the late 'seventies and early 'eighties the real metropolitan daily newspaper boom took off. Financial problems which had inhibited the growth of London daily newspapers in the years following repeal were gradually being overcome. In 1860, there were fifteen London dailies. By 1870 that number had fallen to fourteen, and by 1880, to twelve. But by 1890, there were nineteen metropolitan dailies, whose futures were guaranteed by revenue from advertising.\textsuperscript{64} This reliance on advertising allowed a lower cost price and therefore larger circulation to secure profits and repay initial investment, whose required scale was distinctly larger than at mid-century. Dr. Alan J. Lee explains that:

\begin{quote}
the cheap daily paper was selling at a price well below cost. The gap plus profits, was closed by revenue from advertising. On the smaller papers, advertisements brought in over half the income, and there is reason to believe, although few figures to prove, that the proportion rose with the size of the
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{63.} LSC, \textit{Annual Report}, 1879, p. 11.

\textsuperscript{64.} Mitchells' \textit{Newspaper Press Directory}, 1860, 1870, 1880, 1890. (Figures include sports newspapers, and exclude commercial papers.)
paper. It was essential to have a secure and stable source of such revenue.65

So that for example, by 1886 60.6% of the column space of the Daily Telegraph and 49% of that of the Times were devoted to advertising.66 The risk entailed in a daily newspaper enterprise was enormous and the capital needed to launch such a paper vast. Changes in the mode of ownership provided the capital accumulations necessary for initial investment. The size of newspaper companies multiplied: there was a shift away from family ownership, which had characterised newspaper businesses at mid-century, to partnership and joint-stock ownership.67 Parliamentary returns of joint-stock companies indicate this expansion, showing that during the 1870s and 1880s, the average capital at the disposal of a growing number of companies shifted toward the upper limit of the £10,000 to £100,000 bracket, and that a significant number had nominal capital of over £100,000 - the amount estimated in 1870 as necessary to launch a London daily.68 These years also experienced the beginnings of a take-over movement in the newspaper world: the concentration of more newspapers in fewer


68. Lee, ibid., p. 80, Tables 8, 9, 12. However, John Goodbody estimated the Star cost £30,000 to launch in 1889: Paper given at Institute of Historical Research Newspaper Seminar, 29 Jan. 1985.
hands. For the successful, profits were large - for a few, they were spectacular - but losses and disasters were commonplace, especially among the smaller ventures in which under-capitalization was a common and fatal mistake.

At the same time as commercial motives grew to much greater prominence, the content of newspapers broadened: sporting news became a regular constituent of daily papers and in the 1880s, a number of new successful 1/2d evening papers like the Evening News and the Star carried news of sporting events. Overall, the impression is of an increasing number of daily newspapers both in terms of titles and circulation.

Growth continued outside the daily newspaper section of the printing industry during the 'eighties. Weekly Sundays were of course thriving: Lloyd's Weekly News approached a circulation of 600,000 in the 1880s. Following these were the class and trade papers. Between 1880 and 1890, the number of weekly publications increased from 337 to 496.

70. Lee, ibid., p. 120.
71. See below, pp.244-5.
75. Berridge, op.cit., p. 41.
study of the early joint-stock companies, Shannon points out that companies with £1 shares became popular in the 1880s.\textsuperscript{77} This benefited the journal section of the trade as a large number of small, and often short-lived, publishing companies producing interest papers sprang up during the late 1880s.\textsuperscript{78}

The political reviews were continuing to enjoy their heyday of growing influence and circulation begun in the mid-'60s. As John Mason demonstrates clearly, the \textit{Fortnightly}, (actually a monthly), the \textit{Nineteenth Century}, \textit{Edinburgh Review}, \textit{Westminster Review}, the \textit{Quarterly} and the \textit{National Review} enjoyed a pre-eminence of influence among those upper echelons of society whose members held a near monopoly of public opinion.\textsuperscript{79}

The London Society of Compositors shared the prosperity which marked the 1880s: union membership grew steadily from 5,660 in 1882 to nearly 8,000 in 1890, whilst the Society's total funds rose from almost £11,000 to over £29,000 during the same period.\textsuperscript{80} Of course, 'missionary activity' and systematic extension of the Fair Houses policy inflates the impact of prosperity here. Figures for unemployment and unemployment related expenditure on the other hand, give a more realistic picture of developments. In 1882, unemployed members of the LSC formed roughly 21% of the union and by 1890,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{77} Shannon, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 408, n. 1.
\item \textsuperscript{78} See below, pp. 239-40, 250-7.
\item \textsuperscript{79} John Mason, \textit{op.cit.}
\item \textsuperscript{80} See Fig. 1, Fig. 2, below, pp. 337-8; LSC, \textit{Annual Reports}, 1882-90; The \textit{Printer}, Feb. 1886, p. 77.
\end{itemize}
that proportion had fallen to 17%,\textsuperscript{81} whilst the amount expended on unemployment benefit as a proportion of annual income had fallen from almost a half (48.2%) to roughly a third (33.3%) over the period.\textsuperscript{82} Moreover, Professor Alford has calculated that during these years, the proportion of compositors earning the maximum wage was increasing due to the decline in the composing trade's reliance on parliamentary and seasonal printing, coupled with the upswing in demand for commercial printing.\textsuperscript{83} Despite the fact that compositors' wage rates were falling relative to other trades in the capital, the position for a growing number of compositors was beneficial in comparison with the craft's previous years.\textsuperscript{84}

In the late 1880s then, both general and news compositors were benefiting from the publishing trade's prosperity. Moreover, it was during these years that both bodies of craftsmen became amicable toward one another, and relations between them were characterised by cordiality. This alliance was of crucial significance to general compositors: immediately it strengthened their control of the trade and more significantly in the longer term, it allowed them to maintain and extend that control through the crisis of mechanization.

From 1882 to 1886, the Chairman of the London Society of Compositors was Richard Lee. A daily news compositor from the office of the \textit{Evening News}, Lee was an advocate of close rela-

\textsuperscript{81} See Fig. 3 and 4 below, pp. 339-41.

\textsuperscript{82} See Fig. 4, below p. 341.

\textsuperscript{83} Alford, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 221-7.

\textsuperscript{84} Alford, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 204, 221-7, 279.
tions between the two sections of the Society. This policy of integration was continued by R.W. Minter, a member of the chapel representing the Field newspaper, who became Chairman of the Society in 1887. During the late 'eighties and early 'nineties, co-operation between general and newspaper compositors was further enhanced by C.W. Bowerman, a known and ardent promoter of good relations between the two sections of the craft, who served as Secretary of the News Department during the years 1889-92 and thereafter, was general Secretary of the LSC. At the centre of both sections of the Society then were staunch promoters of alliance of both general and daily newspaper compositors' policies and interests.

Furthermore, during the late 1880s, the LSC was emerging as a large and powerful metropolitan trade union in comparison with other trade organizations. As a trade union, the Society's level of control of its own trade placed it in an enviable influential position. Daily newsmen had long been ambivalent as regards their position within the London Society of Compositors. However, prosperity and growing prominence among other trade unions during the later 'eighties went far to reduce old antagonisms. The position of daily newspaper compositors within the LSC brought them a certain éclat and more

85. LSC, Annual Report, 1882, p. 7; 1886, (verso of back page.)


88. Clegg, Fox and Thompson, op. cit., Ch. 1, Ch. 4.
significantly, the policies of the LSC were directly beneficial to daily newsmen during the mid and late 'eighties. 1884 marks an important step in the highly successful fair houses policy for in that year the offices of the Morning Post were opened to union hands for the first time in 34 years.\textsuperscript{89} Clearly, the LSC was protecting both the position of newsmen and their very considerable earnings.

The effects of this alliance were abundantly evident in the Scale of 1891. Together, general compositors and daily newsmen were able to exploit the disunity of master printers and to gain substantial concessions. The nature of this Scale agreement well indicates the strength of compositors in relation to their mutually antagonistic employers.\textsuperscript{90} Furthermore, the operation of the Scale underlines the advantage which alliance between book and newsmen brought to the LSC and simultaneously illuminates the plight of competitive employers. After the agreement of 1891 there was a general movement in individual printing houses away from piece-work in favour of establishment work paid at fixed weekly wages and also, in those businesses which could afford additional offices outside London, there was a further shift toward provincial book production. Highly lucrative piece-rates for book work, so painstakingly deliberated by the LSC were gradually rendered inoperative. As Ellic Howe comments, "the piece-work scale of

\textsuperscript{89} LSC, \textit{Annual Report}, 1884, p. 19.

\textsuperscript{90} Howe, \textit{London Compositor}, pp. 327-53; see above pp. 130-1.
1891 was soon to become a dead letter". Evidently then, strength and unity among London compositors within all sections of the printing industry enabled them to wrest far more favourable concessions from the body of master printers than those which individual chapels or the body of book compositors could have achieved, and which in reality were undermined by the policies of individual employers. Employers themselves, bedevilled by internecine strife were quite unable to bring the authority which characterised their individual operations to any collective meeting between master printers and the LSC.

If machinery is to be introduced we claim a right to benefit by its introduction; but if it can only be made to pay at the expense of those who have served an apprenticeship to the trade, we submit that in such an event, no real advantage is to be derived.92

In 1886, Ottmar Mergenthaler's revolutionary Linotype composing machine was used to set the New York Tribune.93 Seven years later in London in 1893, the offices of the non-unionised Globe introduced Linotype machines into their composing room.94 These composing machines posed the greatest problem to the LSC since the formation of the union in 1848: to the hand compositor who had dominated the printing trade since the fifteenth century, they threatened his very existence. Within three years however, the first composing Machine Scale had been agreed between compositors and employers. This Scale not only maintained but extended the hand compositor's control of his trade and affirmed his independence of the employer in the workplace, by endowing present


94. Howe, op.cit., p. 497.
and future craftsmen with sole control of the working of these machines. In enabling craft compositors to gain complete control of the mechanized composing trade, the first Machine Scale determined the pattern which industrial relations were to take in the newspaper and general printing trade in London in the 20th century.

How and why were metropolitan compositors able to do this? Historians of the LSC have never satisfactorily explained this process. Dr. I.C. Cannon's conclusion to his study of the social situation of compositors, that the Linotype was deleterious to the LSC and contributed to status decline, being "a factor in compositors' inability to retain differentials", does not really accord with the facts. Moreover, as the intake of apprentices on Tables 1 and 2 show, the years immediately following agreement of the first Machine Scale were years of rising rather than declining status of compositors vis-a-vis other trades. Furthermore, Ellic Howe's view that:

Although the widespread introduction of composing machinery...caused the displacement of hand compositors, particularly in the provinces, the effect was only temporary. The constant expansion of the trade both in and out of London speedily absorbed any surplus of men, and many more in addition.


97. See below, Tables 1 and 2, pp. 342-3.

glosses over changes wrought by the Linotype's innovation. Dr. Jonathon Zeitlin on the other hand, in his comparative study of engineers and compositors during the 1890s, is the first to underline the significance of this process when he avers that:

The capture of the composing machines by hand compositors furnishes one of the clearest cases available of the successful defence of craft privileges despite mechanization.99

An explanation of the LSC's assertion of control over composing machines in the historical context of the composing industry is, therefore, apposite. It requires by way of introduction, a brief consideration of the nature and condition of all parties involved in the Linotype's innovation.

Firstly, general compositors and daily newsmen together defended the craft's privileges: to a disorganized and disunited body of proprietors, compositors presented the daunting edifice of a completely united front. Secondly, proprietors generally fell into two categories whose needs were quite different and whose dissimilarity was heightened as regards the Linotype, exacerbating present disunity and tending to factionalization. News proprietors, unlike general and book proprietors, did not face the pressure of provincial and/or overseas markets. Their paranoia was reserved rather for threats of strike by the workforce. Moreover, it was news proprietors

who immediately recognised the Linotype's potential application to their trade where speed was essential, and it was this body of employers rather than general proprietors who agreed with compositors the initial temporary terms regulating the working of composing machines in London. Thirdly, and of most significance to the book and periodical section of the trade, arrangements affecting general compositors in relation to composing machines were strikingly similar to the concessions won by the daily newsmen from their proprietors. The LSC's larger and more general body of compositors simply followed in the wake of news compositors whose privileged position in relation to employers enabled them to secure extremely advantageous conditions regulating the working of Linotype machines. In so doing, general compositors were able to transform an acutely vulnerable market position into one of complete control.

Before the final decades of the 19th century, problems with the typesetting and distributing functions of available composing machines, like the Young and Delambre and the Young and Stoltzer models of the early 1840s, reduced the attraction of these machines to proprietors wanting speedy and efficient production. Moreover, in London, composing machines had made little headway in union offices due to the strength of the LSC, particularly of its news section. In the 1880s,


advances in mechanized typesetting incorporated in the new Thorne and Hattersley machines resolved some of those mechanical problems pointing the way to feasible economical machine composition. With the Linotype's appearance, the future was clear. Unlike previous typesetting machines which employed moveable types and relied upon hand justification and distribution, the Linotype was based on a structure incorporating matrices and hot metal. Manipulation of a keyboard released the matrices which were directed to a point at which they were justified to the correct place by wedge-shaped spaces. The line of matrices was then transferred in front of a mold into which molten lead was pumped automatically, producing a line-of-type ready for printing. The matrices were then lifted from the mold and returned to their respective magazines.

After printing, type was melted down for re-use. The process was quick and efficient, producing a minimum of 6,000 ens per hour, over four times the rate of hand composition, and it saved the labour previously required for justification and distribution.  

By 1893-4, there were 250 known to be at work in the provinces.  

Estimates of the cost of Linotype composition versus hand composition need treating with caution, but G. Eaton-Hart's figures are probably the most reliable available. He estimated that whilst a Linotype operator on piece could earn more than twice the rate of a hand compositor, the overall costs of Linotype production were about half


103. Howe, ibid., p. 497.
that of hand composition and depending on circumstances, sav­
ings could reach over 60%. 104

In the early 'nineties, the LSC refused to acknowledge
the machine and affected to ignore its existence. 105 Newspa-
per proprietors, recognising the Linotype to be the vehicle by
which they could take advantage of that ever increasing audi-
ence and beat competitors in the frantic race for circulation,
begin to press for the formation of a Linotype scale. In
1893, having received no acknowledgement of the Linotype from
the workforce, the Printing and Allied Trade's Association,
representing a small but influential group of master
printers, 106 refused to consider any further proposals for
wage advance until Society representatives proved willing to
discuss the formation of a Scale for news composition. 107

Already, in February 1892, a dispute at the offices of the
Sportsman concerning the operation of Thorne typesetting
machines had suggested the protracted nature of developments
which would surround the Linotype, and had indicated the vehe-

104. G. Eaton-Hart, The Linotype: A Comparison of Cost,
1908, pp. 4-11; cf. Alford, op.cit., p. 45.

105. For example, the LSC held a conference about the
Linotype in 1892, but the Executive was not forthcoming

106. The Printing and Allied Trades' Association represented
49 master printers shortly after its foundtion in Nov.
1890: Printing and Allied Trades' Association Circular,
19 Nov. 1890, p. 2. By December it had about 130
Kelly's Directory for 1889 lists 1,322 printing offices
in London. Even allowing for duplication, the Printing
and Allied Trades' Assoc. can be see to have represented
a small - albeit an influential - portion of the trade.


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mence which mechanized composing generated among members of
the LSC who saw the machine's innovation quite clearly as a
proprietorial conspiracy to break the strength of the composi-
tors' trade union.108

In a circular of February 1892, the LSC detailed events
at the Sportsman: Thorne machines had been installed and a
wage decrease imposed. Compositors refused to accept either
the machine or the lower wage rate, and before the union could
'close' the office, the companionship had been locked out and
replaced by non-union men.109 The pretext for this action was
Luddism, the straps of one machine having been cut, but com-
positors hotly denied any responsibility:

> it was evidently done for the purpose of prejudicing
our union and enabling the proprietors to find a
pretext for severing their connection with us, which
they have been threatening to do for years past.110

Further, they denied any opposition to machinery per se,
but declared they "could not countenance a decline in wages"
which was what, in their view, really underlay the whole issue
of machine composition. Rates currently paid in accordance
with the London Scale of Prices, "only enable our members to
earn a fair living wage", and reduction could not therefore
be considered.111 Meanwhile, publicity for the Linotype Com-

1892, pp. 6-7; Jan. 1893, p. 13.
111. Ibid.
pany predicted a saving on wage payment by employers of over 70%.\textsuperscript{112} The dispute at the \textit{Sportsman} continued throughout the year. A boycott was threatened by the LSC.\textsuperscript{113} Recrimination turned hostility to bitterness. Early in 1893, circumstances became more acrimonious when it was made known to compositors of the original chapel that owners of the \textit{Sportsman} had been offered, but had refused arbitration by independent Labour Commissioners during the winter of 1892-3.\textsuperscript{114} Later in the year attempts were made by compositors to reach an agreement with masters concerning a machine scale but these negotiations proved unsuccessful though and hostilities remained.\textsuperscript{115}

Later in 1893 then, when Linotypes were introduced on the \textit{Globe} and the \textit{Daily News}, and shortly thereafter the \textit{Financial Times} and the \textit{Daily Telegraph},\textsuperscript{116} the demand of the Printing and Allied Trade's Association for a preliminary machine scale acquired a new urgency.\textsuperscript{117} The LSC could hold out no longer. Circumstances resulting from the introduction of these machines in London was already turbulent: unemployment was rising, confidence in the trade falling,\textsuperscript{118} and information from the provincial Typographical Association clearly revealed

\textsuperscript{112} Eg. \textit{The Linotype Composing Machine}, The Linotype Co., 1889.

\textsuperscript{113} Howe, \textit{London Compositor}, pp. 495-6.


\textsuperscript{115} Howe, \textit{London Compositor}, p. 495.

\textsuperscript{116} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 497.

\textsuperscript{117} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 479.

\textsuperscript{118} See Figs. 3, 4, and Table 2, pp. 339-41, 343.
a positive correlation between composing machines and unemployment. In this atmosphere then, and well prepared by developments on the Sportsman, representatives of the News Department entered into negotiations with newspaper proprietors.

The preliminary Scale eventually drawn up on 7th June 1894 was to remain in force for 18 months. It provided that all machine operators should be members of the LSC and preference was to be given to members of the companionship into which the Linotype was introduced. Machines were to work seven hours per day or 42 hours per week, and then overtime at 3d an hour extra was to be paid to machine operators. Rates agreed upon were: 3 3/4d per 1,000 ends on morning papers, 3 1/4d per 1,000 ens on evening. The period of probation was established at three months during which time the compositor was to receive his average weekly earnings for the previous three months. Along with this Scale of Prices for machine composition on daily papers, went substantial concessions protecting and regulating the hand composition of advertisements, the make up of advertising on daily papers thus became ex-


tremely lucrative.\textsuperscript{122} This Machine Scale made no mention whatever of Linotype rates for book and general composition.

Clearly, these terms indicate news compositors' upper hand in the negotiations. In providing that Society men alone were to work the machines, the News Department had taken control of the Linotypes in their trade. Moreover, what was evident in the clauses of a written agreement was abundantly clear in practice. Employers asserted that a good number of news compositors working under the provisions of the Scale of 1894, were making almost £5 per week and, though this may have been an exaggeration, there is no doubt that the 1894 Scale proved highly advantageous to news compositors and deleterious to proprietors.\textsuperscript{123} Masters themselves admitted to having been "caught napping" when the 1894 Scale was drawn up.\textsuperscript{124}

Meanwhile, on September 17th 1894, the Daily Telegraph carried an advertisement on behalf of the Linotype Company inviting applications from 500 intelligent, respectable, unemployed, young men to become operators of the Linotype machines in newspaper offices.\textsuperscript{125} Whilst masters' dissatisfaction with the Scale was well-known, the way to more realistic provisions was generally recognised to be through further negotiation


\textsuperscript{124.} Howe, ibid.

\textsuperscript{125.} Printing News, Oct. 1894, p. 4.
with the LSC, certainly not by action of this kind. Among masters the Linotype Company's initiative proved disruptive. Unity among them was at best always fragile, it had already been shaken by the intrusion of entrepreneurs hiring out Linotype machines to small companies at attractive but unrealistic rates, and now it was shattered by the Linotype Company's action. Furthermore, enmity and rivalry between employers were exacerbated by new hostilities between masters and men generated by the advertisement. LSC compositors saw it as a flagrant breach of the relationship between employers and journeymen and as a determined attempt to erode the union's position in the trade. Anxious to calm resentment among both master printers and compositors, the Linotype Company withdrew the offending advertisement and entered into negotiations concerning the operation of composing machines with representatives of the LSC. In an interview in the Sunday Times of January 20th 1895, Joseph Laurence, speaking for the Linotype Company, confessed that events of the previous autumn had been the result of an error on their part, "wiser counsels and a better feeling have since prevailed". He went on somewhat disingenuously to dismiss as "silly" assertions that the Company wanted to "entirely extinguish the

127. Printing News, Oct. 1894, p. 6; See also in this context Print, July 1896, pp. 9, 12.
hand compositor". However, Laurence's conciliatory manner did not completely obscure the fundamental aim of the Company:

The day will come when for every hand compositor now displaced by machines from setting small body type, two or three will be employed in setting display advertisements to a greater extent but in a more artistic manner than any of us have any idea of now.

Later in 1895, in view of the new Scale to be negotiated between news compositors and employers at the end of the year, the Linotype Company drew up general notes preparatory to suggestions for an amended scale. These were embodied in a confidential memo which reveals quite clearly, and certainly not in the affable tones of Joseph Laurence, the feelings of the Linotype Company's directorate toward the LSC. The position was quite clear:

The aim of the Linotype is to have one man where 5/6 were formerly employed. The aim of the Trade Union is to have 2 men where one is at present employed. Between these two opposing forces, the employer must elect what course to take.

The LSC saw the Linotype Company as an enemy trying to break the union's control of the craft, and its attempt to retain control was abundantly clear to the Linotype Company in the policy of restricting the output of the machines,

129. Ibid.
130. Ibid.
132. Ibid., clause 5.
it is possible to set an American newspaper at 27,000 or even 20,000 ens per hour....it is absurd for the LSC to maintain that the best operator cannot do more than 7,000 ens.133

A ballot of the LSC had established that no member should produce more than had been agreed by the chapel as to what constituted a fair day's work.134 This ruling was enforced in every chapel by the clicker who was responsible for the distribution of copy.135 To the Linotype Company, such a degree of craft control was indeed intolerable. Looking to the immediate future, it was imperative that a reduction in the present scale be imposed. In the event of compositors' intransigence or the threat of a strike, desperate remedies would have to be employed. It was understood by the Linotype Company that the LSC had not registered the 1894 Scale with the Registrar of Friendly Societies. Therefore, if a strike was called the Company could expose the lack of legal foundation for the current Scale, thus rendering the LSC liable for damages.136

In the event, tortuous negotiations followed the expiry of the preliminary Scale. A revised Scale submitted to the News Department by its Executive in January 1896 was thrown

133. Ibid., clause 8.
134. Ibid., clause 13, cf. LSC, Annual Report, 1895, p.32.
135. Ibid., clause 12.
out by ballot. A second temporary Scale was agreed and whilst this was in force, the newsmen's Executive urged by their more militant rank and file, adeptly executed a policy of divide and rule. Though a growing number of newspaper offices were adopting the Linotype, no united front enabled news proprietors to innovate composing machines on their own terms. News compositors for their part, whilst accepting the presence of the Linotypes, carefully and systematically surrounded the working of these machines with limitations and restrictions in their own favour. Moreover, these negotiations were of crucial significance to the book and general sections of the trade, for the provisions being debated for a revised Scale in 1896 included clauses covering the operation of typesetting machines in weekly news, book, and general offices.

