

A THESIS ENTITLED

GOVERNMENT
TRADE UNION DEMOCRACY AND MEMBERSHIP

PARTICIPATION : A STUDY OF THE NATIONAL UNION OF TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

The main object of study is the impact of politically leftwing trade union activists on union democracy and membership participation. The fieldwork was carried out in four local associations of the NUT between 1973-1975. The main conclusion is that where there are competing left factions locally then activists become more active, there are more activists, and that members are more likely to participate in direct action. At the same time, however, activists are likely to become less representative, debates less familiar, ordinary members are less able to make decisions, and the national union will develop methods of reducing local autonomy and the power of local activists. This finding I refer to as the democratic paradox.

In order to develop this thesis it was necessary to examine the relative loss in earnings of schoolteachers and changes in their work (Chapter 2, part 1) as well as changes in teacher trade unions (Chapter 2, part 2). Having noted some objective reasons for an upsurge in teacher militancy and leftwing politics I next examined the main political positions found amongst local activists with regard to the role of teachers and teacher trade unions. These groups were the Rank and File, the broad left, and the orthodox representative democrats (Chapter 3).

Armed with knowledge of objective conditions and the aims and strategies of local activists the study examined one local association in detail. Chapter 4 part 1 looks mainly at the relationship between active and inactive members. Part 2 of the chapter examines the interaction between a leftwing set of activists in one local and its relations with the national union in three case studies - Young Teachers, London allowance and The Wandsworth Three (Chapter 4, part 2).

Finally the study takes the lessons from one association and applies them to three other local associations (Chapter 5). The main areas of analysis are over the competition for leadership (representativeness), the competition for policy (familiarity of debated issues), and the competition for action by ordinary members (decision-making capacity of the rank-and-file).

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CHAPTER 1 : INTRODUCTION

This thesis is a study of how groups of politically leftwing activists qua trade union activists influence the type of trade union democracy and the extent of membership participation within a local association of the National Union of Teachers (NUT).

Such a study raises several issues of current importance for trade unionists and observers of trade union behaviour. In general it deals with the traditional concerns of free trade unions operating in a predominantly market economy, and in particular with the often stated dilemma or trade off between efficient organisation and democratic processes.¹ Different approaches to the two sides of this problem include a variety of definitions of democracy based on analysis of constitutions and rule-making, leader powers and decision-making, and the rights of members and opposition groups.² Of special interest here is the role accorded to participation by the rank-and-file in the government of the trade union by the different schools of practitioners and advisers.³

Participation and its representative alternative come up against a series of arguments for its dilution. These include familiar themes about the inevitable power of bureaucrats, the tendency of leaders to lose touch with the membership, and the essential lack of interest members have in their organisations.⁴ The accurate perception of what happens within various trade unions depends upon the specific historic content of the study undertaken, its purpose, and the occupational nature of the members of that union. Hence American print workers may exhibit and may be seen to be exhibiting certain unusually democratic tendencies, ones paralleled perhaps by British mineworkers, but not by American mineworkers nor British print workers.⁵ Thus any analysis of the arguments about democracy and its relation to participation should be based specifically in the context of the occupation and union studied, and also within the context of the purpose of the study for the wider debate about pluralist society and bureaucratic institutions.

My concern, however, is not to repeat the total arguments in this ageless debate, nor indeed to recount the structures and practices of all trade unions. It is to pinpoint one specific area of the controversy associated with the impact that communists, socialists and other leftwing activists have in practice on the democracy and participation of a specific occupational trade union. Thus in the context of the national NUT and the local association (local A) studied I concentrated on the operations of those activists associated with the broad and/or political left and the Rank and File group.⁶

The former loosely constitute the main left opposition at national level and hold office in a few local associations. Their main membership comes from the Communist Party of Great Britain⁷ (CP), leftwing members of the Labour Party (Tribune supporters among others) and non-aligned marxists and socialists. In contrast the Rank and File are mainly centred upon members of the International Socialists⁸ (IS), some members of the International Marxist Group⁹ (IMG) and other non-aligned political left-wingers. These two competing left groups, where they exist, are in opposition to the majority and national incumbent (as well as most local incumbents) position of orthodox representative democrats. This major group tend to be drawn from all parts of the political spectrum to the right of (and including) the Labour Party, although most national and many local activists in this group tend to be associated with the Labour Party. Each of these three main groups found in local A and the national union, it is argued, has a more or less consistent orientation and strategy with regard to both the role of trade unions in society and to their internal control mechanisms. These positions filter through to ordinary activists who seek in their specific environment to enact their prior aims and methods. It is this detailed practical side of the debate, namely the activities of political activists and their consequences for union democracy, that form the main concern of this thesis.

In order to make sense of both the wider democratic debate and the specific political debate on trade unions it is essential that the occupational and organisational context of the action are made clear,

Teachers in England and Wales in the late 1960s and early 1970s experienced certain important shifts in working conditions and practices, in pay differentials, in collective bargaining methods, and in some areas of professional concern.¹⁰ These were watershed years for this occupation as for some other white-collar professional trade unionists. It is in a situation of rapid, complex and disorientating changes in workplace experiences that the political activists make their most serious impact, and when their small numbers can have disproportionate consequences for the members and government of their trade union.

In line with these work and pay developments went a series of organisational changes and challenges to the NUT. More militant action (1969/70 strike over interim pay award), affiliation to the TUC (1970), changes in the size of employment units (comprehensive secondary schools), and the rise of a major rival union (NAS/UWT - see Table 1 below) all presented the leaders and officials of the union with severe problems.¹¹ The response that emerged was a realignment of forces within the union, a restatement of professional values on such issues as industrial action, and a reinforcement of national and representative democratic methods of control. It is this last point that provides the national political basis within which activists at local level had to operate.

TABLE 1 - THE NAS/UWT CHALLENGE

The figures represent the per centage of NAS/UWT members to those of the NUT for the categories shown.

Year	Ratio	Men	Women	All members	Total NUT membership ('000)
1970		62	3	18	311
1971		69	6	24	278
1972		77	7	25	273
1973		90	9	30	250

Source: TUC Annual Reports

In order to carry out a study that raised major contemporary issues about union control and policy formulation, about white-collar militancy, and about the conspiracy theories of leftwing takeovers in the union movement; and which attempted to answer such questions through a very detailed survey of one local association of one national union, the empirical method had to be carefully chosen and comprehensively carried out.

The detailed study of political activists in local A meant observation of local trade union meetings, interviews with some of those involved, analysis of the relevant political documents, and a large scale questionnaire to the members of the association. The details of the questionnaire and its related statistics are in Appendices I. and II. The main point to note is that the questionnaire was the largest survey undertaken of teacher trade unionists and that its main aim was to compare and contrast the behaviour and attitudes of active and inactive union members.

The major technique utilised was that of Guttman scaling. This provided an index of participation, which in turn enabled members to be divided into three categories - inactive, active and very active. These categories were then cross-tabulated by computer with all the questions asked, and the results provide an indication of the impact that left activists have on inactive members. This was emphasised when the results from local A were compared and contrasted with those from the three other local associations studied (B, C and D in Chapter 5).

The tables produced from this data show per centages of respondents by level of activity and local association for each question, and the significance of the results is judged by simply comparing the figure for any one group with that for all members of the association.

Through these data collection methods and data analysis techniques the operation of political activists within the economic, work and organisational framework of NUT members in the years 1973-5 could be analysed in such a way as to contribute to the overall debate on trade union democracy and membership participation.

One important feature of analysis to emerge from the fieldwork is that the notion of representation as used in the main tradition on trade union government raises several problems concerned with definition, measurement and usefulness. The representation of views from members to activists to leaders to decision-takers is a task, it appears, often lacking in real effectiveness or true representativeness. Equally many decisions to be made by members are debated and presented in ways and in terms unfamiliar to the rank-and-file. Activists and leaders at all levels of the organisation, not least those with a clear left perspective, discuss topics that are frequently remote from and irrelevant to ordinary members. This raised the additional problem of whether the consent and understanding of inactive members lost by local activists during their interminable interchanges on seemingly obscure points can be rekindled at times of clear and relevant issues such as pay claims. This leads to another concept which is the capability of members to make decisions and/or select representatives and/or elect leaders given their overall state of ignorance of union affairs. An ignorance not based on some simple notion of apathy, but more clearly understood in terms of the linking and political role of the school representative (the NUT's stewards), and the local autonomy and collective bargaining power of local associations.

In the final analysis, then, these related concepts of representativeness, familiarity and decision-making capability within the context of both the wider debate on trade union democracy and the wider political and trade union strategies of political activists, and within the specific occupational and organisational circumstances of this study, lead to the main argument of this thesis: namely that in practice the impact of leftwing activists on trade union democracy and membership participation results in a democratic paradox. A paradox associated with both a falling off in level of member interest in internal union affairs and an increase in activists' concern with the union at a time when all power-seeking groups within the union wish to appeal to all the members in order to legitimise their attempts to win control over the necessarily new policies and methods of the organisation. New because the NUT experienced at this time profound change, serious challenge from competitors and membership discontent with pay and conditions.

So the search for and struggle for more democratic control through more membership participation resulted in less democracy. This thesis does not state that this is a necessary paradox, but that it was observed in local A of the NUT, and its general applicability depends upon the lasting nature of the problems of these trade unionists at that time. The impact of both the opposition left groups (broad left and Rank and File), therefore, was to raise the level of activity among activists in some local associations and national institutions, but to reduce the overall democratic control of the union through the victory of the orthodox representative democrats. This group sought to emphasise the imperatives of external dealings and threats over the requirements of internal democratic control. They resolved the traditional democratic dilemma of representativeness through greater formality and efficiency, and through the moral revisionism of an instrumental membership.

This is the first study in detail of a local association of a large national union concerned with the operation of various marxist and socialist groups (IS and CP in the main) with regard to their impact on trade union democracy and membership participation. As such it relies greatly upon the research material presented here, and attempts to put that material in the context of the wider political and academic debates associated with the operation of political minorities in trade union branches and government.

CHAPTER 1 - FOOTNOTES

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2. For aspects of constitutionality see:
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J. Goldstein, The Government of British Trade Unions : a study of apathy and the democratic process in the Transport and General Workers Union, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1952, chapter 3.
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C. Wright Mills, The new men of power : America's Labor Leaders, Harcourt, Bruce & Co., New York, 1948.
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3. J. Barbash, Labor's grass roots, Harper & Row, New York, 1961.
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 J. Seidman, J. London, B. Karsh, D.L. Tagliacozzo, The worker views his union, University of Chicago, 1958.
 R. Hyman, Industrial Relations : a Marxist Introduction, Macmillan, London, 1975, chapter 6.
 J. Goldstein, op.cit.
4. S.M. Lipset, M.A. Trow, J.S. Coleman, op.cit., chapter 1.
 V.L. Allen, Power in trade unions, op.cit., Part 1, chapter 1.
 B.C. Roberts, op.cit., chapters 10-14.
 J. Barbash, The practice of unionism, op.cit., chapters 5,12.
 S. and B. Webb, Industrial Democracy, op.cit., Part 1, chapter 3.
5. S.M. Lipset, M.A. Trow, J.S. Coleman, op.cit., chapter 3.
 J.D. Edelstein and M. Warner, op.cit., chapter 8.
6. The 'broad left' refers to a relatively formal and stable group of leftwing and progressive trade union members who combine together to try to win policy-decisions and to contest elections. Their composition usually consists of communists, socialists (some in the Labour Party) and a variety of radicals (some in the Labour and Liberal Parties). The 'political left' is an alternative term for the same group, but attempts to change the emphasis away from concerted organised opposition to a more loosely knit group formed and reformed on specific issues. Thus in the NUT at national level there exists a political left, while in local A there was a broad left.
 In contrast the 'Rank and File' group, while being clearly tied in nature to the union in which it operates, in general is concerned to organise the 'ordinary' trade union member against the perceived 'betrayal' of trade union leaders and officials (the bureaucracy).
7. The Communist Party of Great Britain (CP) is the main Communist group in the UK, and has frequently had some power base within the trade union movement. Its programme, The British Road to Socialism, illustrates much of its general aims and analysis, and also a strategy for its trade union members. Its main regular publications include the daily paper, The Morning Star, and its monthly theoretical journal, Marxism Today.
8. The International Socialists (IS) have changed their name to the Socialist Worker Party (January 1977). They are the main group to survive from the post-war Trotskyist movement, and have since undergone several restatements of their basic political position. Their main publications include a weekly paper, Socialist Worker, and a theoretical journal, International Socialism.

9. The International Marxist Group (IMG) is the British section of the Fourth International, and was founded in 1969. Its origins organisationally are with a group of Trotskyist members of the Labour Party in the 1960s, and its politics are based on a modern version of some of Trotsky's works. Its membership is much smaller than that of the IS (probably about 500 members in the mid-1970s). Its publications include a newspaper, Red Weekly, and a theoretical journal, International.
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CHAPTER 2 : TEACHERS AND THE NUT

The micropolitics of the NUT in the early 1970s illustrate the problems of an organisation confronted by changes in its political, economic and ideological environments. As a result there were challenges to the organisation from outside bodies such as competing trade unions and government departments, and from within from various left political activists. This chapter describes the reality of those problems and the power struggles that emerged in this period. What becomes clear are the contradictory and shifting nature of the alignments within the NUT, and the difficulties this presents for the various group control strategies. In the main this period saw the eclipse of the old style of NUT leadership and tactics, and their replacement by more professional (in trade union terms) and more social democratic (in political terms) personnel and behaviour. In the movement towards mainstream trade unionism the NUT faced the strong internal challenge from the left, and the struggles that followed are part of the general organisational context in which the detailed study is set. It is within an organisation undergoing change and challenge that democratic questions are most clearly raised and resolved.

In order to analyse these developments further the structural and organisational divisions among schoolteachers need to be examined. Seniority, subject and school divisions are reflected throughout the history of teacher politics and organisations,¹ and are contained within the largest teacher union, the NUT. These divisions among teachers, and within the NUT, became more intense when the profession and its organisations are faced by the dual problems of a decline in pay and an increase in work. It is the challenge of these changes that forced teachers and the NUT to re-assess their traditional attitudes and actions within their trade union existence. This part of the chapter provides some evidence of these pay and work developments and also presents their interpretation by the main political groups within the NUT. Each one of these groups sought to develop general strategies around the new issues in order to increase the

power of their presence within the Union. For example the Rank and File group in some local associations took up the cry for more strike action and greater school democracy. These issues helped illustrate, according to the Rank and File leaders, the natural spontaneous militancy of NUT members and their betrayal by the NUT Executive, bureaucrats and other left groups. In contrast to this unsubstantiated position the political left in the union tried to develop a permanent and strong left faction throughout the union. This was based on the expected shift in awareness among many teachers, which itself stemmed from affiliation to the TUC and action over pay policy. In response to both these challenges to traditional union policy the incumbent representative democrats sought to maintain control and credibility through support for limited forms of industrial action, some organisational revitalisation and greater central powers.

The second part of this chapter examines the consequences for the NUT, in terms of policy, democracy and membership participation of the impact of the strategies of the main protagonists within the context of work and pay changes.

Part 1 : All work and no pay

"The claim for substantial increases in teachers' salaries does not rest only on the evidence of the decline in teachers' pay relative to that of the working population as a whole or to that of professions comparable to teaching. It also rests on the increased demands made upon the teaching profession in terms of responsibility and time, which have hitherto gone unrecognised and unrewarded." 2

Edward Britton
(General Secretary NUT 1970-1975)

Teachers had suffered a significant erosion of differentials in the period 1964-1974, and struggles over pay remained the single most important issue. In a survey carried out for the NUT in 1973³ it was shown that a scale 1 teacher on point 7 earned in 1971 99% of a manual workers' average earnings. By 1973 the same teacher had to be on point 10 to reach that equality. Similarly a scale 2 teacher had to be on

point 13 in 1971 to reach 101% of a non-manual workers' average earnings: by 1973 that teacher could not reach equality. Thus this clear relative fall in earnings (more rapid in recent years) led to strong feelings of 'relative deprivation',⁴ and so to a change in attitude and mood of many teachers.

The scale, incremental point and general promotion prospects of teachers vary by sex, qualification and type of school. These important differences are reflected in the growth and development of different teacher trade unions.⁵ The largest and all-embracing union is the NUT. This has as a consequence that the occupational divisions are internal to that organisation, which leads to tensions over the formulation of policies on pay structure.

These tensions find expression in the propaganda of the groups competing for power within the NUT. Hence the Rank and File group argued that the system of scales and increments was divisive, and further that the best paid teachers (invariably university graduates, men and Heads) have interests separate from and opposed to the interests of the rest of the teaching staff. Pay differentials, on this view, represent part of the ruling class strategy to divide workers, and part of the incumbent trade union leaders' strategy to maintain power by appealing to professional self-interest. In contrast the political left in the NUT argued the case for a higher starting salary, more scale posts in recognition of greater teacher responsibility, and reform of the collective bargaining system.

The problem of collective bargaining for teachers, and other public sector service groups, is that the government of the day has increasingly intervened in the negotiations between management and trade unions in their respective joint councils. Since 1919 the Burnham Committees⁶ have settled teacher pay. But following the 1944 Education Act⁷ and the 1965 Remuneration of Teachers' Act⁸ the government has had more and more direct control over agreements. The importance of this lies in the fact that teacher organisations now face government policy on pay directly, and so experience the impact of economic stringencies sooner than other

groups. Education was more vulnerable to this kind of pressure in the 1960s because government and local government together controlled all expenditure associated with education. They also controlled many aspects of teacher existence such as training and entry to the profession. Close government supervision forced teachers and their organisations into a series of fierce debates as to what strategies to adopt. While increased attention to the collective bargaining process was one avenue, others included more political activity, closer association with the rest of the trade union movement, more militant tactics, and a greater stress on the professionalism of the profession. (Part 2 of this chapter takes these points up in more detail).

This general crisis within the educational sector stemmed from a realisation that the power to achieve traditional aims had been eroded by circumstances, and that to restore both the loss in 'welfare' (pay, hours and fringe benefits) and the loss in 'professionalism' (self-government and career) needed some move towards new forms of collective bargaining. As one American observer has simply said:

"The relationship between collective bargaining and teacher power is that through collective bargaining, teachers seek to increase their power". 9

The favoured interpretation of events and the strategy seen most likely to restore some of the loss in power was developed by the majority of the representative democrats in the leadership of the Union. The line taken was to understand the decline in teachers' pay as a special case in need of special government and public sympathy. While the NUT accepted Lockwood's point that:

". . . the war and post-war situation brought about a substantial narrowing of the income differentials between manual and non-manual work" 10

they still argued in both the 'Money Lesson'¹¹ and the 'Bitter Lesson'¹² that teachers had suffered more than most other groups. And that the pay of teachers was closely linked to the quality of teaching. This was the

key propaganda point for those representative democrats who knew they had to abandon the old aloofness from the TUC and militant action, and yet who refused to be drawn to either of the left groups. The aim and hope of the adherents of this dominant position was to develop some form of non-ideological and non-political militancy. The main way this was achieved was through the notion that education and the pupils' welfare were threatened by government interference and loss in teachers' pay.

The findings of these surveys received sympathetic treatment from sections of the Labour Party,¹³ as did the general NUT argument that teacher pay and pupil welfare were inseparable issues. The evidence for this vital argument was in part presented by another Ruskin survey¹⁴ carried out for the NUT. This time they investigated the problem of teacher turnover and related it to the pay levels and pay structure. The report found that in ILEA there was greater teacher mobility than in other areas. The main reasons given included poor working conditions, lack of promotion chances, poor pay, and expensive housing. The relatively low pay and the large number of teachers on scales 1 and 2 highlighted the problem of turnover and promotion seeking. This imbalance in the labour market for teachers and the resultant desperate need for promotion to secure higher wages added to the NUT's internal divisions based on qualification, sex and type of school. The evidence for the monetary importance of these differences comes from several sources. One study concludes:

"We have shown in this paper that the pecuniary advantages to a school teacher of a first or second-class honours degree increase absolutely and relatively through his working life." 15

The most recent survey¹⁶ of teachers' pay at that time showed that female average earnings were overall lower than male by a factor of about 22%. This is made up of about 1/3 by the concentration of women in the primary sector, and 2/3 by the concentration of women on lower-scale posts. This is itself dependent upon qualifications, length of service and availability for promotion. A more sophisticated account of the same phenomena is to be found in Turnbull and Williams.¹⁷ They note

that women tend to earn less than their male colleagues even given the same qualifications and school. They go on to demonstrate with the aid of regression analysis that married women in the primary sector suffer most from promotion discrimination. As they conclude:

"We have shown in this paper that the age-specific and qualification-specific differentials between male and female school teachers depend on two factors:
(i) Women are more likely to have had a break in service
(ii) After allowing for this, men and single women with given qualifications have substantially the same salaries in secondary schools but men have a distinct advantage in primary schools. Married women are substantially worse off than their unmarried colleagues in both sectors. There is furthermore no evidence that women teachers' position has improved since 1963; if anything it has worsened somewhat." 18

These objective reasons for differences in attitudes and behaviour of teachers according to their sex, qualifications and type of school also relate to the areas in which they teach. In London, and other large cities, teachers face special problems, and in 1974 London teachers took special action over their claim for a higher allowance. This kind of difference presents problems for any Union leadership when it formulates a general pay policy. The ways in which they seek to represent each group depends upon the ways in which Union policy develops from Union democracy. But that democracy may itself alter under the impact of opposition groups. For example the Rank and File were able to latch onto these real differences and relate them to a strategy of union control. A strategy, according to Rank and File, which favoured the better paid at the expense of the lowest paid. And this, they went on to argue, was because the Executive itself was composed of mainly men, Heads, secondary teachers and those with higher qualifications.

The ability of any one group within the Union to control the mood of sections of the membership depends upon the ways in which labour market conditions and collective bargaining processes combine to provide the individual teacher with real and perceived rewards and possible future rewards. These factors create the desire among some teachers to evolve new forms of action in pursuit of claims upon the government and the

public. The form of that action, its realisation and success, will depend upon the ways in which different competing groups within the Union fulfill their strategies of control. Their ability to carry out their plans depends upon Union democracy, and that in turn depends on the acceptance by teachers of the arguments and solutions proposed. That credibility comes from the daily experiences of teachers. At work they were subject to larger units of employment, and a greater sense of cost-effective labour. As one American has noted:

"It appears that teachers come closer to fitting the bureaucratic-employee expectations than the professional expectations." 19

This point is associated with large size of schools, distance between the Head and other teachers, powerlessness felt by junior staff, and changes in teaching methods. As a NUT survey noted:

"In both the primary and secondary sectors great emphasis was placed on the fundamental shift from "teacher-centred" to "pupil-centred" education, and the much greater demands this has placed on the individual teacher in terms of time, resources, skills and nervous energy". 20

In particular there has been an increase in the complexity and variety of teaching methods, teaching aids, changes in syllabus (e.g. growth of CSE work), mixed-ability teaching, and team teaching. All this adds up to more time spent on basic teacher functions such as the preparation of material, examinations, reports, out of school activities, counselling, community work, in-service training, and involvement with social welfare services. Such increased pressures are most acute in inner urban areas. The same survey found:

". . . the definite deterioration of standards being associated with secondary schools in city environments" 21

and in America one expert has linked this with other teacher responses:

"Teacher militancy is rooted in the fabric and in the conditions of large-scale urban education". 22

Experiences at school provide a crucial intervening variable between the general economic factors outlined above and the trade union response discussed below. As Cole has argued with reference to the American UFT:

"If a teacher's predisposition toward the union movement was strongly influenced by socialization acquired prior to entering the profession, it was also influenced by the experience he acquired after entering the school system". 23

One central part of that experience is the way in which power is exercised in schools by the senior teachers. The traditional dominance of the Head²⁴ was challenged at this time by teachers faced with problems of large schools, new discipline problems, syllabus changes, poor working conditions, and inadequate salary.

In the atmosphere of change and challenge that existed generally in the early 1970s, and in particular amongst staff and students in the education sector the notion of school democracy became part of the Union debate. Many external factors crystallised into the school issues of the power of the Head, and the rights of other staff in decision making. The roles of the Head as teacher, administrator, adjudicator, local politician, union member, sometimes local union leader, and representative of management lead to pressure from within the NUT to democratise schools. The main thrust for this came from a working party report submitted to the 1973 NUT Conference.²⁵ It recommended teacher consultation as a first step towards full participation. The areas to be subject to staff decision included educational aims of the school, its organisation and structure, discipline, curriculum, and staff appointments. These areas of participation were to be realised through staff meetings and departmental committees in larger schools.

A majority at that Conference²⁶ and among teachers in my survey opposed such full participation suggestions, although supported lesser notions on consultation. But the issue became symbolic of the challenge of the Rank and File in London and of many other younger teachers. Their view was that the Head ran the school on behalf of management and so by default on behalf of Capitalism. They saw his power as absolute;

"Any rumblings from below that threatened this right . . . on the part of teachers or pupils . . . is therefore to be feared and fought". 27

This analysis by the Rank and File drew close parallels between schools and factories. They explained the radical attitudes of teachers and pupils due to their oppressed position in the education system. But this force for change is opposed they claim by a combination of senior teachers, reactionaries and trade union leaders. The Rank and File could draw upon some support for their views by emphasising certain genuine areas of discontent such as the power of the Head, the failure of the NUT to improve the position of the lower-paid teachers, and the general crisis among teachers.

This picture fitted into the Rank and File's more general IS perspectives. The crude 'reproduction' position is that under capitalism education simply 'produces' the next generation of labour necessary to create surplus value for the capitalist class. Some teachers on the left took this up as part of a wider debate about class conflict and the role of teachers within such struggles. The majority of teachers of all political positions tend to reject such a line in favour of a more direct educational role under the circumstances of current systems. The Rank and File interpreted the work and pay developments as a sign that teachers were now just like manual workers, and that they should fight accordingly for more industrial democracy at work and more militancy in the Union. In both cases the immediate enemy was the Head: autocrat at school and oligarch in the Union. Thus their struggle was part of the grand revolutionary upsurge of the early 1970s. As a leading London teacher and member of IS wrote at the time:

"It is, of course, the working class which is the agency for change in society, and teachers, as workers, together with the workers' children (always prominent in workers' uprisings), form an integral part of this agency. Their struggles on the educational front flow into and form part of the general working class struggle of protest against oppressive capitalism". 28

The political left in the NUT rejected such a simple equation, and related the admitted newly found and significant militancy of teachers to their

overall strategy of winning a 'left' majority in the Union. This group saw the new problems as a real chance of defeating the incumbents through a combination of mass militancy and left propaganda. This development was to be based on the widest possible alliance of progressive teachers within the NUT, and on the wider alliance of teachers with other trade unionists. Thus this period of change presented both oppositions on the left with a rare chance to establish their policies and personnel within the fabric of the Union. The struggles that ensued in local A and the NUT resulted in a mixed result for all involved, but certainly the evidence from such watershed years as 1973-75 provides unusually clear insight into the importance of political activists in the development of union policy and democracy in times of wider changes.

With shifts in economic and work place conditions for teachers and with the resultant change in strategies adopted by their organisations goes the alteration in attitudes. This vital ideological link between objective change and new forms of behaviour is carried through by trade union activists operating upon the uncommitted. The challenge is taken up according to the overall theory and group membership. The Rank and File see the chance to build some revolutionary party; the political left to win 'left' leaders and policies in the labour movement; and the majority representative democrats (both liberal and orthodox) as the chance to develop more trade union practices within the limits of non-political group bargaining. The point now taken up is the way in which teachers control the movement towards trade union tactics in a period of unstable economic and work-place developments.

Thus pay, conditions, expectations and the ways in which these were negotiated became for teachers a matter of urgent professional and job concern. The early 1970s saw a coming together of all these problems within the NUT, and meant the need for greater organisational strength to deal with a harder environment and fiercer competition. At the same time the internal divisions within the union (political and sectional) were emphasised, and highlighted the traditional organisational dilemma of efficiency and democracy. The tightening of both sides of the dilemma meant that those involved needed to search for some solution to those

problems while maintaining the unity of the Union. The next section examined such a search and throws up some reasons (detailed later) for the central paradox that democratic struggle and the struggle for more democracy may result in less democracy.

Part 2 : Democratic change and changed democracy

2.1 Old traditions and new tactics

"The National Union of Teachers has been described as "neither an incorporated professional institute nor a trade union but a teachers' professional organisation which combines the best features of both". The Union is affiliated to the Trades Union Congress and plays its part in many aspects of T.U.C. activity and especially in those fields related to education and training, the social services and local government. At the same time it continues to play its part in all the professional bodies and activities that it undertook prior to affiliation to the T.U.C." 29

(NUT Prospectus)

The marked drop in relative income levels allied to the dramatic changes in the requirements of the job led to the emergence of new policies and forms of action by the various teacher trade unions in the late 1960s. Such developments were not solely predetermined by economic objective conditions, but were decided by the power struggles between and within the organisations involved. The ways in which a major trade union changes its orientation to the exercise of its power can tell us a great deal about its internal political processes, and about the impact on union democracy of group competition for control of union policy and operation.

The dominant traditional forms of teacher pressure have revolved around the belief that teachers as a profession will be given proper consideration at all times by those in power. Such tactics are well documented for the NUT and NAS, and in particular it is the view of Coates³⁰ that the main activities of teacher organisations included direct contact with the D.E.S. and its predecessors, the lobbying of M.P.s and good relations with the mass media. His main thesis is that while such methods are still pursued they have become less effective. The realisation of this

has in turn led to the adoption of more militant forms of action aimed at shifting the balance of power back to teachers. The old notions of what professional people can and cannot do had to be discarded with this development. As one observer has suggested in the American context:

"While little evidence is available, it would probably be safe to say that teacher strikes were considered unethical, if not repugnant, by a majority of teachers before 1960. That attitude has changed markedly during the last ten years . . . the record shows that some strikes by teachers led to substantial gains after all other tactics had failed to accomplish anything." 31

This change in attitude did not influence all teachers equally.³² The different types of teacher by qualification, sex, school, subject, seniority and class background means that the impact of a common factor such as income loss is variable. It is this uneven and unpredictable quality of objective change on individual teachers that is fought over by the competing teacher organisations and by groups within the organisations. Some teachers then are more vulnerable to certain forms of appeal because they are closer to the problem outlined by a regional official of the NUT:

". . . it would seem that many of their grievances were echoed by the white-collar sections of industry, who found that their middle-class status was being threatened, as they saw it, by an ever-decreasing gap between themselves and the working-classes . . . a phenomenon which was reflected not only in the pay packet but also in their conditions of work." 33

Various notions have been suggested to explain and describe the possible different types of reaction by teachers (and others) to these changes. They are now more 'unionate',³⁴ they are more 'prone',³⁵ to working-class models of behaviour, or they have become workers³⁶ themselves. Whatever conceptual device is utilised the important point is that there have always been divisions among teachers and their organisations as to what strategy to follow in pursuit of their professional and trade union aims. The success of one set of policies over another depends upon the support for each among active and inactive members, and the ability to turn that support into practical results through the unions' democratic processes.

The historic proliferation of teacher organisations, and the continual existence of a more or less organised opposition within the NUT bear witness to this.

The importance of historical precedent and the passing down of traditional positions on key issues must not be ignored in any study of current teacher politics. If one teacher argues that teachers qua professionals should not strike, and if another teacher argues that such action in the past succeeded in defending and pursuing professional standards, then at least a dialogue of informed opinion can be generated. Past debates often have a powerful hold over present ones, and some mention of the former is necessary to explain the form and content of the latter.

The historic form of these divisions are dealt with at length elsewhere,³⁷ but a summary here provides some background information indicative of the policy issues for debate and change. The issues that emerged with the first teacher organisations in the early 1800s have a familiar ring: professional status, qualifications, conditions of work and pay, and government control. It is this last aspect that tends to trigger off important changes in teacher organisations. It was the failure of teachers to influence the government over the 1870 Education Act that led directly to the setting up of the first national teacher trade union. As Sir Ronald Gould (NUT General Secretary, 1947-1970) explains:

"... the opposition of the weak, disorganised and fragmented profession to the Revised Codes (that is, Payment by Results) had proved futile, and thus teachers were at last persuaded to join together into a national organisation to make opposition more effective." 38

This first national teachers' organisation soon became the largest and most powerful. Mrs Webb³⁹ in her large-scale survey of teacher organisations in 1915 noted that the NUT concerned itself with issues such as pensions, professional control, hours and conditions, salaries, and management whim. By then she could write that:

"The NUT, though not registered as a Trade Union, has shown, both in its objects and in its methods, a marked approximation to the Trade Union type". 40

The NUT was alone at this time in such a category. The numerous other forms of teacher organisation based on sex, grade and school type remained clearly apart from any trade union action. They included the National Federation of Class Teachers, National Union of Uncertificated Teachers, the Teachers' Guild and many others. The main point made by Mrs Webb was about the struggle between secondary and elementary teachers that reflected the nature of educational provision for different classes in society. At this time the NUT, as the main body of elementary teachers, identified itself with the expansion of education. As she explains:

"The leaders of the NUT . . . had a vision of an all-embracing system of public education from the infant school to the modernised university, administered by one ad hoc elected local authority, regulated by one central Government Department, and served by a homogeneous body of salaried men and women, disciplined by one type of training and belonging to one professional organisation". 41

Despite the success of the NUT at this time as indicated by Graham Wallas:

"The NUT has given the elementary teacher self-respect, an improved social and economic position, and some measure of intellectual liberty, much more rapidly than Parliament or the School Boards would or could have done unassisted by a professional organisation". 42

it was unable to prevent important defections from its ranks after the First World War. Clearly the divisions covered by Mrs Webb (including the enormous special subject groups such as domestic science, art and commerce) could not be overcome either by NUT aims or successes. For NUT methods, which included strike action and moves towards equal pay, upset too many of their members. The main result of this was the formation of the NAS in 1919. Latta⁴³ thinks the main factors for the NAS's origins include the decline in the percentage of men in teaching, activation of the female majority, falling differentials with other workers after 1918, and the general growth of trade unionism in the early 1920s.

The NUT remained the largest teacher organisation as the smaller groups tended to disappear. By 1959 a survey⁴⁴ of the main organisations

needed only to discuss the NUT, NAS, NAHT and the Joint Four. The first two in this list remain the largest and most powerful groups, as well as the most militant. They also cover all teachers. The NUT has a majority of women and primary teachers, while the NAS has a majority of men and secondary teachers.

While the NAS is known for its emphasis on careers and professional status, yet by the 1960s it was exhibiting a greater willingness to strike and to join the TUC than the NUT. The significance of this is that the NUT leaders had the possible threat of organisational challenge to some sections of its membership. In order to counter this they had to take up the postures of their main rival in order not to be outflanked. Yet they also had the problem within the NUT of keeping those teachers opposed to more industrial action, and of defeating the left's moves to create a more active union. Traditional divisions among teachers over strike action, links with the labour movement and the nature of the political involvement which had been largely submerged in the 1950s re-appeared in the 1960s. At first in the form of some left activists raising questions of policy, but later, as the general educational crisis developed, in the form of mass concern for the policies and methods of the NUT. By 1967 the NUT was able to force through a sanctions campaign to increase the basic scale and do away with the primary/secondary differential. This success led to the major strike over an interim salary claim in 1969-70.⁴⁵ Both these victories, however, put further strain on the future of the NUT: the first alienated some secondary teachers, the second those against strike action.

Industrial action in any form has always posed special problems for public service workers, and in particular for professional men and women. When teachers strike those that suffer are the pupils and their parents, and it is only through these agents that local authorities and central Government come under pressure. Ever since the NUT was formed a minority of its members have supported the tactical use of strikes, but only under exceptional circumstances has this become a majority.

In the industrial and political unrest of the early 1970s many more teachers were prepared to strike for the reasons outlined in part one

of this chapter and for the organisational needs already mentioned. This willingness to act in such ways opens up for debate within the Union the appropriate forms and circumstances of industrial action, and also provides evidence for the left opposition's claim that traditional leaders and their tactics have failed.

This major example of the new policies indicated that at least a majority of NUT members had overcome the familiar arguments against teacher strikes.⁴⁶ These included the responsibility to set good examples to pupils, that it is unfair to make pupils suffer for the misdeeds of others, loss of public respect, that teachers should set a general example of rational behaviour by settling their differences round the negotiating table, and that strikes by teachers are anyway ineffective since teachers have no industrial power. These points did not disappear, but were no longer sufficient to prevent action. Although the NUT did lose members after the dispute from about 250,000 full members at the end of 1969 to a low of about 210,000 by the end of 1973.⁴⁷ This may be due to other factors such as an increase in subscription, but it does confirm the view that at least some NUT members were unable to accept strike action.

The NUT's own answers to the doubters came in their account of the 1969 strike.⁴⁸ Their main defence of strike action was that to value the child and its education one must value the teacher. In addition the NUT leadership was able to point to other professional groups such as civil servants who were taking similar action. Within the NUT then a majority of members and leaders and officials came to support the new militant policies. This change in professional outlook among the majority of NUT members is not to be found in the abandonment of cherished educational aims, but in the ways in which 'professional' people behave when confronted with a threat to their power. This point has been captured by an American commentator:

"During the coming decade, teachers will need to improve their personal welfare (salaries, working conditions, etc.) gain an improved educational program for students, and gain the right to govern their profession. If the decade of the sixties accomplished nothing else, it buried permanently the myth that teachers are self-sacrificing missionaries content to work for whatever wages and under whatever conditions the patrons in a local community thought appropriate for such "service-minded folk"". 49

It is that image that has been rejected by those teachers most sensitive to the erosion of pay and status of recent years. Thus the pressure to move away from traditional forms of activity was strong among many groups of teachers, but which of the new forms to adopt and their significance was open to debate.

Hand in hand with the major strike of 1969/70 went affiliation to the TUC. Here again old objections were overcome by new circumstances. Again the issue allowed the left to make headway, although the representative democratic incumbents tried to avoid the central principles involved by arguing that affiliation was a politically neutral attempt to find a new pathway to government.

This mood of willingness to take action continued into the early 1970s. There were further NUT actions over the London allowance and national claims in 1974. But each decision, local and national, to take action raised again the differences within the NUT and presented the Union with new challenges from other teacher organisations. As a response to these pressures, and as part of the general mood of the efficacy of industrial methods the Union affiliated to the TUC in 1970.⁵⁰ The reasons why the NUT finally took that decision are partly from organisational pressure from the NAS which had affiliated in 1968. As Latta noted in 1969:

"The NAS decision has been rendered all the more important by the failure of the NUT to affiliate. The NUT Executive, reversing its stated policy of two years previously, advised the Union to seek affiliation, at the 1968 Conference, and a referendum was called. The poll, however, showed 43,222 against and only 31,499 in favour, thus leaving the NUT still in isolation". 51

There had always been members of the NUT who wanted affiliation to the TUC, but its close links with the Labour Party and its image of working-class militancy prevented success. By 1970, however, organisational needs plus renewed interest among greater numbers of teachers meant that affiliation was possible. This was especially relevant when viewed against the notion that teachers felt systematically 'betrayed'⁵² by the government and the public. There is no evidence that NUT members left because of affiliation, and the many Conservative Party teachers in the NUT showed no lasting signs of opposition since the Conservative Opposition⁵³ encouraged such moves.

The changes in objective conditions for teachers outlined in part 1 and the organisational response of the representative democrat leaders already discussed were accompanied by a resurgence of the left at all levels of the NUT. It is this left challenge that forms the basis of this study in terms of their search for greater control through greater democracy (see chapters 4 and 5) which results only in greater activity among greater number of activists, but not in any more general increase in union democracy.

The new tactics adopted by the NUT and the NAS included more strikes, more industrial action short of strikes, more national strikes, and affiliation to the TUC and so to some Trades Councils. The old traditions of direct dealing with government departments became less important, and the old attitudes opposed to such militancy became increasingly a minority and irrelevant view. This process and its results meant that the political left in the NUT could rebuild its lost strength and restore its lost credibility. Thus at national level a Communist Party member, Max Morris, became President of the Union in 1973, and at local level, such as local association A, the fairly coherent broad left could take power. This so-called 'militant' group exists nationally around specific issues, and is composed of communists, leftwing Labour, and other non-aligned socialist teachers. The tactics of this group were to win left leaders at all levels of the organisation, and to win the organisation to left policies. These aims did not necessarily mean the most militant actions, because the political left has a long term strategy of building a permanent broad left within the NUT and the trade union movement in order to facilitate a general move to the left by the labour movement and Labour Party. (see Chapter 3). Their intention was to create out of the current surge of discontent a progressive force that would turn the new militancy into a permanent organised left group.

In their attempts to do this the political left had to counter the attractions of some socialists to the Rank and File, and the tendency of some social democrats and radicals to accept the dominant solution of the representative democrats. The Rank and File saw the developments to more militancy as a once and for all shift in the consciousness of

many teachers towards the need for a socialist revolution based on trade union action. They analysed the trends as unambiguous signs of the 'proletarianisation' of teachers, and that this mood was held back by trade union bureaucrats and reactionary leaders. Thus the two tasks were to build the revolutionary party through Rank and File and to present militant demands in order to make all teachers aware of their exploited situation. This interpretation of events was given further credibility by the very existence of the Rank and File:

"The rapid growth of Rank & File as a ginger group in the National Union of Teachers bears witness to the growing spirit of hope among thousands of teachers that they need not forever be trapped as cogs in the wheel of an oppressive authoritarian regime. Through fighting with the Union against the poor pay, the large classes, the crowded conditions and rotten buildings, and the bureaucratic yoke weighing on them they win over hard-pressed teachers and gain experience of the class struggle. Teachers' strikes, demonstrations and other protest actions show they are learning fast. This lines them up directly with other rank and file workers whose problems are surprisingly similar." 54

The left thus grew out of the objective deterioration in the position of teachers and the change in organisational strategy. They challenged dominant traditional thinking within the union, the school and society. It appears, however, that even at their most effective the left could not move the majority of leaders, of bureaucrats, and of members from their favoured orthodox representative democrat line, although it did undergo some important modifications.

This position was firmly rejected by those who understood the new trade union tactics in a more limited and instrumental way. The more orthodox of the representative democrats characterised by Conservative, Liberal and 'rightwing' Labour members and leaders viewed the necessity of industrial action and TUC affiliation as an unfortunate consequence of a modern malaise. That is they only joined with these trends because at the time no other methods were seriously canvassed. They rejected the more militant actions, and the notion that their strikes were against the government: that is political. The major concern of this majority group was to channel the genuine feelings of discontent into centrally controlled

actions away from the locally based Rank and File and left influence. This concern to depoliticise the developments within the Union stemmed from the traditional belief that teachers must not be involved with party politics, and from the support for limited forms of membership participation. Thus issues about local autonomy, the power to call strike action, the official voice of the Union (see the Young Teachers' Conference in Chapter 4), and leadership of industrial action when it occurred (see London allowance strikes in Chapter 4) all indicate that the NUT leadership and a majority of members sought to use the internal democratic processes of the Union to control the movement from traditional to new tactics.

Support for this orthodox position comes from Manzer.⁵⁵ He argues that one reason for the NUT's loss of influence at government level is because of the excessive internal democracy of the Union. This in turn ties the hands of the negotiators, and of the chief negotiator (the General Secretary) in particular. He blames the 'radical traditon' within the Union for the continued existence of divisions, and so supports any moves to reduce opposition through greater central control. This analysis that formal means of control represent the majority of instrumental trade unionists' best interests fails to locate differences between teachers and their possible courses of action in either the structure of the profession or in the genuine political strands within the Union. This point is taken up by the more liberal representative democrats. They argue that the new trends are a good opportunity to extend democracy in the Union and at school. The non-Marxist 'left' Labour and young Liberals who form this group could thus support either the Rank and File or the political left on given issues, while not supporting the ultimate aims or general strategies of either group. At local level in particular the way these activists' support went was vital in determining the balance of power between the other competing groups. The existence of this group also made it harder for the more orthodox leaders to dismiss the new militancy and its associated democratic developments as just a 'left' or 'ultra-left' plot. Such conspiracy theories became untenable until the Rank and File isolated itself from all other groups in 1974.

The temporary alliances formed around the issues of militant action and internal Union democracy were partly caused by the objective conditions of pay and conditions, but also were due to the influx of large numbers of young teachers into the profession in the late 1960s.⁵⁶ This meant that by 1973 a majority of NUT members were under 35 years old, and that many of them had experienced the student unrest of this period (1967-70). The short-term effects of this were important since many of the Rank and File and left activists had been active in student politics, although the majority of newly qualified teachers had only been on the fringes of the student movement. This new pattern of recruitment into the profession also helps explain the change of attitudes to strike action and TUC affiliation. The young teacher population also tended to find their first jobs in schools in large cities. This meant that local associations in Inner London had a more than proportionate number of new teachers, and this added to the more radical stance of these associations.

Many teachers (new and old) felt betrayed by government in terms of pay and conditions, and turned to new forms of tactics in order to counter the power that had reduced their position. The emergence of new tactics and their impact within the NUT required a prolonged and at times bitter struggle. The struggle was over the direction and long-term consequences of the new methods, and in local A was fought mainly between the political left and the Rank and File. They fought on the terrain of Union democracy and membership participation. This is because Union rules, myths, policies, actions and principles seek to reproduce the constitutional and hegemonic conditions of the wider society in order to legitimise the decision makers' rights to make decisions and enforce them on members. For many teachers the national policies of the NUT are not relevant, and so it appears that they need not bother with the Union government or with the debates of the opposition groups. But this somewhat passive acquiescence to representative democracy breaks down at times of acute conflict or change. At those times, such as 1969-74, the competing groups may want national support for local associations or local associations may be called on to give their support to national policies. When this happens more members are involved in Union government, and this itself has an important impact on the Union's decision-making processes.

This section has sought to indicate that the historic and professional divisions within the teacher movement and the NUT are recurring themes. It has provided general evidence and argument that the coincidence of organisational needs as expressed by representative democrat leaders (elected and appointed) and active membership demands led to the adoption of strike action (1969) and TUC affiliation (1970). The worsening pay and conditions in the early 1970s allied to a labour movement in opposition to Government resulted in a challenge from within the NUT for control over policy and leaders. The challenge came mainly from the left (Rank and File group and the political left) at local association level, and resulted in a self-conscious response from the ruling incumbents nationally and locally. A response which ultimately led to a reduction in democracy in the name of and in the search for more democracy. This internal conflict generated a series of articulate debates around notions of internal union democracy, the right to lead, unity, efficiency, and who is the guardian of members' interests. The following sections examine these arguments in more detail, and assess their importance for activating more activists, securing majority support, and for justifying certain actions.

2.2 The organisation : majority rule and the opposition:

"Our battle is not between teacher and teacher but between teachers and the enemies of education. All our members are entitled to have their interests safeguarded and advanced whatever their status in the profession may be. If there are conflicting interests, real or imaginary, between our members, then the golden rule of unionism is also its iron law . . . respect for and loyalty to majority decisions. A union must work in this way or it will dissolve into anarchy. A union is not a college debating society; its meetings are not teach-ins, talk-ins or shout-ins. Its methods of discussion and decision-making are laid down in its recognised procedures, conventions and rules." 57

Max Morris
(NUT President 1973)

This statement expresses both the conscious practice of the NUT, and the theoretical position of those who wished to keep internal union differences within the limits of the present structure. Thus Morris attacks the tactics of the Rank and File, and supports the left/right struggle within

a representative framework. He supports an electoral system for President and Executive that enables a Communist Party member to become President, and so underlines the central role of majority decision making in trade unions. But union elections have come under attack from a variety of positions, important reforms have been advocated, and the practice of union elections has been carefully scrutinised. The debate has ranged over two main areas: the process and validity of elections themselves, and the power of elected leaders compared to that of appointed full-time officials.

The role and importance of elections has played a major part in the debate on trade union democracy. The electoral model in some form encompasses the two-party system of Lipset,⁵⁸ the representative democratic orthodoxy of the Webbs,⁵⁹ and the equal slates and candidates of Edelstein and Warner.⁶⁰ For teacher trade unionists and for each of the main NUT groups analysed in the next chapter elections are of vital importance: their method, results and consequences. Yet the members are reluctant to vote, and because of this each competing faction has placed a different slant on the election process. In the search for greater control through greater democracy getting out the vote is central to usual notions of membership participation.

Up to 1974 the Executive of the NUT was elected every two years from 12 multi-member constituencies.⁶¹ Only full-time teachers could stand. The national officers are elected at the same time, but in a single national vote. The members elect a treasurer, a Senior Vice President and a Junior Vice President. These last two become President and ex-President in subsequent years. As will be noted below the election of the President is the most important task, and there are usually several candidates representing various strands in the union's regions, politics and membership. The candidates are nominated through the local associations. Ballot papers are sent from local associations to schools, distributed by the school representative, and returned by post. The method of voting is by preference: if the quota is not reached then the votes of the bottom candidate are redistributed until someone is elected.

It was at the 1973 Annual Conference⁶² that amendment 'H' altered the future electoral districts for the Executive. The new system expanded the areas from 12 to 27, and reduced the number of multi-member constituencies from 12 to 7. The politics of this change will be dealt with later, but for now it is interesting to note the timing of the change.

The electoral system of trade unions is often taken as the main guide to the extent of their democracy, and for orthodox representative democrats the election of national leaders is both the sign that democracy operates and the proof that further forms of membership participation are unnecessary. Such a view has been expressed by Lipset:

"The democratic structure and process in the I.T.U. can be seen in the following facts. Since 1898, when the union established the referendum system of electing international officers biennially, there have been seven changes in Presidency in which incumbent officers were defeated, five of these occurring since 1920. During that same period the administration party failed to elect its complete slate for the four- to six-man executive board in eight elections out of the twenty-five which occurred. In no election since 1916 has any international official run without organized opposition. Defeated Presidential candidates have never failed to secure less than 23 per cent of the vote and have secured thirty-five per cent, or more, in 14 of the 16 elections since 1918. The union membership have voted in over 500 referenda since 1889 to approve or disapprove suggested union policies which have been proposed by the International Board, an annual convention, or a number of local unions". 63

This restricted view of democracy has been extended by others⁶⁴ in this tradition to incorporate additional conditions for 'meaningful' elections: regular, contested, properly conducted, high turnout, fair method, and evenly balanced candidates. In addition access to office should be free, and the right to communicate, discuss and criticise should operate. Post election tests of their fairness include the number of times incumbents are defeated, closeness of the results, and the powers that those elected actually possess. These notions are restricted to elections for national and local leaders rather than for shop floor leaders, policy making or the choice of officials. It is clear from Lipset and others⁶⁵ that their notion of trade union democracy is borrowed from the democracy of American two-party system.

Most studies⁶⁶ indicate that many of these conditions do not operate. Strauss⁶⁷ found that in American building unions elections were rarely contested and incumbents rarely defeated. Clegg et al⁶⁸ found the same in their study of British shop stewards and branch officials. Where there is a contest very few members vote. An average figure for the U.K. may be about 10%.⁶⁹ Such low turnout presents a series of important problems about the legitimacy of those elected, the reasons for the low polls, and the level of membership interest in the union.

There are different answers proposed to this problem. Roberts⁷⁰ has argued that in general the size of poll is related to the method of the election, and Roy⁷¹ confirmed this view in his study of the NUT. They suggest that the ways in which ballots are distributed (to home, place of work or branch meetings); the collection of ballot papers (sent in, collected by stewards or put in a ballot box), the system used (proportional representation, preference votes or second ballots); and the number of candidates all influence the numbers who vote. In the NUT national elections (where ballots are sent to the place of work, returned by post, with preference voting and several candidates) the overall turnout is higher than average. But what this position fails to account for is that for President of the NUT 26% voted in 1970 and 16% in 1974. The system remained the same but the vote declined. The same is true for Executive elections. Some areas have better turnouts than others e.g. in 1970 51% voted in district 10 (Wales and Monmouthshire) compared to only 18% in the same year in district 4 (East Midlands). These variations have been explained by reference to a second set of reasons: the meaning of the results for the membership.

The most powerful form of this view comes from Goldstein's⁷² study of the TGWU. His notion was that members correctly perceived their powerlessness in relation to decision making and so voted with their feet in a show of mass 'apathy'. This view supports representative democrats seeking to limit participation through the dual concept that leaders have to make decisions by default because of membership lack of interest, and through the moral aspect of 'apathy' that the members' do not deserve any more than they get. Such views were expressed by local leaders in

some of the associations studied in this thesis, but they seem to be contradicted by the views of members gained through my questionnaire.

If either the defenses of the orthodox representative democratic position are true (technical processes or 'apathy') then the exceptions to the low vote rule need to be explained. The NUM possesses special features which encourage higher votes. One noted by Edelstein and Warner⁷³ among others is the political divisions within the union. This is related to the power of the union in industry and locality decision making, and to local autonomy.

The main political division within the NUM and the AUEW is that between a broad left and a 'right' Labour position. This conflict, while reflected in the wider labour movement, is not reflected in wider political elections. It also tends to exclude those to the right of the Labour Party. The NUT, on the other hand, contains a majority of members who are not part of the Labour Party or groups to the left. The Union does not have any clear left/right split for national elections, and only in a few local associations does the division hold. This makes other aspects of the Union's decision making processes perhaps more important, since elections themselves tend not to reflect policy differences so much as regional, school and personal conflicts.

It emerges from this that the conditions for a high turnout in NUT elections are only partly met. Another set of factors for poor voting returns concerns the amount of knowledge members have about the election. The majority of members do not know the candidates' politics, records, policies, or what issues are at stake. The implications of the victory of one candidate rather than another are equally unknown to the voters. The NUT makes great efforts to inform their members. This may help in keeping voting figures respectable, but the key to member interest and knowledge is the school representative. It is the advice of the 'rep' that carries most weight, and their power to 'get out the vote' that determines the size of vote. The 'reps' themselves rely on local association officers, and the national information of the NUT (e.g. The Teacher). Thus the role of activists in elections tends to emphasise the

degree of 'apathy' of inactive members. Further evidence for this process is detailed in later chapters.

The advantages of a low poll for incumbents provide fuel for the Rank and File attacks on the system of union control, although in some local associations this argument is put on its head: that the Rank and File or political left win control through low polls. This tendency for only small numbers of members to vote for leaders does go some way to undermine arguments based on traditional notions of democracy. It also throws doubt on the importance of studies such as by Edelstein and Warner.⁷⁴ They put great emphasis on the closeness of results as indicators of democracy, but with low polls the closeness of results seems as marginal to the real issues as the size of the poll itself. In both cases the argument for limited forms of representative democracy by orthodox social democrats and their Liberal and Conservative allies appears threatened by the fact of low turnout in elections. A threat certainly contained within the NUT.

Most national and local leaders of the NUT have a well developed sense of the democracy of their union. In particular they point to the elections for the Executive and President as signs that the members control the organisation. The figures for Presidential elections from 1968 to 1974 are given in table 1.⁷⁵ The simple facts show that in those years there were always five candidates or more for the two posts (note that in 1974 when there were 9 candidates, the most in this period, there was the lowest turnout). Turnout ranged from 16% to 26%, and the preference vote method was clearly a factor in voting behaviour. With the exception of Max Morris in the 1972 election most results appear to be based on the persistence of candidates (for example the 1974 Junior Vice President had stood in 1968, 1970 and 1972) rather than on any political alignment. For many the more significant features of the results is that in all cases of President from 1971 to 1974 they were men with university degrees. At the time the last woman to be President was in 1964.

In the case of Executive elections (see table 2) points of interest include the fact that in no year analysed were all areas contested, and

TABLE 2 ELECTION RESULTS FOR THE EXECUTIVE (Source: NUT Annual Reports)

<u>1968</u>	ELECTORAL AREAS											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Number of candidates	7	*	6	*	5	*	*	*	4	7	*	4
Number of seats	3		4		3				2	3		3
Votes cast ('000)	7		8		8				2	9		6
Votes as % members	37		35		31				21	49		27
<u>1970</u>												
Number of candidates	9	6	*	4	7	5	4	3	3	6	6	*
Number of seats	3	5		3	4	3	3	2	2	3	2	
Votes cast ('000)	9	11		4	10	6	4	4	3	10	4	
Votes as % members	45	36		19	39	28	20	30	20	53	22	
<u>1972</u>												
Number of candidates	*	*	4	5	6	6	5	*	3	5	3	*
Number of seats			2	3	4	3	3		2	3	2	
Votes cast ('000)			7	4	7	4	4		2	7	2	
Votes as % members			31	21	27	19	20		20	41	13	

ELECTORAL AREAS

1974⁽¹⁾

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Number of candidates	*	*	2	2	5	5	*	*	3	3	2	2	*	3	*	*	*	2	*	*	*	*	2	*
Number of seats			1	1	1	1			2	1	1	1		1				1					1	
Votes cast ('000)			2	2	3	2			2	3	1	2		2				1					1	
Votes as % members			32	22	42	34			17	35	20	32		35				22					25	

1974⁽²⁾

	25 (Wales)	26 (Inner London)	27 (Outer London)
Number of candidates	4	4	5
Number of seats	3	2	3
Votes cast ('000)	7	2	3
Votes as % members	38	17	13

Notes: * Indicates no contest

(1) 1974 there were new districts for the Executive elections

(2) Districts 25, 26 and 27 correspond to the old districts 10, 11 and 12

that the turnout of vote varied considerably from area to area and from year to year. The turnover of Executive members is fairly high. Of the 36 NUT members of the Executive in 1968 10 did not stand again, 3 were defeated and 23 were re-elected. Of the 1970 Executive 12 did not stand, 1 was defeated and the rest re-elected. Of the 1972 Executive 10 did not stand, 6 were defeated and the rest re-elected (this despite the change in electoral system). Few elections or defeats appeared to be 'political' in origin. In Inner London the 1974 election was highly political, but the vote remained low (17%). This result is examined later.

The evidence from the NUT national elections suggests that local and national leaders attempt to encourage voting, as do the constitutional regulations involved. The new, smaller constituencies were introduced as part of an effort to relate members more closely to their Executive member, and to raise the level of interest in elections. Some of the actual reasons for not voting are analysed later with reference to the four local associations studies, but the meaning of the electoral system for the main participants can be discussed here.

As has been noted it is the orthodox representative democrats (the 'moderates') who most favour a system that relies upon the vote to decide policy and leadership. They argue that the low polls only go to show that members are not really interested in union government, and so representation is the only practical form of government. More direct democracy and more decentralised decisions would, on this view, only harm the efficiency of the organisation. The balance must be maintained between the individual freedom of members as guaranteed in the constitution and the rule by representatives to ensure efficient decision making. This group does seek improvements in the turnout of voters through secret postal ballots and more constituencies, but reform is limited to the national electoral system, and is more readily conceded when any opponent threatens to challenge the majority.

The importance of these elections for the Rank and File group is as a sign of the anti-democratic nature of the bureaucracy that runs the Union.

TABLE 3 COMPOSITION OF THE EXECUTIVE⁷⁷

Year Numbers	1968/9	1970/1	1972/3	1974/5
Men	34	36	34	33
Women	2	1	4	6
Graduates ⁽¹⁾	21	21	20	21
Secondary	16	17	18	23
Primary	16	17	17	14
Heads ⁽²⁾	20	19	20	18

Notes: (1) The definition of graduate is sometimes unclear. I have taken a narrow view, and so the figures may understate the true numbers.

(2) Some members win promotion while on the Executive. Also note that usually $\frac{1}{2}$ of the secondary school teachers are Heads.

They argue that such leaders will tend to 'betray' their members due to the pressures of the 'system'. This links with their view that most members of the Executive are male graduates in secondary schools, while most members are female non-graduates in the primary sector. In addition the Rank and File claim that a disproportionate number of Head teachers sit on the Executive, and that they are management. Not all these points have a factual base, but the candidates for election and those elected do exhibit some 'unrepresentative' characteristics that need to be explained. A majority of Executive members are certainly men: the most number of women on the Executive between 1968 and 1975 was 6 out of 36; the most number of primary teachers was 14; all the Presidents from 1968-1974 were men; and a disproportionate number were Head teachers. These facts, while open to a variety of interpretations, provide some basis for examination of the electoral system in terms of how candidates emerge from among local active members. Thus the platform of the Rank and File has two prongs in this area: first that elections of this kind were irrelevant since the outcome would only confirm the power of the bureaucrats and their 'right' allies; second that Rank and File should contest the elections in order to have a voice of the 'people' at Executive level.

