<u>The Labour Party, the Trade Unions
and Devolution in Wales</u>

A PhD Thesis

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ABSTRACT

This thesis analyses the Labour Party-trade union relationship in Wales. Although existing literature in British political science has paid a great deal attention to the Labour Party-trade union relationship, it has almost entirely been from a London-centric perspective. Political scientists have consistently viewed this relationship as being London based, or taking place within or around the national institutions of the Labour Party or the trade unions. This has led to an acceptance within the literature of the existence of a single Labour Party-trade union relationship. This thesis argues that such a consensus is flawed and cannot provide a comprehensive account of the relationship. This flaw exists because the Labour Party-trade union relationship is not exclusively limited to London or between the UK-level institutions of the Party and the unions. What is required therefore, is an examination of the relationship at the sub-UK level. In order to address this, the thesis examines the Labour Party-trade union relationship in Wales, a relationship which it argues is discernible from the relationship in London. It explores the links between the Party and the unions in Wales, using the development of devolution policy as the central focus around which to explore these links. It views the emergence of Welsh devolution as being the product, largely, of a debate which took place within and between the Labour Party and the trade union movement in Wales. Ultimately the thesis concludes that there is not one Labour Party-trade union relationship but many, each operating in different regions within the UK.

For Tamsin

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The roots of this thesis lay in an undergraduate dissertation supervised by Dr Peter Dorey in the Politics Section at Cardiff University, which I wrote on the subject of a 1997 rule change in the Labour Party concerning policy development. This first initial experience of research, which included a number of interviews with influential British politicians such as Tony Benn, wetted my appetite for something further. The opportunity arose to pursue this interest, initially for an MPhil, thanks in large part to Professor Andrew Vincent, whom I remain indebted to for his early support and true inspiration.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AEEU	Amalgamated Electrical and Engineering Union
AEU	Amalgamated Engineering Union
AM	Assembly Member
APEX	Association of Professional, Executive, Clerical and Computer Staff
ASTMS	Association of Scientific, Technical & Managerial Staff
AUEW	Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers
CAC	Conference Arrangements Committee
CBI	Confederation of British Industry
CLP	Constituency Labour Party
EC	Executive Committee
EEC	European Economic Community
FBU	Fire Brigades Union
FPTP	First Past the Post
GMB	General Municipal and Boiler Workers Union
GMWU	General and Municipal Workers Union
ILP	Independent Labour Party
IRSF	The Inland Revenue Staff Federation
LC	Liaison Committee
LPW	Labour Party Wales
LRC	Labour Representation Committee
MEP	Member of European Parliament
MFGB	Miners Federation of Great Britain
MP	Member of Parliament
NALGO	National Association of Local Government Officers
NEC	National Executive Committee
NHS	National Health Service
NPF	National Policy Forum
NUGMW	National Union of General and Municipal Workers
NUM	National Union of Mineworkers
NUPE	National Union of Public Employees
NUR	National Union of Rail Workers
OMOV	One Member One Vote
PLP	Parliamentary Labour Party
PR	Proportional Representation
QUANGO	Quasi Autonomous Non-Governmental Organisation
RMT	Rail Maritime and Transport Workers Union
SDP	Social Democratic Party
SWMF	South Wales Miners Federation
SWRAC	South Wales Regional Advisory Committee
SWRC	South Wales Regional Committee
SWRCL	South Wales Regional Council for Labour
TGWU	Transport and General Workers Union
TLC	Trades and Labour Council
TUC	Trade Union Congress
TUFL	Trade Unions for Labour
TULP	Trade Unions for Labour Party
TULV	Trade Unions for Labour Victory

UCATT	Union of Construction, Allied Trades and Technicians
USDAW	Union of Shop Distributive and Allied Workers
WALES TUC	The Wales Trade Union Council
WCL	Welsh Council of Labour
WDA	Welsh Development Agency
WLGA	Welsh Local Government Association
WLP	Wales Labour Party
WLP EC	Wales Labour Party Executive Committee
WPP	Welsh Parliamentary Party
WRCL	Welsh Regional Council of Labour

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1   Introduction

This thesis is concerned with the Labour Party and the trade union movement in Wales and with the relationship between them. It is also concerned with the development of devolution policy within this context. The focus of this research is on the period from 1966 to 2003. The central issue is whether a coherent, organised and specifically Welsh trade union movement and Labour Party existed, where policy could be developed, as well as to what extent is actually was developed, during this period. The point here is the extent to which the Labour Party and the trade union movement in Wales had ownership of their policy, as opposed to a policy that they simply adopted from their UK level "parent" bodies. It is also important to consider how such a policy was arrived at, whether it was the democratic decision of the movement, and as a result it could be said to represent a consensus of the movement in Wales. The level of commitment and the degree of priority given to the policy by the movement in Wales is also assessed.

This thesis contributes to two major fields of political science research; labour movement politics, specifically the study of the relationships between the British Labour Party and the trade unions, and territorial politics, specifically Welsh devolution. These are two important fields of research that are currently very relevant. The Labour Party-trade union relationship, an area of research that has seldom been out of fashion, is currently focussed on the likelihood or otherwise of the demise of the national relationship in the context of *new Labour* and Tony Blair's leadership. Yet little attention has been paid to the relationship between the trade unions and the Labour Party outside of London. Although research on the development of devolution has considered the role of regional actors in the Labour Party, mainly Welsh and Scottish, little consideration has been given to the role of the trade unions. Moreover, current research on devolution is almost exclusively concentrated on the development of the devolved governmental structures; Welsh Assembly, Scottish Parliament and London Assembly rather than on the trade unions' response to devolution. This thesis aims to add a regional dimension to the

study of Labour Party-trade union relationships, and a Labour movement dimension to the study of devolution.

1.2   Methodology

Fundamentally this research is a qualitative study of Labour Party-trade union relationships in Wales, primarily in the period from 1966 to 2003. The study is partly ethnographic, arising from my own observations as a participant in the debate. Between 1995 to 1998 I was a member of the Wales Labour Party Executive Committee, the Wales Labour Party Standing Orders Committee/Conference Arrangements Committee, and the Wales Labour Party Organisational Committee. Between 1999 to 2000 I was a Labour researcher at the National Assembly for Wales. In practice this has meant that I have used my personal experience to help provide a framework for the research and to help check the testimony of others. My involvement also significantly improved my access to information.

The research is based upon primary data gathered from a number of sources. Published literature of the Labour Party, the Wales Labour Party, the TUC, the Wales TUC, and the individual trade unions, and fringe groups (manifestos, conference documents, annual reports, policy statements, press releases, and websites), as well as unpublished internal documentation of the Wales Labour Party, the Wales TUC, and the Welsh Group of the PLP (minutes, letters, reports, and briefings) provided the bulk of this data. Often the most perceptive and honest account of developments within the movement, this internal documentation was also often the only contemporary record of the debate, particularly where those present were no longer available for interview. Most of this documentation is housed in the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth. Government literature, including legislation, parliamentary proceedings, websites, and cabinet minutes from the Public Record Office, were also invaluable. Newspaper reports (*Guardian, Western Mail,* and *South Wales Echo*) and speeches and autobiographies of current and former cabinet ministers, politicians and trade unionists, were also used.

Most useful were a series of 54 semi-structured face to face oral interviews with Government ministers, Welsh Assembly ministers, Labour MPs, Labour peers, Labour AMs, trade union leaders, Labour Party officials, special advisors, and other members of the Labour Party and the trade union movement. The majority of these were carried out in two phases, one during Spring 2000 and the other during Spring 2002, and lasted between 45 minutes and two hours. The second phase was used to develop and expand on the findings of the first. The interviews were conducted after most of the major events discussed in this thesis had occurred; this meant that interviewees were tended to provide responses that were more considered and accurate than might have been the case during the heat of the debate. Those selected for interview were done so on the basis of their perceived knowledge or involvement in particular aspects of the development of Labour Party and trade union policy on Welsh devolution, and on Labour Party-trade union relationships more generally. Semi-structured interviews were used so as to allow an opportunity for interviewees to make points that I might not otherwise have asked them about, but which often proved important.

Although not insignificant, the actual number of interviews I undertook for this research was restricted by the limited number of people who were involved enough in this process to be able to provide any significant information. One of the conclusions to emerge from this research has proved to be the comparatively small number of people who were actually involved in making decisions. The size of the group was also restricted by the fact that many of those who were active in the development of the policy, particularly during the 1960's and 1970's, have either retired from politics and are no longer contactable, or are no longer alive. Only in very few, and notable, cases has the failure to interview certain key people been the result of a lack of willingness on their part to co-operate with the research, such as Bill Morris of the TGWU . Most of the evidence collected from interviews has been checked as far as possible against other testimony or documentary sources, though in some cases it was necessary to rely on my own judgement of what seemed plausible in the light of other knowledge. Nevertheless the interviews that were undertaken were invaluable, and provided me with an extremely detailed

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account of the evolution of devolution policy in the Wales Labour movement and beyond.

1.3   The Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is structured around seven further chapters. Chapter Two, A Review of the Literature, analyses the existing body of literature on the relationship between the trade unions and the Labour Party. The chapter focuses is on the eight key contributions made by McKenzie, Harrison, Miliband, Beer, Taylor, Shaw, and two by Minkin. The Literature Review concludes that the primary focus of the literature to date has been almost entirely upon a London based view of the Labour Party-trade union relationship. Although more recently some work has been done on examining the Labour Party-trade union relationship in Wales, this work has not yet produced a comprehensive account of the situation in Wales.

The thesis then moves on to consider the historical context to Labour Party-trade union relationships in Wales in the period from 1899 to 1966. The Historical Context, Chapter Three, traces the historical development of the Labour Party and trade union movement in Wales. The chapter argues that there were a series of factors, both internally and externally generated, which demanded the growth of an increasingly sophisticated and autonomous Welsh Labour Party and trade union movement. The chapter concludes that although the Labour Party was electorally triumphant in 1966, there were significant weaknesses that remained in both the Party and the trade union movement in Wales.

The remainder of the thesis is structured around four chapters, each of which focuses on a different period between 1966 to 2003, and which consists of the main empirical evidence for the thesis. The first of these chapters focuses on the debates concerning devolution within the Labour Party and the trade union movement in Wales in the period leading up to the first devolution referendum in 1979. The chapter concludes that the trade unions played a central role in the debate in this period, particularly where key trade union interests were at

stake, and they exercised much influence within the Labour Party in Wales. The next chapter, 1979 to 1992, examines the decline and then gradual re-emergence of devolution policy following the debacle of 1979. This chapter traces the maturing of the Labour Party and the trade union movement and of their relationship in this period, under the constant pressure of electoral defeat. The chapter on the period from 1992 to 1997 examines the development of the devolution policy upon which Labour won the 1997 general election. As with each of the other chapters the development of this policy is principally examined through the processes of Labour Party-trade union relationships in this period, which were less overt than in the period leading up to 1979. Finally, the chapter from 1997 to 2003 examines the successful implementation of devolution and the establishment of the first session of the National Assembly for Wales.

Chapter Two: A Review of the Literature

2.1 Introduction: The Study of the Internal Life of the Labour Party

Post-war empirical British political science has tended to adopt a predominantly centrist perspective in virtually all fields of inquiry, and academics have rarely ventured out of the closeted world of London politics and national level institutions. In part, the explanation for this can be found in the prevailing political attitudes of the post-war environment, which emphasised the need for a strong central state to control the economy, thus denying, but not preventing, the rise of peripheral politics. Even when the emphasis on a controlled economy was abandoned at the end of the 1970s, the 'strong state' mentality remained, though now for very different social and moral reasons. It is not surprising, given these prevailing attitudes, that until relatively recently, political scientists have tended to ignore the regions. The task of academics has been hindered by the poor provision of statistical information at the regional level, and this is particularly true of Wales, a fact which is itself a result of the pervasive 'strong central state' ethos. The motivation for most empirical research originates in an innate interest in the field of enquiry; often this closeness of geography also translates into closeness of opinion, as the researcher's intimacy with the topic may influence the outcome of the research.

The development of the study of the internal life of the Labour Party, and particularly of the Labour Party-trade union relationship, has been closely associated with the seminal work of several of the key contributors. Although each of these studies has been influenced by previous research, and have led to supplementary work by others, they nonetheless represent the most authoritative work in the field. One fundamental concern has dominated the study of the internal life of the Labour Party, and particularly the Labour Party-trade union relationship; that is the question of what effect the trade unions have upon intra-party democracy, if indeed such a democracy is possible. This concern was

conditioned and influenced by the work of classical elitists such as Pareto (1935), Mosca (1939), Michels (1962), and Duverger (1964). Beyond this fundamental issue, another major concern of the literature has been whether or not intra-party democracy in the Labour Party, and the trade unions' relationship with it, is compatible with parliamentary and cabinet government. Each of the key texts disregards the regions as a factor. The major texts in this field have been written either by trade unionists or Labour Party members, where organisational concerns for the central state have been predominant.

A comprehensive analysis of the vast amount of work that has been published on the Labour Party is beyond the scope of this review, and as this thesis focuses on work relating to the internal life of the Labour Party, and particularly on the Labour Party's relationship with the trade unions, it has been possible to confine the search to work which has a direct bearing on the topic. The review therefore focuses on appropriate scholarly monographs; some less detailed texts are also discussed. The bulk of the literature, therefore, is represented by eight key works in the post-war study of the internal life of Labour Party; these are McKenzie (1955), Harrison (1960), Miliband (1961), Beer (1965), Minkin (1978), Taylor (1987), Shaw (1988), and Minkin (1992). These works are all single authored monographs that focus exclusively or largely upon the internal life of the Labour Party and are widely regarded and acknowledged to be the seminal texts. Their chronological spread, the first published in 1955 and the last in 1992, mirrors the chronological development of the internal life of the Labour Party.

Robert T. McKenzie's *British Political Parties: The Distribution of Power within the Conservative and Labour Parties* (1955), argued that the internal life of parties is only important in relation to how they deal with the conventions of parliamentary and cabinet government, as this has the most significant effect upon the internal distribution of power. He also made a distinction between the theoretical and actual powers of party leaders, the most significant aspect of which is their status as Prime Ministers or Prime Ministers in waiting. McKenzie

further claimed that the extra-parliamentary Labour Party is primarily a vote-gathering agency, and that as long as the leadership retains the confidence of a small group of leading trade unionists they can be confident that no hostile majority will form against them in the mass organisation. He then analysed the key institutions of the Party and shows how each one is dominated by the unions. His discussion of the regional organisation was brief, dismissing it as a virtually powerless vote gatherer.