In May 1896, an employers' lock-out on the Morning did nothing to improve the situation. Negotiations on revisions of the 1894 pay agreement broke down over rates of pay and the issue of the completion of machine composition. In June, negotiations began again. News compositors' representatives gained concessions concerning cut and lift, together with the fair distribution of copy. Eventually, in July 1896,


139. Print, July, p. 6; Aug. 1896, p. 6. "Cut and lift" were trade terms for procedures enabling the stoppage of machine composition.
agreement was reached. The terms of the revised Scale, whilst not quite so lucrative as those of 1894, remained highly advantageous to compositors. The rate per 1,000 ens for work done in morning newspaper offices was to be 3 1/2d, for evening newspaper work, 3 1/4d. Composition by Hattersley machines remained at the 1894 rate of 4 1/2d per 1,000 ens for morning newspaper work, 4d for evening, and for the first time, rates of 5d and 4 1/2d respectively were established for the operation of Empire machines in daily newspaper offices. Furthermore, and of crucial significance to the general section of the trade, this agreement indicated the alliance between both sections of the LSC: the comprehensive provisions included rates and conditions regulating the working of Linotype, Hattersley, and Empire machines in weekly newspaper houses, book and general offices and for the first time in the history of the composing trade, included a written agreement between masters and men as to the "due proportion of apprentices to journeymen".

142. Ibid.
143. Ibid.
in the non-news sections of the trade.  Moreover, the 1894 provisions concerning advertising which secured to compositors lucrative terms for hand composition, including those allowing compositors to charge for the first appearance of advertisements not composed by hand, i.e. advertisements which were stereotyped and/or for those composed in other houses, remained unchanged by the 1896 agreement. Print rather modestly claimed that the LSC was to be congratulated on the Scale of 1896: LSC compositors themselves, were jubilant.

The Machine Scale agreement of 1896 was first and most emphatically a clear demonstration of the success of that cohesive alliance between book and newsmen characteristic of the LSC during the early 'nineties. Its effect was at once reflected in falling unemployment rates and with the restoration of confidence, status anxiety declined accordingly. In the longer term, the Scale of 1896 was the climax of the LSC's structural consolidation of its control of the composing trade which had been developing, now with more and now with less effect, depending on the Society's grasp on the market situation in the varying sections of the metropolitan industry during the previous fifty years. Also, the Scale


146. London Society of Compositors (News Dept.) New and Amended Rules...agreed to at Anderton's Hotel, 7 June 1894: Howe, ibid., pp. 479-81.


148. See below, Fig. 3b, Fig 4, Table 2, pp. 340-1, 343.
was the future determinant of the organization of compositors and of their prominent position within the printing industry during the 20th century. Significantly, it ensured the perpetuation of an archaic form of workshop organisation. The chapel, which since the 16th century had been the central focus of the compositors' work place and which, since 1848 had been developed by the LSC as the trade union nucleus within the composing craft, was assured prominence within the printing industry of the 20th century. Finally, in sanctioning compositors' advantageous position as regards advertising, the Scale ensured that compositors, primarily newsmen, would develop a financial influence over proprietors which would be in direct correlation to the role of advertising in the financial equation of publication.

It is compositors' acquisition of control over composing machines and the concomitant extension of their unique level of craft control over mechanized typesetting, which sets them apart from craftsmen in other industries who found themselves to varying extents, rendered vulnerable by the process of mechanization. Following Professor Hobsbawm, Dr. John Foster and Dr. Gareth Stedman Jones in particular, have analysed and discussed the impact of the process of mechanization upon the workforce in some major industries of the economy, eg. cotton and engineering, and whilst they are not agreed on all aspects of the industrial and social relations generated by the process, neither is in any doubt as to the severity of that impact wrought by mechanization. In the industries which they
have studied, identifiable changes in the industrial behaviour of certain groups of workers during the process of mechanization arose from the fact that their positions, previously ones of privilege through skill, were made vulnerable by machinery. Machines replaced skills, rendering the pre-existing status distinctions arising out of the old divisions of labour anachronistic. At best, these were subject to erosion and down-grading. At worst, they were made immediately redundant, being replaced by new status distinctions which derived value from their position in relation to new machinery. This was not the experience of compositors. For them, the Linotype did not breach craft control; the hand compositor was not rendered obsolete. Thus, de-skilling and status downgrading consequent upon the introduction of new machinery, and the processes instrumental in the transition of a craft trade to an industrialised trade, were not relevant to compositors. 149

Compositors' retention of craft control over the mechanized composing industry is testimony to their unity and tenacity,


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as it is to employers' lack of organization. It also demonstrates quite clearly that the mechanized composing industry which entered the 20th century, was thoroughly pre-industrial, as we conventionally understand the term, in its workshop organization, its status distinctions, its level of craft control, and in the craft ideology of its members.

* * *

Over the period 1848-1896, the phases of growth of the London press industry diversely affected sections of metropolitan compositors. Daily news compositors enjoyed an increasingly advantageous position throughout the period, whereas that of book compositors, more sensitive to the pressure of external competition, oscillated from a situation depressed by a cyclical downturn of the trade, to one of unprecedented demand generating an overstocked labour market and concomitant slump, followed by a general recovery in the 1880s, and then threatened by the Linotype which jeopardised hand compositors' very existence. The militancy of the newsmen, together with unity between general and news compositors, enabled them to confront the threat as a united body, to confront masters whose innate rivalry was given added sharpness by the varying pressures of the market, and to take control of machine composition. In 1896, the LSC emerged victorious. Reinforced control of the craft determined the nature of the relationship between the union and employers, which was to
characterise the composing trade during the early decades of the twentieth century.
Chapter 5

Metropolitan Compositors and the Radical and Socialist Press In Victorian London
The decades of the third quarter of the 19th century were marked by an ideological diversity among metropolitan compositors. During these years the political economy of J.S. Mill, the Christian Republicanism of Mazzini, the theories of land communism, secularism, co-operation, economic determinism and eclecticism along with a radicalism of the old style which inveighed against all the manifestations of Old Corruption, and of the new style which expressed a class conscious view of society, were put forward by various compositors in response to differing situations as proffering the key
to a harmonious or classless or utopian future. Then in the late 1880s and early 1890s, Marxist socialist ideology in the varying interpretations of Engels, Hyndman and Morris gained a certain currency within the LSC and during these years, commitment to socialist publication by some prominent members of the Society is evident. The ideological diversity of the composing trade however, makes viable conclusions as to the degree of adherence to any one specific idea or body of ideas among compositors of the LSC somewhat problematic. Moreover, this difficulty is exacerbated particularly in the later years of this period as the stance of the LSC leadership shifts to the left. As has been shown above in Chapter 2, the Society's involvement in the unsuccessful People's Newspaper influenced both the leadership and the attitude of the early union. In these circumstances, is it likely that an absence of information in official union Reports concerning radical publication during these years reflects a genuine lack of interest among compositors? Conversely, during the final decades of the 19th century, the disposition of the compositors' union becomes increasingly receptive to egalitarian ideas. Does the expression of socialist ideas in trade reports and circulars of that period actually indicate consciousness of socialist ideology,


2. See above pp. 91-7.
or, does it signify only the rhetoric of that ideology? The search for clarity is all important here. In this context, it is somewhat less confusing to assume a certain level of ideological commitment underlying a compositor's involvement in radical publication, particularly if supplementary information indicates that his activity here was not solely determined by mercenary motives. Indeed it is unlikely that profit was the overriding consideration: the financial failure of many radical journals indicates that ideological commitment, not financial concern was the necessary prerequisite to involvement in radical publication. For these reasons, evidence of a compositor's financial contribution enabling publication is recognised as indicative of a thorough going ideological commitment. On these grounds, it can be seen that a tradition of radical publication among compositors of the metropolitan union continued throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, and the evidence suggests that no break occurred between radical publication and socialist publication, but rather that political radicalism lent itself to the assimilation of socialist ideology.

3. On this point, see J. Foster, Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution, 1974, p. 73.


Compared with the earlier decades of the 19th century, radical political publication after 1848 appears small scale, piecemeal, and sporadic. The prevailing ideological atmosphere was not conducive to radical publication, and it is indicative of current attitudes that the established press and the metropolitan publishing industry together prevented the publication of working men's views and trade union issues in the early '50s. It is however, helpful here by way of introduction to a discussion of compositors' involvement in radical publication in the second half of the nineteenth century, to examine the relationship between the early union of compositors and Chartism.

Among the printers who worked for the Chartist movement, were a handful of craftsmen known to have been formative members of the early London Society of Compositors: Henry Hetherington, Robert Hartwell, and John Catchpool. Hetherington is best known for his activities in the war of the unstamped and most famous for his Poor Man's Guardian. Throughout his working life and until his death from Cholera in 1849, Hetherington was active in the publication and distribution of radical literature. According to John Brindley, government spy in 1840, Hetherington advertised "the most blasphemous of the socialist tracts". From 1841 to 1844

6. Hollis, op.cit., passim.
8. PRO HO 41/30, f. 5; cf. ff. 15-6; PRO HO 79/4, f. 223.
along with John Cleave and William Lovett, Hetherington produced the *English Chartist Circular*.\(^9\)

Robert Hartwell published the *Charter*.\(^10\) Hartwell, who is known for his role in the production of the *BeeHive* newspaper and for his activities in the London Working Men's Association, was a Society compositor at least until the late 'fifties.\(^11\) He had been a member of the Dorchester Labourers' Committee, was a physical force Chartist in the 1840s, and represented Tower Hamlets at the Chartist General Convention of 1848.\(^12\) Along with him, John Catchpool was involved in the production of Chartist literature.\(^13\) Catchpool had been Secretary of the Southwark Radical Association.\(^14\) Later, he was a formative member of the LSC, serving as representative on the District Board of the National Typographical

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10. Warwick, no. 504.

11. The exact date of his leaving the LSC is unknown. In the early '50s he was Chairman of the LSC Benefit Society for Widows and Orphans: *Typographical Protection Circular*, Jan. 1850, p. 54. The LSC's 149th Quarterly Delegate Report for May 1885, p. 17, refers to "R. Hartwell, no longer a member of the Society".


He was an architect of the controversial People's Newspaper. On formation of the London Society of Compositors, Catchpool printed the official union rule book and then the Quarterly Delegate Reports.

In Chapter 1, the antipathy of London Compositors toward Fergus O'Connor, arising from the low wages he paid to compositors and pressmen on the Northern Star, was discussed. Clearly, this coloured craftsmen's attitudes and probably alienated some compositors from Chartist publication. For the purpose of this study however, it prevents a definite conclusion being drawn concerning London compositors and the Chartist movement. However, it can be said that the involvement discussed here, cannot in any way be seen as fully representative of compositors' attitudes to involvement in the radical press.

In the early '50s compositors of the LSC were prevented from publishing their views by a censorship operating in certain daily newspaper offices and in a good number of general publishing houses. This embargo was imposed upon individual compositors and also upon the collective body of union craftsmen. Compositors had long complained that they could not make their views on current issues known. Early in 1851, when a number of London newspapers were victims of

16. See above, p. 92.
17. LSC, Rules, 1848, p. 12.
18. See above, pp. 32-4.
proprietal attempts to reduce wage rates, a dispute
developed on the Morning Post. Edward Edwards, at that time
Secretary of the LSC, wrote to the Morning Advertiser
explaining the compositors' role in the dispute and making
clear that it arose not from a workmen's strike, but from a
"wholesale ejection on the part of the employers". The
Morning Advertiser refused to print the letter. Later, in
1852, when a similar and prolonged dispute developed on the
Evening Sun, similar conditions prevailed. Throughout the
dispute, the Evening Sun did not discuss the circumstances of
its printing office. The Times of course did not mention
the dispute. Nor, more surprisingly, did the Morning
Chronicle - that paper noted elsewhere for its regard for the
working class. Only Reynolds's Weekly News with the
"extensive circulation it enjoys" among the working class gave
coverage.

20. Ibid.
21. St. Bride Trade Colln., nos. 67, 69, 72, 73, 73a, 73b,
73c, 73d.
22. Sun, 1 Oct. 1851-30 Mar. 1853 (inc.).
23. Times, 1 Oct. 1851-30 Mar. 1853 (inc.).
24. Morning Chronicle, 1 Oct. 1851-30 June 1853; BL Add. MSS.
27810 (Place Papers) Vol. XXII, ff. 3, 39, 40, 113v; P.E.
Razell and R.W. Wainwright, eds., The Victorian Working
Class. Selections from the Morning Chronicle, 1973,
Introduction.
Reynolds's Weekly Newspaper, 17 Oct. 1852-20 Feb. 1853
(incl.).
Some years later, the Chairman of the Society of London Bookbinders, T.J. Dunning, sought anxiously for a publisher of his work on trade unions, *Trade Unions and Strikes: their Philosophy and Intention*. A defence of trade unions, Dunning's book sought to explain the strike weapon as the only sanction working men could impose upon their employers. He made abundantly clear that he did not condone strikes and that he and trade unionists like him saw the strike as an instrument of the last resort to be employed only when other methods of bargaining, i.e. negotiation, had proved unfruitful. This was a reasoned and moderate work, coming from a trade union leader who was one of the most well known and respected of his time. Dunning however, was unable to find any publishing house willing to take on his book and eventually, he published the work himself apologizing in the preface for shortcomings in presentation arising from makeshift publication, commenting sarcastically that no "respectable publisher" would handle so inflammatory a work. These specific examples give some credibility to a general feeling evident amongst compositors, expressed most vehemently in their trade circulars, that the established press, "from the Thunderer...down to the 1d Weekly Herald", opposed trade

26. T.J. Dunning, *Trade Unions and Strikes: their Philosophy and Intention*, 1860, "Published by the author".
unions and strikes and continually misrepresented them in their portrayal of industrial and economic matters.  

During the early years of the Society, trade circulars were predominantly concerned with issues of trade benefit and trade protection, but the *Typographical Protection Circular* which served the trade from January 1849 to November 1853, also provided a platform for the occasional expression of radical political ideas and a class conscious analysis of society. In the 1840s, trade circulars had been a vehicle for compositors' opposition to composing machines and had provided a platform where political philosophy could be discussed.  

In the late '40s and early '50s, circulars reflected the ideological diversity of the composing craft. No circular was an official organ of the union, but some were more sympathetic to the union leadership than others. The *Typographical Protection Circular* did not align itself with the official union leadership and it tended to be more outspoken than the *Typographical Circular* which followed it in April 1854 and which endorsed the Executive's cautious politics.

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which did not have the support of the Committee were emphatically chapel oriented as it was upon chapel purchase that they depended for their continued existence.

The *Typographical Protection Circular* was a zestful compilation which portrayed combination between working men as a force for progress and not just defence.\(^{33}\) It emphasized the strongly elitist occupational ethos of the trade, stressing respectability, independence, and sobriety, whilst defending the privileges of the craft; "compositors must unite to forcibly eject any innovation from the hand of oppression".\(^{34}\) It vehemently opposed tramping and it campaigned vigorously for repeal of the Newspaper Stamp.\(^{35}\) At the same time it attempted to prod the Committee from complacency for, "not withstanding the remonstrance of the chapels", the Executive remained dilatory in trade matters.\(^{36}\) The journal also strove to awaken compositors from inertia. At the outset of the disputes which marked the trade in the early '50s, the *Typographical Protection Circular* presented in a leading article, an analysis of society in which the capitalist, not the landowner or aristocrat was indentified as the working man's enemy

\(^{33}\) *Typographical Protection Circular*, Feb. 1849, pp. 7-8; Mar. 1849, pp. 11-2; Jan. 1850, pp. 53-4; Feb. 1850, pp. 57-8; Apr. 1850, pp. 75-6; Sept. 1856, p. 21; Oct. 1850, pp. 101-2; July 1851, p. 142; June 1853, p. 243.

\(^{34}\) "The Toxford", *Typographical Protection Circular*, Mar. 1851, p. 125.


The foe must be met, his weapon is the gold of his class, ours must be the pence of our order...let us be true to our work, determining justice be done to these alleged conspirators...let us speak and write these words - The conspiracy of capital! The conspiracy of capital...The masters combination.\(^{37}\)

The Typographical Protection Circular increasingly advocated the use of legal political channels for compositors to agitate against masters' encroachments and against the hated "document" (a statement eschewing membership of a trade union which suspended craftsmen had to sign to gain reinstatement) which was being used to crush trade unionism in the composing craft: "trade meetings and petitions are the lawful weapons which the constitution has placed in our hands".\(^{38}\)

The Typographical Protection Circular inherited a considerable legacy from the channels of distribution of the unstamped press and the Chartist papers. It was published by John Catchpool at St. John's Square, Clerkenwell and it was sold by William Strange at 21 Paternoster Row.\(^{39}\) Catchpool, we have already met in connection with Chartist literature. William Strange was well known in London's radical circles. In the early 1820s he shared a press with G. Cowie, and in the early '30s they were active in producing unstamped papers. In June 1832, Cowie was fined £20 for selling the Church

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\(^{38}\) *Typographical Protection Circular*, April 1852, pp. 178-80, Leader. This article estimated that, "4,000 out of 15,000 printers" in Britain had the vote.

Later, Cowie published for the London Union of Compositors and the LSC, supplying members with guides to London's printing offices. The Typographical Circular followed the Typographical Protection Circular in April 1854. Like its predecessor, the Circular's declared aim was to stir craftsmen from inertia:

established for the purpose of restraining the revolutionary and giving ardour to the apathetic, we have endeavoured...to repress the extreme notions of the ultra-democrats and to stimulate to increased energy those who seemed to be affected with a lethargy from which it was difficult to arouse them.

Such militancy was however reserved for occupational matters. Its reporting of union meetings indicates the Circular's respect for and approval of the current Committee. In August 1855, following the Master Printers' Association's reformation, the Circular reported the MPA's meetings.

Anonymity, the occupational hazard of the newspaper historian, affects a trade newspaper just as it does a national daily. Leader writers, columnists and contributors to those journals were either anonymous or pseudonymous and cannot be

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42. Typographical Circular, Aug. 1858, p. 402.
43. Typographical Circular, April 1854-Sept. 1858, passim.
44. Typographical Circular, 1 Aug. 1855, p. 133.
identified. Some trade journals were registered with the Stationers' Company and in a number of these cases, the proprietor is identifiable.\(^{45}\) For the rest, the individuals who supplied finance for publication, like the compositors and printers of trade journals throughout this period, remain anonymous.\(^{46}\)

In the wider context of Victorian society in the early 1850s, Christian Socialism was gaining some support within the working classes.\(^{47}\) John Ludlow's leadership of the movement and his establishment of the Society for Promoting Working Men's Associations were accompanied during the years 1850 to 1852 by his Christian Socialist produced by the Working Printers' Association at 4A Johnson's Court, Fleet Street.\(^{48}\) Richard Isham, a member of the London Society of Compositors, and the ex-Chartist printer, J.B. Leno, were founders of this


\(^{48}\) Christian Socialist: A Journal of Co-operation, 1850-1, 1852, 1d, 2d; Warwick, no. 541.
The WPA was one of a number of short lived co-operative ventures promoted by Edward Vansittart Neale who was attempting to bring the co-operative movement and Christian Socialism into a harmony of both a practical and spiritual nature. In 1853, the Co-operative Commercial Circular under Neale's direction appeared from the Working Printers' Association, and under Isham's sole proprietorship. It ran till 1855 during which time it was published by John Tupling and then by James Watson, who also acted as vendor of both publications. Watson had been printer and vendor of Hetherington's Republican, vendor of the Poor Man's Guardian, and in 1850 had published the Chartist-revivalist Democratic Review and Cooper's Journal. After the mid '50s, the movement identified with Ludlow and Neale declined in influence. Tensions between Ludlow and Neale over leadership and direction, along with those which arose from disagreements


51. Colloms, op.cit., p. 128.

52. Co-operative Commercial Circular, 1853-55, 1/2d, 1d: Warwick, no. 725.


54. PRO MEPO 2/59; Hollis, op.cit., p. 307. According to Dr. Hollis, he retired from printing and bookselling in 1850, but his name continues to appear on radical publications till the mid-'50s: See English Republican: Warwick, no. 1042; Political Examiner, 1d: Warwick, no. 2753.

55. 3d: Warwick, no. 880; 1d: Warwick, no. 764.
over means and ends between Ludlow and F.P. Maurice (the spiritual father of Christian Socialism who refused to take responsibility for the movement) brought disintegration.\textsuperscript{56} To its followers, Christian Socialism did not prove satisfying in either a spiritual or a practical sense. Co-operative production on the other hand, drew increasing support from within the working class. Although the great surge in co-operative production in the fourth quarter of the 19th century was essentially a provincial and not a metropolitan phenomenon,\textsuperscript{57} the Co-operative Printing Society did have a prosperous London branch. Like its provincial counterpart, its co-operation was a compliment to, not a subverter of, the prevailing economic system.\textsuperscript{58} In 1889 and 1890 the Co-operative Printing Society printed the \textit{Vigilance Gazette} for the LSC's Vigilance Association.\textsuperscript{59}

In the composing craft in the late '50s, the \textit{London Press Journal} and \textit{General Trades Advocate} appeared and continued to

\textsuperscript{56} DNB, Vol. XIII, pp. 97-105.


\textsuperscript{59} \textit{London Printers' Circular and Vigilance Gazette}, May 1889-Aug. 1890, printed by the Co-operative Printing Society at 6 Salisbury Court and published by them for the LSC Vigilance Committee; see below Appx. A.; cf. Hall, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 126. In 1911, the Co-operative Printing Society printed the \textit{Daily Herald}, see below pp. 331-2.
serve as circular to the trade till the mid-'sixties. As its name suggests, this paper catered to a wide trade unionist audience, providing information on coalminers, the Spitalfields weavers and building trades workers as well as compositors and pressmen. It was a working man's paper: as vehemently anti-capitalist and outspoken against masters' exploitation as it was supportive of the 9-hours movement in the building trades. In philosophy the journal was eclectic, in politics it was republican and it advocated self-help, education and internationalism as the way to the peaceful and harmonious republic of the future. The paper's editor was Edwin Shelly Mantz, compositor and member of the LSC. Mantz's political sympathies led him to speak out against slavery and in favour of the Northern States during the American Civil War, when the North versus South issue polarized opinion within the British trade union movement. Mantz's opinions were so completely at variance with those of the LSC's stoical Committee that in an effort to disassociate

60. The London Press Journal and General Trades Advocate, Nov. 1858-1864, 1d: Warwick, no. 3635. The paper bore the words "late the Typographical Circular", and the Warwick Guide indicates direct descent, but its tone, presentation, and editor indicate it to have been a distinct journal. Though the only copies extant are Nov. 1858-Jan. 1859, The London Press Journal continued until at least April 1863. E.S. Mantz refers to his "capacity as editor of the London Press Journal" in the BeeHive, 11 April 1863, p. 5.