The political left took exception to such an approach. They argued for the fullest participation in elections in order to secure 'left' leaders and policies at all levels of the organisation. They sided with the liberal representative democrats on the extension of electoral practice, and the need for a higher vote. This aim is stated by 'broad left' trade union leaders throughout the union movement. Thus Dick Seabrook (USDAW President 1967-1973) has written:

"There is certainly ground for argument about what systems of election are best calculated to involve the greatest number of members in the most effective expression of their wishes . . ." 78

And elsewhere George Jerrom (NGA Executive Council Member) has argued that:

"Periodic re-election is a principle of democracy for which all should aim. This must be done in order to avoid 'democracy passing into despotism'". 79

Sentiments echoed by Bob Wright⁸⁰ of the AUEW and other leading broad left spokesmen.⁸¹ Therefore for the political left in the NUT elections are seen as part of the total process of local participation, and not as the end of that process. The importance of this position lies in the extension of the analysis to both the politics of the candidates, and the recognition that to form an effective left opposition all aspects of union operation must be challenged. The success of that opposition depends partly on the electoral results, partly on local association activity, and partly upon the power of the non-elected full-time officials. Genuine opposition as part of democracy and election process can be seen as a threat to the unity of the organisation by those most involved in the negotiating and organising tasks. In the NUT the tradition of strong national officials represented a challenge to all groups competing for power.

For many the main debate on the election of leaders and on votes on policy is the extent to which the elected can push through their programme in light of the powers of full-time, appointed, paid officials. There are about 200 staff in the NUT with 15 senior officials at Hamilton House and two officials in most of the twelve regions. They form the nuts and bolts of the organisation, the backbone of the Executive position on most issues and the main object for attack from the Rank and File group. The consequence of such attacks is to bring the bureaucrats and the Executive that appointed them into the political debate within the union. If they win that battle then more central control may follow based on the external strength/internal control trade off. Thus the embattled defenders of the rights of organisation man may inflict defeats on the searchers for democracy just because the chosen battle ground is union democracy. So a democratic paradox emerges from the thrust and counter-thrust of combatants for power within an organisation.

In the NUT full-time officials are appointed by the Executive (rule 19),⁸² and are not subject to any electoral contest. This is typical of white-collar union practice as opposed to unions such as the NUM⁸³ and AUEW.⁸⁴ This system of appointment tends to raise the issue of the power of

bureaucrats in relation to the lay Executive. Here constitutional statements about the powers of Annual Conference and the Executive may appear of little relevance. The history of the Union supports this view.

From the start⁸⁵ the Union needed to put pressure on the government and relied on central dealings with the relevant civil servant. The national structure of the Union developed according to this main avenue of power, but it had also to take account of the views of the members and to respect local autonomy. What evolved was a small full-time staff at Hamilton House in London. This staff dealt with the membership through the Membership Department and its district and regional officers, through national advisory committees (e.g. Young Teachers, Secondary schools), and through the relevant standing committee of the Executive. The staff also deal with outside bodies such as government departments, other unions, and the media. This bureaucracy is presided over by the General Secretary. His power in part depends upon his personality: as the best known NUT leader he has an advantage over others, as the main Union negotiator and as a member of the TUC General Council he has great experience of what goes on, and as one of the longest serving senior officials, he accumulates a mass of important contacts and information. While the potential of such leaders is well known, the ability to limit that potential by a lay Executive is harder to ascertain. Part of that ability depends upon the length of service of Executive members (which as we have seen is about as long as they want), and upon the actual policies pursued by the Union. The key point is whether the General Secretary and his other officials will or would want to follow strategies opposed to those of the majority. Cases do occur when this happens as with Wil Paynter⁸⁶ and to a less extent with Hugh Scanlon.⁸⁷ But with a Union lacking the political divisions found elsewhere it seems less likely. What we can say is that the bureaucracy is in a position to give powerful advice to the Executive on a whole range of issues, but most of the time the Executive accepts it because it is unexceptional. Rarely does controversy find its way into Executive committees. When it does the Executive decides policy. This does not mean that the small bureaucracy does not have some areas of interest of its own, and that it pushes these from time to time. It does.

The professional administrators at Hamilton House do develop some special interests. For the official⁸⁸ in charge of membership his prime aim is to recruit more members. He is concerned about the growth of rival unions, and he will push the campaign in the colleges. He is also aware that most teachers join the NUT because it is the largest union, and provides some of the best facilities, and not out of any deeper motive. This is supported by my evidence from the local associations. The recruiting propaganda will stress the role of good services and a large union. This may upset some activists who would want more publicity about the aims of the union in terms of education, ideology and principles. The official will emphasise the organisational qualities of the Union, because he is responsible for them and because he is correct in thinking that is the best way to recruit new members.

Most officials⁸⁹ feel that they are the guardians of the ordinary member concerned with his immediate terms and conditions of employment problems. They have a restricted view of the functions of the Union: to serve the membership within the constraints of the educational world's problems. Some bitterly resent and oppose what they term the 'politicisation' of the union. And to quote one senior official⁹⁰ the Rank and File "bugger up the union". He meant, of course, that his task is difficult enough without the interference of political groups who divide and weaken the union in its main purpose of negotiating with powerful outside bodies for the benefits of the whole membership. This view is felt even more sharply by regional and district officials.⁹¹ So the bureaucracy do have a view, and in this case a fairly unified one. But it is shared by the majority of the Executive, and probably by a majority of the members. That does not make it right, but it means that the bureaucracy generally falls in line with the main union tradition especially when that tradition favours more centralised and limited forms of representative democracy. That is the bureaucrats and the Executive accept the arguments about efficiency, formality and the instrumentalism of the membership. So we can conclude that in the NUT in the early 1970s the majority of full-time officials, and certainly the most senior ones, took the orthodox representative democracy line. This would colour their views of opposition groups, and therefore gave some grounds for complaint from the left.

The officials and the majority of the Executive had an ambivalent attitude to opposition within the union. On the one hand most were sufficiently committed to wider democratic principles not to ban factions, but on the other hand most accepted the argument that a divided union is a weak union and so sought to curb open signs of dissent. This came out in the treatment of the Young Teachers, on the rule change about the power to call strikes, and over the Central Hall Westminster meeting. These areas are detailed in Chapter 4. They show that at times of serious challenge from opposition groups on policy and elections the orthodox representative democrats among officials and lay Executive members will seek to alter the nature of union democracy and participation of members in order to maintain, as they see it, the balance between the individual rights of members as set out in the constitution and the unified voice of an efficient union. They pose the greater democracy of an efficient organisation improving the terms and conditions of employment of the majority of members against the more limited democracy of the more 'political' opposition.

Most of the time at most levels of union organisation and among most members the dominant view of union government corresponds to some limited form of representative democracy associated with a moderate social democracy (see Chapter 3). Equally most of the serious ideological, political and organisational challenge comes from the left. It appears sometimes as organised opposition, sometimes as organised faction, and sometimes as a loose formation of like-minded individuals. The NUT has always had some form of left opposition to the dominant position, and from time to time the left has been strong enough to warrant a serious struggle between the groups. In these battles within the union the form and content of union democracy comes up for debate and the argument from external imperatives (dealings with undemocratic bodies) continues to cast a shadow over debates for increased internal democracy.

The success of opposition, particularly left opposition, within trade unions is defined in terms of continued existence as a 'ginger' group rather than as victors in the election process. This last may occur where the broad left is highly organised and well supported, but in the majority of white-collar unions the main hope of the 'left' is to remain a credible

opposition. In the NUT the political left was not formed from any special group of teachers. It was not a sectional movement. Its basis was the genuine progressive views of all types of teachers on a variety of educational and trade union issues. Its very looseness and extreme breadth presented it with difficulties in terms of a permanent group at national level. In some local associations, such as local A, a broad left organisation did emerge in a fairly coherent manner. Here it was successful in winning elections and having a high proportion of its policy views adopted. The Rank and File on the other hand wanted to base their opposition on sections of teachers. They excluded senior teachers, and generally were suspicious of male graduates in secondary schools. This case was adhered to even though many leading members of Rank and File were of that type. This parallels the problem within IS itself: a leadership strongly anti-intellectual and middle class, yet composed overwhelmingly of middle-class students and teachers. The contradiction between leadership and intended group members meant that both the IS and Rank and File in the NUT took on an elitist tendency. It was their challenge that provoked the majority of the Executive and full-time officials into altering the democratic methods in order to exclude what they saw as illegitimate opposition. But as other democrats have found before once the process of exclusion starts it can be used to embrace others on the left, and that leads to a further division within the union.

As a method of excluding the left from opposition bans and proscriptions⁹² are not new to the trade union movement. Many American commentators in the 1950s exercised great analytical powers to show that bans on Communists in the unions was democratic practice. The main line of argument was that dedicated Party members could win control of the union due to the apathy of the mass membership. As Barber noted:

"... for the devoted Communist, the party is both his family and his job" 93

Such a life sacrifice is explained by Alexander and Berger⁹⁴ in their study of a single local leader: Tom is not a Communist, but a misguided

radical fellow-traveller. He mistakenly falls for the trap set by the Communists. A theme taken up by Baarslag⁹⁵ in his book entitled Communist trade union trickery exposed. Such views did have their detractors: Pearlin and Richards⁹⁶ saw that Equity in America was not democratic because it did not give the franchise to Communists. Most British unions today allow political freedom to their members and leaders as enshrined in most union constitutions. But in practice individual Communists and those who are part of a broad or political left opposition still feel a lack of legitimacy. The notion of a conspiracy of a few dedicated and unrepresentative revolutionaries has now been applied to the Rank and File. The NUT leadership adopted the same tactics in the 1970s against that group as they had in the 1950s against Communists. This time, however, the existence of a left presence at all levels of leadership and of a stronger liberal representative democrat group made the moves against Rank and File less permanent and less effective. In fact it forced the incumbents to take on a dual strategy: to limit some challenges through attacks on strike calls, and to encourage local activity and school representatives in the belief that the majority of members opposed the Rank and File. The risks in both cases were that the political left would benefit from more local action, and from the feelings among teachers against administrative measures against other teachers. The fact that this struggle took place against a background of militant action provided even more hope for the left. As we shall see from the studies of the local associations the changes for left advance were not taken due to the internal divisions within both Rank and File and the political left.

Given the political difficulties of banning the left then the ways in which incumbents or in the case of the NUT the majority of the Executive and full-time officials held on to the movement for change to trade union tactics are important in any examination of the impact of political opposition on democratic procedures. The constitutional aspects of leadership control relate to the rules, the changing of the rules and the extent to which rule breaking is punished. The balance is often very nice between the need to make rules difficult to alter for the sake of continuity and efficiency, and rules easily modified which help the union

keep up with outside changes and which also help the capture of union practice by small groups. The rights of the majority are maintained through elections (however small the poll), and the rights of minorities are upheld through the constitution and the commitment of the majority to democracy. But within this the rule book can be used to control local action and subsequent disciplinary procedures. In some cases the disciplining of members is tightly controlled by the national leadership. It is then that the temptation to use them against political opponents becomes great, and the validity of leadership rights can be questioned. (See the Wandsworth 3 in Chapter 4).

The ability of leaders to control opponents, even if they want to, depends more on the real divisions among the active and inactive members than on the possible undemocratic practices available. That is not to underestimate the power of bans or of hostility to a particular group, but to put it into a wider political perspective. Thus the political left can sustain its position within the NUT, loosely at national level and more coherently in some local associations, because the members as a whole accord it a degree of legitimacy that cannot be ignored by potential enemies. On the other hand the Rank and File tended not to have won the same tolerance, and so was an easier target for political attacks from both the left and the 'moderates'. At the time this isolation of the Rank and File from both more traditional positions gave it an added attraction for some members; but in the end its excessive factionalism made it more vulnerable. Despite this some of the issues raised by the Rank and File and some of their criticisms of union democracy had a special relevance in Inner London in the early 1970s. Such central issues at a time of change for the union meant that some local associations threw up an important Rank and File group to oppose the left and the representative democrats. The extension of their ideas and numbers into the wider fabric of the union was an essentially local task. One carried out at meetings and by school representatives. At a time when members showed most interest in union policy and action the majority on the Executive and the full-time officials failed to respond fast enough to encourage and inform ordinary members. This task went by default to those groups on the left most able to respond to new circumstances.

The results and nature of national elections, the appointments, views and powers of full-time officials, the practice of left opposition, its protection under the constitution and the response of the right, all depend for meaning, legitimacy and success upon the members of the union. The active ones to make policy work, to vote and to express local views nationally; and the inactive ones who make up the numbers and who are the customers of the organisation and its final guardian. We can now see how the struggles between the various groups for a winning strategy are translated into practice at local level; how they effect local operations; and how the four local associations examined in detail later fit into the more general pattern of NUT associations.

For it is through membership participation that genuine strategical and political intentions with regard to both external power relations and internal democratic wrangles become subject to the final test of their correctness. The members working in the schools experience, expect and act on, within their union and work lives, the problem of pay and conditions, of status and authority, of union promise and competence; and it is they who decide under pressure from activists and other information sources on the success or failure of debates, policies and actions. Within the NUT the possible distortions of members' interests by bureaucrats and/or leaders is real but limited. The move by these groups to more central control over local associations in line with collective bargaining arrangements and central government intervention is in part an attempt to by-pass the left incumbents in some local associations, and in part an attempt to express the wishes of the ordinary members away from the possibly distorting views of activists. The traditional dilemma of efficiency and democracy posed by the representative democrats often is a statement about the contacts between inactive members and local activists, and which set of local activists control the local association.

2.3 Membership participation: local associations, local activists and the national union

"The key link with the vast majority of our members is the School Representative . . . For good or ill the School Representative is in the eyes of many staff synonymous with the Union . . . The one aspect of the responsibility common to all schools is that of the Union link and in this respect it is vital that you and the Local Association maintain close contact at all times . . . Briefly, the other roles may be categorised as adviser, representative of members' views, disseminator of information, collector, recruiter and P.R. adviser". 97

(NUT School Representative's Handbook)

This section takes the preceding arguments about loss of economic and professional status, the NUT changes in policy-orientation, and the differences within the union and applies them to local leaders, local organisation and to the main areas of interaction between local and national levels of the union e.g. annual conference, information flows and industrial action. Since these relationships are concerned with active members the section also examines interactions between school representatives and ordinary members. Throughout the respective positions of the main groups are noted, and their relevance to the central paradox outlined.

This key role of the school representative is emphasised in the NUT by the frequently small size of work units, their geographical location and the role of 'reps' as intermediaries between members and local and national leaders and officials. It follows that the political disposition of representatives, particularly in large schools with large NUT memberships, may be of crucial importance in the final determination of local association control, and ultimately in the ability of the national union to persuade local activists to carry out certain instructions, and to win the support of members to participate in local and national calls for action.

School representatives and local activists

Concern over levels of membership participation in the activities of any trade union stems from the basic requirements of the organisation and its

leaders to claim support for their policies by a majority of the members. This overriding gesture to popular control derives from the need to present a democratic face to the world, and to control the ways in which member demands are met. The most basic membership unit is that of the work group. Whatever its objective basis the work group has some common factor that provides a view of collective reality. The size and spread of work groups within the educational sphere can be very great, and a consequence of that is the dependence on its shop steward (school-representative) as a link with management, union and other work groups.

It is a commonplace of trade union studies that the shop steward is the vital link between members and the union branch. As Roberts noted in his exhaustive study of trade union government:

" . . . for the great majority of members trade unionism begins and ends at the place of work . . . to most the steward is the Union". 98

and this sentiment is emphasised by Lane writing twenty years later:

" . . . when observers said that for the rank and file the shop steward was the union, they were saying more than they realised. The very guts of trade unionism was the loyalty and solidarity of the workplace. It was that which the shop steward expressed". 99

In stressing the importance of the workplace leader Lane vividly illustrates the qualitative difference between the immediate representative and the representative at higher levels of the organisation. As he says the steward:

" . . . was not the sort of leader typical of systems of 'representative democracy' as manifested in parliaments. He did not, once elected, pack his bags and move off . . . Neither was his constituency so large that he could remain personally anonymous to the overwhelming majority of his electors . . . The steward spent the bulk of his time at work alongside those who elected him." 100

Most stewards are not actually elected, and school representatives in the NUT face election or re-election less frequently than engineering shop stewards. Despite the lack of strict democratic form the results tend

to express the opinion of the work group. Most of the NUT school representatives have only a marginally greater knowledge or understanding of trade unionism than most inactive members. Many do not attend local association meetings, and on important issues are often by-passed by the members, who go straight to local association officers. Nonetheless active representatives form the basis of local activity and power, especially in larger schools. The power base a school representative can secure in large schools can be the key to winning power in the local association. This provides an important tactical means for opposition groups to form their own bases in local associations, and also means that school and local association meetings can provide the official arena for struggles between differently aligned powerful school representatives. As Faunce says:

"Organized party conflict, which is more likely to occur in large than in small locals, may produce pressures that also result in more active opposition to policies of national officers. It has also been suggested that members of small locals are less likely to be exposed to, and are less well informed about, opposing views on political issues at the national union level." 101

This pattern¹⁰² certainly appears in the cases studied in Chapters 4 and 5. In particular large schools in large inner city local associations have come to play a disproportionately important role in NUT policy. The growth of powerful school representatives and 'branches' at this time was one way in which any potential opposition group could launch itself against local and national incumbents.

In some larger schools in the large city local associations there has developed the tendency to hold formal school association meetings. The basic unit of organisation for the NUT is the local association, and so school associations have no constitutional status. Nevertheless they have grown up as part of the response to attract more members to participate in union affairs. The success of these meetings stems from the physical ease of attendance (in your own school), and from the friendlier atmosphere where most teachers know each other. A school with 50 or more NUT members is equivalent to some smaller local associations. The growth of school branches can also be used to develop coherent power blocs from which to

challenge the incumbents in the local association. The Union officially opposes these units since they represent unacceptable decentralisation, an additional fragmentation of the membership, and a formal shift in the balance of power to larger schools. The supporters of the new scheme welcome it as a means of increasing membership participation, and as a means of spreading power in large local associations. The idea, particularly in the London region, is that the local associations are too large and the County Divisions too remote to be of help for each school, and so the school members need to organise themselves formally for greater protection.

Such developments simultaneously raise organisational and political problems for the union leadership, and represent a serious challenge to notions of representative democracy, membership participation, school based collective bargaining, and the rights of opposition groups. As such they illustrate both the traditional democratic dilemma of control over members and control for members, and throw further light on this thesis in respect of the paradox of more democratic practices leading to less democracy.

The Rank and File group supported this development as a way of attacking the incumbents of many local associations. In their journal for October/November 1973¹⁰³ they provide guidelines for activists. The active member should build the school association and become the school representative. He should then call regular meetings in school to discuss local association issues and policies. Decisions made at these meetings should be sent to both the local association and direct to Hamilton House, and the school representative is told what his appointment requires:

"... his function is also to organise members in the school, to be the link between them and other sections of the Union, to provide the leadership in disputes and with the help of the members to keep a watchful eye on conditions of work in the school." 104

This advice seems to accord with standard trade union practice, but NUT officials saw it as additionally seeking to create independent power bases. The suggestions add up to an attempt to by-pass the local association and the official union structure, and to develop a shop stewards system able in

the classic style to challenge the formally elected leadership.

All active pressure groups within the NUT emphasised the importance of the school representative, and sought to encourage their efficiency and knowledge. This meant pressure was put on 'reps' to attend local decision-making meetings. It was at those meetings that 'reps' of all types were exposed to the main debates within the union, and in particular to the arguments of the left factions.

The main co-ordinating place for local school representatives, members of various political factions, and the local incumbent leadership is the local association committee and general meetings. It is the meeting that captures the success and failure of trade unionism at the local level. It is the obvious and favoured method of communication since it creates an atmosphere of collective interests, and enables those members who attend to reach higher levels of knowledge and understanding than any printed document. Yet the attendance at meetings is as low as votes in union elections. Observations of trade union meetings reveal the same tiresome pattern. Sayles and Strauss¹⁰⁵ sat through over 70 meetings of 5 different Unions and concluded that the typical meeting was too long, dull, badly chaired, with a poor quality of debate, in unsuitable surroundings, at inconvenient times, and generally out of tune with the ordinary member. Some of these comments correspond with my observations of over 20 meetings of 4 local associations of the NUT.

The true function of meetings, according to Sayles and Strauss,¹⁰⁶ is as a ceremonial - - a social anthropological ritual to confirm existence and to sacrifice to the gods - - with a secondary and more practical function of a communication channel. In addition they found that these meetings tended to 'rubber stamp' decisions taken by a few leaders prior to the meeting. The vicious circle of low attendance at meetings leading to dominance by a few old stagers, and these incumbents discouraging attendance through their social clique is broken at times of change and crisis. Thus for the NUT many stable leadership groups were removed during the period of the early 1970s. This challenge to the established tradition coincided with both the desire to improve membership participation by removing some of the barriers to attendance at meetings listed above, and by trying

to persuade members that local association meetings had the power to take relevant decisions. In the NUT, and elsewhere, when the meeting discusses and decided upon collective bargaining issues then attendance tends to be much higher. It appears that the greater is local autonomy and the more powerful the local association with regard to collective bargaining decisions then the more important the local meetings become. In large associations in London such tendencies meant that local leadership groups could fight over control of meetings, committees and local officers with some relevance to the outcome of final policy. In smaller more county associations, however, these developments were less relevant and so the challenge of the left opposition less effective.

So the political potential of school representatives in their collective capacities as part of the pool of local activists attending local association meetings became an important area of struggle for the competing groups outlined in Chapter 3. The form of the competition was by argument, organisational requirements and political perspective.

The orthodox representative democrats among local activists and national leaders wanted to retain a system of delegate policy making as the best way to combine the desires of the members with the dictates of efficient organisation, and so accord formal elections and local recruitment policies greater weight than active local association meetings. The emphasis is on downward communications and control, and its base argument involves the notion of competing representativeness. That is local active minorities may be less representative of the membership than national leaders and officials, or more politically the dominant group view is considered legitimate because it is believed to reflect the views of most members. In contrast the views of the left opposition are defined as minority views even if expressed by local leaders and activists. Seidman explains:

"Whatever the reasons, the fact of low attendance permits a relatively small group of leaders and active members to control the organisation. Where jobs or other favours and rewards can be distributed, the union head may fashion a political machine whose members are always present; the smaller the attendance, the more certain they are to be in control. A determined and disciplined grouping such as the Communists, similarly, may take advantage of low attendance and the lack of organization of most of those who do come, to intrench themselves in power". 107

The left opposition within the NUT, whether Rank and File or political left, would clearly disagree. They argue that school representatives and those members who attend local meetings are the most sensitive representatives of members' interests and so have the right to hold office, make policy, and speak for the membership. A greater right than either national leaders elected on low polls or appointed officials stuck in the power intrigues of Hamilton House.

How sensitive school representatives are to members' views and how their political disposition can influence local association policy is examined in Chapters 4 and 5, but they do form the pool of activists from which local leaders are drawn.

Local leaders and local associations

In most local associations the leaders are a small, stable set of office holders e.g. President, secretary and treasurer. The typical local association is run by the local secretary. This figure is rarely challenged in any election,¹⁰⁸ and usually stays in the post for several years. The local treasurer enjoys an even greater security of tenure, but usually has less influence on the association. The President is elected every year as the Vice President of the previous year. This is the post most likely to bring about an election, and most reflects any changes in the attitudes and personalities of the local activists. These main officers are helped by a range of others from membership secretary to Parliamentary Correspondent. The extent of the work of these positions and the numbers filling them are closely related to the size and level of activity of the association. These are the officers, and they make most of the decisions on most issues. Their responsibilities are supplemented by an elected committee. Its size varies from association to association, as does its composition and relevance. In some small and inactive associations it will play no role while in some large active associations there will be contests for places and considerable decision-making powers. In an active association this committee will meet about once a month, and their proceedings are usually dominated by a few members and especially by the secretary. According to each local association rules all important

decisions must be ratified by a general meeting open to all members. The A.G.M. is formally the most important general meeting where the new President takes over and where the rules can be changed. In practice this is often poorly attended, and the largest attendances are recorded either for visiting speakers or for votes on the current pay deal. Numbers are low at meetings, and as will be seen it is a constant source of frustration for activists that their efforts are so poorly rewarded. The other main activity of any local association are social events. In some cases these are the most important and best attended local activity.

The level of activity of a local association depends largely upon the local leadership of the union. The main starting point for leaders is as a school representative. This post is usually uncontested,¹⁰⁹ and in small schools requires a minimum of effort and commitment. In recent years the NUT has given much more attention to the role and expertise of this basic union official, but the vast majority remain only marginally more interested and aware of union affairs than the inactive members. Once the school representatives job has been taken seriously then the member will tend to attend local meetings, join the committee and form the pool of members from which local officers are taken. The ability of the 'rep' will often determine the union's strength in a school; whether the members in the school are properly informed; and whether or not they vote or attend meetings. Strong school representatives can determine the type of local association and its policies. They can build up power bases in the schools and so influence many members which way to vote, or what issues to take up. This central local role means that politically aware 'reps' can have an influence far greater than their numbers. It is in this way that opposition groups can win issues locally without having the backing of the majority of inactive members. So the battle for the key local activists is the most important battle to win for those seeking union power. The realisation of this in the NUT came later than for some other unions, but once in the 1970s the idea was firmly accepted then all competing groups paid more attention to the representative than ever before, and began to put pressure on them to support their particular perspective.

The vulnerability of this group of activists to various forms of political and trade union notions depends partly upon the objective experiences of teachers as a whole, partly on the nature of the Union, and partly upon the operation of the local association. This last factor is the one that concerns us most, since the impact of left groups on membership participation has most, though not all, its effect at local level. The type of teacher to take on the job of 'rep' of course varies enormously, but there are important common features which are developed for the locals studied later. On the whole though the findings of Sayles and Strauss provide a general degree of agreement:

"It cannot be stated that a certain individual is more likely to win an election because he has higher status. All our current knowledge enables us to state is that more leaders come from higher- than from lower-paid groups. A few hypotheses may explain these phenomena.

1. High-status groups appear to participate in union activities more than low-status ones. Assuming that they are supported as "favourite sons", high-status candidates will have a better than average chance of winning elections.
2. To some extent, individuals holding high-status jobs are more likely to win votes, since they are "respectable" or "looked up to". It may be that a rank-and-file member thinks that a man who has not been successful on his job is not a good bet as a union officer.
3. In general, one might expect that higher-paid workers with high seniority would be unlikely to want lower-paid younger workers as their leaders. On the other hand, a lower-paid worker might not resist being represented by someone with higher pay.
4. Many of the higher-paid jobs require quasi-supervisory duties and skill in human relations. In many instances, men who are successful at these jobs provide good officer material". 110

So local leaders are likely to be higher-paid and higher qualified; with more seniority; from dominant ethnic groups; with plenty of chances to talk to other teachers at school and male. The truth of this for the NUT can be seen in Chapters 4 and 5, but the undoubted importance of some of these factors has considerable bearing upon local association operation, and upon the representativeness of local leaders.

The core of local leaders were typically the local Heads,¹¹¹ but in the late 1960s this pattern tended to change. The increased work load on

senior teachers allied to a change in age balance of the profession to younger members saw the dominance of local Heads fade. In key large city associations this corresponded with a movement of political activists into local posts. For example in Inner London by 1973 the Vice President of my local B, the ex-President of local A, and the Vice President of Lewisham were all CP members. While the secretary of Hackney, the Treasurer of Lambeth, and the assistant secretary of local A were all members of IS. The depth of broad left and Rank and File representation among local leaders in London is examined more fully later, but in local A 11 out of 12 officers were so aligned. It appears that in the NUT as elsewhere the low numbers of local candidates means that activists who want office can almost certainly obtain it. This then opens the question of motive. One set of motives is linked to preconceived notions about the role of trade unions and political views. Most of the time in most local associations those members prepared to take office will be able to secure that office. This tends to result in two types of incumbent: first the non-political supporter of the National Union policy (a majority among small associations, see my local C); and political supporters or opponents of the dominant trade union position (most large city associations, see my locals A and B).

The nature of the local leadership will influence the kind of local activities undertaken, and the extent that local autonomy is an issue. These areas are linked to the desire to involve more members in local affairs, and to form an independent power base away from the pressures of national politics and leaders. So the typical programme of local C included three general meetings with speakers from the Union, local education authority, and local political parties. In contrast the seven or eight general meetings in local A had no outside speakers and concentrated on issues such as Union conference, strike action, educational politics, and collective bargaining issues. Whatever the style of programme selected, and whatever the intentions of those leaders who designed the topics, the attendance in all cases remained low. The one exception in local A being a meeting to discuss pay and strike action. These questions are analysed in more detail later, but they indicate that neither meetings themselves nor local autonomy are the relevant symbols for either membership participation or leadership concern with such participation.

The fact that most members of the union do not enter into any of these processes shows the degree to which the NUT is run on the basis of government by consent. A consent based on the awareness of the Union by members at school level: an awareness of the need for both professional safeguards and trade union strength. The image that the NUT enjoys of both these things depends on the media coverage of national leaders and on the activities of the local association. It is at local level that union policy must be accepted to be workable, and it is the network of local activists and leaders that provide the personnel and attitudes that come to dominate the whole Union. There can be no final statement about the power relations as between the self-styled civil servants at Hamilton House and the Executive on the one hand, and the leaders and members on the other. The relationships are constantly changing in accordance with the balance of power between individuals, interests and views within the Union; and the balance of power between the Union and outside bodies. Any analysis must therefore take account of the ideologies and strategies of different groups in the NUT, structural pressures of the Union, and the changing requirements of the membership. The impact of policies, separate interests, and differential tactics on membership participation can only be uncovered at local level; and within the context of local links with the national Union.

Local leaders, activists and school representatives therefore dominate the union proceedings at decision-making meetings. A majority of this active minority can control a local association, and in turn several such local associations can bring considerable pressure to bear on the national union policies and actions. The extent to which competition for local control between groups leads to more or less wider membership participation is a central problem tackled in Chapters 4 and 5, and its strategic limits are discussed in the next chapter. For the present the additional relationship enjoyed by activists with official leaders, national events and real decisions provides them with extra power to deal with members, and to challenge existing policy. This last section therefore examines the role of local officials, annual conference, The Teacher, and strikes.

One set of links is with the regional and district officials of the NUT. These local bureaucrats have constant contact with local association leaders and school representatives.

Local activists and the National Union

Officials, conferences, information and industrial action

In recent years the NUT has appointed a full set of regional and district officers to cope with local association problems.¹¹² Their main task is case work: legal problems, local disputes, conditions of work, grievances, and cases of dismissal and hardship. Members and associations refer queries about salaries, superannuation, rights and powers to the local officials. The District Officer has an additional brief to deal with recruitment, Young Teachers and student teachers. Both officials spend time explaining policy to the membership, and convincing teachers in Lincoln that their colleagues in London are worthy of support. Most of these officials are recruited from NUT activists, and are in close touch with local Executive members. This does not represent some conspiracy of rulers, but the familiarity of exchanging views with those who know and count in the world of local educational politics.

Membership contact with local officials and/or with local Executive members is infrequent and random. Only among the officers of the local associations will regular contact be established. For the remainder of the membership local leaders with national responsibilities are only marginally less remote than Hamilton House. Such tentative relationships need careful interpretation, since the preconditions for leadership control may appear to exist while forces constraining such oligarchy may be understated. The main question for union democracy often comes after elections, conferences, and the publication of the latest information broadsheet. The lay Executive and its full-time official servants may or may not make decisions in accord with the voting intentions of the members: this happens at both national and divisional level of the organisation.

If there is flagrant misrepresentation on a clear issue then some response from local associations may be forthcoming. But the concern that such decisions will be made overplays the importance of formal structures and the membership/leadership divide. There does not exist some unified monolithic set of officials and leaders who share the same perspectives. This group are subject to a wide variety of pressures from members as seen above. Any leader who ignores the aspirations of sections of the

membership; who attempts to prosecute his own separate and distinct interests will quickly be isolated and lose ground to others seeking their own share of power. The main factor holding the members and leaders together is their joint membership of the same organisation. At national level the imperative is to develop a national policy and strategy, and so encourage a sense of national interest opposed to sectional and regional interests. The power of such concepts in practice rests partly on the centre of collective bargaining. If most decisions are made at national level then the interpretation of the national interest becomes of vital importance for those groups that feel relatively neglected. So if differentials increase through a per centage based pay rise, then those at the bottom of scale 1 may seek alternative power bases in order to force the negotiators to redefine the national interest so as to include a special increase for the lowest paid members of the profession. If there is some plant level bargaining then local and sectional strengths may avoid any complaint of national negotiations, since their gains will depend upon their own powers and priorities.

For teachers, as for some other public service workers, national guidelines are subject to local variations. Although in periods of financial control and incomes policies local discretion becomes less important. This means that national policy decisions carry great weight with the membership and in negotiations. The final definition of national NUT interests is not a neutral question left to experts, but a political question constructed from the competing strategies of various strands within the Union. Within the NUT the final policy will rarely reflect any simple left/right division, but will tend to be an amalgam of various tendencies different for each issue. Most local and national leaders are so overwhelmed by the daily rush of life that they are unable to formulate any consistently clear principles from which to operate and make decisions. They react to the constant pressures put upon them from various sources within and outside the Union. Thus the majority of representative democrats among both local and national leaders are often ill-equipped to deal with either the challenge of militant action or the challenge of the left opposition. In the early 1970s when both these came allied to the realisation that traditional strategies were no longer efficacious the response of the

incumbents was ad hoc and based upon the sole consideration of keeping control. Control over the ways in which the new methods of organisation and operation would be formulated and practised, rather than direct control over the membership as such.

It is locally based union officials who personify and crystallize these conflicts of representative national interests against sectional and local problems. They also watch over the growth of opposition to their main position with careful independence, but they will still prosecute national policies against what they see as divisive and damaging differences.

Most NUT members know their Union through work place contacts and some through the local association. Few have dealings with the national Union, and yet the interaction of local association and national personnel, structures and policies are of great importance in the operation and control of the NUT. The left opposition, in all its forms, can benefit from the importance of understanding and knowing how the Union works through internal control processes, and using that knowledge to exert influence nationally out of proportion with actual supporters. This locally based challenge is often aided by the prevailing view of most other local activists about the tolerance of low levels of membership participation. The ways in which local activists can influence national policy and national leaders influence local activity can be discussed through the main sets of local-national links. These relationships are presented in detail when three case studies are examined in Chapter 4.

The knowledge and power of local activists and leaders with regard to members and to union officials is also based on their participation in and understanding of union affairs. Such power by association comes in part from the Annual Conference in Easter.

In many ways the most formal and most public interaction between local association members and national officials and leaders is the Annual Conference. The NUT like many other trade unions accords this event the highest constitutional powers. Rule 3¹¹³ says starkly: "Conference is the supreme authority of the Union". In practice its powers are

limited by the complex intricacies of its operation and by its composition and duration. While the platform of incumbent leaders tends to have considerable power in the progress of Conference, yet any crude platform/floor divide¹¹⁴ or any belief that the leaders have it all their own way¹¹⁵ is misleading.

The NUT conference is composed of the Executive, General Secretary, members elected by local associations and a few other persons. The local delegates have one vote each, and the method of selection of these delegates varies from local association to local association. In open session Conference receives the report of the Executive, debates vital policy issues, and amends the rules. The Conference Business Committee sorts out the motions for debate submitted by local associations. Like all conferences a great deal of politics goes on behind the scenes to composite motions, to win allies for certain issues, and to promote the image of key national personalities to the assembled local leaders. The point of the conference is open to doubt. The orthodox representative democrats tend to see it as having a limited role based on a symbolic democratic gesture rather than as a genuine decision-making body. They argue that genuine policy decisions cannot be made in public since the process will reveal divisions in the union, and so weaken the hand of the negotiators when dealing with outside bodies. Manzer¹¹⁶ has argued this for the NUT, and because he overstates the platform/floor division so he fails to see more important patterns of disagreement.

This devaluing of Conference is opposed by the Rank and File. They feel that the sham performance is bad for the union since it will further discourage membership interest, and prevents the ordinary member from expressing their opinions. The political left share this criticism, but do not go as far as the Rank and File in wanting to create an independent delegate structure which essentially by-passes the Executive. The political left would share the feelings of a liberal representative democrat writing fifty years before:

"The essential democracy of the national organisation of teachers consisted in the early days, as now, in the annual conference" . . .

"at conference in the resolutions are crystallised the opinions of the teachers". 117

The public setting of Conference provides many NUT members with the chance to follow the debates and activities of their national and local leaders. The national press and the NUT information service provide extensive coverage. The extent to which members take advantage of this opportunity was tested in my survey,¹¹⁸ and the limited response indicates that the exercise is retained for three main reasons: so that competing groups and individuals have a chance to impress key local activists and through them that proportion of the membership who take note of union affairs; to remind the outside world of the importance of the organisation as a pressure group; and because to abolish it would reflect upon the democratic credentials of the incumbents.

Despite the fashionable tendency to dismiss conferences as shadow boxing resolutions are passed at the NUT event against the wishes of the Executive. Special conferences can confer legitimacy on decisions necessary to win the support of the membership against the often conflicting views of the national leaders. This last point is critical. It is the assumption that either willingly or unwillingly all national leaders and officials share the same aims and want the same results from conference that allows false images of leadership control to emerge. Real divisions within these ranks mean that a more realistic view takes account of alliances between the local activists and some national leaders on some issues. This situation appears more clearly in the case studies later.

Conference provides directly by attendance or indirectly through careful attention to press and personal reports the local active member with certain insights into union policies and decision-making practices. The contrasting views of its true purpose provide another area of contention for the competing factions, and also a possible base for any local challenge to national policy. Knowledge about Conference provides additional union status for those local activists seeking to establish their credibility with members, and enables them, if required, to more effectively challenge local incumbents. This argument holds equally true for those activists who receive and disperse the flow of information from the centre of the union to members.

The importance of Conference for the ordinary non-attending member may be decided by the amount of information received. This applies to other areas of democratic practice within the union such as elections. All such processes assume a degree of knowledge and understanding often absent. It is a point of great pride for NUT officials that they provide the membership with a regular and useful source of information about the union. They also feel that every effort is made to encourage members to express their feelings to the union leaders. A major part of this two-way communication channel is the union journal: The Teacher. It appears once a week and is distributed free to as many school common rooms as possible. Its contents range from union business, official statements and policies, through news and letters to educational issues. It is more detailed and better presented than most union papers, and for those who read it regularly it does provide sufficient information to give a good idea of the union.

The problem is that most members do not read it as my survey indicates.¹¹⁹ This is partly because some members do not receive it, some are not interested, and others feel it is the organ of the Executive and so not an independent union voice. As a source of information to those who are interested it does a good job, but as a means of expressing membership opinion it is limited to an inadequate letters page. As an indication of its relative failure to express views of the minority groups there exist two politically based NUT journals: Rank and File and Education Today and Tomorrow.

In addition to The Teacher there is a vast and useful supply of material from officials to the active membership. All members receive the fairly comprehensive Members' Handbook, and recruiting propaganda. The emphasis here is on union services and professional help. More recently local activists have received more practical help through a series called "Guidelines"; and since 1973 a School Representative's Handbook. These regular papers are supplemented by discussion documents on policy areas such as teacher participation in schools. There are also statements for teacher and public consumption such as the excellent studies carried out by Ruskin College on pay and turnover.

The production of all this information is part of the task of officials and part of their perception of help to members. But the dissemination and use of the material depends upon local activists. It is this group who also provide the upward flow of information from members to officials. The limited success of information production, as with Conference, is tied to notions of the extent of membership participation. The more one favours such popular control the more important is membership knowledge of union affairs and the more likely are local leaders to encourage their membership to accept the available flow of information, and to reply to it. The success or failure of local penetration of members depends upon the efficiency and determination of the local association, the concern of the members, the relevance of any crisis to that local area, and the credibility of local officials and members of the Executive.

One test of the developments of NUT local organisation and member attitudes is the extent to which strike action has been presented to and accepted by local activists, and the extent to which such action forms a central area of disagreement between leftwing controlled local associations and national incumbents. The rejuvenated role accorded to school representatives, the recent appointment of regional officials, the increased flow of information from the centre were all part of the response of representative democratic leaders to economic change, organisational challenge and the emergence of a left opposition. Some of these points come together on the key issue of industrial action.

All forms of industrial action are represented from the late 1960s on several of the points discussed: the changed tactics of teacher organisations; the battle for control of the form and extent of the action by the various political groups; decision-making processes at local and national level become more important if strikes are on the agenda; and the possibility that such actions reflect the discontent of the many with the policy of the few. Strike action itself is a qualitatively different form of participation from that associated with internal union politics.

A key element in the new found willingness of teachers to take action was who controlled it. The dominant orthodox representative group were

faced with a problem: if they supported all local strike calls then they were 'irresponsible', but if they only supported some then they might lose any say in the strike decision. This latter point is suggested elsewhere:

"... given the existence within trade unionism of institutional tendencies towards the suppression of workers' grievances rather than their expression, the unofficial strike might well be described as an important counterbalance." 120

The notion is that 'rank and file' belligerence forces leaders to represent members' demands rather than lose control over decision procedures. In an earlier study Gouldner makes a similar point:

"... wildcat strikes constitute an expression of aggression against the dilatory manner in which workers' grievances are being dealt with". 121

Some observers then see unofficial or even local official strike action as a cry of anger against an unresponsive leadership. The democratic answer to these points is that through central control of strike decisions (the NUT changed from local to national rights to call strikes in these years)¹²² and strike ballots among the members concerned (used by the NUT for London Allowance dispute in 1974, see Chapter 4) a fair system of handling discontent emerges.

The overall strike movement among teachers starting with their national action in 1969 has remained a national question even with regional action over the London allowance. Its main revelation about teachers is simply expressed by reference to American teachers in the 1960s.

"... this increase in strike activity is symptomatic of a growing inclination among teachers and their organisations to take direct action. More broadly, it undoubtedly reflects a remarkable upsurge in the volume of collective bargaining or collective teacher demands," 123

The importance of strike action for groups such as teachers¹²⁴ is that it represents the breakdown of traditional anti-strike sentiments among the majority. In this it alters both the public image and the self-image

of the profession, and is a final renouncing of the historic failure of collective bargaining by gentleman's agreement. This itself awakens the hopes of the left opposition. Some of this group accept the basic proposition that action heightens consciousness, and socialist consciousness in particular. It appears from my survey of teacher attitudes and other works¹²⁵ that some changes in perceptions take place among trade unionists on strike. Whether this occurs before, during or after the direct action is difficult to know. But the form of increased awareness has no automatic relationship to political views or trade union politics. The effects of going on strike for individual teachers depend upon local association activities and propaganda, national opinion, and the relevant bargaining and structural factors such as size of school. In the end the control over strike decisions and activities are important weapons in the fight for overall control over union policy and membership participation. This can be seen in more detail when the London Allowance strike of 1974 is examined in relation to local association A in Chapter 4.

Conclusions

Changes in the NUT's organisational methods, national leaders' orientations to direct action and members' attitudes were the result of the pressures facing teacher trade unionists in the early 1970s. This chapter has outlined the problems of pay, conditions and careers for different types of teacher, and noted the possible variety of responses which individual members of the profession may have to common objective changes. The NUT response came from these internal pressures, and from alterations in the relationship with central and local government and with rival teacher trade unions.

The results were an overall agreed movement towards closer links with other trade unions in the TUC, a greater willingness to take strike action, and a recognition of the need for a more informed body of local activists. Thus organisational imperatives faced by local and national leaders and officials coincided with the demands of the left opposition for more membership participation, more industrial action, and for a closer identity with organised labour.

This historical culmination of shared tactics allowed the emergence of an overt struggle for control of these developments based on the quite separate and distinct strategies and aims of various groups. The traditionally limited role of opposition groups within the NUT and the low level of activity was temporarily transformed in some associations to become important opposition challenges to national incumbents and majority local policy. In addition there was a resurgence of local activity around the challenge of the left. Thus the shifting alignments of control within the NUT based on alterations in organisational tactics and political alliances meant the development of more local action and an increased awareness of the importance of wider membership support for current policy.

In the end the left challenge was met by argument, action and certain strategical manoeuvres which resulted in a diminution of NUT internal democracy despite the explicit assertion by all groups that they wanted more democracy. That paradox is now investigated by reference to a more detailed examination of the arguments and strategies of the main groups competing for power in local association A, by a detailed study of the operation of local A and by three case studies revealing the nature of local/national conflict.

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER 2

1. For the NUT see:
A. Tropp, op.cit.
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R.A. Manzer, op.cit.
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B. Webb, 'English teachers and their professional organisations', New Statesman Supplement, vol.V no. 129, 25 September 1915 and vol. V no. 130, 2 October 1915.
D. Thompson, Professional solidarity among the teachers of England, Columbia University Press, New York, 1927.
R.D. Coates, op.cit.
P.H.J.H. Gosden, op.cit.
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Year	1968	1970	1972	1974
Number of candidates	7	7	5	9
Votes cast ('000)	56	69	45	42
Votes as % of members	23	27	19	16

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CHAPTER 3 : COMPETING GROUP ORIENTATIONS AND STRATEGIES OF TRADE
UNION DEMOCRACY AND MEMBERSHIP PARTICIPATION AS FOUND
IN LOCAL A OF THE NUT

" . . . to refuse a hearing to an opinion, because they are sure it is false, is to assume that their certainty is the same thing as absolute certainty. All silencing of discussion is an assumption of infallibility." 1

(J.S. Mill)

The main theme of this study is to uncover the processes that present activists in the trade union movement with the paradox of democratic reality and democratic improvements. In order to achieve this it is necessary to examine the economic, work and organisational context (Chapter 2) of those involved, and then to see how the most concerned leaders, officials and activists at all levels of the union perceive and consider their tasks in relation to the problems of organisational goal achievement, internal decision-making, union policies and actions, and overall union control. The impact of group competition over and on these features of union existence is to some extent dependent upon the groups' perceptions of their roles in the union, their tolerance levels towards democratic structures, and their views on the role of trade unions in society.

The groups that emerged from local A in 1973/5 included the Rank and File. This was a specific opposition group seeking control of school, local and national policy and action. Its main supporters were in IS,² but its numbers came from an assortment of members of IMG,³ revolutionary socialists in the Labour Party (e.g. Militant⁴), an ad hoc body of non-aligned and non-communist marxists, and a few disaffected young members of the Communist Party. The other main left grouping I refer to as the political left. Its main support came from the left of the Labour Party (Tribunites⁵) and members of the Communist Party. These activists were joined from time to time by non-aligned socialists and marxists, some radicals, and some liberal representative democrats.

In permanent opposition to this loose federation of the left was the dominant group among local and national leaders and a majority of the members: orthodox representative democrats. Among activists this group

is mainly composed of Labour Party members and supporters. They may be also allied in some local associations and in a minor way nationally with some Liberals and some Conservatives. They do not constitute a real faction, but rather an organisationally and ideologically dominant set of union leaders and policies. From this it can be seen that the spectrum of argument, orientation, strategy and political affiliation is mainly within the limits of the labour movement. But it divides, like other unions, along the critical line of left/right.

In order to examine the impact of the behaviour of certain groups within the NUT upon the democracy and membership participation of local association A it is necessary to analyse the orientations and practices of each main group. This chapter discusses the three main sets of views that dominated the proceedings in local A, and its relations with national Union leaders and officials and looks at the role each view assigns to the internal processes of trade union decision-making.

Each model is presented in terms of the membership of the relevant group, their general political position, and then their analysis of the current situation linked with their strategies within the trade unions. This approach shows how general political orientations lead directly to trade union practices, and that a partial explanation of the behaviour of activists in local A is to be found in their membership of specific groups. It is the leaders and activists who are most familiar with, and influenced by, wider strategical considerations, and that through their beliefs they act upon the democratic factors such as elections in order to use internal political processes for external objectives.

The greater the struggle between groups for the power to change the leadership and policies of the NUT the more important internal political processes become. The outcome of these internal power struggles through the democratic mechanism of union government vitally influence the collective bargaining methods and achievements of that union. It is here that the mass of members are deeply involved, and so whether they know it or not are affected by the results of the internal debate.

In negotiations actual specific bargains are made which are vital to the interests of the membership. In any negotiating process only a few leaders and officials are present, and they have the authority (within limits) to decide what bargain to accept. This dual function - - dealing with external agencies and seeking to achieve organisational goals - - leads to a constant balancing of forces between internal democracy and external effectiveness. It may be true, and certainly many union leaders⁶ argue that it is, that to win maximum benefits for members trade unions must exert maximum pressure on outside bodies. To do this in our society they must be able to display both a solidly united membership and to guarantee acceptance by members of agreements.

This situation is noted by Hemmingway who believes that:

"whatever the stance, the commitment to internal democracy involves a dilemma" 7

namely between stable leadership and efficient organisation (external dealings and power over members) on the one hand and the freedom to disagree (internal democracy and power for members) on the other. Hemmingway goes on to summarise some of the thinking in this area as either control through participation⁸ (some form of representative democratic model) or control through opposition⁹ (institutionalised, elected or merely factional). He prefers his own model of control through conflict¹⁰ (bargaining) where the 'logic of the conflict situation' forces the parties into a bargaining process that leads to both persuasive (alliances) and coercive (strikes) strategies.

While this a neat presentation of arguments within the dilemma, yet Hemmingway fails to tie them to either explicitly political groups or to exemplars within the Unions he investigates. That gap reduces his analysis of competing models of trade union government to an exercise in summary rather than an analytical tool to uncover further problems and dimensions. It is these additional elements presented here that enables this thesis to move away from the traditional dilemma stated by representative democrats as an explanation of and justification for their preferred

method of operation, and so move towards the central democratic paradox exhibited by the impact of left groups on union government practices. In order, however, to express that paradox in the practical operation of local A in the next chapter a further analysis of the arguments and strategies of the combatants is required.

These contradictory elements of trade union bargaining (efficiency and democracy) rely heavily on the final agreement being acceptable most of the time to most of the membership. Such acceptance depends upon internal processes used to select leaders, formulate policy, mobilise support for action, and to explain results. The majority of the rank and file must believe that any bargain made was the best possible bargain in the circumstances. In all these processes alternatives are present. Within the union there is argument about its goals and their achievement. Such debate revolves around the choice of leaders, policies and actions. Such choices revolve around the democracy of the union.

That democracy is often expressed in faction or groups, which exist in some form within trade unions to challenge each other for membership support to change direction, methods and leaders. Their bases and motives will vary, but the concern of this study is to see how the existence of three such groups in local A of the NUT affected the crucial intervening variables associated with trade union democracy and membership participation.

The groups of concern here have competing sets of policies for the NUT, and want to change leaders and methods of decision-making. Most trade union members (and those in the NUT are no exception), as well as a majority of leaders and activists, subscribe in some form to the dominant ideological position of representative democracy. This applies to both the role of trade unions in a free enterprise society, and to the ways in which trade unions should run themselves. There are differences within this view, but the main consensus is that trade unions should adopt a form of representative democracy to choose leaders and make decisions, and that trade unions themselves should seek to limit their actions to

immediate gains in the well-being of their membership. This position as we shall see later (Chapters 4 and 5) reflects both the norms of a wider society and the view of most union incumbents most of the time.

The major challenge to this dominant position comes from the left. In the circumstances of this study represented by the Rank and File group within the NUT, and by the 'political' left¹¹ in the same union. These two groups are oppositionists within the NUT in the true sense. They seek to challenge current ideas, leaders, policies, methods of work and actions. And they see their challenge within the trade unions as part of a wider challenge within society as a whole.

These two groups found in local A and elsewhere in the NUT in the early 1970s represent most clearly the ways in which the theories and analysis of political parties can directly influence the strategies and tactics of those trade union activists who subscribe to the views of the relevant political parties (IS, CP and Labour Party¹²). This provides the vital link between theory, strategy and tactics within a trade union, and so part of the answer to the question of the impact of left groups on trade union democracy and membership participation.

In the case of local association meetings, for example, decisions may be taken that affect policy and action even though few members attend the proceedings. In local A fierce battles took place over the control of general meetings and their attendant Standing Orders. Questions arose as to who had the final decision powers; as to the authority of the chair; and on the morality of small but quorate meetings committing the local association to strike action. In often trivial and repetitive debate political activists fought over ground which appeared sterile to the casual observer and irritating to union officials. Yet such detailed weekly skirmishes represent the end product of the strategies and theories of revolution and reform applied to the policy of local A of the NUT. The challenge came from two different left groups seeking wider political gains, and the defense was made by those seeking a narrower road for trade union power.

Part 1 : The representative democrats:

"Workers do not join trade unions because they think alike and share the same political outlook. They do so for the sake of gaining collective action. Their unity, that completeness of the organisation of trade unions which is the foundation of their strength, must always be imperilled when they import political faction fights . . . What I find so objectionable as well as invalid in the Marxist view is its implicit contempt for 'pure and simple' trade unionism. Trade unions, by doggedly sticking to their immediate ends and refusing to be captured and exploited by any political party, have gradually transformed society, only not according to the sacred text or the dialectical laws. That they may be right in preferring reform to revolution and unity to discord never crosses the mind of those whose theory tells them all the answers". 13

(Allen Flanders)

This is a modern statement of an earlier social democratic Fabianism, strong in the Webbs,¹⁴ and dominant among trade unionists today. It presents many popular contemporary attitudes: the role of organisational strength; the destructiveness of political faction; the belief in gradual reform as the basis for real change; the rejection of theory and dogma; the plea for unity in a free society; and the essential non-politics of dominant politics.

These are some of the arguments which together form the basis for representative democrats within local A, the NUT and the trade union movement in general. I refer to them as a group, but their level of organisational formality varies from a coherent presence in the AUEW¹⁵ to a loose collaboration around certain leaders and policies in the NUT and most other unions. The claim that most members and leaders accept the wider norms of democracy in our society and apply them to trade unions is supported both by the stated views of union leaders, and by my survey of inactive members in the NUT. In party political terms such views exist in a spectrum from Conservative through Liberal to Labour, and no doubt include those who consider themselves 'non-political'. On the whole few act as part of a wider political movement, although many act from wider political values.

The usual term for this general alignment in the trade union movement is the 'rightwing'. It refers mainly to 'moderates' within the Labour Party.¹⁶ Such views find their clearest expression among those trade union leaders most in need of articulating their arguments in opposition to some persistent left challenge. Hence Jim Conway¹⁷ frequently attacked the left in the AUEW in the editorial columns of his union's journal. He denounced these "militant progressives" and argued the case that union democracy meant a more efficient organisation and the part that trade unions played in bringing about a more equal society. These polemics were often based on the more theoretical works of Labour Party leaders such as Tony Crosland.¹⁸ He argued in several long statements that social democracy is rightly understood as the champion of both equality and liberty. And that such a notion excludes marxist concepts about class or control or the central question of private ownership. Such a position is defended by another Labour Party theoretician¹⁹ writing in order to reassure the representatives of private enterprise about the real policies of the Party as opposed to the published ones outlined by the left.

It is these spokesmen, and many others, who are the most notable advocates of the orthodox representative democratic model. Within the NUT the general secretary and his deputy, a majority of the Executive and a majority of local activists and members shared these views. The representative democrats then are a group within the labour movement and within the NUT, and as such they seek to pursue their ends without alliance with or hindrance from the left. This aim presents them with the ever-present cross of how democrats deal democratically with any organised opposition. Part of the answer and its paradoxical consequences lie in a further examination of what representative democrats actually argue and demand.

Within the NUT, and in general, we can distinguish between two types of representative democrat: the orthodox and the liberal. The distinction is important theoretically, strategically and in terms of potential alliances to be formed with other groups.

The orthodox view is based largely on the early descriptive work of the Webbs²⁰ and their more recent updates by Roberts²¹ (for trade unions) and Dahl²² (for wider society). It has been defined by Pateman:

"... for among political theorists and political sociologists the widely accepted theory of democracy (so widely accepted that one might call it the orthodox doctrine) is one in which the concept of participation has only the most minimal role. These characteristics derive from two major concerns of recent, particularly American, writers on democratic theory. First, their conviction that the theories of earlier writers on democracy (the so-called 'classical theorists') which have the idea of maximum participation of all the people at their heart, are in need of drastic revision, if not outright rejection. Secondly, a preoccupation with the stability of the political system, and with the conditions or prerequisites, necessary to ensure that stability . . ." 23

This type of approach was used by Lipset et al²⁴ in their study of the ITU. It incorporates an over-riding concern with the balance of power in the wider society fostered through stable units of organisation, and a theoretical (though clearly not empirical) acceptance of Michels'²⁵ intractable one-way process towards oligarchy. A process only rarely disturbed by special factors operating to provide, in Lipset's view,²⁶ the only legitimate alternative: namely a form of 2-party representative democracy within a trade union. Parliamentary codes applied if possible to trade union members and leaders, and if not possible then a strongly anti-left union leadership - - both models are intended to guarantee the social order.

The other part of the representative democrat tradition is the more liberal and more participative perspective of social democrats such as G.D.H. Cole.²⁷ This position still exists in trade unions often among Labour Party activists,²⁸ as was found in the NUT. More open government, more decisions made at meetings rather than by representatives, and more emphasis on decentralised work place decision-taking are some of the points made. This expression of radical populism²⁹ still retains its hold among sections³⁰ of the labour movement in this country. It still finds the trend to oligarchical organisations competing for the necessities of life too far removed from participative values. Thus the liberal

representative democrat can at times link up with more doctrinal leftwingers, around broad policy platforms, and so become part of that building force referred to by Gouldner:

"Oligarchical waves repeatedly wash away the bridges of democracy, this eternal occurrence can only happen because men doggardly rebuild them after each inundation". 31

While the majority of representative democrats in the trade unions still seem to favour the orthodox position, yet the liberal perspective may have gained ground in the early 1970s. This appears in the form of greater membership say in national agreements (see NUT ratification conferences³²), and with the development of a shop steward system in unions such as NALGO, NUPE³³ and the NUT. Hence Alan Fisher³⁴ can note that today many more decisions must be ratified by the members directly than ever before, and on the opposite side the Conservative Party³⁵ can officially attempt to strengthen the power of trade union leaders (vis à vis members) through legislation aimed at backing the orthodox side for the sake of stability in the free enterprise system.

In local A I found large numbers of inactive members who subscribed to some form of representative democracy for the NUT, and who politically find themselves anywhere between the Labour Party and the Conservatives. Among the more active members of this group the predominant trend was that of the liberal position for more participation. Such beliefs led to attempts in local A to increase member interest in the association, but the stubborn and silent majority kept away and so kept faith with those who argue for a representative system as the inevitable consequence of low participation. Nonetheless the fact that some local and national leaders accept a position on greater participation provides part of the explanation for their behaviour in forming alliances with other groups to fight for more union democracy.

What lies behind this dominant ideology, whether orthodox or liberal, is the general acceptance of a view³⁶ of how society functions, and the role of trade unions within that perspective. In a condensed form the argument is that competing groups are the basis for our democracy, and

that people belong to organisations in order to develop their own and the organisations' goals. This fair and equal competition for scarce resources means a balance of economic justice, political power and ideological consensus. Trade unions are seen to be part of a national bargaining process, and collective bargaining is the way in which trade unions and their members receive their (fair) share of the goods. In this the State is an impartial umpire guarding the liberties of the individual by maintaining the balance between the groups. This view then accepts some forms of conflict, but still prefers to see unity as the last-resort common denominator.³⁷

The first point to emerge from this analysis is the importance of equating trade unions with other voluntary organisations in order to show how group competition benefits all the participants (and incidentally provides an argument for trade unions to remain non-political). As Lipset illustrates:

"... all organisations, be they athletic clubs, men's fraternal lodges, the National League, the American Legion, or the Teamsters' Union . . ."

38

The implication is that people are no more likely to be active in their trade unions than in any other club, and that this lack of involvement means that decisions must be taken on a representative basis. This equation of trade unions with other voluntary organisations is misleading. The essentially protective nature of trade unions and their dependence on a special kind of collective activity relate to a basic economic and political relationship in our society: the contract of employment. The support members give to union policies and leaders is an important factor in their power, and so the question of control over internal processes becomes much more vital. This underlines the fact that unions are not voluntary in the same sense as other organisations. Besides closed shops the imperative to join a trade union comes from the more general weakness of individual workers in any bargain made with the employer. A bargain whose outcome is more important to the individual than the decisions of other voluntary associations.

If trade unions are different in principle from other types of organisations as I have argued then any competition becomes one between groups who are by definition unequal. The implications of this position include questions about the lack of membership participation not subject to the usual organisational concepts, and the neutrality of the State.

The State does intervene in important ways in collective bargaining through legal enactments, court decisions, as an employer of large numbers of trade union members, as provider of arbitration and conciliation facilities, and as the watch-dog of public interest in trade union behaviour. In all these activities if trade unionists believe, rightly or wrongly, that either the State or the government are biased against them then the political nature of trade union policy becomes more apparent. This political dimension, scorned by Flanders, takes on two forms: in general terms politics becomes relevant to trade union theory and practice, and more specifically for groups such as teachers their employer has motives outside those usually attributable to ordinary employers.