Martin Harrison's *The Trade Unions and the Labour Party Since 1945* (1960), was the first text exclusively to analyse the Labour Party-trade union relationship and to focus on key aspects of the relationship: political levy; trade union funding of the Party; branch level politics; making of Party policy; conference; trade union sponsorship of MPs; elections to the NEC; and non-political unions. He claimed that the central dynamic in the Labour Party was between the trade union elements, which were predominantly concerned with bread and butter issues, and the non-trade union elements, who were predominantly concerned with ideology. Since the influence of the TUC General Council on the Labour Party leadership, the most important influence from the trade unions, is not part of his study, he claimed not to be concerned with a systematic study of power in the relationship. Harrison argued that although under the Party's constitution the unions have the power to dominate, in practice they do not exercise this power as most trade union leaders realise that the position of the political wing becomes intolerable if people with no public responsibility insist on intervening with all their force in the affairs of the movement. He pointed out, however, that this view is not shared by the trade union rank and file.

Arguing from a Marxist perspective, Ralph Miliband's *Parliamentary Socialism* (1961), is a historically based study, where each period of the Labour Party history up to the time of its publication in 1961 is analysed - such as the Labour Representation Committee, the First World War, early government experiences, the 1930's and the 1945 Government. He also identified key failings in Labour's

development. Miliband claimed that Labour's political and industrial leaders have been determined to embrace parliamentary politics and exclude all other avenues. Miliband aimed therefore to analyse the consequences of this. He argued that the integration of the trade unions into capitalism was a major factor in the Labour Party's integration into parliamentary politics, which from his Marxist standpoint is defined as a failing.

Samuel Beer's *Modern British Politics: A Study of Parties and Pressure Group Politics* (1965), is a wider study of parties and pressure groups and how they have exercised authority and influenced public policy since 1945. He saw post-war politics as a distinctive era, arguing that the main variable of a political system is political culture, and that this is a major factor in explaining the behaviour of groups, individuals and parties. He claimed that politics is about a struggle for power, but it is a struggle that is deeply conditioned by fundamental moral concerns. According to Beer, the most important question concerns legitimate authority; "how ought we be governed?", and consensus on a particular answer to this question defines this era as distinct from previous eras. Beer argued that political culture exists within parties, and he therefore traced the development of the Labour Party to examine the effect of political culture on its history. He said that agreement over the fundamentals has usually existed in the Labour Party, the exception being its formative years and the crisis of the 1950s. Pluralistic democracy, he claimed, can exist within the Labour Party without endangering its cohesion, as long as there is agreement over fundamentals. Beer argued that the fundamental aim of the Labour Party was a commitment to the creation of a socialist commonwealth, but that consensus over this point was lost during the 1950s, as the Party argued over its economic management policies. This development was partly because the trade unions, which had gained greater power during the war, had changed their vision of a radical transformation of society.

Lewis Minkin's *The Labour Party Conference: A Study in the Politics of intra-Party Democracy* (1978), was the first text to focus exclusively on the operation

of one institution of the Labour Party, the Conference. Even though others had looked at the Conference as part of wider explorations, some aspects of its operation remained little understood, particularly the management of conference agendas, the taking of decisions by the trade union delegations, and the elections to the NEC. Minkin offered a rebuttal of McKenzie's argument, claiming that concentration on the effect of the acceptance of the rules of parliamentary government on power in parties fails to allot due weight to various sources of power fluctuations, especially those that come from the constitutional, structural and procedural characteristics of the Labour Party. Minkin argued that even though Conference may not determine government policy, it is still important because its proceedings produce subtle internal party repercussions, it is a forum for opinion and mood within the Party, it elects the NEC and could transform the composition of it, and in addition, it acts as an alternative authoritative source of Labour Party policy. Minkin observed that trade unions generally support the leadership of the Party, but effectively close off key areas of policy that are central to their objectives. Therefore, each policy area produces a different distribution of power, and on some issues, restrictions on the Party leadership are significant. Much depends on the character of the subject in relation to trade union tradition and mandates.

Andrew Taylor's *The Trade Unions and the Labour Party* (1987), argued that two key aspects characterised the Labour Party – trade union relationships from the mid-1970s to the time of the book's publication in 1978. These key aspects, Taylor said, were the policy relationship between the trade unions and the Labour Party and the role of the trade unions as actors in the political economy. Taylor argued that these aspects each contained intractable weaknesses that logically lead to the Winter of Discontent, and which were likely to lead to the medium term separation of the relationship after 1987.

Eric Shaw's *Discipline and Discord in the Labour Party: The Politics of Managerial Control in the Labour Party* (1988) is concerned with the prominence

of discipline in the internal life of the Labour Party. To sustain itself organisationally, any party needs a minimum level of internal cohesion in combination with a framework of rules that apportions rights and duties amongst the various tiers of the organisation. These, for Shaw, constitute the field of party management. The book contains a historical examination of post-war party management in the Labour Party up until its publication in the late 1980's, and Shaw identified three key periods: a tough-minded social democratic centrist regime which operated until the late 1960's; the dismantling of the social democratic centrist regime during the 1970's; and the partial restoration of managerial control after 1983. He argued that the power holding the social democratic centrist regime in place was not so much the power of the Party machine, but a normative power rooted in two characteristics of the Party at that time, loyalism and solidarism. When there was a reassertion of managerial control after 1983, a full restoration of the previous regime was not possible because the two characteristics which had sustained it were no longer present in the Party.

The stated aim of Lewis Minkin's *The Contentious Alliance: The Trade Unions and the Labour Party* (1991), both a historical study and a study of the institutions of the Labour Party, is to provide a comprehensive update of Harrison (1960), even though he admitted to neglecting several aspects of the Labour Party-trade union relationship, such as the grass-roots, the regional dimension and individual unions' policy processes. His central thesis is that the relationship between the Party and the unions is governed by unwritten "rules", which are informed by the trade union values of freedom, democracy, unity and priority, and which led to the playing of different roles by Party and union leaderships in the different spheres of the industrial and the political. The rules have prevented the absolute supremacy of leadership groups on either side of the relationship. Minkin argued that the existence of these "rules" meant, that the trade unions, whatever their formal position of strength may have been in the Party's constitution, have not dominated the Party. Minkin also hinted that the regional organisation of the Party and the unions may be a source of challenge to the "rules", but this

suggestion is not expanded or developed. Since the publication of Minkin (1992) the debate in the literature has continued to be influenced by his work. Much of the emphasis has been placed on the stability and desirability of the Labour Party-trade union relationship.

The remainder of this chapter is divided into nine parts, eight focusing on the works of the key authors and one on a conclusion. Each part focuses on a key text consists of a detailed scrutiny of the text and of its impact on the development of the topic. We will conclude by analysing the current state of the literature on the topic, and assess the inaccuracies and omissions.

2.2   Robert T. McKenzie

Prior to the publication of McKenzie's *British Political Parties* (1955), most of the studies of the Labour Party, such as Wertheimer (1929) and Attlee (1937), had concentrated on the historical emergence of the Party and of the labour movement more generally. This work was more political history rather than political science, and it is an approach which continued long after the publication of McKenzie's work. Henry Pelling's *The Origins of the Labour Party* (1965) and *A History of British Trade Unionism* (1963), along with McKibbin's *The Evolution of the Labour Party, 1910-1924* (1974), are key examples. The key themes to emerge from such studies have usually included: the historical emergence of the working class, Chartism and its aftermath, the social consequences of imperialism, the revival of socialism, the political awakening of the trade unions, the birth of the Labour Party, and syndicalism, which were used by Morton (1956) as the key focuses of his book aimed to "...set out, simply, the main features of the history of the British labour movement" (Morton, 1956: 8). Though of significance as studies in the history of the labour movement, many of which would be used by political scientists as key sources in their analysis, these studies did not aim to examine the internal life of the Labour Party, or the

relationship between the Party and the trade unions, from a political science perspective.

Although it is the first of the key landmark texts in the study of the internal life of the Labour Party from a political science perspective, McKenzie's *British Political Parties* is concerned with a wider field of study. As the subtitle, *The Distribution of Power within the Conservative and Labour Parties*, suggests, the work also examines the internal life of the Conservative Party. McKenzie's work, however, is only concerned with the distribution of power within parties, and not with either ideology or programmes. He argued, "the most important conditioning influence on the internal life of any British political party is the fact that it is either responsible for the government of the country or has a reasonable prospect of winning such responsibility." (McKenzie, 1955, p. vii). Because McKenzie saw the internal distribution of power in British political parties as being important only in relation to how the party will cope with the conventions of cabinet or parliamentary government, then "...the prospect of office is of far greater importance in determining the distribution of power within the party than are any of the party's internal constitutional arrangements" (McKenzie, 1955, p. vii). Hence his concentration on the two government parties.

McKenzie traced the historical development of British political parties. Firstly, he looked at parties before the first Reform Act of 1832, where he noted that even on the eve of the Bill there was nothing that could seriously be called a party system either inside or outside parliament. As the electorate began to expand in successive waves after 1832, however, the parliamentarians had increasingly to organise popular support for themselves, despite a constant preconception that the "...new extra-parliamentary party organisations must not be allowed to become Frankenstein's monsters which might destroy (or at best enslave) their creators". (p.3, 6-7) Secondly, he looked at the fears of Ostrogorski and others that the rise of the mass party might destroy the British parliamentary system, and that as a result "...Parliament could no longer act as a national forum in which enlightened

and independently minded MPs could discuss great issues on their merits" (p. 9). Thirdly, McKenzie contrasted the reactions of the older parties, Conservative and Liberal, with that of the Labour Party. He pointed out that the two older parties never faced the dangers that Ostrogorski had feared because they were so successful in "...shackling and controlling their extra-parliamentary organisations", but that this success of the older parties was proof to the Labour Party of their undemocratic nature. This latter point has been, McKenzie argued, the "...cardinal doctrine of the Labour Party ever since". (p. 10) Fourthly, he examines the polemical exchanges between the Conservative and Labour parties in particular over the subject of intra-party democracy. McKenzie stated that the subservience of the Parliamentary Labour Party to the movement outside of Parliament was held by those within the movement as proof of its democratic structure, but that the Conservatives believed that the very same circumstances were proof of its undemocratic nature, since the extra-parliamentary organisation was not accountable to the electorate. (p.13) McKenzie concluded, however, that there is good reason to believe that each of the political parties not only caricatures its opponent, but also that it caricatures itself in its official description of its own organisation. McKenzie pointed out that "this would not perhaps be of any serious consequence were it not for the fact that no intensive effort has been made to probe the inner workings of British political parties in the half century since Ostrogorski wrote" (p. 15). This therefore is the main purpose of McKenzie's research.

Given the stated purpose of his work, McKenzie's empirical research methods place much emphasis on first-hand knowledge of the workings of the two parties he studies. This he achieved by "...spending a great many hours in conversation at the House of Commons, at the party head offices, at the annual party conferences (most of which I have attended since the war) and at regional and local offices of the parties" (p. viii). Other than this simple statement McKenzie did not elaborate any further on his research methods, which is surprising since much of his work is empirically based, and given that his primary objective is to

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"probe the inner workings" of the parties. It is on the basis of his understanding of the historical development of parties that McKenzie placed such importance on the internal distribution of power in political parties being important only in relation to how they cope with government. In his analysis of power in the Labour Party, McKenzie considered four key themes - the Leader of the Labour Party; the Parliamentary Labour Party; the Party outside Parliament; and the Labour Party Head Office - which we shall now examine. It should be understood that his analysis is, of course, limited to developments prior to the publication of his work in 1955, and conditioned by the concerns of his period.

Considering the position of the Leader of the Labour Party (pp. 297-384) McKenzie stated that the contrast between the formal description of the powers of the Conservative Leader, which suggest that once elected "...he can play the autocrat with impunity", and the Labour Leader, which suggest that "...he is hemmed round with restrictions which ensure his subservience both to the party in Parliament and to the mass party organisation outside", is in practice very wide of the mark particularly when the two parties are in power. Although there are differences between the degree of authority assumed by particular people on becoming Prime Minister, the "...variation depends more on the personality, temperament, and ability of the individual concerned than on his party affiliation". (pp.397-8) When in opposition, McKenzie argued, what differences do exist between Labour and Conservative leaders have originated in the historical tendency of Conservatives to regard their leaders as potential Prime Ministers. Since 1922, however, Labour has more readily accepted this notion, and the authority of the Leader has therefore increased, though this is "...nowhere acknowledged in the constitution of the Party" (p. 299). McKenzie concluded that "it cannot be stressed to strongly that the Leader of each of the great parties is either Prime Minister or a potential Prime Minister. And it is this fact, not the internal mechanisms of the Party, which is the governing influence in determining the role the Leader plays in the affairs of his party" (p. 300).

McKenzie also examined the Labour Party in Parliament firstly before 1922, and then after 1922 in government and in opposition (pp. 385-454). In the period from 1906 to 1914, McKenzie states, the PLP succeeded in winning a measure of independence from extra-parliamentary control, and "despite a slighting attitude toward the PLP which seems implicit in certain passages of the 1918 constitution, the position of the PLP..." was strengthened. This was because of a series of "loopholes" in the constitution that were designed to limit the extent the PLP could be controlled by the party outside Parliament. The most significant of these "loopholes" was a procedural format that in effect provided for the trade union domination of the NEC, namely electing all the spaces on the NEC by a vote of the entire conference, which the unions dominated as a result of the size of their block vote. This, McKenzie concluded, "...helped ensure in the years after 1918 that the leaders of the PLP were unlikely to face an Executive which might be goaded or stimulated by a militant block into attempting to play a determining role in controlling the affairs of the PLP". (pp.406-7) McKenzie concluded that although after 1922 the PLP maintained certain "democratic" practices in its internal organisation when in opposition, such as the stipulation that the Leader and the Parliamentary Committee should be subject to annual re-election, when in office such "democratic" practices were jettisoned because the Party considered them to be incompatible with the British cabinet system (p. 411).