62. BeeHive, 11 April, 1863, p. 5.

themselves from such inflammatory views, the Executive circularized various daily papers publicly denying complicity in Mantz's activities. Mantz's response in the BeeHive highlights the split which divided the LSC's Executive from its rank and file at that time: "Does the fact of a man belonging to the Compositors' Society ignore his rights as a politician, a lecturer, a debater or writer?"64

After October 1861 it was somewhat easier - at least theoretically - for politically motivated working men to air their views. The BeeHive, the first English newspaper produced by and for working men appeared courtesy of the Trades Newspaper Company on October 19th.65 It was a weekly paper and it cost 1d. It added a newspaper for politically aware and intellectually inclined working men, to the middle class dailies and the trade papers of commerce and industrial interests which did not allow for the expression of working men's views or the discussion of trade union issues. The BeeHive made the English press tri-partite. It was an avowedly trade unionist paper catering to a wide audience, carrying information on trade union and labour issues from national and international sources as well as legal and parliamentary reports and general articles of a serious nature. It is true that the BeeHive did not have a universal appeal to working men: its tone could be high-flown and its material theoretical which tended to diminish both impact and circulation. On the other

64. BeeHive, 11 April 1863, p. 5.

65. BeeHive, 19 Oct. 1861-30 Dec. 1876, then Industrial Review Social and Political, 6 Jan. 1877-28 Dec. 1878, weekly, 2d; Shares were 5/-: Warwick, no. 214.
hand, it had no specific ideology - socialist or otherwise - and this allowed it to function as a forum for the discussion of diverse trade union and labour related issues enabling it to serve all working men who were dissatisfied with the frivolous, domestic, parochial nature of Reynolds's News and Lloyd's Weekly News.  

In discussing the BeeHive in the context of craftsmen of the compositors' trade union, the familiar problem of anonymity is accentuated by a number of factors. Firstly, no copies of the paper from the first year of its publication survive. Secondly, articles in the BeeHive are rarely signed and those which do carry a by-line are almost invariably pseudonymous. The only identifiable nom de plume is that of "Scourge" who is known to have been Robert Hartwell. Thirdly, the space devoted to correspondence is minimal: in the early '60s only two letters at most appeared each week and these were often pseudonymous. Added to these problems of anonymity are those arising from the paper's wide coverage of diverse issues. The BeeHive grew out of the builders' strike of 1859. It was edited by George Potter of the Progressive Society of Carpenters and Joiners and during its early years one of its main aims was to inveigh against Potter's rivals, the trade union junta led by Robert Applegarth, George Odger


68. Coltham, op.cit., p. 66.
and Daniel Guile. At the same time the BeeHive was also regarded as the organ of the London Trades' Council and of the Reform League. These specific functions then, together with the vast field of interests covered in a more general manner, meant that contributions from LSC compositors could only appear occasionally. Space for regular comment on trade union issues was reserved for trade union leaders of national stature, like T.J. Dunning.

In view of the above, viable conclusions concerning the BeeHive's role in providing an outlet for politically motivated compositors remain problematic. The evidence available however, suggests that the BeeHive did provide a restricted channel for the expression of ideas by some compositors. Robert Hartwell certainly used the BeeHive to publicize his views: until 1868 he appeared as front page Leader writer on almost every edition of the BeeHive. Also, compositor and journalist E.S. Mantz, used the paper as he did the London Press Journal, to disseminate his egalitarian and republican views and also to expose the shortcomings of the current Executive of the LSC. The need for reform in the organization of the compositors' union was an issue well publicized in

69. Coltham, op.cit., pp. 6-224.


71. The BeeHive did not carry its editorial inside as was customary, but rather led with it on its front page. Parliamentary news appeared in the place beneath publication information, which is normally associated with the Leader.

72. BeeHive, 11 April 1865, p. 5.
the BeeHive. "Judex" contributed a series of articles which appeared in the paper in the early 'sixties, campaigning for internal reform and democratic constitution of the LSC Committee. In October 1863, Hartwell entered the fray, condemning the union for its conservatism and its "horror of things political".

The strand of political radicalism which developed from Owenism through Chartism to secularism was exemplified in the London composing trade by the career of Austin Holyoake, younger brother to the more famous George Jacob Holyoake. Austin printed and published secularist literature first at the Fleet Printing Works from 1853-62, then at offices which he shared with Charles Watts at MacLean's Buildings, New Street and from the late '60s to 1874, at 17 Johnson Court. In the late '60s and early '70s, he printed for Charles Bradlaugh and the National Secular Society. At his death in 1874, Watts took over Austin's business and shortly thereafter, moved to 84 Fleet Street. It was here, in 1877, that

78. Royle, op.cit., Docs., 1044, 1045, 1047.
79. Ibid., Introduction.
the unexceptionable and previously published *Fruits of Philosophy* by Charles Knowlton was printed by Watts for Charles Bradlaugh and Annie Besant, and published by their newly founded Freethought Publishing Company. The *Fruits of Philosophy* was a birth control pamphlet whose content was highly respectable, but whose nature was found objectionable by the Society for the Suppression of Vice which instigated a prosecution against Bradlaugh, Besant, and Watts. Shortly thereafter, the London publisher Edward Truelove was indicted for publishing pamphlets and treatises advocating birth control and for selling similar literature from his premises at 256 High Holborn. The prosecution against Bradlaugh, Besant and Watts, and that against Truelove failed. The jury was unable to agree concerning the attribution of guilt and the defendants were acquitted. Truelove was more of a republican than a secularist at that time. He was well known in radical political circles having been the publisher of the *Republican Chronicle*, then the *Republican*, then the *Radical*. Later in the 1880s, he used the press as a vehicle for debat-

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81. Not found in the PRO's Company Records held in Board of Trade Documents, Class 31.
83. He was indicted for publishing, Anon. *Individual Family and National Poverty*, April 1877, and R. Dale Owen's *Moral Physiology*, May 1877, and for selling similar publications: E. Truelove, *In the High Court of Justice...the Queen v. E. Truelove*, 1878, p. 1.
84. Ibid., p. 99.
85. 1d.; *Warwick*, no. 2983.
ing the respective merits of republicanism versus social democracy. His printers of republican papers and of neo-Malthusian tracts were Charles Watts and George Standring of Finsbury. Standring, well known in the trade for his sympathies with the Independent Labour Party, worked for Bradlaugh occasionally and produced some literature for the National Secular Society.

Bradlaugh relied for the publication of his National Reformer on Charles Watts and also on the compositor E.W. Whittle. When relations between Bradlaugh and G.W. Foote, Bradlaugh's second in command at the National Secular Society, soured, Whittle worked for Foote on his scurrilous Freethinker and in 1882, found himself indicted on a charge of blasphemous libel. Whittle recanted and was discharged, but Foote went on to serve a year in Newgate and Holloway for his satires on the clergy.

During the early and mid-'eighties, Charles Bradlaugh wrote a number of secularist works in co-authorship with Annie Besant. Most of those which were published before the rift

86. Ibid.
87. Warwick, no. 2983.
89. Warwick, no. 2983; E. Royle, ed., The Infidel Tradition from Paine to Bradlaugh, 1976, p. 86; Royle, Index, Doc. 1606.
90. Royle, Index, p. 57 and Docs. 1044, 1045, 1047.
occurred between them in 1887, were produced by Authur Bonner. Bonner was a compositor of Bradlaugh's National Reformer and from June 1885, he was Bradlaugh's son-in-law. In the 1880s he produced Annie Besant's socialist advocate Link, and during the last years of the 19th century he composed the Progressive Review for Ramsay MacDonald and he worked for the socialist utopian and mystic Edward Carpenter.

During the late 'seventies, within the LSC itself, the Printing Review expressed an ideological as well as an economic turmoil prevalent amongst compositors during the later years of that decade. Redolent of the union's early circulars, the Review spearheaded opposition to the Society's Executive and the demands for internal reform, and coupled this with an economic orientation and a political awareness. It was printed and published by Alfred George of Oxford Street and declared itself to be a "workman's organ" for the "wage earning classes of the printing trade" representative of men who were "unwilling to give their opinion at trade meetings, but who would gladly do so by means of an organ such as

93. Royle, Index, pp. viii-ix, Doc. 2435; A. Bonner and C. Bradlaugh Bonner, Hypatia Bradlaugh Bonner, 1942; LSC, Annual Report, 1884; From 1902 onward, he had his own business: LSC, Annual Report, p. 47.

94. Warwick, no. 1873.

95. Warwick, no. 2841; PRO BT 31 6665/46874.

96. E. Carpenter, An Unknown People, 1897.

this". The journal's impetus was economic: it charted the depression and unemployment of 1879, vehemently demanding abolition of the half-pay provident benefit and voicing unflagging criticism of the LSC's Executive; but at the same time it promoted fresh ideas and approaches to the discussion of political philosophy and economic issues. Its articles and correspondence indicate ideas and opinions in transition. Overall, the Printing Review was egalitarian and it could be socialist, yet it expressed no coherent theory and adhered to no single doctrine. It was a journal of LSC compositors disillusioned with the conditions of the 1870s, aware yet uncommitted to the political alternatives. Consequently, the politics it purveyed were those of general iconoclasm rather than a specific ideology. It was an indication of the breakdown of compartmentalisation which was characteristic of compositors at mid-century, evidence of the growing realisation that personal concerns, trade union matters and national issues of a political economic and social nature were interrelated, were part of one all-encompassing whole.


101. See Printing Review, 2 Mar., p. 40. Support for its function as enquirer and iconoclast is evident in the extensive correspondence section of the paper. About a quarter to a third of each issue was devoted to correspondence; this was a very high proportion, even for a trade paper.
In the 1880s, Marxist socialism in its varying interpretations began to gain adherents within the London trades. At this time, individual compositors of a committed ideological position used their proximity to the press to publicize their views. Thomas Binning for example, was one such compositor. A member of the LSC and propagandist of the Social Democratic Federation's breakaway Socialist League, Binning sought to convert his fellow trade unionists to membership of the League, resolving the contradiction in policy between reformism and revolution by calling for recognition of trade unions not as institutions which "bolster up the present thoroughly vicious state of society", but rather, as a temporary and essential precursor of Socialism. Socialism, the new social order to be ushered in by trade unions, was to be established as a "co-operative commonwealth" in which "communes would own and control all the raw materials, instruments of labour and means of transit".

In May 1888 the movement for reform in the London Society of Compositors came to a head, culminating in the publication of the *Vigilance Gazette*. This journal was the chapel


oriented anti-Committee trade circular par excellence. The Vigilance Gazette supported the formation of new unions in the printing trade and it opposed exploitative masters. It was never, however, a politically radical organ. Some of its articles promoted identity of interests between employers and employees and its commitment to co-operative production as the compliment to the capitalist system was clearly expressed in its pages. The Vigilance Gazette circulated in the trade just at that time when socialist journals provided politically conscious craftsmen who were attracted to a new ideology of society with a direct outlet for political publication.

105. See front page articles and correspondence columns in Vigilance Gazette, passim, esp., "Our trade committee: is a reconstitution really necessary?"; Vigilance Gazette, June 1888, pp. 7-8; July 1888, pp. 18-9; Aug. 1888, pp. 26-7.


More definitive evidence of a continuing tradition of radical publication in the second half of the nineteenth century than the above anecdotal survey allows is provided by information from the *Warwick Guide to Labour Periodicals*, together with information from company records where they survive, and the work of Dr. Deian Hopkin on newspapers of the Independent Labour Party. As H.A. Shannon's work on


109. The registration and regulation of joint stock companies was initially required and entrusted to the Board of Trade in 1844 by 7 and 8 Vict. c. 110, then by 10 and 11 Vict. c. 78 and 19 and 20 Vict. c. 17, in 1856. By these acts, companies acquired corporate privileges without special Acts of Parliament or Royal Charters. At the PRO, Board of Trade Records, Class 41 contains documents of companies registered under the Acts of 1844 and 1856, which survived until 1860. Board of Trade Records Class 31 contains the documents of dissolved companies established between 1856 and the present. The records have been extensively weeded: annual returns of shareholders, except the first, last, and every intervening 5th, have been destroyed. In many cases then, particularly of short lived companies, it is impossible to see any pattern of shareholding. Records found in these classes are hereafter cited as PRO 41--; PRO 31-. Records of companies still in existence are held at the Companies' Registration Office, Companies' House. The records of none of the companies discussed here could be traced at Companies' House.

the first joint stock companies indicates, and as Dr. Hopkin has pointed out, it was only in the later nineteenth century that the fashion for small shares (of 10/- or 5/-) really caught on, allowing the formation of newspaper companies whose shareholders were working men and whose publications catered to a working class audience. Hence, the majority of company records relevant to this study emanate from the fourth quarter of the nineteenth century. In these records, the presence of compositors among the shareholders is taken as a clear indication of ideological commitment.

The presentation of research and conclusions arising from these sources has necessitated a certain duplication of some works previously mentioned. Where such duplication is unavoidable, it has been kept to a minimum.

To deal firstly with the newspapers of the Independent Labour Party, which Deian Hopkin has researched for his thesis. The greater proportion of ILP Newspapers were provincial; indeed, the movement did not have any considerable following in London. The story of the *Workman's Times*, a labour newspaper directed by Joseph Burgess which anticipated the ILP papers of the later 'nineties is illustrative here. The paper had little impact in London where it could establish no reliable circulation. However, in Manchester, where its


main edition was produced, the paper had a healthy and buoyant readership. It was printed by the Manchester Labour Press Society, whose manager and owner Henry Henshall, was an Executive member of the provincial compositors' union, the Typographical Association. Of all the ILP papers Dr. Hopkin has located, only nine are known to have been printed and circulated in London, and of them, four were known to have been produced by compositors/printers sympathetic to socialism and/or the politics of the Independent Labour Party. The Chelsea Pick and Shovel (January 1900-1) and Finsbury (January 1900-May 1901), came from the printing office of Vail and Company at 170 Farringdon Road, whilst the South West Ham Worker (August 1897-August 1901) and Woolwich District and Labour Notes (November 1896-December 1899) were printed at the union house of Walter Godbold of Plaistow. Godbold was a Councillor in West Ham and an active member of the Independent Labour Party.

These newspapers, along with all newspapers and journals of labour and trade union origin are listed in the Warwick Guide. In this bibliography, newspapers and periodicals of a


radical or socialist trade union orientation, printed, published and circulated in London during the years 1848-1900, which are not specifically Chartist, Temperance or ILP and which are not the organ of a particular trade union, number 75. Of these, three have been discussed above and two more are not accessible to research: no copies of the Red Flag are held by the British Library at Colindale and copies are not known to exist elsewhere; Rich and Poor (1867-8), an expose of the Royal Commission on Trade Unions in progress during 1867-8 was avowedly anonymous in its writing, printing and publication for, "fear of proscription". This brings the workable total down to seventy. All these publications have been studied for printer and publication details. Of these, 24 were produced by craftsmen who are known to have been favourably disposed to socialist newspapers, either from company records, trade union reports, trade journals, contemporary commentaries, from information arising from the unstamped agitation, or from the radical newspapers themselves.

Henry Hetherington composed and published the advocate of land colonisation and economic co-operation, the Spirit of the Time, during 1849, and after him in 1850-51, George Berger

117. See Table 4 below, pp. 345-6.
118. Workman's Times; Christian Socialist (1850-1); Co-operative Commercial Circular.
120. Warwick, no. 3011.
121. 2d; Mar. 1849-July 1850: Warwick, no. 3367.
produced the trade union paper the Operative. Austin Holyoake produced the Political Examiner in 1853, followed by the London Investigator and the Counsellor in 1861 and then Bradlaugh's National Reformer in the early '70s. Vail's office produced the Republican of 1870-72 and George Standring of Finsbury whom we met in conjunction with Edward Truelove's Republican Chronicle, Republican and Radical, later produced Fabian News. In 1883 William Reeves began to print the 1d Christian Socialist, a newspaper published by the Land Reform Union and edited in part by H.H. Champion. As well as land colonisation it urged the formation of an independent labour party. After 1887, the paper became the organ of the Christian Socialist Society. In 1886, Reeves printed the Socialist for Alex Campbell, Jack Fitzgerald, and J.R. MacDonald, then the Practical Socialist throughout 1886-87 and in the 1890s, Free Exchange. He was also

122. 1 1/2d; June 1851-July 1852: Warwick, no. 2541.


124. 1d; Sept. 1870-Feb. 1872: Warwick, no. 2981.

125. 1d; Jan. 1879-Sep. 1889: Warwick, No. 2983.


130. May-July 1892: Warwick, no. 1202.
the printer of a number of H.M. Hyndman's works. Arthur Bonner prepared some editions of Bradlaugh's National Reformer for the press. In 1888 he worked for Annie Besant, whose assertion two years previously that, "composers were the most numerous class among English Socialists", had brought a hot denial from the trade's current circular, the Printer. Throughout that year Bonner produced Link and followed this in the '90s with the Progressive Review. Turner and Company printed Federation throughout 1872-75, and then the long running Freedom of 1886-1927. R.K. Burt printed Labour Standard and the Pioneer in the early '80s. Page and Pratt produced the short-lived Liberty in 1883, and then from November 1884 to September 1890, the Democrat. In the early '90s, Haymann, Christie and Lily produced the Workers' Cry and later

133. The Printer, Aug. 1886, p. 97.
134. 1/2d; Feb.-Dec. 1888: Warwick, no. 1873.
137. 2d, 3d, 4d: Warwick, no. 1212.
139. 1d, Apr.-May 1883: Warwick, no. 1861. Daniel Pratt was a shareholder in the Trades Newspaper Company which published the BeeHive: BT 31 584/2426.
140. 1d, 2d: Warwick, no. 867A.
in 1902, as the National Press Agency, they printed the Democrat.\textsuperscript{141}

A further 27 of the total 70 give reference to a publishing company, or to what can be recognised as such, from which they originated. None of these companies were registered as Friendly Societies,\textsuperscript{142} but of the 27, eleven companies can be traced in the Public Record Office's Board of Trade records. Unregistered companies cannot of course be traced and those which have merged into another company are almost impossible to locate. Some company records have simply disappeared. Who for example, formed and operated the 8-Hour and Trade Union Printing works at 13 Pater Noster Row, which published H.H. Champion's Commonsense during the years 1887-88?\textsuperscript{143} Similarly, it is only possible to speculate on the printing houses which provided press and type for emigre anarchist groups in London, some of whose publications bore the imprint of the anonymous International Publishing Company.\textsuperscript{144} In 1881, Johann Most's exile German newspaper Freiheit carried an article celebrating the assassination of Alexander II.\textsuperscript{145} Its

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{141} 1891: Warwick, no. 3946; June-Nov. 1902: Warwick, no. 868.
\item \textsuperscript{142} PRO FS 8.
\item \textsuperscript{143} BLPES Colln, D.S. 1296 (1-10 with gaps): Warwick, no. 650.
\item \textsuperscript{144} Eg. Alarm, 1896: Warwick, no. 49; Anarchist, 1885-8: Warwick, no. 73; Freedom, 1886-1927, printed by John Turner: Warwick, no. 1212; Freiheit, printed by John Bale: Warwick, no. 1218; Le Tocsin, 1893; Warwick, No. 3542; Torch, 1894-6: Warwick, no. 3552; The Waker, 1892-3; (Anarchist?, Yiddish, pr. by Socialist Workmen's Assoc., (no company found)): Warwick, no. 4126.
\item \textsuperscript{145} 1d, monthly; Jan. 1879-Dec. 1883: Warwick, no. 1218.
\end{enumerate}
publication brought Most 18 months' imprisonment after a trial accompanied by the defiant publication and sale of Freiheit in the precincts of the Old Bailey. It was the union compositor and socialist A.G. Barker who printed and circulated the paper throughout Most's absence. Elsewhere, the paucity of information in surviving company files is thoroughly tantalising; for example, the file of Swan Sonnenschein and Company, the organization which printed much socialist literature, including the English edition of Marx's Das Kapital in 1887, has no records pertaining to the years before 1895. Following a take-over in that year, the new directors included one Barrister, one J.P., one Esquire, and two publishers and shares in the new company were £100 each. Where company records do survive, they indicate all too clearly the financial anxieties which confronted these organizations: under-capitalization and shortage of cash were ever present problems.

Of the 11 papers for which company records do survive, the earliest was undoubtedly the most prominent trades' newspaper of its time, the BeeHive. The BeeHive was published by the Trades Newspaper Company from October 1861 until 1868. From the outset, less than half the Company's five

147. 1887. Trans. by S. Moore and E. Aveling.
148. PRO BT 31 6359/44917.
150. PRO BT 31 584/2426; Warwick, no. 214.
thousand 5/- shares were taken up. Most of these were held in ones or twos by workmen in the building trades.\textsuperscript{151} Robert Hartwell was an initial shareholder, and also along with him were LSC members Edwin Shelly Mantz, editor of the \textit{London Press Journal} who later became a member of the compositors' Executive, and John Vogel who worked with Mantz on the composing trade's journal.\textsuperscript{152} Also included among the shareholders were compositors William Becket,\textsuperscript{153} and John Shand who had been assistant Secretary of the compositors' union in 1857.\textsuperscript{154}

In June 1875, the \textit{People's Advocate} and \textit{National Vindicator of Right and Wrong} was published by the People's Newspaper and General Publishing Company.\textsuperscript{155} This democratic advocate of trade unions was a radical paper of the old style, celebrating in its weekly calendar John Hampden's death, Horne Tooke's birthday and the imprisonment in 1797 of the printer Williams for his publication of Tom Paine's \textit{Age of Reason}.\textsuperscript{156} Shares in the newspaper Company were £1, and as its prospectus declared, "it is hoped that working men will at once take up

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{151} PRO BT 31 584/2426, (np.).
\item \textsuperscript{152} \textit{London Press Journal}, No. 1, 1 Nov. 1858, p. 1; LSC, \textit{Annual Report}, 1883, p. 7.
\item \textsuperscript{153} PRO BT 31 584/2426.
\item \textsuperscript{154} PRO BT 31 584/2426; \textit{Typographical Circular}, 15 May 1857, p. 331.
\item \textsuperscript{155} 1d; 1-16 June 1875-May 1876; PRO BT 31 2114/9618; \textit{Warwick}, no. 2651.
\item \textsuperscript{156} \textit{People's Advocate}, 19 June 1875, p. 4.
\end{itemize}
shares". The paper was printed by W.W. Hawes, shareholder and compositor of Mile End.\textsuperscript{157}

In 1880, \textit{Commongood} appeared.\textsuperscript{158} Devoted to "social, political and technical education, rational recreation, cooperation, thrift and the general improvement of the working classes", this paper was backed by the \textit{Commongood Newspaper Company}, whose 5,000 shares sold at £1 each.\textsuperscript{159} Fred Willis was a shareholder and a director of this company.\textsuperscript{160} Willis was an active member of the LSC, an ex-member of the Compositors' Discussion Association, a vociferous participant in union meetings and an articulate contributor to trade gazettes from the 1850s, who later became both a Society delegate and member of the Executive.\textsuperscript{161} In 1881, the Board of Directors of the \textit{Commongood Newspaper Company} consisted of Fred Willis, Howard Hodgkin, George Howell and the Reverend Henry Solly.\textsuperscript{162}

\textit{H.H. Champion's Labour Elector} which promoted the Gas Workers' Union, the Dockers' Union and carried occasional articles by compositors of the LSC,\textsuperscript{163} appeared weekly from 1888-1894. It was printed and published by Winkworth, Foulger

\begin{itemize}
  \item[] \textsuperscript{157} PRO BT 31 2114/9618.
  \item[] \textsuperscript{158} \textit{Warwick}, no. 649.
  \item[] \textsuperscript{159} PRO BT 31 2736/14833.
  \item[] \textsuperscript{160} \textit{Ibid}.
  \item[] \textsuperscript{161} F. Willis, \textit{The Present Position and Future prospects of the LSC}, 1881; \textit{Printing Review}, 12 Dec. 1879, p. 184; See above, pp. 141-5.
  \item[] \textsuperscript{162} PRO BT 31 2736/14833.
  \item[] \textsuperscript{163} Unidentified, "well known member of the LSC", \textit{Labour Elector}, 25 Mar. 1893, p. 2.
\end{itemize}
and Co., then by Champion himself and then by Rait Henderson and Company, "printers to numerous trade unions and provident societies", whose shareholders included David Foster Rait and George Montague Hare, substantial master printers who between them held 450 of the company's 10,000 £1 shares.