In both these roles, as employer and as perhaps biased intervener, the State and/or the government can be criticised in its policy decisions and actions. The possibility of political attacks on policy within a trade union context is used by left groups of all types to further their immediate trade union aims through wider political argument. The legitimacy accorded to the introduction of political debate³⁹ into trade union branches depends on the credibility of government policy. There has always been a political strand in trade unionism (see the numerous references to changing society in union rule books⁴⁰), but its local realisation has depended upon the type of challenge made to existing policies of the union. In periods of incomes control, direct interference in wage bargaining by Secretaries of State, and trade union legislation⁴¹ it can be expected that politics will prove to be a more acceptable topic of debate within local branches than at other times.

In particular if the prevailing politics fails to show itself to be neutral as between employer and employee, then some substance is taken away from the need to protect the stability of such a system, and from the need to

ape its dominant form of representative decision-making. One contradiction of more State intervention can be that in seeking to secure the stability of the system it produces those forces most likely to destabilise society. As this is realised by writers such as Lipset⁴² and Roberts⁴³ they have as a position of last resort that it is preferable to have undemocratic practices in trade unions as long as those in charge favour the continued system of wage bargaining.

The problem of change

Magrath⁴⁴ has in particular picked up this contradiction and dealt with it in scathing tones. He argues correctly that the yardstick for union democracy claimed by the unions themselves (codes of ethical practice of the AFL-CIO⁴⁵) and by writers⁴⁶ for the unions is that of conventional American democratic processes. These include the accountability and responsibility of the rulers to the ruled, legitimacy of continued opposition, and the guarantee of member rights. He rejects this whole attempt to apply the pluralism of a group theory of politics to trade unions, and concludes that:

"Possibly useful answers to the difficult problems of union government begins with the recognition that union democracy is not one of those answers." 47

In the end the representative democratic tradition is left with Lipset's thesis of limited trade union democracy. This is based on the view that too much membership participation (something unlikely to happen in practice) is both inefficient and leads to instability among group bargaining. This particular orthodoxy relegates individual participation to a more or less subsidiary and peripheral role as Hyman has noted:

". . . from the perspective of liberal pluralism, then, the notion of union democracy is readily defined so as to exclude regular rank-and-file involvement in decision making". 48

This may apply to the orthodox position, but not to the liberal perspective. The former is reflected in Manzer's⁴⁹ treatment of the NUT. He argues that internal democracy leads to internal division, which weakens the union

in its relations with other undemocratic centralised power groups such as government departments. However his uncritical acceptance of the democracy/efficiency trade-off and of the simple national agreement model of wage determination devalue his contribution.

The main challenge to Manzer's NUT and Lipset's ITU is that of change. The situation of any group of workers is often in flux, and the tried methods of reform and advancement may no longer apply. In such cases the traditional approach of experienced incumbents may become counter-productive, and the challenge from within becomes stronger. In these circumstances the orthodox must seek a new equilibrium, and the rest (the liberal representative democrats and the left) seek to change the rules in order to capture the policy and leadership of the union. (See Chapter 2).

When change is forced on an organisation like the NUT then all parts are drawn into struggle. With the pressure mounting the official guardians of the organisation need to be more efficient in goal-achievement in order not to be outflanked either by a competitor (the NAS/UWT⁵⁰) or by groups from within the organisation. This power struggle certainly came to the fore in the NUT in the 1970s. The response of the majority of orthodox representative democrats in positions of leadership was to re-assert the dominance of formal relationships within the union, and to emphasise the non-political instrumental goals of the organisation. The response to change was to re-establish a new power equilibrium on a new platform, and this development is traced in four local associations later in this study. The external factors that created the need for change were dealt with in the last chapter, but they necessitated a debate and a set of actions around the left challenge to the majority based on charges of bureaucracy and a failed instrumentalism.

Limited forms of representative democracy within trade unions either through a formal two-party system or through committed electoral challenge or through loose factions has to be constantly modified to meet the arguments about the lack of participation and the true role of trade unions in society given further state and government intervention in

collective bargaining. External changes in the attitudes and circumstances of union members and a lack of internal participation tend to rekindle interest in the real powers of trade union full-time officials in relation to elected leaders and local lay activists. Charges of bureaucratic control constantly erode the commitment of activists and members to current organisational behaviour. It is this challenge that reveals weaknesses in the case of moderate incumbents and suggests future arguments in defense of current practices.

The representative democratic tradition recognises this problem of bureaucracy, but reconciles it with democratic forms which place trade union bureaucrats as civil servants controlled by a combination of regularly elected Executives, open communications and the rule of law. The hope is that the professionals are checked and balanced by constitutional means allied with independently elected local and national leaders. The parallel with the wider forms of democracy are clear, and so is the corollary that representatives carry out decision functions and so in practice remove much of the need for participation in government other than the vote. As Pateman has argued:

"... 'participation', so far as the majority is concerned, is participation in the choice of decision makers. Therefore, the function of participation in the theory is solely a protective one; the protection of the individual from arbitrary decisions by elected leaders and the protection of his private interests. It is in its achievement of this aim that the justification for the democratic method lies". 51

This position is explained and justified by the use of certain conceptual devices: the nature of efficiency; the instrumental/ideological distinction; and the formal/informal distinction. The NUT orthodox representative democratic majority among leaders and members responded to external change, organisational competition and internal challenges by invoking the need for greater efficiency and greater formality in order to express the greater instrumentalism of a majority of members.

This tradition then explains why representative democracy is the most favoured form of trade union government in terms of external dealings, internal control, and as being in line with the wider norms of rule by consent. It justifies such forms of democracy by reference to the

inevitable tendency to bureaucracy, the need for efficiency, the lack of interest of the majority expressed by apathy, and the desire to prevent the left from winning control of the unions. The fact that many British and American trade unions do not even reach these limited forms of democratic practice is explained by the strength of anti-democratic processes, which are overcome only under unusual circumstances.⁵² The fact of imperfection allows for the strategies of reform associated with the introduction of postal ballots, the extension of some form of shop stewards system, and an increase in trade union training.

The argument from bureaucracy

The general basis for this position derives from dominant historical developments as described by the Webbs⁵³ for trade unions, and by Michels⁵⁴ for organisations in general. Its major formulation is the need for some expert bureaucracy to run the organisation and deal with outside bodies, and the assumed gains in goal efficiency are made at the acceptable expense of some loss in internal democracy. This, it is proposed, is no theoretical dogma but a fact of life as witnessed by Myrdal:

"The observer is struck by the importance played by salaried 'organisers' and the relative unimportance of, or often the lack of, a spontaneous drive from the workers themselves". 55

The solution, therefore, is to represent members' interests, and at the same time to induce a voluntary limiting of those interests in exchange for some bargaining rights. The best way of doing this is through some form of representative democracy, which recognises the need for a passive role for the membership. The main act required of members is to vote in elections. This act combines legitimacy for elected leaders (and so for their appointees) with the need for a strong united leadership able to cope with other strong groups at industry and state level.

Such arguments are familiar to students of political theory, where Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau⁵⁶ all grappled with the distinct possibility that there are interesting logical problems with their notions of consent, democracy, interests of the majority and the minority, and the powers of the state.

The main point of the orthodox representative model is to combine popular control with administrative efficiency. The arguments from efficiency relate to both the internal operation of the union and its external dealings. Efficiency is linked to bureaucracy in this approach, but the two concepts are logically distinct and empirically separate since any relation between more bureaucracy and greater efficiency is open to doubt. The failure to make this distinction tempts the representative democrats to view democracy and efficiency as a trade-off. As the Webbs claim:

"... the result is that such Democratic institutions as we possess are, of necessity, still inefficiently managed; and neither the citizen-consumer nor the trade unionist producer find themselves exercising much effective control over their own lives". 57

This statement of historical fact is taken a stage further with the proposition that if the union officials can secure pay increases then union members are not concerned with how they were achieved.⁵⁸ On this view the success of the union as an organisation and the satisfaction of the members can be measured by the size of the wage increase. If leaders are efficient in winning higher rewards then they are acting democratically because higher rewards are the substance of trade unionism. So internal governmental processes are irrelevant.⁵⁹

The argument from efficiency

Efficiency is itself used in two ways. First to refer to the technical-communication smooth running of an organisation, and secondly as the task of bringing home the goods. Within the NUT successful internal communications depend as much upon activists as upon expert officials, and there is no reason to believe that an increase in the power of the latter will aid the process. Equally the settlements reached by the NUT have clearly not been seen to be the best possible settlements by a majority of the members. One cause of the apparent failure to secure adequate rewards is that the bargaining process itself is increasingly subject to government and public scrutiny. This puts additional pressure on negotiators to find settlements that balance the demands of the members with the limits of wider opinion. As Lipset points out:

"... there is a basic conflict between democratic unionism and 'responsible' unionism". 60

This suggests that for a union to control its members (that is for it to negotiate an agreement binding on members and thus acceptable to management) it needs to be under the firm leadership of a small group who limit the power of the membership. The ability of a trade union to safeguard negotiated agreements from membership disruption (in extreme forms wildcat strikes) requires limited forms of participation based on rule by consent.⁶¹

An alternative presentation of this problem comes in a theoretical paper⁶² that deals with the efficiency/democracy trade-off. The authors argue against the general trend of organisational sociologists to lump trade unions in with other voluntary associations. They also argue against the view that low levels of membership involvement imply a lack of democratic feeling among the members. The membership may grant the union high democratic status irrespective of the level of participation (such a view is supported by my evidence in the NUT). Nonetheless they end up with the same underlying theme:

"For a trade union, administrative rationality may conflict with the ideal of widespread membership involvement in the representative process - - another rationality. Conflict between the two rationalities is manifested above all in regard to the source and arrangement of power. Administrative rationality speaks for a unified and co-ordinated system of control in which the prime source of authority is located at the top of the organisational hierarchy. Representative rationality speaks for a division of power and control, for the opportunity of action taken by one party to be revised by that of another group. It implies a system in which the prime source of authority lies at the grass roots of the institutional hierarchy". 63

The justification for the use of limited forms of representative democracy (on the orthodox position) for trade union government relies on the case for greater efficiency, and this in turn rests upon the notion that to win concessions from outside bodies it is necessary to present a strong and united front capable of forcing decisions on the membership. This is no idle claim, but part of the way in which NUT leaders fought out the battles for change within their union in the 1970s. In many forms this

argument places a political obligation upon the trade union to respond sensibly to their environment in terms of their relations to undemocratic agencies such as government departments. Lipset et al⁶⁴ stressed the nature of the industry, the state of the labour market, and the class position of the trade union members as external factors which require a bureaucratic response from the organisation. Only under exceptionally favourable conditions would democracy exist within a union without diminishing its overall efficiency. In similar vein Coleman⁶⁵ has suggested that management prefer to deal with democratic unions since they tend to be weak and divided. A view supported by Manzer⁶⁶ in his study of the NUT. As part of the search for organisational unity and so strength representative democrats have fought off left challenges by insisting upon a constitutional and formal process of decision making, and the use of harsh administrative measures against those who stray from this line. Within the NUT a tightening of the rules on strike action, chairmanship and ballots,⁶⁷ and the treatment of the Wandsworth 3⁶⁸ are examples of such a response. (See Chapters 3 and 4).

The argument from formality

So the political expediency of formal procedures is rooted in the argument that informal power relations threaten the existence of the organisation itself. As the Donovan Report has concluded in a different context, but one which might equally have been that of trade union government:

"... what is of crucial importance is that practices of the formal system have become increasingly empty, while the practices of the informal system have come to exert an ever greater influence . . . that the two systems conflict" 69

Formal processes within trade unions include elections, meetings, changes to the rule book, the ratio of selected to elected leaders, and in general are the constitutionally defined, easily measured and unambiguous sets of activities associated with diagrammatic presentations of control structures. In contrast the informal system includes the real channels of communication, the exercise of power by friendship and political groups; and the cabals at Conference. The concentration on formal factors by many experts has

tended to lead to an over clinical analysis of election results, which may miss the point of internal power relations. A detailed study of local A shows some of the ways in which informal practices can be used to undermine or devalue formal structures, and the implications of this for trade union democracy and political processes is examined.

The point of orthodox representative democratic formality is that it requires that organisations run by the few on the consent of the many need clear constitutional decision paths. But the consent of the many as a passive role relies a great deal on Goldstein's⁷⁰ use of the concept of apathy. He uses it to describe the behaviour of the majority of branch members and so sees no alternative but for the few to take decisions. In fact Goldstein's use of apathy begs the question since it contains a clear moral message. It is the assumption that low participation is a sign of apathy. In my survey of the NUT low participation was found not to be due to apathy, but due to the active perceptions that the membership had of the union leaders and policies. This argument on the importance of formal procedures and its companion of the need for efficiency are both related to the view that the trade union goals and their method of achievement assume an essentially instrumental approach by the members. Any ideological presence is seen as either irrelevant or more frequently as harmful.

The argument from instrumentalism

The problem is presented by the orthodox representative democrats⁷¹ in terms of how to explain the co-existence within the same trade union of members who join for simple protective reasons and those who join as part of a wider commitment to fight for improvements for trade union members. They argue that since those members who join for 'ideological' motives (belief in trade unions as vehicles for social change) will be active under any conditions then for the union to reflect the position of the 'instrumental' members (those who view the union as protector of rights and securor of basic economic wants) it cannot rely on methods of direct democracy. This position suffers from the fact that most so-called 'ideological' members in the UK belong to parties and groups on the political left, while the silent majority of 'normal' or 'true' trade unionists subscribe in some way to the orthodox line on democracy. The purpose of the argument therefore

becomes an attempt to isolate political trade unionists in favour of rule by the 'non-political'. Such a device is further used to explain the apparent paradox of many workers joining trade unions, backing their leaders and taking action on the one hand, but the same workers are not prepared to be active in internal union affairs. In this way the orthodox democrats hope to win support for their limited interpretation of the goals and methods of trade union activity. An interpretation based on the legitimacy of the simple instrumentalism of the majority even in times of change.

A major weakness of this whole presentation is the lack of a proper definition of ideology, and the assumption that it refers exclusively to an explicit and self-conscious attachment to a set of preconceived truths. Hand in hand with this is the presumption that supporters of the representative democratic model of trade union government are neither ideological nor political. But the act of joining a trade union and the subsequent support for it add up to more than simple insurance. It is an admission of individual weakness only partly explained by the fear of acts of God, but fully understood as an explicit defence against the acts of men, and in this case of management. It is also an admission that collective activity is the way to higher pay and better conditions. Although such awareness comes from economic reality rather than from intellectual understanding, yet it is still a strong counter in practice to the prevailing norms of 'possessive individualism'.⁷²

An allied, but alternative, position comes from Tannenbaum and Kahn.⁷³ They argue that activists will tend to be those members who have the most to lose: who have the greatest "stake in the job". This notion is used to explain why the better paid, older and married men tended to be the most active in their study. But concern for one's job and the trade union activities that stem from it depend upon some view of management action and ability to meet union claims. It also requires such activists to believe that trade union action can alter the balance of power within the work place, and so encourage practices that conflict with simple management demands. It was the 'solid citizen', according to Tannenbaum and Kahn, most worried about security that expressed the deepest awareness for the

need for strong unions and for union activity outside the workplace. If my future and my present are bound closely to the operation of the company I work for then an instrumental approach to solve my worries will involve an ideological rejection of limited forms of action, and will have the dual practical result of greater participation and a greater demand for an extension of collective bargaining. So any view that considers ideological and instrumental trade unionists to be mutually exclusive categories needs both more evidence and more realistic definitions.

In opposition to the orthodox view summarised above Spinrad⁷⁴ has argued that the instrumental activist can logically develop a position favourable to wider roles for trade unions. He thinks that members do perceive trade unions as instrumentally fulfilling certain economic needs and political ends. This rational-economic man view of worker motivation is strongly supported by Sayles and Strauss⁷⁵ with regard to work attitudes as well as trade union attitudes. These commentators then accept that a logical extension of rational instrumentalism may take trade unionists into a position where they challenge government policy, question trade union practices and doubt the moral basis of the wider society: it then becomes ideological.

Any simple instrumental link to work exhibited by workers as claimed by the orthodox democrats is rejected by Brough and Hyman.⁷⁶ They argue that even the crude instrumentalism witnessed by many researchers still implies some value-attachments. They consider that workers maintain a sense of work obligation, but one now expressed in terms of "the divergent interests of employers and workers"⁷⁷ rather than in the traditional unitary manner. The burden of the Brough and Hyman case is that the instrumentalists' slogan "a fair day's pay for a fair day's work"⁷⁸ (central to the 1974 NUT claim) is an ideological concept rooted in the capitalist mode of production and control, and represents part of the trend to the incorporation⁷⁹ of trade unions into the capitalist system. An incorporation encouraged in order to reduce conflict from an endemic and problematic status to that of something that can be solved through remedial action. The point is well made, and applies with special relevance to teachers in the 1970s.

A powerful empirical substantiation of the instrumental/ideological split used to explain low levels of participation in trade union government comes in the study made by Goldthorpe et al⁸⁰ of affluent car workers in Luton. From the start they suggest a close link between work attitudes and trade union attitudes:

"... on this basis, the argument is then advanced that among the men we studied a particular orientation to work -- one of a materially instrumental kind -- is predominant ... our aim here is to show that the relationship of our affluent workers to their unions can be comprehended within the same frame of reference as the other aspects of their industrial lives". 81

Their conclusion present one explanation for limited participation:

"... that unionism should have little significance for them other than in relation to the immediate 'bread-and-butter' issues of their own work situation is entirely consistent with their definition of work as primarily a means to extrinsic ends: their main interest in the union, as in the firm, is that of the 'pay-off'". 82

This evidence for the traditional non-ideological trade union member is challenged by Brough and Hyman.⁸³ They contend that 'bread-and-butter' issues are themselves ideological in terms of the wider values of 'fairness' and the distribution of income. This becomes more evident in times of increasing State and public interest in the results of collective agreements and conflicts. In addition it appears from my research that teachers in the early 1970s, or at least members of the NUT, exhibited quite different attitudes to those of the affluent industrial workers of the mid-1960s. As a consequence straightforward notions of instrumentalism need revision when applied to the relatively less affluent professionals in the public sector.

The ideological content of trade union membership is of great importance in this country. A purely instrumental approach leads to serious problems for the efficacy of collective action and collective decision-making, and in the end to the existence of trade unionism. My contention is that some ideological element (even if incoherent and unconscious) exists

among activists and many members. If this is correct then efforts to realise it by either side of the ideological divide and to channel it into group competition for organisational control are important in the search for new forms of trade union response to new forms of economic and political challenges. So while the debate presented here may seem unacceptably ideological, yet it has considerable practical consequences for the behaviour of leading protagonists within trade union power struggles.

Conclusion

These general theoretical propositions about the functional uses of bureaucracy, efficiency, formality and instrumentalism for the existence of the organisation become part of the arguments and strategies followed by union leaders.⁸⁴ The orthodox representative democrats amongst them accept Lipset's final word:

"The obvious conclusions of this analysis are that the functional requirements for democracy cannot be met most of the time in most unions." 85

And bow to the confession that:

"The skimpy data available on the behaviour of nominally "democratic" large-scale organisations such as political parties, business corporations, trade unions and co-operatives would seem to confirm Michels' prediction that structural forces endemic in large-scale organisations make control by the self-opting leaders of a bureaucratic hierarchy inevitable". 86

Against this there are those liberal representative democrats who are more aware of the classical tradition associated with more participation, and who share the concern of the Webbs if organisations fail their members:

". . . the active-minded minority sees itself submerged by the 'apathetic man'; the individual feels enslaved by the 'machine'. the complaint of the 'rank and file' - - using that term to mean, not any 'extremist' minority, but merely the majority: the 'common run of men' - - comes to no more than that they do not find themselves obtaining the results in their daily lives which they expected, and which they were, as they understood, promised". 87

Poor results and broken promises whether real or perceived were certainly part of the background for teachers in the early 1970s, and presented part of the challenge to the NUT which caused the internal power struggles. No section of the representative democratic adherents would argue against reforms necessary to improve the lot of the membership and maintain the existence of the organisation. For example most trade unionists are aware of the possible abuses of bureaucratic mechanisms, but within the NUT the majority of full-time officials at national and local level share common perspectives with the majority of elected local and national leaders. This majority position would share the need for reforms in areas such as pay bargaining, educational politics, teacher training, and within the NUT itself. When confronted with rapid changes in the position of their members and a subsequent increase in the left challenge the majority responds by creating a new equilibrium through reform. The strategy is to manage any discontent in the short term in order to resolve what is seen as a temporary flux in the long term.

Therefore any groups within the NUT who seek either to use short term troubles for their own militant ends, or who seek to draw political lessons from what the majority see as non-political shifts in the organisation's environment are defined as enemies by the orthodox democrats. Most NUT leaders and members would attack the left within the union on grounds already suggested by Flanders:⁸⁸ division is inefficient, militancy must be carefully controlled, ideological intervention is a weakness, and informal pressure (or ginger) groups undermine the credibility of the organisation both for the majority of inactive members and for outside agencies. This is made more urgent at a time of the spectre of teacher unemployment⁸⁹ and NAS gains.⁹⁰ The call of the General Secretary of the NUT supported by the majority of the lay Executive was that to put more pressure on the government and the public in order to strengthen a threatened collective bargaining position it was necessary to show 'responsible' attitudes, 'moderate' behaviour and 'reasonable' argument.⁹¹

Within this general aim of keeping control over the goal-achievement side of the efficient organisation went the dual strategy of maintaining membership numbers and majority support. Whether this was realised through more or less democracy and participation was subject for debate between the

representative democrats themselves. In the end the proclaimed realism and clear dominance of the orthodox view, its adherents and their practice brought it into conflict with what became a major problem for the NUT - - what to do about the left opposition?

In practice in local A, and in the NUT in general, the respective leaderships had to answer this question. The response was based on appeals to the effectiveness of the organisation, wider democratic norms and power realities, and greater emphasis on formal constitutional methods in order to fully express the instrumentalism of inactive members. The full array of arguments presented above formed part of the armoury of conflict within the NUT. Models of democracy and justification for limits to classical notions of democracy constantly come up against changes in environmental conditions and among members. These changes for teachers in the early 1970s have been discussed in Chapter 2, and they resulted in problems for incumbent representative democrats when challenged from within the union by the left opposition groups.

Hence the representative democratic arguments, orientations and strategies had to be promulgated to the mass of members, endorsed by activists in local associations, shared by national and regional officials, acknowledged by outside bodies and commentators, and above all victorious over left opposition. How this was carried out is shown in the next two chapters. In particular they deal with the how of some of the severe decisions taken with respect to traditional union democratic practices in the context of the above ideological considerations.

Such a powerful body of opinion, so strongly and widely held, is one of the major factors in uncovering the central paradox of this study. Action and counter-action, argument and counter-argument, manoeuvre and counter-manoevre were all part of the political existence of local A and the NUT in the years 1973/5: the result was less democracy in the search for and in the name of more democracy. A result fought for on the battle ground of democratic practice itself.

Part 2 : The Political left

"The Power of this idea to transform the dry detail work of trade union organisation into the constructive work of revolutionary Socialism, and thus make of the unimaginative trade unionist a potent factor in the launching of a new system of society, cannot be over-estimated. It invests the sordid details of the daily incidents of the class struggle with a new and beautiful meaning, and presents them in their true light as skirmishes between the two opposing armies of light and darkness." 92

(James Connolly)

The common thread that draws the political left together is their belief that work within the trade union movement is only part of the wider struggle to bring about the collapse of Capitalism. In the NUT, as in many other unions, the main opposition to the majority representative democratic line comes from the left. This group is often not well organised, and the more formal term 'broad left' can be used in the AUEW⁹³ for example with more meaning than in the NUT. Although in local A of the NUT something approaching a broad left did exist.

Both terms 'broad left' and 'political left' describe trade unionists who subscribe to a common set of propositions about some areas of political life under capitalism, and who may also belong to either the Labour Party or to the Communist Party. It also incorporates at any one time non-aligned socialists. The main distinction between the two terms is the level of organisation: the broad left in some unions and in the student movement has meant a well organised opposition of a more or less permanent nature. In contrast the term political left represents the main common feature of those involved, but does not incorporate a systematically argued or permanent opposition.

The political left within the NUT then describes that loose collection of progressive groups and individuals who join forces from time to time to back a specific issue, action or leader. The broad left would constitute a more formal group, which additionally encompasses many trade unionists prepared to vote or support left candidates or actions as part of a protest against some specific decision or event.

A relevant definition of the broad left comes from Bob Wright talking about the AUEW:

"The view that we expressed within the union was that we were seeking to bring together, in a positive activity sense, on policy, elections and other union issues all those who were basically on the left of centre in the Labour Party or indeed held a mixture of opinions - - some of them were not aligned with any political party as such but were generally progressive in their outlook. . . . but our endeavours have been directed towards the defeat of reaction in the trade union movement, and to do that we were firmly convinced that we had to bring together all the elements of progressive trade union and political thinking under that title of broad left". 94

The failure to form an equivalent group within the NUT is explained by a Communist Party teacher:

"The lack of successful broad left organisation within the teaching profession must be seen in the light of our party's left unity perspectives. Failure to carry them forward has been an influential factor in the emergence of a lively, influential ultra-left rank and file group within the education sector". 95

So the left unity of the Communist Party, left Labour and non-aligned socialists within the NUT has resulted not in a powerful broad left, but in a more limited political left which excludes the Rank and File.

This unity of some left groups within trade unions is not generally found in other spheres of activity. As Taylor has noted:

"The industrial climate has helped to blur the distinction between the communists and the Labour Left. For the moment, their objectives coincide." 96

This view is supported by Eric Heffer⁹⁷ who points out that while there are no organisational links between the left Labour and the CP, yet there are alliances when necessary. For a variety of reasons the CP is the closest left group to the Labour Party and this enables them to show "unity in action" on specific issues.⁹⁸

Elsewhere leading spokesmen for the Labour left such as Ken Coates, Tony Benn and Frank Allaun⁹⁹ emphasise the ideological and organisational differences with the CP while noting that the "Labour left proper"¹⁰⁰ are prepared to work with communists and others for common aims in certain situations.

It is this shared analysis of the tactical requirements of the left in trade unions allied with the willingness of some Labour Party members to be seen to work with members of the CP that has had an important influence on CP strategy. This is reflected in the most recent edition of the CP's programme the British Road to Socialism.¹⁰¹ In this document can be found constant reference to the need to build a broad left movement, and so go some way to solving the problem of the CP's political isolation on the back of its trade union strengths.

The role of the left opposition within trade unions goes further than just the existence of alternative election slates, policies and actions. Its whole being and structure depend upon its part in the wider struggles of the labour movement, the working-class and the socialist revolution. Thus it challenges the core beliefs of the majority through the articulation of political questions within the trade union issue, and in local A of the NUT that is just what they did. The impact of the application of such strategies upon decision procedures can be partly explained by reference to the relationship between trade union action and revolutionary practice.

The common theoretical perspective of the political left is a form of classical Marxism.¹⁰² The centre of which is a critique of modern capitalism allied to the leading role of the class struggle in determining historical processes and daily political reality. This struggle involves the State as part of the power play of the capitalist class, and trade unions as key 'organising centres of the working-class'.¹⁰³ While trade unions, particularly in Britain, represent the class interests of their members they also (in classic dialectical terms) contain the contradictions of those interests: so that within trade unions a separate, but related, battle is fought between the reformists and the revolutionaries. The popular modern version of the reasons for reformism are presented in the new version of the British Road to Socialism:

"Over a long period this gave them the resources, strength and confidence to make concessions which resulted in many sectors of workers feeling that provided they organised and struggled, they could make sufficient advances within the system. The ending of capitalism was either seen as unnecessary, or as a remote aim to be achieved by transforming it through a process of piecemeal reforms. This was the basis for the dominant outlook, reformism, which developed in the labour movement. Its main features include class collaboration rather than class struggle; the view that the state is neutral and can serve the purposes of a Labour Government as well as Tory or Liberal Governments; and the belief that the industrial power of the workers should not be used for political, but only for economic ends". 104

Such an analysis places trade unions in line with Lenin's¹⁰⁵ famous statement in What is to be Done? :

"We have said that the workers could not yet possess Social-Democratic consciousness. This consciousness could only be brought to them from the outside. The history of all countries shows that the working class, solely by its own forces, is able to work out merely trade-union consciousness, i.e. the conviction of the need for combining in unions, for fighting against the employers, and for trying to prevail upon the government to pass laws necessary for the workers, etc. The teaching of Socialism, however, has grown out of the philosophical, historical, and economic theories that were worked out by the educated representatives of the propertied classes - the intelligentsia". 106

Many activists on the Labour left would accept this notion that the political party of the working-class represents them in relation to all other classes in society and to the state as an organised political force, rather than the more limited view of representation to a group of employers. Yet also most of the Labour left reject Lenin's view both of the role of the Party and the possible nature of the socialist revolution. In contrast the CP remains an essentially Leninist organisation. This division indicates the limits of any alliance between the two groups in a wider political arena, but enables them to work together in trade union struggles.

This position has been woven into a more general strategy based on the recent upsurge of interest in the work of Gramsci.¹⁰⁷ As one CP activist in the broad left in another teacher union (NATHFE) has typically expressed it:

"Here the problem of the Labour Party, and the labour movement is set within an implicitly Gramscian framework. This analyses power in Britain by differentiating between civil society, in which relations of consensus predominate, and the political state which embodies relations of coercion. Capitalist rule, though finally guaranteed by control of the state, primarily rests on predominance within the institutions and practices of civil society, including the ideological domain. Thus a civil society has developed in which the working class is able to participate autonomously, but within which capitalist class hegemony persists. Through a complex network of processes, consent to capitalism as 'normal', is reproduced. To confront this the working class must come to see itself, and act, as the leading force in society, i.e. to mount a hegemonic challenge. This yields a strategy of revolution. . ." 108

A central feature of this strategy is that:

"The left should aim to transform the dominant ideological forms of the working class movement from a primarily reformist framework to a revolutionary or hegemonic one. This is the essence of the CP's insistence on the fight to dislodge the right wing within the labour movement and win left predominance". 109

Whatever is said about the crisis and nature of capitalism and about the recent developments in class structure the widely accepted dominant left view sees the labour movement divided between a left and a right. Therefore the imperative of any struggle within the trade unions is that of the defeat of the reformist right and the victory of the revolutionary left. As the CP explain:

". . . a battleground between a right-wing trend, composed of the most consistent exponents of reformist policies, and a left-wing trend, which has often challenged the practical policies resulting from reformism, and to a lesser extent the basic ideas of reformism. The issues on which this right-left conflict has been fought out have constantly changed, and the political positions of individuals have shifted, but the clash has been constant and will continue. Changing the dominant outlook of the labour movement, winning it for left policies and breaking the grip both of economism and reformism, involves a battle in all sections and at all levels of the movement". 110

A recent, but important, corollary of this line is the need for allies and alliances in this struggle. Based on the 'war of manoeuvre' notion¹¹¹ the common interests of various groups is stressed in order to solve the problem of the isolation of the CP in particular and the left in general. Again the new programme of the CP is the clearest statement of this general position.

"The work of the left is vital in building the broad democratic alliance. Left unity needs to be promoted both in the practical development of activity and in the battle of ideas. There are those who will be united by an understanding of the need for fundamental change, and those who will become involved only on specific issues. Communists and the labour left have a special role to play in developing broad left unity and in helping to build the alliances, of which only the most politically conscious sections of the new forces will see the need".¹¹²

a point made by and shared with Tribunite MPs and their supporters in the trade union movement.¹¹³

This analysis is stressed time and time again in the propaganda documents and articles of the leading members of the CP's industrial side, and by those left Labour members¹¹⁴ who contribute to journals such as Tribune, Labour Monthly and The Morning Star. Bert Ramelson¹¹⁵ in his pamphlets; Ken Gill¹¹⁶ and Max Morris¹¹⁷ in articles and speeches constantly return to the theme of left unity to defeat the right. It is no accident that the theory of alliances is renovated and rediscovered at a time when the left makes headway in unpredicted areas, and that Gill and Morris became leaders in non-manual trade unions. The important link between new strategical developments and new forces of revolutionary potential for the left is again detailed by the British Road to Socialism:

"New areas of struggle have been opened up by the growth and activity of such sectors as teachers, civil servants, scientists, technicians, journalists, local government and social workers. As well as being concerned with their economic situation, many of them are also concerned with the social purpose of their work, with democracy in their institutions, and their relationship to the rest of the labour movement. Thus discussion and activity have been developed on such important issues as the content of education, teaching methods, private education, the viability of the health service, private beds, the use of science, and the role of the social work".¹¹⁸

Despite the lengthy analysis and numerous arguments the actual success of the Labour left and the broad left in the trade union movement has been limited. The 1973 Labour Party Conference, the students' movement and unions such as the AUEW, NUM, CPSA and others have had genuine left victories, but at best the general picture is one of permanent opposition.

In practice the strategy of left unity in the unions has met with varied success. In recent times the AUEW has suffered set backs explained by Bob Wright:

"A key problem here is the lack of a united socialist left. You've had the development of a degree of fragmentation on the left as expressed in some of the ultra-leftist groups that have been active in recent years. I think their role is diminishing because they are losing credibility. I equally think that the movement towards left unity must ultimately produce common disputes and strategies. If we can achieve that then I believe we can begin to win a much deeper involvement of the trade union membership". 119

The weakness of the Labour left and of the CP meant that the temporary alliances of broad left groups within trade unions suffered from political isolation, wider group opposition and a national lack of credibility. These organisational and political weaknesses become more apparent with the struggle against the rightwing of the movement and are made worse by the intervention of the 'ultra-left'. It was their activities in some unions in the early 1970s that presented the rest of the left with its own version of the democratic cross: how to deal democratically and fraternally with its own left opposition.

What emerges from these statements of analysis from parts of the political and broad left is that the success of it as a strategy has always been limited. That despite the Minority Movement¹²⁰ of the 1920s and the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions¹²¹ in the 1970s the left in general, and the CP in particular, have not made any permanent advances. In some trade unions such as NUT and CPSA¹²² the more general failure of the left has let in the ultra-left as an organised opposition. This raises an important theoretical and strategical dilemma for the traditional left groups. In their challenge to rightwing incumbents the political left

have used the lack of participation and the tendency to oligarchy as part of their attacks. The representative democrats have been accused of ignoring member wishes. But when the left holds positions of authority or when they are outflanked by the ultra-left then they themselves return to some more limited definition of democracy. Thus the problem of trade union democracy becomes central to the left's attempts to remain the main opposition within the trade unions, and the ways in which issues such as secret ballots and the editorial of Newsletters became part of the more fundamental struggle 'can be seen in analysis of local A later.

As part of their wider image-projection as the champions of democracy¹²³ the political left are very sensitive to charges of conspiracy. Both the right and the ultra-left join forces in pointing the finger at communists for their undemocratic behaviour. Their defense is made by a leading CP trade union official:

"The conspiracy theories so popular before the Election are designed to prove to workers that those workers who espouse Marxism are unreliable. It is also intended to show that trade unions are being manipulated by political opportunists. It is important to understand that Marxists do not confuse trade unions with political parties. Trade unions are as Marx said, "organising centres of the working class". The fact that Marxists know that trade unions can and will play a part in changing society is not in any way a confusion of roles". 124

Both for the Labour left with its assortment of MPs, councillors and trade union leaders and for the CP with its influential handful of trade union leaders any attacks on elected and/or appointed leaders per se had to be countered. Thus the joint approach was that leaders who were sympathetic to the left need to be elected and need support from the mass movement and are not automatically prey to corruption or likely to 'sell out' the workers' interests. Some Labour MPs such as Dennis Skinner¹²⁵ go to great lengths to illustrate that, but many are content to work away within their relevant organisations and use their positions to advance worker demands.

The rejection of bureaucratic interests and/or leader corruption is not just a personal issue, but goes deeper into the analysis of the left of current political and organisational structures and processes.

So in the NUT the left backed the internal democracy of the union, and wanted an extension of it in terms of more power to school representatives. On the other hand when confronted with a powerful challenge from their left the political left sought to side with the representative democrats on some issues aimed at curtailing democracy (see the arguments over the Young Teacher movement¹²⁶). One main area in which fierce debate between the groups took place in local A was that of the role of trade union leaders and bureaucrats. The political left accepted the dangers of bureaucracy, but rejected Michels' notion¹²⁷ that leaders become divorced from the membership. As part of their overall position the left preferred to see leaders and activists as either left or right: and that right leaders were there to be defeated while left leaders were to be supported.

They realised the dangers for leaders of the pressures of office, but supported Hobsbawm's classic statement:

"... even the most revolutionary must fight the battles for improvement and reform according to the nature of the terrain, which is that of 'realistic' calculation in a capitalist economy and a capitalist state". 128

It is the 'logic of the situation'¹²⁹ that leads trade union officials to accept that at the end of any round of bargaining some concrete result must emerge, and must be in some sense a compromise. This view does not state that officials have separate interests as argued by Michels¹³⁰ and taken up by the Rank and File. It is structural factors and dominant ideas that count, and not the individual morality of the individual in power. The role of the left is to back left leaders and officials and to prevent them from sliding into any of the moral and political traps set by their opponents. Thus they would share the distinction made by Chinoy:

"At the opposite pole from the "ambitious" leaders are those for whom the possible advantages of union office are largely irrelevant. These, whom we may call "ideological" leaders, embark upon active union work and accept responsibility on the basis of a strongly held set of social and economic beliefs. To them the union is an instrument for achieving broad social and economic purposes. They may be socialists or communists, with an eye to reforming the entire society, or they may merely have strong personal feelings about the treatment they feel working men should have on the job". 131

This point is underlined by Herberg¹³² who thinks that the decline of a socialist conscience among working class leaders (in American unions) means that those who remain are more likely to fall prey to the usual power lusts and crude personal ambitions of men. The existence of left leaders in trade unions, and in particular in the NUT and local A thus provides some base for the left to organise around. But the leaders are constantly pressured by the majority of representative democratic leaders not to rock the boat or expose union divisions to public scrutiny. Thus the left is charged with causing the union to be less efficient since it divides the leaders and members.¹³³

In answer to this charge that there is a loss of efficiency because of the internal struggles the left argue that the union is stronger the more united it is, and it is more united if the national negotiators have an accurate picture of the views of all the membership. A possibility only realised if the left opposition constantly states their case. Hughes¹³⁴ supports this position that work-place leaders should have a clear communication channel to senior officials. Another left response to the efficiency argument is that all members should be able to debate and discuss all union policy issues: the fuller the participation of members the better policy will be. But once the decision is made then all members should support it in public. Efficiency is defined here not just as goal achievement but as a recognition of the power of mass action and participation in both bargaining situations and in developing union policy.

The correctness of this argument, if it is correct, does not hide the failure of the political left within the NUT. A failure in part due to the divisions within the ranks of active members of the Communist Party. The CP teachers' journal, Education Today and Tomorrow¹³⁵ tended to take

a rather sectarian line with regard to the Rank and File, while some younger members wanted a more unified approach. These tactical divisions within the CP in local A were themselves based on differences of opinion about the Party's strategy on the formation of alliances. If

"... the struggle for the unity of the working class is no mere tactical question. It is a matter of principle" 136

holds true then the problem for the political left in the NUT is how far does the principle extend. Some, such as Max Morris and some leading CP members in locals A and B extended it fully to the left in the Labour Party and other progressives, but excluded the ultra-left. Other CP members wished to embrace the ultra-left as part of the general political left. This difference in the interpretation of a common strategy, when faced with tactical questions in a specific union context, greatly weakened the political left within the NUT. This weakness, seen so well in local A, meant that both the incumbent representative democrats and the new oppositionist Rank and File group could strengthen their respective positions at a time when the political left could have expected to make dramatic gains.

So the overriding aim of the CP and the political left of:

"... winning the trade union movement at all levels - - from individual members and shop stewards committees to national executives, trades councils and the TUC - - for mass action on immediate questions, and for support for social and political change. . . . 137

as the strategical expression in the labour movement¹³⁸ of a more deeply rooted theoretical analysis of capitalism and the revolutionary process finds considerable difficulties in practice in a union. The NUT in general, and local A in particular, show that while the political left can enjoy some success some of the time, yet their divisions and the weakness of the CP and Labour Left prevent the sort of unity and impact being made that they might have expected. The result of this relative failure has a bearing on their attitudes to democracy. Their requirement is for a system that best supports their own strengths: low turnout at meetings where they have a majority of those present. On the other hand

this kind of lack of participation is one of the ways in which the left can attack the representative democrats, and also leaves the left open to charges of being undemocratic from the ultra-left. Such conflicting pressures resolve themselves in conflicting practices as seen in local A.

The broad left in local A and the political left in the NUT in general remain a constant power base among teachers. Although the CP, left Labour and other socialists were in a minority, yet they did express views and suggest actions acceptable some of the time to a wider section of local activists and members. In the early 1970s many factors seemed favourable for a major advance of this group: economic and work problems, organisational change and challenge, new attitudes and expectations, a Conservative government, and an insecure dominant ideology. Yet the advances made were temporary and resulted in the end with the emergence of a stronger right leadership, although admittedly a more trade union orientated one. Part of the reason for this was the existence of a lively and active Rank and File movement in opposition to the political local left.

Part 3 : The 'Rank and File' group:

"The historical crisis of mankind is reduced to the crisis of the revolutionary leadership. The economy, the state, the politics of the bourgeoisie and its international relations are completely blighted by a social crisis, characteristic of a prerevolutionary state of society. The chief obstacle in the path of transforming the prerevolutionary into a revolutionary state is the opportunist character of proletarian leadership: its petty-bourgeois cowardice before the big bourgeoisie and its perfidious connection with it even in its death agony". 139

(Leon Trotsky)

This general perspective that the main obstacle to revolution is the present working class leadership, composed of rightwing bureaucrats and the failed traditional left of the CP, has its main expression in the politics and practice of the International Socialists¹⁴⁰ (renamed the

Socialist Worker Party on 1st January 1977)). It was the IS that decided to set up Rank and File (capital R and F) movements in various trade unions including the NUT. As Birchall has stated in his history of the IS:

"The development of effective factions was intimately linked to the perspective of building rank-and-file movements inside the trade union movement. The ultimate aim was to repeat the successes of the Minority Movement of the 1920s, though it was clearly recognised that this could only be done with a much bigger base than was at present available. The model was provided by the work carried out since 1967 in the National Union of Teachers. Here a small group of IS teachers had come together with some Communist Party members who were disillusioned by the increasingly conservative role of the Communist Party within the unions. As a result the paper Rank and File was set up; it rapidly became the focus for the militant left in the union, and succeeded in attracting support way beyond IS and IS sympathisers. As the role of the trade union bureaucracy as the main obstacle to shop-floor militancy became more and more obvious in the early seventies, IS members were able to participate in, and in some cases initiate, the creation of similar papers in a number of unions and industries - - The Collier, The Car-Worker, The Hospital Worker and several others." 141

It is important to realise that the Rank and File in the NUT was part of a wider strategy declared by the IS, and that the NUT example was the most successful. The extent of its success is noted by Shaw:

". . . a few IS teachers founded a teachers' journal called "Rank and File" which within two or three years had a readership of several thousands. (They included very experienced activists such as Duncan Hallas, a founder member of Socialist Review who rejoined IS in 1968 after 14 years absence). A supporters' group which was established involved hundreds of activists, the majority of them outside IS, and soon became the major left-wing force in the newly radicalised NUT. Rank and File played a leading role in teachers' strikes in London, and eventually had two of its members elected to the union's executive." 142

Some of the claims made will be examined later in the analysis of local A, and of the national events of the Young Teachers, Wandsworth 3, and London Allowance strikes. Both writers make the correct point that the NUT form of Rank and File was the most important, despite inroads into unions such as NALGO, CPSA and ATTI (now NATHFE). So the Rank and File

played a role in the politics of the NUT in the early 1970s, and are the best illustration of the application of one type of revolutionary strategy to British trade unions in the period after the upheavals of 1968.

It was the declared aim of Rank and File (its IS leaders and various supporters) to democratise the profession, the union and society. This central and publically stated theme of more membership participation and greater democratic structures within the NUT resulted in an opposite outcome. That paradox rested in part on the tactics of the Rank and File imposed by the IS and in part on its misplaced assessment of the causes and extent of teacher militancy. Thus wrong calculation was based on a series of mistaken propositions about developments within society, the working-class and the Labour Party, and eventually led to the wrong strategy.

In addition much of the actual practice of this group in local A and the NUT was associated with the democratic battle against the representative democrat incumbents and the political left opposition. In these battles the major ground was that of internal union processes and membership participation. Therefore the ways in which the Rank and File used these areas of concern, and the ways in which NUT and local A democracy were affected by their activities are a vital concern of this thesis.

To trace and comprehend the theoretical base of the IS is a complex exercise since the organisation has altered its perspectives several times.¹⁴³ The relevant problem here is to see what main strands in theory led to the adoption of its rank-and-file strategy for trade unions. The main thrust for the building of Rank-and-File movements in trade unions comes in the person of Cliff¹⁴⁴ and his breach with orthodox Trotskyism. Before 1968 he tended to follow the position of Rosa Luxemburg¹⁴⁵ on the relationship of the revolutionary party to the working-class and her tendency to underestimate the strength of bourgeois democracy. This particular form of Marxism was an attack on Lenin,¹⁴⁶ and its main flaw noted by Krasso:

"Both Trotsky and Luxemburg relied on the revolutionary elan of the masses at the expense of consideration of the problem of its mobilisation in a revolutionary organisation". 147

This overestimation of the role of the growth of spontaneous socialist consciousness¹⁴⁸ allied to a general attack on state bureaucracies¹⁴⁹ and state capitalism¹⁵⁰ led to a revolutionary strategy based on the predicted collapse of reformism and the Labour Party.

After 1968 the IS leadership¹⁵¹ considered the time right for a major advance in the trade union movement through Rank and File groups, and against what it saw as the class collaboration of trade union leaders with the state.¹⁵² Some saw a national Rank and File movement as an alternative to the TUC,¹⁵³ and throughout this period (1968-1973) such a perspective became the major IS preoccupation.

Thus IS concentrated on bureaucracy, the final failure of Western Capitalism and the spontaneous revolutionary consciousness of workers as key pointers to the overthrow of the system.

The main weakness of the IS analysis was their assessment of the Labour Party,¹⁵⁴ and this parallels a major theoretical failing of Trotsky himself as has been noted:

"Here, his constant under-estimation of the autonomous power of political institutions, and his tendency to collapse these back into the mass forces which were allegedly their 'social base', was his nemesis. For throughout the inner-party struggle, he was always interpreting the political positions adopted by various participants as merely the visible signs of occult sociological trends within Soviet society. So Right, Centre and Left in the Party became in Trotsky's writings basically idealist categories, divorced from politics as such - - the concrete arena of power and institutions". 155

Thus the notion of internal opposition to trade union leaders based on the revolutionary party comes from Trotsky,¹⁵⁶ although in practice it underwent in the NUT, as elsewhere, a metamorphosis from genuine rank-and-file group to simple front organisations.

So by 1974/5 IS had moved away from the genuine Rank and File developments and towards their major new theme of Party Building.¹⁵⁷ This is a simplistic notion based on the collapse of all problems and strategies

into the single act of recruitment to the Party. From this stems the front tactics of IS during 1974: tactics made possible by further leadership upheavals¹⁵⁸ and by further reassessment of Trotsky's contribution.¹⁵⁹ The basic well of inspiration for this comes from the original influence of Trotsky on Cliff and the IS.

"Therefore, the sections of the Fourth International should strive not only to renew the top leadership of the trade unions, boldly and resolutely in critical moments advancing new militant leaders in place of routine functionaries and careerists, but also to create in all possible instances independent militant organisations corresponding more closely to the tasks of mass struggle against bourgeois society; and if necessary, not flinching even in the face of a direct break with the conservative apparatus of the trade unions. If it be criminal to turn one's back on mass organisations for the sake of fostering sectarian fictions, it is no less so to passively tolerate subordination of the revolutionary or disguised conservative ('progressive') bureaucratic cliques. Trade unions are not ends in themselves; they are but means along the road to proletarian revolution". 160

This equation of militancy with socialist awareness, and therefore that the road to revolution is blocked by the present union leadership appears in a clear form in the articles and actions of the NUT Rank and File.¹⁶¹ This attack on bureaucracy within the trade unions is a central and recurrent theme in the debates in local A, and the exact nature of the argument and its part in the strategy and tactics of Rank and File are now examined.

The attacks on trade union bureaucrats stems from the IS analysis that UK society was experiencing a 'shifting locus of reform'.¹⁶² After 1968 this was seen in terms of the final decline of the Labour Party as the party of the workers, and with it the moment had come for a massive intervention by a left revolutionary group. The collapse of social democratic attempts to manage the capitalist economy and state was a sign, to the IS, of the more general failure of capitalism to meet the needs of the people, and of Parliament and trade union leaders in particular to meet the demands of the labour movement for reform.

Therefore struggle and revolutionary consciousness, it was argued, would come from the shop floor; and from the shop stewards movement in particular.

This then became the virtual sole centre of their campaign. In the NUT this meant a constant emphasis on the role of the school representative,¹⁶³ and attempts to build links between school representatives similar to combine committees in engineering. Thus three elements appear: the great stress layed on the level of revolutionary consciousness of the workers; the premature burial of the Labour Party as the party of the workers; and the emphasis on trade union and shop floor activity.

Given these assumptions based upon a general critique of Capitalism and the more specific notion of the failure of reformism then the question arose for the IS why was progress so limited. The answer emerged in three forms. First the obstructive role of the Communist Party; second the intransigence of the trade union bureaucrats; and third the enemies within IS itself.

In the early 1970s IS identified¹⁶⁴ the class enemy as an alliance of government, employers and trade union leaders. The idea was that the trade unions should take on the government directly, and that all struggle could therefore be undertaken at the place of work. The result is that trade union policy and action becomes central, and so trade union democracy becomes the key battle ground. The first aim is to replace the CP and the Broad Left as the main opposition in the unions. The ambitions of the IS were considerable as Shaw notes:

"By 1973 IS had developed a number of viable rank and file movements, particularly in white collar unions, and had won a small but significant number of bases among manual workers, although these were not generally converted into functioning rank and file bodies. It had long been the intention of the organisation to build these at some stage into a national movement, which would function as an opposition within the trade movement as a whole . . .

In the early seventies, however, there were good reasons for noting an improvement in the balance of industrial forces between IS and the CP. In some major white collar unions, such as the NUT and NALGO, IS had won the leadership of the left, and industrially it had begun to provide some effective competition. More generally, the CP's conflict of loyalties between the rank and file and the left-wing union leaders (such as Jones and Scanlon) seemed to be causing it increasing problems . . . Towards the end of 1973, the time seemed ripe to attempt to start an alternative focus for trade union militants. It was decided to organise the first National Rank and File Conference, sponsored by various rank and file papers." ¹⁶⁵

So the attacks on the CP and broad left whether in local A, the NUT or in other unions were calculated to weaken and defeat that form of left opposition. It is in the perspective of this challenge (the challenge to become the dominant left opposition) that Rank and File behaviour in relation to internal decision processes must be understood.

The second enemy, and one that also determined the IS tactics on union democracy, was the trade union bureaucracy. The appeal of this form of analysis lies partly in the generally fashionable abuse of bureaucrats and leaders, and partly within the structure of the NUT at that time. The opposition to NUT leaders and officials was linked with the role of Head teachers at school and in the union, and of democracy in schools. This then provided a wide campaign capable of bringing into the Rank and File all kinds of disenchanted radical teachers. The basic theme comes from a peculiar version of Marxism adopted by Michels.¹⁶⁶ In reference to the 'youthful German labour party' Michels writes:

"The party, regarded as an entity, as a piece of mechanism is not necessarily identifiable with the totality of its members, and still less so with the class to which these belong . . . The party is created as a means to secure an end. Having, however, become an end in itself, endowed with aims and interests of its own, it undergoes detachment, from the teleological point of view, from the class which it represents. In a party, it is far from obvious that the interests of the masses which have combined to form the party will coincide with the interests of the bureaucracy in which the party becomes personified." 167

Here then the recurring theme of Trotsky and Cliff about the relationship of party to class, and class to party. The dangers of bureaucracy and the oligarchical nature of leadership are there for all to see. Later Michels adds:

"By a universally applicable social law, every organ of the collectivity, brought into existence through the need for the division of labour, creates for itself, as soon as it becomes consolidated, interests peculiar to itself. The existence of these special interests involves a necessary conflict with the interests of the collectivity. Nay, more, social strata fulfilling peculiar functions tend to become isolated, to produce organs fitted for the defence of their own peculiar interests." 168

The attraction of this position for teachers in the UK in the early 1970s is connected to their own experiences at college, at work through the re-organisation into larger units, and in the trade union. Michels¹⁶⁹ deepens this perspective by arguing that bureaucrats, whatever their subjective aims and intentions, will of necessity form interests separate from and antagonistic to the membership. This meets the IS requirement of attacking all trade union leaders irrespective of their views, and of attracting a range of trade unionists embarrassed by the slough of despondency of their leaders. The actual processes that are supposed to seduce the leaders away from their origins include social, monetary and career rewards. It follows that at the crucial historical moments the road is blocked by corrupt officials. As the IS put it:

"... at all decisive moments the union bureaucracy is bound to side with the state". 170

This is according to the IS because the objective historic task of such leaders is to control the militancy of the rank and file on behalf of the capitalist class. But Michels and the analysis of bureaucracy lack both hard evidence and precise theoretical formulations. One effectively critical view of Michels concludes:

"Far from being a pessimistic democrat, Michels was a pessimistic Romantic Revolutionist and a pessimistic Scientific Paternalist. He denounced Organization for promoting the amelioration instead of the radical purification of society. He detested Organization for promoting the manifest wishes rather than the 'objective' interests of the 'masses'. Michels's solicitude for the welfare of the 'masses' evidently was linked with a profound disdain for the judgement of the 'masses'". 171

Thus contempt for the policies and the decision making procedures of a trade union can also mean contempt for the members of that trade union. The Rank and File might be putting the real interests of trade union members above what the members want, and so present themselves as the champions¹⁷² of the people against the representative democrats who argue that they are the guardians of the General Will. The exact attitudes and practices of the Rank and File towards teachers and the NUT can be seen in the chapter on local A, but something along the above lines does emerge.

The third attack that IS made in this period was against some of its own members. This is not the place to examine the various factions and their fate, but only to note that by the end of 1973 Cliff¹⁷³ organised a form of coup which replaced nearly all of the Executive Committee. The results of this was another change in tactics away from widely based rank and file movements, and towards the setting up of a 'proper' political party. The consequences of this change, and of some other IS thinking can now be described when we examine their strategies.

It appears that IS became so involved in trade union struggles that they tended to see that as the sole means to revolution. This modern form of economism¹⁷⁴ came about through the importance of wages struggles under the Heath government, and therefore IS tended to ignore extra-industrial movements such as the women's movement, the environment lobby and the Labour left. As part of the emphasis on shop floor and shop steward power the IS became more and more 'workerist'¹⁷⁵ in outlook (an irony not missed by its opponents, since the majority of IS were students). This shows itself in attempts to reduce all forms of struggle to factory struggle. So schools became factories; the pupils and junior teachers became the workers; and the senior teachers became management. Professional attitudes were seen as automatically reactionary, and educational discussion became irrelevant. Many teachers in local A were particularly upset by the move away from discussion of education at local association meetings. The logic of this spilled over into the form of wage system claimed: productivity, overtime, bonus and differentials all became part of the Rank and File teachers' demands.¹⁷⁶

After 1973 IS took a strong line on the building of the party. All other activities became subordinate to that task. If syndicalism led IS to build rank and file movements in the trade unions, then building the party led to the use of front tactics.¹⁷⁷ The idea being that demands made and actions taken no longer are for genuine causes, but are aimed at feeding IS views into the trade union movement and therefore recruiting members.

These tendencies show the basis for Rank and File action in local A, and help explain the group's attitudes to internal decision processes. The degeneration of the IS line rests partly with its own failures; partly with its theoretical weaknesses; and partly due to its practice in the NUT. As Shaw notes:

"The idea that a rank and file grouping involved a wide layer of trade unionists willing to fight for more militant and socialist policies in their particular union, democratically deciding their own policies, was quickly being lost. Many of the rank and file groups became, and were seen as, little more than extensions of IS, controlled centrally by it. Even the first and strongest, Rank and File Teacher, was the victim of manipulative control by IS; many members of the other left-wing groups and independent radicals pulled out and formed a new group, the Socialist Teachers Alliance, which by 1977 clearly possessed a wider base of support in the union". 178

As has been seen the IS had too many internal problems to consistently provide the basis for a Rank and File challenge as the left opposition in unions like the NUT. Its relative success in the NUT was in part due to the dramatic changes within teaching and the NUT in this period, and partly due to the number of radicalised students who became teachers. These features plus a divided political left, and in some areas a politically unwise set of representative democratic leaders allowed a foothold. But once IS expelled several teachers, and became more sectarian then the group lost ground. The failure in the NUT and in other unions has been explained by Shaw in his conclusions:

"The basic causes were nevertheless political, as I have tried to show. At the most general level of theory and politics, IS's leaders devalued a consistent political response to all forms of oppression, in favour of a one-dimensional "fundamentalist" stress on economic class struggle. More specifically, there were two major features to IS's failure. On the one hand, IS failed to get to grips with some of the "new" features of the situation - - the "lessons of May", the women's movement and sexual politics, the changing nature of the working class. On the other hand, there was the fatal underestimate of that very "old" obstacle, the strength of reformist ideas and organisations, and indeed its renewed influence on organised workers as a result of the crisis." 179

Although the Rank and File group failed to sustain its particular challenge within the NUT it bequeathed a legacy for other loose formations around the same issues to challenge the lack of democracy in the union and to fight for a shift in consciousness among teachers. The particular failure of Rank and File and the IS strategy was part of the overall failure of the left within the field of union organisation and democratic government. These internal wrangles were part of the more generally agreed movement to new organisational action and attitudes adopted in relation to the way the NUT influenced the level of educational expenditure, and the interference by outside agencies on professional judgement and education in general. The failure of the left in the NUT matched the failure of the NUT to hold its position on many major issues later in the decade.

The theoretical base, the changes in strategy, and the tactical use of union democracy against incumbent bureaucrats and leaders all present the logic of IS failure. The Rank and File in the NUT then were essentially short-lived. This study covers the crucial years of its greatest headway and its crucial defeats through the activities of local A. It shared with the political left the Marxist perspective that trade unions play a part in the socialist revolution; and it shared with the representative democrats the view that organisations tend to develop bureaucratic forms. But it fought both these groups in the field of union democracy in order to replace the former as the main challenge to the latter. In doing that it managed to change the development of NUT democracy, and so play a vital role in the impact of political groups on union democracy.

Conclusions

These brief surveys of the arguments and strategies of the main groups studied in local A and the NUT illustrate the importance of wider perspectives, wider party and political allegiances and specific trade union adaptations of more general tactical considerations for the study of democratic dilemmas and paradox.

The self-conscious adherence of key activists and leaders in local A to some of the views outlined, their reading of and discussion with specific party journals and members outside teaching, and their acceptance of the tactical consequences of being a CP, IS or Labour Party Member within the context of being a NUT activist all add to the analysis of the main themes presented here. These include the explicit political motives found among some activists within trade unions, the consequences of such activities among the mass of less political teachers, and the overall impact of these left oppositionists on NUT democracy. This cacophony of factors leads in turn to individuals and groups fighting each other for control over key policies and organisational mechanisms at local and national level - - strike calls, meeting agenda, rule changes and wage claims. The consequences of the intervention of the left and the response it provoked from members, leaders and officials in the special circumstances outlined in Chapter 2 led to the central thesis of paradox in the search for and defense of an extension of union democracy.

The next chapter brings together the political, strategical, economic, work and organisational changes, challenges and circumstances of teachers in the NUT in 1973/5 within a single local association. Through a detailed account of this association's operation, organisation and personnel it is hoped to illustrate the processes involved in the main themes of left intervention and the democratic paradox.