McKenzie's analysis also considered the evolution of the extra-parliamentary party before and after the 1918 constitution, including the annual conference, the NEC and its Sub-Committees, the regional organisation, and the constituency and ward committees (pp. 455-558). McKenzie stated that the mass organisation in the Labour Party is "primarily a vote getting agency" (p. 455), with certain other functions, such as a limited role in the formation of party policy and in the selection of leaders. Ultimately, he concludes, as long as Labour leaders "...retain the confidence of a small group of leading figures in the trade union world, [they] can be reasonably confident that no hostile majority will form against them within their mass organisation" (p. 456). Specifically on the

conference, he says "by an adroit use of the internal party mechanisms the conference is kept carefully in control; and on the rare occasions when the conference gets out of control it usually succeeds in doing little more than demonstrating its own impotence" (p. 488). McKenzie meticulously analysed the workings of the conference, and in particular focuses on how the casting of the trade union block vote is usually determined by the most senior member of the trade union delegation (p. 493). McKenzie placed a great deal of weight on the evidence of formal voting figures, but did not consider many of the other, less visible, factors that Minkin (1979) later explored. McKenzie concluded his comments on the conference with the remark that "while the leading parliamentarians and trade union leaders stand together, they do have almost overwhelming influence in determining the outcome of conference deliberations. But this is not necessarily an `undemocratic situation`. Each element in the controlling group wields great authority..." (p. 507). He expressed similar sentiments on the NEC, saying that "so long as the leading parliamentarians have been able, as individuals, to retain the confidence of the leading figures in the trade unions world, and so long as they have been able to convince these trade unionists of the wisdom of the policies they propose, the NEC has inevitably fallen into line", this is because the trade union block on the NEC dominates (p. 520). As a result of this situation, McKenzie said, the NEC fell into comparative insignificance when Labour entered power in 1945, and this situation persisted when Labour was out of office after 1951 (p. 527).

McKenzie also considered the regional organisation of the Labour Party and constituency and ward committees. I do not intend to cover constituency and ward committees in detail here, other than to say that McKenzie believed their only real power lay in the selection of parliamentary candidates, but that once candidates were selected, these organisations had little further power over them (pp. 539-558). The Labour Party's regional organisation is based on the regional councils, which McKenzie said are "...so nearly powerless that it is difficult to understand how they succeed in holding the interest of those who attend their

meetings" (p. 533). The regional councils serve only as regional organisers of the vote gathering machine, they are forbidden to discuss national or international issues, and "leaving nothing to chance, the constitutions of most regional councils provide that the regional organiser [who is accountable to the Party head office, not the regional council] `shall act as secretary to the regional council`" (p.535). In concluding on the regional councils, McKenzie said "it must be emphasised that the regional organisation of the Labour Party...plays an insignificant part in the life of the Party" (p. 538).

Finally, McKenzie examined the Labour Party Head Office (pp. 559-577). McKenzie said that although the constitution of the Labour Party does not give the Party Leader or the PLP control of the Party's professional organisation and instead gives this power to the NEC, the very fact that the NEC itself has never for any length of time been out of step with the PLP (for reasons discussed above) "...helps account for the fact that the head office has never menaced the autonomy of the PLP" (p. 560). Moreover, McKenzie concluded, "in practice the Labour head office has invariably served the interests of the Leader of the parliamentary party and his colleagues" (p. 576).

McKenzie claimed that "by accepting all the conventions with respect to the office of the Prime Minister and of cabinet government, it ensured that the Labour Party outside Parliament would be regulated to a status not unlike that of the National Union [of the Conservative Party]" (p. 584). This does not mean that Labour Leaders can ignore with impunity the moods and aspirations of their followers, as they must carry them with them. However, if the mass organisations "...attempted to arrogate to themselves a determining influence with respect to policy or leadership they would be cutting across the chain of responsibility from Cabinet, to Parliament, to electorate, which is a fundamental feature of the British parliamentary system" (pp. 587-8). In a later work in 1982 McKenzie reiterated his position, arguing that "intra-Party democracy, strictly interpreted, is incompatible with democratic government" (McKenzie, 1982: 195).

In conclusion, Robert McKenzie's *British Political Parties* (1955) contains an implicit normative approval of the system of Parliamentary democracy. That said, McKenzie provides a new political science approach to the study of the internal life of the Labour Party. The book is primarily concerned with the internal distribution of power, not with ideology or programme, and the most important conditioning factors are the conventions of Parliamentary and cabinet government, not any internal constitutional arrangements. McKenzie surmised that there may be a gap between the Labour Party's description of its own internal democracy, and what actually happens, and therefore undertakes a detailed examination of the Party's internal life. McKenzie concluded that each of Labour's internal institutions - the Leadership, the PLP and the extra-Parliamentary Party – is conditioned by the conventions of Parliamentary government. Moreover, far from being the democratic creature that the Party's constitution would seem to imply, the extra-Parliamentary Party is meticulously controlled by the Leadership with the aid of trade union leaders. In addition, the regional organisation, McKenzie concluded, plays an almost insignificant part in the life of the Party.

2.3   Martin Harrison

Harrison's *The Trade Unions and the Labour Party Since 1945* (1960), is a groundbreaking work, as it is the first to examine exclusively the Labour Party-trade union relationship. In a well researched and referenced book, Harrison examines in a highly ordered and readable way several key aspects of the relationship. These are: the political levy, trade union funding of the Party, politics at branch level, the making of Party policy, the Labour Party Conference, trade union sponsorship of MPs, the trade union role in electing the NEC, and the role of non-political unions. Harrison's main claim is that the central tension in the Labour Party, in the period prior to the publication of his work in 1960, existed between the trade union elements, who were predominantly concerned

with bread and butter issues, and non-trade union elements, who were predominantly concerned with ideology (p. 12). So embedded was the relationship, Harrison argued, that most of the largest unions saw it as an unspoken assumption (p. 13). Harrison stated that his aim was not to debate the merits of the Labour Party-trade union relationship, but to understand it, as it was impossible to understand the Labour Party without reference to this relationship (p. 15). He claimed that the most important single source of pressure on the Labour Party leadership comes directly from the TUC General Council, which is outside the Party's constitutional circuits that are the normal focus of his attention. As a result, he said, he was not attempting a systematic exposition of union power, which would clearly entail an extension of the focus of his attention, but how the unions contribute to the life of the Labour Party (p. 17). His central questions are:

- Do the unions pull their weight?
- Do the unions take their share of burdens of are they sleeping partners?
- Does the link with the Labour Party still seem important enough for the unions to be willing to make sacrifices to maintain it?

In his analysis of the Party's constitution Harrison concluded that should they so wish the unions would have the power to control the Labour Party, but it is clear that the Labour Party has never been purely and simply an expression of trade unionism. Moreover, he claimed that there was no single case of the unions successfully forcing their views on the Party on a non-industrial issue. Harrison argued that policy initiative tended to come from the political movement, the unions at most take sides though they have not acted as a united force in any of the biggest policy struggles that racked the Party in the years prior to his study. (pp. 336) The reason for this, Harrison concluded, is that most of the union leaders realised that the position of the political wing becomes quite intolerable if people with no public responsibility insist on intervening with all their force in the complex affairs of a political movement (p. 337). Harrison also said, "the fact that the TUC leaders are usually also prominent within the Party is less important

than might be assumed. The Labour Party is bound to the unions not just by cash and card votes, but by personalities and doctrines, common experience and sentiment – and mutual advantage". Harrison pointed out, however, that the union rank and file is less reluctant to try to tell the Party what to do, and they do not tend to draw a distinction between the good of the community as a whole and the demands of the organised working class. (p. 340) Overall Harrison concluded that the Labour Party and the trade unions clung to an outdated notion of what they could do for each other and this was bound to increase the pressure on the alliance when Labour was in office (p. 344). From their point of view the unions increasingly saw the role of a Labour Government as providing a framework within which they could successfully pursue their activities. This expectation is constant, as the unions would be antagonised by the failure to provide this framework. (p. 349) Regarding the future of the relationship Harrison claimed that, although on the one hand social change could make the Party's association with the unions a wasting electoral asset, and even an embarrassment, on the other hand "if the unions continued to withdraw from participation it would leave the movement like an aging Elm – outwardly ok but inwardly dead". (p. 350)

In summary, Harrison's *The Trade Unions and the Labour Party Since 1945* (1960) is the first work to focus exclusively on the Labour Party-trade union relationship. Firmly rooted in detailed empirical research the work is not concerned with an exposition of power, because of Harrison's belief that the biggest influence on the Labour Party leadership comes directly from the TUC General Council and is therefore beyond the scope of his research, it is concerned with a study of how the trade unions contribute the internal life of the Labour Party. The biggest source of tension, as discussed above, being between the trade union elements and the non-trade union elements. Harrison said that an analysis of the Party's constitution shows that although the trade unions had the formal power to dominate the Labour Party, in reality they did not do so. This is because unlike the political leadership they did not have the public authority to intervene

in the political movement. As a result the trade unions leaders were usually willing to follow the initiatives of the Party leadership.

Following the publication of Harrison (1960) researcher began to focus on the internal life of the Labour Party as a field of study in its own right. Hindel and Williams (1962) meticulously examined the Labour Party conference decisions of 1960 and 1961. Alexander and Hobbs (1966; first published in 1962) considered the various influences on Labour MPs, particularly focussing on the impact of religion, books and personalities. Aitken (1966) considered the financial role of the trade unions in Party institutions, concluding that while they gave support to the national party, there was no record of their having contributed to the party in the regions. (Aitkin, 1966: 29). Janosik's (1968) quantitative study of constituency parties examined the relationship between grass-roots bodies and the central Party institutions, and is an interesting early attempt to examine the internal life of the Labour Party outside of London, albeit only in relation to how that life related to events and processes at the centre. Other studies in this phase were much more dismissive of the sub-national situation. Rose (1976) for example said, "because the most important problems of government cannot be resolved by decentralisation, this volume concentrates upon the role of parties in central government... [and in an ethnocentric twist that is indicative of this period in the literature he adds] an intensive study of the politics of local government...would probably lead to many of the same conclusions as those that follow here" (Rose, 1976: 16). Others took a different approach, examining instead the ideology of the Party, such as Panitch (1971), Heffer (1972), and Marquand (1975), Borthwick (1979), Drucker (1979), as a major factor for the crisis in its internal life. Simpson (1973) examined the ideological debate between the Party and the unions over their political purposes.

2.4   Ralph Miliband

Miliband's *Parliamentary Socialism* (1961) is concerned almost exclusively with the Labour Party. The central claim of the book is that both Labour's political and industrial leaders have "...been determined that the Labour Party should not stray from the narrow path of parliamentary politics". Moreover, this determination predates the Labour Party, as those who set up the Labour Party did so as a commitment to parliamentary politics. (p. 13) Miliband's central aim was to analyse the consequences that this approach to politics has had for the Labour Party and the Labour movement. Miliband said that he adopted a historical approach to his work because "...Labour's integration into parliamentary politics has been a process of growth...producing new tensions as the Labour Party changed from small pressure group in the House of Commons into a party of Official Opposition and of Government". He added "nor would the Labour Party's integration into parliamentary politics have taken place, or taken place in the same way, had it not had its parallel in the growing integration of the trade unions into the framework of modern capitalism". (p.14) Miliband also said that Labour's leaders have had to contend with two sets of critics from the left. Firstly, the "Labour Left", which he describes as the left-wing element in the Labour Party and the trade unions, who he says have always been in a minority, but have "...in various ways...have at least reduced the leaders' freedom of action". Secondly, the "extra-parliamentary left", who he describes as the groups outside the Labour Party, such as the Communist Party. (pp. 14-15) Finally, Miliband also made it clear that there were other factors which his analysis must also consider. He said, "the Labour movement is not self-contained . It responds to, and is deeply influenced by, external factors, historical, economic, social and political". (p. 15) *Parliamentary Socialism*, then, is concerned with each of these factors.

Miliband concluded that the setting up of the Labour Representation Committee was symbolic of the belief of the Independent Labour Party and the trade unions

that the House of Commons is the most appropriate location for political and constitutional debate.(p.18). Miliband made it clear, however, that he believed the "...history of the LRC is largely the history of political manoeuvres to reach electoral accommodations with the Liberals" (p. 19), and that even after 1906 the Parliamentary Labour Party acted as "...a more or less radical appendage of the Liberal Party in Parliament...and Labour behaved much less like an opposition party than as a pressure group..." (p. 22). Throughout this period and subsequently there existed a "...tension between activists and parliamentarians". Underlying this tension was "the former's fears that the Labour Group in Parliament would, if not strictly controlled [by intra-party democracy], backslide into opportunism, manoeuvre and compromise, and the latter's easy assumption that manoeuvre and compromise were inherent in their situation and essential to the furtherance of Labour's immediate aims". Miliband said the activist left's failure had been their inability to recognise the futility of their task. (pp.26-27) The greater challenge to the Labour Party in this period was not its own left, but the militant left outside the Party. Miliband focused in particular on Revolutionary Syndicalism, which he said rejected traditional trade unionism with its fragmented organisation, rejected the bureaucratic collectivism of Fabians, and embraced a doctrine of industrial action that was based on a rejection of parliamentary action. (p. 34) Miliband claimed that as a result of these groups, by 1914 the Liberal Party saw Labour in the House of Commons much less as a threat than as a safety valve (p. 37).

Examining the Labour Party during the First World War (pp. 39-58) Miliband observed that the decision of Labour leaders to support the war was based on its perceived need to dispel any doubts as to Labour's patriotism. He said that "the war immediately gave Labour's leaders, particularly its industrial leaders, a very different and much enhanced status. For they now came to be needed as brokers and intermediaries between Government and a labour force whose acceptance of a new industrial discipline was an essential condition of military success" (p. 47). He added, the entry of the Labour Party into the Asquith coalition meant that it

became "…more official party than it had ever been before", but it also committed the Party to an acceptance of government policies, over which it only had a very small influence (p. 50). Miliband claimed that trade unionism emerged from the war strengthened. Its leaders wanted "…a new deal for labour", but they wanted to get it by the traditional methods to which they were used to and which the war had enhanced (p. 59), but the Labour Party was ineffectual in the House of Commons and it refused to use it power in the country (p. 65). The main reason for this decision was a fear that direct action "…would necessarily strengthen the influence of a hated left, [and] would also threaten the supremacy of the unions' traditional leadership" (p. 70). Miliband concluded by saying that, "by 1921, industrial militancy was on the wane. Having failed to assert their full power during the post-war boom, the unions now found their task made more difficult by slump, falling wages and mass unemployment" (p. 92).