The Clarion, most popular of all socialist, trade unionist, and labour papers during the 1890s and the early twentieth century, first appeared in Manchester in 1889. The Clarion Press was incorporated on 11 October 1894 and though Manchester based, did have a London Office in the later 'nineties. The Clarion purveyed Blatchford's idiosyncratic socialism: partisan to neither the Independent Labour Party nor the Social Democratic Federation, gradualist with a crucial emphasis on educationalism, laced with the emotive egalitarianism of his Merrie England and the vigour and enthusiasm of cycling and glee clubs. It was however, never a paper which depended, - like so many local ILP newspapers - on the support of working men shareholders. Its shares were £1 apiece, but of the 6,207 shares taken up in the 1890s, the five directors Robert Blatchford, his brother Montagu, Edward Francis Fay, Alix Thompson, and William

165. PRO BT 31 5251/35353.
166. PRO BT 31 31789/42159.
Raustead, together held over 5,000. In 1895 the Clarion Press produced Scout: A Journal for Socialist Workers. This paper was expressly aimed to help Clarion Scouts in industrial centres like Birmingham, Glasgow and the West Riding of Yorkshire, and to that end it carried along with socialist information and ideas, much space devoted to recruitment information for the Clarion's cycling and glee clubs.

In the early '90s, John Trevor's Labour Prophet was circulated from offices in both Manchester and London. Originally printed and published by John Heywood, this organ of the Labour Church was produced after the tenth edition by Taylor Garnett Evans and Company. This publishing company was that of the Manchester Guardian.

During the years 1893-1902, the Trade Unionist was printed and published by the Ideal Publishing Company. This rather eccentric body supported trade unionism, deplored socialism, and advocated vegetarianism as the key to a harmonious future. It is not known that any compositors were among the shareholders of this esoteric company.

168. PRO BT 31 31789/42159.
169. Warwick, no. 3131.
170. 1d, 2d; Mar. 1895-Apr. 1896: Warwick, no. 3131.
171. Labour Prophet, 1d, nos. 1-10 by John Heywood, Deansgate and Ridgefield, Manchester, and 1 Paternoster Row, London, nos. 11-43 by Taylor, Garnett and Evans: PRO BT 31 1161/60127; Warwick, no. 1729.
173. PRO BT 31 5729/40074; Warwick, no. 3589.
The remaining three newspapers, *Justice*, the *Bow and Bromley Socialist*, and *Social Democrat* were all produced by the Twentieth Century Press Company. The Twentieth Century Press was registered with the Registrar of Companies on 12 November 1891. Its initial capital was £1,000. Its declared aims were to, "to carry out the printing of socialist and trade union organs...to take over *Justice* and to acquire the printing business now carried on by the Justice Printery of 337 the Strand". *Justice* was the organ of the Social Democratic Federation. It had been printed from 1884, firstly by the Modern Press under the direction of H.H. Champion, then by the Justice Printery, then by the Twentieth Century Press. Publications of the Twentieth Century Press in the '90s included along with *Justice*, the *Bow and Bromley Socialist* and *Social Democrat*, the Annual Reports of the Social Democratic Federation, a number of the writings of H.M. Hyndman, Ernest Belfort Bax and William Morris, and a


175. PRO BT 31 15187/35009.


large number of 1/2d and 1d socialist pamphlets. Original company directors of the Twentieth Century Press included H.M. Hyndman, the journalist and socialist Ernest Belfort Bax, Harry Quelch, A.P. Hazell and A.A. Watts. Alfred Pung Hazell was a printer of 101 Blackstock Road, Finsbury Park, and A.A. Watts of 20 Selwyn Road Mile End, was Secretary of the Twentieth Century Press and a member of the London Society of Compositors.

By April 1892 when the Twentieth Century Press moved to 44 Gray's Inn Road, its shareholders included James Blackwell, Arthur William Chalkley, C.F. Davies, Henry Hobart, Richard Mayes, William George Wells, and Thomas Anderson Webster, as well as A.A. Watts and A.P. Hazell. All these men described themselves as compositors or LSC members at a time when the trade was becoming synonymous with the union. By June, the Twentieth Century Press Company's shareholders had risen to 520 and roughly 10% of them were compositors. Always under capitalized, the Press suffered from periodic financial catastrophes. Despite differences between William Morris and H.M. Hyndman, it was Morris who aided the company


179. PRO BT 31 15187/35009.


181. PRO BT 31 15187/35009.

182. PRO BT 31 15187/35009.
with a loan of £50 in June 1893. During the mid-'90s prospects must have improved, bringing a chance of stability to the company, for in 1897 a new attempt was made to increase capital assets by the floatation of 16,000 additional 5/- shares. The Press moved once more in June 1893 to 37A Clerkenwell Green. This was to become its permanent home and here it remained until 1912, when the Twentieth Century Press Company went bankrupt through a libel case. The publishing house then re-formed as the Twentieth Century Press (1912) and under this name, continued the publication of Justice until the newspaper's demise in 1925.

Of the identifiable compositor shareholders, Davies and Hobart were prominent LSC members. Davies represented the LSC on the London Trades' Council annually from 1892. In 1898 and 1899 he served the Council as Whip. Henry Hobart sat on the union Executive from 1892 to 1895, and from 1898 to 1900 and he was Chairman of the Printing Trades' Group of

183. Letter from Wm. Morris to M.R.P. Lyons, 31 June 1893: BL Add. MSS. 45341, f. 89. Morris is better known for his journal Commonweal which from Jan. 1891 was the journal of the Socialist League: Warwick, no. 657.
184. PRO BT 31 15187/35009; Annual Returns of the Twentieth Century Press Company indicate that the Company made a net profit of only £20-£30 in the '90s: See Justice, 6 June 1896; 5 June 1897.
185. Ibid. Now the Marx Memorial Library.
186. Ibid.
188. LSC, Annual Reports, 1892-1900.
189. LSC, Annual Reports, 1898, 1899.
190. LSC, Annual Reports, 1892-5; 1897-1900.
the London Trades' Council from 1892-1900. Blackwell, Watts, Davies, Hobart, and Hazell were also members of the Social Democratic Federation. Blackwell and Hobart wrote for Justice from the autumn of 1886, and Hazell joined them in September 1888. Other members of the SDF who were increasingly prominent members of the LSC were Fred Knee, A.E. Holmes and Charles Copeland. Knee wrote for Justice from July 1891 and later he became a compositor for the Twentieth Century Press. Knee joined the LSC shortly after his arrival from Somerset in December 1890 and was elected to the Executive in 1897. In the following year he served as delegate on the Printing Trades Group of the LTC. A.E. Holmes represented the LSC on the LTC annually from 1895. In 1898


195. Knee, Diary, p. 68. The exact date of his employment by the press is unknown, but he was working for them by 1904 when he stood as LSC delegate to LTC: Annual Report, 1904, p. 54.

196. LSC, Annual Reports, 1897, 1898.
and 1899, along with C.F. Davies, he served as Whip.\(^ {197}\) In 1897 Holmes was elected to the union Executive.\(^ {198}\) Charles Copeland, like Holmes, was an LSC delegate to the London Trades' Council from 1898 and was then elected to the union Executive in 1900.\(^ {199}\)

Clearly, during the late '80s and 1890s there were active SDFers at the centre of the LSC. Increasingly in the 1890s they were elected to the union Executive and they represented the London Society of Compositors on the London Trades Council and on its Printing Trades Group.\(^ {200}\) C.F. Davies, A.E. Holmes, Henry Hobart and Charles Copeland were all chapel delegates prior to their election to more important posts within the union. This is clear from a rule of 1881 which provided that delegate bodies of the LSC were to be elected from chapel delegates at Quarterly Delegate Meetings.\(^ {201}\) Evidently, it was at these meetings and through the proposal of resolutions,\(^ {202}\) that these socialist compositors gained prominence and publicity. Like the Vigilance Association, they used QDMs

\(^{197}\) LSC, Annual Reports, 1895-1900.

\(^{198}\) LSC, Annual Report, 1897.

\(^{199}\) LSC, Annual Reports, 1898, 1900.

\(^{200}\) London Trades Council, Delegates' Reports, 1894-1899; LSC, Annual Reports, 1894, pp. 38-40; 1895, pp. 28-30; 1896, pp. 27-9; 1897, p. 26-9, 1898, p. 28-30; 1899, pp. 31-4; see below, pp. 295-306.

\(^{201}\) Rules of the LSC, 1881, Rule XII.

as a wedge into the leadership of the union. Dr. I.C. Cannon has pointed to the ideological cohesion of the chapel and identified this as contributing to the radical political alignment of present day compositors.\textsuperscript{203} Certainly, the ideological power of the chapel may well have been conducive to socialist politics among Victorian compositors, yet the evidence indicates that it was the institutional rather than the ideological functions of the chapel which, in the case of socialist compositors, provided a means for the spread of socialist ideas. Evidently within the compositors' union during the late nineteenth century there were a number of craftsmen who, far from being apolitical trade unionists, were politically active. Militant compositors never formed more than a minority in the union, but their presence indicates that the LSC was far more than a protective craft oriented elitist union. Moreover, there was a good deal of support for SDF politics within the union, as the frequent election of SDFers well testifies.

Within the LSC itself, the Twentieth Century Press performed a number of functions. Firstly, for those compositors whose political ideas approached the ideology of the SDF, the Press' publications provided a forum for the expression and discussion of ideas. Secondly, the Twentieth Century Press Company provided an organization to which sympathetic craftsmen might gravitate and through which they could further the publication, circulation, and dissemination of socialist ideas.

ideology by financial subscriptions. Together, these contributed to the continuing erosion of compartmentalisation among compositors. Craftsmen active in both the LSC and the SDF evidently saw quite clearly the role of trade unions within a wider society. The presence within the LSC of men who were members of the SDF casts new light on our knowledge and understanding of the Social Democratic Federation. The leadership of the SDF opposed trade unions because these organizations of working men were reformist rather than revolutionary, advocating change within the existing economic political and social system rather than the establishment of a new socialist state. Furthermore they siphoned off a good deal of radical energy from the working class which if channelled into socialism would have made revolutionary socialism a formidable force in British politics.\textsuperscript{204} Within the London Society of Compositors at least, trade unionism and the revolutionary socialism of the SDF had reached an effective accommodation.\textsuperscript{205}

It is virtually impossible to assess the scale of influence exerted by the Twentieth Century Press' publications. Estimates of circulation and audience of publications are elusive, but it can be reasonably assumed, in the metropolis at least, that the Press had a readership of class conscious socialists, trade unionists, middle class socialists, some Fabians, journalists and writers of socialist and/or anarchist sympathies, republicans, secularists, atheists and free-

\textsuperscript{204} Stanley Pierson, Marxism and the Origins of British Socialism, Cornell, 1973, pp. 1-75.

\textsuperscript{205} On this point see E. Hobsbawm, "Hyndman and the SDF", pp. 231-39 in Labouring Men, 1964.
thinkers. A.L. Rothstein, in his study of the Twentieth Century Press, concludes that it was influential during the last decade of the 19th century, as for some years it was the only source of cheap socialist literature in England.\textsuperscript{206}

The journal which served the composing trade during the years 1892-4 was \textit{Printing News}, a monthly publication printed and published by Fielden McAllan and Company.\textsuperscript{207} It was the first circular to be given official recognition by the LSC.\textsuperscript{208} The \textit{Printing News} was an avid supporter of the current Committee and a detailed reporter of union and Executive activities.\textsuperscript{209} At the same time, it advocated the advancement of class conscious socialist trade unionism. "A Journal for the workers", ran its sub-title and correspondingly, the \textit{Printing News} catered not only for all ranks of the printing trade, including printers' labourers, printers' warehousemen and organizations of women workers, but also it supported the

\begin{itemize}
\item A.F. Rothstein, \textit{A House on Clerkenwell Green}, 1966, p. 61.
\item Monthly, 1d: Warwick, no. 2824. There is an error in the dates given here. The \textit{Printing News} did not finish publication in June 1894 as stated, but continued till December: St. Bride Collection. The only remaining journal relevant to the composing trade during the later 1890s was \textit{Print}, (May-Oct. 1896). This was not aimed simply at the workforce of the printing trades, but also to employers: May 1896, p. 1. It may in fact have served as an employers' gazette, the form and presentation of its advertising supplements suggest this to have been the case: St. Bride Collection. The \textit{Printing News} was registered at the Stationers' Company by its printers Fielden MacAllan and Co. on 9 Aug. 1892: PRO Copy 3/38.
\item See \textit{Printing News}, Aug. 1892-Dec. 1894, \textit{passim}.
\end{itemize}
activity of the Social Democratic Federation, praised Justice, and advocated parliamentary activity as the means to the betterment of working conditions and the opening of the road to socialism: 210

The middle classes have hitherto used the legislative machine for their own personal benefit. It is time that the masses utilised it for a nobler purpose. 211

The Printing News suggested the nature of accommodation between the SDF and trade unionists within the LSC. In the columns of the paper, a strategy focusing upon parliamentary representation was urged in the early to mid-1890s, anticipating by some years the official SDF-trade union alliance and its campaign for parliamentary representation. This accommodation seems to have been founded upon the precept that parliamentary representation was the first step to socialism: parliamentary institutions were to be the midwife of the new socialist state.

As the journal's correspondence columns show, the paper provided a forum for the discussion of controversial trade issues: unemployment, piece-'stab, federation with other trade unions, casual labour, and apprentices. 212 That it spoke for a good number of compositors within the trade and reflected the prevailing spirit of the union can be gauged


from its continued appearance: it supplied the trade with information and comment for over two years without revenue from the LSC or from advertising, having had only an initial small grant from the union.\textsuperscript{213} In appearance and tone the Printing News resembled the Vigilance Gazette, but unlike its predecessor its framework incorporated socialist theory, allowing trade issues to be treated in the light of socialist analysis.\textsuperscript{214} Its continued appearance in the trade during the early 'nineties suggests clearly that ideological commitment to socialism was not simply the preserve of a minority in the trade. Finally, it casts dubious light on statements like that of the printer and journalist George Rowles, which sought to identify socialism in the composing trade with well-intentioned yet harmless eccentricity:

Socialist compositors were regarded by the majority of men in the trade with a good humoured tolerance, just as if they had been members of the Salvation Army.\textsuperscript{215}

* * *

Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, continuing from Chartist newspapers and pamphlets, there is evidence of the involvement of metropolitan compositors in the


\textsuperscript{214} Eg: Aug. 1892, pp. 1, 3, 12; Sept. 1892, p. 4; Oct. 1892, pp. 2-3; Dec. 1892, p. 8; Aug. 1893, p. 8; April 1894, p. 15; Aug. 1894, p. 8; Oct. 1894, p. 3; but cf. June 1894, p. 8.

publication of neo-Chartist, trade unionist, republican, secularist, freethought and socialist literature. In the final years of the period, militant compositors active in the LSC were involved in the production of a variety of publications incorporating moderate socialist literature and militant SDF papers, though they rarely, as far as the limited evidence allows conclusion, sanctioned impossibilist propaganda. There is little indication of a break in this tradition of radical publication, but rather of a continuity. During the early years of the second half of the nineteenth century radicals in the composing craft were attracted to diverse ideological trends. Then in the 1880s and 1890s, the currency of new socialist ideology articulated both dissatisfaction with the prevailing economic political and social system and the inability of current political and economic theorists to proffer viable solutions, which the ecclecticism of the Typographical Protection Circular, London Press Journal and Printing Review had indicated. Among socialist compositors, the currency of socialist ideology prompted, not only publication, but also political activity. These developments occurred during a period in which legal provision for joint stock companies and the dictates of fashion in share holding came to fruition. The result was a plethora of socialist newspapers and periodicals founded on joint stock companies floated on 5/- shares, through which a number of compositors either by involvement in the production, or compilation of these publications, or by shareholding in the newspaper companies, could indicate their ideological commitment.
Chapter 6

1896-1906: End of an Era?
The decade 1896-1906 was one of both continuity and change for the London Society of Compositors. These were the years in which each aspect of the Society's concerns, progressing from developments in the second half of the nineteenth century, drew to a conclusion. The fruition of that conclusion was in turn to influence future developments of the LSC. During these years, some traditional forces in the craft gained a new pre-eminence in response to both internal and external developments. The following chapter then considers: firstly, the union's place within the changing printing industry at the turn of the century, it discusses the union's changing market situation and the differing fortunes of the book and news departments with special reference to the position of employers, and it charts the progress of the LSC's internal developments; secondly it analyses the impact of
external political and legal forces upon the London Society of Compositors and within that context, it examines the relationship of compositors to the tradition of radical and socialist publication.

I

In 1850 the London printing industry was estimated as being worth £1-2 million: in 1907, estimates based on the first Census of Production valued it at £9 million.¹ At the end of the 19th century, printing offices in the capital were more numerous that ever before; they were larger, more mechanized and somewhat cleaner than at mid-century. Generally, the impression of a printing office is one of a streamlined office-cum-factory whose proportion of machinery, but not of manpower had increased.² The printing trade was oriented much less around parliamentary printing and much more toward the production of newspapers and magazines which catered to a mass market; for example, in 1896 the 1/2d Daily Mail appeared, followed four years later by Pearson's 1/2d Daily Express and in 1903 by Harmsworth's Daily Mirror.³ Overall, the number of metropolitan daily newspapers had reached twelve morning and

ten evening by 1896.\textsuperscript{4} The move in favour of morning rather than evening papers continued; there being 13 and 9 respectively in 1900.\textsuperscript{5} By 1906 this trend was affirmed; 16 morning and 7 evening papers with national appeal were printed and published daily in London.\textsuperscript{6} In book publishing, the trend to provincial production continued, given new impetus by the 1891 Scale which guaranteed metropolitan book compositors lucrative piece rates,\textsuperscript{7} and in view of the rise in metropolitan rents and leases in the late nineteenth century. Firms which were large enough to move to the provinces and retain a sales office in London did so, and among those which remained, competition was keener than ever before.\textsuperscript{8} As the proportion of book printing in relation to newspaper, journal and jobbing printing in London declined in both absolute and relative terms, so too did the vogue of the three volume novel - that epitome of mid-Victorian publishing. It was gradually superseded by the single volume novel in cheap popular editions like "Everyman".\textsuperscript{9} Competition in book publishing intensified during the early years of the Monotype machine. In form, the Monotype was more suited to book production and

\textsuperscript{4} Excluding trade, financial, and commercial papers: Mitchell's Newspaper Press Directory, 1896,

\textsuperscript{5} Mitchell's Newspaper Press Directory, 1900,

\textsuperscript{6} Mitchell's Newspaper Press Directory, 1906,

\textsuperscript{7} Alford, op.cit., p. 143.


\textsuperscript{9} Alford, op.cit., pp. 74-5, 89, 287-8.
to jobbing printing rather than to newspapers, but because of its cost it could not be introduced into small offices. Small businesses were unable to compete with their newly mechanized rivals and take-overs and bankruptcies were commonplace. Profits from book publishing during the '70s and '80s had enabled increasing capital accumulation, which had been ploughed back into publication. At the end of the century when profit margins were much reduced, it was only the large operator with capital behind him who could succeed and predominate. The ascendency of the bookpublisher over the printer or bookseller which Professor Alford describes as, "the real revolution in Fleet Street", had been accomplished.

Newspapers, especially dailies were not really affected by provincial competition and though magazine and jobbing printing were somewhat more at risk, advertising revenue increasingly tended to offset the higher metropolitan cost of these three forms of publication. In newspaper production, the position of advertising became pre-eminent. It was a source of revenue enabling a reduction in retail price thereby increasing circulation and sharpening competition between newspapers, whilst allowing proprietors to make new demands on


their craftsmen in return for advantageous piece-rate payments.\(^\text{13}\)

The prime exploiters of advertising revenues were proprietors who were managers rather than master printers: men who looked at newspaper production from the outside as a commercial venture, rather than from the inside as the most highly specialised and demanding branch of the printing craft. Harmsworth, Rothermere and Beaverbrook were men who differed from the newspaper proprietors of the earlier decades of the nineteenth century in kind, not in degree.\(^\text{14}\) Harmsworth, later Lord Northcliffe, gave his name to the "Northcliffe Revolution" which is usually associated with the innovatory headlines and new journalistic style of his papers at the turn of the century, but it was rather the exploitation of advertising revenue which allowed that whole genre of new newspapers typified by the 1/2d Daily Mail written in this novel journalistic style, which was the real "Northcliffe Revolution".\(^\text{15}\)

Overall, this spiralling competition within all sections of the London printing industry at the turn of the century gave new impetus to the rivalry between master printers. The


Printing and Allied Trades' Association formed in November 1890, later the Master Printers and Allied Trades' Association and then the London MPA, had been too little, too late. Its partial representation gave the appearance but not the reality of unity to increasingly competitive proprietors. It was not until 1906 that any constructive move was made on the part of proprietors in the field of negotiation with employees, and then as perhaps was to be expected, it was upon the initiative of those commercially orientated newspaper proprietors.

For the London Society of Compositors itself, these years were ones in which the developments of the 1880s and early '90s were consolidated. Membership continued to grow; approaching 11,000 in the early 'nineties the LSC was the largest trade union in London.\(^1\) Throughout the period, the Society remained relatively prosperous. Despite increasing benefit payments and disputes in defence of the scale,\(^1\) sound investment producing interest at 3\%\(^1\) together with financial aid from the National Federation of Trade Unions,\(^1\) offset financial drain which might have threatened the very existence of the union. Only in the early years of the twentieth century did the increase in superannuation payments reduce the LSC's

\[\text{References:}\]
\begin{enumerate}
\item LSC, Annual Reports, 1894-1906.
\item Annual Financial Circulars, pp. 2-3 in LSC, Annual Reports, 1894-1906.
\item Proposals to join the National Federation were endorsed in 1898: LSC, Annual Report, 1898, p. 23; Rules were drawn up in 1901: LSC, Annual Report, 1901, p. 38.
\end{enumerate}
assets.\textsuperscript{20} The union itself was able to maintain buoyancy during this period when the composing trade underwent economic fluctuation; depression marked the early '90s, followed by improvement in 1896 and prosperity by 1898, then stagnation followed and the trade remained quiet till 1904, when improvement promised new prosperity in 1905 and 1906.\textsuperscript{21} More specifically, during these years the union was able to penetrate and take control of salient developments within the printing industry. The LSC benefited from the increasing use of the Linotype, the innovation of the Monotype and from the ascendancy of advertising.

Firstly, concerning the Linotype; negotiations focusing on revision of the 1896 Machine Composing Scale continued throughout the period as masters strove in vain to reduce the agreement's predisposition to compositors. In 1898 militant news compositors rebuffed proprietorial attempts to introduce a 'stab rate for daily news work on the machines, commenting on employers' proposals that, "had they been seriously entertained, they would have altered entirely the system of working in the metropolis".\textsuperscript{22} In 1902, further negotiations looked optimistic until employers again reverted to the issue of a 'stab rate to supersede the lucrative piece rates. The LSC's members refused to consider the matter. Negotiations were

\textsuperscript{20} See Fig. 2, p. 338.
\textsuperscript{21} LSC, \textit{Annual Reports}, 1894-1906.
adjourned on the 24th January 1903. Deadlock remained until 1904, when both sides agreed to revert to the Scale agreement of 1896 until a mutual modification was reached. All that further negotiations had achieved, was a re-endorsement of the advantageous position which compositors had gained in 1896.