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER 3

1. J.S. Mill, On Liberty, 1964 Everyman edition, p. 79.
2. The International Socialists (IS) were the largest organisation to the 'left' of the Communist Party, and the most important of such groups theoretically and in practice within local A and the NUT in general.
3. The International Marxist Group (IMG) was a much smaller Trotskyist group whose main strengths came from the student-teacher movement and some influential intellectuals. Their impact as an organised group was hardly noticeable, but some individuals played important parts in the overall balance of forces between different left factions.
4. The Militant group in the Labour Party was a relatively new Trotskyist faction around the journal Militant. Their origins lie somewhere in the various attempts to control the Young Socialists by Trotskyite groups (see Z. Layton-Henry, 'Labour's Militant Youth', Political Quarterly, vol. 45 no. 4, October-December 1974; and also D. White, 'Youth Politics', New Society, vol. 23 no. 547, 29th March 1973).
5. The Labour Party faction around the journal Tribune has been termed the "the Labour left proper", and constitutes a reasonably consistent although loosely organised group within the Party (see D. Coates, The Labour Party and the Struggle for Socialism, Cambridge University Press, 1975).
6. A major example of this view was John L. Lewis of the United Mine Workers, (see J. Barbash, The practice of Unionism, op.cit.).
7. J. Hemingway, Conflict and Democracy : studies in trade union government, Oxford University Press, 1978, p. 2.
8. Ibid., pp. 5-7.
9. Ibid., pp. 7-9.
10. Ibid., Chapter 2.
11. The political left has already been described as organisationally a loose and varied group operating nationally within the NUT. Its politics are drawn organisationally from the Labour Party, Communist Party and non-aligned socialists and radicals, and theoretically from a shared awareness of the relevance of political processes over and above trade union ones even within trade unions.

12. Supporters and group membership of the main left opposition groups do not tend to belong to the dominant political parties. It is the enduring ability of parties such as IS and CP to create movements far in excess of their own numbers that throws their activities into such sharp democratic relief.
13. A. Flanders, 'What are trade unions for?', in Management and Unions : the theory and reform of industrial relations, Faber and Faber, London 1970, p. 39.
14. S. and B. Webb, Industrial Democracy, op.cit., part 1.
S. and B. Webb, The History of trade unionism, op.cit., chapters 10, 11.
15. J.B. Jeffreys, The Story of the Engineers, AEU, London 1945.
J.D. Edelstein and M. Warner, op.cit., chapter 9.
16. The 'rightwing' and/or 'moderates' within the Labour Party and trade union movement are an extremely loose group both organisationally and theoretically. From time to time their existence may be centred on a series of more coherent groups such as the Fabian Society, the Campaign for Democratic Socialism and the Manifesto Group (see D. Coates, op.cit.).
17. J. Conway (general secretary of the AUEW 1964-1974). For specific attacks on the broad left in his union see his editorial in the AUEW Journal for October 1971 (vol. 38 no. 10) p.433; and for a scathing assault on what he terms "these militant progressives" see his editorial in the AUEW Journal for December 1973 (vol. 40 no. 12) p.553. For Conway's views (in many ways the most coherently anti-left of the trade union leaders at this time) on union democracy and efficiency see editorials in the AUEW Journal as follows:
October 1973, p. 457 on postal ballots
November 1973, pp. 505-6 on the role of branches
July 1971, pp. 284-5 on union efficiency.
18. C.A.R. Crosland, Social Democracy in Europe, Fabian Tract 438, 1975. As he argues pointedly against Marxists : "The Ownership of the means of production is not now, in our view, the key factor which imparts to a society its essential character" (p.2.).
C.A.R. Crosland, A social democratic Britain, Fabian Tract 404, 1971.
C.A.R. Crosland, The future of Socialism, Cape, London 1956.
19. D. Marquand, 'The challenge to the Labour Party', The Political Quarterly, vol. 46, no. 4, October-December 1975.
20. S. and B. Webb, Industrial Democracy, op.cit., part 1.
21. B.C. Roberts, op.cit.

22. R.A. Dahl, Modern Political Analysis, Prentice-Hall, New Jersey, 1963.
R.A. Dahl and C.E. Lindblom, Politics, Economics and Welfare, Harper, 1953.
P.M. Blau and W.R.Scott, Formal Organisations : a comparative approach Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1963.
23. C. Pateman, Participation and Democratic Theory, Cambridge University Press, 1970, pp. 1-2.
24. S.M. Lipset, 'Introduction', to Political Parties by R. Michels, Free Press, London 1962.
S.M. Lipset, M.A. Trow, J.S. Coleman, op.cit., pp. 4-13.
25. R. Michels, op.cit., pp. 377-393.
I refer to the work of R. Michels in the main text almost as a shorthand for the body of thought associated with the universal law approach to democracy and bureaucracy in political organisations.
V. Pareto, Sociological writings, Blackwell, Oxford 1966.
G. Mosca, The ruling class, McGraw-Hill, London 1939
M. Ostrogorsky, Democracy and the organisation of political parties, Macmillan, 1902.
26. S.M. Lipset, 'The two party system in the UK'. op.cit.
S.M. Lipset, 'The political process in trade unions : a theoretical statement', Labour and Trade Unionism, op.cit.
27. G.D.H. Cole, The world of labour, G. Bell & Sons, London 1913.
G.D.H. Cole, Social Theory, Methuen, London 1920.
A.W. Wright, G.D.H. Cole and Socialist democracy, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1979.
28. Two contemporary groups that have some relation to this liberal participative tradition in the labour movement are the Workers' control movement (K. Coates and T. Topham, The New Unionism : the case for workers' control, Peter Owen, London 1972); and the 'open government' lobby (T. Benn, Arguments for Socialism, Jonathan Cape 1979; S. Holland, The Socialist Challenge, Quartet, London 1975). One might also consider the role of the New Left here (P. Sedgwick, 'The two new lefts', in The Left in Britain 1956-1968, ed. D. Widgery, Penguin, 1976).
29. The extent of radical populism as a part of the Labour political tradition is discussed in general terms in D. Coates, op.cit.
K. Coates, The crisis of British Socialism, op.cit., and T. Nairn, 'Anatomy of the Labour Party', in Revolution and Class Struggle, ed. R. Blackburn, Fontana 1977.
30. For its existence in the wider trade union movement see M.B. Brown, From Labourism to Socialism : the political economy of Labour in the 1970s, Spokesman, 1972; D. Coates, op.cit.; and B. Simpson, Labour : the Unions and the Party - a study of the trade unions and The British Labour Movement, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1973.

31. A.W. Gouldner, 'Metaphysical pathos and the theory of bureaucracy', American Political Science Review, vol. 49, 1955, p. 506.
32. For example the NUT Annual Report 1970 says: "The Executive shall not instruct or permit its representatives on the Teachers' Panel of the Burnham Committee to ratify any tentative agreement reached in the Committee until it has been endorsed by a Conference of the Union" (p.20).
Examples of this include a Special Conference in London on 15 February 1969 to approve the provisional agreement on revised salary scales (p.104 of the 1970 Annual Report); another similar occasion was 16 February 1974 (p.124 of the 1975 Annual Report); and one on the London allowance on 28 September 1974 (p.129, 1975 Annual Report).
33. R.H. Fryer, A. Fairclough and T. Manson, Organisation and change in the National Union of Public Employees, NUPE 1974.
M. Somerton, Trade unions and industrial relations in local government, Studies for trade unionists vol. 3 no. 11, September 1977.
W. Roy, 'Membership participation in the NUT', op.cit.
34. A. Fisher, private seminar to trade union officials, March 1978.
35. Industrial Relations Act 1971, HMSO, Part V on Unfair Industrial Practices and actions by officials and/or members of a trade union.
36. The debate on pluralism itself and its specific relation to industrial relations and trade unions goes on. Its main statements include:
A. Flanders, Management and Unions, Faber, London 1970.
A. Fox, Beyond contract : work, power and trust relations, Faber and Faber, London, 1974.
H.A. Clegg, 'Pluralism in Industrial Relations', British Journal of Industrial Relations, vol. XIII no. 3, November 1975.
J.H. Goldthorpe, 'Industrial Relations in Great Britain : a critique of reformism', in Trade Unions under Capitalism, eds. T. Clarke and L. Clements, Fontana 1977.
R. Hyman, 'Pluralism, procedural consensus and collective bargaining', British Journal of Industrial Relations, vol XVI no. 1, March 1978.
37. R. Hyman and I. Brough, Social values and Industrial Relations : a study of fairness and inequality, Blackwell, Oxford 1975.
C.B. Macpherson, The political theory of possessive individualism : Hobbes to Locke, Oxford University Press, 1962.
J. Locke, Two Treatises of civil government (1690), Everyman, 1962.
R. Miliband, The state in capitalist society, Quartet 1969.
B.M. Barry, 'Public Interest', Proceedings of the Aristotelean Society Supplement, vol. XXXVIII, 1964.
P. Jacobs, 'Union democracy and the public good'. Commentary, vol. 25 no. 1, January 1958.
38. S.M. Lipset, Political Man, Heinemann, London 1969, p. 357.

39. Trade union branches often experience confusion when clearly political motions are raised, and there is a tendency for branch officials to rule them out of order. The fate of such motions will depend on the balance of forces and perceptions of officers and active members with regard to what is political and what is relevant.
40. R. Fletcher, Trade union rules, Arrow 1979.
41. C. Crouch, Class conflict and the Industrial Relations crisis : compromise and cooperation in the policies of the British State, Heinemann, London 1977.
V.L. Allen, Militant trade unionism, op.cit.
42. S.M. Lipset, 'Democracy in private government : a case study of the ITU', op.cit.
43. B.C. Roberts, Trade unions in a free society : studies in the organisation of labour in Britain and the USA, Hutchinson, London 1959.
44. C.P. Magrath, 'Democracy in overalls : the futile quest for union democracy', Industrial and Labor Relations Review, vol. 12 no. 4, July 1959.
45. AFL-CIO, Codes of Ethical Practice, Washington D.C. 1957.
46. J. Barbash, The practice of unionism, op.cit.
J. Goldstein, op.cit.
J. Seidman, 'Democracy in Labor Unions', op.cit.
47. C.P. Magrath, 'Democracy in overalls : the futile quest for union democracy', op.cit., p. 525.
48. R. Hyman, Industrial Relations, op.cit., p. 77.
49. R.A. Manzer, op.cit.
50. See table 1, chapter 1, for growth of NAS/UWT relative to that of the NUT.
51. C. Pateman, op.cit., p.14.
52. S.M. Lipset, M.A. Trow and J.S. Coleman, op.cit.
J.D. Edelstein and M. Warner, op.cit.
53. S. and B. Webb, Industrial Democracy, op.cit., part 1.
54. D. Spitz, Patterns of anti-democratic thought, New York, 1949.
P. Selznick, 'An approach to the theory of bureaucracy', American Sociological Review, vol. 8, 1943.
R. Michels, op.cit., pp. 185-205.

55. T. Hobbes, Leviathan, Oxford 1929.
J. Locke, op.cit.
J.J. Rousseau, The social contract, Penguin 1968.
C.B. Macpherson, op.cit.
J.L. Talmon, The origins of totalitarian democracy, Sphere, London, 1970.
57. S. and B. Webb, The history of trade unionism, op.cit., p. 705.
58. V.L. Allen, Trade union leadership, op.cit.
A. Bullock, The life and times of Ernest Bevin, Volume 1 trade union leader 1881-1940, Heinemann, London 1960.
59. V.L. Allen, Power in trade unions, op.cit.
J. Barbash, The practice of unionism, op.cit.
60. S.M. Lipset, Political Man, op.cit., p. 360.
61. The notion of consent within democratic theory is both central and powerful. In the work of Locke (J. Locke, Two treatises of civil government, op.cit.) it is also closely related to the reasons why everyone should obey majority decisions. Thus voting and rule-making take on a special significance, and one which links democratic practice with the legitimising concepts of equality and justice. One major corrective to this approach comes from Macpherson (C.B. Macpherson, The political theory of possessive individualism, op.cit.). He argues that democratic processes must be firmly set in the socio-economic conditions of the society, and it follows from that that the advocacy of a particular form of democracy within a given set of organisations must be subject to constant empirical test and not accepted because of the appearance of certain conditions for the existence of that form of democracy.
62. J. Child, R. Loveridge and M. Warner, 'Towards an organizational study of trade unions', Sociology, vol. 7 no. 1, January 1973. Other relevant papers include:
J.D. Edelstein, 'An organisational theory of union democracy', American Sociological Review, vol. 32 no. 1, February 1967.
J.C. Craig and E. Gross, 'The forum theory of organisational democracy : structural guarantees as time-related variables', American Sociological Review, vol. 35, no. 1, February 1970.
63. J. Child, R. Loveridge and M. Warner, 'Towards an organizational study of trade unions'. op.cit., pp. 77-78.
64. S.M. Lipset, M.A. Trow and J.S. Coleman, op.cit., chapters 6-8.
65. J.R. Coleman, 'Compulsive pressures of democracy in Unionism', American Journal of Sociology, vol. 61, May 1956.
66. R.A. Manzer, op.cit., pp. 144-152.

67. Constitutional changes within the NUT were made on strike calls (1973); discipline (1976); postal ballots (1977) and power of the chair at meetings (1977). See Chapter 4 for details.
68. For details of the Wandsworth 3 case which concerned a disciplinary hearing within the NUT see Chapter 4 part 2.3.
69. Donovan Report, Royal Commission on trade unions and employers' associations 1965-1968, HMSO 1968, p. 37.
70. J. Goldstein, op.cit., chapters 4 and 18.
71. H.A. Shepherd, 'Democratic control in a labor union', American Journal of Sociology, vol. LIV, January 1949.
J. Seidman and D.L. Tagliacozzo, 'A typology of rank-and-file union members', American Journal of Sociology, vol. LXI, May 1956.
72. C.B. Macpherson, op.cit., chapter 6.
73. A.S. Tannenbaum and R.L. Kahn, op.cit., chapter 5.
74. W. Spinrad, 'Correlates of trade union participation : a summary of the literature', American Sociological Review, vol. 25 no. 2, April 1960.
D.L. Tagliacozzo, 'Trade Union Government, its nature and its problems : a bibliographical review', American Journal of Sociology, vol. 61 no. 6. May 1956.
75. L.R. Sayles and G. Strauss, The local union, op.cit., chapter 13.
76. R. Hyman and I. Brough, op.cit.
77. Ibid., p. 28.
78. The fairness slogan analysed by Hyman and Brough is more strongly dealt with by Marx in his 'Wages, price and profit' (K. Marx and F. Engels, Selected works, vol. 2, Progress publishers, Moscow 1969). Marx says: "instead of the conservative motto, 'A fair day's wage for a fair day's work' they ought to inscribe on their banner the revolutionary watchword, 'Abolition of the wages system'" (p. 78).
79. The incorporation thesis in its extreme form sees trade unions incorporated into the capitalist social and economic power structure. The implications of such a tendency is that those trade union leaders arguing for greater involvement with state and non-state agencies must be opposed by the rank-and-file. See R. Hyman, Industrial Relations, op.cit.; V.L. Allen, Militant trade unionism, op.cit.; and A. Fox and A. Flanders, 'The reform of collective bargaining from Donovan to Durkheim', British Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. VII, no. 2, July 1969.

80. J.H. Goldthorpe, D. Lockwood, F. Bechhofer and J. Platt, The Affluent worker : industrial attitudes and behaviour, Cambridge University Press, 1968.
81. Ibid., p. 93.
82. Ibid., p. 106.
83. R. Hyman and I. Brough, op.cit., chapter 1.
84. See Jim Conway for the AUEW, Ernest Bevan for the TGWU, and Sir Ronald Gould for the NUT.
85. S.M. Lipset, Political Man, op.cit., p. 394.
86. S.M. Lipset, 'Democracy in private government', op.cit., p. 47.
87. S. and B. Webb, The history of trade unionism, op.cit., pp. 705-6.
88. A. Flanders, 'What are trade unions for?', op.cit.

Teacher Unemployment	1974		1975		1976		Source: Department of Employment
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	
Secondary:	900	600	1300	1000	2300	1800	Gazette November 1974, 1975 and 1976
Primary:	300	600	500	1100	800	2600	

90. For the dramatic increase in NAS/UWT membership relative to the NUT (from 18% to 30% in the years 1970/1973) see table 1 chapter 1.
91. See E. Britton (general secretary of the NUT) articles in The Teacher and statements to NUT Annual Conferences.
92. J. Connolly, 'Socialism made easy', Selected writings, ed. P.B.Ellis, Pelican, 1973, p. 153.
93. J.D. Edelstein and M. Warner, op.cit., chapter 9.
J.D. Edelstein, 'Democracy in a national union : the British AEU'. Industrial Relations, vol. 4 no. 3, May 1965.
I. Richter, Political purpose in trade unions, George Allen & Unwin, London 1973.
94. R. Wright, 'Interview', op.cit. p. 271.
95. P. Barnett, 'Viewpoint', Comment, vol. 15. no. 9, April 1977, p.149.
96. R. Taylor, 'Reds under the bed?', New Society, vol. 27 no. 589, 17th January 1974, p. 120.

97. E. Heffer, 'Communists and the Labour Party', New Statesman, vol. 87 no. 2238, 8th February 1974.
98. R. Blackburn, 'Labour and the Marxist Left', New Statesman, vol. 86, no. 2217, 14th September 1973, p. 342.
E. Heffer, 'Unity of the Left', Tribune, 10th and 17th August 1973.
99. T. Benn, Arguments for Socialism, op.cit.
K. Coates, 'Socialists and the Labour Party', Socialist Register 1973, eds. R. Miliband and J. Saville, Merlin Press, London.
F. Allaun, 'The class struggle in Parliament', AUEW Journal, vol. 38, no. 4, April 1971.
100. D. Coates, op.cit., p. 178.
101. British Road to Socialism, Communist Party publication, London 1978.
102. As useful an essay as any to give a reasonable presentation of the major aspects of modern Marxism is R. Blackburn, 'Marxism: theory of proletarian revolution', in Revolution and Class Struggle, op.cit.
103. A. Lozovsky, Marx and the trade unions, Martin Lawrence, London 1935.
104. British Road to Socialism, op.cit., p.22.
105. V.I. Lenin, What is to be done?, Pelican 1972.
106. Ibid., p. 80.
107. A. Gramsci, Selections from the Prison Notebooks, Lawrence & Wishart, London 1973.
108. G. Bridges, 'The Communist Party and the struggle for hegemony', The Socialist Register 1977, eds. R. Miliband and J. Saville, Merlin Press, London, pp. 27-28.
109. Ibid., p. 29.
110. British Road to Socialism, op.cit., p. 23.
111. A. Gramsci, op.cit., pp. 229-239.
112. British Road to Socialism, op.cit., p. 34.
113. One example of this is a collective article by Alan Sapper, Joan Maynard, Syd Bidwell and Millie Miller, 'The left looks forward', Labour Monthly, vol. 56 no. 11, November 1974.
114. These would include most Tribune MPs (e.g. Norman Atkinson, Stan Orme, Dennis Skinner, Renee Short as well as those mentioned above) and trade union leaders such as Bob Wright, Alan Fisher, Terry Parry, Alex Kitson and others.

115. B. Ramelson (Industrial organiser of the Communist Party 1963-1978), Smash Phase III : The Tory fraud exposed, CP publication, 1973.
Social contract : cure-all or con-trick. CP publication, 1974.
Bury the social contract : the case for an alternative policy, CP publication, 1977.
116. K. Gill (General secretary of TASS 1973-now), 'Marxism and the Trade Unions', Marxism Today, vol. 18 no 6, June 1974.
'The left looks ahead', Labour Monthly, vol. 56 no. 11, November 1974.
117. M. Morris (President NUT 1973), 'Teachers in action', Labour Monthly, vol. 60 no. 2, March/April 1978.
Presidential Address to 1973 NUT Conference, NUT Annual Report 1973.
118. British Road to Socialism, op.cit., pp. 31-32.
119. R. Wright, 'Interview', op.cit., p. 277.
120. R. Martin, Communism and the British Trade Unions 1924-1933 : a study of the National Minority Movement, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1969.
J. Hinton and R. Hyman, Trade unions and revolution : the industrial politics of the early British Communist Party, Pluto Press, 1975.
H. Pollit, Serving my time : an apprenticeship to politics, Lawrence & Wishart, London 1950, chapter 10.
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122. See for example an article in Labour Weekly, 16th March 1973, no. 77, p. 10.
123. Both the CP and IS constantly attack the facade of bourgeois democracy in this country, and put themselves forward as the defenders of genuine democratic rights. For the CP in particular this is essential in order to distinguish themselves from Soviet democratic practice.
124. K. Gill, 'Marxism and the trade unions', op.cit., p. 167.
125. Mr Skinner only spends that portion of his salary that equates to the average industrial wage (the rest he gives away), and still lives in the house he occupied as President of the Derby NUM.
126. For details of the curtailment of the activities of the Young Teacher section of the NUT see chapter 4 part 2.1.
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174. Economism and/or economic reductionism tend to exaggerate the
importance of trade union struggles in the revolutionary process.
IS were particularly prone to this in the early 1970s. The
major consequence of such an analysis was the development of Rank
and File (R. Hyman, Industrial Relations, op.cit., chapter 6;
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175. Forms of worker-worship or 'workerism' tend to emphasise the qualities of male industrial workers and so elevate their attitudes and struggles to the centre of the revolutionary stage.
T. Cliff, The employers' offensive, op.cit.
176. Article on teachers' pay and phase III (pp 1-3), Rank and File, no. 28, December 1973.
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CHAPTER 4 : LOCAL ASSOCIATION POLITICS AND NATIONAL ISSUES:
A CASE STUDY OF LOCAL A.

Part 1 : Members, leaders and influence

"The NUT exists rather in the background, only becoming important in time of crisis. Although I generally support the NUT I have never been active".

Statement from an unmarried woman teacher on a Scale 1 in a Comprehensive. She is between 21 and 25 years old; went to Grammar school in Slough; received a Certificate of Education; and votes Liberal.

"I have been a NUT rep for one year during which time I have attended meetings regularly. I eventually became disillusioned with the 'political clique', whilst having sympathy for their ideals".

Statement from a married woman teacher on Scale 3 in a Primary school. She is between 26 and 35 years old; went to Grammar school in Yorkshire; received a Certificate of Education; and votes Labour.

This chapter aims to illustrate how the politically active members of a local association relate to and influence the mass of inactive members. This process takes place in the context of the national union structure and operation, the changes in economic and work-place factors for the membership, and the ideological commitment and political operation of some local leaders. The underlying deterioration in the pay and conditions of many teachers explains the general tendency to become more active in their trade unions, but the form and extent of such action depends upon local factors, and the relations between a given local leadership and the national union control mechanisms. The case study presented here is a large local association in Inner London, and this part of the chapter presents a picture of the association, its leaders and its members at the start of 1973. Part 2 of the chapter deals with three case studies (the Young Teacher movement, the London Allowance action, the case of the Wandsworth 3) that link national issues with local politics and membership interest.

The two main processes examined in this part of the chapter then are those connected with the reasons why some members become active in their trade unions, and the ways in which these activists interact with the rest of the union membership. In Chapter 2 some formal channels of communication within the union were discussed as were changes in the conditions of and climate for teachers at work. These problems are now seen in a specific context of one London borough. This applies equally to the impact of leftwing activists and the competition between left groups on the wider membership of the union. In this examination the political orientations of groups, their attitudes to trade union governmental processes and their personal positions are revealed and related to the consequences of their actions. The central paradox of this study is therefore detailed in two stages: first among local activists with their behaviour, attitudes and relations with members; and secondly, in part 2, among local association relations with national issues and leaders.

The main sources of information for this study are of three types. First there was analysis of the past records of the association: all minutes since 1965, membership book since 1965 and other documents. Secondly there was my observation of meetings of the association: in the year February 1973 to February 1974 I attended 10 general meetings, 3 special general meetings, 8 committee meetings, 1 meeting of delegates to the Annual Conference, and 1 meeting of the Officers. In addition I interviewed several local leaders and members. The third source of information was a detailed postal questionnaire to a stratified sample of the membership.¹ The extent of this survey and the response are shown in the tables.²

The first task of investigation therefore, is to distinguish between active and inactive members³ in order to establish some pattern of difference with which to analyse behaviour and relationships. The age/sex/school features of members provides one guide to some of the special problems of local A and to the source of some of the discontent. These factors are presented in Table 1 and show that the more active members tend to be older, male and in secondary schools.

TABLE 1 AGE, SEX AND SCHOOL BY ACTIVITY LEVEL

Q1 Age (%)	Inactive		Active		Very Active		All	
21-25	70		35		35		45	
26-35	5		35		45		30	
Over 36	25		30		20		25	
Q2 Sex (%)								
Men	5		30		40		25	
Women	95		70		60		75	
Q3 Age/Sex (%)	Men Women		Men Women		Men Women		Men Women	
21-25	5	95	20	80	25	75	15	85
26-35	10	90	50	50	50	50	40	60
Over 36	5	95	30	70	35	65	25	75
Q4 Sex/School (%)	Prim	Sec	Prim	Sec	Prim	Sec	Prim	Sec
Men	0	10	20	40	20	50	15	35
Women	100	90	80	60	80	50	85	65

It also shows that many inactive members tend to be young women in primary schools, and so underlines the problems for local leaders of establishing contact with a highly mobile, non-political and isolated section of the union membership. The success of contacting this group may depend partly on the extent to which a member is 'socialised' into the school. There is evidence to show that the more a member identifies with the organisation in which he works the more likely he is to identify with the organisation that represents most of the staff.⁴ Being part of the social system at work provides the opportunity to link up with established trade union activists. This process, whereby inactive members are in contact with active members at work, depends upon the extent to which both sets are part of the school social system.⁵

The question of socialisation and its relationship to both the activity levels of members and the ability of active members to contact inactive members depends upon the view that inactive members are not a homogeneous group, but are composed of teachers in various stages of interest, knowledge and awareness of union life. And that in addition such members themselves pass on information to other inactive members. These processes are very difficult to measure and in consequence this analysis tends to treat the two groups (active and inactive members) as discrete and independently composed of similar teachers. While this is not the case in fact, nevertheless it serves as a device to clarify interactions at the place of work. The rest of this part of the chapter examines the processes of 'activation' and 'interaction' mentioned before in general terms under the conceptual titles of 'socialisation', 'stake-in-the-job'⁶ and 'mobility'.

The suggestion is that the greater the stake in the job, the greater the commitment to the school, and the longer one remains at that school then the more likely one is to be 'socialised', and so be in touch with NUT activists and activities. That these concepts apply to very active members was noted by Sayles and Strauss in their study of local union officers:

"The evidence from the locals is that local officers are more likely to be elected from (1) higher-paid and more skilled workers; (2) those with more seniority, both within the plant and within the union; (3) those with ample opportunities to talk and "move around" the plant; (4) those from dominant ethnic groups; and (5) men rather than women. Together these conditions provide a rough operational definition of high in-plant status". 7

The results of my questionnaire on these points are presented in Table 2A on 'socialisation', which concentrates on focal points of interaction at school such as the common room and lunch times, and on specific interaction with other groups such as staff, secretaries and caretakers. The overall pattern supports the view that more active members are more involved in school relationships. Table 2B attempts to measure the 'stake in the job', which presents the degree to which members identify with the job, the school and the union. This concentrates on career possibilities and seniority, with graduates and secondary school teachers more active in the union. This underlines the problem of activists representing inactive members, and so stresses the importance of school contacts in the union process. Table 2C on mobility provides further evidence for this tendency. The most recent teachers in all respects tend to be the least active, and this corresponds with seniority and involvement in school affairs. It also highlights the difficulties of contacting and servicing such highly mobile members.

It is against this local membership pattern and the limits of school union relationships that the political orientations and trade union strategies of various union activists must be viewed. The question of representing, directly or indirectly, the interests of all members becomes more difficult both to achieve and to know that one has achieved it the nearer to the individual member one goes. The success or failure of a given policy of the national union, or of a given strategy of some aspiring left group depends upon the overall type of teachers that belong to the NUT. It also depends upon the relationship between the active members in the schools and the inactive ones. A relationship determined by the economic and organisational context outlined in Chapter 2, by the stated aims of the minority of political activists (Chapter 3), by the policies of the majority leadership, and by the nature of local and school union activists and leaders.

TABLE 2 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ACTIVE AND INACTIVE MEMBERS AT WORK

(A) Factors determining the 'socialisation' of members of staff
by activity level

Q1 Where do you meet other staff? Common room	%	Inactive	Active	Very Active	All
		65	80	75	75
Q2 When do you meet other staff? Lunch time		20	70	80	60
Q3 How often do you chat to staff? Very often/often Sometimes Rarely/never		55 35 10	65 20 15	85 5 10	65 20 15
Q4 How often to you attend school meetings about school issues? Very often/often Sometimes Rarely/never		55 30 15	70 20 10	80 10 10	65 20 15
Q5 How often does the Head consult you about school issues? Very often/often Sometimes Rarely/never		30 35 35	40 25 35	40 30 30	40 25 35
Q6 How often do you chat with the school secretaries Very often/often Sometimes Rarely/never		55 30 15	60 35 5	70 20 10	60 30 10

TABLE 2 (Continued)

	%	Inactive	Active	Very Active	All
Q7 How often do you chat with the school manual staff?					
Very often/often	40	45	55	45	
Sometimes	50	40	40	40	
Rarely/never	10	15	5	15	
Q8 How often do you chat with parents?					
Very often/often	40	45	55	45	
Sometimes	40	35	30	35	
Rarely/never	20	20	15	20	

2 (B) The 'stake in the job' by level of activity

	Inactive	Active	Very Active	All
Q1 Type of school				
Primary	65	50	50	50
Secondary	35	50	50	50
Q2 Qualification				
Graduate	35	25	45	35
Non-graduate	65	75	55	65
Q3 Scale				
1	70	35	30	45
2	15	30	35	25
3 and higher	15	35	35	30
Q4 Job				
Head/deputy Head	5	5	15	15
Senior teacher	10	35	30	25
Assistant	85	60	55	60

2 (C) Job mobility by level of activity

	Inactive	Active	Very Active	All
Q1 For how long have you been teaching?				
Under 2 years	70	40	35	45
3-7 years	10	40	40	35
Over 8 years	20	20	25	20
Q2 For how long have you taught in this area?				
Under 2 years	75	50	40	55
3-7 years	20	35	55	35
Over 8 years	5	15	5	10
Q3 For how long have you taught in your present school?				
Under 2 years	80	55	50	60
3-7 years	15	35	45	35
Over 8 years	5	10	5	5
Q4 For how long have you been in your present post?				
Under 2 years	90	80	75	80
3-7 years	10	15	20	15
Over 8 years	0	5	5	5

1.1 The activist's progress

"Are you an active member, the kind that would be missed?
Or are you just contented, that your name is on the list?
Do you attend the meetings, and mingle with the flock?
Or do you stay at home to criticize and knock?
Do you ever go to visit a member who is sick?
Or leave the work to just a few - - and talk about the clique?
Think this over, member - - you know right from wrong.
Are you an active member, or do you just belong? 8

(Poem by a local union President)

In 1965, following the 1963 London Government Act, two local associations of the NUT were merged to form the present association referred to throughout this thesis as local A.⁹ In 1974 it had a membership of about 1750, which made it one of the largest associations in London and in the whole of England and Wales.¹⁰ The size of the membership presented local leaders with special problems connected with keeping in touch with the variety of members and their problems. This was compounded in London where the members are found in a large number of units,¹¹ and where the sheer rush of the daily teaching task was so great that many members had neither time nor energy to participate in union affairs. At the time of the study there were a large number of young teachers in the area, and the turnover rate was also very high.¹² This meant that apparently simple administrative tasks became so daunting that it took at least half a dozen local leaders a good deal of their time to barely cope. It is in this local organisational context that links between local activists and the individual teacher in the schools are so vital for the well being of the association. Links made and remade as some inactive members are converted into active members, and the active members form their own exclusive groups around political strategies and trade union tactics.

The concern of this section then is to discover why people become active, how activists are measured and defined, and some of the things they do in order to win policy, elections and to take action. That is the ways in which the Rank and File group and the broad left operated in local A.

The commitment and level of understanding of the constant and persistent activist can be gauged through his articulation of why he became active:

either from some ideological conviction, or due to some work and management related experience. But the lesser and peripheral mass of active members, as opposed to very active members, do not and often cannot pinpoint their reasons for being the reluctant 'rep'. It is only through some vague and limited notion of vicarious responsibility and a shared awareness of possible work problems that the marginal activist can be appreciated. They know or feel at some level of consciousness that if some teachers are vulnerable today to problems of pay and conditions then others will become vulnerable tomorrow. What 'activates' members therefore is still a problem area for trade unionists,¹³ as is the control of such sudden and often unpredictable surges in membership involvement and interest in union affairs. This thesis seeks to relate the various explanations for membership participation (or its lack) to the actual strategies of competing groups within the NUT at a time of economic and organisational change for the members of that union.

An awareness of these central problems persuaded the NUT to appoint regional and district officials with some responsibility for recruitment and the development of school representatives' training. Roy¹⁴ follows the conclusion of Tropp¹⁵ that an overpowerful central administration dominated the Executive for too long and discouraged membership participation. This gradually meant that union policy failed to keep up with membership aspirations. The low level of activity by members and local associations tended to mean that older and senior teachers held local office, and were the least sensitive group to changes in the pay and conditions of the profession. They were also the least able to resist the renewed organisational challenge of the NAS.¹⁶ The upsurge in teacher militancy in the late 1960s forced this old guard out of office in some large city associations, and brought the realisation that control and success of the NUT required for the moment more debate and more involvement at local and school level. In 1969 one commentator could write:

"... but what of the ordinary rank and file member? Why does he join a union, what does he expect from his membership, and how does he view his union's activities? Above all, what is his own part in these activities? ... we have very little precise knowledge of the behaviour of rank and file members of English teachers' unions." 17

This knowledge gap was not really filled by the efforts of Margerison and Elliott¹⁸ in 1970. They did not seek to investigate the vital processes that convert inactive members into active ones, although they did show that such a conversion had taken place for a significant minority of teacher trade unionists. Equally Manzer¹⁹ fails to explore the 'activation' of NUT members. His dismissal of the problem as due to a simple conspiracy of the left operating in an over-democratic union structure is hardly worthy of serious consideration. The answer to the move towards more membership participation lies in the balance of strategies of competing groups, changes in terms and conditions of service, organisational crisis, and a new cultural commitment to democracy (of the liberal representative kind) among a significant minority of new teachers. These general points resolve themselves into a series of testable hypotheses developed from the study of local A and in part based on the work of other experts.

For example, Sayles and Strauss²⁰ concentrated their study on the varying levels of union activity by different work groups in the same plant. They argued that the necessary condition for a work group to initially turn to the trade union for assistance is some form of prior pro-union attitude. Dissatisfaction only leads to union action, on this view, if those involved believe that the union can help. This positive perception of the union role is more likely to be present if the work group is homogeneous, strategically placed (this often coincided with high status and pay), and if the work group contains union activists able to channel the frustrations of members into union action. Shop floor leaders and activists are crucial in this analysis in changing members' perceptions as to the efficacy of trade union activity. This study was supported by Seidman's²¹ survey of local leaders. He found that the trigger of activation was a specific experience with management linked to a prior pro-union attitude. These studies fit in with attempts to discover the mechanisms by which members are 'socialised' into the sub-culture of trade union life. While the dangers of such an approach can be seen in the absurd conclusions of Kyllonen²² yet the benefits are found in the work of Dean.²³ She found that in plants with 'good' industrial relations workers were either

pro-union and pro-management or anti-both. In addition the pro-union activists were the most 'socially integrated' group. If industrial-relations then became 'bad' the pro-union views went with anti-management views, and members with 'low integration' also became active.

Another related position on activation comes from Faunce²⁴ on the size of local associations. He argues that in the UAW large locals contribute more to democratic processes in the national union, and that there are problems in using customary indexes of democracy for small locals. He links this with the operation of political groups. His findings can be set within the more general work of Tannenbaum and Kahn.²⁵ They seek to distinguish between active and inactive locals and members in order to see which factors are relevant for activation. They stressed as important personal factors such as marital status, sex, education, age, place of origin, and the attitudes of family and friends. These pro-union factors in the backgrounds of individual workers are then activated by work and union experiences. These include mixing with union activists and ideologically coherent work mates, management decisions and local and national union successes. The local union organisation therefore is a vital part of the total package of factors, and political divisions within it crucial for union democracy and membership participation. And it is the school representative who is the cornerstone of NUT local organisation.

The main contact members have with the union remains the school representative. While many holders of this office perform the bare minimum of their duties and may have only a marginally greater knowledge of union affairs than the inactive member, yet the experience is never completely without meaning and the constant movement of members in and out of the job of 'rep' provides a continual flow of union activists.

The evidence from Table 3 shows that school representatives are more active than the ordinary member, but there are some school representatives who remain as inactive as the bulk of the membership. This applies particularly in small primary or special schools with only one or two NUT members. The school representative will also tend to be a man rather than a woman in proportion to the sex ratio of members, and will come from the 26-36

TABLE 3 **DETAILS ABOUT THE NATURE OF SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVES**

N = 207	%	School Representative	Ordinary Member
Q1 Level of activity			
Very active	50		20
Active	40		45
Inactive	10		35
Q2 Sex			
Male	30		25
Female	70		75
Q3 Age			
Under 25	20		55
26-35	50		25
Over 36	30		20
Q4 Type of school			
Primary	65		50
Secondary	35		50
Q5 Qualification			
Graduate	35		30
Non-graduate	65		70
Q6 Politics			
Conservative	0		10
Liberal	10		30
Labour	70		50
Other left	15		5
Other	5		5

age range. He will be a graduate in higher proportion than among members. There are more primary school teachers who are representatives than by proportion of members because the ratio of representatives to numbers in the school is much higher in primary schools. Finally the school representative is to be found in greater numbers than in proportion to total members among Labour and leftwing teachers. The whole picture shows that those school representatives in primary schools will tend to be 'active' women, while those in secondary schools will be 'very active' men. Armed with the distinctions between primary and secondary school members, between those teachers set in the school structure and those passing-through, and between inactive members and school representatives the analysis of local A can proceed to a closer examination of the local leaders.

The local leadership

Local trade union leaders are by definition active members (although not all activists are leaders). They emerge as leaders through the holding of some official position either as an officer of the association, or as a member of the association committee. Most are now or have been school representatives, and like their junior officials tend to be concentrated among certain types of member. Not least the political activists. It is the ability of that group of members, especially if their activity in politics is left rather than right, to influence the local association through the holding of office that is of the greatest interest to this study.

The local association is formally run by a committee elected every year at the AGM, and meets about once a month. The main power centre remains the Officers of the local association who include the President, Ex-President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and others of less importance. The Secretary is the most important figure, but the power disposition of the leaders depends partly on personality and partly upon political alliances. The Officers answer to the Committee, and the Committee answers to the whole membership at general meetings. In formal terms the activities of the group of local leaders can be illustrated with references to

attendance figures at Committee meetings, and by the continuity of the main leadership set. The evidence for this comes from the minutes and membership book for the local association for 1965-1972 as seen in Table 4. From this it can be noted that only about half the members of the Committee are regular attenders at meetings, and most of these are or have been or will soon be Officers. The concept of an 'inner circle' may sound somewhat conspiratorial, but it refers to the real fact that formal power resides with a small number of members at any one time. The 'outer circle' refers to those members of the Committee not so concerned with regular duties and a few active school representatives not on the Committee. It can also be seen that many of the leadership come from a small selection of larger schools in the area. This is in part due to the ability of a well organised school to 'turn out' members to vote for their candidate in local elections. Even with fairly strong forces helping incumbents there was an important change in some of the leading positions in 1969. In the previous year some new leadership figures had emerged from the more militant movement among members, and by 1972 they had come to dominate the local leadership. The move was towards the younger members, the more leftwing and to some extent women in primary schools. The wave of activity over the interim award struggle in 1969-1970 brought in new leaders who consolidated their position in the years after. In line with the revival of militancy and the new leaders was the re-emergence of the Young Teacher section which provided many of the new leadership. As part of the style of the younger leaders and as a reaction to the increased level of industrial action the association made strenuous efforts to improve the quality of relations between the local leadership and the schools through the school representatives. By 1972 the Committee was composed of a politically mixed group of radical young teachers formed around Rank and File. This group was in opposition to the broad left teachers who included a mixture of CP members, left Labour Party and non-aligned socialists.

The core of the local leadership is very small indeed. I estimate that only about 15 members of the association still there had ever been Officers, and about 70 members on the Committee: that is only about 4% of the entire membership had ever been in any kind of leading position. A

disproportionate number of these were members of either the CP (4 members of the inner circle in 1972, and about the same number since 1968), or IS (3 members of the inner circle in 1972, and probably 2 members since 1968). The Communist presence in terms of members of the Party holding office goes back to 1960 for present members, but any real influence only comes in the late 1960s. The Rank and File can claim no main posts in the local association, but since the early 1970s they had some leading members on the Committee. The rest of the leadership tends to be a mixture of left Labour (mainly the younger radicals) and non-political progressives (mainly the older teachers concerned with mainly professional issues).

TABLE 4 SOME FACTS ABOUT THE LOCAL LEADERSHIP 1965-1972²⁶

	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972
Number of Committee meetings	8	10	10	9	9	8	10	10
Average attendance	12	15	12	10	16	17	18	18
Highest % attendance	50	63	40	40	65	47	52	52
Inner circle (women)	12(4)	17(6)	13(6)	14(6)	22(10)	22(10)	16(8)	23(11)
Outer circle	18	16	20	10	20	21	25	20
Numbers still in the inner circle from previous years	-	11	11	8	11	14	13	18
School reps. from large schools in the inner circle	5	9	9	7	4	5	4	4

The various political groups operated in different ways. The IS members tended to work more at the level of a few schools where their influence was strong, and use those as a means of rallying members to general meetings over certain key issues. Some of the time they could attract many teachers concerned with events and sympathetic to left politics, but more often they failed to win either the issue or any major positions

within the local association. They met as a Rank and File group independently of the union, and tended to take their positions from either their journals (Rank and File, Socialist Worker) or from other local association Rank and File members they met. While their tactical efforts were at times well co-ordinated their lack of a coherent policy and strategy meant that they tended to isolate themselves from the membership. In contrast the broad left tended to concentrate more at the level of the Committee and the election of Officers. In this and in their mobilising attempts on some issues they always made the effort to link up with other left forces among the membership. Some of the younger CP members sometimes sided with Rank and File, while older ones associated more with Labour Party activists. At the same time as this rather self-effacing broad approach the CP also met as a group and was in touch with the London advisory committee for education of the CP London District, and took policy from their journals (Education Today and Tomorrow, Morning Star).

Other members of the leadership were not closely linked to any group, and tended either to fall in with the proposals of the political activists or to argue a non-political national NUT position based on their interpretation of the views of the majority of the members. Within this highly organised political leadership there remained the essential tasks of union organisation. This tended to be controlled by the local Secretary²⁷ (started in 1971 after being an active member of the Young Teacher section, and a politically active left wing member of the Labour Party), and the local Treasurer²⁸ (an older leader of the local association whose politics varied from sympathy with the CP to sympathy with the moderate part of the Executive: he was a Head teacher and had been President of the association in 1965). In all areas of leadership activity (political fighting and organisational efforts) the leaders constantly appealed to the membership as the final judges of the correctness of a policy, statement or action. In doing so they claimed both the legitimacy of democratic decision making and knowledge of the members' interests and wishes. A claim now examined in more detail.

The politics of rule changes

The motives of activists, their leadership qualities and their use of left political analyses to capture policy, action and leaders can be crystallised in an episode in local A relating initially to changes in the rules but raising wider personal, political and constitutional issues for the union and its active members.

The alteration of local association rules tends to be an occasion for the purists among local leaders. In a situation with competing political groups, however, the change of a rule may help sway the delicate balance in favour of one faction. The process by which rules are amended is far removed from the experiences or interests of most members, and often appears to those not involved in the subtleties of union in-fighting to be a "boring waste of time".²⁹ In local A the Rank and File based their tactics upon the need to extend union democracy, by which they meant to limit the decision powers of leaders and to encourage the decision participation of members. In practice this meant in local A a limit on the powers of the Officers and Committee and an extension of the powers of general meetings: the point being that in elections the broad left alliance won all keyposts, but at meetings the Rank and File could find a majority of support on some issues. Some of their suggestions for increased democracy within the union had the support of those younger members of the political left in favour of more open union processes, but they were opposed by a combination of CP members and representative democrats. This latter group felt that more democracy meant more Rank and File control, and so in practice less democracy. The first proposed rule change was to the effect that officers and Committee members who miss 3 consecutive meetings of the same kind should be reported to the general meeting. This was to put pressure on them to maintain links with members. The motion was unopposed, and was just the prelude to more substantial attempts at rule changes.

The next set of proposals were put by the local IS leader who wanted the 7 delegates from the local association to ILTA Council³⁰ to report direct to general meetings and not to the Committee, and that those delegates

should be ex officio on the Committee, and that they be elected at general meetings and not at Committee meetings. His argument was that the general meeting was the supreme decision-making organ of the association and so should have full control over delegates to such an important body as the divisional council. The point behind the suggestions was that at general meetings the Rank and File can muster up majority support, while on the Committee they tend to be in a permanent minority. The opposition knew the tactics being used and argued against the changes on the grounds that delegates were mandated and fully accountable already, and that it would undermine the role of the Committee which is designed to hear detailed reports while general meetings are not suitable places for such long and often tedious sessions. The vote was 28 for and 15 against the extension of power to general meetings.

At a subsequent general meeting³¹ two other rule changes were proposed by the Rank and File along the same lines of reducing the power of the Officers and Committee in favour of general meetings. The first was a change with regard to the power of the Chair at meetings. At the time, according to the rules of local A, if the chairman's ruling was challenged then the challenge was debated at the next meeting in order to prevent disruption and to prevent attempts to discredit the President. The new proposals meant that when a challenge occurred the Chairman and challenger were allowed to defend their positions and then the meeting would decide by a simple majority who was correct. This change (since reversed by national rule changes³²) went through by 80 votes to 20 indicating again the support of many younger activists for the maximum of democratic practice as presented by the Rank and File. The motives for the support given to Rank and File on this issue were associated with the young teachers views on authority and the power of the Head (since most Presidents of the local association were Head or deputy Head teachers). The final change of interest was on a point where the question of authority was over-ridden by the need to protect the inactive members from snap decisions by some activists. The proposed rule change was that a motion to suspend standing orders required a 2/3 majority and not a simple majority. The political left proposed it in order to prevent motions not on the agenda from being sprung on meetings not equipped to decide upon them (based

on their experience of strike calls). The Rank and File opposed the change on the grounds that a simple majority was the most democratic way to proceed in any situation. The rule change was carried by 40 votes to 38, which shows the limited hold Rank and File views had over many local activists.

The politics of union discipline

The lesson from these rule changes is that the Rank and File achieved certain additional control over local policy through increasing the powers of the general meeting, but in doing that they alienated many members either on the grounds that they did not see the relevance of much of the political tactics for the benefit of the local membership or because it meant that general meetings would be even less attractive to members than before and so reduce the level of membership participation. This trend was encouraged by a personality clash between the leading IS member in the local association and the President who was a member of the CP. The general meeting on July 11th 1973 began with a statement from the President on the improper behaviour of the IS leader. He stated that the Officers and Committee would have to discuss the case and refused to make any other comment. At that point 20 members of Rank and File walked out of the meeting. The Officers met during the summer holidays and reported to a Committee meeting on September 10th: the member was to be censured for including a motion on the agenda for a meeting without authority and for not apologising. The Committee agreed by 12 votes to 4 to present the censure motion at the next general meeting.

The two camps rallied their forces for the forthcoming clash. The IS member was a leading activist in Rank and File and contributed articles to both Rank and File and Socialist Worker. He was the central figure in local A's Rank and File group and had attracted around himself about 30 supporters. The political left had no comparable figure and was run by the coalition of the local Secretary and Treasurer (left Labour) and the President and 2 Past Presidents (all in the CP). The vital meeting came on September 26th 1973 when over 100 members attended to debate the London allowance issue. This meant that the mood of the meeting was militant

and impatient. In an atmosphere of anticipation the Vice-President's statement reprimanding the IS leader for breaking the rules was received with anger since the majority saw it either as irrelevant or disliked a militant being hounded by the trade union leaders over a trivial mistake. The Rank and File seized on the mood of the meeting and asked for the reprimand to be cancelled and the whole matter ended. This was agreed by 41 votes to 21 (with over 40 abstentions). The feelings generated by this vote helped the same IS member to win the local nomination for Vice-President of ILTA against a popular political left opponent backed by the Committee: the victory was 37 to 26 (again with over 40 abstentions).

The meeting then debated the main issue of strike action, but at 7.40 (2½ hours after the start of the meeting) the President proposed another motion to censure the IS member for his admitted misconduct. He argued that the duty of the President of any local association was to make sure that the rules were obeyed and that directives of the Officers followed. He continued that the democracy of the union was at stake since the rules were "the safeguard of democracy", and that Officers are the elected representatives of the members. The seconder of the motion noted that the local association must be united within the rules of the union, and that it was normal to discipline wrongdoers and that this case was no exception. After a good deal of bitter interchange between the Rank and File and the broad left the matter was 'left on the table'. The aftermath of this meeting was that the IS member lost ground among some of the activists because of his refusal to submit to trade union discipline, and that the President lost ground among some members because of the strict way in which he dealt with an affair that appeared to be rather trivial. The general outcome was that many members were even more disillusioned with the operation of the local leadership and ground won on issues like the London allowance was partially lost over this dispute.

In the October general meeting of local A the tide of Rank and File support remained high as active members identified them as major protagonists in favour of militant action on the London allowance. The election of delegates for the Annual Conference saw two Rank and File

candidates elected (including the IS leader) along with two from the younger section of the political left: those defeated included the President. As a result of this vote and due to a loss of face over the misconduct case the President resigned in November. The first time this had happened in this association. In a letter he sent out to all members in all schools he warned that badly attended and unrepresentative general meetings passed policies which could divide the membership and destroy the power of the local association to mobilise members around genuine issues of wide importance. The Rank and File reply was that general meetings made policy and not the members. In the election for a temporary successor the local Secretary urged members to attend the meeting:

"For it is only in this way, through properly constituted and policy-making general meetings that the Association can grow and develop policies that can be seen to be representative of all 1,500 members". 33

Well over 100 did attend³⁴ and the candidate of the left alliance (an older member of the CP) defeated the Rank and File candidate by 79 votes to 32. This shows the real limits to Rank and File support among most members, and was underlined in the election for Vice-President at the February 1974 AGM when the left alliance candidate defeated the Rank and File by 71 votes to 47.

The rule changes and the dispute between the President and a leading member of Rank and File are the kind of examples of local association activity that makes so many members see the antics of the leaders as irrelevant 'politicking'. Over half of the inactive members said that they did not attend meetings because they had some other commitment which was more important, and this low level of priority for union activity is explained by inactive members in terms of feelings of powerlessness ("I cannot influence decisions"; "nothing is achieved by attending"; "nothing to do with me"), and also several expressed anger at the political nature of much of the discussion.³⁵ In addition the amount of constitutional procedure and the 'in-crowd' atmosphere deterred many members who attended one meeting from going again. It therefore appears

that the kind of democracy that denies the role of leaders and wants to reduce every decision to the will of a general meeting entails in the present context of teacher trade unionism a decline in the actual democracy in any local association.

While this pattern of Rank and File versus the broad left was typical of local A at the time it also resulted in some genuine attempts to involve a wider group of members and inform all members of local union debates, decisions and elections. This movement came jointly from liberal representative democrats, the political left and Rank and File. They all sought to win control through an extension of local democracy by an appeal to the membership in the schools. The next section shows one way this was attempted, and the impact of those measures on membership activity levels and attitudes.

1.2 Actions and attitudes: the members join-in

"The biggest demonstration was on the afternoon of Tuesday 3rd March, when teachers on strike in Southwark, Birmingham, Waltham Forest and others from all over Britain marched to the House of Commons. It was that evening that it was announced that the Secretary of State for Education had stepped in and the teachers had been granted nearly their full demand." 36

(History of local A)

"So apart from a sense of depression, because no teacher is happy to leave his pupils unattended, there is also a sense of exhilaration among the strikers. There is the new stirring unity in the profession . . . and a feeling of solidarity in a good cause." 37

(NUT Member)

Activists within local A of the NUT formed themselves into two main groups: the Rank and File and the broad left. The latter held most positions as officers and delegates, and also could rely on a fairly stable majority at committee meetings. At general meetings and special general meetings, however, the Rank and File were able on occasion to win a majority for certain policy issues and to secure the election of their own delegates to outside bodies. This ability to call more and more

meetings to secure victory on certain tactical questions meant the counter-move by the left incumbents to try to involve more members. The relationship between current activists and the majority of inactive members is of the greatest importance for the local association and the union. This section examines that relationship and also seeks the views of the membership on questions about the operation and leadership of local A. The answers given go some way to explain the impact of the competition between left groups for local control of the members, and also the success of the strategies pursued.

One of the more powerful instruments of communications between members and activists, and the one most likely to increase the trade union awareness of members, is direct action. Direct action is the most public act of trade unionists, and as such tends to involve national leaders, political group members and local association members. The experience of such action and attitudes to it are important in any assessment of activist/member links, and of the competing strategies of each left group.

Some of the members in this area had experienced strike action in the recent past.³⁸ Important waves of militant action like the 1969-1970 interim pay strikes can have permanent effects in shifting the attitudes of members, and they may result in changes in the leadership which correspond to the new forms of struggle. The extent of membership involvement is important in that it brings into union life groups hitherto isolated or reluctant parts of the union membership. In February 1969 the local Committee voted unanimously to lobby the Executive over the pay settlement, and began a local campaign to win members for action.³⁹ The local leaders wanted to develop the manifest feelings of many members in order to put pressure at national level for militant action. Part of the strategy of persuasion was the use of the newly revived Young Teachers section under the leadership of young radicals willing to visit many schools to talk to the members. Another tactic was the use of school branches to keep up pressure on the local Committee. At a meeting on March 10th 1969 the following motion was passed from one of the largest and most militant local Comprehensives:

"NUT members in X school express to local A their dismay at the decision taken by the NUT special salaries conference on 15th February to accept the award offered . . . we now ask local A to request ILTA to convene . . . a general meeting of members with a view to planning immediate action."

The relations between the schools and the local leadership developed through the summer and by November a meeting of the local association could attract over 150 members to support the Executive's call for strike action.⁴⁰ That meeting also elected delegates for the NUT Conference: of the 8 elected 4 were members of the CP, 3 were left Labour and 1 was a non-aligned militant. In line with this move to the 'left' among the local leadership the local Action Committee voted out a former President of the association who had opposed strike action and replaced him with a leading member of the local IS group. In January 1970 another meeting on salaries produced the record turnout of about 470 members to hear Max Morris, and to decide "to conduct the necessary referendum of the members of the association" (carried 460 to 8) to prepare for strike action. The area experienced extensive strike action as follows: In December 1969 1 secondary and 1 primary school were out for 2 weeks; in January they were joined by 2 more primary and 2 more secondary schools; and between February 25th and March 6th the vast majority of members had stopped work. Over 120 schools were involved, and about 1,400 members of the local association.

The assessment of this action on local teachers comes from their own local history:

"One of the most important campaigns in the history of local A of the NUT was the one for the interim pay award, in the winter of 1969-1970 . . . for all concerned the experience was new if not a little bizarre. Most people were on strike for the first time and therefore cast into a situation which was entirely foreign and not a little disturbing. For older members participation required a great psychological shift. The tradition had always been that professional people simply do not do this sort of thing! Teachers for the first time found themselves well in the public eye, the focus of attention for the mass media and faced with the necessity of justifying their actions in front of a critical audience . . . what distinguished the teachers' strike from other industrial action was the amount of rank and file participation during the period while not at work". 41

The struggle had helped the local association forge links with parents and other local trade unions, and it affiliated to the local Trades Council. As the wave of enthusiasm died down the older leaders became more and more isolated and upset by the more radical attitudes of those leaders brought to power in the months of the strike. Many of the more traditional members of the Committee dropped out over issues like refusal to contribute to Gould's retirement fund;⁴² support for the Schools Action Union⁴³ and the political fight against the Industrial Relations Act. But the now firmly radical Committee was also split between the Rank and File members and the alliance of older CP members with left Labour younger teachers. On many issues the leaders agreed, and the majority vacillated between the two dominant groups. All the while the local leaders wanted to win support among the members for a new round of action over the London allowance. This entailed the further development of relations with schools and the rebuilding of the loss in membership after 1970 (due in part to the actions taken, but more due to the large increase in union subscription).⁴⁴ One method of linking up with schools and members was through a regular Newsletter, and the editorship of that circular became a major political battle within the local Officers. The result was that the IS member in charge was censured, and a decision taken that all articles were to be vetted by the Officers before publication. The lines of battle were being drawn for the fight to win support in 1973/74.

The emphasis on the previous strike experience of members is to explain the importance of traditions of action among leaders and members in the schools in breaking-down some of the ideological inhibitions⁴⁵ of teachers and of their likely reaction to strike calls in the future. Table 5 sets out the more detailed experiences of the 1973-4 membership with regard to industrial action, and shows that most inactive members have little personal knowledge of such activities.

The evidence from Table 5 shows that most inactive members are either new teachers who are the least active section of members or those members who oppose militant action by the union. This is borne out by an analysis of the relation between the length of time a member has been in the union and the level of activity. The extent to which involvement in industrial

TABLE 5 TRADE UNION ACTION OF MEMBERS BY LEVEL OF ACTIVITY

%		Inactive	Active	Very Active	All
Q1	Have you ever attended a NUT rally?				
	Yes	0	85	95	60
Q2	Have you ever attended a NUT demonstration?				
	Yes	15	85	95	65
Q3	Have you ever been on strike?				
	Yes	25	85	90	70
Q4	Have you ever picketed?				
	Yes	0	25	35	20

action creates a permanent shift in the traditions of an area in terms of both the actual personnel involved and the atmosphere in schools can be seen from an analysis of answers given to questions on strikes by members. Table 6 shows the views of members on this by level of activity and by type of school.

The evidence of Table 6 indicates that only among the 'very active' members of the local association is there a permanent and large majority in favour of strike action and militancy in general and in the specific case of the London allowance. Amongst the rest of the membership there is a fairly even divide for and against more action in general, although there is a clear majority in favour of action on the London allowance. There is no marked difference between primary and secondary responses, which indicates the extent to which feelings of frustration and the need for union action have reached even the small primary schools with their traditionally inactive members. The most active section of the membership both support more strike action and have experienced more strike action than other groups, but the indications are that there is still important numbers of inactive teachers willing to join-in a militant campaign on the issue of the London allowance. The development of that feeling into action, and the winning over of those members opposed to strike action, depends upon the relationships between the members in the schools and the local leaders. It would be misleading to suggest that it is a simple case of local Committee members meeting inactive members with the intention of convincing them that strike action will solve their lost economic and status position. There is no such homogenous alignment nor any easy reasons for industrial action. As one Labour Party supporter on the Committee said: "I totally disagree with NUT one day and political strikes. I was pro latter some years ago, but have modified my views"; and this was echoed by an active union member in the Conservative Party: "strikes must not be a mindless confrontation with government in an attempt to appear a 'force to be reckoned with'". Another shade of opinion comes from an inactive member of the union who supports the Labour Party: "I would argue that striking for teachers does not appear an effective weapon against a government . . . I believe the union should be fairly militant, but can't we be more effective than striking?". These statements indicate the variety of opinion facing local leaders in their relations with members.

TABLE 6 ATTITUDES TO INDUSTRIAL ACTION BY TYPE OF SCHOOL AND LEVEL OF ACTIVITY

	%	Inactive			Active			Very Active			All
		P	S	All	P	S	All	P	S	All	
Q1 Should the NUT be more militant?											
Yes		40	45	40	30	55	40	70	90	85	55
Unsure		10	20	15	10	5	10	10	5	5	10
No		50	35	45	60	40	50	20	5	10	35
Q2 Does the NUT need to use the strike weapon?											
Yes		45	30	35	35	35	35	70	70	65	40
Unsure		10	30	25	25	25	25	15	10	15	25
No		45	40	40	40	40	40	15	20	20	35
Q3 Should the NUT call a strike on London Allowance?											
Yes		50	60	50	50	55	50	80	70	75	60
Unsure		15	10	15	15	15	15	0	10	5	15
No		35	30	35	35	30	35	20	20	20	25

The central problem of active and leftwing local leaders trying to convince and lead inactive and often not leftwing members can best be understood through two incidents that occurred in local A. The lessons from them go some way to explain this thesis on democratic paradox.

The politics of strike calls and majority opinion

The AGM of local A in February 1973 passed a motion committing the local association to strike action over the London allowance campaign. The meeting was attended by 55 members, and on the agenda sent out to all schools there was no motion on strike action. Members of the Rank and File group argued that the motion was a matter of urgency and that it could not have been presented 15 days before the meeting as required by rule 14 of the local association rules for 1972. The proposers of the motion won the decision to suspend standing orders to take the main motion, and then won that vote by 38 votes to 8. The Rank and File view that prevailed held that most members wanted strike action and were frustrated by the lack of militant leadership from the Executive and from the local Committee. The opposition (mainly the broad left) took the line that the members were not as eager for militant action as the Rank and File thought, and that the test of member interest was to publicise that such a decision was to be taken at the next meeting and see the response. The victory of the Rank and File at the AGM on this motion owed much to prior coordination of support, and to their ability to point out that other local associations in the area had already passed the same motion through Rank and File pressure. The impression at the meeting was that members in the schools throughout London wanted this action and that it was the duty of the leaders to back that demand. The mood and the tactics of the proposers of the strike motion convinced many of the younger teachers on the left to support the Rank and File on this, although in the elections for Vice-President at the same meeting the Rank and File was defeated.