Miliband pointed out that after the 1922 General Election, the PLP included a sizeable number of MPs who were neither trade unionists or working class, and although they gave the PLP respectability, they were careerists (p. 94). As for MacDonald, he was "…above all determined that the Labour Party in Parliament should say nothing and do nothing which might suggest that…it was not fit to govern" (p.97). Miliband also argued that during the general strike "the movement *was* betrayed, but not because the Labour leaders were villains or cowards. It was betrayed because betrayal was the inherent and inescapable consequence of their whole philosophy of politics…". This philosophy was characterised most importantly by "…the belief, common to both industrial and parliamentary leaders, that a challenge to the Government through the assertion of working class strength outside Parliament was *wrong*". (p. 144) This philosophy, Miliband argued, continued to characterise the PLP throughout the 1920s, the second Labour Government and MacDonald's ultimate betrayal (pp. 152-192). Miliband concluded that although the Labour Party returned to Parliament after the 1931 General Election with a substantially reduced number of MPs, its popular support in terms of the number of votes it received did not reduce by the

same extent, adding that "though powerless in Parliament, Labour had retained massive support in the country, most of it, obviously, from within the rank of the organised working class. The Labour leadership could...have chosen to mobilize that support for effective opposition to the Government's policies at home and abroad. The history of this terrible decade [1930's] might have been different...but for its deliberate refusal to do so." (p.192). The impact of the events of 1931 on Labour's leaders was, however, very limited, and "they never swerved from the belief that opposition meant opposition in Parliament and that Labour could achieve little, and must not attempt much, until it had been returned to office as a majority Government" (pp. 193-194). Such an attitude, Miliband implied, helped the Conservatives win the 1935 General Election with an impregnable majority (p. 230), and as a result Labour's leaders could not be absolved of guilt for the failed policies of appeasement (p. 271).

Miliband also outlined the effect of the war on Labour (pp. 272-317), suggesting that "because of the demands of the war, Britain's rulers were forced to give a convincing demonstration that economic planning and state intervention on a massive and, for Britain, quite unprecedented scale, not only worked, but were the indispensable conditions of victory" (p. 273), but that "in the first flush of victory [at the 1945 General Election], the hesitations and inhibitions of Labour's leadership..." were easily overlooked (p. 285). One of the key priorities of the 1945 Government was that it used its strength to neutralise the left, Miliband said,

> this was...true of the Government's relation with the Labour rank and file. The former's insistence on its prior constitutional responsibility to Parliament, and its concern that the Parliamentary Party should be free from Conference `dictation` proceeded much less from some abstract model of parliamentary government, or from some preconceived notion of the desirability or otherwise of `inner-party` democracy than from a desire to escape from the *radical* pressure of the rank and file. The debate on these issues, then and after, was firmly rooted the ideological divisions between leaders and activists, and is only meaningful with reference to these decisions. (p. 298).

Free from the influence of the activists, the Government was free to "consolidate" rather than to extend nationalisation (p.298). As a result, by the late 1940's the

Government was exhausted politically and ideologically, it had "...no distinctive purpose" (p. 310). This ideological bankruptcy, Miliband said, underpinned Labour's problems thought the 1950's.

In summary, Miliband's *Parliamentary Socialism* (1961), is conditioned by an entrenched Marxist ideology. The central assumption is that restricting the actions of the Labour movement to Parliamentary politics represented a betrayal by the leadership. Miliband's work, although well argued, well written and well referenced, was written from a predetermined political standpoint. Arguing from a Marxist perspective, Miliband identified the Party's divergence from a Marxist agenda as a betrayal, although he presents no convincing arguments that the adoption of extra-parliamentary revolutionary activity would have been more effective than the use of parliamentary democracy in achieving the aims of the Labour movement.

Many of the points made by Miliband were taken up by Panitch (1976). At a time when incomes policy was a key debate in British politics, Panitch argued that "analyses which begin with the premise that the Labour Party is primarily a socialists Party...confine themselves to the attempt to explain Labour's consistent 'failure' to be 'socialist' when in government...must inevitably fall wide of the mark" (Panitch, 1976: 3). Panitch concluded that "the Labour Party...acts simultaneously as a party of representation and as a major political socialization and control agent, mediating between nation and class"; moreover "the missing link between industrial militancy and revolutionary political consciousness is the Labour Party-trade union link" (Panitch, 1976: 236, 253). Such conclusions are an anathema to those reached by Miliband.

2.5 Samuel Beer

Samuel Beer's *Modern British Politics* (1965), like McKenzie's *British Political Parties*, is more than merely a study of the internal life of the Labour Party. As

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the subtitle *A Study of Parties and Pressure Groups* makes clear, Beer's scope was wider than a concern with just the Labour and Conservative parties. Beer said that his focus included both political parties and interest groups since the Second World War and how they have exercised authority and influenced public policy. Beer's interest in pressure groups was influenced by the fact that he was a political sociologist rather than an institutionalist like McKenzie or Minkin. Beer compared the period from 1945 to the publication of his work in 1965 with what he describes as "previous eras in politics", and this provided him with the means to classify post-war politics as a distinctive type. (p. x) Beer argued that political culture was one of the main variables of the political system and a major factor, though not the only factor, in explaining the political behaviour of groups, individuals and parties during the 1950's and 1960's. It is political culture, therefore, which helps to differentiate between eras in politics. He said that "politics is a struggle for power, but a struggle that is deeply conditioned by fundamental moral concerns". "How ought we to be governed?" is, said Beer, a question that has substantially shaped the way that men concerted and directed their attempt to win and influence power. This is a question concerning legitimate authority, the answer to which changes from era to era. (p. xii) Beer claimed that the ideological differences between the two parties was very narrow, even though they continued to be divided about particular ideas; for example the Conservatives believed in economic and social freedom while Labour believed in achieving equality. On the fundamental issue of political culture, however, a consensus existed, which was vital for an orderly political process. He added, "in collectivist politics, as in old Tory, old Whig, Liberal and Radical politics, a distinctive system of political ideas informed the decisions of individuals and guided the behaviour of the political formations". (pp. 386-390)

In describing the Labour Party as a "coalition of pressure groups" (pp. 105-125), Beer highlighted three broad currents of political thought which lay doubt on the possibility of intra-party democracy in the Labour Party. The first, quoting Bernard Crick (1960), is pluralist theory, which defined a political party as a

coalition of groups, in which leaders function as brokers between them; although there is some overlap of goals there is no distinctive common purpose. The second, elitist theory, says that in such a large formation, initiative and decisive power must be exercised by leadership. Thirdly, quoting Schumpeter's *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (1947), Beer cites irrationalist theory; the idea that leadership influences debate by "subconscious, non-rational debate" such as traditional deference, demagogic manipulation of sentiments, charismatic appeal, or other psycho-technical means (pp. 106-7).

Beer argued that the trade unions' decision to set up the Labour Party was, for them, a further extension of pressure group politics, and even after 1906 the unions continued to think of the Party in this way rather than as a national political party with governmental aspirations. He claimed that although the socialists within the Labour Party were important and held office, they only did so if they were able to accept the limited objectives of the trade unions. (pp. 113-4) He also said that the unions used the annual conference of the Labour Party as an opportunity to promote their own sectional interests. Although the Conference could and did issue instructions to the Parliamentary Party, because there was limited time and opportunities in Parliament this usually meant determining priorities. This, Beer claimed, was reflected in the annual Parliamentary reports of the time, which showed a heavy emphasis among Labour MPs on trade union interests. (pp. 117-9) Finally, Beer said that the bulk of the Labour Party during this time shared a general frame of thought and values, and that this perspective could be accommodated within the ideology of liberal radicalism. He went on to say, "when the Party did adopt socialism this represented not a shift from interest politics to ideological politics, but a basic change in ideology", from liberal radicalism to socialism. (pp. 124-5)

Beer argued that during the interwar years the Labour Party became more than just a coalition. This was a result of both its commitment to socialism and its power structure. Turning first to the Party's commitment to socialism, Beer said

that as a result of this commitment in 1918 all groups within the Labour Party now traced their particular grievances to the same root cause, the capitalist system, and all had but one remedy, a socialist society. The root of the problem was private ownership. The Party therefore wanted, Beer said, a "...socialist revolution without sudden and violent change". (pp. 127-135). Beer argued that the wartime measures had taught trade unions that large-scale state control was practical and beneficial, and it was this that had persuaded them to support socialism. (p.140) Examining the internal structure of power in the Labour Party, Beer examined the question of elitism in the Labour Party from the perspective of party organisation between 1918 and 1948, in which the Party had its own organisational life where individuals and groups put forward ideas and contested positions of influence within the framework of socialist purpose and trade union power. (p. 153) He argued that as there was a corpus of principle and programme, acceptance of which by leaders could be taken for granted, these leaders could therefore be trusted to use their discretion. Likewise the pluralistic democracy of the Party, similarly conditioned by an agreement on the fundamentals, could continue without endangering Party cohesion. Such consensus over the fundamentals did not exist, Beer said, during the Party's early years, or during the crisis of the 1950`s. (p. 156)

In the post-Attlee era, Beer observed, there was a fundamental conflict over the purpose of the Party, particularly relating to its commitment to ideology and its democratic structure. This was mainly because the old orthodoxies of the Party were challenged by the new forces now shaping British politics. These forces related mainly to economic planning. Beer claimed that the central change was a shift from the old commitment to a socialist commonwealth toward an acceptance of the welfare state and managed economy as the basic structure of policy within which the Labour Party would henceforth pursue its aims. Under Attlee, faith in economic planning was undermined, and as a result the case for nationalisation lost support. (p. 194) Beer said that during 1947 to 1950 there was a shift from manpower budget to financial budget as a means of guiding the economy, and

from physical planning to economic management. This was compatible with private ownership and made public ownership superfluous. The principle reason for this change was, Beer argued, the resistance of the trade unions to government control over the movement and compensation of labour. (pp. 194, 198) For democratic control to take the place of market forces, the government must control wage-fixing and the movement of labour through labour direction and wages policy, but the unions were not prepared to accept this and the government was aware that TUC support would be needed if these approaches were to succeed. (pp. 202-204) Although a bargaining position of wage-restraint was achieved in 1948, it only lasted until 1950 when the devaluation of the pound led to price increases which broke the bargaining agreement between government and the unions. (pp. 205, 208) Beer concluded that trade union support from the Party's socialist vision had lapsed because during the war their power and position in the state had grown and the unions now had access, regardless of who was in government. (p. 214) Beer claimed that during the period from 1951 to 1961, the Party and the wider labour movement was split between the revisionists, who wanted to revise the Party's commitment to socialism, and the fundamentalists, who wanted to preserve it. (pp. 217-228) The story of this period, however, is not of an elite imposing its views on a mass, where the Party was split horizontally, rather it was split vertically between two sets of leaders and followers. This pattern extended into the unions. (pp. 229-231)

In summary, Samuel Beer's *Modern British Politics* (1965), is concerned with political culture and political consensus within parties. Beer attempted to situate the internal life of the Labour Party and its relationship with the trade unions within the context of political culture. Beer argued that the Labour Party's internal political consensus consisted of three distinct periods prior to the publication of his book. He said that the period before 1918 was characterised by a liberal radical consensus in the Labour Party-trade union relationship. This was replaced in 1918 when the Labour Party adopted a new constitution with a commitment to socialism. Finally, after 1947 consensus on a socialist programme

broke down, mainly as a result of the trade unions removing their support for a socialist transformation of the economy owing to their experiences during the war. This saw them gain greater power and access to the state than ever before, and resulted in division. Beer therefore argued that when consensus over political culture breaks down in the Labour Party and it fails to be a united force, crisis follows. Beer also claimed that the reason why the trade unions haven't dominated the Labour Party is that a consensus over their proper role in the movement has restricted their actions.

2.6   Lewis Minkin - One

Minkin's *The Labour Party Conference: A Study in the Politics of Intra-Party Democracy* (1978), took the study of the Labour Party's internal life to new levels of detailed empirical scrutiny. It is meticulously researched and referenced. Minkin stated that although the Conference had been included in several previous studies of the trade unions, the PLP, and the NEC, none have taken the Conference as its central focus. As a result whole areas of Conference politics were little understood, including the management of the agenda, the taking of decisions by the trade union delegations, and the behaviour of the NEC.

Minkin defined his key questions as:
- How does the Labour Party Conference work?
- How is power distributed amongst those who take part?
- How is policy made at, and through, the Conference?
- How does the Conference interact with other bodies within the Party?
- Is the Conference any longer a significant political assembly? (p. xiii)

These questions imply that although the Conference is the focus of Minkin's attention, his analysis necessarily extends beyond the five days when the conference actually meets. Minkin first had to address, therefore, the methodological problem of defining the limit of the Conference. He defined

Conference decisions as the pivotal point of the analysis, but also examined the process leading up to the decisions of conference and their repercussions in the Party agencies responsible for their implementation. Minkin labelled this the "Conference policy-process". (p. xvi) Minkin argued that in the absence of a clear understanding, mythology became a pervasive element in Conference politics, to which was added a deep-rooted suspicion between left and right. Minkin also argued that the long-standing belief in the sovereignty of the Party Conference was subverted by a new and powerful intellectual critique of the legitimacy of Conference authority. Minkin claimed, however, that the existing academic analysis that saw the permanent dominance of the PLP leadership over policy-making within the Party, "...not only understated the structural and procedural limitations on the power of the Parliamentary leadership but underestimated the capacity of the extra-parliamentary party to reassert itself, particularly when the trade unions reacted adversely to the failures of a Labour Government." (p. xiv)

Minkin's study was not merely concerned with an analysis of policy making; indeed he argued that a "...satisfactory analysis of Conference policy-making cannot be made in isolation from an examination of the changing attitudes towards democracy and authority within the Party as a whole, if only because the type and degree of activity within the Conference varies with the authority of that body and varies with the ideological predispositions of the participants." (p. xv) Minkin saw Conference decisions as being a result of two general steams of political activity. The first was the process by which the policy mandates of the constituent organisations were decided, delegates were appointed, delegates met at Conference, and ultimately the events during the conference sessions themselves. The second was the process by which policy alternatives to be presented to the Conference for its decision were determined. (p. xvii) According to Minkin, the view that effective political power in the Labour Party was concentrated in the hands of the Parliamentary leadership become predominant during the 1960s. Indeed, Minkin conceded that "if we are to understand by `final

authority` the capacity of the PLP leadership when in Government to avoid the implementation of Conference and NEC decisions to which they had expressed public opposition then...that capacity is indisputable". In what can be seen as a direct response to McKenzie, however, Minkin added "any analysis which focuses primarily upon the concentration of power produced by acceptance of the rules and the roles of the British constitution risks a failure to allot due weight to the various sources of power fluctuations – particularly those which spring from the compositional, structural, and procedural character of the Labour Party" (pp. 316-317) Minkin therefore justified such a study.