Secondly, concerning the innovation of the Monotype machine; negotiations between employers and the LSC concerning a scale for the Monotype were in progress from at least 1903. In the spring of that year the LSC attempted to prevent their use in non-union houses by underlining the prohibition on the employment of skilled LSC Monotype operators in these houses. In 1906 provisional proposals were submitted to the delegates of the LSC, but it was not until 1911 that the union reached a decision, and then its resolutions concerning the piece scale were unacceptable to employers. Eventually in May 1912 agreement was reached. The Monotype scale, like the Linotype scale was based on piece rates (3d per 1000 ens for bookwork and 31/8d per 1000 ens for weekly news work) and it ensured the working of Monotype machines exclusively to members of the LSC in book and jobbing houses.

Thirdly, concerning the LSC's position with relation to the growing importance of advertising; the 1894 agreement on

advertising which protected the hand composition of adverts and guaranteed very lucrative piece rates for their composition, had been endorsed by the Linotype Agreement of 1896 and remained in force throughout the period.\textsuperscript{28} It seems then that whilst increasing revenue from advertising could underwrite craftsmen's wage advances - particularly in the daily newspaper section of the trade - the 1894 agreement ensured more specific gains to craftsmen. Consequently, as the extent of advertising grew in absolute and relative terms within the newspaper and jobbing sections of the trade, compositors were guaranteed directly proportionate financial benefits.

In view of the above, general conclusions as to the effect of increasing competition upon compositors' wage rates are problematic. Indices of relative wage rates are deceptive for they are based on establishment flat rates, and can take no account of an anomalous pay agreement like that which existed between employers and compositors concerning advertising.\textsuperscript{29} Further, Professor Alford's index of average wages in printing is too general to be useful concerning compositors.\textsuperscript{30} It covers the period 1850-1906, in which changes in the machine room as well as in composing increased the proportion of semi-skilled workmen in the printing trade as a whole. The increase in the wages of semi-skilled men in the printing trade over the whole period obscures that of those compositors on lucrative piece rates whose earnings are deflated by an

\textsuperscript{28} Howe, \textit{London Compositor}, pp. 479-81.

\textsuperscript{29} Alford, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 203-4.

average wage rate based on time rates. As Professor Alford avers, the real problem here is that of distinction between wage rates and earnings.\footnote{Op.cit., p. 193.} Moreover, difficulties are exacerbated concerning London news compositors, for their position is singular. The union's own \textit{Annual Reports} for these years are increasingly uninformative as to the nature of disputes and the content of agreements in newspaper houses.\footnote{LSC, \textit{Annual Reports}, 1896-1906.} At the same time, surviving reports of the News Department's own delegate meetings during these years are both brief and infrequent, and those which are extant are concerned specifically with the Linotype Scale of 1896, and with negotiations attendant upon its revisions.\footnote{These are: LSC News Department, \textit{Annual Report}, 1890, 1899 in LSC, \textit{Trade Reports} at St. Bride Printing Library; LSC News Department, \textit{Annual Report}, 1893, 1894, 1895, 1896; LSC, \textit{Trade Reports} in Warwick MSS. 28/CO/4/1/15-28.} Further, the Board of Trade's annual \textit{Report of the Changes in the Rate of Hours and Wages in the UK} is of no help here. With the exclusion of the Linotype agreement, these reports give no information as to news compositors' wages and earnings throughout this period.\footnote{C. 8075: PP, 1896, Vol. LXXX (I); C. 8374: PP, 1897, Vol. LXXXIII; C. 8975: PP, 1898, Vol. LXXXVIII; C. 9434: PP, 1899, Vol. XCI; Cd. 309: PP, 1900, Vol. LXXXI; Cd. 688: PP, 1901, Vol. LXXII; Cd. 1204: PP, 1902, Vol. XCVI; Cd. 1562: PP, 1903, Vol. LXVI; Cd. 2199: PP, 1904, Vol. LXXXIX; Cd. 2674: PP, 1905, Vol. LXXVI; Cd. 3172: PP, 1906, Vol. CXII.} The reticence of the News Department's \textit{Reports} in the \textit{Annual Reports} is, as shall be seen below, due in part to the
increasingly hostile legal situation,\textsuperscript{35} but also to the natural secrecy of news offices in a time of increasing competition. Disputes continued and agreements were reached in news houses\textsuperscript{36} but these were not discussed in detail or referred to at either the News Department's AGM or at the union's AGM. Evidently the bulk of the News Department's business was carried out elsewhere. It would seem that in this expanding and prosperous section of the composing trade, where craftsmen held a level of craft control which was "almost perfect",\textsuperscript{37} the bulk of negotiation fell upon representatives of both workforce and employers in an individual house. Calling in the central union Executive might be lengthy and interrupt production and to avoid this chapel and proprietors would negotiate and draw up agreements in each office. Since 1820 at least, this form of negotiation had been one customary mode of reaching settlement in news houses.\textsuperscript{38}

Only in book composition where 'stab rates predominated are comparative wage rates relevant. Here, the book compositor's income does indeed show a decline relative to other London trades. By the late 1890s, 'stab rates had fallen

\textsuperscript{35} See below, pp. 289-91.

\textsuperscript{36} As for example in 1896: LSC, Annual Report, 1896, p. 27, and in 1904: LSC, Annual Report, 1904, p. 32.

\textsuperscript{37} C. Watney and J.A. Little, Industrial Warfare, 1912, pp. 217-8.

behind those of shipwrights, of all craftsmen in the building trades, of all except turners and fitters in the engineering trades, of boilermakers, of cabinetmakers, French polishers and upholsterers. This was due to provincial competition, a reduction in the number of new printing offices established in the metropolis which further reduced the demand for compositors, together with uncertainty arising from the growing use of Monotype machines in metropolitan book houses prior to any agreement between proprietors and the LSC regulating their operation. Early in 1900, militant book compositors together with representatives of the unemployed proposed a 48 hour week, a 'stab rate of 40/- together with higher overtime rates. In the spring, an LSC General Meeting endorsed these proposals, and a memorial was then sent to the proprietors. Following arbitration by G.R. Askwith of the Board of Trade, the 'stab rate was increased to 39/- for a week of 52 1/2 hours. Askwith underlined the uncertainty affecting book compositors and pointed to the need to restrain the increasing threat of provincial competition. In the years following, negotiations were begun concerning an extension of the London radius, removing provincial competition from areas immediately

40. See below Table 3, p. 344; see above pp. 169-73.
41. See below, Tables 1 and 2, pp. 337-8.
42. LSC, Annual Report, 1900, p. 24.
43. LSC, Annual Report, 1901, pp. 36-7.
adjacent to London. In 1907, the radius was extended from 15 to 40 miles. This acted as a brake on the impact of provincial competition, and it well underlines the inability of provincial and metropolitan book proprietors to unite against the LSC. Extension of the London radius together with overtime restrictions provisionally agreed in 1900, and more stringently limited to 8 hours in any one week in 1906, gave renewed protection to metropolitan bookmen in the early years of the twentieth century.

Obviously, any attempt at a general conclusion as to wage rates and earnings highlights the diversity of the craft during this period. However, it can be said that the earnings of news compositors were rising, those of jobbing compositors, for whom advertising was a major consideration, tended to buoyancy and in book printing, where compositors were dependent on 'stab not piece rates, the Scale of 1901, together with the overtime limitation and extension of the radius, halted wage erosion and offset depression in that section of the trade. Generally, the outlook for metropolitan compositors in the early 1900s was optimistic. They were assured of retention of both their craft control and their dominant position within the printing trade in future years.

Revision of the LSC Rules continued throughout the period, affirmed by ballots of the trade membership. Apprentice limitation and the outlawing of Gifts, were institutional-

46. LSC, Annual Report, 1900, pp. 24-6; 1905, p. 31; 1906, p. 32.
ised. Fines for the non-payment of arrears had been established in 1893, were elaborated upon in 1898 and again in 1903. In response to the growing size and strength of new unions of semi-skilled men in the printing trade, eligibility for membership of the LSC was extended in 1897 to include, "every compositor working as a journeyman, overseer, storekeeper or reader...in a fair house, who proves his right to the craft of compositor". Consonant with the policy of the post-Drummond leadership, the powers and duties of the Secretary, delegates and Executive were clarified. The earnings of the Secretary, for example, were more clearly defined and limited. In 1901, the new post of Organiser was created following a favourable ballot of the trade. In 1902, unemployed compositors were given representation at delegate meetings. In 1903, rules were drawn up governing parliamentary representation and a political levy of 1/- was established.

Benefits were increased throughout the period in terms both of eligibility and amount and in 1901, a reciprocal arrangement with the provincial Typographical Association


48. LSC, Annual Report, 1893, p. 38; 1898, pp. 31-2; 1905, p. 45.

49. LSC, Annual Report, 1897, p. 30.

50. LSC, Annual Report, 1901, pp. 40-1.

51. LSC, Annual Report, 1901, pp. 43, 48.

52. LSC, Annual Report, 1902, p. 43.

53. LSC, Annual Report, 1903, p. 46.
guaranteed metropolitan compositors unemployment benefit in provincial areas.\textsuperscript{54} Weekly subscriptions were increased from 8d to 10d\textsuperscript{55} in an attempt to cover increases in unemployment benefit which took allowances to £9.12.0 in 1897\textsuperscript{56} and to £14 in 1903,\textsuperscript{57} and also to finance more realistic removal grants and funeral allowances.\textsuperscript{58} In 1897, the minimum payment of superannuation was raised from 4/- to a member of 20 years' standing at age 55, to 5/-,\textsuperscript{59} and in the following year the age limit was abolished.\textsuperscript{60} Annually, the payment of superannuation rose. In 1903, the Society's Report commented on the year's increase of £900, taking payment to over £6,000; "the natural and anticipated outcome of the growth of such an important and extremely useful benefit".\textsuperscript{61} The rising amounts of superannuation benefits did however prove a drain on the Society's resources,\textsuperscript{62} and exacerbated the unsatisfactory circumstances surrounding provident benefit. During the late 1870s and 1880s, both the amount and frequency of provident benefit payment had been a major cause of rank and file

\textsuperscript{54} LSC, Annual Report, 1901, p. 44.
\textsuperscript{55} LSC, Annual Report, 1893, p. 27.
\textsuperscript{56} LSC, Annual Report, 1897, p. 30.
\textsuperscript{57} LSC, Annual Report, 1903, p. 27.
\textsuperscript{58} LSC, Annual Report, 1897, p. 31; LSC, Annual Report, 1899, p. 35.
\textsuperscript{59} LSC, Annual Report, 1897, p. 32.
\textsuperscript{60} LSC, Annual Report, 1898, p. 32.
\textsuperscript{61} LSC, Annual Report, 1903, pp. 2, 30.
\textsuperscript{62} See below, Fig. 2, p. 338; J. Child, Industrial Relations in the British Printing Industry, 1967, p. 191.

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discontent, and revision of this benefit had been the rallying
cry of the Vigilance Association.63 Now, in the late '90s the
men who had been most critical of the old Committee's handling
of "prov." proved unable to reform and revise the benefit to
anything approaching a realistic level. The payment of provi­
dent benefit was extended for a period of between 5 and 10
weeks every year from 1896 to 1903. In 1904 and 1906, it was
increased for two periods of 8 weeks, and in 1905, for one of
10. To cover the extended payments, subscriptions were raised
to between 1/- and 1/6d for the duration of the period until
1903 when a levy on membership replaced the increase in sub­
scriptions.64

It was the cumulative effect of this inability to revise
the payment of provident benefit to a realistic level which
gave impetus to growing resentment against the Executive within the LSC's rank and file. Despite the execution of policies
of continual rules revision and the elaboration of benefits,
it was felt in certain quarters that the leadership was
increasingly staid and complacent. At the turn of the
century, the Secretary, C.W. Bowerman and the Chairman, John
Galbraith, held positions they had retained for seven years.65
Now they promoted only gradual revision of the union's rules
and benefits, altering the superstructure not the foundation

63. See above, pp. 149-52.
64. LSC, Annual Report, 1893, p. 37; 1894, p. 40; 1895, p.
35; 1897, p. 38; 1898, p. 33; 1899, p. 38; 1900, p. 40;
1901, p. 48; 1902, p. 48; 1903, p. 55; 1904, p. 49; 1905,
p. 49; 1906, p. 52.
65. LSC, Annual Reports, 1893-1900.
of the union or its benefit policies. The spearhead of this opposition to the Committee among the rank and file, was a trade journal published in 1903 under the title Fleet Street.66

It is within the sphere of the Society's continuing revisions in domestic policy over the period 1896-1906, that the growing authority of the chapel is apparent. Extension of the chapel's role, most obviously in financial matters consolidated its position within the union, heightened its authority and reinforced the powerful ideological functions of this institution unique to the printing trade.

During the later '90s and early 1900s, FOCs were accorded responsibility to watch over apprentices, to provide for their education and to protect their morals from the evils of intemperance.67 At the same time, the institution of the chapel, either in a general sense or in the specific person of the FOC, was given legitimacy by the union for responsibilities which had previously been only customary, and also gained new authority in the areas of collection of subscriptions, payment of unemployment benefit, payment of arrears, reinforcement of overtime restriction and machine composition.68 For example,

67. LSC, Annual Report, 1897, p. 31; Fleet Street, Feb. 1903, p. 8.
it was the chapel which customarily determined a fair week's work, and this custom was legitimised in the rules revision of 1895. By the end of the 19th century, the chapel had sole responsibility for the operation and regulation of Linotype machines. From 1893, the chapel had sole authority for the Non-Provident Fund which was a chapel based unemployment fund whose payments supplemented the inadequate provident benefit. Collectively, these provisions consolidated the chapel's integration and supervision of workplace issues and ensured its pre-eminence both in financial matters and in control of the labour supply. It was the FOC (not a committee member or an employer) who knew when a full-time compositor or a part-time hand was needed, who knew also which members were eligible for, and which in receipt of, the full rate of superannuation. Similarly, it was the FOC who watched for and reported upon the employment of "turnovers", or too many apprentices, and for the innovation of doubtful and possibly unfair practices. Likewise, consolidation of the chapel's position in the union enhanced its role as bulwark against female labour. The customary prohibition on membership of the LSC for women had no legal force, and therefore in 1892, when William Morris applied for membership for Jayne Pynne, his compositor at the Kelmscott Press, the LSC had no option but

69. LSC, Annual Report, p. 32.
70. LSC, Annual Report, 1895, p. 32; Webb EA Vol. LXXIV, item 41, clauses 12 and 13.
71. LSC, Annual Reports, 1893-1906.
72. LSC, Rules, 1881, Rule XVII; 1882, XVII; 1893, XXII; 1897, XXII; 1902, XXIII; 1903, XXII.
to concur. 73 Somewhat ironically, egalitarian sensibilities dictated support to struggling women's trade unions outside the composing craft, 74 but when the chapel's own power over the labour supply was threatened by female labour, reaction was both swift and vigorous. In 1904, chapel authority over the Linotype was threatened by certain proprietors who wished to introduce female Linotype operators on reduced pay rates. 75 Far from taking up the women's cause, the LSC termed this innovation "a departure which members strenuously oppose". 76 It went on to prohibit the introduction of women operators of composing machines in houses which observed Scale rates. 77 From the early '90s the chapel in both book and news departments had been responsible for the administration of ballots. 78 Authority over the exercise of the membership's democratic right reinforced the institution's position at the centre of the LSC. Collectively then, the increased powers of the chapel generated an enhanced level of authority which had significant ideological implications for the composing trade.


74. The LSC gave £8 to the Women's Trade Union Association in 1894: LSC, Annual Report, 1894, p. 33; and it gave 5 guineas to Women Bookbinders in 1903: LSC, Annual Report, 1903, p. 37.

75. LSC, Annual Report, 1904, p. 32.


77. LSC, Annual Report, 1904, p. 32.

78. Notice of Ballot, 28 Sept. 1893: LSC, Trade Reports, 1895.
It has been explained in Chapter 2 how the chapel created and maintained a craft ideology and consciousness among compositors which were both cogent and cohesive, and how, after 1848 the chapel extended craft ideology throughout the sphere of trade union functions, so that the London Society of Compositors acquired the cohesion of an ancient craft ideology in return for which, craft privileges and traditions gained new strength and vigour. In this sense then, the cumulative effect of extension of the chapel's trade union functions and the consolidation of the institution's authority during the later 1890s and early 1900s was to heighten and reinforce those ideological functions of the chapel, and to accentuate the chapel's formative role in creating and maintaining the extraordinary ideological cohesion among members of the composing craft at the turn of the century.

The increased authority of the chapel within the LSC is exemplified by the union's response to new unions of semi-skilled men within the printing trade. Craft elitism, boosted by the chapel, strengthened the compositor's identification with his craft during these years. Moreover, that process was reinforced as the LSC reacted against the growing size and strength of unions of unapprenticed semi-skilled men, brought to prominence in the trade by innovations in printing

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machine. Further, as has been described, the structure of new unions in the printing trade was chapel-based and this engendered what can only be called an integrated separatism. The chapel structure in each union inculcated identification and encouraged the preservation and elaboration of what was singular to each union, as opposed to what was common to the printing trade. Certainly, all unions in the printing trade shared a common bond of interest against the employer, especially during the late '90s and early 1900s when hostility toward the trade union movement intensified. Where inter-union relations were concerned however, the structure of unions in the printing trade made for the heightening and institutionalisation of antagonism. Talking of the origins of later strife between printing unions, the historian of the National Association of Operative Printers and Assistants which developed from the PLU, comments:

the unions realised the situation too late, when organisational practices tended to harden, instead of recognising the need for more flexibility, they took their stand on an antiquated system and hence laid the basis for much inter-union strife.

It was this "antiquated system", centred on and continually reinforced by the chapel, which acted as each union's bulwark

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80. No threat to income was yet apparent, the differential was not diminishing: Alford, op.cit., p. 228, 277; Moran, op.cit., p. 55.
81. See above pp. 152-5; Moran, op.cit., p. 18.
82. In 1905, the LSC gave the PLU £250 enabling it to take a case concerning picketing to the Court of Appeal: LSC, Annual Report, 1905, p. 35.
against integration, and it was this chapel based structure which determined the nature of inter-union relations in the twentieth century printing industry.

These findings concerning the chapel affirm the conclusions of Gray, Zeitlin and Reid in so far as they illustrate that it is the peculiarities of each industry or industrial section, in circumstances which may vary according to the play of market forces, together with the levels of control exercised by certain skilled men in each industry or industrial section, rather than similarities of skilled men across diverse sections of the economy, which dictate and determine craftsmen's responses to varying economic pressures. 84

Overall, during the years 1896-1906, the chapel's powers penetrated and pervaded all aspects of the compositor's life. Its authority over modes of working and financial matters was affirmed. It maintained and increased its role as barrier against the influx of female, unapprenticed, and unskilled labour, and in news houses, union chapels negotiated wage rates and working conditions. The chapel reaffirmed the LSC's idiosyncratic trade unionism and it perpetually reinforced the craft's ideology and tradition. Cumulatively, it strengthened the craft's extraordinary cohesion and through integrated separatism, it dictated the nature of industrial relations and

inter-union relations in the printing trade in the twentieth century.

In June 1906, a dispute concerning overtime in the machine room of the house of Hampton and Co. spread to the composing room. The compositors' support of the pressmen led to notice of dismissal being served on the companionship. The London Society of Compositors acting on behalf of the compositors at Hampton's, demanded an explanation of the circumstances from the Federation of Master Printers. Their demands were answered not with an explanation, but rather with the threat of a lock-out. In retaliation, the LSC demanded the withdrawal of notices by June 18th, and the implementation of overtime restrictions at Hampton's as a condition of the workforce returning to their jobs. If these demands were not met, a strike in all union houses throughout London was threatened. On June 13th, a meeting of the LSC convened to discuss the procedure of the dispute had to move from the Memorial Hall to the larger Exeter Hall as the meeting was so well attended, "about 5,000 members being present". Here it was agreed that as no concession was forthcoming from the masters, the machinery for a ballot of the trade on the strike issue be set in motion. Meanwhile on July 4th, proprietors

of the Daily Telegraph, Daily Chronicle, Daily Graphic, Daily Mirror, Daily Mail, Daily Express, Standard, Tribune, Morning Advertiser, Morning Leader, Star, Evening News, Financial Times, Financial News, and Sporting Life, together with eight weekly news proprietors, met at the offices of the Daily Telegraph in Fleet Street and formed the Newspaper Proprietors' Association for, "the mutual benefit and protection of members". A constitution was drawn up and membership on the basis of a sliding scale was established. The NPA made clear to newspaper chapels its refusal to deal with or to be involved in any question or dispute affecting the generality of the trade: in future it would deal only with the News Department. This provision was agreed to by newspaper chapels. Following this agreement, the NPA intervened in the Hampton dispute with a financial inducement to the proprietors to settle the matter as soon as possible. Full reinstatement of the dismissed compositors together with limitation of overtime in Hampton's offices followed.

For newspaper proprietors this was a turning point. Unable to present a united front to compositors throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, they had proved unable to take the initiative in negotiations concerning Linotype

89. Letter from NPA explaining the Association's foundation and stating that all documents relating to the NPA, 1906-1940, were destroyed on 6 May 1941: NPA to the author, 29 April 1983.


composition and had been unsuccessful in amending the 1896 Machine Scale which was very favourable to the news compositor on piece work. From now on however, newspaper proprietors presented a united front and they were no longer in danger of suffering the effects of dispute and strike in non-news offices of the trade. News compositors on the other hand did not feel at all endangered. Newspaper proprietors' disunity and the lack of provincial competition had given news compositors the upper hand throughout these decades allowing them to gain concessions and to make highly advantageous agreements concerning those changes in production which were brought about by the first industrial revolution in typesetting. Moreover, they had carried the general trade with them, enabling the latter to turn an inauspicious market situation to their own advantage. By 1906 machine composition, advertising, overtime and limitations to provincial competition were issues which were either settled or in the process of agreement. The outcome of negotiations in all these areas was in the compositor's interest. Future negotiations could only build on these agreements which had regulated the first major economic upheaval in the composing trade. Facing a united body of proprietors in 1906 presented news compositors with few qualms. Moreover, the terms of the Hampton settlement did not jeopardise craftsmen in the general trade, for here wage negotiations would continue to have the backing and support of news compositors. It was indeed news compositors who were to benefit most from this agreement. Elitist, exclusive, and secure, these men had enjoyed a level of craft control far
superior to that of any other group of skilled men. From the
18th century, their control of the labour supply had not been
weakened by the threat of unskilled labour which apprentice­
ship introduced. Now, in 1906, their conditions of work and
their earnings potential would no longer be threatened by
problems of the non-news trade. Newspaper compositors
certainly enjoyed a most enviable position. The newspaper
industry was booming. Advertising revenue was increasing.
Profit was assured. It is only with hindsight and with knowl­
edge of the impact of the second industrial revolution in the
composing trade, that the London Typographical Journal's opti­
mistic view of the Hampton settlement carries an ominous note;
"instead of treating with the officials of an association of
price-cutting masters", the Journal assured its readers in
July 1906, newspaper compositors from now on, "will deal
directly with affluent newspaper proprietors, who are not
usually put under the necessity of making their property pay
at the expense of their journeymen printers".93

During the years 1896-1906, the external development of the London Society of Compositors, that is, its relationship with other unions, with metropolitan and national trade union bodies and its participation in local and national politics was influenced by circumstances affecting the trade union movement, by developments in London politics and by a number of legal decisions hostile to trade unions.  

The new unions of 1889-91, formed in the aftermath of the Great Dock Strike had swelled the scope and size of the trade union movement, but these gains were eroded in the mid-'90s when the economic boom of the early decade was replaced by recession and rising unemployment, and as many of the new unions collapsed or disintegrated. In London, the situation was not helped by the reticence of the dominant political Labour organizations - the Social Democratic Federation and the Fabians - to provide leadership for a movement based essentially on a trade union-working class membership.