The new President of local A was very concerned by the strike decision and by the tactics of the Rank and File. In his presidential address to that same AGM he argued strongly for the widest possible unity of the members in any industrial action. As he said:

"Such unity comes from the maximum participation by the many in response to the legitimate and realisable considerations of the few". 47

A concise statement of strategy of the broad left, and in accord with CP policy as he was an established member of that Party. The follow up to his plea for unity was an attack on the dominance by over-militant minority groups (the Rank and File), and their tendency to alienate members. The practice of his views was seen when in response to the strike call he organised a meeting of local Officers on April 9th to discuss that decision. The Officers agreed that the membership was 'fed up' with the tactics of calling strikes at general meetings attended by a handful of members with no prior warning that such a decision was on the agenda. The Officers consisted of 2 members of the CP and 3 others who referred to themselves as 'left Labour' and part of the broad left group. The President suggested that the rules of the local association be changed so that strike decisions could only be made if the motion to strike was on the agenda sent out to schools. The procedure was to get the local Committee to agree to this, and then to call a special general meeting to change the rules. The general worry was that at a time of militant action and therefore of maximum need for unity the local association was losing credibility with members through the unrepresentative actions of the 'ultra-left'. In addition the Officers were worried about possible Executive moves to centralise all strike decisions, and so wanted to preempt their actions through tighter local control.

The Officers circulated their decision to all schools and asked school representatives to call meetings of members in the schools to discuss the proposal. The vast majority of schools reported back to the Officers (either by letter to the local Secretary or by phone to the local Treasurer) that at well attended school meetings the majority of members opposed the strike call and supported the Officers' proposal to change the rules. The Committee met on April 30th to debate the proposals, and the Rank and File launched a strong attack on the Officers for contacting schools over the head of the Committee and for attempting to limit the power of general meetings of the association. The President replied that the duty of the Officers was to sound out the views of members and to represent them

against the self-appointed interpreters of the wishes of the membership. The Committee voted by 11 to 9 to back the Officers' demand for a special general meeting to change the rules. The vote indicates the close division of support among the left groups, and the serious differences on tactics: confrontation with government and the Executive, or militancy tied to politically respectable compromises.

The local Secretary sent to all schools a letter with the proposed rule change:

"No motion or amendment to a motion calling on the members of the Association to take sanctions of any kind, including strike action, shall be considered by a general meeting unless such a motion or amendment has been included in the published agenda of the meeting". 48

The letter also explained why the Officers thought the change necessary following two recent occasions when general meetings attended by a few members committed the local association to strike action without prior notice. At the special meeting⁴⁹ the local Secretary proposed the rule change as a safeguard for members and in the interest of union democracy. He argued that for strike action to be effective it must have large support and for this it was necessary to encourage members to attend meetings and to have faith in the processes of the local association decision-making. He further noted that teachers were not like factory workers (a point constantly made by the Rank and File), but were scattered in small groups with the requirement of co-ordination and broad unity. The Rank and File opposed the rule change as a curtailment of democracy, and as limiting the ability of local activists who were the main ingredient in any struggle. The motion passed by 25 votes to 14. Even with this attempt by a majority of activists to maintain some form of local democratic control, the eventual outcome was a national rule change preventing local associations from calling strikes without Executive support.⁵⁰ A change carried at conference on the argument that the Rank and File use small and unrepresentative meetings to call strikes.

One practical consequence of this battle was that the broad left among the local leaders realised the urgent need to establish better contacts between

the members in the schools and the local association. This was both a political response to the Rank and File who had little appeal outside the immediate circle of activists, and a trade union response to the recruitment difficulties of the local association at a time of high turnover and of increased competition from other teacher trade unions. The impetus for the new drive to develop the union in the schools came from the Secretary of ILTA,⁵¹ who provided local leaders with a list of suggestions: all members in all schools should be fully informed; all school representatives should meet once a term and be serviced by the Committee; all schools should be visited by a local Officer once a year; and that emphasis should be put on the NUT's role as protector of teachers and provider of benefits (e.g. trading schemes). At a local association general meeting these points were extended: the problem of high number of young teachers; the high turnover of school representatives; The Teacher was ineffective (only 10% of inactive members said they read The Teacher very often/often; while 60% of inactive members said they read it rarely/never)⁵²; union Headquarters was inefficient in servicing local leaders; and that social events for school representatives tended to be failures. As a result the local Secretary produced a document entitled: "Membership, the organisation of secondary and primary schools and the relationship to the Association". The document provides a clear and concise statement of the views of the majority of local leaders (CP members and liberal representative democrats in the Labour Party) and is worth quoting at length:

"The Association has for some time been looking at communication and the relationship between the members in the schools and the Association. One of the functions of trade unionism is to provide support for individual members and represent their collective views . . . With higher teacher mobility, increased pressures in schools etc., the Association feels that communication and organisation are not what they could be . . . We are concerned with the unequal distribution of members in both sectors of education, the isolation of primary members and the need for full democracy and participation in the forming of Association, Union policy and action. The Association wishes to develop a new structure based on a 'co-operative model' whereby primary schools in an immediate area would be able to derive support and be serviced by the Secondary school which, with more members is in a position to help them and in turn, because there are less Secondary schools can be more easily serviced by the Association". 53

Organisational and constitutional reforms thus became part of the political battle between the Rank and File and the broad left in local A; part of the general movement within the union to interest members; and part of the ideological struggle over democratic credentials. By their nature such changes are the concern of the few activists at local level, but they still greatly impinge upon the limited union lives of those key intermediaries, the school representatives. In the argument about what 'activates' trade union members and its parallel argument about membership participation the main area of ignorance, and the one that captures the essence of the democratic paradox, is the contact inactive members have with their local association.

The contacts with and attitudes to the local association of inactive members

General discontent with work content, working conditions and pay allied with changes in the organisation, structure and control of their unions, schools and educational administrations together add up to a powerful background for activity in any professional trade union. The realisation of that at individual level depends on the related concepts of prior ideological orientation and work socialisation. In addition the level and extent of such activation of members depends greatly on local activists and their political and trade union work within the local association. When inactive members see and/or perceive a political debate on top of all the other issues then it is essential for the membership, the political activists and national union policy that members are properly represented, that they are familiar with the relevant debates, and that they have the capacity to make decisions based on knowledge and experience.

Thus a mood of discontent among inactive teachers does not mean a willingness to take industrial action, nor to be more active in the union. Many seek personal solutions to the general pressures by moving school, changing area and leaving the profession. Often the explicit political affiliation of inactive teachers does not provide a reliable guide to their potential for involvement as seen by some of the responses already quoted. One of the most important intervening variables between discontent and action is the relationship between members in schools and the school

representative or some other local leader. It is the enduring power to persuade of this group that makes their political stance so vital to the overall operation and policy of the union, and which makes them so effective in times of crisis. The appreciation of this reality enables left groups within the NUT to mount successive campaigns around their own strategies, and to base them in the strength of local activists. Against this the dominant orthodox representative democrats seek to keep control over events and members through administrative devices such as the constitutionality of strike calls, and political attacks on the divisive policies of the Rank and File.

Whatever the national and local activists fight over and fight for nonetheless the formal face of the union for most members is to be found at school. In many schools some form of informal meeting does now take place of NUT members when the school representative and occasionally a local Committee member will talk about the union's work or about a special issue of concern. In the larger secondary schools these meetings are more formal and are arranged by the school branch of the union. In local A about half of the members said that they attended NUT meetings at school. With or without such meetings the main figure in the school tends to be the school representative, unless there is a member of the local Committee who is not the school representative. The members in the school elect their own representatives, but as in other trade unions⁵⁴ most are appointed through some form of social pressure and/or sense of duty of one member. The importance of this process is limited for most members: about 40% did not even know how their representative was chosen and of the remainder about half thought he was (self)-appointed. Only in large secondary schools with some kind of political division will an election be held, which is unusual.⁵⁵ The main task for the school representative is to inform members about union affairs, and 60% said he did this very often/often and only 15% said it was rarely/never. In contrast 40% of the membership said that the representative asked them their opinion and this was against 35% who said he asked them rarely/never.⁵⁶ The importance of the link with members is shown in Table 7. That demonstrates that for the mass of members the school representative is The Union.

TABLE 7 DO YOU AGREE THAT THE SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVE IS YOUR MAIN CONTACT WITH THE UNION?

%	Inactive	Active	Very Active	All
Strongly agree/agree	80	90	65	80
Unsure	5	5	10	5
Strongly disagree/disagree	15	5	25	15

These findings are supported by the fact that 70% of all members said that they rarely/never were in contact with local Officers, and that 55% said that they received all their union information from the school representative only.⁵⁷ Most members never come across activists either in the formal context of a school meeting and visit, or in the attempts at informal relations through local socials. Only 10% of all members went to socials and these were the activists themselves.⁵⁸ The two other ways in which active members link up with the majority of members in a union context are at meetings of the local association, and through some friendship network.

Table 8 shows the attendance record of members at local meetings, and illustrates that these are not places where local leaders directly influence most members although the events of meetings will be reported back in some way to interested members in the schools through school representatives and friends. This process is very random and means that the members in larger secondary schools are better informed than those in small primary schools.

Given the limited amount of formal contact between active members and the mass of the membership it is worth examining possible informal links through friendship groups at school and in the union. Table 8B provides some evidence for the view that additional union information and influence

TABLE 8 CONTACTS BETWEEN ACTIVE AND INACTIVE MEMBERS

(A) Attendance record at local meetings by level of activity

%	Inactive	Active	Very Active	All
<p>Q1 How often do you attend general meetings?</p> <p>Never</p> <p>Once</p> <p>More than once</p>	<p>95</p> <p>5</p> <p>0</p>	<p>55</p> <p>20</p> <p>25</p>	<p>10</p> <p>5</p> <p>85</p>	<p>55</p> <p>10</p> <p>35</p>
<p>Q2 How often do you attend special general meetings?</p> <p>Never</p> <p>Once</p> <p>More than once</p>	<p>90</p> <p>10</p> <p>0</p>	<p>70</p> <p>20</p> <p>10</p>	<p>30</p> <p>15</p> <p>55</p>	<p>65</p> <p>15</p> <p>20</p>

TABLE 8 (B) FRIENDSHIP GROUPS AND UNION LINKS

%	Inactive	Active	Very Active	All
Q1 Are your school friends in the NUT? Yes	75	75	90	80
Q2 Are your school friends powerful in the local association? Yes	0	15	25	15
Q3 Are your friends in the NUT powerful in the local association? Yes	5	15	30	20
Q4 How often do you discuss union affairs with friends? Very often/often Sometimes Rarely/never	0 20 80	5 20 75	35 35 30	10 25 65

works through this channel, but only in a limited way since the tendency is that active members will have active friends, and inactive members will have inactive friends.

The evidence so far points to limited contact between members at the place of work and leaders of the local association even at a time of considerable unrest among London teachers and with a radical union association. Although there is a lack of direct interaction there remains important indirect links as through the school representative and other members of the NUT in the school. Lack of contact does not mean lack of influence, and the ways in which members perceive their local leaders and association goes some way to explain the kind and the extent of influence members have on leaders and leaders on members. In addition the political views of the teachers may be important in their assessment of a highly (exceptionally) political local Committee and Officers.

The ordinary member in the school will have some view of the way in which his local association is run, and even if it is based on limited and unfair information he will use that perception with regard to his actions within the union on trade union issues. Among the whole membership 40% felt that they could influence the local association while 30% felt that they could not. This relatively favourable position with regard to the 'openness' of the local decision making procedures was despite the view by 65% of the members that the activists ran events and that the other 35% thought the Officers and Committee were in charge. This evidence is supported by more detailed findings with regard to members' views about the importance of their vote in local elections and the control of the local association by any political group. Table 9 shows that the vast majority of all types of members believe that their vote does count in local union affairs, that they can influence local decisions (less clear response), but the picture is less pronounced on perceptions about the centre of power.

While the vast majority of all members think their vote can effect the local leadership this is not reflected in the actual numbers voting. Only 5% of inactive members said that they voted in local elections

TABLE 9 MEMBERS' ATTITUDES TO THEIR POWER AND THE CENTRE OF POWER IN THE LOCAL ASSOCIATION BY TYPE OF SCHOOL AND LEVEL OF ACTIVITY

Z	Inactive			Active			Very Active			All
	P	S	All	P	S	All	P	S	All	
Q1 Does your vote matter in local elections?										
Strongly agree/agree	75	70	70	65	70	65	85	95	90	75
Unsure	10	10	10	10	5	10	10	5	10	10
Strongly disagree/disagree	15	20	20	25	25	25	5	0	0	15
Q2 Can you influence your local association?										
Strongly agree/agree	40	20	30	20	45	35	55	65	65	40
Unsure	35	65	45	35	25	25	20	10	15	30
Strongly disagree/disagree	25	15	25	45	30	40	25	25	20	30
Q3 Is your local association run by a political clique?										
Strongly agree/agree	15	20	15	30	40	35	45	25	35	30
Unsure	80	60	75	60	40	50	20	25	20	50
Strongly disagree/disagree	5	20	10	10	20	15	35	50	45	20
Q4 Who runs your local association?										
Active members	40	35	45	55	60	55	75	100	90	65
Officers	30	35	30	25	25	25	15	0	5	20
Committee	30	30	25	20	15	20	10	0	5	15

compared to 90% of very active members who did vote.⁵⁹ This can be explained partly with reference to the fact that only a minority of inactive members felt sure about their influence on local events. This suggests an awareness of possible changes if different people were elected to office and a feeling that once that is done members become powerless. A further set of reasons for inactive members not voting comes from their stated answers to the question "why do you not vote?". About 25% claimed ignorance of candidates and issues, and another 20% said they were not aware that any elections took place. Another 20% said they were not eligible to vote last time, and the rest gave a mixed bag of reasons around the notion that "they could not be bothered". One major factor in the low vote compared to the view that the vote matters is that all local elections take place at meetings of the local association. The local association had debated the question of postal ballots several times in the recent past, but it was always turned down on the point that they would further discourage membership attendance at meetings.

In answer to the questions on control of the local association the more active members put control more firmly in the hands of activists in general while inactive members were divided between activists and the Officers and Committee. The further from the centre of power the more it appears that a handful of names is in control. This is supported by answers to control by political group. Here inactive members basically did not know, and among those that gave an opinion more thought a clique existed than thought it did not. The activists among secondary school members came out against rule by political minority, but the primary school activists split in favour of a clique. This suggests that those in the main power positions see the local control mechanisms as fairly open, while most other members see them as closed.

The same pattern can be seen with regard to more direct attitudes to the local leaders. Table 10A shows that those closest to the centre of power (secondary school activists) have a much more favourable view of the openness of the local association than other members, but most inactive members do not really have any view about it.

TABLE 10 ATTITUDES OF MEMBERS

(A) To the local leadership by type of school and level of activity

%	Inactive			Active			Very Active			All
	P	S	All	P	S	All	P	S	All	
Q1 Are local leaders responsive to members?										
Strongly agree/agree	20	25	20	15	40	30	60	45	50	35
Unsure	75	65	70	65	30	45	15	25	20	45
Strongly disagree/disagree	5	10	10	20	30	25	25	30	30	20
Q2 Are the local leaders good leaders?										
Strongly agree/agree	30	20	25	30	35	35	60	40	50	35
Unsure	60	80	65	50	45	50	30	45	35	50
Strongly disagree/disagree	10	0	10	20	20	15	10	15	15	15
Q3 Is the local association democratic?										
Strongly agree/agree	40	0	25	25	55	35	35	65	50	40
Unsure	50	70	60	50	40	50	20	15	20	50
Strongly disagree/disagree	10	30	15	25	5	15	45	20	30	10

Inactive members were reluctant to pass judgement on leaders and the association from their position of relative ignorance. Those that did generally gave a more positive response, and primary teachers were more favourable than secondary teachers. Among the most active members opinions were more decisive, and an important minority felt that the local leaders were not up to standard with regard to representing the interests of the members. Here primary teachers were less critical of the leaders themselves, but clearly felt that their problems were not covered by the association and so deemed it undemocratic.

These attempts to gauge membership attitudes towards the local leaders and association are really aimed at substantiating the claims to 'representativeness' of various political groups within the NUT with regard to the policy-making by the few on behalf of the many. The related but distinct concepts of familiarity with issues and the capability of decision-making are themselves thrown into perspective by the high proportion of members (especially inactive ones) who were unsure when confronted with certain questions. It does matter for the members, for the political groups and for the union whether or not leaders are representative, and whether or not members are familiar and capable with regard to democratic procedures. The most alive and potent aspect of these key notions is the political position of local A members by level of activity as shown in Table 10B.

TABLE 10B POLITICAL ATTITUDES

	Inactive	Active	Very Active	All
Conservative	15	10	0	10
Liberal	45	20	5	20
Labour	40	60	70	55
Left of Labour	0	5	20	10
Other	0	5	5	5

The extent to which the political orientations and party membership of activists reflects or represents members is also a guide to the strategies of each group, their disproportionate influence and their level of acceptance by the membership. Table 10B shows that 60% of inactive members support either the Liberals or Conservatives compared with 5% of the most active members. In contrast 90% of the most active align themselves with the Labour Party or groups to its left compared with 40% of inactive members. The clear political bias of the active members and leaders in local A is hardly a surprise since even among the orthodox representative democrats in London associations and among the national leadership the majority are Labour Party supporters.

This political imbalance presents three problems. The first relates to the representativeness (and therefore democratic relevance) of activists and decision-makers. This refers to representativeness in several senses: literally the same sort of people (see section 1 above); politically sensitive to the requirements of their constituents; and expressing the 'true' interests of the majority of teachers. The test of the last two points comes with the results of attitude questions reported later and in the next chapter.

The second problem relates to the nature of familiar and informed debate among activists. The reinforcing aura of knowledge, the special language of discussion and the shared final aims all set the activist apart from and make it difficult to communicate with the inactive non-left members. In this respect attempts to dispatch active members to schools in order to bolster up inactive members may prove irrelevant or counter-productive.

The final problem presented by political unrepresentativeness is that of the reference back to members on key issues. Postal ballots, referenda, and fully attended meetings all ask questions of members. Their ability to answer comes from the specific propaganda of local leaders, daily work experiences, general views of national NUT spokesmen, and the wider Professional and citizen culture. In this sense affiliation to the TUC, for example, may be irrelevant or inappropriate or just incomprehensible to inactive members. Yet activists of all main groups supported

affiliation as a necessary move towards organisational safety and political strength.⁶⁰ It is this sense of accountability that depends so greatly upon an informed membership, which itself is necessary for the operation of union democracy. Its absence creates the paradox that the more democracy is sought by reference to the views of members then the more they may be removed from actual decision-making.

Conclusions

This part of the chapter has attempted to show the nature of the local membership and leadership, and to illustrate the interaction between the members in schools and their union. Given a situation of economic and work place discontent allied to the problems of high turnover among teachers and the special difficulties of inner city schools, the point is to see how members perceive and react to initiatives from active union members with regard to taking action to improve the lot of the school teacher. This local association had an unusually leftwing leadership group and one that was often divided between the Rank and File and a roughly constituted broad left. The effect of both the politics of the leaders and the struggle for power on members' perceptions and actions depends upon the precise issue examined and the structure of the local association in terms of school representatives and links between members and those taking decisions. The analysis has so far been limited to a comparison of active members with inactive ones, their interactions and an assessment of the feelings of the different groups of members.

The question then for representative democracy and for some more radical forms of participation is posed in terms of the ability of local leaders, representatives and spokesmen to act and speak on behalf of local members to other organisations (management, the press) and to other levels of their own union organisation (national, Conference). A failure of 'representativeness', a confusion of activists' concerns with the interests of inactive members, a conflation of the capacity to make decisions by members with the assumed knowledge that those members would want to make those decisions whether consulted or not, all add up to a series of Propositions about trade union democracy and membership participation under the impact of left oppositional intervention.

The task now is to study actual campaigns in which local leaders spoke on behalf of members and acted in their name with appeals for their approval. Once this has been achieved for this local association the next chapter covers similar ground in less detail for three other local associations in order to compare and contrast the influence of politics and leaders on membership participation.

Part 2 : National issues: the test of local power politics

"Whereas all the leaders and active members interviewed agreed that the union should be active politically, only about half of the inactives shared such views, and then mostly with reservations as to the type of activity that be undertaken or the issues that should be acted on. Fully a fourth of the inactives opposed union political action, usually on the ground that the union's proper interests were limited to collective bargaining. A smaller but still significant number had no opinion on the subject, indicating a failure of communication within the local or an insufficient desire on the part of the leaders to inform the general membership on this issue." 61

(Seidmen et al.)

Do you agree that the NUT should be more involved in politics?⁶²

%	Inactive	Active	Very Active	All
Yes	30	30	55	35
No	45	45	25	40
Unsure	25	25	20	25

Part 1 of this chapter examined only one aspect of the central democratic mechanism of links between the wider membership and the union activists and leaders: that within the local association. It showed the problems for politically left leaders competing with each other for credible authority and real power. It also raised the issues of representativeness, familiarity and decision-making capacity. These concepts together help uncover the thesis of democratic paradox in a period of job change and organisation challenge.

The other part of the mechanism are the links between national decision-makers and local association leaders, and between national leaders and the members organised in the local associations. In this sense members receive information from two competing organisational levels and sources, and within the local association they also heard competing left views. In addition most information from both sources went only to active members.

Inactive members received only a few comments from the national press, and usually relied on school representatives for the bulk of their communications. The three case studies that follow show these relationships more clearly, as well as the relevance of the nature of the actual issue to the democratic argument. The cases, although independent instances, reveal the common problems for members and leaders in local A in the period under study.

The work carried out in order to discover how politically active trade union activists influenced inactive members in local A became concentrated on the events surrounding three national issues in 1973/4. The aim in each case is to show how the representative democrats in national power positions sought to control the union's transition to new forms of trade union tactics through constitutional, administrative and political responses. And to also see how the left challenge from Rank and File and the political left attempted to improve their respective positions by the use of certain issues: thus the locus of local power shifted with the successes of local left leaders involved in national decision-making.

The first issue was concerned with the changes in the power of the Young Teacher section of the union. A decision at Executive level was challenged by various groups within the union, and through local agitation and political pressure some parts of the decision were reversed. This case brings out the different approach to the union decision-making processes by different parts of the union membership. The second study was on the London allowance campaign and again analyses how local leaders try to influence national policies according to their political position, and how on an issue about pay the membership in the schools is involved more intensely than on issues of less immediate concern. The last study examines the way in which the Rank and File group in local A attempted to win wide support for a case about the Executive's handling of the disciplinary action against three members of this group. It will show how the prior ideological position of a political party operating within a trade union can utilise certain events to try to win mass support for that party.

2.1 The Young Teacher Movement

The Teacher

"The form of the young teacher movement is to be radically changed following a decision of the Executive" 63

Rank and File

"It must be clear to all who follow union affairs that this action has been taken for largely political reasons." 64

On November 24th 1972 The Teacher announced a list of changes in the Young Teacher section:

"The age limit for membership is to be reduced from 35 to 27 . . . and the National YT Conference is to be abandoned . . . The National YT Advisory Committee is also to be wound up . . . But local teachers associations will still be able to keep young teacher sections if they wish". 65

The editorial⁶⁶ of the same edition of the The Teacher provided some of the reasons for the decision. The argument was that the expansion in education had meant that more than half of all teachers were under 35, and that the original intention of the young teacher section to train the minority of the young members of the profession in trade union ways no longer applied. Another point was that since young and old teachers have the same interests so the debates and decisions at the National YT Annual Conference were the same. As the editorial continued:

"This duplication is one reason which led the Executive to its decision last week to discontinue the YT conference as a separate fixture. They also had in mind that the conference is very expensive". 67

The last specific point made was that only 4.7% of young teachers voted for the NYTAC, which shows lack of support and interest. Implicit in some of the Executive's case was the notion that the young teachers no longer represented a minority of members but a majority and so it appeared as if the union was making decisions in two different places which could weaken the unity of the union when dealing with outside bodies. This point is not made openly but underlies the conclusion of the editorial.

"The hope, therefore, is that the ending of the national institutions of the young teachers within the NUT will be a positive encouragement to younger teachers to take an active part in the Union as a whole, to seek office in local associations and to stand for the Executive . . . The NUT has always enjoyed far greater active participation by members than most other unions, but in common with most democratic organisations it needs to make constant efforts to keep up interest". 68

The decision of the Executive was not unanimous. The membership committee under the chairmanship of John Gray made the proposals to the full Executive. There was some opposition to lowering the age limit to 27 and a suggestion that it should be 30 was defeated. An amendment to maintain the National YT advisory committee was lost by 19 votes to 13, and indicates that the main element of the militant group on the Executive opposed the abolition of the advisory committee. 69

The reaction of the Rank and File group to the decision was immediate and strong. In the Winter 1972 edition of their journal in an article called 'Democracy under attack' it was argued that:

"The discussions on the NYTAC . . . revealed that the largest single factor in the decision was the success of Rank and File policies at the recent YT conference . . . it is important for us to recognise what the real issue is. And this is the concept of Union democracy. Our Executive are reaching in the classic bureaucratic manner to those within the Union who dissent from their position . . . We have seen how at the last annual conference, Executive manipulation of the Agenda prevented discussion of all but a handful of Local Association resolutions . . . It is now clear that many members of the Executive are prepared to go to any lengths to stifle opposition. . . the right to dissent is the life's blood of any democratic institution."70

The article is written in a way to support the more general theory of the IS leaders of Rank and File. They see the decision as a simple case of Executive bureaucrats against the feelings and interests of ordinary members, and so vindicate their claim to be the champions of democracy within the union. They do make a correct point about the timing of the decision with regard to the resolutions passed at the YT conference opposing union policy. The failure at this early stage of the Executive to make

open their worries about sections of the union having policies contrary to official union policy (especially on salaries) enabled the Rank and File to develop the issue at local level more effectively.

These arguments were taken up by the young teacher section of local A. This group had been revitalised in 1968 and provided a power base for several members of the local leadership. Its composition was more radical and with more women from primary schools than the rest of the local activists. This was in part due to the influx of young teachers active in the student and women's movements at college and university. The young teachers became a focus for radical politics around the Rank and File, although it contained the division between those Rank and File members oriented to the IS and those more inclined to the broad alliance of other left groups. The group opposed the decision by the Executive over the fate of the YTs nationally and proposed a motion to the general meeting of the association held on January 24th 1973 calling for total opposition to the Executive, opposition at the forthcoming Annual Conference, and for mass action through the power of ILTA. This motion was passed, and at another meeting in February⁷¹ the young teachers took up the Rank and File line that the Executive had acted in response to the decisions of the previous YT conference. In particular the local delegates to that conference pointed out that the salary motion was in opposition to NUT policy. All 5 delegates were in fact associated with Rank and File: 2 were members of the IS, 2 were sympathetic and 1 represented a left Labour position. Although the Rank and File were able at this time to win the local association to support them at the level of local policy there was little organised effort with regard to gaining wider support in the schools, or with regard to fighting for positive action within the leadership. This was partly because the local CP members in the leadership took a different line on the Executive's actions.

The members of the CP in the local leadership were very influential among the broad left group which effectively controlled the association. Their attitude to the decision on the young teachers was indicative of the ground they held between Rank and File and the Executive. In the Autumn 1972 edition of their journal there was an article entitled 'Ultra-leftism and the Teachers' in which the section on young teachers argues that:

"Entrism follows a simple pattern. Unsuspecting local associations, especially militant ones, are so delighted to find young teachers (up to 35!) who wish to be active that it is comparatively easy for ultra-lefts to achieve control of YT committees and ensure that YTs hear nothing but the ultra-left slant presented as the general viewpoint of YTs and the rank and file (no capitals) of the Union generally. The next stage is to rally enough of these YTs, in alliance with one or two older and more experienced ultra-lefts, to tackle the 'reactionary old squares' in the parent local Association.

Every meeting then becomes a long series of strident resolutions either demanding the most advanced forms of industrial action as the automatic reaction to every issue major or minor; or with sharp political overtones, interspersed with endless bickering over rules and procedure, and constant attacks on local officers if they stand in their way. The essential routine work of the local Association on behalf of its members is swept contemptuously aside unless it can be made to involve sharp confrontation with local head teachers, the Divisional Office and the LEA, or, of course, the local officers, the County Association and the national Executive.

The effect of all this, whatever the aim, is to drive away many of the ordinary members from the meetings . . . In the schools it is comparatively easy to become school correspondent, presenting a tendentious version of Union affairs to colleagues and influencing elections positively and negatively". 72

This analysis is based on an appraisal of IS strategy and Rank and File practice as seen from the point of view of immediate opponents of both in local and national union affairs. The CP recognise that the YT movement was used by Rank and File to extend its own power in the union, and that the Executive in hitting at the YTs are hitting at the illegitimate behaviour of the Rank and File group.

Initially the Rank and File had used the young teacher movement as a legitimate expression of a certain point of view, but in line with changes in IS this soon degenerated into simple front tactics: a platform to express IS views to the widest possible audience in the expectation that some would join the Party. The orthodox representative democrats on the Executive and among fulltime officials took the opportunity of attacking all on the left by associating any attack on Executive policy with the specific attacks of the Rank and File. In this way it was hoped that control over union action would remain firmly with the 'moderates'

despite pressure from below and a growing 'militant' group on the Executive. This tactic forced the political left, and the CP in particular, into a position where they dissassociated themselves from Rank and File, but also exposed the tactics of the Executive. The problem for the political left became that of explaining their intermediate position to NUT members and to do this they had to largely rely on word of mouth accounts by activists based on the more considered position of politically active left who read Education Today and Tomorrow, the Morning Star, Labour Weekly, Tribune and other related left journals.

The CP line modified when it realised the extent of the Executive's attack, because it saw the move as aimed not only at Rank and File but possibly at other groups within the union. By the Spring of 1973 the view of Education Today and Tomorrow was that the Executive's decisions:

"seem to have been based more on anxiety about the activities of leftists, particularly the so-called Rank and File group, than on a cool assessment of the value and role of the YT movement." 73

The line still condemned the YT conference for passing motions against national policy, but the requirement is local reform and encouragement in order to prevent the YT sections from falling under Rank and File control through lack of interest of the majority of young teachers. They want the NYTAC reinstated and the age limit put up to 30: the same points as the minority of the Executive had made in the original debate. The position was an attempt to steer a path between the over-reaction of the Executive with the dangers of giving credibility to Rank and File, and some curtailment of the public activity of the YTs at national level to prevent an image of a divided union.

Some of the reasons given by the Executive for its move were challenged at local level and also in the letter columns of The Teacher. One letter from the chairman of the NYTAC illustrates the way in which the decision was taken. He says:

"I was shocked to receive the information that both the NYTAC and the YT conference were to be abolished . . . no member of the National Executive had told me that the futures of the NYTAC and the conference were even being discussed let alone discontinued. . . members of the Executive expressed concern at certain events at the last conference, notably the salaries debate and the activities of a minority of left wing radicals . . . Are these the reasons why the conference has been abolished with indecent haste? . . . Mr. Gray lays great stress on the fact that only 4.7% of the membership voted at the last YT elections, but what per cent voted for the primary, secondary and other advisory committees and what per cent of the Union voted Messrs. Morris and Caulfield to high office?". 74

The same points were also made by other letters to The Teacher from various parts of the country.⁷⁵ The case about the numbers voting seemed to win support among active members, as did the view that the decision was made essentially to prevent the public statement of views opposed to union policy by a section of the union. The dispute was whether the Executive were right in principle to protect the 'good name' of the union by keeping debate over policy within the political processes of the union, or whether Rank and File were correct to claim that democracy means the free (and public) expression of all views even when they conflict with national policy.

In local A the issue of the young teachers remained concentrated at the level of the Committee and some additional activists, but did not enter the schools nor interest the majority of members. The leadership struggle continued within the local, and the election for Vice-President at the February 1973 AGM⁷⁶ was between a Rank and File candidate and the candidate of the broad left coalition. The former was a member of IS and had been chairman of the local YT Committee as well as the school representative in a local primary school: she was also active in Rank and File and the wife of another local activist from a large Comprehensive in the area. Her opponent was a member of the Labour Party and had also been chairman of the local YT section; school representative for her own primary school (where she was deputy Head) and a delegate to the last YT conference. The line up was therefore fairly clear for active members, and the issue of the YT's future was one main point of controversy. The vote (secret ballot at the AGM) resulted in the defeat of the Rank and File candidate

by 37 votes to 21. The same meeting elected the local delegates for the forthcoming Annual Conference: 2 members of the CP (the President and Ex-President) and 4 members associated with the left Labour non-Rank and File group (the local Secretary, local Treasurer, Vice-President, and a past President).

The meeting of these delegates to work out local policy to national issues of the conference discussed in particular the conference resolutions on the future of the YTs. By this time (April 19th) the Executive had already reversed part of its original decision due to the pressure from the militant section on the Executive backed by sympathetic local leaders. The new decision reprieved the NYTAC and put the age limit up to 30. The opponents of the Executive's original position also wanted the conference to be reinstated. With this in mind the delegates were faced with a situation where local policy had been decided before the change in the Executive's position. One delegate argued that "sections of the membership should not hold divisive conferences"⁷⁷ and was supported by one other delegate in opposing local policy in favour of the new position of the Executive. The others argued that local policy could not be changed and that anyway the YT conference was the legitimate expression of views by an important section of the union. This case won the vote, and interestingly the two members of the CP voted on opposite sides. The issue at this level of local politics became reduced in importance after the Executive's change in policy, but the Rank and File still kept up the fight in order to have an issue at national conference which appeared to present the Executive as unrepresentative of the mass of the members.

In the Spring edition of Rank and File the YT issue was again tackled.

"At a time when by its intention to decimate the YT movement, the Executive seems hell-bent on a suicidal course of splitting the NUT straight down the middle, it is perhaps worth examining briefly the YT's role in the Union". 78

The argument continues that young teachers have special interests separate from and opposed to the interests of the older and senior teachers, and that this latter section have control of the union through the Executive

and delegates to national conference. The article gives a history of the good work done by the YTs in the past, and in conclusion rhetorically asks:

"Why then has such a vicious attempt suddenly been made to clamp down on a section of the Union which was, by common consent, doing such a grand job? The answer is obvious. The rank and file membership through the YT Movement is making too much noise . . . the national YT conference has changed from a tentative get-together . . . into a high powered, serious opportunity for debate on a national level . . . Quite obviously the Executive is afraid . . . afraid of losing its own dominance of the Union; afraid that the grass roots membership are at last showing their opposition to weak, complacent and down-right unprincipled positions adopted by a National Conference which does not properly represent the majority of the Union". 79

Thus the Rank and File believe that the mass of members have economic and political views opposed to those of the leadership, and through undemocratic control of the union the present leaders can follow policies in their own interests. This is a bold statement of IS analysis of the oligarchy theme in trade unions based on an assessment of the wishes of inactive members from local association actions. But such a view gives as evidence of mass militancy the tiny minority of activists at local level, and what militancy means in this analysis is not what most members understand by it. The final point of the Rank and File use of the YT issue comes in the conclusion of the article on YTs:

"The problem that, when it comes to the crunch, nearly all Union Executives will make a few militant noises, but in reality attempt to dominate and stifle their members' demands, and ultimately seek to avoid direct confrontation with their employers or the Government. This is why rank-and-file unionists everywhere must activate and take control of their unions. This, for us, is what Rank and File is all about". 80

The last word on the YT issue comes from the Annual Conference of the union held that Easter.⁸¹ The conference overwhelmingly supported the Executive decision to end the YT conference on the grounds that it was divisionary and diversionary on the salary issue. Attempts to reverse this and to also ban the NYTAC both failed. It was Max Morris in his

Presidential address who made the essential trade union points with regard to political factions and the interests of sections of the membership:

"Our profession has been changing rapidly especially in the age balance. We are now much younger than we have been. This we should welcome . . . we have to educate our new members. . . good union members are not born but made. Union principles of organisation, modes of discussion and action, are not matters that are automatically understood, absorbed and accepted. The very nature of a union, its aims and objects, the way it operates under rules democratically decided and under a leadership democratically elected, has to be taught and learned like everything else. A Union may engage in political activity, and indeed a union like ours must do so because so many educational and professional issues are highly charged with politics. But a union is not the same thing as a political party, or group, or sect, whose members have an ideology in common. Our common bond is our occupation which is the sole criterion for membership. The prime job of our union is to weld its members together into the strongest possible force to fight for pay, better conditions of service and educational advance. Wider objectives, beyond these must have the clear support of the mass of our members if they are to be acceptable. Our strength lies both in our numbers in relation to the size of the profession and the backing the mass of our membership is prepared to give the policies we follow." 82

The task of trade union leaders is thus seen to be to reconcile one voice to the outside world with the many voices within the union, and it does that best when it has the fullest possible knowledge of the interests and opinions of the whole membership. The use by a political group or faction of a section of the union's structure to present competing views of union policy in public is seen as illegitimate by both the orthodox representative democrats seeking strong control over anti-leadership groups, and by the political left who set the tone for the alliance of left forces in the union and who wish to combine the rights of those seeking to mobilise the membership on issues where the Executive is reluctant with restraint on those who seek to build alternative centres of power within the union. Thus the YT movement became an issue which demonstrated the struggles between local and national leaders. The Rank and File members used the YTs as a vehicle for their views; the left alliance acted against such abuse but wishing to maintain some aspects

of YT existence; and the representative democrats wanted to demolish any possible centre of competing power. In all this the members in the schools remained largely unaffected. The inactive members were neither able to appreciate the debate nor capable of forming an informed decision on the issues raised by the attempted closure of the YT section. Political activists of all kinds fought out the issue at local and national committee level and in their journals, but never amongst ordinary union members in the schools. So while activists became more active, and while democratic procedures and internal union politics became more important, and while the explicit ideological commitments to various models of trade union and political behaviour became clearer, yet the mass of NUT members were not only unaffected but also effectively ignored.

2.2 The London allowance campaign

"This G.M. of the . . . welcomes the determined stand taken by our NUT colleagues in the London Area who have responded so magnificently to the NUT's strike call. It recognises that this struggle is not just for a £15 increase for London's teachers, negotiated separately from the main Burnham claim, and accordingly voices the determination of all NUT members to continue and intensify the fight until the Union's just claim for £300 London Allowance is substantially won. It therefore calls upon the Executive to extend the campaign of militant action against the Government's wages freeze into and beyond Phase 2 of the Incomes Limitation Policy, by organising indefinite school and/or area strikes." 83

(Mo. on at local A general meeting)

The campaign for a special pay allowance for those teachers living and working in London was spread over several months from about November 1972 to the summer of 1974. This account only deals with part of that period, and concentrates on the activities of local A and the politics of the leading groups. The issue demanded the winning of the support for the members in the schools for some kind of industrial action. It has already been noted that the members in the area were divided 10 to 7 in favour of strike action, although among the most active this was 8 to 2.⁸⁴ Thus a majority of members wanted to take action, but not a decisive enough majority and this meant that local leaders had to campaign in the schools to win more support. The extent to which the different groups among the local leaders tried and succeeded in this

task is the topic of this case study.

The first major development in the campaign was a half-day strike on November 23rd 1972 of teachers from the London area. This was the biggest action by teachers since the 1969 stoppage and was called by the Extra-Metropolitan Association and ILTA backed by the Executive of the NUT. As an article in the Morning Star by the Vice-President of ILTA (and editor of Education Today and Tomorrow) said:

"Immediate cause of this action is the provocative insult of a take-it-or-leave-it "offer" by the Government of 20p a week on the London Allowance (a "weighting" paid to teachers in addition to the national pay scales to compensate for higher living costs in the Greater London area)" 85

The protest action, in the words of a leading article in The Teacher:

"was directed solely against the Government's action in preventing an offer on the London Allowance which the management wanted to make on October 20th before the wage freeze was introduced". 86

The response from members in the local associations had been good, but for many teachers the half-day was just the start of the campaign.

As The Teacher noted:

"The real issue was the way the Burnham Committee had been prevented from negotiating, and this had implications for the salaries of every teacher in the country". 87

Or in the words of Ian Gunn in the Morning Star:

"Coming, however, after nearly three years of comparative "industrial" inactivity caused by the Government's divisive separate-scales system, it is a very necessary first mobilisation, the success of which is vital to the development of further action". 88

The official position of the NUT was that the action should be directed primarily against Government interference in free collective bargaining: such a line was aimed at winning the support of all teachers for what appeared to be a sectional fight based in London. The editorial in The Teacher makes the point:

"The protest last week by 15,000 London teachers against the Government's interference in the negotiations for an increase in this allowance, illustrates the strength of feeling on this issue . . . teachers were angry, not merely because they had been offered insufficient money, but because they felt let down by the Government on a matter of principle . . . This year, again, the Government has used a wages freeze as the excuse to discriminate unfairly against teachers by interfering with negotiations before the freeze was even announced". 89

After the half-day strike the Action Committee of the Executive wanted selective strike action in London schools, and needed the support of members for their plans.

In January 1973 the Committee of local A met and passed a motion calling on ILTA to ask the Action Committee of the union to call selective school strikes by the end of the month. It also wanted a mass meeting and demonstration, and to create links with other unions involved in London weighting issues like the CPSA. As part of this the left leaders in local A were very enthusiastic about the involvement of the Trades Council in their action, and a leading member of the NUT was President of the Council in 1978. As the official trades council history says:

"Throughout 1973 support was given to successive groups of workers who were in conflict with the government's pay laws. Hospital workers, gasworkers, teachers, train drivers, civil servants and miners, all had the Council's backing." 90

The proposer of the motion at that local Committee meeting was the leader of the local Rank and File group (and also a leading IS member of the London NUT). The local leaders put their case in the Newsletter sent to all schools in the area, and the January general meeting supported the union plan to hold selective strikes on the question of free negotiations over London weighting. At the February AGM a motion was passed by 25 votes to 12 calling for "a massive campaign" for the full allowance to prevent "teachers leaving London and teaching". The proposer was again the IS leader of the local Rank and File, and at this time he made the running in winning the local policy for militant action. On the whole his position was supported not only by the Rank and File group, but also by the majority

of other leftwing teachers at meetings. The members in the schools were holding informal meetings and many sent letters to the local Secretary expressing general support for industrial action on this issue. Support also came from left-journals such as Labour Weekly⁹¹ and the New Statesman.⁹²

By early March sporadic strikes were to be called as The Times explained:

"Union members in selected Greater London schools will be polled. If they vote in favour of action, they will be instructed to withdraw their labour. The number of schools and the length of disruption in any one school remain to be settled, in consultation with local branches; but it is expected that the union will need to use its sustentation fund, which suggests that there will be more than just token strikes. It seems probably that the necessary majority will be forthcoming in the schools chosen for ballot, in view of the discontent of London teachers over the Government's refusal to allow the present £118-a-year London allowance to be raised by more than £15." ⁹³

These 3-day strikes were followed by a one day strike of all London NUT members: about 36,000 teachers (out of London teaching force of about 60,000). The week before the one day action Edward Britton wrote the editorial in The Teacher in which he stated the position of the union on the London allowance issue. First he attacked "the politically naive" members of local associations (namely the Rank and File) for believing that the Government would give in because 500 London schools closed for 3 days. As he said:

"If anyone thought that the Union was staking a claim to out-Scanlon Scanlon and was trying to lead the field against the whole weight of Government economic policies . . . and quite clearly that is what some of those who interrupted the protest meeting in Central Hall believe . . . then presumably they also feel the effort has failed". ⁹⁴

He argued that the point of the strikes was to draw public attention to the serious crisis of education in London, and to demand free collective bargaining for the teachers. The Rank and File, in his view, see the strikes as direct confrontation with a Conservative Government and as

parallel to the more serious actions of the large manual trade unions. This he dismisses. The NUT have called strikes in order to make their needs felt, and not for wider political motives. His statement reflects the awareness among NUT members and leaders that the old forms of pressure no longer work, and that when a group of employees negotiates directly with Government (because Burnham had ceased to operate at times of pay control) they must win public support through actions aimed to make their case correspond to the general problems of inadequate educational facilities.

It was over the escalation of industrial action by the union in March that the leaders of local A ended their previous unity. There were those for more drastic action based on their interpretation of the feelings of members in the schools, and there were those who supported the more cautious attitude of the Executive in recognising the limits to militant action tolerated by a majority of the members. On the 14th March the local association held a general meeting attended by over 100 members: this was the highest attendance since the large meetings of the 1969-70 strike campaign, and although it only represented a small minority of the membership (about 6%) yet it showed that activists from a wide range of schools had turned up in order to report back to their colleagues. The Rank and File argued at the meeting that 'indefinite' strike action was required in order to defeat the Government's wage freeze;⁹⁵ and as one leading member of IS asserted:

"Most teachers have no faith in the Executive, who want the action to fail". 96

This line was opposed by members of the broad left who argued that the need of the day was unity of all members in the union, and that the Executive on the advice of the Action Committee was leading the members as far as they were willing to go. The meeting divided strongly in favour of the more militant Rank and File line, and ended with a call to take the message back to members in the schools. This was done in part by the March Newsletter which reported the strike action in the area (11 schools had been on 3-day strike) and the motorcade and protest meetings. It concluded with this plea:

"We can only win with the support of the whole membership. Even if your school has not been called out on strike, there are still plenty of things you can do". 97

The line taken by the broad left among the leaders of local A is reflected in the Easter edition of Education Today and Tomorrow in a long article on the London allowance.

"The bitterest, hardest and most important lesson of all has been that advances can only be made on the basis of unity; unity on the main issues affecting the workers in any particular sector at any particular time . . . There never was a greater need to deal effectively, therefore, with any attempt to divide and weaken our forces; to avoid sectional clashes; to prevent some elements forcing through policies and decisions that will alienate large numbers of trade union members." 98

The article continues to attack the Rank and File in strong terms. The broad left line agreed that political development can and does take place through mass action "but action that the majority can be won to regard as necessary and possible", and not as "the result of mere sloganizing by small numbers".⁹⁹ With this in mind they reject the Rank and File demand for indefinite strikes on the grounds that the membership is not yet ready for such action due to the divisive salary scales structures introduced by the Management side; the divisive actions of other teacher trade unions; and the backlash that followed the 1969 strike. The broad left also rejected the notion that the action is an attack on the Government, and supported the Executive against Rank and File attacks. In defending the Executive as the representatives of all teachers and as aiming at democratic decisions the article states that the Executive "has done more than ever before"; and that:

"The Executive then voted a generous budget to the Union Action Committee (out of national not London funds) which made possible the three waves of thee-day strikes . . . All schools which had the required 2/3 vote in the strike ballots were called out". 100

In a final assault on the Rank and File the Communist Party sounds a warning note:

"Such self-indulgent heroics would not be serious if they involved only the handful of sick irresponsibles who advocate them; but when deliberate efforts are made to hive off large numbers of the mass movement (particularly the younger and less experienced) into mass diversions . . . it becomes a threat to the whole movement, and must be dealt with as such with the strictest measures.

Two elements bedevil the London situation. The anarchist element, with the tactic of permanent confrontation . . . Then there is the Trotskyite element, with the tactic of always proposing two steps ahead as the next step . . . Both are divisive . . . They have also tried to set London against the rest of the country. And of course at all times to get the members against what they always without fail call 'The Executive', an imaginary, faceless monolith invented by them to replace the flesh and blood individuals who are elected by the membership". 101

This position is taken up by the members of the Committee in local A sympathetic to the joint broad left and militant line of the Official union leadership. The reply to this attack on the Rank and File tactics comes from the IS journal Socialist Worker. It stated that:

"Members of the NUT national executive seem to have regarded the march and one-day strike as the end of the mass action . . . that is not, however, how London teachers see it . . . the officers of ILTA have been almost as unresponsive as the national executive . . . to counter this lack of action from the Union's official leaders, 500 teachers crowded into the Conway Hall after the demonstration". 102

Taking their cue from this the Rank and File noted that the Executive's Proposals contain:

"No confrontation with the Government", and "there is no alternative but to fight. The rank-and-file must push the hesitant leaders into battle". 103

The actual practice of such formulations in local A took the immediate form of a motion for a day of action at the Committee meeting on March 26th. The proposal came from the IS leader in the local association, but the Chairman (a member of the CP and head of a local comprehensive) ruled the motion out of order on the grounds that it was not the policy of the local association to call for such action. After a lengthy dispute the

chairman won the point, but another challenge from the IS group came when the local Secretary reported that the Officers of the local association had refused to join a meeting on the London allowance called by two other London local associations controlled by Rank and File. The broad left argued that such a meeting constituted an attempt to by-pass NUT structures and so to set up an alternative leadership. The Rank and File replied that such ad hoc committees were only methods of putting pressure on the union leadership to be more militant as a reflection of the mood of the membership. They wanted to send delegates from local A to this ad hoc body. The others wanted no part in such Rank and File plans, but for tactical reasons changed their line to one of sending observers only. This last position won the vote 12 to 11, which proved to be a fair reflection of the wider activist view as the next general meeting endorsed it.

At that meeting in April¹⁰⁴ the Rank and File called for a strike by teachers on May 1st, but the left alliance opposed this on two grounds: first that the majority of members would not respond to such a strike call; and secondly they felt that a meeting attended by 40 members should not call 1,800 members out on strike especially since the strike motion was not on the agenda sent to schools since it had been an amendment. The meeting still voted for strike action by 18 votes to 9, and this led later to important developments concerning the calling of strikes at local and national level. The response to the action on May 1st was small, and by this time the London allowance issue had been overshadowed for the membership by the national pay claim, and for many activists by the decision at Conference to stop local associations calling strikes without the permission of the Executive.¹⁰⁵

At the 1973 Annual Conference the Executive won a motion which became the new rule 8. It proposed that:

"This Conference declares that no Constituent Association . . . shall organise or engage in a strike or industrial action without the prior approval of the Executive".¹⁰⁶

The debate as reported in The Teacher included a classic statement of the orthodox representative view from the past President Harry Allison. He argued that local associations had recently called out members on the London allowance either against Executive wishes or in conflict with Executive action, and he stressed the need for unity and discipline in the union. Against this several speakers from the floor considered the motion a challenge to local autonomy and a sign of Executive panic in the face of actions by a few unrepresentative militants.¹⁰⁷ A typical local response to the rule change came in a motion from local A for the 1974 Conference:

"Conference considers that grass roots control of the Union is essential if we are to gain the strength to fight for democratic control of the schools, a decent salary and much better working conditions. It therefore regrets the way in which the priority motion from the Executive taking away the right of the local association to take official strike action was passed by the 1973 Conference without prior discussion by the membership at large and reverses that decision." 108

The rule change on strike calls at national level reflected the struggle at local level between the formal democracy of meetings and the assumed authority of the elected officers. The conflict between the two definitions of democracy, between the two left groups, and between two leading local A personalities was examined in greater detail in part 1 of this chapter.

Not until school resumed in September 1973 was it clear that thousands of teachers had left London and teaching. The result was part-time schooling became a fact for thousands of pupils. The Evening Standard carried a full page story on the situation based on the situation in local A. The NUT implemented a policy that teachers should not "cover" for posts not filled, and in the words of the Secretary of local A:

"We are just fed up with papering over the cracks. We decided to take a stand and, unfortunately, it is the children who must suffer. For the last three years teachers in many London comprehensives have given up their periods to mind a class when for some reason there was no teacher to take it. But no longer." 109

The NUT produced two documents to illustrate their case. The first was a study by Ruskin College on teacher turnover caused by the London allowance freeze,¹¹⁰ and the second was a discussion document on the London area addition.¹¹¹ The idea was that local associations would debate the issues and then be able to win the majority of members for some form of action to put pressure on the Government to make concessions.

Local A held such a meeting in September with over 100 members present. The general attitude and support for strike action was united behind the policy of the union. Although there was some debate on minor tactical points the meeting agreed that the members in the schools had to be contacted for action. The result was a series of half-day strikes; lobbies of Parliament and the development of a greater willingness to act in most members. At the general meeting in October the Rank and File policy again won the support of the 100 attenders. They supported the call for indefinite strike action, and saw this as part of the wave of strikes aimed at bringing down the Tory Government. The militancy of the membership for the first time approached the militancy of the local leadership, but the problem was how to sustain and channel it. The resolution of that difficulty is not covered here, but is dealt with again in the next chapter.

The London allowance campaign went on for over nine months, and was waged by one section of the union with Executive support against the Government's interference in negotiations between the unions and management. It was a difficult issue since the union had to convince both their own members outside London and the public that the London teachers had a case, and at the same time act strongly enough to put pressure on the Government. The gaps between various actions show the divisions on the Executive, and how the militants there were able to win support for their policy when the local associations and members responded. The local leaderships tended to support the Action Committee or pushed for more militant action, but the membership was more divided on what course of action was appropriate. The study in local A indicates that careful initial action later enabled fuller and stronger action to be taken, and that attempts to move immediately

to the most militant forms of action did not find support among members. The general level of high militancy and political commitment to strong action among the leaders of local A almost certainly resulted in greater militancy and participation among the members, but the political divisions among leaders and the strongly-stated political attitudes of some of the Rank and File leaders almost certainly retarded support among members for strike action and certainly prevented more members from attending the formal general meetings of the local association. When the issue is one about collective bargaining many members will use their trade union as the vehicle for action, but this does not then mean that they will behave in the same way over internal union matters. This is shown in the next section in a disciplinary case with strong political overtones.

2.3 Professional conduct and disciplinary procedure: the Wandsworth Three

"Leaders of the National Union of Teachers - - - a coalition ranging from the Communist left to the Tory right - - have stepped up their attacks on the Wandsworth Three . . . The three, for reasons probably not unconnected with their leading role in the militant teachers' group Rank and File, were held responsible . . ." 112

(Socialist Worker)

One important element in the operation of any trade union is the way in which members who break the rules are treated. The formal machinery of discipline is set out in the rules and follows some set procedure.¹¹³ Most of the time there is no problem as the cases involve individual misconduct around traditional issues of either professional failings or trade union disobedience. The issue becomes important when the same processes are used in a case where several offenders belong to the same anti-leadership faction within the union, and when 'due process' takes on a political aspect. It is on such cases that the major problem of union unity comes into conflict with internal democracy. Can the imperatives of the former over-ride the requirements of the latter? By posing the question in that way there is a presumption of a trade-off which reflects the basic representative democratic argument about internal weakness and external strength. To draw the line that contrasts the legitimacy of internal opposition with Executive control over the

membership is the mistake of applying the norms of a political party to a trade union: a mistake shared by the Rank and File and the representative democrats. The case used to illustrate this point also shows the lack of interest such problems have for the majority of members, and the extent to which local leaders can build up myths about Executive 'betrayal' among activists.

On February 27th 1973 the Executive called a mass rally of London NUT members at the Central Hall Westminster as part of the action against Government intervention in Burnham negotiations on the London allowance. The next day the report in The Times read:

"Chaotic end to pay meeting by teachers: during a noisy two-hour meeting Mr. Harry Allison, the president of the NUT, was shouted down and microphone leads were wrenched out . . . Trouble arose from the wording of an executive motion . . . A rival, unofficial motion put forward by four London associations went much further. The platform . . . declined to accept it . . . Mr. Eric Porter, a Wandsworth teacher, began to move the rival resolution through a portable microphone . . . scuffles followed . . . In the half-light Mr. Fred Scott, of the Wandsworth association, read the rival motion". 114

The incident became a national disaster for the public image of the union at a time when it was striving to win the public to support its pay claims. The Officers of the union issued a statement that the Executive:

"Condemn unreservedly the action of the organised and deliberately disruptive minority that destroyed the mass rally at central hall . . . What should have been a demonstration of unity and support for the members on strike in the London area was reduced to chaos by those unprepared to accept rulings given by the President . . . At a time when the union is engaged in a major struggle . . . deliberate attempts are being made to undermine action authorised by the Executive and supported by the overwhelming majority of local associations. To be effective Union action must be disciplined . . . There is clear evidence that the disruption of the rally followed a pre-arranged plan". 115

This position was underlined by the General Secretary in an article in The Teacher called: "Central Hall - - testing ground for democracy". He argued that "an organised minority" tried to alter union policy at a meeting which was held as a show of unity. Policy can only be made by

local associations, the Executive and Annual Conference; and that attempts to by-pass that democratic machinery by ad hoc groups which take over organisations within the union because of the apathy of the majority of members, must be prevented.¹¹⁶ His hint of some action against those who disrupted the meeting was taken up by some letters to The Teacher,¹¹⁷ and by the CP's official journal on NUT affairs. The latter noted that the point of the meeting was to show to members not supporting the strike action that the Executive thought the campaign so important that it sent two of its most militant members (both in the CP) to speak at the meeting. This aim for maximum unity under Executive leadership was thwarted and so those responsible need to be disciplined as the "enemy of all trade unions".¹¹⁸

The official CP position and the official NUT position shared the view that the meeting was deliberately disrupted by unrepresentative groups, and that some action against such behaviour was necessary. Local A did not share those sentiments. At a general meeting they passed by a large majority the following motion:

"This general meeting regrets the disruptions of the mass strike meeting on Tuesday February 27th, but recognises that this was to a large extent provoked by the undemocratic manner in which the meeting was conducted. Specifically we regret that even though a large majority of the meeting wished to hear the Wandsworth motion, the President of the Union ignored this request. In order to avoid a similar situation in the future, we suggest that the Executive organise either a mass solidarity meeting with no resolution, at which a majority of the time be given over to the floor or a properly constructed meeting where a resolution is sent out to Associations beforehand, allowing for the normal procedure of amendment".¹¹⁹

The proposer and seconder both blamed the Executive for the events, but the older members of the broad left blamed the Wandsworth teachers for introducing their provocative motion at the meeting. But at that time the activists in local A accepted the Rank and File position that what had happened was yet another example of Executive dictatorship.

The tone of the Rank and File opposition was set by the Socialist Worker. The first line of argument went as follows:

"NUT leaders try to stifle debate: the Executive is out of touch with its own London members . . . in their attempts to deny the meeting its basic democratic rights, they denied the microphone to Eric Porter . . . since then the Executive has been attempting to use the events of the meeting as a pretext for witch-hunting R & F supporters". 120

The second position was stated after an official complaint was made by a member of the union against three of the teachers that disrupted the Central Hall meeting.