Minkin claimed that although no simple characterisation of the distribution of power within the conference policy process does justice to its subtlety and variability, there are three particular characteristics of the process which stand out during the 1960`s and 1970`s. Firstly, its elitist character, which could be seen in "...a wide and institutionalised power differential between those operating at leadership level and those who made up the rank and file". Secondly, its dialectical quality. On this point Minkin said that much of what did emerge as the decisions of the Conference bore marks of the interaction between the unions and the PLP leadership. It was difficult for the Party leadership to make positive commitments which ran counter to the policy boundaries set by the trade unions. Thirdly, there was an increasing institutional independence, and growing policy differentiation between the Labour party and the Labour Government. The Labour Party had only a very limited effect on immediate Government policy, but in turn, the Government had a decreasing effect on the policy output of the Party. (p. 317)

Minkin also argued that although the Conference authority and control over the procedures that regulated the relationship between the NEC and the PLP was in decline during this period, it continued to remain a significant political assembly for four key reasons. These were:

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- The proceedings within the Conference produced a range of subtle internal Party repercussions for the individuals and groups who participated in it.

- It provided a unique forum of opinion and mood within the various sections of the Party.

- It elected the NEC and could slowly transform the composition of that body.

- It retained formal authority over the NEC , which meant that the decisions of Conference, whether or not implemented by a Labour Government, could have significant consequences. Thus the question of "what is Labour Party policy?" could often be met by various answers derived from different authoritative sources. (pp. 317-318)

Minkin concluded that there were three key areas where interaction between the unions and the PLP leadership took place: policy formulation; agenda management; and the implementation of mandates. Although in each of these key areas the PLP leadership played a much greater role than was formally prescribed in the Party rules, in none of them was there simple leadership dominance. In policy formulation, although "the union leaders were often sympathetic and prepared discreetly to play a part rather than a union role, on a number of issues there was simply no room for manoeuvre, and on some of those considered fundamental to trade unionism there was no will for it." (p. 318) Regarding agenda management, Minkin said that even though they were at an advantage in terms of their own resolutions to Conference, to claim that the agenda management process of the Conference was a collective conspiracy of the Party bureaucracy, NEC, PLP leadership and CAC (Conference Arrangements Committee) was simply wrong. (p. 320) "The PLP leadership had to react to an agenda which in its original form was the product of relatively spontaneous submission by the affiliated organisations". Additionally, the independent character of the CAC was principally assured by the fact that its composition was largely the preserve of the largest unions at the Conference. Minkin concluded, that

fundamentally, the success of the intricate process of `soundings` and cues
rested upon assumptions about the management of `a good Conference`
and involved shared perceptions and common purposes, not an
institutionalised structure of authority. This left open the possibility that
within a different milieu and with a new pattern of political alignment
amongst the unions...the managerial definition of "a good Conference"
might change – a change which could have considerable repercussions
upon the position of the Party's leadership...(p. 320),

which Minkin argued happen during the 1970s.

As the primary instrument of agenda management at the Party conference, the
CAC is highly important. It is the CAC that decides on the validity of resolutions
to the conference, the structure of debates, the process of composting, and acts as
the Standing Orders Committee when conference is in session. Minkin (1992) is
the only published source of information on the operation of the CAC, and he
described its operations in detail. On the basis of the information presented to
them, the Committee itself operates strictly within the rules. Yet as with the
conference itself, there is a more covert process operating beneath the surface.
The representatives of the largest trade unions have dominated the CAC for much
of the post war period. The role of the CAC Chairman was one that was largely
hidden from the majority of members. The Chair's role was to take "soundings"
in private caucus meetings that take place before the committee proper and
effectively decide what information should be presented to the membership as a
whole. (pp. 68-9)

Minkin also considered in detail the process of determining how the trade union
block vote would be used. He commented that "the character of the process was
problematic enough to place a regular question mark over the representativeness
of the votes cast in the name of millions of members who apparently took little
interest in them". The reason for this, Minkin argued, was that politics was never
the prime concern of most trade union branches or trade union Conferences.
Nevertheless, most trade union delegations at the very least had to consider the
decisions of the union's executive committee. Union delegations rarely had

autocratic power, however; "there is no doubt that the procedures of the Party Conference gave an added element of flexibility to the process and created an area of discretion where formally none existed." (pp. 323-324) Negative boundary setting by the unions effectively "closed-off" some key areas of policy (P. 54). Minkin's extensive research has revealed exactly how the process of securing the unions' acquiescence is secured.

> For influence to be exerted where it mattered most – upon the major union delegations – contact had to be made and communication established in the period from the Thursday afternoon, when the trade unionists on the NEC arrived, to the time when the union delegations met. In this short period the hotel occupied by the NEC as the Party head quarters for the conference week, was the scene of most important activity (p. 156).

The room for manoeuvre was reduced where a mandate existed, but where none did, or where the issue was political and not industrial, the Party leadership was generally successful in gaining the support of the major union leaders. Minkin added one note of caution, however; the PLP use of the trade union's block vote to get a conference majority meant that they were not in a position to openly repudiate conference authority without declaring war on the major unions (p. 26). In the final analysis the conference policy process, according to Minkin, was complex and variable. The crucial variability arose out of the PLP leadership-trade union relationship. Each policy area produced a different distribution of power, and on some issues the restrictions of the parliamentary leadership were considerable. Much depended on the character of the subject in relation to trade union tradition and mandates.

Following Minkin, a series of studies emerged during the 1980s examining the crisis facing the Labour Party. These works shared a consensus that Labour was far from the position of being able to form a government, particularly until the mid-1980s, and so the proximity of office was much less of a consideration that the Party's own internal difficulties. Watkins (1972), Seyd (1978) and Layton-Henry (1979) are some examples. Others include Hodgson (1981), who looked at

the changing nature of the Party's structure, its links with the trade unions, and the move to the left after the 1960s, and Mitchell (1983), who undertakes a similar study. Others focused exclusively on the trade union link. Mackintosh (1972), pointed out that the trade unions have moved far from the belief that the Labour party was their own political wing, for which they were responsible. (Mackintosh, 1972: 8). Muller, (1973) looked at trade union sponsored MPs. Taylor (1976) looked at the internal democracy of the trade unions, and concluded that more democracy in the unions was not desirable, as trade union leaders were a valuable buffer against militancy (Taylor, 1976: 36). Heffer (1975) concluded that the trade unions are the "…cement which holds the Labour Party together" (Heffer, 1975: 390). Hain (1986) explored the trade unions, and in particular the label "political strike". He contested the use of the term, arguing that the extent to which unions have themselves chosen to act in a militant or overtly political way has been vastly exaggerated (Hain, 1986: 9). Generally researchers continued to ignore or pay only a cursory reference to the regions.

2.7 Andrew Taylor

Andrew Taylor's *The Trade Unions and the Labour Party* (1987) is an extremely well researched and written monograph. Taylor looked at the development of the Labour Party-trade union relationship from the mid-1970s to 1987, and examined the debate between those who, at the time, called for a more prominent role in the Party and those who argued against it. The book concentrated, however, on the policy relationship between the Party and the unions and the wider role of the unions in the political economy, rather than the internal life of the Labour Party and the trade unions role within it. The work focused on what Taylor claimed were the two key aspects of the Labour Party – trade union relationship: firstly, the policy relationship between the trade unions and the Labour Party and the trade unions; and secondly, the role of the trade unions as actors in the political economy. (pp. 1-5)

Taylor's examination of the policy relationship between the unions and the Party runs until the time of the book's publication in 1987. He argued that in this period, theirs was an unstable relationship because the Labour Party's concept of socialism transcended the sectional interests of the trade unions. Taylor observed that although historically the unions have usually been willing to sublimate their sectional interests to the electoral goals of the Party, in order to strengthen their influence, this has rarely happened in practice. This is because Labour saw its self as being responsible to the electorate as a whole, and likewise the union leaderships to their membership. (pp. 6-46)

On the role of the unions as actors in the political economy, Taylor claimed that the basic premise of all governments since 1945 is that the unions cause inflation. This, Taylor said, led to the resort to incomes policies and wage restraint. Labour's answer to this was the Social Contract, the aim of which was to involve the unions in an exchange: legislative concessions for wage moderation. Taylor argued that this resort to bargaining was a permanent feature of Labour politics, which unfortunately suffered with recurrent problems. These problems were: the weakness of union support for collectivism; a Labour government's tendency to be "blown off course"; and the absence of any conviction in the union grass roots that wage moderation would deliver any benefits. The truth, according to Taylor, was that the unions had very little power over the economic policies of the government. (pp. 6-46)

Taylor argued that the failure of the Social Contract can be attributed to "Labour's national-interest conception of socialism [which] clashed with the unions ideology and practice of voluntarism, [moreover] the Winter of Discontent was the logical and foreseen consequence of this clash". The reasons why it wasn't avoided, Taylor said, was a result of two things, ideology and organisation. On ideology, Taylor claimed that there were few ideological bonds between Labour and the unions strong enough to overcome sectionalism. Another point made by Taylor was that "the TUC's political theory is broadly Schumpeterian:

the electorate's job is to choose a government which is then influenced by pressure groups". (Taylor, 1987: 389) On organisation, Taylor claimed that there was no labour *movement* just a coalition that came together for limited electoral reasons. He added, "the problem is compounded by the structure of the TUC, which contains Party and non-Party unions. A decentralised Party and decentralised unions render the type of exchange politics favoured by Labour and the TUC massively unstable". Also on organisation Taylor pointed out that the notable feature of the unions' role in internal Labour politics is their hesitancy to impose solutions, and that only after 1983, with the realignment of the left, did the unions take an open stance in favour of unity. (pp. 84-114)

On the future of the alliance, Taylor claimed that the restructuring of the economy was likely to mean a continuing shift from blue-collar manual to white-collar non-manual unions, and the political implication of this was that the latter were less likely to support Labour. Moreover, although all the unions voted in favour of the retention of political funds after the 1984 Trade Union Act, the central appeal of the union leaders to their membership was for the retention of the trade union political role, rather than a party political one. This, Taylor argued, was a reflection of the growing awareness of political pluralism in the unions. Taylor surmised that should Labour lose the 1987 election, then union support for it was likely to lessen even further. He concluded that "it seems only a massive organisational restructuring of the Party and the unions offers the prospect of majority government for Labour, and there is little sign of such changes in their relationship". (pp. 199-241)

2.8   Eric Shaw

The central question of Shaw's *Discipline and Discord in the Labour Party* (1988), concerns the prominence of discipline in the internal life of the Labour Party. In his attempt to address this question Shaw said that up until the late 1960s, the Labour Party was managed by tough-minded "social democratic

centralists", who were quite prepared to discipline dissidents to maintain their authority and the unity of the Party. The book contains a systematic empirical examination of this regime. Following this Shaw describes how this regime was dismantled though the 1970s as a result of an increasingly influential left, before being partially rebuilt after 1983. Shaw ultimately concludes, however, that as by this time the Labour Party had a more radical and assertive membership, the strict discipline of the past was unlikely to be fully restored. (pp. vii-xi) *Discipline and Discord in the Labour Party* is an excellent monograph, well researched and well written. Shaw is highly accurate in his analysis of developments in the Labour Party up to the time of publication, but he clearly illustrates the dangers of prediction. Shaw's ultimate conclusion, that the strict managerial control of the past was unlikely to be fully restored, was wrong. Since this prediction was based on an understanding that the main obstacle to such a development was an assertive membership, his analysis on historical developments may also have been incorrect, especially as they were based on the same factor – an unassertive membership.

Shaw began his examination of what he described as the "evolution of managerial control" in the Labour Party by stating that a prerequisite for any party is the ability to sustain itself organisationally. This, he said, requires both a framework of rules that apportions rights and duties amongst the various tiers of the organisation, and a minimum level of internal cohesion. These two requirements constitute the field of party management and are a vital segment of party life. Shaw said, "a party's ability to achieve its goals depends on its capacity to harness the commitment and loyalty of its members and to regulate conflict in such a way as to prevent energy consumption and electorally damaging disputes". (p.1) Managerial control, Shaw argued, varies along two dimensions: centralisation, the distribution of rights and duties between higher and lower units; and discipline, the use of threat of sanctions (p. 2).

Shaw's main empirical analysis took 1951 as its point of departure, and Shaw cited two key reasons for this: firstly, there was an outburst of fierce intra-party decent in 1951 after a period of harmony, which raised acute problems of party management; and secondly, an analysis of the leadership's response to the Bevanite challenge from 1951 affords both illuminating insights into the character of social democratic centrism, and provides a benchmark from which to compare the development of Labour's regime in later years. (p. 31) Shaw's main empirical analysis focuses on several key themes in Labour's internal life, including the balance between central control and local autonomy from 1951 to the mid-1960s (pp. 51-66); the role of the national party in adjudicating local disputes from 1951 to the late 1960s (pp. 89-114); the role of the centre in overseeing the selection process at the local level between 1951 and 1970 (pp. 115-140); the response of the centre to the threat of Trotskyism from 1951 to the late 1960s (pp. 141-153); and an analysis of the conditions that sustained the social democratic regime (pp. 154-184). Shaw also considers the period of liberalisation in managerial control from 1966 to 1974, the left NEC's managerial regime from the mid-70s to the turn of the decade, and the renewed battle against Militant in the context of a shift back toward a firmer managerial regime in the early 1980s (pp. 201-290). Shaw said that the recurring theme in Labour's managerial problem was the endeavour to reconcile cohesion and organisational effectiveness with diversity and dissent.