Labour politics in London during these years were characterised by faction and division. The rift between moderate socialists who were willing to work through existing


95. But not the Printers' Labourers' Union or the Printers' Cutters and Warehousemens' Union: see H.A. Clegg, Alan Fox and A.F. Thompson, *A History of British Trade Unions Since 1889*, 1964, pp. 55-96,
parliamentary channels, and revolutionary socialists who cer­
tainly were not, but who offered no alternative policy was
widening into an unbridgeable gulf. Moreover, the failure of
the Independent Labour Party to win any seats in the General
Election of 1895 did not help. The ILP had never been a
metropolitan movement, indeed it was to remain provincial into
the early twentieth century, but its failure added to the
inpropitious state of Labour politics in the late 1890s.

On top of these developments, a series of legal decisions
unfavourable to trade unions indicated the legislature's hos­
tility toward organizations of working men. The Court of
Appeal's decision in the case of Temperton v. Russell in 1893
limited a union's control over the supply of its members' ser­
vices to an employer, and brought to prominence the liability
for damages of members and officers of a union who had inter­
fered with an employer's freedom of contract. Moreover, the
whole issue of intimidation and picketing remained controver­
sial and unsettled. The decision in Curran v. Treleaven in
1891 had favoured trade unions rather than employers, but
the situation remained unclear. Attempts to clarify the legal
confusion surrounding picketing and to settle trade union

96. For a detailed discussion of the impact of legal
decisions on trade unions at this time, see J. Saville,
op.cit.
97. Temperton v. Russell [1893] 1 Q.B. 435; 5th and Final
Report of the Royal Commission on Labour, 1893-4. C.
7421: PP, 1894, Vol. XXXV; Clegg, Fox and Thompson,
98. [1891] 2 Q.B. 545; Clegg, Fox, and Thompson, Ibid.
discontent\(^99\) were not helped by Mr. Justice Grantham's summing up in the case of Wernam v. the Furnishing Trades' Federation, which stigmatised all working men involved in picketing as "brute beasts",\(^100\) nor by the long running case of Lyons v. Wilky which eventually outlawed both peaceful picketing and inducement of any sort.\(^101\) In July 1896, the decision in Trollope and Sons v. the London Building Trades prohibited the publication of blacklists of unfair employers and/or workmen, further limiting a trade union's power against employers.\(^102\) Tensions rose in certain trades in response to the anti-union tactics of Free Labour organizations like that of William Collison, whose organized strike breaking smacked of the complicity of employers.\(^103\) In 1898, the London Society of Compositors commented that the increasingly serious situation surrounding labour legislation must be watched.\(^104\) This concern was not misplaced. In September 1900, came Mr. Justice Farwell's decision in the Taff Vale case which made the Union of Railway Servants liable for acts and damages in its strike against the Taff Vale Railway Company. Affirmed by the House of Lords in July 1901, this decision effectively

\(^{100}\) LSC, Annual Report, 1896, pp. 28-9.
\(^{101}\) Saville, op.cit., p. 346.
\(^{102}\) Ibid., p. 345.
\(^{103}\) LSC, Annual Report, 1897, p. 28.
prevented a trade union from taking strike action. 105 Two weeks later the outcome of Quinn v. Leatham 106 determined that the threat of a strike or boycott could be held a conspiracy to injure for which trade union funds, as a result of the Taff Vale case, were now available for damages. 107 Together, these decisions came as the culmination of the increasingly anti-trade union legislation of the late 1890s. They returned the legal status of trade unions to that which had prevailed before the advances of the labour and trade union legislation of 1871-5. 108 Moreover, this position was further weakened by the decision against the Denaby Miners in 1903, which threatened to remove legal protection from trade union funds. 109

The impact of these legal decisions was not palliated by developments in education at the turn of the century. Education was seen by workingmen who were advocates of self-help, by trade unions, trade councils, and by socialists who espoused "educationalism", as the key to social evolution, to peaceful social progress of the working class. 110 By the

106. [1901] A.C. 495.
108. See above pp. 138-40.
1890s, the reforms of 1870 were as yet unfinished, no provision had been made for free secondary education for all, no provision existed for the financing of secular as opposed to church schools and grants originally intended for the "industrial classes" were channelled into middle class schools.\textsuperscript{111} The SDF and the ILP advocated secular education and sought representation on School Boards during the 1890s as a means of gaining and furthering influence.\textsuperscript{112} From 1897, the TUC advocated democratic control of education by district councils who would provide free primary and secondary secular education for all. The government's education policy supported church schools as opposed to secular schools and it did not promote either free secondary education or democratic control by local education authorities. Moreover, the Education Act of 1902 which received Royal Assent on December 18th enshrined this denominational and divisive government policy, it sidestepped the whole issue of non-conformity and secular education and it incorporated a controversial provision for secondary education by voluntary levy from the rates.\textsuperscript{113} When this Act reached the Statute Book it stood as further testimony to the government's intention to prevent any advancement of the working man.

The response to these events was to prove crucial for the future of the trade union movement, for the ILP and for the

\textsuperscript{111} Simon, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 165-246.

\textsuperscript{112} Thompson, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 115, 117, 119; \textit{Printing News}, Oct. 1894, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{113} 2 Edward 7 c. 19.
SDF. Failure as an electoral force in 1895 prompted the ILP to adopt a practical policy in tune with the realities of British politics, and in 1897, that section of the SDF willing to work with moderate socialists achieved an accommodation with the ILP. Following this, alliance was sought with the TUC. Despite internal problems and squabbling, a practical policy did emerge. Ideals of revolutionary socialism were replaced by reformist policies which sought to gain adherents from the pro-Liberal upper echelons of the trade union movement. This growing accommodation to the British political system was manifest firstly in the ILP's policy of permeation into organs of local government, ie. onto vestries, Boards of Guardians, etc., and secondly, in the campaign for parliamentary representation. A Labour Representation Committee formed in the spring of 1900 directly out of a conference of the ILP and trade unions held in February, was an outward sign of the realisation that parliamentary representation, not revolutionary upheaval, was the only way for the working class in England to achieve any political, economic and social change. Concurrent with these developments, the legal judgements of these years acted as a catalyst upon the ILP campaign to gain adherents and support within the trade union movement and more specifically, to achieve parliamentary representation. In 1902 for example, the LSC Annual Report asserted that the campaign for parliamentary representation had been, "forced upon workingmen and the recent and unexpected decisions of the


115. Ibid., pp. 268-9.
courts have materially hastened the effort to obtain its realisation". Collectively, developments in the trade union movement and in Labour politics, together with antagonistic trade union legislation, were instrumental in shaping both the disposition of the London Society of Compositors and its external growth during the years 1898-1906. The response is discussed in detail below. Here, some idea of the powerful effect of legislative changes upon the LSC can be gauged by the Society's immediate response in the conduct of its own affairs. The legal limitations placed on the activity and powers of trade unions, especially that prohibiting the publication of black lists of unfair employers, inhibited the content of the LSC's Annual Reports. This trend was intensified in 1906 when the firm of Waterlow Bros. & Layton was granted both an injunction preventing the LSC "libelling" them in a list of unfair houses and damages from the union. Throughout the years at the turn of the century then, and acutely so after 1906, it is increasingly difficult to find out what was actually happening in the union. For example, during the late '90s and early 1900s, disputes in defence of the Scale continued and some were prolonged, as we can see from the amount spent by the LSC on legal proceedings and matters in defence of the Scale and also by the amount of financial aid given to the LSC by the National Federation of

118. LSC, Annual Report, 1906, p. 31. See also the claim by Straker & Sons: Ibid.
Trades' Unions to support strike hands, but it is impossible to glean from Annual Reports precisely which offices were affected. In February 1903, at a General Meeting of the Society, limitations on the union's publications were made only too clear to members:

[A] delegate regretted that he did not hear in the report any intimation of recognition of the splendid work now being performed by Advisory Committees. He wished to see in future, not only the names of various Secretaries of those committees, but also the names of members... their addresses and places of meeting printed each quarter like any other matters...and proposed a motion to that effect. The seconder of the motion opined that very few members knew where the meeting places were and who were associated with the movement...

The Chairman said that a resume of the Organiser's work would appear in the Annual Report. He thought the resolution was a dangerous one in the present state of the law.

The Organiser pointed out that two Quarterly meetings of Advisory Committees had decided that to print such names and addresses was inadvisable. So long as no official standing were credited, it would be difficult if not impossible to prove agency; otherwise, agency proved, it would be possible to proceed against the Society.

The Secretary and Chairman of the LSC throughout this period were C.W. Bowerman and John Galbraith. Galbraith had been president of the Compositors' Discussion Association -

119. LSC Financial Circulars in Annual Reports, 1898-1906.
120. LSC Quarterly Delegation to General Meeting, 14 Feb. 1903: Fleet Street, Feb. 1903, pp. 7-8. The Advisory Committees were under the aegis of the Organiser and kept watch on Fair Houses in the outer areas of London.
those "scorpions" and "communists" of 1879.\textsuperscript{121} According to
\textit{Printing News}, he was first and foremost a political animal,
"Politics were John Galbraith's first love".\textsuperscript{122} In the early
'90s, C.W. Bowerman was more a Radical with Fabian tendencies
than a socialist, but during the later '90s he moved to the
left, becoming a member of the ILP in 1902.\textsuperscript{123} The continued
election of members of the SDF to the union's Executive and
delegate bodies during the years 1896-1906, suggests an
increasingly successful accommodation between trade unionists,
independent socialists and the SDF in the London Society of
Compositors. Henry Hobart for example, was a Committee member
during 1898 and 1899, 1902, 1903 and 1904, and throughout this
period he retained his Chairmanship of the London Trades' Council's Printing Trades' Group.\textsuperscript{124} In 1903, he was a dele-
gate on the Parliamentary Representation Committee.\textsuperscript{125} Fred
Knee sat on the Society's Committee in 1898 and 1899 and from
1903 he represented the LSC on the London Trades' Council.\textsuperscript{126}
Charles Copeland was a Society delegate in 1898 and an

\textsuperscript{121} \textit{Printing Review}, 12 Dec. 1879, p. 184; See above, pp. 144-5.
\textsuperscript{123} Clegg, Fox and Thompson, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 144; \textit{DLB}, Vol. V, pp. 29-34.
\textsuperscript{124} LSC, Committee and Delegate Lists: LSC, \textit{Annual Reports}, 1898-1906.
\textsuperscript{125} LSC, \textit{Annual Report}, 1903, p. 48.
\textsuperscript{126} LSC, \textit{Annual Report}, 1898, p. 33; 1899, p. 37; LSC Delegate Lists, in \textit{Annual Reports}, 1903-6.
Executive member in 1900. The C.F. Davis represented the LSC on the LTC annually throughout this period and he was a member of the SDF Executive in 1901-2. A.E. Holmes likewise served as delegate from 1896-1901. Other prominent Committee men during these years were Fred Willis, the Progressive Stanley Gale, Robert Newstead previously of the Vigilance Association and Thomas Naylor of the ILP who followed Bowerman as Secretary of the LSC. In 1901, A.E. Holmes was elected as the Society's first Organiser. The aim of the post was to "devote attention to the organisation of compositors in non-union houses". A.E. Holmes saw his role in a more comprehensive sense: not only was he to spread the Fair Houses policy with the aid of Advisory Committees, but he was also "aiming to gain direct representation of the LSC upon borough councils" and "to pave the way for a general broadening of the attitude of public bodies to the Labour

127. LSC, Committee and Delegate Lists, in Annual Reports, 1898, 1900.
130. LSC Delegate Lists in Annual Reports, 1895-1901.
131. LSC, Annual Report, 1902, p. 47; 1903, p. 54.
132. Vigilance Gazette, May 1889, p. 7; May 1890, p. 10; LSC, Annual Report, 1897, p. 34; 1898, p. 33.
134. LSC, Annual Report, 1901, p. 43.
135. Ibid., p. 43, clause 1.
Movement generally". In 1903, in the Society's election for a parliamentary candidate, C.F. Davis of the SDF was narrowly beaten by the moderate C.W. Bowerman in a close ballot: 3966 to 3205 votes. This level of support clearly indicates the popularity of militant trade union policies and socialist politics among compositors.

During the years 1896-1906, the London Society of Compositors continued its policy of integration and federation with other trade unions and with metropolitan and national trade union bodies. Prior to 1896, the position of the moderate George Shipton as Chairman of the London Trades' Council had caused LSC militants to question their union's membership of this body. In 1892 a Leader in the Printing News declared the LTC to be a "talking shop....Quite powerless to achieve any real good for the workers of London...outdoors, it has not half the influence of say, the SDF". The LSC had advocated the 8-hour day since 1888 and had supported demonstrations for 8-hours from at least 1892. This endorsement of what was to become the hallmark of new unions signified the position of the LSC as that of a militant metropolitan craft union, and this did not sit easily with Shipton's

136. LSC, Annual Report, 1903, p. 42. (The vestries were abolished and replaced by Borough Councils in 1900.)
137. Ibid., p. 55.
139. LSC, Annual Report, 1888, p. 23.
140. LSC, Annual Report, 1892, p. 24; 1893, p. 37; 1894, p. 2; 1895, p. 2; 1896, p. 2; 1899, p. 27; 1900, p. 27.
interpretation of the LTC, but in 1896, with Shipton's resignation and the appointment of the new unionist James McDonald of the Tailors to the Chairmanship of the LTC, a new departure in policy was assured. In the early 'nineties, the Printing Trades' Group of the LTC had provided the LSC with a direct channel of influence through which it could spread its militant trade policies, particularly its Fair Houses policy, to other metropolitan unions. In 1892, a Fair Houses clause had been made a condition of support in the general election and in 1893, the LTC endorsed the proposal for the inclusion of a Fair Houses clause in government contracts. In 1894 it was proposed by the LTC that the government distribute contracts only to firms which observed the payment of union rates, and memorials to that effect were sent to the Secretary to the Treasury and the Chancellor of the Exchequer. A list of Fair Houses in the printing trade, along with fair firms of blacksmiths and stonemasons appeared in the Board of Labour Gazette from 1895. Two years later, the issue of a Fair Houses clause in government contracts again appeared as a condition of support in the LCC elections, and it remained an issue in metropolitan elections well into

141. LSC, Annual Report, 1896, p. 27; Thompson, op.cit., pp. 53-4, 104, 194, 204, 273, 283.
142. LSC, Annual Report, 1892, p. 29.
143. LSC, Annual Report, 1893, p. 36.
145. LSC, Annual Report, 1895, p. 28.
the 1900s.\textsuperscript{146} Not all attempts at spreading the Fair Houses policy through deputations from the LTC met with immediate success. The London School Board for example, held out until 1899.\textsuperscript{147} However over the decade 1896-1906, various metropolitan authorities including the London vestries, the LTC and the LSB, together with a number of government departments, and of course an increasing number of printing houses, adopted the Fair Houses clause.\textsuperscript{148}

The LSC endorsed the LTC's policies directed at improving living and working conditions of the city's working class during the late 1890s. Annually, the LSC gave 5 guineas to the Council's Housing Committee to further proposals for new working class housing in London, and to petition parliament to that effect.\textsuperscript{149} Similarly, the LSC supported the LTC's Workmen's Trains Committee.\textsuperscript{150} The Society promoted the Council's call for more and more enforceable Factory and Workshop Legislation and endorsed its suggestion that working class men and women should be called upon to swell the inadequate ranks of the factory inspectorate.\textsuperscript{151} The Society supported the Trades' Council's advocacy of old age

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\textsuperscript{146} LSC, Annual Report, 1897, p. 26; 1898, p. 28; 1903, p. 46; but see 1899, p. 32.

\textsuperscript{147} LSC, Annual Report, 1899, p. 30.

\textsuperscript{148} LSC, Annual Report, 1896, p. 28; 1897, p. 26; 1898, p. 28; 1899, p. 30; 1900, pp. 31, 34; 1901, p. 35; 1902, pp. 40-1; 1903, p. 45; 1905, p. 43.

\textsuperscript{149} LSC, Financial Reports, Annual Reports, 1898-1906, pp. 2-3.

\textsuperscript{150} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{151} LSC, Annual Report, 1899, p. 32.
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pensions\textsuperscript{152} and its attempt to help the unemployed by forming a central workers' committee of co-ordination which would act as a Labour Exchange.\textsuperscript{153} When in 1902, the LTC openly declared a policy of political action, the LSC's approval was wholehearted: "Your delegates feel that at the present time, more than perhaps at any period in the history of trade unionism, it is necessary for solid combination and unity".\textsuperscript{154} Political practicalities dictated that divisions must be bridged if real progress and permanent advance is to be made, and, "the Trades' Council in London - as indeed similar bodies in other places - will be one of the best mediums for that purpose".\textsuperscript{155}

At the same time as the LSC was consolidating its membership on the London Trades' Council it was instrumental in the formation of the London Printing and Kindred Trades' Federation and it entered into negotiations with the provincial Typographical Association and with other trade union bodies of national significance. In 1897, initial rules were drawn up for the PKTF whose members included "all trade unions ... intimately connected with the processes of printing, book-binding, stationery and connected trades".\textsuperscript{156} In 1900, the Federation endorsed the LSC's Fair Houses policy.\textsuperscript{157} The

\textsuperscript{152} LSC, Annual Report, 1901, p. 34.
\textsuperscript{153} LSC, Annual Report, 1904, p. 46; 1905, p. 43.
\textsuperscript{154} LSC, Annual Report, 1902, p. 43.
\textsuperscript{155} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{156} LSC, Annual Report, 1897, p. 32; cf. 1898, p. 26.
\textsuperscript{157} LSC, Annual Report, 1900, p. 31.
prestigious metropolitan Society had eschewed federation with the provincial TA from the early years of the trade, and the fiasco of the National Typographical Association had simply affirmed the LSC's customary suspicion of national bodies. However, ideas in favour of federation within the LSC Executive during the early 'nineties gained currency from the atmosphere of growing hostility toward trade unions. In 1895 the LSC set up a committee to negotiate federation with the TA.¹⁵⁸ Final negotiations with the provincial TA came to fruition in 1898 when a National Printing and Kindred Trades Federation was established.¹⁵⁹ In 1899, an LSC ballot endorsed a proposal for membership of a General Federation of Trade Unions.¹⁶⁰ This organization intended for the defence of trade unionism, provided, through the subscriptions of member bodies, financial support for any union enforcing a strike and thereby sought to prevent the collapse of a local trade union undergoing the financial strictures of a prolonged dispute. The LSC's membership of this national body of trade unions was highly significant. From 1899 onward, the union was able to finance strikes in various printing houses which previously might have led to capitulation due to financial pressure. As was seen above, this facility was greatly advantageous to the LSC in the early 1900s.

Collectively then, the developments of the late 1890s which extended the Society's role on the LTC and which inte-

¹⁵⁸. LSC, Annual Report, 1898, pp. 32-3.
¹⁵⁹. LSC, Annual Report, 1898, p. 22.
¹⁶⁰. LSC, Annual Report, 1899, p. 38.
grated this previously isolationist union with other metropolitan unions, with the provincial Typographical Association and most significantly, with the National Federation of Trade Unions, considerably enhanced the position of the LSC in relation to other trade unions and employers. At the same time they clearly expressed the development and strengthening of trade union consciousness among members of the London Society of Compositors.

The LSC's support for the policy of trade union permeation onto local and metropolitan authorities and for the campaign for parliamentary representation derived added sharpness at this time from increasingly hostile legal decisions, from employers' aggressive policies (following the engineers' defeat it was declared that "the employers have been silently preparing for this contest for years"),\(^1\) and more specifically, from attempts at union breaking. In 1897, William Collison's Free Labour Organization attempted to supply casual labour to the printing trade.\(^2\) In that year, the LSC's support for permeation gained further impetus following an LTC report in which it was revealed that the government and the employers, "were out to capture the vestries" to keep out


\(^2\) LSC, Annual Report, 1897, p. 28; "Free Labour", LSC, Annual Report, 1898, p. 25.
those "cruel organisations", the trade unions. In 1898, Charles Copeland, a member of the LSC Executive was elected to the Islington Vestry. In the following year, financial aid was given to Labour candidates standing for the Town Council in West Ham; a Borough well known for Keir Hardie's election as M.P. in 1892 and one which the LSC had long supported for it had "one of the most progressive of municipal councils". Prior to 1901, the LSC supported the campaigns of working men like John Burns, who with official support from the Liberal Association, stood for independent labour in Battersea. In the aftermath of the Taff Vale decision, with the formation of the Labour Representation Committee and its adoption of the campaign for parliamentary representation, a realistic attempt was made to provide independent electoral machinery for the promotion of labour candidates. The LSC's Annual Reports reflect its support for the campaign for parliamentary representation throughout this period. In 1901, the union gave financial aid to the Labour Representation Committee and it increased its donation to the Parliamentary Fund of the

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164. Print, June 1896, p. 3.

165. LSC, Annual Report, 1899, p. 27; 1894, p. 25; 1895, p. 2; DNB, (1921-7), 1927, pp. 239-41.

166. The LSC donated £10 to the John Burns Wages Fund from 1894: LSC, Annual Report, 1894, p. 33; 1895, p. 25; 1896, p. 24; 1897, p. 27; 1898, p. 24; 1899, p. 27; 1900, p. 29; 1901, p. 24; 1902, p. 36; 1903, p. 37; 1904, p. 23; Thompson, op.cit., p. 106.

TUC. In 1902 £5 was donated to the Harry Quelch election fund. Quelch was editor of Justice and an ex-Executive member of the SDF. In the following year a donation to Will Crooks' election fund helped his successful campaign at Woolwich. At the same time, support to the West Ham Trades' Council continued, and a donation was given to the Walthamstow Parliamentary Fund in which A.E. Holmes, SDF member and Organiser of the LSC was involved.

The official SDF withdrew from the Labour Representation Committee in August 1901 because of the LRC's reformist tendencies. Given the circumstances, the position of LSC members who were members of the SDF must have been awkward to say the least, particularly so for C.F. Davies who sat on the SDF Executive in 1901-2. But an accommodation appears to have been reached quite quickly. The acceptance of practical policies rather than the adoption of an impossiblist stance by SDFers at the centre of the LSC suggests that for them, as for Thomas Binning, trade unions were the first step to a social-

168. LSC, Annual Report, 1901, pp. 2, 27, 34; 1902, p. 35.
169. LSC, Annual Report, 1902, p. 36.
172. LSC, Annual Report, 1902, p. 36; 1903, p. 37; 1904, p. 25.
ist state. It is known that SDFers generally found it impossible to work with moderates and Progressives in London's local elections yet it is evident that within the Executive and delegate bodies of the LSC at least, SDFers could and did work with men of a more moderate persuasion. Later, W.C. Cluse, LSC member and shareholder in the Twentieth Century Press advocated unity between the SDF, trade unions and the ILP at the SDF's Annual Conference.

In 1902, the LSC's delegation to the LTC, which included the SDFer Henry Hobart, proposed the establishment of an annual parliamentary levy of 1/- to, "secure the return of a Member of Parliament who shall be a member of the LSC." This was endorsed the following year and rules for the election of a candidate from the membership were drawn up. The election fought between C.W. Bowerman, C.F. Davis, A.E. Holmes and T. Scanlon resulted in Bowerman's candidature: at the next general election he was to represent the LSC in the ILP interest.