"It was announced that three London militants, Eric Porter, Fred Scott and David Whitely, are now to be called before the disciplinary committee of the union . . . Their 'offence' was to . . . discuss a resolution for more militant action . . . Now the Executive is arbitrarily picking on three individuals to blame". 121

The official NUT response was a short statement:

"Complaints have been laid against three members of the NUT under the professional conduct code in connection with the incidents at Central Hall Westminster on February the 27th. The complaints are now before the law and tenure committee of the Union Executive". 122

Under section (3) of Appendix II(A) of the NUT rules it says:

"Any question as to the professional honour of any member, whether it arises upon the personal application of another member or otherwise, shall stand referred to the Law and Tenure Committee" 123

Under sub-section (4) this committee hears evidence and statements from those concerned and then decides whether to deal with the case itself or refer it to the Professional Conduct Committee. The latter consists of the senior Vice-President and 10 others from the Executive (of whom 5 should be assistant teachers if possible). The committee then reports to the full Executive. 124

The response in local A was seen at their April general meeting which debated this motion:

"We recognise that the charges of unprofessional conduct brought against "the 3" represent victimisation . . . We are opposed to the victimisation of these three NUT members . . . We call on the NUT not to allow these charges to be pressed". 125

The proposer and seconder (both Rank and File) argued that the case represented the Executive's campaign to destroy Rank and File by undemocratic methods. A leading member of the CP noted that the local association could not intervene in the case and argued that:

"the Central Hall chaos was caused by those who planned to disrupt the meeting by putting forward a motion on policy which could not be considered by a meeting not for policy making". 126

The local Secretary and Treasurer followed this position that the NUT Executive had to allow the case to follow its course according to the rules of the union. The IS followers ignored these points and concentrated on the line that the Executive was out to destroy Rank and File ever since the "1969 sell-out", and so the disciplinary procedure was politically weighted against the defendants. This won the debate by 19 votes to 14. As a sequence to this victory the Rank and File proposed at the next Committee meeting¹²⁷ that the association circulated to the schools a statement supporting the 'Wandsworth 3'. This was opposed by the left alliance on the same grounds as before: that the case was really sub judice. This time this argument won by 17 votes to 6: an indication that on the Committee the Rank and File have little representation. In June the local held a special general meeting on the case called by the Rank and File: the low attendance and no practical outcome indicates the lack of general interest and the failure of Rank and File to mobilise members on an issue of internal union politics. Indeed the extent of the victory of the Executive-inspired attack on the Rank and File is demonstrated by the successful national rule change in 1976, which tightened disciplinary procedures for union members in breach of the new rule 8 on the local power to call strike action.¹²⁸

The highpoint of the defense of the Wandsworth teachers came in a special edition of the Rank and File journal. One of the defendants questioned

the whole nature of the NUT disciplinary procedures on the grounds that they were suitable for a profession but not for a TUC-affiliated trade union. As he said:

"The NUT leadership was pushed into a position of seeking a new method of disciplining its dissidents because of the increased militancy of these same dissidents now grouped around 'R & F'. . . . The Executive can effectively be, at the same time, Prosecutor, Jury, Judge and Appeals Court. Admittedly it is normally arranged for an outside individual or group to act as the prosecutor . . . In our case Mr. Roy Porter, secretary of Greenwich association, has actually lodged the complaint . . . It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that there exists a strong tendency among certain Executive members to 'teach the militants a lesson', to seek to isolate a number of active individuals and especially to destroy the credibility of the Wandsworth Association". 129

The classic IS position that the militancy of the members is stifled by the undemocratic operations of the Executive is used to explain the case of the Wandsworth 3. What this them/us analysis fails to consider is that the motives of the Executive and of many local activists are mixed. The representative democrats (specially the more orthodox ones) may wish to remove from the scene members of an anti-leadership group whose base is in a few local associations and whose formal power relies on the lack of interest of most members in internal union affairs. The political left (and some liberal representative democrats) do not seek to destroy the legitimate role of political faction within the union, but do seek to prevent the setting up of alternative leadership and structures by any group. Their own strategy is to work within the union at all levels in order to help the militants on the Executive through winning 'left' policies at local association level on issues backed by a majority of members. In the case of the Wandsworth 3 the Rank and File failed to win the interest of the membership in the schools, and relied on winning the rather empty policy statements of local association meetings attended by a tiny minority of activists. So, as with the Young Teacher section, activists became more active and explicit political actions became confused with members' rights and internal union control mechanisms. Once again inactive members were not represented, were not familiar with the issues and were not capable of making decisions. Once again they were excluded from and excluded themselves from union affairs.

Conclusions

These examples of major issues fought over by competing groups indicate the ways in which the orthodox representative democrats at national level sought to isolate and defeat the left challenge, and so keep control over the NUT's uneven surge towards trade union tactics and attitudes.

At local level the Rank and File failed to interest ordinary members in either the Young Teachers or the Wandsworth 3, and in the case of the London allowance campaign any militancy felt by members existed independently of Rank and File propaganda. In contrast the political left locally and the militant group on the Executive managed to win a substantial reprieve for the Young Teacher movement, and to take the political sting from the Wandsworth case which led to its final withdrawal.¹³⁰ But they could not prevent those on the Executive who wanted more centralised power and more control over members from gaining ground. This was shown later when subsequent Annual Conferences passed a succession of motions banning local associations from calling strikes, forcing them to hold postal ballots, strengthening the position of the local chair at general meetings, and bringing in harsher disciplinary rules.¹³¹ Those defeats and the slow response of the majority of the Executive to some of the events on pay came about in part because of the weakness of the left due to the division of their forces in key local associations.

In the continual battles at local A between the two left factions the views of inactive members and attempts to involve them were reduced to secondary importance over issues of internal union politics. Only on the London allowance were members subjected to the debate and decisions of the local and national leaders through active attempts to forge contacts with the schools. Here the clear policy and case of the official union line could be argued in the common rooms, and some kind of decision made in conjunction with local activists. The partial success of the campaign can in part be attributed to the fact that those members opposed to strike action (or unsure about it) tended to be worried by the over-militant posture of some of the local resolutions. For many members the London allowance was about more pay to meet the higher costs of living in London,

and not about challenging the Government. This feeling that even on legitimate issues to take strike action or to participate at local level is to be associated with a majority of out-of-touch radicals may inhibit mass support for some official action. Such sentiments are represented by statements such as:

"Unfortunately the great majority of those who attend local meetings are the militants; the moderates feel out of place, overwhelmed by the atmosphere of militancy and disinclined to attend such meetings"

from a Labour Party voter who is also a school representative; or

"A great deal of attention seems to be given to issues completely outside the province of the Association. . . I feel little pride in belonging to a Union no better motivated than the TGWU"

from an inactive Conservative voter. The friendly but critical voice of a very active member of the CP who had taught in the area for about 20 years sums up much of the problem:

"My own view is that the young, enthusiastic and able extreme-left members of the local association get the Committee to carry decisions involving action which is often too left-wing for the membership. . . From reports given at the local committee one would feel that the Executive were lagging far behind the needs of the situation yet . . . in the recent special salaries conference they got overwhelming support".

This is expressed more strongly by Max Morris:

"Nothing debases the currency or blunts the sharp edge of militant action more than its misuse as an empty slogan and a panacea for every unsolved problem. . . Strikes decided upon by tiny majority votes; calls for extended, indefinite strikes unrelated to the possible achievement of particular objectives are foreign to genuine trade unionism". 132

The policy-making at local and national level is crucially linked to the individual nature of each local association - - its leaders and members. Although they face similar economic, job and organisational problems,

yet it is the local relationships of NUT members that mould the real-politik of union policy. Something that is vitally altered by the action of sets of political activists operating at local level. The comparison and contrast of local A with three other local associations shows more clearly the importance of leftwing political activists working in local NUT associations. That is the task of the next chapter.

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER 4

1. In local A this meant that 50 questionnaires went out to all 50 members identified as 'very active', 84 went to the 275 'active' members; and 263 went to the remaining 1420 'inactive' members. For details see Appendix I. The strata for the samples were therefore based on prior notions of activity level, and a random selection taken of those members.
2. In total 1745 members received 359 questionnaires and 161 were returned. This gives an overall response rate of 45%, which is considered high for this type of postal questionnaire. In addition 67 schools were involved out of the 83 with NUT members in the area. Further details are in Appendix I.
3. The division of all members into 'very active', 'active' and 'inactive' categories was chiefly achieved through the use of a Guttman index of participation (see Appendix II). It is central to the analysis presented here that these types of member can be distinguished and that their behaviour, attitudes and characteristics can be compared and contrasted.
4. J. Kovner and H.J. Lahne, 'Shop society and the union', Industrial and Labour Relations Review, vol. 7 no. 1, October 1953.
G.S. Bain, The growth of white-collar unionism, Oxford University Press, 1970.
5. F.E. Katz, 'The school as a complex social organisation', Harvard Education Review, vol XXXIV, Summer 1964.
S. Cole, op.cit., chapter 6.
6. One's 'stake-in-the-job' is a concept favoured by many American commentators to indicate commitment to both the financial rewards of the current job and the realisation that improved job satisfaction (given that one is destined to stay) comes with an increase in work-place power.
7. L.R. Sayles and G. Strauss, 'Occupation and the selection of local union officers', op.cit., p. 585.
8. A.S. Tannenbaum and R.L. Kahn, op.cit., quoted on p. 48.
9. - , Teachers and teaching : a booklet to celebrate 100 years of 'A' teachers' association, published by local 'A', 1973, p. 20.
10. See table 4 chapter 2 - only 47 of the 603 associations in 1972 had more than 1000 members.
11. In area A there were 91 schools with NUT members (67 primary and special, and 24 secondary).
12. Ruskin College, The Bitter Lesson: teacher turnover and the London allowance, op.cit.

13. Members who are active frequently complain that they are left to do all the work and wish that more people would help out. Trade union officials also say that they would like more members to be active, but then others complain that activists detract from the real tasks of union business.
14. W. Roy, op.cit., chapter 3.
15. A. Tropp, op.cit., chapter 14.
16. The NAS/UWT membership relative to that of the NUT rose from 18% in 1970 to 30% in 1973 (see table 1 chapter 1).
17. N. Morris, 'England', Teachers Unions and Associations : a comparative study, ed. A.A. Blum, University of Illinois, 1969, p. 78.
18. C.J. Margerison and C.K. Elliott, 'A predictive study of the development in teacher militancy', British Journal of Industrial Relations, vol. 8 no. 3, November 1970.
19. R.A. Manzer, op.cit., pp. 48-56.
20. L.R. Sayles and G. Strauss, 'Patterns of participation in local unions', Industrial and Labour Relations Review, vol. 6, October 1952.
L.R. Sayles, Behaviour of industrial work groups : prediction and control, John Wiley & Sons, New York, 1958.
J.W. Kuhn, Bargaining in grievance settlement : the power of industrial work groups, Columbia University Press, 1961.
21. J. Seidman, J. London and B. Karsh, 'Leadership in a local union', American Journal of Sociology, vol. LVI, November 1950.
22. T.E. Kyllonen, 'Social characteristics of active unionists', American Journal of Sociology, vol LVI, May 1951.
23. L.R. Dean, 'Union activity and dual loyalty', Industrial and Labour Relations Review, vol. 7, July 1954.
L.R. Dean, 'Social integration, attitudes and union activity', Industrial and Labour Relations Review, vol. 8, October 1954.
24. W.A. Faunce, 'Size of locals and union democracy', op.cit.
25. A.S. Tannenbaum and R.L. Kahn, op.cit.
26. Sources include local A attendance and minute books for 1965-1972.
27. Interview with him at The Teachers' Centre 8th February 1973.
28. Interview with him at his school on 22nd February 1973.
29. Quote from a questionnaire on why the member did not attend union meetings.

30. ILTA refers to the Inner London Teachers' Association (the county level of union organisation for Metropolitan areas).
31. Held on 14th March 1973.
32. Changes to the national rules include strike calls (1973-rule 8); postal ballots (1977-rule 5h); local chair's powers (1977-rule 5h); and new disciplinary rules (1976-Appendix VI).
33. Letter to members from local Secretary, November 1973.
34. Held on 28th November 1973.
35. Replies from questionnaires.
36. - , Teachers and teaching, op.cit., p. 23.
37. R. Leach (member of Birmingham NUT), 'On strike!', Tribune, vol. 34 no. 9, 27th February 1970, p. 7.
38. For example a letter to Tribune (vol. 34 no. 6, 6th February 1970) complained about the treatment of teachers and explained the reasons for strike action. It was from the NUT members in a large comprehensive school in local A.
39. Minutes of local A, 1969.
40. Minutes of local A, 1969-70.
41. - , Teachers and teaching, op.cit., pp. 21-22.
42. Sir R. Gould (General Secretary NUT 1947-1970) was unpopular among younger teachers and with the political left in general.
43. A radical group favouring direct action to defend schools from any educational cuts.
44. NUT officials (see interview with Fred Jarvis and Mike Power) still argue about the reasons for a loss in membership 1969-71. Some suggest it was caused by the NUT's militancy, others prefer to propose reasons such as the large increase in subscription rates from £4.20 to £9.
45. V. Burke, op.cit., part 1, chapter 2.
S. Cole, op.cit., chapter 4.
R.D. Coates, op.cit., chapter 6.
46. It said: " . . . we call on all teachers to join a half day strike . . .".
47. Quote from President's address to the AGM on 14th February 1973.
48. Letter to members from local Secretary, May 1973.

49. Held on 16th May 1973.
50. NUT Annual Report 1973 says: "This conference declares that no constituent association or division of the Union, or members or member thereof, shall organise or engage in a strike or industrial action without the prior approval of the Executive, and that the Rules of the Union be amended accordingly" (p. 164). This new rule 8 was quoted in a letter from the local Secretary of A to members (27/4/73) with his ruling that the strike called for May 1st was now cancelled despite the successful motion at a previous general meeting.
51. Mr. R. Richardson (general secretary of ILTA 1968-1978) - a centre left member of the Labour Party.
52. Chapter 5, table 6, Q8.
53. Letter from local Secretary to members 16th July 1973.
54. W. Roy, op.cit., pp. 3-10.
W. Brown, R. Ebsworth and M. Teny, 'Factors shaping shop steward organisation in Britain', British Journal of Industrial Relations, vol. XVI no. 2, July 1978.
55. W. Roy, 'Membership participation in the NUT', op.cit. In area A 43% of schools elected their representatives compared with 20% in area C (Chapter 5, part 3).
56. Chapter 5, table 11B, Q2 and Q3.
57. Chapter 5, table 4, Q4, 5 and 6; table 11B, Q4.
58. Chapter 5, table 6, Q6.
59. Chapter 5, table 2, Q3.
60. Chapter 5, table 9, Q3.
61. J. Seidman, J. London and B. Karsh, 'Political consciousness in a local union', Public Opinion Quarterly, vol. XV, Winter 1951. p. 699.
62. Questionnaire replies. Chapter 5, table 9, Q5.
63. - , 'Change for the young', The Teacher, vol. 21 no. 13, 24th November 1972, p. 1.
64. - , 'Democracy under attack', Rank and File, no. 23, Winter 1972, p. 3.
65. - , 'Change for the young', The Teacher, op.cit.
66. - , 'Lowering the teachers' age', The Teacher, vol. 21 no. 13, 24th November 1972, p. 2.

67. Ibid., p.2.
68. Ibid., p.2.
69. - , NUT Executive Report, The Teacher, vol. 21 no. 13, 24th November, p.6.
70. - , 'Democracy under attack', Rank and File, op.cit., p.3.
71. - , report of The Young Teacher section of local A to the AGM on 14th February 1973.
72. - , 'Ultra-leftism and the teachers', Education Today and Tomorrow, vol. 25 no. 1, Autumn 1972, p.8.
73. Education Today and Tomorrow, vol. 25 no. 2, Spring 1973, p.5.
74. Letter from W. Wiggen, The Teacher, vol. 21 no. 14, 1st December 1972, p.4.
75. Letters from Bristol, Manchester and Wolverhampton members, The Teacher, vol. 21, no. 14, 1st December 1972, p.4.
76. Election handouts of candidates and minuted report of election results.
77. Meeting of local A Conference delegates, 9th April 1973.
78. J. Bell, 'Young teachers : past and present', Rank and File, no. 24, Spring 1973, p. 20.
79. Ibid., p. 20.
80. Ibid., p. 21.
81. NUT Annual Report 1973 on young teacher activities (p.124).
82. M. Morris, 'Presidential address', NUT Annual Report 1973, p.48.
83. Motion passed at general meeting of local association A on 14th March 1973.
84. Chapter 4, table 6.
85. I. Gunn, 'Teachers reply to government insult', Morning Star, 23rd November 1972, p.2.
86. NUT Executive Report, The Teacher, vol. 21, no. 13, 24th November 1972, p.6.
87. Ibid., p.6.
88. I. Gunn, 'Teachers reply to government insult', op.cit.
89. - , 'cheated on a principle', The Teacher, vol. 21 no. 14, 1st December 1972, p.2.

90. D. Russell, Southwark trades council 1903-1978 : a short history, Southwark trades council publication 1978, p.56.
91. Labour Weekly, 16th March 1973, no. 77, p. 11.
92. - , 'Schools without teachers', New Statesman, vol 86, no. 2216, 7th September, p.301.
93. S. Jessel, 'London teachers to strike in protest at 28p on allowance', The Times, 5th February 1973, p.3.
94. E. Britton, 'Perspective on protest', The Teacher, vol. 22, no. 11, 16th March 1973, p.2.
95. R. Kline, Anti-freeze : a handbook for trade unionists, IS pamphlet, March 1973, p.8.
96. Meeting on 14th March 1973.
97. Local A newsletter March 1973.
98. R. Franklin, 'London Allowance : the campaign and the politics', Education Today and Tomorrow, vol. 25, no. 3, Easter 1973, p.8.
99. Ibid., p.9.
100. Ibid., p.10.
101. Ibid., p. 9 and p.11.
102. Socialist Worker, no. 316, 31st March 1973, p.14
103. - , 'Defeat the freeze', Rank and File, no. 24, Spring 1973, p.2.
104. Chapter 4, footnote 50 for 1973 Conference rule change.
106. NUT Annual Report 1973, p. 164.
107. The Teacher, vol. 22 no. 18, 4th May 1973, p.3.
108. Held on 31st October 1973 - the motion received 51 votes out of 90 attenders.
109. M. Macpherson, 'The term the teachers ran out', Evening Standard, 30th August 1973. She quotes local A's secretary as evidence.
110. Ruskin College, The Bitter Lesson : teacher turnover and the London Allowance, op.cit.
111. London Area Addition, a Nut discussion document, September 1973.

112. - , 'Teacher militants face new attack from union chiefs', Socialist Worker, no. 341, 22nd September 1973, p.2.
113. NUT Annual Report 1973, Appendices to the rules (II pp. 29-33 and VI pp. 38-39).
114. S. Jessel, 'Chaotic end to pay meeting by teachers', The Times, 28th February 1973, p.2.
115. The Teacher, vol. 22 no. 9, 2nd March 1973, p.1.
116. E. Britton, 'Central Hall - testing ground for democracy', The Teacher, vol. 22 no. 11, 9th March 1973, p.2.
117. The Teacher, vol. 22 no. 11, 9th March 1973, pp. 4-5.
118. - , 'London Allowance : the campaign and the politics', Education Today and Tomorrow, op.cit.
119. Motion at general meeting 14th March 1973.
120. Socialist Worker, no. 313, 10th March 1973, p.14.
121. Socialist Worker, no. 316, 31st March 1973, p.14.
122. The Teacher, vol. 22 no. 12, 23rd March 1973, p.4.
123. NUT Annual Report 1973, p.29.
124. Ibid., p.29.
125. Motion at general meeting on 4th April 1973.
126. Contribution from the floor by CP member and sometime President of local A to debate on Wandsworth Three motion.
127. Held on 30th April 1973.
128. - , 'Union discipline rules approved', The Teacher, vol. 28, no. 18, 30th April 1986, p.8.
129. F. Scott, 'Democracy', The Wandsworth 3, A Rank and File Special, p.2.
130. The charges were dropped early in 1974.
131. Changes were as follows: local strike calls rule 8 1973; postal ballots rule 5h 1977; power of local chair rule 5h 1977; new disciplinary rules Appendix VI 1976. Note that from 1st January 1978 model rule 7 on postal ballots and model standing order 5 on the power of the chair (NUT Annual Report 1977, pp. 105-108) are mandatory.
132. M. Morris, 'Presidential Address', op.cit., p. 49.

CHAPTER 5 : THE CRITICAL DIMENSIONS OF THE POWER STRUGGLE

"The Agricultural Labourers' Union and the National Union of Railwaymen rallied to the aid of the Strikers, and the anger of their members increased when Burston villagers supporting the Higdon were deprived of their glebe-land by the Vicar. The support for the pro-Higdon minority on the Executive of the National Union of Teachers grew and at last succeeded in reversing the "Pontius Pilate" official "line". Sustentation, back-dated, was granted to Mrs Higdon. Campaign meetings were held over a wide range of Norfolk . . . Funds were raised from all over the country . . . In 1917 a new school was built on the edge of Burston Green and opened with great enthusiasm. 1

(The Burston School Strike)

The history of this famous strike, which started in April 1914, illustrates the full range of powers involved in teacher struggles. Local and national NUT leaders had to be won over and induced to use their powers; important policy decisions had to be taken within the union and also in those unions that support the strike; and finally those involved (pupils, parents, teachers, and local politicians) had to be persuaded and mobilised in defence of the strike school. It is along these dimensions that power struggles are fought in everyday and practical ways, and which this study attempts to analyse in relation to specific actions of politically active NUT members.

The last chapter showed that in terms of the establishment of relations between active leaders at local and national levels and the inactive majority of members, and between sets of leaders themselves, certain concepts emerged. The distinction between active and inactive itself draws attention to notions of representativeness (also allied to the questions of activisation and socialisation); the political orientations of the main leadership factions in local A bring out problems of familiarity with debates and strategical aims and actions; and the success and methods of communications between active and inactive members revealed concern about the actual decision-making capacity of members given their knowledge, understanding and interest in any of the problems referred back to them (actually or rhetorically). These three concepts developed in part 1 of Chapter 4 all move the thesis closer to its paradox of democratic

search and democratic realisation. Their specific enactment in local A and the NUT was demonstrated in three case studies against a background of economic and work changes (Chapter 2 part 1), organisational challenge and response (Chapter 2 part 2) and the political orientations and trade union strategies of the main protagonists (Chapter 3).

The crucial relationship investigated by this study then is the impact of politically active groups within the framework of a local union association on local democracy and membership participation. The relationship is the last link in the chain that stretches from theoretical imperatives to practical consequences, and the missing link is that between the tactical responses of certain political groups with certain stated and unstated aims and the actual results of their intervention. As with all real events it cannot be rerun with chosen features omitted or added for convenience, but has to be judged by comparison and extrapolation.

The bringing together of this material into four main hypotheses enables the study to complete its investigation through contrasting and comparing the findings from local A with similar research in three other local associations: related through the associated notions of winning leaders, controlling policy, and exercising control over the reference to members in the schools.

H1 The traditional democratic dilemma restated: The competition for elected/appointed leadership power between political factions or the challenge to incumbents by a political faction will increase the degree of local democracy among activists of all types, but will reduce the representativeness and organisational effectiveness of the local leadership.

Such a proposition requires close examination of the ways in which leadership positions are won (e.g. elections), the organisation of each competing group, and the attitudes of inactive members to their leaders.

H2 The dialectics of informed policy-making: The competition for policy-making powers between political factions will increase the degree of local democracy among activists of all types, but will reduce the representativeness of the local leadership. The way in which policy is

formulated to meet the dictates of the members and the situation, the use of meetings to make policy, and the relevance of the decisions taken are all discussed.

H3 The contradictions of mobilisation: The competition between leftwing groups and orthodox NUT defenders for the power to mobilise the membership over certain important collective bargaining issues and for control over trade union tactics results in more membership participation in direct action, and the development of anti-union structures.

The evidence for this comes from the use of school organisations and school representatives, and the conduct of the strike campaign around the London allowance and national pay scales.

H4 The democratic paradox: When for economic and professional reasons a trade union experiences a period of great activity dragging it towards the recognition and use of traditional trade union tactics, then where political groups compete for local and national power each will seek to win control over the new processes. In so doing the victory of one group over another tends to reduce the level of democracy of local associations, increase the involvement of activists, and diminish overall membership participation.

The first three hypotheses are treated in the three parts of this chapter, while the fourth hypothesis is discussed in the concluding chapter.

The evidence used to support the hypothesis comes from several sources: interviews, observations, research into union records and questionnaires in four local associations - - - each with its own distinctive pattern of existence. This section of the thesis attempts to show that the presence of political groups within the union has measurable consequences for the union, for the stated aims of the groups, and for the practice and principles of the majority of teachers and members.

Three areas of competition between groups have been selected as those most relevant with regard to local democracy and membership participation. These dimensions of struggle are around leadership positions, policy decisions, and school organisations with the intention to mobilise the members.

Part 1 The traditional democratic dilemma restated: leaders
 and their powers

There appears to be no simple or straightforward trade-off between efficiency and democracy as traditionally posed, but rather a tendency to a loss of organisational effectiveness based on a limited notion of increased democracy through an increase in the numbers and activities of union activists. This tendency is strengthened when it is political competition that creates the increase in activist involvement, because it carries with it the question of representativeness with the added suggestion that the more active democracy based on political activists the less representative and the less democratic. This was the situation in local A. For all four local associations this hypothesis was tested with reference to the strength of political groups, the outcome of group competition, the representativeness of leaders, and the attitudes of members to local leaders and local union government.

To pinpoint the political orientations of activists is a relatively simple task, but for inactive members it was necessary to use a questionnaire. From Table 1A, Q1 it appears that in local A activists were predominantly Labour Party or left of Labour. This contrasts with the 60% of inactive members supporting Liberals and Conservatives.

A similar pattern emerged in local B. Here the incumbents were mainly rightwing Labour, but over 30% of activists were left of Labour. This was true despite a poorly organised political left and a weak Rank and File group. So while local B had its share of left opposition the main attack on the traditional incumbents came from their general unpopularity rather than from their politics.

The division of the local associations into the larger inner city ones of A and B with leftwing group activity, and the smaller small town associations of C and D with virtually no overtly political challenge to the dominant NUT position, follows a line of argument expounded by Faunce in his own research:

TABLE 1 - POLITICS

1(A) Area and level of activity

Q1 Which of the following political groups are you most sympathetic towards?

%	A				B				C				D			
	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA
Conservative	10	15	10	0	10	10	15	10	30	25	40	20	20	25	25	0
Liberal	20	45	20	5	10	15	15	5	40	45	45	35	30	45	30	15
Labour	55	40	60	70	60	65	55	50	25	25	15	40	40	25	35	70
Left of Labour	10	0	5	20	10	5	10	35	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	10
Nationalists	5	0	5	5	10	5	5	0	5	5	0	0	10	5	10	5

Left of Labour broken down by actual numbers

	A	B	C	D
Communist Party	23	7	1	0
International Socialists	10	6	0	2
Others	25	6	0	0
Total	58	19	1	2

Q1 (a) The relationship of politics to activity level
tested for type of school

%	A				B				C				D			
	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA
Conservative norm	10	15	10	0	10	10	15	10	30	25	40	20	20	25	25	0
Primary	5	5	10	0	20	15	30	10	35	40	40	15	15	20	30	0
Secondary	10	20	5	0	10	5	10	15	20	10	35	25	20	30	25	0
Liberal Norm	20	45	20	5	10	15	15	5	40	45	45	35	30	45	30	15
Primary	25	50	20	5	15	15	25	5	40	35	45	35	25	25	35	20
Secondary	20	40	20	5	10	15	5	5	50	50	45	45	30	55	25	10
Labour norm	55	40	60	70	60	65	55	50	25	25	15	40	40	25	35	70
Primary	55	45	55	75	50	55	35	55	20	15	15	50	50	45	35	55
Secondary	60	40	60	65	60	70	70	45	25	30	20	30	40	15	30	80
Other left norm	10	0	5	20	10	5	10	35	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	10
Primary	5	0	5	15	15	5	10	30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
Secondary	15	0	10	25	10	5	5	30	0	5	0	0	5	0	0	10

Q1 (b) The relationship of politics to activity level
tested for sex

%	A			B			C			D		
	In	Ac	vA	In	Ac	vA	In	Ac	vA	In	Ac	vA
Conservative norm	15	10	0	10	15	10	25	40	20	25	25	0
Male	100	15	0	0	0	0	20	45	15	25	20	0
Female	10	5	0	10	30	15	25	35	25	25	30	0
Liberal norm	45	20	5	15	15	5	45	45	35	45	30	15
Male	0	30	5	10	0	5	45	35	35	25	25	10
Female	45	15	5	15	20	5	45	45	35	45	35	20
Labour norm	40	60	70	65	55	50	25	15	40	25	35	70
Male	0	45	65	80	75	65	25	20	35	50	45	80
Female	45	65	70	65	40	45	25	20	40	25	30	60
Other left norm	0	5	20	5	10	35	0	0	5	0	0	10
Male	0	0	20	10	20	30	0	0	15	0	0	10
Female	0	10	20	5	5	35	0	0	0	0	0	10

Q2 Party membership now and when students by actual numbers

	A		B		C		D	
	now	then	now	then	now	then	now	then
Conservative	4	4	1	1	2	1	0	1
Liberal	0	1	2	0	2	1	1	2
Labour	59	41	13	12	2	2	11	5
Communist	15	10	2	2	0	0	0	0
IS/IMG	3	5	1	0	0	0	0	0
Other left	14	15	2	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	95	76	21	15	6	4	12	8

"The data regarding political processes within local unions suggest that rates of rank-and-file participation and leadership turnover may not be appropriate indexes of democracy in small political units. The small locals in our sample had a higher proportion of members voting in elections and more frequent turnover in the delegate position. These locals, however, also had fewer elections that were contested and were less likely to have an active opposition party to represent minority views on local issues. In addition delegates from small locals appeared to be less responsive to rank-and-file wishes and less concerned with accounting to their constituents for actions at the convention. In general, the data suggest that formal control structures have a different and perhaps less important function in small local unions." 2

This dominant presence of political activists amongst local A leaders goes back to the early 1960s and is evident from the minutes of past meetings, observations of current ones and interviews with the leaders themselves. As part of their campaigns each group sold its journals at association meetings and inside key schools. While observation can pinpoint the existence and strength of the groups among the very active members, it is the questionnaire that informs about the extent of the following of each within the association. The question was asked 'Do you belong to any group within the NUT?' In all areas (Table 1B, Q1) Rank and File was the only group named, and only in local A with 54 members was it of any size. Further evidence of the size of political groups comes from estimated sales of the teacher journals (Table 1B, Q2): in area A about 25% or 200 members said that they read Rank and File (this does not mean they bought a copy) at sometime, while only 5% or about 40 members said the same for Education Today and Tomorrow.

The final evidence for the strength of the left groups in the local associations comes from the stated political views of the leaders. In Table 1A, Q1 it can be seen that 20% of the very active members in area A belonged to parties to the left of Labour, while another 70% aligned with the Labour Party. The more active the more leftwing, and in this case the basis is there for factions to compete for power.

To further investigate the relationship between level of union activity and political affiliation the relationship was tested for its sensitivity to the additional variables of type of school and sex (Table 1A Q1(a) and

Q3 Do you agree that teachers have more in common with industrial and clerical workers than with doctors and lawyers?

%	A	B	C	D
	All In Ac vA	All In Ac vA	All In Ac vA	All In Ac vA
Strongly agree/ agree	40 25 45 55	30 30 25 45	20 20 25 25	25 15 25 35
Strongly disagree/ disagree	40 55 35 30	50 55 55 40	70 70 70 65	55 70 55 40
Unsure	20 20 20 15	20 15 20 15	10 10 5 10	20 15 20 25

1(B) Involvement in the NUT

Q1 Please state any NUT political group of which you are a member

(Numbers)	A*	B	C	D
Rank and File	54	8	0	2

*In area A some members of the broad left also belonged to Rank and File (see Table 1C)

Q2 Please list any journals you read for union purposes

The figures refer to percentage of times mentioned

Rank and File	%	26	14	0	11
Education Today & Tomorrow	%	5	5	2	2

Q1(b)). From these tables it can be seen that no particular interference occurs, and the usual expectation that women in primary schools will be less active may have been offset by the influx of young radical women from the colleges. The conclusion from area A is that rival political groups exist among the very active, and that these groups can command limited wider support. Although the majority of inactive members owe no allegiance to any group, but may be persuaded to follow one or other on a specific policy point.

Of the other local associations examined only in area B³ is there any similar pattern. In 1973 this association was dominated at Officer level by highly traditional Labour incumbents. The one exception being a long-standing member of the CP, who despite being editor of Education Today and Tomorrow took the majority orthodox line on many occasions. The committee was of a similar outlook, although Rank and File candidates had won some seats on the committee in 1974 after three years of trying. At best the Rank and File could muster about 30 votes at important meetings compared to about 50 regular backers of the incumbents. As Table 1B, Q1 shows only 8 members said that they belonged to Rank and File. Readership of the journals was about 14% for Rank and File (about 60 members) and 5% for Education Today and Tomorrow (Table 1B, Q2).

One difference between this area and area A is that here the Rank and File activists tend not to be in IS, and also they are not really represented among the leadership group although they form a large proportion of the very active members. On the other hand local CP activists are represented on the committee since the Labour incumbents prefer their support to that of the Rank and File. The political composition of the membership is similar to that in area A with a majority of Labour and left of Labour supporters among the activists (Table 1A, Q1).

In areas C⁴ and D⁵ the pattern reflects the absence of political activists and left debate. Area C has a very small leadership/activist set, and none of them were involved in Rank and File or political left movements (Table 1). The local Secretary is a traditional Labour Party supporter who is unsure about the existence of Rank and File and who barely tolerates

CP members such as Max Morris.⁶ This situation of virtually no leftwing political support is emphasised by the evidence from Table 2B, Q1 that there are no Rank and File members in the area. No member of the association read Rank and File and only 2 read Education Today and Tomorrow. Only 5% of very active members described themselves as left of Labour (Table 1A, Q1).

Area D was essentially the same as area C, but the specific problems of a new town meant that in some respects the local association was moving nearer some of the features of locals A and B. The local Secretary⁷ was a young 'left Labour' radical who was surrounded by other Labour and Liberal young radicals. During the course of this study a Rank and File presence became known, but on a very small scale. About 10% of the membership read Rank and File and about 2% Education Today and Tomorrow. The leadership group was strongly Labour although 10% of the very active members said they were left of Labour, which includes 2 new IS recruits (Table 1A, Q1).

The existence in strength of Rank and File supporters among activists in areas A and B and to a less extent in area D, and the less formal existence of some anti-Rank and File political left also in areas A, B and D added to strong orthodox groups in B and C shows the reality of competing groups. Their existence is often known even to inactive members:

"I do not like the image of CP leadership and the militant element in the NUT" (Inactive member of local B who votes Labour).

"Like teaching in general the NUT is composed of various factions varying from the militant left to the rightwing" (Active member from area C who votes Labour).

"I feel the local NUT has too many left-wing members" (Inactive member from local D who was non-political).

"I eventually became disillusioned with the 'political clique'" (Active member from local A who votes Labour).

The Table below provides an estimate of supporters of various positions who could be relied on to vote at meetings if necessary:

TABLE 1C GROUP SUPPORTERS

		A	B	C	D
Rank and File	(Nos.)	35	15	0	10
CP/political left		50	15	5	10
Traditional		20	40	20	15

Sources: Questionnaire responses, observation of meetings, interviews with local leaders.

The next question to ask now that the existence of the groups has been shown is how do these groups compete for power and leadership?

The winning of positions of leadership partly depends upon the election process. This includes the positions up for elections (Officers, committee, delegates), the method of voting, the candidates and the results. Also the factors influencing the results such as electioneering, slates and the voters.

In all the areas, corresponding to the model rules for local associations,⁸ the Officers are elected each year. Usually the Secretary and Treasurer are unopposed. The most frequently contested post is that of President: the election is for Vice-President who then becomes President the next year and Ex-President the year after. The delegates to the Annual Conference and other events are usually the Officers, but sometimes they are decided in open contest.

In area A the Secretary and Treasurer are elected with all other posts at general meetings of the association (this has since changed), but they are usually unopposed. The key vote was for the job of Vice-President and was by secret ballot at the AGM (see Chapter 4). In 1974 it was between two women primary school teachers.⁹ One was a member of IS and a leading Rank and File activist. The other was part of the local broad

left and active in the Labour Party. The broad left candidate won by 37 votes to 21 (58 voted out of a possible 1500) after a campaign amongst activists through election handouts and short speeches. At the same meeting¹⁰ the six delegates to Annual Conference were elected: all the Officers made up of 2 CP members and 4 left Labour. To show the fine balance of support at a later meeting¹¹ the Rank and File candidate for the position of ILTA Vice-President won the nomination by 37 votes to 26 against a former association President and broad left young radical. The balance swung back after the resignation of the President when in the election to replace him the successful candidate was a CP member of the broad left who received 79 votes to the loser's 32 (she was an IS member of the Rank and File).¹² And at the next AGM¹³ the Rank and File candidate for Vice-President again lost to the broad left by 71 votes to 47.

In area A the two political factions competed for power through elections with most posts going to the broad left by small but clear majorities. In 1974 the Rank and File had some success in election of delegates to Conference, but their slate for committee of 10 candidates did less well than the broad left's 15 candidates. The elections show that only among active members is any real interest shown. Only 5% of inactive members said they voted at local elections compared to 90% of the very active (Table 2, Q3).

The numbers of members who ever hold formal leadership positions is very small. Only 15 members still in the area had ever been officers and only 70 on the committee, or about 4% of the total membership. Table 2 shows that only 5% of very active members had been officers and 30 on the committee. The questionnaire shows that 10% of all members had at some time been involved in leadership roles. The conclusion from local A is that a few positions are contested for between the Rank and File and the broad left with the latter having the edge. The voting and the interest is among a small group of activists and extends no further into the fabric of the union.

In area B the election of Secretary and Treasurer are by the committee and not by the membership at meetings. The committee itself is composed

TABLE 2 - NUT ACTIVITIES

Q1 Have you ever been a member of the local committee?

%	A				B				C				D			
	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA
Yes	10	0	0	30	5	0	0	10	10	0	5	40	15	0	10	45

Q2 Have you ever been a local officer?

Yes	5	0	0	5	5	0	0	5	10	5	5	30	10	0	5	30
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Q3 Do you vote in local union elections?

Yes	50	5	45	90	70	20	95	95	30	0	30	85	55	0	75	90
-----	----	---	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	---	----	----	----	---	----	----

of the 7 Officers and 16 other elected members. The elections are by postal ballot to the schools. The President and Secretary are ex officio delegates to Conference, and the other places are determined by postal ballot.

Despite the more open approach to voting the actual leadership pattern is much more restricted than in local A. Since 1962 the committee has been dominated by about 10 people. In 1973-4 they held 6 of the 7 Officer's positions and even by 1975 only 1/5 of the committee were relative newcomers. Overall only 50 members had been on the committee since 1962, and most of the time unopposed. The only regularly contested post was that of Vice-President. In 1970 the left Labour candidate defeated the right Labour candidate by 166 votes to 131 (about 20% turnout). Also that year the committee was elected with close results (the lowest successful had 160 votes to the highest unsuccessful's 154). This year marked the start of a push from the left from younger radical teachers to replace the traditionalist incumbents. The position was complicated by the presence of a very loose political left section who divided between support for the Labour office-holders and the Rank and File challengers. To try to stem the left advance the incumbents sent electioneering material to the schools to encourage a high poll with the view that this would defeat the Rank and File. In 1972 the rightwing candidate defeated the left for Vice-President by 133 votes to 107 (17% turnout) and again the committee results were close. By 1974 the left was more successful with a political left President and a CP Vice-President, and the bulk of the committee reflecting the loose agreement between the now isolated traditional officers and the non-Rank and File young radicals; and again the Rank and File itself was defeated the highest receiving 118 votes against the lowest successful committee candidate's 126. It appears that the tactic of electioneering in the schools and the use of the postal vote meant an increase in the number of elected posts and candidates with the Rank and File being opposed by a very loose group of other leftwing members. The results were a dilution of the traditional leadership by more radical young teachers and the defeat of the Rank and File. The election method helped because up to 20% of inactive members voted, much higher than elsewhere,

and 95% of very active members voted (Table 2, Q3). The very small turnover of leadership up to 1975 is indicated in Table 2 showing that only 10% of the very actives were on the committee at any time and only 5% were Officers.

In local B then the incumbents had held control for many years with virtually no change in personnel, and not until the 1970s with the Rank and File challenge did some movement occur with the filtering into the leadership of some younger politically leftwing teachers.

In contrast to the unusual level of political power struggles in locals A and B, the atmosphere in local C provides the classic example of the 'typical' local union. The minutes date from 1893, and show a remarkable pattern of stable existence in line with the Surrey town on which the association is based. Control resides with a small number of self-selected Officers and committee members (13 in all). They are loyal to the union and shy of political controversy. The committee selects the Officers (no contest) and is itself returned unopposed. This typical non-election process extends to delegates to the County teachers association and Annual Conference. Despite this small number of activist-leaders among the 350 members of the association the proportion of very active members being Officers and committee members is proportionately higher than in other areas: 30% were officers and 40% on the committee (Table 2). From this it is obvious that in local C to be active is to be a leader, and therefore no member is excluded from power because of a political stance.

In local D the situation appears to be similar to local C, but certain special factors have moved the association closer to the competitive models seen in locals A and B. From the association's founding in 1955 with the start of education in the new town there were 7 Officers and 8 other committee members all elected unopposed. After 1970 the older incumbents moved out of the association and were replaced by a new wave of younger more radical teachers recruited from the active local Labour and Liberal Parties. By 1974 the committee had increased in size to 24 with most members there for only 3 to 4 years. The Officers, with the

exception of the Treasurer had also been active in the association for a relatively short period of time. The Officers were elected at the AGM as in local A with 14 other committee places. It is also a rule that retired teachers cannot hold office unlike in area C. The delegates to Conference must include the Officers as in area B.

As with area C to be active is to be a leader: 45% of the very active members had been on the committee and 30% officers (Table 2). The competition for office is virtually non-existent, but the fact that votes take place at meetings rules out the majority of members as voters (0% of inactives voted at local elections - Table 2, Q3). The overall pattern in area D is that the new leadership tried to encourage more member interest but with little success, and that the radical alliance at leadership level seems so far to have prevented the small Rank and File group from making inroads into the control of the association.

The ways in which activists become leaders is thus mainly a question of choosing to stand for office, and unless you are firmly situated within a permanent opposition group then you will win office. Rather than dwell on election results it may be more profitable to look at the types of member who are active and so can become leaders. Are the activists representative of the mass of inactive members? Are those activists who are involved in political groups more or less representative of the membership than those who reject overt political struggle within the union? To answer these questions so vital for the impact of leaders on local democracy a profile of local leaders has been built: in areas C and D the leaders are the activists, but in areas A and B many activists are not leaders because they belong to groups who to date have failed to win control. In area A most activists are either Rank and File or part of the loose broad left, while in B activists are mainly Rank and File or part of the loose traditionalist group.

From Table 3a, Q1 it appears that in area A the bulk of very active members come from the 26-35 age range of new radicals young enough to be influenced by student movements of the late 1960s and old enough to have won through to leadership positions, especially when the bulk of

TABLE 3 - BACKGROUND FACTORS

(A) Age and Sex and Qualifications

Q1 How old are you?

%	(1) All NUT	(2) All Teacher	A				B				C				D			
			All	In	Ac	VA	All	In	Ac	VA	All	In	Ac	VA	All	In	Ac	VA
Under 25		20	45	70	35	35	20	25	20	25	30	35	30	15	25	35	25	15
26-35	n.a.	30	30	5	35	45	50	50	40	55	20	20	25	15	40	40	35	50
Over 36		50	25	25	30	20	30	25	40	20	50	45	45	70	35	25	40	35

Q2 Sex

Men	26	40	25	5	30	40	30	15	35	30	20	20	20	30	30	15	40	40
Women	74	60	75	95	70	60	70	85	65	70	80	80	80	70	70	85	60	60

Q3 Are you a graduate?

Yes	n.a.	25	35	35	25	45	55	65	50	40	25	15	15	20	35	30	30	40
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Notes: (1) Figures from TUC Annual Reports
 (2) Figures from DES, Statistics of Education 1973, vol. 4 Teachers, HMSO, London 1975.

(B) Class

Q1 What is your father's occupation?⁽¹⁾

%	A				B				C				D			
	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA
Professional	20	20	25	20	25	25	20	25	20	20	15	20	20	25	25	15
Small Business	20	20	20	20	20	30	30	15	25	30	35	20	15	15	20	25
White collar	30	30	30	15	30	25	30	30	30	25	30	30	35	25	25	30
Manual	30	30	25	45	25	20	20	30	25	25	20	30	30	35	30	30

Q2 What is your spouse's occupation?

Professional	15	25	20	5	20	35	10	15	20	25	25	15	25	30	35	15
White collar	30	25	40	20	35	20	45	35	30	25	40	25	15	20	15	15
Teacher	25	15	20	45	35	30	30	45	25	20	20	45	30	30	20	40
Other	30	35	20	30	10	15	15	5	25	30	15	15	30	20	30	30
N	343				111				97				78			

Notes: (1) Occupation based on collapse of Registrar General's categories.

the under 25's are inactive in terms of normal union affairs. The same is largely true for local B, except that 40% of activists are over 36 indicating the continued presence of older traditional teachers around their persistent leadership group. In local C it is the older teachers that not surprisingly dominate the local, while in D a mixed pattern emerges of the 25-35 year old radicals and the rump of older Labour Party activists. Overall (except local C) it is the 25-36 year olds that tend to be most active, which corresponds to the wider pattern of experience in the student movement in the 1960s and current problems about promotion.

In all the areas men are proportionately more active than women (Table 3A, Q2), but not by such an extent as was previously the case.¹⁴ In areas A, B and D the young radicals now include a correct proportion of women especially in the young teacher movement. Also in areas C and D there has always been the presence of older married women teachers who traditionally were involved in the social events and Teachers Benevolent Fund. Although women seem to play an active role overall in the associations there is still a lack of them in key leadership posts as Table 3C below shows.

TABLE 3C AGE AND SEX OF MAIN OFFICERS IN 1973

	A	B	C	D
Secretary	26-35 Man	36+ Man	36+ Man	26-35 Man
Treasurer	36+Man	36+ Man	36+ Man	36+ Woman
President	36+Man	36+ Man	36+ Woman	36+ Man
Ex-President	26-35 Man	36+ Woman	36+ Man	36+ Man
Vice-President	26-35 Woman	26-35 Woman	36+ Man	26-35 Woman

Table 3C then shows the dominance of men among key posts, although the list of Vice-Presidents could mark the start of the influx of women activists into the local associations leadership through the young teacher movement.

While the majority of activist leaders are men and the majority of inactive members are women there may appear some unrepresentative elements in terms of leader-member relations. But a more important consideration than age or sex is the class origin and class position of the active members (Table 3B). Teachers come from a mixed social and educational background and present certain important divisions within their numbers around issues of an all-graduate profession,¹⁵ therefore the difference in class outlook (partly determined by background) may be important in deciding whether union members are being lead democratically.

Class origin based on the simple single criteria of father's occupation provides a reasonable finding that in area A, B and C the sons and daughters of manual workers are more likely to be active (Table 3B, Q1). Of greater significance is that those teachers married to teachers are much more active than other groups, while those married to higher professionals are less active (Table 3B, Q2). Leaders are more likely to be older married male graduates (married to teachers) and from manual working class homes, while other activists are more likely to be 25-36 years old and of mixed class origin, education and marital status. This phenomenon may reflect that among the younger activists these traditional factors count for less than they did for those teacher trade unionists brought up on more clear cut class lines and less ideological influences.

To question the representativeness of local leaders in this way may mean very little in one sense: they are teachers. On the other hand who they are does count in determining the control certain ideas and groups exercise in the operation of the union. To this extent the next question must be how do these leaders meet with ordinary members in a union context? As practising teachers they meet some colleagues every day. Although that is no guarantee of representation. Also it should be noted that 3 out of the 4 local Secretaries were not in usual teaching situations: in area A he worked in the Teachers' Centre; in B he worked outside the area (and outside London); and in C he was retired. In area D the local Secretary was a scale 2 teacher in a Middle school with 14 other NUT members. The Presidents of the associations in contrast

tended to come from large local secondary schools, which meant that they may have lacked knowledge and/or sympathy with small special and primary schools.

Regular contact between leaders and members is important for any union, and the links forged at meetings and at special events such as rallies are useful. But this kind of link can only be with a small minority of members, themselves more active than the average. Even if these non-leader activists then report back to members in some form it may not be sufficient. When asked who they would contact for information about the union members replied in the way shown in Table 4, Q6. In areas C and D 25% said the local Secretary, and in area A 15% said the Secretary and the same number the other Officers (mainly the Treasurer). In area B only 5% said the Secretary, which shows the extent to which that local leadership had lost the confidence of the membership. In terms of the amount of contact between members and leaders it seems that 70/75% of members had virtually no contact, and only 10/15% said that they were in contact often (Table 4, Q5).

The leadership groups and styles that exist in the four local associations provide an interesting mixture of types. In A a radical and leftwing political group carried on a highly active local organisation and competed for office with an equally active Rank and File group. In B the leadership was less in touch and sympathy with the members. These older rightwing Labour incumbents were fighting a fierce action against the joint attacks of the Rank and File and loose political left. In C there was an unopposed, non-political and non-active leadership group. While in D the leaders were a mixture of young radicals setting an aggressive pace and older quieter leaders. If these are fair comments then the next question is how do the majority of members see their leaders?

The question was asked 'Who runs the local association?' From observation the simple answers are: local A is run by the activists; local B by the Officers; local C by the Officers and committee; and local D by the Officers and committee.

TABLE 4 - ATTITUDES TO LOCAL ASSOCIATION

Q1 Do you agree that the local leaders do a good job?

%	A				B				C				D			
	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA
Strongly agree/ agree	35	25	35	50	25	20	40	20	55	30	65	85	55	40	55	75
Strongly disagree/ disagree	15	10	15	15	25	10	15	35	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	10
Unsure	50	65	50	35	50	70	45	45	40	65	30	10	40	55	40	15

Q2 Do you agree that the local leaders are responsive?

Strongly agree/ agree	35	20	30	50	25	25	30	25	55	35	60	85	45	20	50	60
Strongly disagree/ disagree	20	10	25	30	30	20	10	45	10	10	10	10	10	5	5	15
Unsure	45	70	45	20	45	55	60	30	35	55	30	5	45	75	45	25

Q3 Do you agree that your vote matters in local elections?

Strongly agree/ agree	75	70	65	90	70	60	80	75	60	50	75	80	75	50	85	85
Strongly disagree/ disagree	15	20	25	0	20	20	10	15	15	20	5	5	10	20	5	5
Unsure	10	10	10	10	10	20	10	10	25	30	20	15	15	30	10	10

Q4 Who do you think makes the decisions in your local association?

Officers	20	30	25	5	30	25	30	40	30	35	15	35	15	20	15	15
Committee	15	25	20	5	20	20	10	25	35	30	50	35	30	40	25	30
Activists	65	45	55	90	50	55	60	35	35	35	35	30	55	40	60	55

Q5 How often are you in contact with officers of your local association?

%	A All	B All	C All	D All
Very often/often	15	10	10	15
Rarely/never	70	75	70	75
Sometimes	15	15	20	10

Q6 Who would you ask for information about the union?

Local secretary only	15	5	25	25
Other officers	15	5	10	5

In the opinions of the members (Table 4, Q4) 65% thought activists ran local A; and the more active the members the more they supported that position. Among inactive members 55% gave the power to officers and committee, which suggests that the further you are from the centre of power the more dominant leaders appear and the more activists merge with leaders. In area B 40% of the very active members thought the local was run by officers, although 35% said activists. Among the inactive the majority thought activists ran the association: again the failure to distinguish activists from leaders. In local C 70% of activists said that the officers and committee ran the association, while in D most saw control in the hands of the officers and committee. With the exception of area B most perceptions of power in the locals was fairly accurate, although the more active the more accurate.

The members were then asked whether they thought the local leaders to be 'good' and 'responsive' (Table 4, Q1 and Q2). In areas A, C and D the activists had a better impression of the local leaders than did inactive members, but some also had a worse view. Most of the inactive members had no view at all. In locals C and D those that expressed an opinion gave high support to their leaders, while in area A the support was fair. Only in area B did more activists oppose the local leaders than support them.

As a further test of the attitudes taken by members towards their local leaders they were asked if they thought their vote for leaders was of any importance (Table 4, Q3). The implication is that if they did then their view of the local power relationships would be more favourable. A surprisingly large number thought that their vote did matter: the ratios of those who agreed to those who disagreed was about 4/1 with the smallest margin being in area C where it was 3/1 of all members.

The conclusions so far are that competition among left groups for office in area A means more elections, more electioneering, closer results and more interest in internal union affairs among some activists. The leadership are politically unrepresentative of most members, although it does reflect the influx of young, women and radical teachers in the 1970s.

The goodwill of the majority of members is still there, but the left competition seems to be endangering that. In area B the left challenge to the incumbents had also meant more and closer elections, but the leaders are seen as out of touch and inadequate by many members rather than unrepresentative.

In areas C and D the lack of elections seems to have little effect on the representativeness of the leaders, and indeed in these locals the members were most supportive of their leaders. Although in D there has been a recent tendency for the leaders to move away from the views of the majority of members.

The evidence of this section then supports the original contention that the competition for office among left groups in areas such as A and B does raise the level of local democracy among activists, but also reduces the representativeness of the leaders when compared with leaders in areas without the faction fighting, namely C and D. The extent to which this also effects local organisational effectiveness and the extent to which representativeness of leaders matters are dealt with in the next section. No clear relationship between the extent of formal democracy and the level of local association efficiency can be shown. The traditional democratic dilemma, therefore, appears to be too abstractedly painted, for without reference to the political nature of those groups competing for leadership positions then notions of representativeness tend to be either empty of meaning or irrelevant in practice. What one is left with then is a democracy of activists in those units where competition for office exists, and a democracy of representatives in areas where there is no leadership conflict.

Part 2 The dialectics of informed policy-making

Here again competition to make policy between groups in local A created more activists and more activity amongst them, but reduced the representativeness of the decisions made and further limited the relevance of debate. This finding can be substantiated by reference to the method of decision-making, the type of NUT member most involved in decisions, and the attitudes of inactive members to the policies and methods of policy-making.

While it is often difficult to pinpoint the exact moment of policy-making the usual process involved the tabling of motions at general meetings of local A by both the main left groups. The motions themselves originated from national union policy and/or Rank and File policy and/or broad left policy and/or some special local concern. Once on the agenda a motion's success or failure often depended upon group views of its content and appropriateness, and the extent to which the meeting that decided its fate was composed of group and non-group members.

It was to secure victory for motions that the centre of decision and policy making varied from local to local. In local A it tended to be at general meetings. In locals C and D at committee meetings, and in local B it varied between general and committee meetings as part of the tension that existed between the competing factions.

In any usual sense policy is made at local level by general meetings of associations, and through rule changes at AGMs. A great deal of the policy is passive in so far that it is support for or rejection of proposals from other sources, usually the national union. The importance of local policy of all varieties is that it relates that local's identity to regional and national decision-making, that it reflects at least the views of a majority of active members, and that it may indicate developments among the membership with regard to trade union and work attitudes and behaviour.

Meetings

A great deal of emphasis is placed on the meeting: the traditional method of communication, control and power. One key question for local union democracy is who attends the general meetings which decide policy and often provide leaders. The frequency of meetings is itself of interest: in local B there were 6 general meetings in 1974 (compared with between 3-5 each year since 1970) with an average attendance of 47 in 1974 (and between 26-48 since 1970) with a range of 20-73 in 1974 (20-111 since 1970). These meetings are held at NUT Headquarters (Hamilton House) after school on Thursday nights, and last for about 2 hours. The hall was very pleasant, but rather formal. The normal attendance was made up of about 1/3 committee members and the rest other activists. Some of the meetings presented guest speakers rather than policy matters. In 1974 about 20 members turned up to hear a debate between the 3 main contenders for the Executive, while 60 attended the AGM.¹⁶

The pattern of events was broadly similar in locals C and D. In area C they usually held 3-4 meetings each year with an average attendance of 35 (range of 15-185 since the 1890s). The normal convention is that 3 meetings are with outside speakers (usually LEA and NUT officials), and the AGM. Most meetings are made up of 1/3 committee, and others interested in the particular topic. Similarly in D there are 3 meetings and a AGM with average attendance of 30 ranging from 20-120. A meeting to discuss the 1974 salary settlement attracted only 20 members of whom 1/3 were on the committee.¹⁷

Area A provides a contrast to these patterns. It held many more meetings - - almost one a month; each had higher turnouts, although in meetings of up to 50 in size the committee contributed 25%-30% of attenders.

Most of the time most meetings are poorly attended and so controlled by the committee members present, but in areas A and B the occasional salaries meeting attracted large numbers (over 100) which put the very active members in the position of having to fight for policy. In contrast the high turnouts in areas C and D were reserved for important guest speakers.

A point often neglected by other commentators should be stressed here. That is that attenders are not identical. Simply the same people do not attend all meetings: so with two meetings of say 45 and 38 the numbers having attended could lie anywhere between 45 and 83. This means that in any year more members have attended meetings than the numbers at the best attended meeting. From Table 5 it seems that in area A 55-65% said that they had never been to a general meeting, and 10-20% said that they had been at least once. So meetings do reach more people than is often conceded, but the question still remains why do so many members find one meeting enough.

In areas C and D and to a less extent in area B most general meetings are on educational topics, and these usually attract the best attendances. No policy is made here. The two particular occasions for policy are the AGM where rule changes are possible, where the new President makes a keynote speech and when some policy is made; and the meeting that decides which motions to support for Annual Conference. The reality is that in local C certainly and in local D despite efforts to change, policy is made at committee meetings, and then endorsed at general meetings dominated by committee members. In area B this pattern was successfully challenged in 1974-5 with the result that general meetings became the battle ground between the committee's right to take decisions and the members' rights to alter them at general meetings. In fact that issue was the chosen ground of the Rank and File attack aimed at winning the widest support among non-aligned activists through the appeal to democracy. Only in local A did regular general meetings make policy, and this was due to the coincidence of the incumbent's commitment to greater democracy and the Rank and File tactic of elevating majority votes at general meetings into some final democratic proof of the rightness of their position.

Meetings have limited attendance, but what happens at them can turn the tide of local power and they retain a special meaning in trade union tradition. In February 1974 the committee in area B met to decide local policy on the salary award: 13 people were present. The committee had undertaken this task since the general meeting called to discuss the

settlement had been inquorate with only 20 attenders. The dominant line of support for the Executive's negotiating position defeated those on the left who attacked it as insufficient. At this meeting a motion had been sent to the Secretary for inclusion on the agenda for the next general meeting: the motion expressed support for the miners' action. Both the Secretary and the assistant Secretary thought that such 'political' resolutions were outside the scope of the NUT's aims and objects, and that it was this kind of Rank and File manoeuvre that had reduced area A for example to "a shambles".¹⁸ The Officers felt that it was their duty to protect the mass of the membership from political factions, and that this duty justified the use of administrative control to prevent such motions reaching general meetings, or more important being on agendas that were circulated to the schools. The committee saw the motion about miners' as diversive, and sought to increase local interest in the salaries issue by arranging a meeting of Executive candidates to speak on salaries. The chosen speakers were Fisher (CP), Whitely (Rank and File), and Richardson (traditionalist Labour). In the event only about 20 members attended that meeting.¹⁹

In contrast to this badly attended meeting the AGM²⁰ in area B attracted over 60 members. One main item of debate was the need for greater membership involvement in the union's policy making. The Rank and File speakers accused the incumbents of deliberately preventing this by stifling local democracy through over-control by the committee. Their solution was to propose a series of rule changes aimed at restoring power to general meetings away from elected leaders. There then followed the usual constitutional wrangle over the propriety of motions to alter the association rules. Once debate started it centred around the argument that the present committee made local policy and so had usurped the rights of general meetings. The line ran that if policy was made at general meetings then more people would attend since they would see the results of their efforts, and that this would be more democratic. The case against was that most members wanted the committee to make policy except in periods of acute crisis. After two recounts and some bitter recriminations the vote to change the rule won by 37 to 25, but failed on the 2/3 majority rule. The second line of attack was to change the

rules so that urgent motions could be debated immediately. The case against was that if this happened members would not know what was to be decided since the motions would not appear on the agenda (the same happened in area A which resulted in the resignation of the President). This proposal won by 31 to 25, so again failed on the 2/3 rule.

These proposed rule changes stem from the Rank and File policy to try to locate decision-making at general meetings away from the elected committee and officers. This was supported by others on the left as part of the radical move to greater democracy and openness and as part of the total challenge to the entrenched attitudes of the majority of the committee. The incumbents held on narrowly, but at the cost of alienating many potentially useful activists. The goings-on at these meetings are often incomprehensible to the uninitiated members, and the floor tended to be dominated by certain speakers from the main factions. Only about $\frac{1}{3}$ of the very active members said that they did anything at meetings, while 40% thought them dull although 40% also said that they enjoyed meetings (Table 5, Q5 and Q6).

To elevate the meeting over elected representatives as the centre of decision-making actually corresponds with many union constitutions.²¹ These refer to a period when liberal representative democrats held greater sway over the movement. In recent times, however, orthodox representative democrats have increasingly neglected such mechanisms in favour of decision by elected leaders. The Rank and File opposed this tendency in order to try to win policy at meetings through temporary Rank and File majorities. In the end democracy amongst those who stand for election and attend meetings becomes stronger, but the argument debated and the wider participation of members becomes more remote.

Such meetings are never seen in area C. Here the only general meeting for members is the AGM. At the 1974 one the new President expressed regrets that the changes in the teacher's role had not been fully understood by the public as she said: "from the one-room teacher village, schools have grown to the vast multi-purpose factories of learning", and teachers should be rewarded accordingly. She thought that part of the

TABLE 5 - MEETINGS

Q1 How often do you attend general meetings?

%	A				B				C				D			
	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA
Never	55	95	55	10	65	85	85	15	65	100	40	10	60	90	70	20
Once	10	5	20	5	15	10	15	20	15	0	35	20	20	10	25	20
Twice	10	0	15	15	10	5	0	25	10	0	20	30	10	0	5	30
More often	25	0	10	70	10	0	0	40	10	0	5	40	10	0	0	30

Q2 How often do you attend special general meetings?