Shaw argued that "the fundamental managerial dilemma that Labour has had to deal with is how to encourage freedom without which political parties will become moribund, whilst not destroying their cohesion without which they will cease to be effective instruments of government and opposition". To demonstrate the social democratic response to this dilemma Shaw quoted Attlee, who said "in politics as in other forms of warfare the leader must be able to rely on his troops when he is fighting his opponents. The more that discipline is self imposed the better, but discipline there must be unless one is prepared to lose the battle". The problem with this response, Shaw claimed, was that discipline may as easily be used to suppress dissent as to promote effective management. (p. 291) The origin

of the social democratic regime, Shaw said, lies in the inter-war period, as Labour's managerial regime stiffened in response to systematic Communist attempts at penetration and the problems of dealing with a confederal and highly factionalised party. The power holding the social democratic regime in place was not the power of the Party machine, but normative control, which was rooted, Shaw said, in two prominent characteristics of Labour's political culture in the late 1960's. These two characteristics were solidarism, the sense amongst many working class members that Labour was their party and that their solidarity was essential if it was to prevail in a struggle against its opponents, and loyalism, which was wide spread deference toward autonomy. (p. 292) These two characteristics, Shaw claimed, were fortified by two other features of the Party: firstly, the prestige and influence of the regional staff, who had superior political expertise and experience that fostered their ability to intervene at strategic points, particularly parliamentary selections; and secondly, the highly centralised character of Labour's power structure in this period. (p. 293). Shaw concluded that, though characterised by centralisation, the Party did not suppress all dissent, although the NEC consistently interpreted Labour's constitution in a centralist manner, and discipline was applied to ensure that majority decisions were obeyed by all. He added that although the centre was never omnipotent, there was a deep authoritarianism within the dominant right-wing. (p. 293)

From the mid-1960s, the survival of the social democratic regime was called into question, mainly as a result of its opponents gaining positions of power within the Party. There was, Shaw argued, a steady liberalisation and erosion of central control. This process had two stages. Firstly, there was the rise to positions of influence of former Benvanites like Crossman, who retained their distain of past managerial practices. Crossman himself was appointed as Leader of the House by Wilson, who was himself a former Bevanite, with a mandate to liberalise discipline in the PLP. Secondly, there was the steady expansion of the left on the NEC, which was mainly the result of left-wing trade unionism. As a result, the Parliamentary leadership was deprived of access to a range of procedural

mechanisms available only to the NEC. (p. 296) By the early 1980's the shift of the NEC to the right made possible a partial renewal of the partnership between the parliamentary leadership and the NEC, and therefore a reconstruction of a managerial centre. According to Shaw, however, by 1982, the NEC discovered that the conditions which had sustained the social democratic centrist regime in the past no long existed. Shaw outlined three factors which constrained the reassertion of managerial control. Firstly, there had been a profound alteration in the composition and outlook of the Party's active membership. Secondly, the courts were increasingly intervening in the internal life of the Party, which meant that the NEC could only act in such ways as it was clearly empowered to do so by the Parties' rules. Any disciplinary action had to conform to the precepts of natural justice. Thirdly, the left vigorously and almost unanimously opposed any increase in managerial control. (pp. 298-299)

Shaw concludes with an analysis of the revival of managerial control between 1983 and 1988, when, he argued, there was a significant re-imposition of managerial control, which was exemplified by the second assault on Militant. Shaw claimed there were three factors which made such a re-imposition possible: the impact of the 1983 General Election catastrophe; the creation of the electoral college, which gave Kinnock a stronger democratic mandate; and a steady reorientation of the attitude of the soft-left toward party management in general and the threat posed by Militant in particular. (p. 300) Ultimately Shaw concluded that managerial control would not be as strong as it was under the social democratic regime of the past, primarily because the trade unions were much more evenly balanced politically, and the soft-left was now in a position of influence as a result of the attempt to get a broad political base for the leadership. Even if they wanted to, Shaw argued, the leadership would not be able to re-impose strict managerial control because of a much more assertive membership and fear of intervention by the courts. (pp. 301-302) An assertive membership, however, is only significant if they have power in the organisation, if they do not, and if the Party changed its rules to suit managerial control then it has no need to

fear the courts. Also if the trade unions tipped toward the right and became less important in the Party, and the soft left became less relevant this might also aid the re-imposition of strict managerial control. In addition if the Party were to suffer more election losses, that may also aid such a process. All of which, of course, actually happened in the period after Shaw (1988) was published, when strict managerial control was re-imposed.

Following Shaw, (1988) greater emphasis in the literature was placed on attitudes and latent influences on the internal life of the Labour Party. Taylor (1986) argued that the unparallel support given by the TUC to the Labour government between 1976 and 1979 suggested that the alliance was not merely one of convenience, but was also emotional, and a product of a shared history (Taylor, 1976: 406). Seyd and Whiteley (1992) is an extensive quantitative study of the opinions of the Labour grass-roots. It concludes "the conventional wisdom which suggests that Party activists are `extremists`, whose opinions in general do not reflect those of any other group, whether Party members or voters, is quite wrong" (Seyd and Whiteley, 1992: 216). The most significant text to use latent attitude and sentiment as key aspect of its analysis is Minkin (1991), which we will now consider in detail.

2.9   Lewis Minkin - Two

Minkin`s *The Contentious Alliance: The Trade Unions and the Labour Party* (1991), took previous empirical research and scholarship to an even higher level, though its level of detail, size and structure does make this book very difficult to read. In justifying his work Minkin stated that nobody before had attempted a comprehensive update of Harrison's *Trade Unions and the Labour Party Since 1945* (1960). Though this is a wide-ranging and highly detailed examination of what he describes as the most important relationship on the left of British politics, by own admission, constraints of time and space led to the exclusion of certain areas, one of which was the regional dimension. As Minkin pointed out, he

hardly touched upon the regional or grass-roots relationship, nor individual trade union policy-making machinery. Much of his study is preoccupied with how and why internal conflicts, divergent aims and potential fragmentation came about - and how "the big split" was avoided. Minkin said that there has always been a fundamental problem within the movement of preserving ideologically based unity, "after various attempts to create one structurally unified movement had failed in the mid-20s, the relationship was managed...by unwritten rules and protocol derived mainly from trade union values and priorities. These "rules" embodied an acceptance of the permanent differentiation of functions and spheres – the political and the industrial" (p. xiii). Minkin uses a historical schema to explore how these rules have operated and concludes that they have vitally affected the distribution of power in the relationship (he defines power simply as "the ability to affect outcomes"). "Fear of the courts and of political division and manipulation...fused into a powerful, if ambiguous, demarcation of spheres which fed into the bloodstream of the movement" (pp. 8-9) The relationship, therefore, became governed by restraint and the playing of different roles in different spheres. The "rules" governing behaviour were derived from trade union values of freedom, democracy, unity, and priority. These "rules" formed powerful traditions that were handed down from one generation of union leader to another, and in general, they were wholeheartedly accepted by those on the left. (p. 26) An MP's freedom from immediate trade union sanctions, Minkin claimed, became part of the "rules", and commitment to Parliamentary democracy was increased at the start of the Cold War (p. 88). As a result trade union leaders always sought to protect sponsored MPs from challenges to their Parliamentary independence (p. 261). What trade union leaders did want from sponsoring MPs was the outward evidence of a successful political project, the maintenance of MPs with a working class background, acknowledgement and an immediate political function and recognition of status for individual unions by levels of sponsorship (pp. 251-252). The rules, he said, acted as boundaries producing "...inhibitions and constraints which prevented the absolute supremacy of

leadership groups in either wing of the relationship". (p. xiv) The existence of these "rules" and their character constitute Minkin's central thesis.

Minkin also moves beyond a historically based analysis toward a study of particular processes, institutions and procedures of the Labour Party-trade union relationship. In particular, he looked at trade union sponsorship of MPs, the operation of the block vote in various arenas and also the emergence of relatively new "linking bodies" such as TULV (Trade Unions for a Labour Victory), one of the key features of which, Minkin says, is its territorial transgression, by which he meant that they had a role at the regional level. He also said that these new bodies took "direct trade union involvement in the Labour Party's organisational and administrative affairs" to new levels. (pp. xv-xvi) Minkin also noted that a series of questions arose from these new bodies, including:

- Did TULV act as a neutral trade union assistant to the Party's organisation or as a factionally motivated intervention?
- What objectives did TULV pursue and how successful was it?
- Was the Party given valuable extra financial assistance by TULV or was it "drip-fed" for political reasons and guided by political criteria?

Minkin argued that on many counts, trade union leaders failed to secure their objectives and he found it difficult to square the many defeats and hesitations with crude images of union leaders engaged in *realpolitik*. (p. xvii) Minkin argued that the simple generalisation that has frequently characterised the literature is not appropriate to a discussion of this subject. Minkin's central argument is that the historic character of the Labour Party-trade union relationship has been governed fundamentally by "…role playing in different spheres and by a framework of "rules" and protocol, based on the values of freedom, democracy, unity and solidarity, and the working principal of priority". Minkin claimed that, for the majority of factions within both the industrial and political wing of the movement, these rules appeared to be mature and settled arrangements necessary for a

successful, stable relationship. Only after 1959, Minkin believed, did consensus on the "rules" break down. Minkin observed that there were periodic challenges to these "rules". In particular, between 1979 and 1982 three main factors undermined them. These were:

- The emergence of lay and 2nd rank union leaders who did not share the General Council orthodoxy about the relationship
- The unusually prominent position of three left-wing union leaders prepared to support of accommodate the reformers
- The strategy of the GMWU in seeking to build cross-factional support on a broad range of organisational issues divided the right tactically

This particular impasse was only resolved in January 1982 at a conference at Bishops Stortford. This lack of consensus continued to some extent up to the publication of Minkin's book in 1992. He argued that competing attempts to deal with this predicament characterised the history of the relationship from 1959, but that the strongest defence of the old "rules" came from the trade union left, whereas the strongest challenges came from within the right wing of PLP, and culminated with the split of the SDP in 1982. (pp. 619-620) Minkin argued that, "...whatever the formal features, it is virtually always misleading to say that the unions 'run the Labour Party'". In particular he claims, "union contributions to the Party's finances were heavily insulated from leverage over specific policy outcomes". (p. 329)

Minkin claimed that in unions, decentralisation sometimes allowed regional officers and regional committees a significant degree of autonomy, but that there was central control over the appointment of the regional bureaucracy (pp. 379-321). Though he did not expand significantly on this, he did recognise it as a potential source of challenge to his "rules". In analysing the new policy making arrangements of the Party after 1990, Minkin observed that Party leaders would have preferred the national union leader to stay clear of the National Policy Forum, but that the virtual decline of the Liaison Committee and with TUC

withdrawal, made it difficult to argue that the unions should be excluded from Policy Commissions that were designed to house constructive dialogue with Labour Ministers. The union leaders may have been open to persuasion if not for the plan to have regional representation on the Commissions. Minkin said, "it was one thing to withdraw from direct participation in Labour Party policy formation, it was quite another to withdraw and leave it to regional union officials". (p. 385) In other areas, however, the national union leaders, Minkin observed, made no moves to block decentralisation of powers, adding that though the central body did support devolution for Wales and Scotland, despite a general desire to retain economic power to remain at the UK level, they only did so after being prompted by the Wales and Scottish TUCs. (pp. 420-464)

One of the key debates to emerge from Minkin's *Contentious Alliance: The Trade Unions and the Labour Party* (1991), concerned the future stability of the relationship. It is also the area where most of the academic community appears to be split, though this debate is not new to the current period. There is no shortage of those who write of discontent within the trade union movement and the current Blair Government, who claim that survival in the past is no guarantee of similar success in the future, who write of Party leadership plots against an uninformed trade union leadership, and who foresee divorce as a prelude to a split in the Party itself and financial ruin (Marquand; 1975:395; Heffer; 1975:393; Marqusee; 1997:232-3; Kelly; 1998:4). These academics share a failure to distinguish between political rhetoric and political reality. Much has been made of Tony Blair's pronouncements to the TUC since 1997 (that they should not tell the Labour Party how to do its job, and that he wasn't going to tell them how do theirs), but this was not an attack on the unions; indeed most leading trade unionists were happy rather than offended. These comments simply restated the fundamental trade union value of autonomy for themselves and for the Party. Indeed, Tony Blair's words were almost identical to those used by Frank Cousins in his 1956 address to the Labour conference "I told you last year not to tell the

unions how to do their job, and I am certainly not going to tell the Labour Party how to do its job", quoted by Martin Harrison (1960: 342)

There are, however, very real challenges that face the trade unions and the Labour Party, and these are potentially far more serious. The resulting consequences of two key influences, affluence and occupational change, were incrementally outlined by a series of academic arguments during the 70s and 80s, these arguments remain the most fundamental challenge to the alliance. In the changing labour market most of the potential new recruits to trade unions will come from non-manual workers and non-Labour voters. This in turn will lead to a rise in non-affiliated unions and changes in the political orientation of the major unions. The composition of the TUC will change and the debate on the role of the unions will intensify. At the same time, as changes in the composition of the working class affect trade unions, they will also affect the Labour Party. And as the social, educational and occupational composition of the Labour Party changes, the remaining affiliated unions will become an electoral liability, leading to an increase in tensions (Rawson; 1969; May; 1975; Minkin; 1978; Hague; 1983; Hain; 1984; Taylor; 1987). The unparalleled support given by the TUC to the Labour Government of 1976-9, however, suggests the alliance is not merely one of convenience. The alliance is not only one that is based on mutual advantage, but also on personalities, common experience and loyalties formed during a key period of development, and sentiment and unity against common adversaries that continue to exist. Even though the unions have willingly compromised, they have also gained from the present government. They now have union recognition, rights for membership and protection from victimisation. They have welcomed the European Social Charter and the statutory minimum wage, as well as statutory working hours and parental leave. There is also a new emphasis on health and safety at work. Many of these gains have always been central to the goals of trade unionism.

There are grounds for optimism in the medium-term future of the alliance. Minkin (1991) catalogued a series of factors that demand the necessity of the alliance, including the persistence of a range of obstacles to organised labour within the state. There is a continuing need for union finances; a degree of state funding which would remove the need for some trade union money would not be acceptable to the electorate. The link has and will continue to operate a stabilising role within the Party. The interaction has, as we have seen, pushed the unions into greater receptivity to broader social values and has counteracted narrowly focused producer sectionalism. Without the unions, the Party would lose an element of appeal to its traditional voters, who have enabled it to build up a base of safe seats in Parliament. (Minkin; 1991:646-62) Any divorce, at least according to Minkin, is beyond the foreseeable future.