Among trade unions and trade councils the campaign for independent parliamentary representation gained publicity and support from the case against the Denaby miners which looked set to jeopardise union funds. Indeed, the LRC in its first Report stated that its approval and support "among all sec-

176. Thompson, op.cit, pp. 212-38.
179. LSC, Annual Report, 1903, p. 50.
180. LSC, Annual Report, 1904, p. 47.
tions of the workers" was a direct result of the decisions of "judge made law" in the Taff Vale and Denaby miners' cases.\footnote{181} In the following year, a further boost came from the progress of the Trades' Dispute Bill whose provisions revoked the decisions of both the Taff Vale case and of Quinn v. Leatham and which clarified the confusion surrounding picketing.\footnote{182} This Bill, which passed its second reading in the Commons was blocked in the House of Lords.\footnote{183}

In the summer of 1903, after consideration of a number of constituencies, it was decided that Bowerman should stand for Deptford at the coming general election of 1905.\footnote{184} Deptford was chosen because no Liberal candidate was to contest the seat. As the election grew nearer, hopes rose. At the last minute, Herbert Vivian, "a few weeks previously an avowed conservative", made known his intention to stand as Liberal candidate and thus a three-cornered fight which the LSC had "strenuously endeavoured to avoid" ensued. The LSC printed and circulated The King, a leaflet promoting Bowerman's election.\footnote{185} In Deptford itself, Bowerman had the support of Alderman Sidney Webb and the active help of Will Crooks.\footnote{186}

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181. LSC, Annual Report, 1904, p. 47.


183. LSC, Annual Report, 1904, p. 31.

184. LSC, Annual Report, 1904, p. 47. The election was actually held in 1906.


186. LSC, Annual Reports, 1904-6.
At the election of 1905, Bowerman along with Labour candidates in Woolwich and South West Ham won election to the House of Commons. Nationally, 29 candidates promoted by the LRC were victorious. The LTC gleefully commented that this was the price the Government had to pay for emasculation of the Trades' Disputes' Bill in the House of Lords. On a more cautious note, displaying the reserve in print which had become customary, the LSC declared its "gratification that must be felt not only by members of the LSC, but also by organised labour throughout the world...that the printing trade has taken its share in so important a movement". In accordance with an earlier rules revision, Bowerman resigned the Secretaryship of the LSC on election. His successor was T.E. Naylor, who was also a member of the Independent Labour Party.

Bowerman's success in 1906 augmented the confidence of the London Society of Compositors and set the seal on the labourist policy of future years. In the early 1890s, it had seemed possible that the leadership of the Society might develop along militant socialist lines, espousing revolutionary socialism of the SDF stamp: Hobart, Knee, Davis, Holmes, and Copeland were prominent within the LSC Executive and were serving as union delegates on the London Trades' Council.

187. LSC, Annual Report, 1905, p. 43. The Bill was passed in 1906: 6 Edward 7 c. 47.
188. LSC, Annual Report, 1905, pp. 30-1.
189. LSC, Annual Report, 1906, p. 50.
However, sometime prior to the accommodation reached between ILP, SDF, and trade unions, a *via media* enabled militants and moderates within the LSC to work together. A practical policy focused on parliamentary representation of the labour interest emerged. Despite the withdrawal of the SDF from the LRC in 1901, SDFers prominent within the LSC continued the campaign for parliamentary representation. Moreover, the continued election of SDFers to the LSC's delegate bodies and Executive, and the ballot in favour of C.F. Davis's nomination for parliamentary candidate in 1903 together indicate the extent of support for policies based on an SDF-trade union alliance in the LSC.

The function of parliamentary representation remained as yet undecided in political discussion amongst compositors: was it an end in itself, or was it a step on the road to parliamentary socialism, or did it promise even more than that? Diversity remained. In 1903, Bowerman's election as parliamentary candidate was a victory for moderates within the LSC. His success at Deptford three years later gave a mandate to adherents of a more practical less militant strand of labour politics among trade unionists.
Within the context of the LSC's increasing adherence to practical politics during this period, the relationship of compositors to radical and socialist publication may be examined. Involvement in militant publication by compositors of the LSC did continue, though pressures against such publication at this time were severe. Firstly, financial pressure proved a great deterrent to publication in late '90s and early 1900s in the wake of the financial catastrophe of so many Independent Labour Party papers, which without wealthy benefactors had struggled to survive only to meet an early death. Bowerman himself and members of the Labour Representation Committee had discussed the possibility of an independent Labour paper as early as 1903. To avoid the major financial pitfalls, the purchase of a current established newspaper was mooted, but proposals came to nothing. Similarly, in December 1904, the TUC proposed the establishment of the New Era Press whose main aim would be to print and


publish the Co-operative Printing Press and Labour Newspaper, a daily Labour paper whose need had been:

emphasised recently by the fact that to a large extent, the journals of this country are being bought up by a few capitalists for the purposes of advocating policies inimical to the best interests of workmen.

As far as is known, the New Era Press was never established. To the financial pressure inhibiting publication were added the more pervasive and persuasive influences of repressive atmosphere and specific legal decisions like that preventing the publication of names of unfair employers.

If not inhibiting publication altogether, these pressures tended to mitigate content and exacerbate the traditional secrecy and anonymity surrounding such publications. The degree of censorship imposed on the LSC by daily newspapers at this time is indicated by the action of reporters at a meeting of the London Trades' Council in 1896. When a dispute in an unnamed newspaper was under discussion, journalists made known that they could not report the dispute as "they had been instructed to ignore it". Evidence of radical or socialist publication where it survives is slight. Moreover, no addi-

194. LSC, 228th Quarterly Delegate Report, 1 Feb. 1905, pp. 34-54.
195. Ibid., p. 34.
196. The New Era Co-operative Printery (Co. 63983) is not the press under discussion. This was formed before 1896 when it printed the anarchist Alarm: Warwick, no. 49.
197. Trollope & Sons v. the London Building Trades [1896].
ional information concerning shareholding in newspapers at this time is forthcoming.

Within the LSC itself, craftsmen who opposed the growing moderation and reformism of officials like Bowerman and Galbraith produced the journal Fleet Street in 1903. Only two editions of the paper survive. Fleet Street was an "advocate of true trade unionism" with little room for the "panegyrics and photographs", ie. the biographical articles which had been a commonplace of Printing News. It was chapel orientated, favouring chapel delegate meetings in preference to the current Executive whose members "delay, avoid or neglect the instructions given by the trade... defy and thwart the intentions of the responsible members and delegates", and whose politics were "errors, blunders...financial and political". Its gossip column was written by "Miles's Boy", a fitting nom de plume in a journal dedicated to oppose those individuals it saw to be eroding the democratic structure of the compositors' organization. The journal gave lengthy reports of delegate meetings of the LSC and kept its readers informed of current legislative developments. Fleet Street was a trade journal most obviously like the Vigilance


201. Fleet Street, Feb. 1903, p. 4.

202. Fleet Street, Jan. 1903, p. 5; Feb. 1903, p. 4.

203. Fleet Street, Jan. 1903, pp. 5-8; Feb. 1903, pp. 7-8.
Gazette but also in the tradition of the early trade circul-
ars. Its promoters used the journal as a vehicle for rank-
and-file agitation against an elitist union leadership,
expressing the conviction that chapel delegate meetings and
not the Executive's coterie epitomised the real democratic
character of the craft; but also, within the wider political
sphere, the paper expressed sympathy with politics of a pro-
letarian stamp. Fleet Street also indicates quite clearly
the effect of current legal hostility to trade unions upon a
publication emanating - albeit unofficially - from the LSC.
Antagonism heightened the tendency to secrecy and anonymity
surrounding publication making identification of journalists,
contributors and the editor of this gazette an impossibility.
The paper was registered with the Stationers' Company on 20th
January 1903 by its publisher and proprietor Robert Liver-
Powell. Supplementary information concerning other
individuals involved in compilation and publication is not
forthcoming. No company records can be traced. Moreover,
reports of union meetings carried in the paper clearly show
compositors' anxiety over what should be published concerning
the union's activities; it is in Fleet Street's columns that
uncertainty over the publication of names and addresses of

204. "Poppinscourt" in Fleet Street, Jan. 1903, p. 1;
"Metropolitan Musings", ibid.; Leader, p. 4;
"Poppinscourt" in Fleet Street, Feb. 1903, p. 1; Leader,
ibid., p. 4.


206. Powell's publishing company at 34 Coin Street cannot
be traced in either PRO BT 31 or in PRO FS 8.
Advisory Committees is aired. The journal itself published lists of names and addresses of the Organiser's Advisory Committees when current legal circumstances discouraged, and the Committees themselves had expressly advised against it.

Within the compositors' union at this time, the Socialist Group of the LSC was active. This group, whose membership is unknown, aimed to "promote discussion of trade matters within the rules of the LSC" and to forward "socialist principles among trade unionists". It published and circulated writings promoting its aims and policies and the remaining pamphlet, *Socialism and Trade Unionism*. Wherein do they differ? succinctly expresses the nature of the campaign for parliamentary representation which was characteristic of SDFers, independent socialists and trade unionists in the LSC at this time:

The enemy of trade unionists and socialists is the capitalist....trade unionists in combination with the socialists should endeavour to take away the political power of the Liberals and Tories, by returning their own representatives to Parliament and to modify the laws in their own favour.

During the years 1896-1906, the Twentieth Century Press continued as the publishing house of the Social Democratic Federation. Twenty seven compositors including Henry Hobart, William Cluse, C.F. Davis, A.A. Watts, James Brookfield, A.W.


208. Ibid., p. 3.

209. Socialist Group of the LSC, *Socialism and Trade Unionism*: Wherein do they differ?, nd., p. 8. Published by the Twentieth Century Press at 37A Clerkenwell Green, publication must therefore have been after June 1893.
Chalkley, Richard Mayes, T.A. Webster and W.G. Wells held shares in the Company.\textsuperscript{210} The Twentieth Century Press's publications included along with \textit{Justice}, the Bow & Bromley Socialist and Social Democrat of earlier years, the ILP News, the London Trades and Labour Gazette, the Liberal-Labour Journal, the Westminster Labour Advocate, General Strike and the Young Socialist.\textsuperscript{211} From April 1902 to May 1903 the Press provided facilities for production of the emigre bolshevik newspaper, \textit{Iskra}.\textsuperscript{212}

It is difficult to identify any dramatic change in the ideological stance of the Twentieth Century Press during these years from the nature of its publications, except to conclude that the publishing house was more flexible or heterogeneous than it had been in earlier years. Whilst it can be argued that alliance between the SDF and ILP is reflected in the publication of ILP News from 1897, and withdrawal from the LRC can be identified with the appearance of the extreme General Strike in 1901, this analysis is not consistent with the appearance of either the Trades and Labour Gazette in 1901, or the Lib-Lab Journal from 1904. It seems rather that the

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{210} Shareholder Lists, July 1902, July 1907: PRO BT 31 15187/35009.
  \item \textsuperscript{212} Warwick, no. 1587.
\end{itemize}
Twentieth Century Press reflected the growing rift between practical socialism on the one hand and an absolutist socialism on the other. Like the SDF, the Twentieth Century Press experienced the division between practical socialists and impossiblists which split the Federation.

The militant compositor T.A. Jackson gives an incisive illustration of H.M. Hyndman's attempts to veto all publications of the Twentieth Century Press. Jackson, still serving his apprenticeship in 1906, tells in his memoirs of how Harry Quelch, wanting to keep the press busy, had translated Marx's *Poverty of Philosophy* 214 and whilst he was printing it, Hyndman walked into the office. Furious at what he found, but unable to stop the print run, Hyndman prevented Marx's *Poverty of Philosophy* ever being re-printed by the Twentieth Century Press. 215 Tensions arising from clashes like this increased through 1900 and 1901 following the Kautsky Resolution, Hyndman's resignation from the SDF Committee and from the Board of Directors of the Twentieth Century Press, and finally, with the Federation's withdrawal from the LRC. 216 Following 1901, the Twentieth Century Press tried to cater to a general socialist audience. Whilst delegates at the Annual Conferences of the SDF spoke of the value of propaganda to the socialist movement, "especially that issued by the Twentieth

Century Press on behalf of the SDF". Harry Quelch, who was responsible for the Press, tempered that optimism with realism: he tried to ensure that the Press always had "something useful to sell".

Blatchford's Clarion remained the pre-eminent popular socialist newspaper of this period. However, as was discussed in Chapter 5, it remains difficult to estimate the effect of the Clarion's idiosyncratic socialism on London compositors because the paper did not rely upon working class shareholders for survival. Furthermore, the status of the Clarion's London Office as a non-union house would not have encouraged any support for the paper among compositors. Possibly attitudes changed after 1902, when the Clarion office became fair, though for the militant compositor T.A. Jackson, the Clarion remained "no newspaper at all".

During the period 1896-1906 then, London compositors continued their involvement in radical publication, despite considerable legal and financial pressure discouraging this activity. The publications circulated alongside, and they reflected, the direct political activity which predominated during these years. The papers which survive were class conscious socialist publications and, by and large, they advo-

218. Jackson, op.cit., p. 68.
221. Jackson, op.cit., p. 63.
cated a pragmatic socialism rather than a militant utopianism without practical application.

Shortly after **Fleet Street**'s appearance in the trade, plans were in progress for an official union gazette. Following a ballot of the Society in August 1905, the **London Typographical Journal** appeared in January 1906. Printed by Driver and Leaver of Roseberry Avenue and published at the Society's office in Bride Street, the new journal was professional in appearance, authoritative in trade union matters, detailed on issues concerning local government, and thorough in its parliamentary reporting. The **London Typographical Journal** did however, share with the union's **Annual Reports** a tendency to cautious reserve in its content, a tendency accentuated later in 1906 following the successful action of Waterlow Brothers and Layton to prevent its name being included in the union's publications. "For the first time in the history of the organisation", the first edition's Leader enthused, "the London Society of Compositors possesses its own trade journal". Furthermore, its future was secured by compulsory chapel purchase. From January 1906 then, the **London Typographical Journal** presented the appear-

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224. LSC, **Annual Report**, 1906, p. 30; See above, p. 294.


ance of ideological unity amongst metropolitan compositors. This contrasted sharply with the outlook and attitudes of members of the LSC, who from the foundation of the union in 1848, had been characterised by freedom, independence, and diversity of expression.

At the beginning of that eventful year of 1906 it was, appositely enough, the London Typographical Journal which applauded Bowerman's success as Parliamentary candidate for Deptford at the General Election. In a Leader whose pedantic style betrayed something of the nature of the trade's official gazette, the Journal looked backward and forward, predicting the role which trade unions were to perform for the Labour Party in British parliamentary politics in future years:

It is clear that during the past fortnight Labour has asserted itself in a manner exceeding the most sanguine expectations, and the impetus thereby given to the movement in favour of direct parliamentary representation must necessarily help to strengthen the determination of workmen, not only to retain what they have so gallantly won, but by judicious organisation to still further increase the footing they have already secured thereby enabling them to take a still larger hand in the framing of legislation in the interest of the eighty-five per cent of the population labour can rightly claim as its own.227

The Development of the London Society of Compositors,

1848-1906:

Conclusion
During the period 1848-1906, the world in which the London Society of Compositors functioned underwent tremendous change. The metropolitan printing industry experienced unprecedented growth, mechanization and reorientation from a trade geared to the demands of parliamentary and book printing, to a mass producing industry based not on seasonal production, but rather on daily and weekly newspapers, on periodicals and on jobbing printing. At the same time, British society was undergoing transformation. The Reform Acts of 1867 and 1884/5, together with the redistribution of seats, irrevocably altered the physiognomy of the electorate. Developments within party politics and the emergence of a viable Labour party by the end of the period presented greater choice to the newly enlarged electorate. For the LSC within this atmosphere of transformation, these years were ones of both change and
continuity. Change was most obvious in the Society's structure and in the role of the LSC as protector of its own members faced with the demands of an industry undergoing rapid growth. Change was also acutely visible in the union's political development; that is, in the political orientation and function of the union and its members. Continuity on the other hand was evident in the union's retention of the workforce's traditional level of control over the trade, and also in retention of the traditional culture and ethos of the chapel based composing craft, whose rituals, customs and ideology became synonymous with the trade union through these decades, and which in the process acquired a singular cogency.

The London Society of Compositors developed both in terms of internal issues and in response to external influences during the period.

In terms of internal development the LSC evolved from an elitist, hierarchically organized benefit society within a chapel-structured craft which possessed an extraordinary level of craft control, to a democratically constituted, chapel-orientated trade union which provided its members with effective trade protection and comprehensive benefits and which possessed a level of craft control in both general and newspaper printing unparalleled by other organizations of skilled men. This metamorphosis, in progress through the printing industry's own industrial revolution, manifest in the reconstruction of the union's leadership, continual rules revision and the extension of benefits, was in essence an evolution in
the meaning of compositors' trade unionism and in compositors' trade union consciousness. In the middle of the 19th century, trade unionism within the LSC was identifiable with an exclusive isolationist Executive, distanced from its own rank and file membership and from an even larger group of non-unionised journeymen: by the 1890s, trade unionism in the composing trade was recognized to be much more democratic, expressive of the Society's rank and file. Over the same period, the sway of the union had come to be roughly identifiable with the geographical limits of the trade.

The nature of the metamorphosis in the LSC's internal structure was determined by the chapel, that institution peculiar to the printing trade which was an expression to those outside the trade of the composing craft's level of control and the independence of its members, and at the same time, it was an internal expression of the egalitarianism of compositors and a symbol of the craft's freedom from the encroachment of external forces. As the period 1848-1906 unfolded, the compositors' chapel became synonymous with the compositors' trade union, and to a great extent this explains the continuity of custom, ritual and tradition within the printing trade. The chapel was fundamental to retention and increase of the trade's level of craft control and it was instrumental in transferring this control from craft to trade union. Moreover, a salient function of the chapel in its collective role as nexus of the trade union in the workplace was its capacity to present at one and the same time, an adherence to the ancient practices of the craft and a forum for those forces
for change within the LSC; chapel delegate meetings expressed both formal adherence to the traditional customs and nature of the trade and provided a platform for reform movements in the union and for the expression and promotion of new ideas and analyses of society. In this sense, the chapel epitomised both the continuity and change of the London Society of Compositors during the period 1848-1906.

In 1889, when the printers' labourers and the printers' warehousemen and cutters formed new unions of the semi-skilled in the printing trade, the structure of both these unions was chapel based closely following the organization of the LSC in the later 19th century. The adoption of this structure precipitated an integrated separatism of trade unions in the printing trade, and encouraged the heightening of tension and escalation of antagonism. New unions in the printing trade unlike those in other industries did not suffer from decline in support in the early 1890s and thus, from 1889 onward, inter-union relationships in the printing trade were influenced by the chapel-in-union structure.

In 1907, the National Union of Journalists was formed. Its initial aims were to establish a separate identity from the elitist and ineffectual Institute of Journalists, and to increase and regulate the appallingly low wages currently paid to journalists, wages which for many men outside the handful of columnists of national stature, were lower than those paid

1. F.J. Mansfield, "Gentlemen, the Press!", 1943.
John Richardson, a later secretary of the NUJ, talking of these early years commented:

when the union started in 1907, journalistic salaries were generally so low that...there would have been a public scandal had it not been for the fact that the machinery for exposing the scandal was under the control of the people who were mainly responsible for the scandalous conditions.

These were sentiments well understood by compositors who decades previously had struggled unsuccessfully against the selfsame machinery to express similar opinions concerning wages and conditions. At the outset, the National Union of Journalists adopted that most successful cohesive form of organization, the chapel-in-union structure. Hence, the integrated separatism which characterised trade unions concerned with the production of all forms of literature in the last years of the 19th century, had been adopted into the editorial workforce by 1907. This structure which institutionalised antagonism and made for the heightening of tension between chapels, unions and newspaper houses was a salient contributor to the inter-union and proprietor-union relations in the printing industry of the later twentieth century.

The LSC's development in relation to external influences during the period 1848-1906 was signal. Firstly, the union

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2. Mansfield, op.cit., p. 189. Early records of the London Branch of the NUJ were lost in a fire at Wine Office Court; ibid., p. 116.


shifted from an isolationist posture to one of association with other trade unions and with trade union bodies of metropolitan and national significance. Furthermore, the Fair Houses policy enabled the LSC to achieve legislative gains and policy changes significant for the whole trade union movement. In 1885, the London Scale became the basis of government printing contracts. More importantly, through delegations and representations of the LSC and LTC, a number of metropolitan authorities came to subscribe to a policy ensuring the distribution of contracts solely to firms which observed union pay scales and conditions.

Secondly, and more significantly, during this period the LSC developed from an apolitical institution into a political trade union: in this sense, this thesis is a study in politicization. Between the mid-19th century and the turn of the 20th century, the LSC moved from the periphery to the centre of metropolitan and national events. At first sight this movement appears to have been the shift of an aristocratic trade union which came to identify itself with the Lib-Lab section of labour politics, but as the foregoing has demonstrated, the LSC's political development and growth of political consciousness was the result of a far more complex process than this simplistic view would allow. At the end of the period, the precise political hue of the LSC and its leadership was dialectically determined by union responses to specific developments in both British Labour politics and in British society at the turn of the century.

5. LSC, Annual Report, 1885, pp. 14, 23.
Bowerman's election as a Member of Parliament for Deptford in the General Election of 1906 set the stamp on LSC politics and contributed to the nature of the Labour Party in future years. The union of compositors was identified with successful moderate labour politics. The Labour Party at its foundation was a reformist labourist independent party and its nature in 1906 was significant to its development and character in the later 20th century.

It is to be noted that the legal status of the printing trade in the late 19th and early 20th century differed markedly from that which pertained during the middle decades of the 19th. In the middle of the 19th century, the LSC was the inheritor of values and attitudes traditional within a craft which had remained unchanged for four centuries, and which originally had a privileged legal status, being regulated by central government not by masters and employers in the trade. Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries this legislation had no force, but regulation of the trade by a higher authority than employers was still assumed by journeymen compositors. Then, during the second half of the 19th century the LSC systematically sought recourse to a court of law for decisions in trade matters. This gave the union's decisions legitimacy and declared the union's superiority over masters in deciding trade issues, but it also signified clearly the desuetude of paternalist legislation as a regulatory force for the printing trade. Following the Trade Union Acts of 1871-5, the union was guaranteed legal status and protection in the years which followed and the LSC continued not only to acquire legitimacy
for decisions concerning employers in its own trade, but also to achieve some concessions of relevance to the whole trade union movement. Finally, in the late 'nineties and early 1900s, the LSC as part of the whole trade union movement was subject to antagonistic legal decisions and hostile legislation. Thus between 1848 and the end of the period under discussion the legal status of the compositors changed from a position of privilege to one lacking legal protection and then to one safeguarded by trade union legislation.

During the second half of the 19th century, the market situation of metropolitan book compositors was deteriorating in relation to employers in the printing industry and also in comparison with other skilled metropolitan trades. Piece-'stab and systematic overtime were rife in London book houses whose proprietors attempted to cut costs to the bone in order to retain economic viability in the face of provincial competition. The threat from provincial, and in some cases European, book houses and the absence of legislation prohibiting or regulating this output diminished the bargaining power of book compositors. Consequently, the rates of 'stab payment in book composing deteriorated both in real terms and in respect of other skilled trades. At the same time, the circumstances of London's news compositors, experiencing a newspaper boom of unprecedented proportions were improving from the 1860s onwards and after the 1894 agreement concerning advertising, their position was one of unexampled and ensured prosperity.