Never	65	90	70	30	75	95	95	30	70	85	65	50	70	100	85	20
Once	15	10	20	15	10	5	5	25	15	10	25	20	20	0	15	50
Twice	10	0	10	20	10	0	0	25	10	5	5	20	10	0	0	25
More often	10	0	0	35	5	0	0	20	5	0	5	10	0	0	0	5

Q3 How often do you attend committee meetings?

Never	95	95	100	80	95	100	100	85	90	100	95	50	85	100	95	60
Once	0	5	0	5	0	0	0	10	5	0	5	35	10	0	5	20
More often	5	0	0	15	5	0	0	5	5	0	0	15	5	0	0	20

Q4 Do you "do" anything at meetings?

Yes	30	25	25	40	45	20	45	50	45	30	55	45	50	25	15	80
N	394				92				83				51			

Q5 Do you agree that meetings are dull?

%	A				B				C				D			
	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA
Strongly agree/ agree	40	40	40	40	40	30	45	40	40	45	45	25	45	50	55	35
Strongly disagree/ disagree	35	15	35	50	35	35	30	50	25	10	25	50	25	10	10	50
Unsure	25	45	25	10	25	35	25	10	35	45	30	25	30	40	35	15

Q6 Do you enjoy meetings?

Yes	25	25	25	35	20	20	40	40	40	30	55	75	35	25	50	85
N	377				95				76				70			

failure of public support was because local teachers tended to ignore serious union, educational and political debate, and only show any enthusiasm for social events. The result of this was that the local had no policy except its endorsement of executive positions made at committee meetings.

In area D the committee makes policy, although it attempts to get permission from general meetings. The new young leadership is very keen to make general meetings more interesting and representative, but they have had only modest success so far. The general meeting in February 1974 to discuss the salary claim only attracted 20 members. The meeting voted 12 to 8 to reject the offer despite the advice of the Officers to support the Executive. This policy revolt was inspired by young low paid teachers who saw the deal as totally inadequate for their needs. The leader of that revolt appeared again at a March committee meeting with the proposition that he attend a Rank and File conference as a delegate from that association. The Secretary opposed the suggestion with an attack on Rank and File factionalism in the union. The retort was that Rank and File was just a group of socialist teachers joined together to defend union democracy. The Secretary then launched a bitter attack against the Rank and File on the grounds that it posed as a friendly ginger group but was in fact an IS front. The debate resulted in general confusion among other committee members since the majority had no idea what Rank and File was. In the vote the committee split 6 to 6 with one abstention. After considerable further argument a re-vote decided 6 to 5 to send him as a delegate. This incident shows how what appears to be a harmless request turns into a divisive and bitter argument with damage done to the credibility of the union Officers and the relevance of union meetings.

In practice most policy is made at committee in area D, and usually by the Secretary and President. The liberal representative democrats on the committee wanted a broader base for decisions at general meetings and this was supported by the 2 Rank and File members who saw it as a tactical point to by-pass the elected leaders and win policy through swaying meetings. In area D the leadership was committed to such an increase in democracy, but it was in advance of the membership who remained

unresponsive. This is the opposite of area B where the leaders sought to present the extension of democracy even though the weight of evidence suggested that the members wanted more say in policy-making.

Area A presents a different picture. A left leadership committed to more democracy and a Rank and File opposition utilising that to win some policy at meetings against the leadership line. The result is a diluted militancy wedded to a confused democracy. The assumption in both cases is that the leaders (elected by small majorities in low polls or unopposed) or meetings (with low attendance and narrow majorities) or both represent the views and wishes of the inactive majority of members. These activists formulate policies (so they say) that others agree with and care about on issues that others know about. Such is the claim to democracy!

How activists and leaders represent the needs of members and reflect their views depend in part on the communication processes, and in part on the in-work status of activists. The test of their success depends upon the attitudes of members in general to both policy issues and to local leadership structures. The more left competition exists the more unrepresentative both leaders and issues become, although the greater the democracy amongst activists.

Given the limited nature of elections and meetings the next question must be what links do the activist-leaders have with members in order to assess their needs? And then how do members perceive the policies adopted and the processes involved?

Leader/member contacts

The ways in which leader-activists, in their union capacity, interact with other union members in influencing and being influenced about needs and opinions is important in the total process of representative policy-making. Many of the most vital links are forged at the place of work (the schools) and by the school representative. We need to know what are the links between leaders and members, how they relate to the individual member's union and work career and experience, and then to

test how good the communication processes are by comparing actual policy with the views of the membership.

The importance of this for the study is that the Rank and File and other left groups claim to represent and speak for the majority of members through their special insights and/or contacts with the ordinary member. Who knows what the real interests of the members are? Who is the historical repository of rank-and-file feelings? For the Rank and File it is essential that they are the authentic voice of the people in order to substantiate their wider claim of a bureaucratic-CP-rightwing 'betrayal' of the masses. For the political left the correct assessment of the people's wishes is vital for their bid as spokesman of the popular front. The traditionalists need to claim mass backing in order to justify their role as the representatives of the 'silent majority' and guardian of the union against extremists. But the researcher wants to know how does the local Secretary in area B know what members want when he works and lives over 50 miles away; or in local C where he is retired; or in A where he works at the Teachers' Centre? To proclaim with Zarathustra that God is dead is one thing, but to prove it is another!

One linking place for members and leaders is at meetings themselves. Before they start several members will discuss with Officers problems that have arisen at school, and after the meeting the most interested adjourn to the bar or pub (more often in A and B than in C and D). But such contacts, while important for activists, are non-existent for the majority of members who never attend meetings. A more common way to attract the less-union conscious is through social events. In areas A and B real effort was put into organising socials for the newly qualified teachers each year, for the school representatives and for young teachers. In all cases a few new people would attend and so some contact with a wider audience established, but only 10% in A and 5% in B said they ever attended socials (Table 6, Q3). This is in contrast with areas C and D where socials were major events (often summer outings or tea parties) and here 40% of members said they attended. This indicates that in the small, non-political and town (as opposed to inner city) associations socials take on a special significance and play a vital role in keeping

TABLE 6 - UNION INTEREST

Q1 Are your union friends powerful in the local union?

%	A				B				C				D			
	All	In	Ac	VA	All	In	Ac	VA	All	In	Ac	VA	All	In	Ac	VA
Yes	20	5	15	30	20	5	20	20	15	10	10	40	20	0	30	35
N	475				136				89				57			

Q2 Are your school friends members of the NUT?

Yes	80	75	75	90	85	75	80	95	75	60	85	85	80	60	90	80
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Q3 Are your school NUT friends active in the local association?

Yes	15	0	15	25	20	5	20	30	10	5	10	20	15	5	15	25
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Q4 Would you go to the union for help with a professional problem?

%	A				B				C				D			
	All	In	Ac	VA	All	In	Ac	VA	All	In	Ac	VA	All	In	Ac	VA
Yes	20	15	20	25	15	15	15	10	20	15	10	45	20	15	25	25

Q5 How often do you discuss union matters?

Very often/often	10	0	5	35	20	5	15	25	5	0	0	5	5	0	5	10
Rarely/never	65	80	75	30	55	75	65	50	75	85	80	75	75	90	80	50
Sometimes	25	20	20	35	25	20	20	25	20	15	20	20	20	10	15	40

Q6 Do you attend socials organised by the union?

Yes	10	0	5	45	5	0	0	10	40	20	45	70	40	10	50	65
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Q7 How closely do you follow reports of the Annual Conference?

Very closely/closely	15	5	5	25	15	5	15	20	15	5	10	25	10	0	10	25
Not closely/ not at all	50	70	60	30	55	70	60	40	45	60	50	20	55	75	70	20
Fairly closely	35	25	35	45	30	25	25	40	40	35	40	55	35	25	20	55

Q8 How often do you read The Teacher?

Very often/often	20	10	25	20	25	5	25	30	40	25	45	65	25	15	25	40
Rarely/never	45	60	50	30	45	75	45	35	30	45	15	10	40	45	45	20
Sometimes	35	30	25	50	30	20	30	35	30	30	40	25	35	40	30	40

the local together and allowing Officers to meet members. In areas A and B despite the efforts socials take the form of anonymous wine and cheese functions, where a few self-selected neophytes join the activist group with little else achieved.

Some additional contacts are made at NUT events, such as rallies, that attract more than an average response. In the 1970s these would be fairly common occurrences for members of A and B, but rather scarce out in the home counties.

As has been already noted only about 1/3 of members are in any form of regular contact with Officers, and in area B the figure is much lower (Table 4, Q5). Other links include contacts through friends. Table 6, Q1-Q5 shows that inactive members have few friends who are active in the local association, and from that it follows that they spend little or no time talking about union matters. An additional area of contact may be within groups, where an active communist teacher is not active in the union but hears all about events from other communists who are active.²² In all this, however, the same pattern of activists being in touch with other activists maintains itself.

Wider links are found through the formal information flow. Inactive teachers may hear more about the union from The Teacher (Table 6, Q8) than from other sources although the signs are that only a few actually read it. The same applies to following their Annual Conference (Table 6, Q7) through the media in general. The overall impression is that these links within the union structure are a function of the size of the local association and its particularisation, rather than of the nature of the the leadership or any competition for power. The great political battles among active members and the tidal waves of national pay agreements seem to by-pass the ordinary member in the schools. Although the word 'seem' is revised when school union activity and mobilisation around pay issues are examined.

To discover the more likely impact of activists within schools, and to reinforce the image of activists a further analysis was made of teacher mobility, job level and type of school. The aim was to find some

measure of representativeness and familiarity with issues as between active and inactive members. In locals A and B with left competition for office this should be more true than in the other areas. A relevant consideration, therefore, is the time spent as a member of the union (Table 7, Q2). In all areas the newest members were the least active. In areas A, B and D those in the union for from 2 to 7 years were the most active, while in C this was true for those in longer than 8 years. This reflects the age structure of the membership and the inner London tendency to recruit newly qualified staff. The results for membership of the local association showed that only 15% of the very active members in areas A, B and D had been around for more than 8 years. In C this figure was 40%. Turnover of staff and the number of newly qualified teachers influences the level of activity and interest in the union. The failure to identify with job, school, area and union that exists among highly mobile young teachers has the consequence that they are not interested in the normal activities of their association, but may be persuaded to take limited action on pay and employment issues (see Chapter 4).

The motivation that persuades members to contact the local union, and/or be involved in the local union and/or hold attitudes in line with local union policy is partly to be found in the job and career prospects of the individual. This motivation exists in parallel, but at a more superficial level, with the underlying motive for joining any trade union: namely the weakness of the individual worker in the market place. The effects of the job on union activity are always difficult to measure, but some insight can be gained in particular with reference to the notion of mobility. Highly mobile teachers (Table 7B) have little reason to invest time in local union affairs and with local union activists.

Closely tied to job, career and expectations is the type of school you work in. In all kinds of ways the great divide in teaching is the primary/secondary school. This by itself, however, provides little guide to the question of level of union activity. In areas B, C and D there is a slight indication that primary school teachers are more active, while

TABLE 7 - TIME PROFILE

(A) NUT

Q1 Were you a member of the NUT when you were a student?

%	A				B				C				D			
	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA
Yes	50	55	50	50	40	25	40	50	45	40	55	50	50	50	45	55

Q2 How long have you been a member of the NUT?

Less than one year	30	55	25	20	15	30	10	10	25	30	25	15	15	20	15	10
2-7 years	50	35	55	55	55	50	55	60	40	45	40	25	55	60	55	60
Over 8 years	20	10	20	25	30	20	35	30	35	25	35	60	30	20	30	30

Q3 How long have you been a member of your local association?

Less than one year	40	70	30	25	30	45	25	20	35	40	40	20	25	30	25	10
2-7 years	55	25	60	65	55	50	55	65	45	40	45	40	60	45	55	75
Over 8 years	5	5	10	10	15	5	20	15	20	20	15	40	15	25	20	15

(B) JOB

Q1 For how long have you been teaching?

%	A				B				C				D			
	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA
Less than 2 years	45	70	40	35	25	30	25	20	25	30	30	15	25	30	25	15
3-7 years	35	10	40	40	40	45	35	45	30	35	30	15	40	40	40	55
Over 8 years	20	20	20	25	35	25	40	35	45	35	40	70	35	30	35	30

Q2 For how long have you been in this area?

Less than 2 years	55	75	50	40	45	55	45	40	45	50	45	30	35	40	40	25
3-7 years	35	20	35	55	35	35	35	40	30	30	40	30	45	40	40	60
Over 8 years	10	5	15	5	20	10	20	20	25	20	15	40	20	20	20	15

Q3 For how long have you been in this school?

Less than 2 years	60	80	55	50	50	60	45	45	50	65	50	40	45	50	40	40
3-7 years	35	15	35	45	35	30	35	45	35	20	40	45	40	35	40	50
Over 8 years	5	5	10	5	15	10	20	10	15	15	10	15	15	15	20	10

Q4 For how long have you been in this job?

Less than 2 years	80	90	80	75	70	75	65	70	60	70	60	70	70	65	60	75
3-7 years	15	10	15	20	20	20	20	25	30	20	35	25	25	25	25	20
Over 8 years	5	0	5	5	10	5	15	5	10	10	5	5	5	10	15	5

Q5 Do you agree that you will stay in your present school?

%	A				B				C				D			
	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA
Strongly agree/ agree	30	30	30	25	40	30	40	40	30	25	30	40	30	25	35	25
Strongly disagree/ disagree	40	40	35	40	30	40	25	35	35	35	40	25	35	40	30	30
Unsure	30	30	35	35	30	30	35	25	35	40	30	35	35	35	35	45

Q6 Do you agree that you will be promoted in the near future?

Strongly agree/ agree	20	15	20	20	30	30	20	35	10	15	10	10	20	5	25	30
Strongly disagree/ disagree	50	55	50	50	40	40	35	40	45	50	55	25	50	50	50	45
Unsure	30	30	30	30	30	30	45	25	45	35	35	65	30	45	25	25

in area A the evidence shows that inactive members are more common among primary staff (Table 8, Q1). The conclusions from this are unclear. Various factors operate prima facie in opposite directions. Large secondary schools mean that many members face the same problem in a single work unit, but in other ways some secondary teachers feel more isolated. Small primary schools may themselves experience separateness from the main events, but may feel more unified within themselves. Which way individuals or groups jump in terms of union commitment often depends upon the school representative and organisation.

Those measurable features that relate mobility, type of school and expectations to level of union activity include the present job (Table 8, Q4) and scale (Table 8, Q3) teachers are on. In areas A and C the more senior the position the more active, and in area D senior teachers are also the most active but not Heads for certain specific historical reasons. In all areas those on scale 1 were the least active, which is to be expected since scale is related to age, school type and subject.

To test these relationships further school type was also put against sex (Table 8, Q2) for level of activity analysis. In areas A and C men in primary schools are more active than women, but the extent of significance is marginal. In secondary schools men are markedly more active than women especially in areas A and D.

It is now possible to return to the notion of mobility, and to note that in inner London high turnover was acute in the early 1970s. This was in part due to the wage payment system, and in part because young newly qualified teachers found London an attractive place to start work. In all areas those who had taught for less than 2 years were the least active (Table 7B, Q1); and the same was true for time spent in the same school or locality (Table 7B, Q2, Q3). There was a consistent pattern (although not very strong) indicating that the longer you stay in a post the more likely you are to be involved in local union affairs (Table 7B, Q4) and the longer you teach the more likely you are to experience some union dependent experience.

TABLE 8 - JOB PROFILE

Q1 In what kind of school do you teach?

%	(1)	A				B				C				D			
	All Teach	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA
Primary	50	50	65	50	50	40	40	45	50	45	40	60	60	35	30	45	40
Secondary	50	50	35	50	50	60	60	55	50	55	60	40	40	65	70	55	60

Q2 Type of School and Sex

Primary	Men	25	15	0	20	20	20	10	10	10	20	5	10	0	0			
	Women	75	85	100	80	80	80	90	90	90	80	95	90	100	100			
Secondary	Men	55	35	10	40	50	40	20	45	40	30	25	35	35	45	15	60	65
	Women	45	65	90	60	50	60	80	55	60	70	75	65	65	55	85	40	35

Q3 On what scale are you?

One	35	45	70	35	30	40	45	45	30	60	65	65	50	45	45	50	40
Two	35	25	15	30	35	25	25	15	30	20	15	15	25	30	35	30	30
Three	10	15	5	15	20	20	25	20	25	10	10	15	10	15	10	15	15
Four and higher	20	15	10	20	15	15	5	20	15	10	10	5	15	10	10	5	15

Q4 What is your present job?

Head/deputy head	15	10	5	5	15	10	10	10	15	10	5	10	30	10	10	5	10
Other senior	25	25	10	35	30	40	30	45	30	25	25	25	25	35	35	30	40
Assistant	60	65	85	60	55	50	60	45	55	65	70	65	45	55	55	65	50

Notes: (1) Figures from DES, 'Statistics of Education', op.cit.
(figures refer to all teachers in England and Wales).

In addition to the facts of their career teachers experience certain hopes and fears for the future. There was no marked pattern between level of activity and perceptions of promotion or movement (Table 7B, Q5 and Q6), but the trend was that those who thought they would remain in their schools were more active. The more significant finding was that in all areas inactive members felt more likely to move than did active members. Again a slight trend showed that those who thought promotion most likely were the most active, although most respondents saw little chance of promotion in the near future.

No definitive conclusions can be reached from this survey of the links between career developments and union activity, but the results show that the longer you stay in a school the more likely you are to be promoted and to form some links with the local association. So high mobility while unsettling and perhaps radicalising does not result in the usual forms of union activity, although later it will be argued that it does effect the ability to mobilise groups of teachers around pay issues. It does provide, however, some insight into the relationship between active members who have a stake in local teacher affairs and the mass of inactive teachers some of who have no such investment. In area A the majority of NUT members were young and highly mobile: few of these could be expected to know of or care about the daily life and commitment of local union operation, let alone have any deeply held view of its continued existence. This army of insecure young teachers constitutes the basis for a radical and easily mobilised group, who will act in a short-lived and demonstrable way but who will shun the toil of most union work. The marked absence of such a group in areas C and D is perhaps more important in terms of the local union than any other single factor.

In terms of policy creation, influence and representativeness it seems that the links between those actively concerned in taking decisions and making policy and those whose name is taken as supporting such actions are of a patchy and self-perpetuating kind. The main point is that many of the inactive/don't know members are very new or very mobile or at least see themselves in temporary, insecure and uncertain positions. Such members in inner London exhibit dual characteristics: a lack of

identity and concern with local events and union activities; a confused and volatile attitude to actions associated with demonstrations of general discontent and specific pay/job grievances. Concentration on elections and policy formation illustrates the first position, while the next section on schools and mobilisation provides evidence for the second proposition. If this is correct, especially for areas A and B, then the impact of political groups will be of greater significance than in times of higher security and fewer manpower bulges. The left will attempt to harness this mobile and frustrated group: the Rank and File using them as the basis for anti-trade union bureaucracy proposals and hoping for short-term gains; and the political left seeking to consolidate the mass into an alliance with other discontent groups and providing some permanent shift within the union. In their turn the orthodox democrats will seek to accommodate the feelings of discontent within the new official national policy.

Representative policy-making

The extent to which activists strive to win policy at local union level is an indication of the importance they place on the results. The extent to which that policy is in line with the wishes of all or some of the membership is an indication of the democracy of that local union, and of the potential that local association has for mobilising members around important struggles over pay and employment issues. In area A the frequency of general and special meetings (about one each month) was a pointer to the stress put on policy by local political activists. Each meeting had before it several major motions ranging from calls for strike action through education to support for other groups of workers. The local union was committed by successful resolutions to total comprehensive schooling, teacher participation in school, time off for school representatives, and support for the Shrewsbury 24. In addition more time was spent on the case of the Wandsworth Three and internal union democracy than on any other issues.²³

And apparently such circumstances reveal the extent to which activists in locals C and D differ from those in A and B in terms of representing

issues of interest and discussing issues of a familiar nature. Although activists in all the local associations exhibited common characteristics about length of time in the profession, level of job and type of school, yet in areas C and D this was more in line with inactive teachers than among the mass of young newly qualified passive members in inner London.

As a test of this aspect of representativeness certain motions in the local associations that came up for detailed and sophisticated debate were put to inactive members. On comprehensive schooling and teacher participation in schools activists in locals A and B were far more enthusiastically in favour of both than inactive members. This pattern was repeated for trade union issues.²⁴

At a meeting of local A the overwhelming number of those present voted to support comprehensive education for all, and 70% of active members agreed with this, but only 35% of inactive members agreed (Table 9, Q1). In locals B and D there is a similar picture with active members supporting comprehensives and the less active being less enthusiastic. On the sensitive topic of teacher participation within schools a clear majority favoured it at a meeting of local A, and active members there and in the other locals also felt strongly in favour of such developments. Although inactive members were uninterested (Table 9, Q2). So on two educational issues where activists express strong and frequent opinions they were out of step with inactive members.

The question of NUT affiliation to the TUC has for many years been a somewhat divisive issue within the union at Conference and at local level. In areas A, B and D the activists supported the affiliation (Table 9, Q3) and have successfully carried through the local concomitant, affiliation to local trades councils. On another trade union issue that of time off for union representatives the active minority are again the ones who are and support, while inactive members appear indifferent or antagonistic (Table 9, Q4). So on trade union matters the activists are again out of step with the members in their demands in locals A and B (and partly in D) but not in local C.

TABLE 9 - ATTITUDES

Q1 Do you agree that all secondary schools should be comprehensives?

%	A				B				C				D			
	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA
Strongly agree/ agree	55	35	50	70	50	45	50	75	30	35	25	45	40	30	30	65
Strongly disagree/ disagree	35	50	40	20	40	45	45	20	55	55	60	30	40	55	55	15
Unsure	10	15	10	10	10	10	5	5	15	10	15	25	20	15	15	20

Q2 Do you agree that there should be more teacher participation in school?

Strongly agree/ agree	70	35	35	75	75	25	45	70	45	35	40	50	50	35	45	55
Strongly disagree/ disagree	15	20	25	10	10	30	30	10	20	15	15	25	15	15	15	20
Unsure	15	45	40	15	15	45	25	20	35	50	45	25	35	50	40	25

Q3 Do you agree that the NUT should stay in the TUC?

Strongly agree/ agree	65	50	70	85	65	55	65	70	40	40	40	45	60	40	60	85
Strongly disagree/ disagree	10	15	10	5	15	10	20	10	25	20	30	25	15	30	15	5
Unsure	25	35	20	10	20	35	15	20	35	40	30	30	25	30	25	10

Q4 Do you agree that your school representative should have time off for union duties?

%	A				B				C				D			
	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA
Strongly agree/ agree	50	45	45	60	55	50	60	55	45	40	50	45	35	25	35	50
Strongly disagree/ disagree	35	40	40	30	30	30	25	35	35	35	40	40	45	60	35	30
Unsure	15	15	15	10	15	20	15	10	20	25	10	15	20	15	30	20

Q5 Do you agree that the NUT should be more involved in politics?

Strongly agree/ agree	35	30	30	55	35	25	30	50	15	15	10	20	25	15	20	45
Strongly disagree/ disagree	40	45	45	25	40	35	50	30	70	65	80	60	50	70	60	20
Unsure	25	25	25	20	25	40	20	20	15	20	10	20	25	15	20	35

Q6 Do you agree that your local association is democratic?

Strongly agree/ agree	40	30	45	35	30	20	40	30	55	30	70	85	60	40	55	90
Strongly disagree/ disagree	10	10	10	45	20	5	10	35	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	5
Unsure	50	60	45	20	50	75	50	35	45	70	30	15	40	60	40	5

Q7 Do you agree that you can influence the running of your local association?

%	A				B				C				D			
	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA
Strongly agree/ agree	40	30	35	65	40	30	30	50	40	35	40	55	50	25	60	75
Strongly disagree/ disagree	30	25	40	20	30	30	35	30	30	35	25	20	25	40	10	20
Unsure	30	45	25	15	30	40	35	20	30	30	35	25	25	35	30	5

Q8 Do you agree that your local association is run by a political clique?

Strongly agree/ agree	30	15	35	35	25	15	20	30	5	5	0	0	5	5	10	5
Strongly disagree/ disagree	20	10	15	45	20	5	20	40	45	25	50	80	55	30	50	80
Unsure	50	75	50	20	55	80	60	30	50	70	50	20	40	65	40	15

Q9 Why do you not attend meetings?

Powerless	20	10	30	30	20	5	10	40	10	10	10	20	15	5	25	30
Apathy	5	15	0	0	20	35	15	5	20	25	10	0	15	5	10	20
Other commitments	50	50	50	55	40	45	50	35	50	40	60	75	50	45	50	50
Other	25	25	20	15	20	15	25	20	20	25	20	5	20	45	15	0

Q10 Why do you not vote in local union elections?

Ignorance of policy/person	25	40	60	65
Ignorance of election	20	20	5	5
Apathy	15	10	10	10
Other	40	30	25	20
N	390	63	99	52

In terms of what members think the NUT should be doing (and part of the reason why they joined) it can be seen from Table 9 that activists put more emphasis on trade union issues and others more on collective bargaining. The consequence is that internal union problems about unity and democracy come up for debate and form policy more often than most members would want. In addition motions on wider political questions also appear more often than most members feel necessary: in area B they debated Northern Ireland and in area D South Africa.²⁵ The overall impression from the successful policy motions and the test of members' opinion is that in area B the leadership is behind the wishes of the members; while in area D they are ahead of them. In area C the leaders seem to express the views of the members most accurately, while in A the active members do seem to take account of inactive opinion more than might be expected.

Motions attacking the union itself are rare in areas C and D, and in area A despite some special local problems most attacks are reserved for the Executive as in the Wandsworth Three case. Only in area B were systematic attacks launched against the local leadership: too much committee power, undemocratic practices, and failure of the Secretary to call special meetings when instructed.²⁶ Whether such strong feelings are felt by less active members was put to the test in the questionnaire. As has been seen in answer to the question about whether local leaders are 'good' the area B leaders are the most unpopular (Table 4, Q1). To underline this only 30% in area B thought the local democratic compared with 60% in area D (Table 14, Q6). Again as noted above 30% in area B said the Officers ran the local compared with 15% in local D (Table 4, Q4).

The overall policy picture is that in the absence of political controversy and competition in areas C and D the range of policy topics and the time spent on policy decisions are very limited. Furthermore most policy corresponds to the general national NUT line on pay and the cuts in educational expenditure. Such lowest common denominator policy commitments plus good social links in the smaller associations provides the basis for an approving if uninterested membership. A membership which seems to be satisfied to let the self-selected leaders lead even if in area D they are more radical and adventurous than their members, and in C slightly less radical.

In areas A and B, however, with fierce political activity it seems that in A at least there has been only a limited impact upon the members, who are not bothered by what policy is passed unless it directly involves them in action. In area B because of the way in which the incumbents retain power and because many members are more worried about events than some of the leaders appear to be so the members have withdrawn their tacit support and taken a more active interest in local affairs.

Many of these points are more eloquently made by members themselves. One inactive member of area A gave his reasons for being inactive as "I disapprove of political rather than professional concern in the local association": a common sentiment in areas A and B where professional aspirations are considered inappropriate by the left activists and so rarely feature in policy debate. The same man saw the main tasks of the NUT: "To promote the professional status of teachers": again an anathema to the Rank and File. In conclusion this professional teacher argues that: "A great deal of attention seems to be given to issues completely outside the province of the Association". It is not just that type of union member who has a grievance against the local union. A school representative in area A who was a Labour Party supporter said that she would be less active in future because of the highly political nature of meetings and decisions. Another Labour Party member in area A said she was leaving the NUT although she had once been on the local committee: the reason given was that there was too much on "rights" of everybody and not enough on basic teacher interests. While these views are random selections, and it should be said that many members support the local activists and their methods, yet the lengthy political debates and the tactical expression of the need to win policy motions do reduce membership interest and so local effectiveness on normal union issues. The same applied in area B where members also suggested that militants among the activists were "fighting the wrong causes" and so prevented their own interest in the union from finding concrete expression. And that any comment about professional matters was fatal for aspiring activists, and so not mentioned.

In areas C and D no such criticisms emerged, and the rare comment against the local leaders tended to be over specific personal grievances not dealt with adequately (in the view of the member with the grievance).

Members' perceptions of the local leaders and local association government reflect at least the image, if not the reality, that exists. In areas A and B not even the activists considered the local to be democratic. In contrast the activists in C and D granted high democratic status to their associations. In areas A and B the largest critical voice came from active members, which indicates the nature of left opposition there. Activists tended to have a more accurate view of the local realities: in all cases they saw influencing local decisions as possible (although there was some division of opinion here). In A and B about 1/3 agreed that a political clique ran the association, while in C and D only about 5% thought that. In all cases inactive members had no opinion on these questions (Table 9, Q7 and Q8).

In order to relate these perceptions to actions members were asked for the reasons for not attending meetings or not voting (Table 9, Q9 and Q10). Only among activists was the reason 'powerlessness' given, which suggests a politically sophisticated view of how decisions are made locally. In the case of members not voting the main reasons given were ignorance of the candidates or what they stood for. These answers (including the high proportion of 'don't knows') raise problems about the decision-making abilities of members taken up in the next part of this chapter.

In practice most local leaders communicate with other members informally at work. This has problems since most activists are more senior and more integrated at school than inactive members. This may result in a lack of representativeness and familiarity indicated by member attitudes to certain key issues and to the local leadership. In addition union meetings are seen as battle grounds in local A and B where elected leaders can be out-flanked on policy. Rank and File and political left emphasis on the democratic role of general meetings (not just to decide policy but also to elect leaders and delegates, and to change rules) tends in those areas to increase local activist interest and numbers, but further

distance them from members. In locals C and D this does not occur due to decision by committee or Officers. So there the activists are less active, but leaders and policies are more representative of ordinary members. The evidence so far indicates a reduction in representativeness, familiarity and organisational efficiency in exchange for an increase in local activist democracy.

For many, however, the election of leaders and the creation of policy are secondary events when compared with the possibility of real action over pay and conditions. The union in the schools and the ability to mobilise teachers onto the streets is the final dimension along which power is fought for and union democracy tested.

Part 3 The contradictions of mobilisation

Hypothesis 3 on the contradictions of mobilisation states that the competition for control over the power to mobilise members among political activists of the left and right incumbents on collective bargaining issues and trade union tactics leads to more direct action and more work-place activity. This tends to increase the decision-making capacity of some active members, but has important divisive consequences which may lead to less democratic practices.

Problems of representativeness, familiarity with debate and competition for office and policy relate strictly to the work of activists at local association level. At the level of the work-place (schools) different relationships may form. Attempts to measure these through notions of 'socialisation' and with regard to age, sex, school, seniority and mobility have helped explain and measure the problem. This part now takes these issues to the school based trade union experiences.

The work experience of teachers is important for their trade union attitudes and behaviour. Certain changes in conditions, status, size of work unit and pay (see Chapter 2) developed into changes and challenges to the NUT as a professional association and a TUC affiliated trade union.

Part of the uneven effects of these changes on teachers comes from their diverse and dispersed teaching circumstances, and this relates to the operation of the local associations. For example a large secondary school may have more than 50 NUT members, while a small primary school might have just 2 members. The consequences of that are now discussed in relation to school level union organisation; to the ability to persuade teachers to take direct action; to local association control; to each competing group; and to the decision-making capabilities of the members. The results add to the overall thesis that left activity in the implementation of democratic practices may lead to less local democratic control.

This part then examines teachers and what goes on in their schools with regard to the union, and shows how the development of increased work place

union organisation (especially in large secondary schools) is both a consequence of modern educational management and a stimulation to Rank and File to build alternative union structures to the official union power base. It links these questions with the need of all groups to be able to control and mobilise teachers around key pay/employment issues. For the Rank and File it is a matter of enormous doctrinal concern to get members to confront the authorities and so reveal the true nature of our repressive society. For the political left it represents a chance to improve conditions, to expand their power base and to achieve a once-and-for-all shift in consciousness along trade union lines. For the orthodox incumbents it is a chance to prove their trade union credentials, keep control over members and win sufficient concessions to justify their hold on the union power agencies.

The impact of the growth of school organisation of the union would appear to lead to greater participation among the membership since more members can be more easily involved. The same applies to issues such as the London allowance. Against this attempts to interest members in action over cases such as the Wandsworth Three or to take opposition stances to Head teacher decisions may well diminish the willingness to participate: it may "blunt the sharp edge of militancy". The greater supposed democracy in certain schools does not ipso facto mean greater democracy in the local association as a whole. That depends more upon the ever-present school representative than upon union 'branches' in the larger schools.

The role of the school representative is of vital importance in smaller schools where there is no formal union organisation, and where (especially in small areas) there is little debate about union policy alternatives. In larger schools the school representative is still responsible for union matters, although rarely the only NUT member active locally. In large schools the school branch meeting can involve most of the NUT members in the school, and this in turn can influence the power balance at local association meetings. The ability to inform members about issues, and the ability to mobilise them for action on certain issues depends to some extent on the way in which the local association is presented to members, and this is done by representatives and school meetings.

The suggestion is that normal activists in terms of representative characteristics and weekly union work may be quite different from those members prepared to participate in school based union work and/or strike action. The potential to mobilise therefore may be stronger among some inactive members than among some active ones. This difference is reflected in the attitudes and behaviour of the Rank and File, the political left and the moderate incumbents towards such activities in areas A and B.

Teachers are a discrete sub-population of the public service workforce, and NUT members are a sub-population of teachers. The personal characteristics of NUT members, and their links to activity levels, is part of the evidence about their potential (shared by some other public service groups) for mobilisation on national issues based on organisation at the local and work place unit. As has been noted above younger teachers are less active in the union's daily functions, but more anxious to improve their pay and conditions; and that educational and work experience of these new professionals seem to be more relevant for their trade union actions and attitudes than their class background and other traditional measures of potential for union action. The specific contention with regard to work experiences is that older and senior teachers are more 'socialised' (Table 10) into the school system, which means more power and higher status for them. In turn the more 'socialised' into the school then the more likely to be active in local union affairs since the teacher will identify his future with that of the school and area and profession. The younger teachers will feel greater discontent and less satisfaction in its expression through lack of access to school and union power centres. Hence their potential for both alternative sources of power within the school such as all-powerful staff associations, and for active challenges to the union leadership and government policy through strike action.

This influx of young teachers into inner London schools at a time of educational and employment uncertainty means that they played the part of a kind of temporary 'lumpen-proletariat' to the real proletariat of active teachers. An alliance of the two forces meant a powerful challenge to any complacent leadership. The Rank and File sought to turn the mass of inexperienced militancy into a permanent alternative to the union

TABLE 10 - MEASURES OF 'SOCIALISATION'

Q1 Where do you "chat" with other members of staff?

%	A				B				C				D			
	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA
Common Room	75	65	80	75	60	65	65	55	70	65	70	75	70	70	70	60

Q2 When do you "chat" with other members of staff?

Lunch	60	20	70	80	20	20	25	20	25	20	35	35	20	15	25	25
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Q3 How often do you "chat" with other members of staff?

Very often/often	65	55	65	85	65	75	65	60	55	50	70	45	60	65	65	55
Sometimes	20	35	20	5	20	15	15	25	25	20	20	40	20	30	15	20
Rarely/never	15	10	15	10	15	10	20	15	20	30	10	15	20	5	20	25

Q4 How often do you attend meetings about school matters?

Very often/often	65	60	70	80	70	70	75	70	50	40	55	55	60	40	60	70
Sometimes	20	25	20	10	20	20	15	20	30	35	30	25	35	55	35	20
Rarely/never	15	15	10	10	10	10	10	10	20	25	15	20	5	5	5	10

Q5 How often does the Head consult you about school matters?

Very often/often	40	30	40	40	45	40	40	55	30	20	45	25	40	20	45	45
Sometimes	25	35	25	30	25	25	30	15	40	35	30	55	30	30	30	35
Rarely/never	35	35	35	30	30	35	30	30	30	45	25	20	30	50	25	20

Q6 How often do you "chat" to school secretarial staff?

%	A				B				C				D			
	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA
Very often/often	60	55	60	70	55	45	55	60	70	60	75	80	70	55	65	80
Sometimes	30	30	35	20	35	45	35	35	20	25	25	15	20	30	20	15
Rarely/never	10	15	5	10	10	10	10	5	10	15	0	5	10	15	15	5

Q7 How often do you "chat" to school cleaners and caretakers?

Very often/often	45	40	45	55	50	30	50	70	50	45	50	60	55	50	45	65
Sometimes	40	50	40	40	30	40	30	20	30	35	30	30	30	30	40	30
Rarely/never	15	10	15	5	20	30	20	10	20	20	20	10	15	20	15	5

Q8 How often do you "chat" to parents?

Very often/often	45	40	45	55	50	50	40	60	50	35	55	65	45	45	40	50
Sometimes	35	40	35	30	35	30	35	30	35	40	35	30	45	40	50	45
Rarely/never	20	20	20	15	15	20	25	10	15	25	10	5	10	15	10	5

Q9 Do you enjoy teaching?

Strongly agree/ agree	90	90	90	90	90	85	90	95	90	85	95	90	90	90	85	95
Strongly disagree/ disagree	5	5	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	5	0	0
Unsure	5	5	10	5	10	15	10	5	10	10	5	10	10	5	15	5

Q10 Do you find teaching lonely?

%	A				B				C				D			
	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA
Strongly agree/ agree	20	10	30	25	20	15	20	25	20	15	10	25	20	15	25	15
Strongly disagree/ disagree	65	80	60	60	65	65	65	65	65	75	75	60	70	75	70	75
Unsure	15	10	10	15	15	20	15	10	15	10	15	15	10	10	5	10

bureaucracy, while the political left for their part sought to turn them into true union militants through a shift in consciousness towards stable trade union involvement. The traditionalists in turn sought to transform the army of discontents into an institutionalised acceptance of the union by attacking the various left options and at the same time bowing sufficiently to the strike calls to maintain control. The union as a whole sought to channel these various forms of energy into the multi-purpose objectives of mobilisation around pay/employment issues, local struggles against specific employer practices and the everyday tasks of recruitment. And within this the Rank and File hoped to get some spin-off in the form of new members for the Party through the 'shock-consciousness' and blinding revelation of leadership betrayal. In these processes the school representative, school/union links, national publicity and the work of political factions are the main factors in converting the members' feelings into union practice.

The school representative and work place organisation

The school representative, as was noted in Chapter 2, has only recently been recognised as anything more than union fodder. Since the early 1970s the job has been enhanced by renewed competition with other unions for members (especially the NAS/UWT); the re-organisation of local government; the more frequent and important pay/employment problems and the general move to work place activity in anticipation of the then new legislation (e.g. Employment Protection Act). Between 20-25% of all members said that they had at sometime been a school representative (Table 11A); and if every school has at least one representative (which is correct most of the time, except a few large schools have more than one) then with an average of 16 NUT members/school in area A; 11 in area B; and 7 in areas C and D, the overall picture shows that about 12% of current members are at present representatives. By definition the more active members are more likely to be representatives, although only in area A have as many as $\frac{1}{4}$ of the very active members been representatives. This shows that many activists are not representatives, and that many representatives are not activists.

TABLE 11 - SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVES

(A) Characteristics

Q1 Have you ever been a school representative?

%	A				B				C				D			
	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA
Yes	25	10	25	50	20	15	20	25	20	10	20	30	25	10	30	40

Q2 What % of men and women are representatives?

Norm N	25 207	20 42	20 33	25 23
Men	30	25	40	35
Women	25	15	20	20

Q3 What % of under 25s, 26-35, and over 36s are representatives?

Under 25	15	5	5	20
26-35	40	20	25	20
Over 36	35	30	30	30

Q4 What % of graduates are representatives?

Graduates	30	15	20	25
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Q5 What % of primary and secondary school teachers are representatives?

Primary	20	10	25	20
Secondary	35	30	25	25

Q6 What % of politics are representatives?

Conservative	5	15	30	20
Liberal	10	15	20	15
Labour	35	20	25	30
Other left	50	20	0	35

On closer examination of school representatives it can be seen that there are more men (Table 11A, Q2) than by proportion among representatives, especially in local C. Older members (Table 11A, Q3) tend to be representatives more frequently: in areas B, C and D over 36; and in area A 26-35. Qualifications (Table 11A, Q4) do not seem relevant. There are more representatives among primary teachers (Table 11A, Q5), but that is because there are more primary schools anyway. Of most interest is the political positions of representatives (Table 11A, Q6). In areas A, B and D they are less likely to be Conservatives and Liberals, and in areas A and D they are more likely to be Labour and further left. In contrast area C shows that 30% of the Conservatives are representatives compared with only 25% of Labour supporters.

Another point of interest is the method of selection for representatives. In general in the trade union movement and traditionally in the NUT the method of appointment is that some reluctant figure emerges from the slightly more concerned members to take on the job.²⁷ In the questionnaire respondents were asked how their school representative was chosen. A large number had no idea (40% in area A and area D, 35% in area B and 55% in C). Of the ones who did know their answers had to be linked to their school in order to give the true number of schools in each category. In area A 77 schools replied (20 secondary and 57 primary and special): of these 33 (43%) elected their representatives (12 secondary; 21 other schools). This is similar to area B where of the 43 schools responding (11 secondary and 32 other) 18 said they elected their representatives (41%) of which 10 were secondary and 8 other. These figures are much higher than for area C where only 8 (20%) of the 43 schools elected representatives, and of these 2 were secondary. In between was area D with 9 (32%) of the 28 schools electing representatives, of which 3 were secondary and 3 middle schools. The picture that emerges is one where representatives are elected much more often in inner London associations than elsewhere and that this suggests both a greater role for the representative and a form of competition for the job from union groups.

Given this profile of school representatives it can be seen that for the many the job is thrust upon them in a state of unpreparedness, unwillingness

and uninformedness. And this means that their tasks are limited to a poor communications channel pinning up notices and occasionally telling a member how to contact the local Secretary over a grievance. On wider union matters most representatives are no better informed than ordinary members, and no better equipped to deal with trade union problems. The move to representative training is slow and painfully inadequate.²⁸ One simple test of the representative's achievement is whether or not he calls union meetings in school in order to gather together the members in a work unit organisation. Here the contrast between the London areas and the others could scarcely be greater. In area A 47% of schools had meetings and in area B this figure rose to 51%. This compares with 5% in C and 11% in area D. It is the secondary schools in particular that hold such gatherings often of a formal kind within the context of the school 'branch'. Here again the competition between rival factions taken into the large comprehensives in inner London areas has meant a marked move to workplace trade union activity with the result that more members join-in at least at this level. The dangers of such developments are, of course, that not all teachers in the schools are NUT members, and that if the school 'branch' is divided then the repercussions for the school can be serious. The evidence then of faction fighting is that the schools become more active and the representative more important.

With or without meetings the school representative remains the NUT beacon in the schools, and the ordinary member sees the union through its work place representatives. Their main tasks as far as the members are concerned is to tell them about union matters (Table 11B, Q2): 55%-65% of respondents said that the representative informed them very often/often, although only 35%-45% said that he asked their opinion (Table 11B, Q3) (and only 20% in area C). Information from the representatives was the main source of union knowledge (Table 11B, Q4) for 50%-55% of members in areas A, C and D (and 70% in B showing the lack of faith in the local officers). Among inactive members the representative was their main contact with the union (Table 11B, Q1) (75%-80%) while the more active had other contacts. In terms of support for the representative areas A, B and D showed a high level of discontent (Table 11B, Q6) higher among the inactive, and only in area C was there good support. There is to

TABLE 11B - UNION RELATIONS

Q1 Do you agree that your school representative is your
main contact with the union?

%	A				B				C				D			
	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA
Strongly agree/ agree	80	80	90	65	85	80	95	75	75	75	90	65	75	75	85	65
Strongly disagree/ disagree	15	15	5	25	10	10	5	25	20	20	10	30	20	15	5	35
Unsure	5	5	5	10	5	10	0	0	5	5	0	5	5	10	10	0

Q2 How often does your school representative inform you
about union matters?

Very often/often	60	45	60	75	65	55	75	65	65	60	75	75	55	45	50	80
Sometimes	25	25	30	20	30	30	15	25	25	25	15	25	25	25	30	10
Rarely/never	15	30	10	5	5	15	10	10	10	15	10	0	20	30	20	10

Q3 How often does your school representative ask your opinion
about union matters?

Very often/often	40	15	40	70	45	35	50	55	20	5	30	30	35	10	25	65
Sometimes	25	20	40	15	30	40	30	25	20	15	25	50	20	15	15	30
Rarely/never	35	65	20	15	25	25	20	20	60	80	45	20	45	75	60	5

Q4 Who would you ask for information about the union?

Representative only	55	70	65	35	70	75	85	60	50	70	60	20	55	80	45	45
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Q5 How did you join the NUT?

%	A				B				C				D			
	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA
Through school representative	55	60	60	50	60	70	55	65	55	55	60	45	40	40	30	40

Q6 Do you agree that your school representative does a good job?

Strongly agree/ agree	55	35	60	65	60	50	75	50	75	75	75	70	60	50	60	70
Strongly disagree/ disagree	20	30	10	10	20	25	10	35	10	15	10	5	20	20	25	10
Unsure	25	35	30	25	20	25	15	15	15	10	15	25	20	30	15	20

some extent the operation of vicious and virtuous circles in that schools with high memberships will contain some active members who interact with other active members and who use the union more so that they develop an active union school, and the reverse. It is this feature of union organisation that enables political groups to campaign with some success within the schools to develop launching pads for assaults on the control mechanisms of local associations. A large comprehensive in area A typifies this situation. The vast majority of the staff are in the NUT; there are 3 representatives assigned different tasks (recruiting, meetings, information); the Head was President of the local association; and the head of one of the main departments was the next President but one. This school and another similar one provided over 100 members of the association, and a high proportion of the Officers and committee (25%). In such schools new teachers will join the union, meetings would be held to explain and discuss events, elections would be encouraged, and political groups could muster extra support. In contrast a large secondary school in area D had very few NUT members (most of the staff were in the NAS): result a reluctant representative and no union development. The task of the representatives in primary schools is equally dependent on the present state of affairs: a small school with strong NUT support means a good representative known by all and with easy communications. In contrast a primary school with 1 or 2 members means no school union (in area B for example, 35 of the 78 work places had 5 or fewer members).

Size of employment unit, size of the NUT membership within that unit and local association size all play an important role in the democratic and political operation of local associations. A large NUT membership in a large comprehensive school may come to dominate local elections and meetings, and in large associations (found exclusively in large towns) this will also have a political dimension in terms of opposition to or support for the position of the national Executive. Local officers and school representatives will tend to be the best informed in areas of union policy. They will also form the main links between members and the union. A vital test of organisational effectiveness and of local member ability to decide in the democratic process is the success of connections with members.

Local leaders are well aware of these organisational problems. Some try to make the regular foray into small schools to boost membership and morale, but only in area A was any more permanent scheme mooted (see Chapter 4). The normal response was that of the trade union movement as a whole: concentrate on large employment units for the best return on effort. In the smaller associations of about 50 schools and 350 members with greater continuity of personnel and healthy social events the task of informing and being informed tends to fall to the local Officers. They can cope with this without recourse to an extension of present organisational arrangements. Local knowledge and experience, and a regular newsletter to all members in all schools provides the basis for a functioning local association. This is not so obvious in large London associations.

The motives, therefore, for better school representatives and school organisations (even school 'branches') are mixed. The overall trade union consideration supported by all types of activists is to increase the membership and the effectiveness of the union. Such general movements are muted in areas like C with an essentially non-trade union practice and Conservative members, where the local Secretary can deal with grievances with the help of Regional and District Officials. In areas like D the local leadership may try to push through reforms without the support of the members in the schools. In areas A and B the need for change is not disputed, but in addition to the reasons already presented there are the motives of the political factions. The ability to take over and develop schools means the ability to build alternative structures to the official union associations. Under the guise of legitimate trade union aims the Rank and File provides a blueprint for the takeover of the job of the representative and school organisation in order to form bases against local leaders.²⁹ It also has a secondary function of mobilising members in times of crisis, and thus building their own Party among young dissidents. The outcome in inner London was that by 1975 some school NUT branches identified with Rank and File anti-union and anti-leadership perspectives, and one consequence of this was restrictions on such school organisation by the majority on the Executive aimed at Rank and File but hurting all left groups and the realistic trade union development in the schools.³⁰

In practice only a few key schools in areas A and B were subject to such pressure, but more may follow.

If the basis for work place union organisation is both the objective requirements of large numbers of members in a large school and the political policy of the Rank and File group, then its success was in the hands of the Executive. At the time, particularly in local A and neighbouring associations in inner London, the school branch was seen by the majority on the Executive as divisive, as an alternative union base, and as politically and organisationally unacceptable. In line with its other decisions relating to local democratic practices the Executive with the support of Conference opposed this development, and responded to the genuine problem of large school organisation through a series of alternative association/school links.

Inactives' militancy, left activists and attitudes to the national union

The question now to be answered is whether or not either the school organisations themselves or the Executive's opposition to them altered the level of local militancy and/or attitudes to the national Union. The results from the questionnaire provide a possible guide to such an answer by contrasting and comparing areas A and B with C and D.

The link with militant notions is partly shown because the political left are caught between support for work place advance through the representatives, and rejection of the splitting tactics that use genuine advance to oppose current leaders. Such battles can mean in the extreme case that a school may be divided along militant/moderate lines with the split reflecting age and scale as well as politics. This situation had led to the disruption of schools in the London area on a limited scale, and shows the dangers of work place 'branches' opposed to local association authority.

In these schools confrontation tactics serve to 'prove' the Rank and File contention that Heads and senior colleagues are the class and union enemy, and that direct action by the low paid young teachers is necessary to defeat the combined forces of class enemy and class traitors. Such a view of school reality combined with militant calls around pay/employment

issues helps to swell the ranks of strikers among teachers, but the same approach has so far failed to get out the members on special non-pay political questions such as the Young Teachers and the Wandsworth Three (see Chapter 4). This shows yet again the essential lack of interest for internal union matters among the mobile young teachers who provide the mass base for pay protests. On pay this group comes together with the older more union-based teachers, and together they put pressure throughout the union for some form of action. One danger is that the Rank and File use the pay issues to undermine existing leaders and structures in the union for their own purposes (see Chapter 4 and the account of the Central Hall Westminster meeting). The dilemma for the political left is that they must support militant action over pay, but need to separate this out from attacks (some which they support) on the union and the leaders. Their view being in particular that it is legitimate to attack each other within the privacy of the union, but to launch offensives against leaders in public and during pay negotiations is indefensible. In area A they can carry out such a strategy of internal dispute with public unity, because the broad left are the incumbents, but in local B this is more difficult because the incumbents turn the Rank and File tactic on its head by the support they give to the Executive. This leaves the political left squeezed and uncomfortable in area B.

The overall impact is that the Rank and File concentrate on the non-loyal highly mobile young teachers in inner London schools in order to 'radicalise' them around pay/employment issues. In the process they seek to use this mass support to both prove their statements about trade union bureaucrats and class traitors, and to create alternative structures and leaders based on their (Rank and File) planning and the 'spontaneity' of the members. In opposing this process in area A the broad left backed militancy within the limits of wide support and tried to widen the base of leftwing teachers within the local association in order to put pressure on higher levels of union policy through support for the militants on the Executive. In area B such tactics were ineffective because of the intransigent nature of the traditional incumbents, and their resistance to both genuine and bogus moves for development in an association badly

in need of a change. The impact of this school empire building can be seen on specific pay issues (for London allowance details see Chapter 4), and the behaviour and attitudes of members to the pressures upon them. The period under study saw the campaign for a London allowance at its height and also the start of the wider salaries struggle. In area A a bevy of motions on the subject was passed at meetings calling for indefinite strikes.³¹

Such policies were taken into the schools through newsletters, special school meetings, The Teacher and other ways. The policy of strikes for the London allowance linked to the right to bargain freely (see Chapters 2 and 4) was common to most prominent NUT groups, but the extent of action was a bone of contention. The Rank and File in area A pressed for the most militant action ("indefinite strikes") and scorned the official one day events organised by the Executive. The political left saw the one day events as necessary first steps in the mounting campaign, while the orthodox democrats and union officials saw their action as placating the militants and putting pressure on government and employers during negotiations.

The extent to which those for maximum action had the support of members can be seen when a Rank and File motion in area B passed into policy at a typically poorly attended meeting. It read:

"The association informs the executive of its determination to fight for a London Allowance of at least £350. If the Government fails to meet this figure, and shelters behind the report of the pay board or tries to procrastinate through negotiations in Burnham, we call upon the Executive:-

- (1) To hold a simple YES/NO ballot for extended strike action and that, at the foot of the ballot, be added the words "The Executive urge you to vote "YES".
- (2) To organise immediately, in conjunction with ILTA and the local associations, a sustained publicity campaign in order to ensure a positive response to the ballot.
- (3) To instruct the total London membership to strike from the second day of next term until the £350 is conceded.
- (4) To reject without reservation any suggestion that there might be a two or three tier system of London Allowance.
- (5) To give assurance that, before any settlement is made it will convene a delegate conference of all London associations, and to accept the decision of that conference on whether an offer shall be accepted.

. . . We believe that unless the union executive acts with utmost urgency on the matter of the London Allowance, the

pace of events in the inflationary crisis could engulf the union, destroying for ever its credibility as a trades union for all teachers". 32

In area B active members certainly supported strike action over the London allowance (60%-70%) (Table 12A, Q4) and this was matched by inactive members (65%). In fact in the referendum in the area³³ 553 voted out of 748 (74%). The first question in support of a one day strike the vote was 390 (52%) for and 152 (20%) against. The per centages given are for the total membership and not for those who voted. This resulted in complaints because the vote register was based on the previous year's figures (quickly out-of-date in high staff turnover areas), and the 2/3 majority needed to call out a school was based on all members. In question two for a 2 week strike the vote was 403 for and 150 against. The last question called for indefinite strikes and the vote was 367 for and 174 against. Although the 2 week option had most support in all cases there was an impressive 2:1 majority of those voting in favour of strike action. But the highest per centage of members was 54%, which fell short of the 67% needed, and the form of the referendum in three options meant a rather difficult result to analyse. The feelings in local B were so high when these figures were announced that the committee debated and voted 7 to 6 against giving the details of each school's vote in order to see where the militants were. This decision was overturned by a general meeting.³⁴

In other areas it seems that the leaders (from motions passed at meetings) and activists (from questionnaire returns) were more in favour of strike action than their members. In area A 75% of activists supported a strike over the London allowance but only 50% of inactive members, and in D the figures were 65% of actives in favour and only 20% of inactive members. Only in area C were the leaders less militant than the members with 20% of the former wanting to strike compared with 40% of the latter. These figures show not only the extent of support for strike action over the London allowance, but also the extent to which the local leaders had taken the campaign into the schools through local union and school organisations. It also shows that even among young London teachers there was no universal

TABLE 12 - MEMBER ATTITUDES AND ACTIONS

(A) Attitudes

Q1 Do you agree that teachers are badly paid?

%	A				B				C				D			
	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA
Strongly agree/ agree	90	90	85	100	90	90	95	95	90	90	90	85	90	90	100	90
Strongly disagree/ disagree	5	0	10	0	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	15	5	5	0	5
Unsure	5	10	5	0	5	5	0	0	5	5	5	0	5	5	0	5

Q2 Do you agree that teachers' status has fallen?

Strongly agree/ agree	85	85	80	90	80	70	85	85	90	90	95	95	90	80	90	90
Strongly disagree/ disagree	10	10	5	5	10	15	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	10	5	0
Unsure	5	5	15	5	10	15	10	10	5	5	0	0	5	10	5	10

Q3 Do you agree that differences in pay between a head teacher and a first year teacher are too great?

Strongly agree/ agree	65	55	55	75	50	50	40	60	40	40	45	40	50	45	40	55
Strongly disagree/ disagree	20	20	30	15	40	35	45	35	50	50	45	55	40	45	45	35
Unsure	15	25	15	10	10	15	15	5	10	10	10	5	10	10	15	10

Q4 Do you agree that it is worth striking for the London allowance?

%	A				B				C				D			
	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA
Strongly agree/ agree	60	50	50	75	70	65	60	70	30	30	25	20	35	20	15	65
Strongly disagree/ disagree	30	35	35	20	25	30	35	20	45	40	50	45	40	45	60	15
Unsure	10	15	15	5	5	5	5	10	25	20	25	35	25	35	25	20

Q5 Do you agree that the NUT needs to strike to achieve its ends?

Strongly agree/ agree	40	35	35	65	45	45	40	60	30	35	20	30	35	30	20	55
Strongly disagree/ disagree	35	40	40	20	35	35	40	25	45	40	55	45	40	55	50	15
Unsure	25	25	25	15	20	20	20	15	25	25	25	25	25	15	30	30

Q6 Do you agree that the NUT should be more militant?

Strongly agree/ agree	55	40	40	85	55	40	40	65	35	40	35	30	45	25	40	80
Strongly disagree/ disagree	35	45	50	10	30	45	45	20	45	40	40	60	35	55	35	10
Unsure	10	15	10	5	15	15	15	15	20	20	25	10	20	20	25	10

(B) Actions

Q1 Have you ever attended a mass rally held by the NUT?

%	A				B				C				D			
	All	In	Ac.	vA	All	In	Ac.	vA	All	In	Ac.	vA	All	In	Ac.	vA
Yes	60	0	80	90	70	60	70	90	15	5	20	35	20	10	10	35

Q2 Have you ever attended a demonstration held by the NUT?

Yes	65	15	85	95	80	70	70	95	20	10	25	45	20	5	10	50
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Q3 Have you ever been on strike with the NUT?

Yes	70	25	85	90	75	65	65	90	25	15	45	55	35	25	40	45
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Q4 Have you ever picketed during a strike with the NUT?

Yes	20	0	25	35	15	5	5	45	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	5
-----	----	---	----	----	----	---	---	----	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

acceptance of more direct action as the solution to their problems, and so how out of step some Rank and File suggestions were with the membership's views.

The general response to the question about the need for greater militancy (Table 12A, Q5 and Q6) underlined the fact that activists in areas A, B and D were much more militant than the membership, and only in area C was there any degree of shared feeling between members and leaders. This is despite a tremendous agreement across the board that teachers were underpaid (Table 12A, Q1) and that the differentials were too great (Table 12A, Q3) (this latter was only backed in areas A and B). Strikes in general or militancy in general or greater political agitation in general had only tentative support among some activists. This response is always partly coloured by the tendency to deny support for the kind of thing that the media call 'militancy' unless it is for a specific purpose of one's own. It also reflects the previous experience of members in such action, which means for teachers their actions in the large strike of 1969/70. In areas A and B the vast majority of activists had been on rallies, demonstrations and strikes under the banner of the NUT (Table 12B). In contrast only among the very active members in areas C and D had any such activities been undertaken and then by less than $\frac{1}{2}$ of them. In area A many of those who had had no experience of direct action were too young to remember the 1969/70 efforts, but the reason for lack of experience in areas C and D was mainly because they had not joined in the actions. So in the London areas those wanting action now could refer to the success of previous strikes and encourage participation, but in the home counties such traditions were considered either irrelevant or shameful. The impact of the strike calls over the London allowance and the more general impact of political groups opposed to the majority on the Executive and local leaders meant that support for national decisions and methods of action so vital in times of crisis had been undermined by constant attacks.

The effect of the militant anti-Executive drive by the Rank and File on members attitudes to the national leaders and union is always difficult to isolate from other factors, but the fact that members in areas C and D

TABLE 13 - MEMBER ATTITUDES TO NATIONAL UNION

Q1 Do you agree that the national leadership do a good job?

%	A				B				C				D			
	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA
Agree	25	20	40	15	20	15	35	20	40	20	50	35	30	40	35	30
Disagree	30	10	20	70	40	35	30	55	15	20	5	5	25	25	5	30
Unsure	45	70	40	15	40	50	35	25	45	60	45	60	45	35	60	40

Q2 Do you agree that the national leadership are responsive?

Agree	25	15	25	15	20	20	25	20	35	20	45	60	25	20	30	35
Disagree	30	15	30	65	35	30	25	50	10	15	5	15	20	15	15	30
Unsure	45	70	45	20	45	50	50	30	55	65	50	25	55	65	55	35

Q3 Do you agree that the national union is democratic?

Agree	40	30	40	35	35	30	45	45	50	35	60	70	50	50	40	60
Disagree	20	10	15	45	20	20	10	20	5	5	0	0	10	15	5	20
Unsure	40	60	45	20	45	50	45	35	45	60	40	30	40	35	55	20

Q4 Do you agree that the national union is run by a political clique?

Agree	15	20	10	25	15	15	20	15	15	15	10	15	15	20	20	10
Disagree	35	10	45	45	30	25	30	40	35	25	35	55	35	25	20	70
Unsure	50	70	45	30	55	60	50	45	50	60	55	30	50	55	60	20

Q5 Do you agree that the national Executive has too many
Head teachers on it?