Minkin's most important critic to date has been Donald Sassoon (1993), who offered a rebuttal of each of Minkin's arguments against a split in the Labour Party-trade union relationship. Sassoon noted the four key benefits of the Labour Party-trade union relationship put forward by Minkin - the original aim of the unions in creating the Party have not been achieved: there is still a widespread belief among the middle classes, the press and other parties that trade unions are an obstacle to economic prosperity; the unions provide the Labour Party with much-needed "stabilising ballast"; cutting the link would accelerate the transformation of Labour into a middle-class party; and without union support, the Labour Party would be financially bankrupt – but criticises each. Sassoon argued that the first three of these are particular weak, "the first can be turned on its head: the union-Party link, after nearly a century has failed to achieve its original purpose", the second is "vague, unconvincing and contradicts the main theme of the book", and the third "cannot be verified" (Sassoon, 1993: 30). Sassoon agreed that the fourth of Minkin's arguments is much stronger, but that state funding, although unpopular, would free the Labour Party to split from the union (Sassoon, 1993: 33).

The debate since the publication of Minkin (1992) has also witnessed an increased emphasis on policy based research. Shaw (1996) examined the evolution of Labour Party policy on key issues such as economic policy, industrial policy, and welfare policy through its history. Since Labour returned to office in 1997 there has been an explosion of interest in policy studies of the Labour Party, though most of these are concerned with the Labour Government, rather than the internal life of the Party and its relationship with the trade unions. Seldon (2001) is perhaps the best example. Apart from debating the likely future stability of the relationship, researchers have tended to shy away from examining the Labour Party-trade union link since Minkin (1992), and those who have confronted the topic have struggled to say anything new, for example, Howell (1999) and Thorpe (1999), who raked over ground which has already well ploughed. Webb (1994) used Minkin's schema to analyse developments since the publication of *Contentious Alliance*. With Labour's centenary year also came a brief revival of historical studies of the Labour Party, such as Brivati (2000) and Layboum (2001), none of which provide any new analysis.

2.10   Conclusions

Two general phases of development can be detected from this review of the literature on the internal life of the Labour Party. Generally, the first phase runs from 1945 to the mid-1970s, and the second phase from the mid-1970s to the present. The first phase was primarily concerned with the role of the Labour Party in government, and in particular, with the Labour Party's acceptance of the state, and of parliamentary procedure and cabinet government. This phase was characterised by the works of McKenzie (1955), Miliband (1961), and Beer (1965). The second phase was characterised by a concern with a return to Labour's roots, or its role as an instrument of the working class. This phase was contained within the works of Harrison (1960), Minkin (1978; 1991) and Shaw (1988). No single one of these phases, however, can adequately analyse, in a single pattern, the internal life of the Labour Party and its relationship with the

trade unions. The full complexity of the Labour Party's internal life can be understood only with reference to its role as a Party of government or as an instrument of the working class, instead a much fuller account can be given by understanding the Labour Party as both of these things and more. The Labour Party also plays an important constitutional role in the make up of the United Kingdom. Therefore an understanding of the Labour Party's internal life can only be achieved by understanding it as a multi-faceted and diverse topic. It is now time for a new phase in the study of the internal life of the Labour Party; one which combines elements of the two previous phases, and which also takes account of the changing nature of the British state and the challenges and opportunities that this presents for the internal life of the Party, and the Labour Party-trade union relationship. The central tenet of this argument is that there is not one, but many different Labour Party-trade union relationships operating in different regions within British politics, and as a result it is not possible to generalise fixed rules about the relationship by a study of the relationship at the UK level based in London.

This literature review has demonstrated that the previous research on the internal life of the Labour Party and its relationship with the trade unions has had an ethnocentric character. No major political science work has explored the nature of the relationship between the trade unions and the Labour Party outside of a centrist concern for the London Party, and only a handful of smaller articles have given consideration to the Labour-union alliance in the regions, for example, McAllister (1982), Jones and Keating (1982a and 1982b). Although occasional limited references are made to the periphery, these have been strictly in the context of how the regional structures have, or have not, affected the national context. No comprehensive attempts have been made to study the regions as entities in themselves. To some extent this is understandable, as the traditional view of British Politics has tended to minimise the importance of the periphery. It is also true that those who have traditionally researched the Labour Party and the trade unions have had a close affinity to the organisations and their political

attitudes; these have tended to be central statist. Political scientists who have examined this topic have tended to generalise fixed rules about the nature of the relationship between the Labour Party and the trade unions, but have done so only by examining the relationship between the Party and the unions in London, and have not considered that there may be not one, but many Labour Party-trade union relationships operating in different regions.

The predominant political science view seems to have been similar to that expressed by Henderson, who saw the regional structure as simply a "cog in the wheel of Labour's nation-wide machine" (Morgan; 1994:109). As shown above, Robert McKenzie claimed that the Party has been careful to ensure that the regions have little authority; that the regional Party staff are responsible to the NEC, that the Party Organisation Department used its control of the regions finances to maintain its dominance, and that regions were forbidden from discussing "high politics" (McKenzie; 1955:532). Five years later, Martin Harrison argued that the regions did not pay their own way, and that outside election years few unions gave money to regional councils (Harrison; 1960:74-6). As a result few political scientists have paid the regions much attention, and studies of the Welsh Labour movement have become largely the preserve of political historians, for example Morgan (1980), Stead (1985), Hopkin (1994), Francis and Smith (1996) and Williams (1998). These studies tended to concentrate on the period until the 1920s and certainly on the pre-war period, and most examine the role of the labour movement within the community. The only text to emerge on the Labour Party in Wales from 1900 to 2000 is Tanner, Williams and Hopkin (2000), which is an edited book with contributions that span Labour's 100 year history. The book is divided into three sections looking at the period from 1980 to 1918, from 1918 to 1951, and from 1951 to 2000, though it is predominantly concerned with the period before 1951. The book is also more concerned with the role of the Party in the community and in the Welsh nation, than as an organisation within a broader "labour movement".

In 1982 two important articles which did consider the internal life of the Labour Party in Wales were published by political scientists. Ian McAllister (1982) explained the organisational weakness of the Welsh Party by the position of dominance it occupies in the polls, a position which has led to a small caucus based Party where all major decisions are taken by small groups of individuals. Although McAllister's paper remains the most significant contribution to the subject, it is not comprehensive. McAllister appears to ignore such factors as the limitations of power by the National Party, the traditional strength of the statist argument within the movement, and the lack of incentive for trade unions to get involved in the regions, at any other level than the directly electoral. Jones and Keating (1982a) suggested that Labour's electoral strength in the regions may be a reason for the National Party limiting the power of the regional organisation; any factors that might lead to devolution and separation were to be resisted, lest the Labour Party lose a large portion of its electoral base for Westminster. Furthermore, the creation of the South Wales Regional Council of Labour in 1937, Jones and Keating argued, should not be seen as an attempt to fulfil some devolutionist role, rather it was intended strictly to confront communist infiltration in the Party in South Wales. Jones and Keating also considered the supporting role of the Wales TUC in the development of a devolution policy for Wales, a support that was so pronounced that at the 1974 Wales Labour Party Conference Party officials had to dissuade the unions from forcing through too strong an endorsement of devolution. (Jones and Keating; 1982a) In a further paper of the same year Jones and Keating considered the divergent views of the trade union leaders. He described two distinct views: firstly the view held mainly by national union leaders that while some political devolution was acceptable, economic devolution was not, and secondly, that held by the regional leaders, who argued that devolution should be used to get economic benefits for the working class in Wales and Scotland. (Jones and Keating; 1982b)

Martin, Sundley and Willis (1996), although not discussing the Labour Party, argued that there should be a move away from analysis of the decline of British

trade unionism nationally, and toward a devolved analysis. They argued that the process of industrial relations is an integral part of uneven regional development, and therefore trade union priorities are likely to vary from place to place. They suggested that the key to the survival of trade unions will depend on forging new geographical structures able to meet the demands of their members. As Minkin's analysis suggests, this view would be contrary to the traditional position of the British unions, which have been dominated from their centres, especially in their relationship with Labour (Minkin; 1992:279-321). Party leaders would have preferred national union leaders to stay clear of the new National Policy Forum, but problems arose with the regional structure. "It was one thing to withdraw from direct participation in Labour Party policy formulation, it was quite another to withdraw and leave it to regional union officials" (Minkin; 1992:385). If true, this would represent a significant challenge to Minkin's thesis, and would call into question his predictions for the future of Labour Party-trade union relations. In addition, the recent transformations in the British state as a result of Welsh and Scottish and English devolution have brought the regional dimension into even greater prominence. It is in this context that an analysis of the regional interaction of the trade unions and the Labour Party is now due.

Although a comprehensive study of all the regional Labour Party-trade union relationships in Wales, Scotland, London, and the English regions is beyond the scope of this thesis, a particular case study, in this case of the situation in Wales, will serve to place sufficient doubt on the understanding of the Labour Party's internal life as a single monolithic entity, and will go some way towards clarifying its multi-dimensional character. Wales is a particularly appropriate choice for a study of this kind owing to the strength of the Welsh Labour movement. The Labour Party has traditionally been a party of the periphery. If it can be shown, therefore, that there are other factors to contend with in the internal life of the Labour Party in Wales, where the Party has traditionally been at its strongest, then one can surmise that such additional complications would exist elsewhere, perhaps to an ever greater degree.

Chapter Three: The Historical Context, 1899-1966

3.1 Introduction

One of the central arguments of this thesis is that the development of Welsh devolution was largely the result of policy formed by the Labour Party in Wales, and that its relationship with the trade union movement in Wales was an important element in this process. The aim of this chapter is to examine the historical context to the more intense and immediate debate that emerged in the Welsh labour movement with the submission of the Labour Party Wales` evidence to the Royal Commission on the Constitution in 1970, which set out the non-negotiable elements of Labour's Welsh devolution policy. The task here is not to present a simple chronology of Welsh labour movement history, though for clarity a chronological approach has been used as the basis for analysis, but rather to consider how the development of the labour movement in Wales has acted as a precursor to the development of its devolution policy, and how it has progressively adapted to the nature of the devolution settlement.

There are five key periods in the history of the Welsh labour movement prior to 1966, and during each, several themes that have acted as prerequisites to the development of Labour's devolution policy can be detected. During the first period, 1899-1937, the basic foundations of the regional labour movement were laid. For most of this time the prerequisite conditions for the future development of the regional movement were met. Toward the end of this period the impetus for further development - the threat of leftwing infiltration - grew to a point where a regionally located strategic body became a necessity. The second period, 1937-1939, witnessed a determined attempt to undermine the threat posed by the communists. During this period the newly created SWRCL also began to show signs of developing its own programme, and it undertook several organisational and policy initiatives beyond its original remit. The third period, 1939-1945, was the first real test for the labour movement in Wales since the establishment of the regional structures. The war made stringent demands on the Party and the unions, meeting these

challenges would help ensure that Labour's organisation and policy, as well as its legitimacy, were significantly strengthened in the post war period. During the fourth period, 1945-1951, the Party and the labour movement in Wales scored significant advances in electoral, organisational and policy terms. During this period four key themes are identifiable: the rationalisation and professionalisation of the movement's organisation; the increasingly formal interaction of Party and unions; incremental developments on policy concerning Welsh devolution; and the apparent reluctance of Welsh Labour MPs to work with, or recognise the authority of, the Regional Council. The final period, from 1951 to 1966, is characterised by an incremental learning experience. The key themes to emerge from this period, most of which Labour spent in opposition, are: the three successive electoral defeats, which provided significant impetus to keep its electoral tactics under review; changes to the Party bureaucracy in Wales; and changes in the Party's attitude to devolution, which later culminated in its evidence to the royal Commission in 1970.

3.2   Prerequisite Conditions, 1899-37

Until the emergence of its 1918 constitution the Labour Party was in essence a coalition of otherwise independent organisations, affiliated at the national level. Until this time no regional structures were in place within the Labour Party organisation, Constituency Labour Parties (CLPs) did not exist, and at the local level the focus for labour movement organisation was mainly centred on the Trades and Labour Councils (TLCs) and the Independent Labour Party (ILP). The development of Labour Party organisation in Wales prior to 1918 therefore, cannot be seen as a monolithic process. Indeed, prior to 1918 a tangible, specifically Welsh organisation was totally absent. It is not possible to identify a structure or bureaucracy that was capable, legitimately or otherwise, of speaking for or on behalf of either part or all of the component parts of the Labour Party or labour movement in Wales. This was a reflection of the weakness of the Party's position at this time; it did not have either the financial or organisational strength to support a regional structure.

However, there were early *calls* for a Welsh structure to Party organisation, or at least a part-Welsh structure, possibly based around subdividing Wales into North and South. One of the earliest such calls came at the 1911 National Eisteddfod, held in Carmarthen, where a meeting arranged by the North Wales trade unionist David Thomas called for the creation of a Welsh structure that would be based around the ILP. Thomas was a keen exponent of devolution, but his proposal was rooted in strategic political awareness. In 1911 Wales was still very much dominated by the Liberal Party, to whom socialists were associated with the kind of "foreign" entity that was anathema to the Welsh. (Jones and Jones, 2000, p.243) Thomas and others recognised that giving a Welsh regional structure to the labour movement, which they associated with the need for devolution, was also necessary for electoral and pragmatic reasons. Therefore, early recognition was given to the need to develop a regional structure of both the labour movement and the Labour Party, in an attempt to improve its organisation, its appeal to the Welsh, and ultimately its electoral strength.