In the 1890s, the composing trade faced its industrial revolution. The introduction of the Linotype composing
machine into London's printing houses in the early '90s was prejudicial to hand compositors in both book and news sections of the trade, but for the former, already experiencing acute pressure from provincial competition, the threat was seemingly devastating. However, from these most inauspicious circumstances the News Department was able to secure extremely advantageous terms governing the introduction and working of machines and not only this, but more remarkably, to achieve highly beneficial provisions concerning the Linotype's operation in metropolitan book houses. The LSC was able to turn these prejudicial circumstances to their own advantage in view of three factors: firstly, master printers, employers and proprietors in both book and news sections of the industry were inherently competitive and unable to present a united front to compositors; secondly, during the later decades of the 19th century both book and news compositors were, in stark contrast to master printers, strongly allied, antagonism between these two bodies of craftsmen having been replaced by constructive relations as exemplified in the Scale of 1891; thirdly, the news section of the trade did not face the acute problem of external competition and thus, its bargaining position remained one of strength vis-a-vis employers. Collectively, these were circumstances which the Executive of the LSC exploited to the full: consequently, the first Machine Scale which was agreed on 27th July 1896 was highly advantageous to compositors. Over the years 1896-1904, the Linotype Scale gained both recognition and institutionalisation within the composing trade. Attempts were made by proprietors to
readjust the pay scale, but these were unsuccessful and in 1904 an agreement between employers and representatives of the LSC to return to the position of 1896, served to reinforce the level of control of the mechanized composing trade which the Linotype agreement had secured to compositors. The level of control of their craft which compositors traditionally held and which had characterised the composing trade from its inception, was not only retained by the Linotype agreement but it acquired a new pre-eminence. With that retention and elaboration of the workforce's traditional power over its craft in terms of wage rates and working conditions, went affirmation of customary attitudes and values: an endorsement of craft ideology. In the industrial relations of the printing trade in the twentieth century there were then powerful craftsmen whose collective control over their craft and whose ideology was sixteenth century in both nature and origin.

During the dispute at the offices of Hampton and Company in 1906, newspaper proprietors allied to form the Newspaper Proprietors' Association, extricating newspaper composition from both the prejudicial effects of dispute and strike in the general trade and from those harmful internecine relations between printing house proprietors. Their agreement with newspaper chapels to negotiate only with newsmen in matters of pay and conditions posed no threat to the position of the news compositor, or to that of craftsmen in the general trade, for it came after those crucial negotiations which had regulated the first industrial revolution in the composing trade in favour of compositors.
Over the period 1848 to 1906, the relationship between compositors of the LSC and the press took four forms. Firstly; the relationship between the union and the established press can be seen to have been a negative one. In a sense it can be said with reference to the metropolitan dailies that the LSC had no more favourable press in 1906 than it had in 1848, for with the exception of the short-lived radical heyday of the Star, the LSC had no real coverage throughout the period. It was not until 1911 that the Daily Herald, and later the Daily Citizen provided the LSC with a platform for airing grievances and allowed an adequate discussion of trade union issues.

Secondly; the press was used to publicize circumstances surrounding a dispute between compositors and employers when compositors were faced with an embargo on their views by the established press. Strike handbills and posters characterised the disputes of 1851-3 which precipitated the highly significant amalgamation of the London Society of Compositors and the Society of London Daily Newspaper Compositors, and their use occurs again later in the nineteenth century; for example in the wage negotiations of 1866 and in the dispute at the Sportsman in February 1892. When the Daily Herald was

6. See for example, the Times, 1848-1906, inclusive.
published in January 1911, it was an LSC strike sheet, not a national Labour daily which appeared, continuing the custom of the strike sheet which sought to present the men's case and break through the censorship imposed by the national press: as the LSC's Annual Report declared, "this little sheet proved of incalculable value at a time when we were receiving no support from the general press".10

Thirdly; compositors' trade circulars were used by members of the craft to publicize trade issues and trade gossip, union developments and legal decisions impinging upon the union's status, and also as a platform for the discussion of current affairs and the expression of political ideas. These vigorous publications, often critical of union leadership and expressing a diversity of political ideas, provided a refreshing counterpart to official union publications, giving added depth and perspective to trade developments. Trade circulars critical of union leadership were chapel orientated egalitarian and democratic, and could reflect a sympathy with and give expression to class conscious proletarian political ideas. In 1906, with the publication of the London Typographical Journal the potential for a trade circular expressing an impartial or critical or alternative view from that of the official union disappeared. This loss is particularly acute as it occurred within a few months of the legal injunction placed on the LSC


by Waterlow Brothers and Layton.\textsuperscript{11} This prevented the union from publishing lists of unfair houses in the printing trade. Its impact was to increase the sensitivity of LSC publications to legal decisions and to reduce the union's \textit{Annual Report} to an over-cautious document. In the years immediately following 1906 then, it is difficult to know exactly what was happening among metropolitan compositors.

Fourthly; a number of metropolitan compositors used the press to publicize radical political views in the second half of the nineteenth century. In the 1890s and 1900s this type of publication emanated from socialist compositors at the centre of the metropolitan union, and also from the Socialist Group of the LSC. In the later decades of the 19th century, because of the survival of some joint stock company records, it is possible to examine the organization behind a number of radical and socialist newspapers and pamphlets, some of which were produced during these years as the accompaniment to political activity.

In 1892, the great Radical journalist H.W. Massingham wrote his survey of the metropolitan daily press.\textsuperscript{12} Discussing the early months of the \textit{Star}, Massingham referred to those euphoric days when it had seemed that, "a newspaper could shape the whispers of a democracy and mould the vague desires for a new social synthesis".\textsuperscript{13} It was conviction of this

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{11}. LSC, \textit{Annual Report}, 1906, p. 31. This was followed by a similar claim by Straker & Sons: \textit{ibid.}
\textsuperscript{12}. \textit{The London Daily Press}, 1892.
\textsuperscript{13}. \textit{Ibid.}, p. 192.
\end{flushright}
nature which motivated those compositors committed to radical and socialist publication throughout the decades from 1848-1906. Furthermore, it has generally been understood that compositors of radical literature were on the periphery rather than within the mainstream of the established trade. However, research into the LSC during the second half of the nineteenth century has shown that compositors involved in such publication were, not only well within the confines of the established trade, but as the Society developed during these decades they moved into prominence within the LSC's Executive and delegate bodies.

* * *

A number of historiographical implications follow from the research and conclusions of this study of the London Society of Compositors during the period 1848-1906. Firstly, this thesis substantiates the assertion that the London Society of Compositors has been inadequately treated in the trade union studies of Sidney and Beatrice Webb. Also in this context, this thesis demonstrates that more recent trade union historians have reinforced the Webbs' conclusions, and further, that they have attached too great a significance to concepts within social history and trade union history, like the aristocracy of labour or the division between a craft and an industrial union, which are neither helpful nor relevant to the development of the LSC. It is apposite in this context to consider the historiographical conclusion to Alistair Reid's
study of shipbuilding on the Clyde.\textsuperscript{14} Here, the essential premise of social history, i.e. that political events will present the problems to be analysed and solutions will be provided by the prevailing economic and social structure, is not confirmed.\textsuperscript{15} It is difficult in the context of this study of the LSC to define a political event. Clearly though, Bowerman's election to Parliament for Deptford in 1906 constituted a political event of national importance and certainly it is debatable whether social and economic factors can be accorded prominence over other influential forces and can be identified as causal. As has been demonstrated, the political development of the LSC and its members during the second half of the nineteenth century was complex, and not simply reducible to economic and social forces. However, this study does affirm Reid's conclusion if, and in so far as, radical or socialist political publication can be identified as a political event. As far as can be ascertained, forces underlying such publication are not to be found in the economic and social structure. Rather, the evidence suggests that the origins of radical or socialist publication are ideological, for it is in response to the currency of new analyses of society that radical and socialist political publications are generated and circulated, and in the later years of the period, they are found accompanying activity in socialist


\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., p. 434.
politics which stems from ideological conviction rather than economic concerns.

Secondly, this thesis substantiates the assertion that current journalistic studies of the present day printing trade which seek the roots of craft elitism in Fleet Street, have referred briefly to studies of the 19th century trade union of compositors, and in consequence give new emphasis to the Webbian conclusion that the LSC was an exclusive apolitical body preoccupied with social status and concerned only with the preservation and protection of craft control.

Further to these conclusions, this thesis indicates that there is utility in a study of the London Society of Compositors which seeks to set the craft and the union in the full context of the printing trade, not solely within a framework delineated by trade union historiography. The development of the London Society of Compositors is revealed not only as being defined by the criteria of trade union history, but also as contributing to the press history of Victorian society. It is hoped then, that this study makes a contribution to an understanding of the interplay and interconnections between metropolitan compositors, their trade union, politics, and the radical and socialist press during the second half of the nineteenth century.
Fig. 2. Total State of LSC's Funds, 1848-1906. Source: Cumulative figures in Annual Report 1906.
Fig. 3a: Unemployed Members of LCS, 1854-81.
Source: Quarterly and Annual Figures, Annual Reports, 1874-1881, Gov.
Fig. 36. Unemployed Members of LG 1879-1906, from Annual Figures.

Source: Annual Reports 1879-1906.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Classification of Fathers/Apprenticing Sons, Composers</th>
<th>Social Classification of Fathers/Apprenticing Sons, Composers vs 90% of All Fathers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>I</td>
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<td>-------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1848</td>
<td>26</td>
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<td>1850</td>
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<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Stationers' Company Apprentice Registers, 1848-1906.

Table 3

Estimates of Union Size to Size of Printing Trade
Over the Period, 1842-1900. 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Offices</th>
<th>Union Membership:</th>
<th>% of Trade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1842</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>1,100</td>
<td>35.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>1,016</td>
<td>3,700</td>
<td>36.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>1,188</td>
<td>5,100</td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>1,322</td>
<td>7,995</td>
<td>60.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>1,548</td>
<td>11,287</td>
<td>72.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. No reliable comparative figures are available. The estimates shown here are based on an assumption of roughly 10 men to each office throughout the period. This of course is a very simplistic estimate: B.W.E. Alford, "The London Letterpress Industry, 1850-1914", unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of London, 1962, pp. 8-9, 87, 184. The percentages given here are similar to Alford's which are derived from an estimate of compositors in the figures for printers in the Census of Production, Part VII, 1907, Cmnd. 5545: PP., 1911, Vol. CL.


4. Kelly's Directory of Printing Trade. (NB: Figures which appear in Kelly's may be inflated due to duplication, eg. in 1880 booksellers like Alvey and Co. of 119 Newington Causeway, and Anderson of High St. Acton, together with publishers like Bradbury Agnew and Co. are also listed under printers.)
### Table 4

Newspapers and Periodicals Studied for Printer/Publication Details.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Warwick no.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Alarm</td>
<td>49</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Anarchist</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Anarchist Labour Leaf</td>
<td>77</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Association for promoting Repeal of the Taxes on Knowledge</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Autonomie</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Beacon</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. BeeHive</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Bolletino Socialiste -Rivoluzionaire</td>
<td>281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Bow and Bromley Socialist</td>
<td>303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Christian Socialist (1850-51)</td>
<td>541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Christian Socialist (1883-91)</td>
<td>542</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Clarion</td>
<td>597</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Commongood</td>
<td>649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Commonsense</td>
<td>650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Commonweal</td>
<td>657</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Commonwealth</td>
<td>662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Co-operative Commercial Circular</td>
<td>725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Counsellor</td>
<td>775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Craftsmen</td>
<td>802</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Democrat</td>
<td>867A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. English Leader</td>
<td>1039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Fabian News</td>
<td>1085</td>
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<tr>
<td>23. Federation</td>
<td>1108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Free Exchange</td>
<td>1202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Freedom</td>
<td>1212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Freiheit</td>
<td>1219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. General Strike</td>
<td>1270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Herald of Anarchy</td>
<td>1382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Homme</td>
<td>1411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Justice</td>
<td>1621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Labour Elector</td>
<td>1694</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Labour Prophet</td>
<td>1729</td>
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<tr>
<td>33. Labour Standard</td>
<td>1757</td>
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<td>34. Labour World</td>
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<td>35. Lanterne</td>
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<td>36. Leaflet Newspapers</td>
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<td>37. Liberty</td>
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<td>40.</td>
<td>London Investigator</td>
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<td>London News</td>
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<td>London Trades and Labour Gazette</td>
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<td>43.</td>
<td>Londoner</td>
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<td>National Reformer</td>
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<td>People's Advocate</td>
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<td>People's Paper</td>
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<td>People's Press</td>
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<td>Pioneer</td>
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<td>Political Examiner</td>
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<td>51.</td>
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<td>52.</td>
<td>Present Day</td>
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<td>53.</td>
<td>Progress (1878)</td>
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<td>54.</td>
<td>Progress (1882–87)</td>
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<td>55.</td>
<td>Progressive Review</td>
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<td>56.</td>
<td>Radical</td>
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<td>Red Flag</td>
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<td>Red Republican</td>
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<td>Republican Chronicle</td>
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<td>Revolutionary Review</td>
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<td>62.</td>
<td>Rich and Poor</td>
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<td>63.</td>
<td>Scout</td>
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<td>64.</td>
<td>Social Democrat</td>
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<td>Social Review</td>
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<td>66.</td>
<td>Socialist</td>
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<td>67.</td>
<td>South Eastern Progressive and Labour News</td>
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<td>68.</td>
<td>Store</td>
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<td>Sun</td>
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<td>Tichborne News</td>
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<td>72.</td>
<td>Torch</td>
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<td>73.</td>
<td>Trade Unionist</td>
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<td>Trades Chronicle</td>
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<td>United Labour</td>
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<td>Waker</td>
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<td>Workers' Cry</td>
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<td>Workmen's Times</td>
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* Not in Colindale Newspaper Catalogue.
NOTE ON SURVIVING DOCUMENTS.

Analysis of the development of the London Society of Compositors during the second half of the nineteenth century is circumscribed by the limitations of surviving documents. The bulk of the records pertaining to the LSC are held at the Modern Records Centre at the University of Warwick (MSS. 28), and in two collections of documents held at the St. Bride Printing Library, Fleet Street, London EC4:—(i) the St. Bride Collection of Trade Documents, 1775-1919; (ii) the Cambridge University Press Collection of Trade Documents, 1795-1919 (CUPC), which was presented to the St. Bride Printing Library in 1975. Collectively, these records are extensive and consist primarily in Annual Reports, Trade Reports, Quarterly Reports, Special Reports and Committee "Minutes". However, early records of the Society are not informative as to union membership or Committee membership; not until 1881 (and thereafter not invariably) are the names of Committee members printed on the back of Trade Reports. There are also lacunae in these bodies of documents: no Committee "Minutes" exist for the years 1850-1860, or for 1862-1906. There are no Annual Reports for 1856, 1861, 1863 and 1877, and those which survive from the early period of the union do not always include a financial statement. In none of these records is there a list of the membership of the LSC during the period 1848-1906.

The paucity of documents relating to the news compositors prevents any viable research which focuses solely upon
this section of the composing trade during this period. In
the Manuscript Collections at the St. Bride Printing Library,
in the Warwick Collection, in the Webb Trade Union Collection
held at the British Library of Political and Economic Science,
and in the printed collections of records edited by Ellic
Howe, there exist some documents pertaining to unionism among
news compositors before the amalgamation of the Society of
London Daily Newspaper Compositors with the London Society of
Compositors in 1853: CUPC, nos. 25, 32; St. Bride Trade
Collection, nos. 1, 4, 6, 12, 38a, 39, 57, 72, 73; Warwick
MSS. 28/CO/1/1/1-2; MSS. 28/CO/1/1/3; MSS. 28/CO/4/1/1; MSS.
71a-75; E. Howe, The London Compositor, 1947 and Newspaper
Printing in the Nineteenth Century, 1943. After 1853, Annual
Reports of the News Department's AGM survive for 1890, 1891,
1893, 1894, 1895, 1896 and 1899 only. There is documentary
evidence (through notices) of Quarterly Delegate Meetings of
the News Department, but there are no surviving Reports of
those meetings.

Whilst Census Returns have proved invaluable to much
recent nineteenth century social history, they are not
similarly advantageous to the study of compositors. Census
Returns make no distinction between compositors and pressmen -
a distinction which is crucial to this study. All craftsmen
in both branches of the trade are described as "printers".
Census Returns cannot then help build up a picture of compo-
sitors' culture outside the workplace. This terminology does
however appear consonant with contemporary usage. The
etymology of the word "printer" takes no account of the division of labour: it is used generically throughout the second half of the nineteenth century to refer to compositors and pressmen, as well as lithographers and machinemen.
APPENDIX A.

PRESS AND PUBLICATION DETAILS OF COMPOSITORS' TRADE CIRCULARS

Compositors' Chronicle, monthly; 2d.
1-37: 7 Sept. 1840-1 Aug. 1843.
Nos. 1-28: Printed by J. Campbell, Brook's Court, Holborn. Published by R. Thompson at 9 1/2 Bouverie Street, Fleet Street. Nos. 29-37: Printed and published by R. Thompson at 1 Little James Street, Gray's Inn Lane. Not registered at Stationers' Hall.
Vendor: Wm. Strange, Paternoster Row; G. Berger, Holywell Street.
Warwick, no. 685.

The Printer, monthly; 2d.
1-19: 1 Nov. 1843-1 June 1845.
Nos. 1-19: Printed and published by R. Thompson at 1 Little James Street, Gray's Inn Lane. Not registered at Stationers' Hall.
Vendors: Wm. Strange, Paternoster Row; G. Berger, Holywell Street; J. Clements, Little Pulteney Street.
Warwick, no. 2818.
The Typographical Gazette, monthly; 2d.
1-16: April 1846-May 1847.
Nos. 1-16: Printed by John Catchpool and Stephen Prentice at 5 St. John's Square and published by Wm. Strange at 21 Paternoster Row.
Not registered at Stationers' Hall.
Vendor: not given.
Warwick, no. 3636.

Typographical Protection Circular, monthly; 1d.
1-59: Jan. 1849-Nov. 1853.
Not registered at Stationers' Hall.
Vendors: John Catchpool and Wm. Strange at 21 Paternoster Row.
Warwick, no. 3637.

Typographical Circular, monthly; 1d.
1-54: April 1854-Sept. 1858.
Nos. 1-54: Printed by Samuel Whitwell at 10 Northumberland Road, and published by Messrs. Piper at Paternoster Row and G. Berger of Holywell Street, Strand.
Not registered at Stationers' Hall.
Vendor: G. Berger, Holywell Street, Strand.
Warwick, no. 3635.
London Press Journal and General Trades' Advocate, fortnightly, then monthly; 1 ½d.
1-?: 1 Nov. 1858-1 Jan. 1859.
Edited by Edwin Shelly Mantz.

Not registered at Stationers' Hall.

Vendor: not given.

Warwick, no. 3635.

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Fleet Street Gazette: A Journeymen's Journal, fortnightly; 1d.
1-7: 28 Feb. 1874-23 May 1874.

Nos. 1-7: Printed by Joseph Sophus Levin at 59a Great Tower St. EC and published for the proprietors by H.E. Harberd & Co. at 11 Red Lion Court, Fleet Street.
Registered at Stationers' Hall by Edwin Haynes, 17 Mar. 1874.

Vendor: not given.

Warwick, no entry.

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Printing Review. A Workman's Organ, monthly; 1d.
1-12: Jan.-Dec. 1879.

Nos. 1-12: Printed and published by Alfred George at the Office at 7 Castle Street East, Oxford Street, London, W.
Registered at Stationers' Hall by Alfred George Cook, 7 Jan. 1879.

Vendor: not given.

Warwick, no entry.

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The Printer, quarterly; 1d.
1-20: Nov. 1883-Aug. 1888.
Nos. 1-20: Printed and published by Blades, East & Blades at 6 Red Lion Court, Fleet Street.
Not registered at Stationers' Hall.
Vendor: not given.
Warwick, no entry.

Vigilance Gazette: A paper devoted to the interests of the London Society of Compositors, monthly, then quarterly; 1d.
1-6: May 1888-Feb. 1889.
Nos 1-6: Printed for the LSC Vigilance Association by C. Bruce at 56 Clerkenwell Road, London EC and published by Kingbury & Co. at 7 Racquet Court, Fleet Street.
Registered at Stationers' Hall, by the LSC Vigilance Association on 25 May 1888.
Vendor: not given.

continues as:
The London Printers' Circular and Vigilance Gazette, quarterly; 1d.
7-11: May 1889-Aug. 1890.
Edited by E.T. Thomlinson, 7 Racquet Court, Fleet Street.
Nos. 7-11: Printed and published by the Co-operative Printing Society at 6 Salisbury Court, Fleet Street.
Vendor: not given.
Warwick, no. 3742.

Registered at Stationers' Hall by Fielden McAllan, 9 Aug. 1892.
Vendor: not given.
Warwick, no. 2842.
Fleet Street. A Journal for the Advancement of Trade Unionism, monthly; 1d.
Nos. 1-2: Jan.-Feb. 1903.
Nos. 1-2: Printed and published by Powell & Co., 50 Stamford Street, London SE.
Registered at Stationers' Hall by Robert Liver-Powell, 20 Jan. 1903.
Vendor: For sale at 50 Stamford Street, London SE.
Warwick, no. 1154.

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London Typographical Journal, monthly, 1d.
No. 1-?: Printed and published by Driver and Leaver Ltd.
Rosebery Avenue, London EC for the London Society of Composers.
Not registered at Stationers' Hall.
Vendor: not given.
Warwick, no. 1936.

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Lansdowne MSS. 905: Star Chamber Decree of 1586.

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MSS. 28/CO/1/1/6: Union Committee "Minutes", 1840-45.
MSS. 28/CO/1/8/1/1: LUC, Quarterly Reports, 1834-45.
MSS. 28/CO/1/8/2/1: LSC, Quarterly Delegate Reports, Apr.-Dec. 1846.

MSS. 28/CO/4/2/1: LSC, Quarterly Delegate Reports, 1848-57.
MSS. 28/CO/4/2/2: LSC, Quarterly Delegate Reports, 1858-67.
MSS. 28/CO/4/2/3: LSC, Quarterly Delegate Reports, 1868-72.
MSS. 28/CO/4/2/4: LSC, Quarterly Delegate Reports, 1873-77.
MSS. 28/CO/4/2/5: LSC, Quarterly Delegate Reports, 1878-82.

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MSS. 28/CO/1/9/2/1: LSC, Annual Reports, 1862-69.

MSS. 28/CO/1/10/5: Report of a Conference Between a Joint Committee of Master Printers and Compositors, June 1874.

MSS. 28/CO/1/11/1: LSC, Library Reports, 1855-82.
MSS. 28/CO/1/12/1: LSC, Provident Fund, Quarterly Reports, 1860-82.

MSS. 28/CO/4/1/1-28: LSC, Trade Reports; these include Annual Reports, Quarterly Delegate Reports, notices of meetings etc., and from 1888, sporadic notices and Reports of the LSC News Department's Quarterly Delegate and Annual General Meetings.

MSS. 28/CO/4/1/3, art. 6: Report of a Joint Committee of the SLDNC and News Dept. of LSC, 1850.
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Correspondence with author, 29 April 1983.

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Morning Star
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ABSTRACT

"The Development of the London Society of Compositors, 1848-1906"
by S.L.M. Craven.

This thesis is a study of the development of the London Society of Compositors from the formation of the Society in 1848 until the separation of news compositors from book compositors, for all negotiations concerning news compositors' wage rates and working conditions, following the Hampton Dispute of 1906. This study examines both the growth of the London Society of Compositors and the trends of change and continuity among metropolitan compositors during the second half of the nineteenth century, and it addresses itself to issues in trade union history, to contemporary concepts in the social history of Victorian society and also to aspects of the political press. Within the context of the metropolitan composing trade this study seeks firstly, to explain the presence in Victorian London of a trade union whose organization is archaic and whose level of craft control vis-a-vis employers is singular; secondly, it attempts to explain and to examine the persistence and the pervasive influence of compositors' craft ideology whose form and functions are fifteenth century in origin; thirdly, it considers the impact of the growth of the metropolitan printing industry upon the LSC; fourthly, it examines the union's response to political developments in British society in the second half of the nineteenth century; finally, this thesis throws light on the involvement of some metropolitan compositors in the radical and socialist press in Victorian London.