%	A				B				C				D			
	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA	All	In	Ac	vA
Agree	35	10	40	70	35	20	40	45	25	25	15	30	30	15	35	45
Disagree	15	5	15	15	10	5	5	20	10	5	10	35	10	15	10	10
Unsure	50	85	45	15	55	75	55	35	65	70	75	35	60	70	55	45

Q6 Do you agree that your vote counts in national elections?

Agree	70	75	65	75	70	55	75	75	55	40	65	60	60	50	60	70
Disagree	15	10	25	5	20	25	15	20	20	30	10	15	15	30	10	10
Unsure	15	15	10	20	10	20	10	5	25	30	25	25	25	20	30	20

had a much better opinion of the Executive and the union nationally than did the members in areas A and B indicates the different conditions in London and the impact of anti-Executive propaganda (Table 13). The most critical groups were the activists in areas A, B and D. Their approach no doubt rubbed off onto the members faced with the harsh realities of London teaching, and shows some residual disaffection from which the Rank and File in particular feed.

Attitudes to the national leadership in terms of its democratic responsiveness show that in general areas C and D (particularly activists in C) had a far better view of the union than members in areas A and B (Table 13, Q2). For most inactive members the more precise questions about the dominance of Heads (Table 13, Q5) or political factions (Table 13, Q4) drew a blank 'don't know'. It is the activists who do know that the union is not run by a clique, and does have a good many Heads on the Executive. In fact member criticism of the union tends to be general and abstract. It concentrates on education policy, professionalism and collective bargaining. The attack of both left groups on the incumbents often misses the point as far as many members are concerned, and so land on deaf ears (85% of area A inactive members were 'unsure' about the domination of Heads).

Conclusions

At times, therefore, of an alliance of discontents between older activists faced with a general deterioration of expectations and younger, mobile and inactive members generally confused and disillusioned by their terms and conditions of appointment (and their prospects) most union leaders and aspiring leaders respond by organising and supporting some forms of direct trade union action. In doing so they both reflect the requirements of sections of their members, and impose on those members the discipline of controlled collective action. The involvement of the three positions outlined in this study in such calls to action meant at this time an increase in membership participation in such action. At the same time, however, each group proposed different forms of action and for somewhat different reasons.

The Rank and File tended to call for all embracing, total and permanent forms of action such as "indefinite strikes". The collective bargaining aim was, to force the union bureaucrats, the employers and ultimately the government to settle for the full claim, but this was allied to an IS objective of converting members into militants, revolutionaries and IS members through their experiences in struggle and their 'spontaneous' understanding of the class and repressive nature of their enemies. Such a strategy required attacks upon the Executive of the NUT for the failure to lead strong action and to hold out for the full claim; attacks upon other left trade unionists for their spirit of compromise (betrayal and sell out); and attacks upon the trade union bureaucrats at Hamilton House for planning and plotting a deliberately, in the eyes of the Rank and File, defeatist method of waging struggle. One consequence of this was the Rank and File decision to set up alternative union structures through school branches and liaison committees.

Further consequences across the board of a Rank and File presence in local associations A and B were the encouragement of more members to become activists, and of present activists to be more active. This occurs because the political left and orthodox democrats respond to the Rank and File challenge, and so put pressure on their own supporters to engage in the competition for office, the fight for policy, and the increased contact with inactive members. This increase in the amount of activists' work is sometimes seen as a beneficial consequence of the stimulous of groups such as Rank and File (the benign ginger group position), and also as a sign of the essential democratic spirit of all political activists within the union.

Such a view needs to be tempered by two additional consequences found in locals A and B of a left challenge and competition and a right response within the NUT. First the rightwing nationally were able to reduce local autonomy and local democracy through changes to the union rules based on attacks on the minority antics of the Rank and File in local associations. This refers to strike decisions, ballots, discipline and the power of the chair at meetings.³⁵ Secondly there tends to be a reduction in overall membership participation, a loss of organisational effectiveness, and an increase in the gap between activists and inactive members.

So the overall impact within locals A and B of leftwing activists and of the local and national responses of orthodox representative democrats to them, was to increase membership participation in direct action, and to increase the number of activists and the activity rate. It also appears that the competition among the groups leads to less representative leaders, less effective organisation, a reduction in local democracy, a fall in general membership participation, and to attempts to set up alternative union structures.

So a detailed examination of the events in locals A, B, C and D in the years 1973/5 show that where there are leftwing political activists among local trade union activists then, given the special conditions under which teachers and the NUT operated at that time, the more competition there is for leadership positions, policy-making and control of work place organisation the less representative are the leaders, policies and new union structures and so the less familiar and capable are the members with decision-making issues. This all adds up to a democratic paradox explored in the final chapter.

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER 5

1. , B. Edwards, op.cit., p. 11.
2. W.A. Faunce, 'Size of locals and union democracy', op.cit., p.298.
3. Local B was another inner London association with 773 members in 1975 spread over 70 schools. Membership of the NUT varied from 2 members in small primary schools to over 60 in large comprehensives. The association was run by a committee that was dominated by long-serving, senior teachers with a predominantly right-wing Labour outlook. General meetings were held at NUT headquarters (Hamilton House), and in the period under study they became battlefields for the struggle between a mixture of Rank and File and political left younger teachers on the one hand and the reformist incumbents on the other. (Sources: attendance at committee and general meetings; interviews with officers and local activists; minute book).
4. Local C was based on a small town in Surrey. There were 351 NUT members in 49 schools, and the range of members by school was from 1 to 23. The association was founded in 1893, and both membership numbers and issues debated seem to have changed only marginally over the years. The local Secretary was a retired teacher, and committee meetings were dominated by long-serving teachers. The officers and committee tended to be a mixture of Liberal and Labour supporters, but Conservative voters dominated the local membership and local activists. General meetings were usually concerned with outside speakers and lacked political and/or policy controversy. (Sources: attendance at committee and general meetings; interviews with officers; minute book).
5. Local D was based on a new town in Sussex. There were 338 members in 39 schools, and the range was 1 to 53. The association was founded in 1955 and until the late 1960s was dominated by Labour Party senior teachers. At the time of this study the officers and committee were mainly radical young Liberals and left Labour Party activists, although most members remained Liberal and Conservative. General meetings developed some controversial nature when the radical leadership was challenged by a small Rank and File group. (Sources: attendance at committee and general meetings; interviews with officers; minute book).
6. Interview with local C Secretary 14th May 1974.
7. Interview with local D Secretary 14th February 1974.
8. NUT Annual Report 1977, Appendix 3, pp. 105-108.
9. AGM on 14th February 1973.
10. AGM on 14th February 1973.

11. General meeting on 26th September 1973. The defeated candidate was supported by the committee.
12. General meeting on 28th November 1973.
13. AGM on 2nd February 1974.
14. W. Roy, op.cit., chapter 1.
A. Tropp, op.cit., chapter 12.
15. P.H.J.H. Gosden, op.cit., chapter 13.
A. Tropp, op.cit., chapter 14.
16. Local B: AGM on 20th March 1974; General meeting on 25th February 1974.
17. Local D: general meeting on 14th February 1974.
18. Local B: committee meeting on 11th February 1974.
19. Local B: general meeting on 25th February 1974.
20. Local B: AGM on 20th March 1974.
21. Not least that of the NUT, but also for example the NUJ (draft rules for office chapels, supplement I, pp. 46-48 of the 1975 rules).
22. This may occur in the local CP branch meeting (residential and/or workplace) and/or at an advisory meeting of CP teachers.
23. Local A minutes for 1973.
24. Table 9. Q3, Q4 and Q5.
25. Local B: motion on N. Ireland at general meeting 20th June 1974.
Local D: motion on South Africa at general meeting 14th November 1974.
26. Local B: committee meeting on 12th June 1974.
27. W. Roy, op.cit., chapter 1.
W.E.J. McCarthy and S.R. Parker, op.cit.
28. Only after 1975 did the NUT seriously consider full-scale training for their school representatives, and by 1978 they had opened their own residential college at Stoke Rochford.
29. C. Dallas, 'Organising in the schools', Rank and File, op.cit.
J. Hooper, 'How to be an effective school rep.', Rank and File, op.cit.
30. Interview with Fred Jarvis, op.cit.
31. Local A: general meeting 14th March 1973.

32. Local B: general meeting on 20th June 1974 (40 members were present).
33. , Local B: report by Secretary to committee meeting on 12th June 1974.
34. Local B: general meeting on 20th June 1974.
35. For details see Chapter 4, footnote 131.

CHAPTER 6 : THE EFFECTS OF POLITICALLY ACTIVE LEFTWING GROUPS
ON LOCAL DEMOCRACY AND MEMBERSHIP PARTICIPATION

Part 1 : Democratic methods and democratic myths

"These thousands of working-class democracies, spontaneously growing up at different times and places, untrammelled by the traditions or interests of other classes, perpetually recasting their constitutions to meet new and varying conditions, present an unrivalled field of observation as to the manner in which the working man copes with the problem of combining administrative efficiency with popular control". 1

(The Webbs)

"The task of the Social-Democrats, however, does not end with political agitation on economic grounds; their task is to turn this trade-unionist politics into Social-Democratic political struggle - to utilize those sparks of political consciousness which the economic struggle has dropped into the workers' minds in order to raise the workers to Social-Democratic political consciousness." 2

(Lenin)

The main thesis presented here is that the conscious intervention of political activists qua trade union activists in local association operations affects the type of democracy and the extent of membership participation in that local association. The specific argument takes the economic position of teachers and the current state of NUT organisation as constraints within which political groups operate.

It is part of the daily reality of trade union life that there exist competing groups which are fundamentally different. The two main traditions are theoretically and strategically separated by the gulf of opposing world views: only at the tactical level do they sometimes join together. The expression of such deeply conceived divisions revolves around either the general position of the Webbs of a trade union movement evolving methods of democratic control in line with administrative efficiency (with the corollary that the wider role of trade unions in society is either irrelevant to their internal workings,

or at best aimed at providing strong pluralist units); or the general position of Lenin of trade union democracy as part of the wider struggle for the 'hearts and minds' of workers against the Capitalist system.

While the Webbs and Lenin are only parts of the competing traditions, and although each tradition has its own important variations, yet the major irreconcilable antagonisms of the revolutionary and reformist doctrines of trade union role, behaviour and aims remains. In the daily actions of the most aware and active members of the relevant groups in their role as trade union activists these differences become apparent.

It is the actions of these members that help determine within the economic and organisational constraints of the specific union membership the final form of the control mechanisms, membership participation and the policy followed at any given time. The concrete form of trade union practice is therefore partly determined by the battles of the political activists - a battle often full of incomplete insight, stunted commitment and the muddled egoism of the combatants. Nonetheless from the detailed confusion of daily farce emerges the pattern of trade union power, and the advantages of possessing some higher order strategical view.

The actual groups involved in the study of local A (Rank and File, the broad left) fought each other for the right to represent the revolutionary alternative, and also fought the dominant national and majority membership position. Namely, control by representative democrats maintained by any means within the bounds of individual and constitutional liberty. The difficulties for the majority to keep a coherent, principled, acceptable and workable set of policies at a time of economic pressure, professional change and with a large number of young, non-loyal and volatile members were more than matched by the problems for the left groups. The left was divided, the main groups were associated with weak political parties, and they failed to take up Lenin's task of converting trade union militancy into political awareness.

The successes and failures, the tactics used, and the people involved are all part of this study. The actual impact made by the left compared

with their efforts, intentions and theoretical imperatives is what is to be measured in this thesis. The internal left fights outlined below in general terms at first and then in more detail provides the concluding statement of the impact of left activists on democracy and membership participation in local A of the NUT.

So the links between theoretical proposition, strategical plans and tactical decisions are the political and personal bonds that make for a coherent group or faction. To trace these links a detailed study of one local association was undertaken (Chapter 4), and from that it can be seen that leading activists were in contact with party journals and committees in such a way as to be the vehicles of party policy. At the tactical level there were differences within each group about certain questions, but the overall pattern of consistent activity was sufficient to indicate group allegiance.

The ways in which these groups operated in order to achieve their aims influences the ways in which the local association was run and the impact of that upon membership involvement. The key link is between the tactical practice based on prior theories and strategies, and the actual measurable consequences of such action. Thus to proclaim to act in the name of the ordinary trade union member is not sufficient (or even necessary) to actually do so. And if the recordable results of your actions show that you achieve the opposite of your stated objectives (less not more democracy) then doubt must be cast on your tactics and their logical predecessors.

1.1 Theory, strategy and tactics - - - personal and political links

The Rank and File group in local A subscribed to the general IS theoretical position about the nature of trade unions (see Chapter 3). As a leading member of IS and the NUT Rank and File group, who was also local secretary of a neighbouring association (to local A) explained in a letter to the journal Rank and File:

"In the fight of workers against their employers for better conditions, Union Executives act as a buffer between the two . . . The compromise engendered by this situation is an ingrained characteristic of Union leaderships, heavily bolstered by their superior pay to the workers they represent, different type of jobs, superior status and style of living, friends, expectations for their children, and so on. The phenomenon has an iron logic: if you are not going to lead your workers forward to what they instinctively strive for . . . then you are going to have to lull the rank and file into accepting the status quo." 3

Here the theoretical acceptance of teachers as workers:

"The dream of becoming a 'profession'. just like the doctors and the lawyers rather than identifying with the working class and building a real trade union, was uppermost in the minds of the Union's founding fathers. This illusory panacea still persists for many of our present office-holders": 4

of a necessarily antagonistic trade union bureaucracy:

"Since the 1930s we have seen the development of two distinct trends within the trade union movement. The further growth and consolidation of the trade union bureaucracy on the one hand, and the re-emergence and resurgence of the rank and file oppositon to that bureaucracy": 5

and the overestimation of the militancy of the majority of union members:

"The initiative lies with the rank and file. There can be no question of this . . . it is the rank and file, not the union full-time officials who are setting the pace": 6

are all presented by the Rank and File and the IS as self-evident truths for NUT activists to see, believe and act upon.

Letters from and articles by leading activists in local A appeared in the journals Rank and File and Socialist Worker, and resolutions that appeared in the former found their way onto the agendas of general meetings of the association. In addition these journals entered into local elections with support for IS candidates.⁷

The overall picture presented by Rank and File is that teachers are like workers and that they feel a strong sense of militancy around the wages issue. This feeling, they argue, is deliberately ignored or attacked by an alliance of Head teachers, trade union bureaucrats and other left groups such as the Communist Party. They (the IS leaders) have therefore decided upon a strategy that emphasises the need to replace all these obstacles with Rank and File members, and the main weapon is greater democracy in the schools and the local associations in order to realise the natural majority of Rank and File supporters among the teachers. This is boldly stated in each edition of Rank and File under the column "What we stand for", which includes:

"... schools are democratically controlled by teachers, pupils, parents and ancillary staff . . .
The development of strong Staff Associations of all workers in the school capable of defending their interests against the Head and the Local Authority.
Control of the NUT by the rank and file membership. The election of all union officials with the right of immediate recall." 8

With these overall strategical aims the tactics pursued fall into two types. First as part of the IS front campaign is the winning of positions of leadership at all levels within the union and the control over policy-making. An example was the Young Teacher conference (see Chapter 4), which was the first blow in the battle to "wrest our Union from the dead hands of the reactionaries".⁹

The second more important strand (based upon the wider appeal of Rank and File) is that of the building of the school organisation, which merited several pages in Rank and File under the heading 'Building the union in the schools'. It states that:

"Strong school branches completely change the atmosphere of Local Association meetings, as real basic school issues get discussed and membership involvement rises considerably . . . What may not be so apparent is the fact that one strong, fighting school branch which knows what it wants can change the whole complexion of a Local Association . . . This is initially done by readiness to put in donkey work which is always appreciated, and usually inevitably leads to committee and officer positions . . . When Local Association activity and militancy increases by these active members being at its helm more schools will be drawn in . . . What turned one Association from reactionary passivity to militant action . . . a single active school - - - can turn others." 10

The tactical steps are clear and build upon NUT organisation, school socialisation and current trade union changes. The stated consequences however, confuse an active and militant local association as measured through the contents of its policy resolutions with the attitudes and actions of the majority of members of that association.

The Rank and File brought directly to local A the ready formulas and policies of the IS theories and strategies. The hard work of a few key personnel tied to the short-lived enthusiasm of a succession of young activists resulted in the occasional majority at meetings necessary to win a point of policy or to change a rule, but never to win total control.

The practical consequences for local A of such interventions was that more meetings were held and that each meeting debated more resolutions (especially about the Executive) than was usual; also competition for office was fiercer than before. The relevance of much of the business to local members seemed less obvious, and the effectiveness of daily organisation came under fire over issues such as the Newsletter, school representatives and recruitment of newly qualified teachers. The representativeness of the resolutions debated and the methods of operation of the local came under strong attack from several schools through contact with the local Secretary and Treasurer, and later lead to the resignation of the local President (see Chapter 4).

The conclusion of this survey of Rank and File in local A is that their attempts to win both elected positions and policy decisions against an incumbency of the broad left resulted in an increase in the number of local meetings and discussion of union internal workings, but tended to restrict the daily operation of the association and to alienate sections of the membership in the schools through the tactics of confrontation and division.

The possibility that the practice of the Rank and File did not help their aims meant constant attacks upon them from various sources within the local. The most prominent was from the CP members of the left alliance, although criticisms also came from leftwing Labour, IMG and the WRP.¹¹

While the IMG tended to dismiss Rank and File for its failure to concentrate on cadre development, the WRP's attack was of a more profound character. In an article in Workers Press they accuse Rank and File of "complete capitulation to syndicalism", and use the example of the NUT as an instance of "anti-Marxist prescription of pure militancy and opposition to revolutionary politics".¹²

While the Rank and File certainly contain syndicalist elements in their overstating of the role of trade unions which is itself based on a failure to assess the real differences among trade union members and leaders, the more relevant consideration for local A and the NUT is the comments of the CP.

The main CP attack on Rank and File appears in their teachers' journal under the title 'Ultra-leftism and the Teachers'. The argument is that:

"There is only a mere handful of hard-core ultra-lefts within the teachers' movement. Since 1968, however, they have endeavoured to increase their influence by means of the tactics of 'entrism', following the classic pattern by forming a 'ginger group', the so-called 'Rank and File' movement with the journal of the same name . . . This 'Rank and File', originally presented to its own followers and elsewhere as a ginger group of young militants, soon proved to be a highly sectarian opposition group . . .

This sectarianism manifests itself in a false conception of the role and significance of the trade unions in the struggle of the working class and in the advance to socialism. The trade unions are the focal organisations of the working class in defence of their day-to-day economic interests. Their strength lies in the extent to which they mobilise all the workers in any given field of production. To ensure maximum unity and strength in the struggle against the class enemy, it is essential that any such differences be resolved internally by the trade unions themselves recognising legitimate sectional claims, thus ensuring the mutual support of all sections for one another.

What they are not entitled to do is to pack little Union meetings in order to pass highly political resolutions way in advance of the views of thousands of members in whose name they are speaking. This is not leadership but unscrupulous manipulation. Above all, it is not politics but puerility for noisy phrase-mongering in small corners achieves absolutely nothing positive except to alienate many union members, destroy the credibility of the local Association in their eyes, and thus jeopardise its chances of winning their support in the real issues of Union policy." 13

This view represents the CP commitment to democratic centralism and provides the basis for attacks on Rank and File by local A broad left group members. Local leading CP activists carried their fight into the Party journals such as the Morning Star and Education Today and Tomorrow, and organised opposition tactics in local and London CP education committee meetings. Their theoretical position based on Gramsci's 'war or manoeuvre', which resolves itself strategically into the broad democratic alliance at all levels of struggle, combined with the known limitations of trade union struggle without political work, can be seen to operate at a tactical level in terms of winning positions of power in order to win policy.¹⁴ In addition they used methods of work which attempted to unite teachers around progressive issues. Such a position sees the key role of leaders not as a vanguardist elite but one that develops the mass support necessary for militant action:

"Thus the leadership of a mass organisation such as a trade union has invested in its control the power-potential to take decisions . . . That leadership can only function as a leadership as long as it retains the trust, support and belief in its actions by the membership." 15

So the touchstone of any alliance against the Rank and File is to counter their tactics by preventing changes in rules and standing orders aimed at allowing small minorities at general meetings to lead the local association outside local committee and officer control. In addition the idea for the CP and others in the political left is to expose the Rank and File as an 'IS front' whose ambition is to split the Union and build organisational units outside the formal control of the Union (school branches). An admission made by the ex-editor of Rank and File:

"If the top grades are driven to split and form their own organisation, so much the better." 16

The failure of Rank and File to achieve this and other aims, and the frustratingly poor performance of the political left must not be allowed to hide the impact their activities had on local A and the NUT.

The greater involvement of larger numbers of trade union and political activists in the daily control mechanisms and decision-making processes of the local association was the result of a gradual unfolding of the Rank and File challenge to the political left incumbents. This activation of activists is seen by the Rank and File and others on the left as evidence of the greater democracy and participation that comes from left intervention. While it was conceded that this development was helped and partly caused by the general background of problems for London teachers in 1973/5, yet the key question remained. Namely that given the impact on democratic methods of increased activity what about the impact on overall involvement in and identification with the union of the mass of inactive members. It is that which determines the representativeness of local leaders and local policies, the effectiveness of local organisation, the support for the national union, and the success of direct action.

By raising the role of activists and the role of activist-based decision making organs e.g. general meetings, to the level of determinant democratic processes the Rank and File seek to turn their small size, the relatively greater commitment of their supporters, and their more general strategy into a decisive advantage in their struggle against the political left. They also seek to turn their representation of certain areas of discontent e.g. the role of Heads, into the decisive democratic expression of the membership in their (the Rank and File) challenge to the dominant Executive officials and majority view.

In all this Rank and File develop democratic myths about their right to speak for the membership, about the rights of general meetings, and about the alleged anti-democratic practices of both the political left and the orthodox representative democrats.

In opposition to this the political left seek to extend the greater activity of activists and the increased direct action of members into the principle of maximum support for broad democratic proposals, which combines the rights and powers of elected leaders with the constant requirement to involve and inform the mass of inactive members. This implies the rejection of indiscriminate attacks on the Executive and Union

full-time officials. The political left reserve their own attacks for those members at any and all levels of the Union who wish to restrict union democracy, refuse to support union action, and who themselves attack the political left. In this way the political left differentiate, unlike the Rank and File, between its enemies on the left and right at all levels of membership and organisation, and its potential supporters in the broad democratic alliance.

The abuse of democratic methods by the Rank and File at local level, and their attempts to create democratic myths through attacks on the political left, the Executive and the full-time officials resulted in the orthodox representative democrats at national level reacting by attacking the Rank and File by making rule changes¹⁷ aimed at strengthening local incumbents against all left groups. In practice these administrative measures to secure political gains were more effective, at least in the immediate circumstances, than the defence of democratic methods by the political left through the tactic of isolating the Rank and File in political ways. The difficulties of achieving this more conclusive aim are highlighted in the final part of this chapter when the wider problems of organisational effectiveness, leadership responsiveness, and membership participation are posed against the role of activists. The failure in the end of the political left to adequately cope with the challenge of the Rank and File opened the way for the victories of the orthodox democrats at national level.

Part 2 : Political activists and trade union activities

"There emerged from this general policy the idea of trying to organise the Left minority inside the trade unions and the Labour Party in order to fight for the demands of the masses and, at the same time, to attempt to change the whole reformist policy and leadership of the official Labour movement." 18

(Harry Pollitt)

So one of the most famous Communist trade union leaders points out the problem of being in a minority, assumes that his position represents in some sense the objective interests and therefore demands of a majority of the members, and that the purpose of political activity within trade unions has the additional aspect of a revolutionary development of trade unions as part of the overall struggle. It is these beliefs of the Left in both its political left and Rank and File forms that help in the fight with the incumbent reformists and in the ability to stimulate members into action. But they also serve to intensify the sectarian left battles, and diminish the democratic credentials of the left in general.

The starting point for any political group that wishes to influence the operation of a trade union branch is that the majority of trade union members are inactive with regard to their trade union. This does not automatically mean that they are apathetic nor indeed that they are inactive all the time in all respects. Nonetheless the fact of this general level of inactivity requires political activists in particular to either accept it and then construct a democratic justification and a model of participation that exclude regular rank and file action, or to try to interest and/or mobilise the members around certain issues in order to build on the assumption that such activity can be made to benefit its originators.

The majority of NUT members are inactive. The fact that they are members of the union and that they are aware of the 'background presence' of the union organisation means that in times of personal and/or collective crisis they can turn to some union activist who will know what steps to take to involve the official union bodies in any dispute. It is the strength

and nature of the background image of the local and national union and its leaders that creates the necessary trust for action in times of crisis. This trust is developed over time through the various mechanisms that exist for the transmission of ideas and traditions between the inactive members and the local activists. The loss of such a relationship or the failure to develop it may result in the inability of the local leadership to mobilise members at times of crisis even when the members feel acute discontent.

This relationship between local activists in the association and inactive members in the schools and between such ordinary rank and file members and the national leaders is a fragile and shifting force within the union. It has to be constantly developed and re-established within the context of changing circumstances and changing union personnel. The claim of the Rank and File group within local A was that their followers were in a unique position to represent, lead and win the confidence of NUT school members. This, they argued, was because of their special insights into the objective power reality of society, their wider political contacts which gave them a special knowledge of working-class interests and organisations, and their open method of working within trade unions which meant that they could expose both union bureaucrats and the broad left.

The concrete expression of such a position came as has been seen in Chapter 4 with the attempts to change the rules of local A in order to give more authority to general meetings and particularly to those members on the floor of such meetings. Thus by raising decision-taking at general meetings to the highest and sole means of local association decision-taking the Rank and File sought to simultaneously out-manoeuvre the broad left locally, and reverse policy of the reformist majority nationally. In such an attempt participative democracy was a central part of the debate to win supporters and from which to defeat the challenge from their right.

The Rank and File thus created a situation in local A where majority opinion at general meetings could decide local policy; elect delegates, officers and committee members; and call for strike action. The

justification for such moves included the arguments that meetings were genuinely representative, that debate was familiar for those attending, and that attenders had the capacity to make proper decisions. In order to secure this tactical position the Rank and File group started to call more and more general and special general meetings, tried to contact the local membership directly without local officer control (e.g. Rank and File, local A newsletter editorial control), and called for more and more militant action over issues such as the disbandment of the Young Teachers, the campaign for an increase in the London allowance, and the alleged victimisation of the Wandsworth Three.

This challenge in local A was mainly aimed at the broad left incumbents in that association. The latter supported some limited movement towards the democratisation of local activities, but preferred to emphasise organisational links between the local association and the members in the schools. The broad left also tended to stress the importance of operating the authority structure of the local union in terms of the hierarchy of officers, committee, representatives and members. This tactical assertion of elected positions over decisions taken at meetings was in part a response to the ability of the broad left to win elected office more easily than policy debates, and partly out of a genuine political regard for the internal discipline of union organisation.

For example in the case of the Wandsworth Three the broad left in local A restricted their comments within the limits of due process of the NUT's internal procedures. In contrast the Rank and File challenged openly both the procedures and the motives of those involved while the case was being heard. When the Young Teacher section came under attack from a majority on the Executive the broad left sought a reversal of policy through pressure on both the 'militant' minority on the Executive and through local resolutions. The Rank and File, however, again took the opportunity to attack the Executive, the union bureaucrats and the political left in public in order to establish their credibility amongst members as the alternative irrespective of the efficaciousness of their action.

In addition the broad left like the orthodox representative democrats expressed a limited role for general meetings, and attacked their use for calling strikes when the meetings were badly attended and when no strike motion appeared on the publicised agenda. The main concern of the broad left then was to extend their general influence among members by showing them that broad left local leadership was efficient, representative, concerned with the everyday industrial relations problems of teachers, and were to inform members and to be informed by members as to the relevant problems.

The results of this struggle between politically based left groups in local A was an increase in the democratic nature of the control structures - more meetings, more activists, more elections, more action, more attempts to keep in touch with members, and more general propaganda than one usually found in NUT local associations.

In this sense greater democracy was achieved. It was also maintained by the joint efforts of the two left groups to fight the national NUT policies on issues such as pay. In this way both groups sought to win new supporters as a result of their arguments and actions against the common opposition of reformist and representative democratic officials. This was potentially a powerful means to success given changes within the job of teacher and within the NUT, and also given the challenge to the NUT from other teacher trade unions.

It was the general position of teachers and the NUT with regard to pay, conditions, status and organisational behaviour which led to the fluid situation in which both left groups could and did expect to make gains at the expense of the nationally dominant reformists. The expected successes depended upon the realisation of such potentially beneficial conditions by local activists operating upon the attitudes, expectations and behaviour of all members.

While objective factors such as job mobility, stake in the job, socialisation into the school system, size of local association and local tradition are

all highly relevant, yet the key variable as to how any or each local association and its members would act in the circumstances seems to have been the impact of the political groups Rank and File and the broad/ political left.

In the mounting of campaigns and challenges to the dominant ideology and control structures the notions of decision-making capability, familiarity with debate and accurate representation seem to give the edge to leftwing activists over their immediate rivals.

In contrast, however, such advantages only survive and matter within the union power struggle if, and only if, the members of those political factions maintain a balanced relationship with ordinary members and/or if, and only if, they limit their attacks on national leaders and officials to policy issues rather than blanket accusations of a necessary betrayal. On both counts the broad left in local A stood a better chance of survival within the political fabric of the union than the Rank and File.

The democratic boast that majorities at general meetings will and ought to decide all local policy and elections, and that such a position is both the most democratic and the most participative available choice, as argued by the Rank and File group, pinpoints the limits of the traditional analysis of union democracy.

The more revealing argument, however, in terms of the democratic paradox is that such meetings in practice tend to make debate less familiar to members, the representation of members less certain and the decision-making capacity of members less clear. The two competing methods in which to counter such a well-launched tactical move of the Rank and File come from the more powerful local and national incumbents.

The broad left in local A sought tighter union discipline within the constraints of local authority structures tied with greater local organisational efficiency and the maintenance of that delicate trust and relevance relationship between active and inactive members of whatever political views. In contrast the representative democrats nationally

enacted rule changes which forced authority out of general meetings and away from ordinary attenders at those meetings by granting more power to the chair, postal ballots, the removal of the autonomous local right to call strikes, and a stricter union discipline. These essentially administrative changes were founded upon arguments, at successive union Conferences, based on the unrepresentative and undemocratic nature of Rank and File control in some local associations. The proposers of such reasoning shun both the open political solution and a serious organisational solution based on the problem of school branches.

Market and job changes, organisational challenges, left faction fighting each other in a few local associations, competing information flows, and quite distinctive ideologies amongst a handful of local and national activists together present the organisational and democratic paradox the NUT faced in the years 1973-5. Its twists and turns remain a historic record, but the struggle for participative democracy within the wider struggle takes on a paradoxical character in the hands of certain groups.

Conclusions

This point raises to a more general level the motives for and practice of imposing prior solutions and borrowed tactics onto a given body of trade union members. The failures of the Rank and File to win policy, elections and members in local A other than for brief moments, and the more profound failure to extend and secure their definition of union democracy within the NUT shows up their limited theoretical perspectives, their workerist strategy and their front tactics. The impact of their actions on locals A and B, however, reveal more important weaknesses in the political left and their orthodox democrat opponents. Weaknesses only partly overcome through the limitations of formal democracy in the NUT, and not yet solved.

The political left with their attachment to a variety of far-reaching social theories, well-debated strategies and limited tactics found the challenge from their left difficult to cope with. On the one hand they

closed ranks and became less democratic in order to attack the Rank and File in their journals, defeat them in union elections, expose them within locals A, B and D and to carry this out with the help of liberal representative democrats. On the other hand the political left attempted to open themselves up to a series of new alliances by appealing to general norms of democracy, and by encouraging the involvement of more inactive members through better local organisation, less local politics, and ad hoc support for the Executive and national majority view.

The orthodox democrats also faced problems when confronted with the challenge from both left groups, and from circumstances themselves. The more trade union minded among them (the rightwing Labour) had first to complete the defeat of the old guard non-trade unionist. That victory was largely achieved in 1969/70 with the aid locally and nationally of all shades of left opinion. Next their task was to attack and defeat the Rank and File group. This was to be done through the use of NUT propaganda with the help of the political left, and through a series of administrative devices to control sectional and local autonomy - - Young Teachers, strike calls, ballots, discipline, and the power of the chair. Such moves also meant attacking the political left in order to prevent the latter from gaining ground lost by Rank and File.

The attacks on the political left locally and nationally required the constant emphasis on national and central collective bargaining and decision-taking; on the role of formal, constitutional and efficient organisational control; and upon policies based on the accepted instrumentalism of the mass of members. All these tactics were allied to official attempts to be in direct touch with the members in the schools, and to by-pass the local association leadership and activists if and when necessary. In contrast the political left sought to decentralise some aspects of collective bargaining; rejected the narrow view of formal control and instrumental attitudes; and wanted to generate mass membership support for left policies and leaders at all levels of the NUT (to express as a reality the dialectic of mass agitation with formal leadership battles).

The results of left political activity in local A, in the other three locals, and in the NUT generally was to provide more activists and more activities for activists. Thus in the narrow sense of group competition for office, policy and control of members within the limits of active members democracy was increased, and so was direct actions by the inactive membership. But in a wider sense of democracy this resulted in a loss of representativeness, a loss of organisational effectiveness, a loss in membership participation, and a loss in local autonomy. These conclusions are not the automatic nor predetermined consequences of left intervention, but the actual product of Rank and File, political left and representative democrats battles in four local associations of the NUT in a period of rapid change for teachers and their organisations.

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER 6

1. S. and W. Webb, Industrial Democracy, op.cit., p. xx.
2. V.I. Lenin, What is to be done?, op.cit., footnote 1 p. 119.
3. Rank and File, no. 30, February/March 1974, p.3.
4. Rank and File, no. 24, Spring 1973, p.12.
5. Ibid., p.11.
6. R. Kline, Anti-freeze, op.cit., p. 8.
7. For example Rank and File, no. 27, October 1973, p.2 gives support to an IS teacher from local A for Vice-President of ILTA.
8. Any edition of Rank and File.
9. Rank and File, no. 24, Spring 1973, p. 16.
10. Rank and File, no. 27, October 1973, pp. 4-5.
11. The Workers Revolutionary Party is another small (less than 1,000 members) Trotskyist organisation (formerly the Socialist Labour League). Founded in 1969 (ten years after the SLL was started) the WRP tends to take a catastrophist view of the economy, and is also highly sectarian.
12. Workers Press, no. 1556, 4th December 1974, p. 11.
13. Education Today and Tomorrow, vol 25 no. 1, Autumn 1972, pp. 6-7.
14. A. Gramsci, Selections from the Prison Notebooks, op.cit..
V.I. Lenin, What is to be done?, op.cit..
The British Road to Socialism, 1978 edition, op.cit.
15. J. Chambers, 'Democrats v. Demagogues in the NUT', Education Today and Tomorrow, vol. 27 no. 1, Autumn 1974, p.8.
16. International Socialism, no. 72, October 1974, p.13.
17. These have been noted several times before as more power to the chair, postal ballots, no local right to call strikes, and tighter union discipline.
18. H. Pollitt, Serving my time, op.cit., p. 167.

APPENDIX I - THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The main purpose in the use of a postal questionnaire was to gather personal and group information about the large numbers of inactive union members in local associations. Only by examining their views, jobs and union ties could any assessment be made of the impact of the left on general levels of participation and control. The first stage is to see what kinds of questions are relevant. This was generally achieved by examination of other investigations (see list at end of Appendix) into trade union membership. Tannenbaum and Kahn in particular concentrated their survey on local activities, and by sifting through the prima facie most relevant information some rough set of questions was devised. The next stage was to show these to some activists in local A in order to adjust them to the needs of teachers and London trade unionists in the 1970s.

The central problem was to ensure that the questions singly and together meant something. That answers could count as evidence of the suggested hypotheses and so lead to a general conclusion about the main aspects of the overall study. The question asking what journals you read allows, amongst other things, one to assess the penetration of leftwing political influence among members of varying degrees of activity, while questions about position and behaviour at school can help uncover any relations between job and the impact of leftwing views on trade union attitudes and activities.

In order to further test the usefulness of the set of questions asked, as well as the design of the questionnaire, a pilot survey was arranged. This took the form of a copy of the questionnaire to all NUT members in a large comprehensive school in area A. The main school representative helped by sending a covering letter of support and also personally delivered each questionnaire. The response rate was about 50%, and the main points that emerged were the inappropriateness of some personal questions such as religious affiliation, and the most useful aspects of the comments was the redesign of the layout for ease of completion and coding.

Once the questionnaire was printed the next problem was its distribution and retrieval. The aim was to obtain the best possible returns in order to aid statistical analysis, but this was combined with the need to reach the widest possible audience in order to be better informed about inactive members. In area A it was decided to send the questionnaire to a stratified sample of the members. In keeping with correct sampling techniques the strata were chosen along the main criteria of concern: the level of activity. In order to arrive at some prior notion of who fell within that category it was necessary to examine attendance records at general and committee meetings and link that with discussion with local leaders. In this way fairly sophisticated criteria were established to divide local A membership into three groups: very active, active and inactive. Once this was achieved the next step was to take a random sample of each group. It was decided that since there were only about 50 very active members all of this group should receive a questionnaire. The other sections were sampled with the aid of the alphabetical index membership records. An obvious problem, discussed more fully in Appendix II, was that the records were not up-to-date nor totally accurate in other ways.

The questionnaire was finally sent out through the internal post system used by the local secretary, and each chosen recipient received an individually named copy with a covering letter from the local secretary, and a stamped addressed envelope returning the document to my home. After ten days all recipients received a follow up letter reminding them about the questionnaire.

In area B the system used was slightly different. The membership was much smaller and so all members were sent questionnaires except for those in schools with 2 members or less and those in special circumstances (e.g. 9 nuns). I delivered bundles of questionnaires to all school representatives in the area with a covering letter from the local secretary and instructions to give each member a copy.

The method used in areas C and D varied from this because the membership levels were again much smaller. Every member received a copy in the union mail along with their regular Newsletter, and also with a covering note from the local secretary.

The overall pattern of response (table 1) varied from 28% in area D to 45% in area A, and with an average for all areas of 36%. This is considered to be a sufficiently good return for this type of questionnaire. At worst the answers are true for those who replied, which in itself represents the largest survey ever done of local NUT membership. At best the results can be used to reach some general conclusions about the members in the four local associations examined and about teacher trade unionists at large. A more detailed breakdown of the response rates (table 2) indicates that the spread of responses leads to a more rather than a less favourable interpretation of the results.

TABLE 1 Overall Response Rate

Local	Number of Questionnaires		Response rate (%)
	Sent	Returned	
A	359	161	45
B	581	179	31
C	346	147	42
D	334	95	28
Total	1620	582	36

TABLE 2 Response rate by type of school

Local A

	Number of schools Area Sent Replies			Number of members Area Questioned		Replies	Response Rate (%)
All secondary	25	24	24	805	165	74	45
All primary	83	67	65	940	194	87	45
All schools	108	91	89	1745	359	161	45

Local B

All secondary	15	10	10	391	310	86	28
All primary	55	41	33	342	271	93	34
All schools	70	51	43	733	581	179	31

Local C

All secondary	10	10	8	112	110	44	39
All primary	39	39	29	239	236	103	44
All schools	49	49	37	351	346	147	42

Local D

	Number of schools Area Sent Replies			Number of members Area Questioned		Replies	Response Rate (%)
All secondary	6	6	4	124	122	34	28
All primary	33	33	24	214	212	61	29
All schools	39	39	28	338	334	95	28

List of other surveys studied:

- S.M. Lipset, M.A. Trow, J.S. Coleman, op.cit., Appendix II.
A.S. Tannenbaum and R.L. Kahn, op.cit., Appendix A.
J. Seidman, J. London, B. Karsh, D.L. Tagliocozzo, op.cit., Appendix
W. Roy, The teachers' union, op.cit., Appendix VII.
R.M. Blackburn, op.cit., Appendix C.
C.M. Phillipson, op.cit.
H.A. Clegg, A.J. Killick, R. Adams, op.cit., Appendix I.
J.H. Goldthorpe, D. Lockwood, F. Bechhofer, J. Platt, op.cit., vol. 3,
Appendix D.
N. Morris, op.cit.
C.J. Margerison and C.K. Elliott, 'A predictive study of the development
in teacher militancy', op.cit.
B.C. Roberts, R. Loveridge, J. Gennard, The Reluctant Militants : a
study of industrial technicians, Heinemann, London, 1972.
R. Loveridge, 'A study of occupational groups in industry', London
Business School, 1973.

The London School of Economics and Political Science

(University of London)



Houghton Street,
London, WC2A 2AE
Telephone: 01-403 7686

Industrial Relations Department

April 22 1974

From: Mr. R.V. Seifert B.A. (Oxon), M.Sc. (Econ).

Dear N.U.T. member,

I enclose a questionnaire which you are asked to complete and return to me in the stamped addressed envelope provided.

The questionnaire is being sent out to all the members of the Working Teachers Association, and all replies will be dealt with in the strictest confidence.

The replies will be processed by computer as part of my research for a Ph.D. thesis on the relationship between trade union members and their trade union --- in your case the National Union of Teachers.

The N.U.T. at national level, and in local associations such as Working have been extremely cooperative in helping me. All concerned believe that the results obtained from this survey will be of use to the N.U.T. and its members.

Thank you very much for your help.

Yours sincerely,

Roger V. Seifert

WOKING & DISTRICT TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION
National Union of Teachers

Hon. Treasurer:
N.E. CHARMAN
15 Honeypots Road
Woking, Surrey GU22 9QW
(Woking 63288)

Hon. Secretary:
L.L. FRANKS
Chile Pine, Onslow Crescent
Woking, Surrey GU22 7AX
(Woking 60425)

Dear colleague,

I ask you to please complete the accompanying questionnaire, and to return it as soon as possible in the envelope provided.

The research being done by Mr. Seifert has the full support of the Association, and it is hoped that his findings will be of benefit to us in Woking.

I ask for your fullest cooperation in this matter. If you have any doubts please contact me.

Yours sincerely,
L.L. Franks

INSTRUCTIONS:

Please note that all answers will be dealt with in the STRICTEST CONFIDENCE.

Please note that the questionnaire should take NO LONGER THAN 20 MINUTES TO COMPLETE.

The layout of the questionnaire and the way in which you are asked to reply, as explained below, are for ease of computer analysis.

There are 4 types of question you are asked to answer. In most cases alternative answers are given, and you must indicate which applies to you.

For example: Are you ☒ 1 male 2 female

A circle around the 1 indicates you are a man.

For example: How often do you read "The Teacher"?

1 very often 2 often 3 sometimes 4 rarely ☒ 5 never

A circle around the 5 indicates you never read it.

In some cases you are asked to write in a reply.

For example: What job does your spouse have?

1 none 2..... **TEACHER**

If your spouse has no job you circle the 1, but if your spouse does have a job you write it in the space provided as above.

For example: Why did you join the N.U.T.?

.....

In this case there is no set of answers, and you are asked just to write in your answer in the space provided.

Finally what happens if you make a mistake and circle the wrong number.

For example: In general are your close friends at school in the N.U.T.?

☒ 1 yes 2 no ☒ 3 don't know

If you first circle the 0 indicating that you don't know, and then decide that you do know and that the answer is yes; then you cross out the first circle as shown and draw another one.

Thank you for your cooperation. I hope you can complete the questionnaire quickly and easily, and send it back to me as soon as possible.

SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU

1. How old are you? 1 21-25 2 26-35 3 36-45
4 46-55 5 56 and over

2. Are you 1 male 2 female

3. Are you 1 single 2 married
3 divorced/widowed

4a. What job does your spouse have? 1 none 2.....

4b. Which trade union/professional association is your spouse a member of?
1 none 2.....

5a. When you were aged 17 what job did your father have?
1 none 2..... 0 don't know

5b. When you were aged 17 what job did your mother have?
1 none 2..... 0 don't know

5c. Which trade union/professional association did your father belong to?
1 none 2..... 0 don't know

5d. Which trade union/professional association did your mother belong to?
1 none 2..... 0 don't know

6a. In general what kinds of jobs do your close friends have?
1 none 2..... 0 don't know

6b. In general which trade unions/professional associations do your close friends belong to?
1 none 2..... 0 don't know

7. Please say in which town and county you spent your school days.
(e.g. Amersham, Bucks.)
.....

8. Please indicate which of the following political groups you are most sympathetic towards.
1 Liberal 2 Labour 3 Conservative 0 don't know
4 Other (please write in).....

SECTION 2

SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR EDUCATION

1. What kind of school did you attend?

1 secondary modern 2 grammar/direct grant

3 comprehensive 2 public/private

5 other(please write in).....

2. Please give the names of the colleges/universities where you were a student, and the towns they were in.(e.g. Goldsmiths, London)

3. Please give the qualifications you received from college/university, (e.g. B.A., Cert.Ed., Dip.Ed., B.Ed. etc.)

4. In what year did you receive your teaching qualification?
(If you have no specific teaching qualification please put the year you left college).

..... 19....

SECTION 3

SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR TEACHING EXPERIENCE

1. For how many years have you taught? years

2a. Please give the name of your present job, and the scale you are on, (e.g. scale 3, head of department).

2b. For how long have you been in this position? years

3a. Please give the name of your school

3b. Please say what type of school it is

4. For how long have you been in your present school? years

5. Please give the name, type and area of the last school in which you taught. (If your present school is your first school write NA).

i name..... ii type.....

iii area.....

6. For how long have you taught in the Woking area? years

7. What subject do you teach most of the time?(please write in)

8a. Please give any full-time jobs you have had other than teaching.

1 none 2.....

8b. Please give the names of any trade union/professional association that you have belonged to outside teaching.

1 none 2.....

9a. In general are your close friends at school in the N.U.T.?

1 yes 2 no 0 don't know

9b. In general are your close friends at school influential in the N.U.T. nationally or locally?

1 yes 2 no 0 don't know

10a. For how often each day do you chat informally with other members of staff?

1 less than 5 minutes 2 6-15 minutes 3 16-25 minutes
4 26-35 minutes 5 more than 36 minutes

10b. Where do these chats usually take place? (e.g. the common room).

.....

10c. When do these chats usually take place? (e.g. at lunch time).

.....

The next four questions require you to circle a number relating to each question. Please circle that number which shows how often you engage in the activities listed.

	very often	often	some times	rarely	never
	1	2	3	4	5
11. How often each term do you attend any meeting about matters of concern in the school?(e.g. on curricula, discipline etc.)					

12. How often are you consulted about school matters by...

1 The Head	1	2	3	4	5
2 The head of your department	1	2	3	4	5
3 Other senior teachers	1	2	3	4	5

13. How often do you chat with non-teaching staff?

1 Technicians	1	2	3	4	5
2 Secretaries	1	2	3	4	5
3 Manual workers(e.g. cleaners)	1	2	3	4	5

14. How often do you chat with the parents of the children you teach?

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

SECTION 4

QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR ACTIVITIES

1. Are you a member of any organisations other than the N.U.T.? (e.g. political, religious, community groups, sports clubs etc.)

1 yes 2 no

2. IF you are a member please give the name and type of organisation, and say what position, if any, you hold. If this applies to more than one organisation please list the 3 main ones in order of importance.

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Your position</u>
1			
2			
3			

3. Please indicate how often you participate in the activities of those organisations which you have listed above.

Name of organisation (as above)	very often	some often	times	rarely	never
1	1	2	3	4	5
2	1	2	3	4	5
3	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION 5

QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU AND YOUR UNION

1. For how long have you been a member of the N.U.T.? years

2. Please give the names of any other teachers' union/association to which you have belonged. (e.g. N.A.S.)

1 none 2

3. For how long have you been a member of the Working Teachers Association (W.T.A.)? years

4. Please give the names of any other local associations of the N.U.T. to which you have belonged.

1 none 2

- 5a. When you were a student did you belong to the N.U.T.?

1 yes 2 no

- 5b. Please give the names of any political, trade union or student group to which you belonged as a student. (e.g. N.U.S., C.N.D., Liberal party).

.....

- 6a. Did you join the N.U.T. in your first teaching job?

1 yes 2 no

- 6b. How long did you teach for before you joined the N.U.T.? years

7. How did you join the N.U.T.? Please circle the number next to the statement which applies to you.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| 1 Through a colleague | 2 Through a school N.U.T. representative |
| 3 Through a N.U.T. official | 4 Through a notice or advertisement |
| 5 Of my own accord | 6 Other way(write in)..... |

8. Are you a school representative (correspondent) for the N.U.T.?

- | | | |
|---------|------------------|---------------------|
| 1 never | 2 yes at present | 3 yes but no longer |
|---------|------------------|---------------------|

9. Are you on the committee of your local N.U.T. association?

- | | | |
|---------|------------------|---------------------|
| 1 never | 2 yes at present | 3 yes but no longer |
|---------|------------------|---------------------|

10. Are you an officer of your local N.U.T. association?

- | | | |
|---------|------------------|---------------------|
| 1 never | 2 yes at present | 3 yes but no longer |
|---------|------------------|---------------------|

11. Please indicate by circling the appropriate number how many meetings of your local association you attended in 1973-4

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 General meetings | 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 |
| 2 Special meetings | 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 |
| 3 Committee meetings | 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 |

12. At those meetings which you do attend please indicate which of the following best describes your usual behaviour.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 remain silent and listen | 2 ask questions |
| 3 propose or second motions | 4 enter into discussion |
| 5 something else (write in) | |

13. Please say which feature of meetings you enjoy most.

- | | |
|--------|--------|
| 1 none | 2..... |
|--------|--------|

14. Please give the main reasons why you do not attend general and special meetings.

.....

15a. How often do you read the N.U.T. journal, "The Teacher"?

- | | | |
|--------------|---------|-------------|
| 1 very often | 2 often | 3 sometimes |
| 4 rarely | 5 never | |

15b. Please give the names of any other teachers' journal that you read regularly.(e.g. Rank and File, Education Today and Tomorrow etc)

.....

16. How closely do you follow the N.U.T. annual conference?

- | | | |
|----------------|--------------|------------------|
| 1 very closely | 2 closely | 3 fairly closely |
| 4 not closely | 5 not at all | |

- 17a. Have you ever attended mass rallies held by the N.U.T.? 1 yes 2 no
- 17b. Have you ever been on a demonstration held by the N.U.T.? 1 yes 2 no
- 17c. Have you ever been on strike with the N.U.T.? 1 yes 2 no
- 17d. Have you ever picketed during a strike of the N.U.T.? 1 yes 2 no
- 18a. In your school are there N.U.T. school meetings? 1 yes 2 no
- 18b. How often do you attend these?
- 1 very often 2 often 3 sometimes
- 4 rarely 5 never
- 18c. Please give the main reasons why you do not attend these meetings.
-
- 19a. Is there a school N.U.T. representative in your school?
- 1 yes 2 no 0 don't know
- 19b. Was your school N.U.T. representative 1 elected 2 appointed
- 0 don't know
- 19c. How often does your school N.U.T. representative inform you directly of union affairs?(If you are the school rep. please write NA).
- 1 very often 2 often 3 sometimes 4 rarely 5 never
- 19d. How often does your school N.U.T. representative ask your opinion about union affairs?(If you are the school rep. please write NA).
- 1 very often 2 often 3 sometimes 4 rarely 5 never
20. How often do you come into contact with (by phone, letter, face to face) some officer of your local association about N.U.T. matters?(If you are an officer please write NA).
- 1 very often 2 often 3 sometimes 4 rarely 5 never
21. Who would you ask for information about the N.U.T.?(please write in)
-
22. Do you attend socials or outings held by the N.U.T.? 1 yes 2 no
23. If you had a professional problem who would you consult first?
- 1 The Head 2 The N.U.T. school representative
- 3 Some other N.U.T. official 4 Teacher friends
- 5 none of these.
- 24a. How often do you meet other members of the N.U.T. to discuss N.U.T. matters other than at official meetings?
- 1 very often 2 often 3 sometimes 4 rarely 5 never
- 24b. Where do you usually have these discussions?(e.g. the pub).
-
- 24c. When do you usually have these discussions?(e.g. after school).
-

25. Are your close friends in the N.U.T. influential in the N.U.T.?
(If you have no close friends in the N.U.T. please write NA)
1 yes 2 no 0 don't know
26. Please give the names of any groups within the N.U.T. to which you
you belong, or to whose meetings you regularly attend. (e.g. Rank and
File, Young Teachers etc)
1 none 2.....
- 27a. Did you vote at the last N.U.T. elections for national officers?
1 yes 2 no
- 27b. Did you vote at the last elections for local officers?
1 yes 2 no
28. Please give the main reasons why you did not vote at the last elections
for either national or local officers. (If you did vote for both please
write NA).
.....
29. Please indicate for each and every of the following N.U.T. facilities
the extent to which you know about or use them.
- | | used | heard of | never heard of |
|--|------|----------|----------------|
| 1 The legal department | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 2 Discount trading | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 3 Educational department | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4 Films | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 5 Insurance and assurance | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 6 Teachers Benevolent Fund | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 7 Building society scheme | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 8 Information services on
pay and conditions. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
30. Have you ever been more active in the N.U.T. than you are now?
1 yes 2 no

SECTION 6

QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR ATTITUDES

A. About your job.

Please circle the number for each question which shows the amount of agreement you have with the statement.

		strongly agree	agree	unsure	disagree	strongly disagree
1.	I enjoy teaching	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Teaching is a lonely profession	1	2	3	4	5
3.	The contract of service for teachers is inadequate	1	2	3	4	5
4.	There should be more teacher participation in school	1	2	3	4	5
5.	It is likely that I will remain in my present school for some years to come	1	2	3	4	5
6.	It is likely that I will be promoted in the near future	1	2	3	4	5

B. About your Union, the N.U.T.

1.	Your school N.U.T. representative does a good job	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Your school N.U.T. representative should have time off at school to attend to N.U.T. affairs.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Your school N.U.T. representative is your main contact with the N.U.T.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	I am a good N.U.T. member	1	2	3	4	5
5.	I find N.U.T. meetings dull	1	2	3	4	5
6.	My vote does not matter in N.U.T. national elections.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	My vote does not matter in N.U.T. local elections.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	I can influence the running of my local N.U.T. association	1	2	3	4	5
9.	The National Executive of the N.U.T. has too many Head teachers on it	1	2	3	4	5
10.	The local leadership of the N.U.T. are responsive to the membership	1	2	3	4	5
11.	The national leadership of the N.U.T. are responsive to the membership	1	2	3	4	5
12.	The local leadership of the N.U.T. does a good job	1	2	3	4	5
13.	The national leadership of the N.U.T. does a good job.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	The Working Teachers Association is run by a political clique	1	2	3	4	5

	strongly agree	agree	unsure	disagree	strongly disagree
15. The N.U.T. nationally is run by a political clique	1	2	3	4	5
16. The Woking Teachers Association is democratic	1	2	3	4	5
17. The N.U.T. is democratic	1	2	3	4	5
18. The N.U.T. should be more militant	1	2	3	4	5
19. The N.U.T. should leave the Trade Union Council(T.U.C.)	1	2	3	4	5
20. The N.U.T. needs to strike to acheive its ends.	1	2	3	4	5
21. The N.U.T.,as part of the Trade Union movement,should be more involved in political activities	1	2	3	4	5
22. All schools should be comprehensives	1	2	3	4	5
23. Differences in pay between a Head teacher and a first year teacher are too great.	1	2	3	4	5
24. The London Allowance is worth striking for	1	2	3	4	5
25. In general who do you think makes the main decisions in your local association.					
1 whole membership		2 active membership		3 local committee	
4 local officers		5 the National Executive			
6 other(write in).....					
26. Please say why you joined the N.U.T..					

27. What should the main tasks of the N.U.T. be?

C. About teachers in society.

- To what extent do you agree that teachers are well paid.
1 strongly agree 2 agree 3 unsure 4 disagree 5 strongly disagree
- To what extent do you agree that the status of teachers has fallen.
1 strongly agree 2 agree 3 unsure 4 disagree 5 strongly disagree
- To what extent do you agree that teachers have more in common with doctors and lawyers than with industrial and clerical workers
1 strongly agree 2 agree 3 unsure 4 disagree 5 strongly disagree

THE END

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.If there are any comments you would like to make please do so over the page.

APPENDIX II : STATISTICAL AND COMPUTING TECHNIQUES

The basis of the statistical validity and use of computer techniques was the population size and the sampling method. In the cases of locals C and D there was no sample since the whole NUT populations received questionnaires. For local A there was a stratified sample taken from the alphabetical membership index, and for local B a sample based on all members in schools with 3 or more NUT members. In order to give a proper sample size to work with it was necessary to weight the responses by sample ratio for locals A and B as shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1 Samples and Weights

Locals	Pop. Size	Sample Size	Weighted Sample	Actual Responses
A	1745	397	757	161
B	633	586	228	178
C	351	351	-	147
D	338	338	-	95

The move from returned questionnaires to analysis involves the data reduction stage of coding answers for transference to computer data cards. The requirements are those of ease of data handling, ease of computer analysis and minimum of data loss. One main way to incorporate all these criteria and help the design of the questionnaire is the use of pre-coded answers. These take various forms ranging from the 1 Yes 2 No variety to the 12345 agree/disagree kind. While this simple solution is available for many questions some of the more important cannot be dealt with in this manner, and require open-ended replies. Reasons for joining the union, for not attending meetings, and for voting in union elections need to be

expressed in a free form by recipients. Any prior straight-jackets may seriously distort the answers. While the advantage of open codes for accuracy is clear the disadvantage in practical coding terms becomes apparent when there are scores of different answers to the same questions: many of them only given once. The problem has only a laborious solution: classify all types and operate a simple frequency analysis as the basis for re-coding into fewer categories in order to provide a realistic number of answers in any given box.

The more common problems of all questionnaire coding include the theme of how to cope with missing, irrelevant, incoherent and multiple responses to otherwise normal questions. The standard solution is to define them out of the system, but this raises queries about distortions due to the motives for the deviant answer patterns. If a value is missing because a respondent with particular views does not wish to express an opinion or give information then that is interesting and significant. But with anonymous questionnaires the researcher cannot fill the motive gap, and so only reacts to the replies as he finds them. Thus further distortion is unavoidable and the only sensible approach is to weigh the inevitable statistical problems of data collection and analysis against the total evidence produced.

The size of the data received (144 variables and 582 cases) and the intended form of analysis (Guttman index and cross-tabulations) justified the use of a computer package (N.H. Nie et al, SPSS, McGraw-Hill, 1975). The data was stored in four subfiles by local association in order to analyse each set of questionnaire returns separately without losing the ability to act on all returns simultaneously.

The first major stage was to develop an index of participation using Guttman scales (SPSS, pp. 528-539). This technique utilises the properties of unidimensionality and reproducibility through the assumption that what is to be measured belong to the same dimension. The simple purpose in this approach is to be able to categorise union members by level of activity using a single index figure based on multiple factors. The index is built

through a trial and error process until the relevant statistics indicate a reasonable expectation that the factors do account for some underlying objective. Each local had its own distinct index, for example in local A it was as follows:

ACTSAT = VAR017, GENMEET, SPECMEET, COMEET, VAR019, VAR020,
VAR030, NUTGROUP, VOTEN, VOTEL.

The main tests of validity are from the coefficient of reproducibility (CR) and the coefficient of scalability (CS).

TABLE 2 Guttman Index statistics

Local	CR	CS
A	0.89	0.59
B	0.93	0.58
C	0.88	0.44
D	0.93	0.71

Once the index figures were decided for each respondent the local membership was divided into three levels of activity as shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3 Activity levels

Local	Inactive	Active	Very Active	Missing Values	Total
A	200	306	194	57	757
B	70	71	63	24	228
C	63	48	28	8	147
D	30	32	28	5	95

The next stage was to cross-tabulate (SPSS, pp. 230-248) these activity levels with all member behaviour, characteristics and attitudes. The relevant statistics here are Chi-squared and per centages as with most qualitative data. For locals A and B with sample populations the question of significance levels is related to total number of valid cases (N). In the first place Chi-squared tests whether the variables are independent or related. The strength of that relationship is assessed when table size and sample size are taken into consideration with other statistics e.g. Cramer's V.

I have followed the practice of omitting both the N and the Chi-squared figures from the tables on the grounds of simplicity. In the case of the former the rule has been that only significant results have been used unless clearly stated. With N, however, I have included it in the tables when it moved importantly away from its usual size (see Table 1 above). The main reasons for such drops in responses are simply related to the question, for example if you are not married you cannot give your spouse's occupation.

This survey suffered from the predictable problem of postal questionnaires, and the best the researcher can hope for are sufficient trustworthy results to develop some model of behaviour without too many statistical impurities.