In the years between 1899 and 1918 trade union organisation and internal structures strengthened significantly, and this was accompanied by increased support for the Labour Party. The early affiliation to the Party of key unions such as the Engineers, Railway Servants and Gasworkers and General Labourers was crucial to the Party's development nationally. However, many of the unions affiliated to the Labour Party, like many unions in general during this period, were linked to particular geographical areas of the country. For example, one of the largest unions to ever affiliate to the Labour Representation Committee (LRC) was the Association of Lancashire Textile Workers, which, of course, only existed in Lancashire (Taylor, 2000, p.45). This meant that while the national organisation of the Party benefited from the affiliation fees of these unions, the local labour movement benefited directly only in those parts of the country where they had a presence. Although it did not affiliate until 1908, the South Wales Miners Federation (SWMF), which by this time was a part of the Miners Federation of Great Britain (MFGB), had a significant effect of the organisational and financial strength of labour movement organisation in the South Wales coalfields (May, 2000, p.67),

though its affiliation did not automatically guarantee increased electoral support amongst miners, as much of its mass membership continued to vote for the Liberals (Williams, 2000, p.26). In those parts of Wales that did not have a strong trade union presence, such as Mid and West Wales, the development of the local movement and Party machinery was much slower and more limited, as the resources provided by unions elsewhere were absent.

In those areas of Wales where there was a trade union presence, another key component in the nascent organisation of the labour movement was the Trades and Labour Councils (TLCs). The TLCs were an amalgam of trade unions that met to discuss issues of common interest, mostly focussed on local employment and municipal service provision issues. Their number increased from just six in 1894, to 36 in 1913, and reached 71 in 1920. In this period they were commonly the most party political section of the labour movement, albeit at a local level. (May, 2000, p.68). Where the TLCs were less successful or entirely absent, the ILP was often the only source of activism in the movement. However, despite the efforts of what was often a very small group of diligent activists, many of who were school teachers `...who occupied a socially ambiguous position between the working and middle classes...` (May, 2000, p.63), the ILP was no substitute for the power and resources of the unions, and in these areas of the country, the labour movement was at its weakest, as was the preparedness of the Labour Party for the 1918 constitutional changes.

Wartime collectivism and Labour's participation in the management of the war effort [not least at the local level] did much to raise the Party's profile, as did its role in defending working-class interests. The challenges made to the Party by the war effort resulted in a spate of party-building and reorganisation, during which Henderson's reforms to the national party pushed forward. (May, 2000, p. 81)

The 1918 constitution, brought about by Party Secretary Arthur Henderson. established the CLPs and for the first time allowed for individual membership of the Party, removing the need for those who wanted to be active in the Party to belong to one of the affiliated organisations. However, no count of individual membership was taken until 1928 when it stood at 277,000

(Laybourn, 2000, p.173). Under the new structure, unions and the socialist organisations were still permitted to affiliate at both national and local level, and the structure of Party conference was now amended to allow for the CLPs to be represented alongside the other affiliates according to the size of their affiliation (Minkin, 1978, p.8). In essence, the constitutional reforms were designed to simplify as well as formalise the complexity of Labour Party-trade union relationships (Taylor, 2000, p.37). The formality also added to the continuing programme of engendering more distance in the relationship (Minkin, 1992).

In Wales, as elsewhere, the years immediately after 1918 saw an energetic push to improve those parts of the movement that had been effected by the new constitution. However, the first CLPs received little by way of organisational or financial assistance from the NEC, which simply did not have the resources to provide such assistance. In Wales the need for help led CLPs to form Federations of Labour Parties, one in North Wales and one in South Wales, in a kind of mutual aid exercise. (Tanner, 2000, p.118) To a large extent, the potential strength of these Federations depended upon the power and resources of their constituent CLPs, and as in the pre-1918 period, this depended on their geographical location. The South Wales Federation could count amongst its membership CLPs from both the industrial coast and the South Wales coalfield. In these areas, thanks mainly to the unions, the Party was at its strongest. The North Wales Federation was much weaker and could count just eight CLPs as it membership. Yet both federations suffered from internal weaknesses. Internal wrangling and a reluctance to share resources effectively crippled the South Wales Federation, while the North Wales Federation very quickly became bogged down in particular grievances, such as the need to produce material in Welsh and the establishment of an all Wales advisory council. (Tanner, 2000, p.127) As a result, the effectiveness of the CLPs set up under the 1918 constitution, and their own initiatives to overcome their weaknesses during this period, were limited. Although locally led, these Federations were nevertheless the first attempt by the Party to establish any sort of regional structure within Wales.

There was also some support from the NEC, which had itself undergone a process of reorganisation since 1918, both in terms of its membership and in appointing four standing sub-committees. By 1922 the Party had been divided into nine regions, with organisers appointed in each, and at least three conferences had been held in most of the regions, including Wales. Since the enfranchisement of women in 1918, the Party had also appointed a woman's officer in each of the regions. (Laybourn, 2000, p.38) The South Wales organiser, B. P. Watts, began to develop links with the South Wales Federation. Watts even joined the Secretary of the Federation, William Harris, who was a miners organiser, in calling for the merger of the two federations into "...some sort of national council" arguing that "the national sentiment for such a proposal exists" (Tanner, 2000, pp.118-119). These added to a growing chorus calling for improvements to the Party's all-Wales, or at least part-Wales, organisation. They also provide yet more evidence of the link between arguments for the internal devolution of Party organisation and arguments for devolution in the wider context. By facilitating the evolution of its structures at the regional level, the NEC was strengthening the hand of those in the labour movement who sought to undermine the absolute administrative dominance of its London head quarters. This was particularly true in Wales and Scotland, which had the added dimension of a national identity, where those who also sought some measure of Home Rule often forwarded the arguments for Party devolution.

The debate concerning devolution within the labour movement in Wales intensified during the 1920s, as Labour politicians and others attacked the "madness" of unplanned capitalism. At this time, the devastating impact of depression and mass unemployment on the Welsh economy invested the argument with a measure of legitimacy. By the 1930's this debate had crystallised into policy proposals within the Welsh Labour movement for the planned restructuring of the Welsh economy. (Tanner, 2000, p.114) In other areas too, the Party and the movement in Wales began to develop their own policy ideas. Even though the South Wales Regional Council for Labour had yet to be established, and the two federations of North and South Wales were no substitute for a proper Welsh policy making forum, on issues like the

means test and views on events in Spain the Welsh movement was beginning to develop its own initiatives. The NEC began to fear that these initiatives would, if unchecked, prove to be a focal point for the Communists who were a powerful force in Wales, particularly in the South Wales coalfield. (Tanner, 2000, p.129) The increasing independence, though as yet uncoordinated, of the Labour movement in Wales and the growing threat of communist infiltration, provided a context within which the national Party began to see the advantages of setting up a formal regional council.

3.3   Starting the Machine, 1937-1939

On 10th February 1937 a meeting of trade union district officers and Party officers took place at Transport House in Cardiff. The meeting agreed to draft a constitution for the nascent South Wales Regional Council for Labour (SWRCL). A constitution was published in April, and the inaugural conference of the new body took place in August. The decision to form the SWRCL not had been taken to fulfil nationalist sentiment within or out outside the Party or movement. Indeed if this had been the case then it would have been far more likely that an all-Wales Regional Council of Labour would have been formed, in spite of the logistical difficulties and the weaknesses of the North Wales movement. Instead, the decision to set up the new body was taken for pragmatic reasons. In the years leading up to the decision to establish the new body there was a rise in individual Party membership from 20,427 in 1933 to 36,067 in 1936 (Labour Party Report, October 1936) and a strengthened trade union movement. This strength posed a potential threat to Party stability, as it provided a possible power base that could be exploited by the Communists who had already begun to infiltrate it.

During the 1930's the Communist Party had made significant inroads into the South Wales labour movement, and its appeal had grown as it capitalised on radical sentiment generated by unemployment and by the introduction of the means test. In 1936 a "Council of Action" had been formed to organise a campaign against the means test. Later, in 1958, a report prepared for the Executive Committee of the by then Welsh Regional Council of Labour

claimed that the SWRCL "sprang" from the Council of Action, which represented all wings of the labour movement in Wales, and that provided its blueprint for uniting the industrial and political wings in a common organisation. Although the Council of Action was certainly a factor in the formation of the SWRCL, however, it was not in the way presented in the 1958 report. Indeed the Council of Action was the manifestation of what both the Party and the TUC feared, as it was heavily infiltrated and controlled by the Communists, in part facilitated by the Communist dominated Miners Federation in South Wales.(Jones, Unpublished Notes on Formation of the SWRCL). With this in mind, a submission from the South Wales Regional Organiser, George Morris, to the Organisation Sub-Committee of the NEC moved them to resolve:

To recommend the National Executive Committee to agree that urgent steps be taken to establish an organisation appropriate to the needs of the situation, and that the Chairman, Secretary and National Agent be authorised to discuss the matter with the Chairman and Secretary of the TUC with a view to guidance being given in the locality. (Minutes of the Organisation Sub-Committee of the NEC, 17 February 1937)

The 1937 Inaugural Conference was "...characterised by acrimony and recrimination" (Jones, Unpublished Notes on the Formation of the SWRCL) and to some extent an element of farce, partly as a result of the presence of Communists or Communist sympathisers who had obtained their delegate position indirectly though their membership of affiliated bodies. Before the Conference could agree or move amendments to the draft constitution on a clause by clause basis it first had to agree whether its votes would be taken on a show of hands or by card vote, which would be weighted to correspond with the number of members affiliated. The Chair of the Conference, Cllr D. T. Jones from Pontypridd, took this preliminary decision on a show of hands. It was overwhelmingly agreed that decisions relating to the draft constitution should be taken by a show of hands. The Miners Federation delegates immediately moved an amendment to this preliminary decision and argued it should have been taken on a card vote. When the Chair ruled this amendment out of order the Miners delegates withdrew from the Conference, though not

from their affiliation to the new body (Report of the Inaugural Conference, 28 August 1937). It is important to highlight this series of events because they demonstrate some key features of the Welsh Labour movement, which are similar to those identified by Minkin at the national level (Minkin, 1978), namely that the precise mechanisms used for reaching decisions have a crucial effect on the actual decisions reached. The Chair of the Inaugural Conference and the Provisional Committee were aware in advance of the Conference that not only was the Miners Federation heavily under the influence of the Communists, but also that they would carry the largest card vote due to the size of its affiliated membership. They were also aware that the actual numerical presence of delegates from smaller affiliates and unions who were less sympathetic to the Communists would be far higher. Therefore decisions at the inaugural conference of a body designed to combat communist infiltration, initially at least, would themselves would be taken in a way that would most disadvantage the Communists.

The 1937 Conference was dominated by organisational and mechanistic concerns. In his address on behalf of the Labour Party, George Ridley MP argued that "the Party prepares first of all its programme, then the machine necessary to secure representatives. This morning we are concerned about machinery; about how power can be secured", he added "dialectical discussions and ideological arguments are not helpful" (Report of the Inaugural Conference, 28 August 1937, p.2). As soon as the decision-making problems had been resolved, the conference agreed the draft constitution with just three amendments that had been submitted in advance. Two amendments from CLPs were withdrawn, with just one from the Miners Federation that concerned the eligibility and qualifications of delegates. This amendment was ruled out of order as such decisions were a matter for the TUC and the Annual Conference of the Labour Party.

Other concerns were raised at the conference. Two key points of contention were raised by a Councillor Robson from Cardiff, who criticised the fact that the Regional Council's permanent secretary would be the Regional Organiser who was at this time George Morris, and would therefore be appointed by the

National Agent and the NEC. He also criticised the powers given to the new Council that instilled its right to veto Parliamentary candidates. (Jones, Unpublished Notes on Formation of the SWRCL) These were clauses in the new constitution, of course, that were further designed to prevent communist infiltration, and Cllr Robson was not surprisingly unsuccessful in getting them overturned. The only amendment that was agreed concerned trade union representation on the new Executive Committee, which was raised from the proposed nine to eleven. (Report of the Inaugural Conference, 28 August 1937) Therefore the new Executive Committee would comprise three seats for Federations of Trades Councils and Labour Parties, three for Women's Federations, Central Committees and Advisory Councils, eleven for the Trade Unions and five for the Constituency and Central Labour Parties. At the end of the Conference the foundations for the SWRCL - which would be funded by affiliation from local bodies, supplemented by ongoing grants from the NEC and a one off commencing grant from the TUC - had been laid, two years in advance of the NEC agreeing that such Councils could be formed elsewhere.

At its very first meeting members of the new EC (Executive Committee), realising its deficiencies immediately began to modify the organisation they had helped to create. In particular the EC requested that the Welsh group of Labour MPs appoint two of their number to attend meetings of the EC in an Ex Officio capacity (EC Minutes, 28.8.37). Less than four months later, the EC discussed relations with the North Wales movement, which was in a far weaker position without either a full time organiser of its own or its own regional council. Although members of the EC were clearly anxious to have contact with the North Wales movement, they were also aware of the difficulties involved. It was felt that the cost of travel between North and South Wales, especially when combined with the poor communication links, was too great for the movement to afford any significant contact. However, it was agreed to send minutes of the EC to the North Wales Federation of Labour Parties and that in principle there should be joint meetings when circumstances permitted. (Minutes of the EC, 14.12.37) Another key development during 1938 was the meetings of the Industrial Section of the

EC, essentially a sub-committee consisting of the members who were elected under the trade union section. This committee soon became very powerful and developed a significant degree of autonomy from the EC as a whole. At its very first meeting in June 1938, the committee held a joint meeting with representatives of the trade union district committees (Minutes of the Industrial Sub-Committee, 20.6.38), seeking to place itself at the epicentre of industrial politics in South Wales. In the space of its first year the SWRCL, and in particular its management and bureaucratic structures, had began to evolve beyond the original conception of the draft constitution, which had been prepared under the "advice and guidance" of the NEC.

The work of the EC during its first year was dominated by the two issues that had such an effect on setting it up in the first place, the "means test" and the combating of communist infiltration. It soon set about developing its own policy responses and campaigns. At its first meeting in August 1937 a task and finish sub-committee was set up to spearhead the campaign against the "means test" (Minutes of the EC, 28.8.37), with the emphasis on developing the Party's own "official" campaign in South Wales, and thereby undermining the more militant one that had been operating in large part under the control of the local arm of the Communist Party. By October 1937 the Regional Council had organised 40 "means test" demonstrations throughout South Wales and had sent a deputation to the district office of the Unemployment Assistance Board in protest (Jones, Unpublished Notes on Formation of the SWRCL).

The EC and the SWRCL also began to take on a life of their own in other areas, and quickly developed policy positions that were not part of their original remit. On international affairs the Council condemned the Japanese invasion of China, and organised "Welsh/Spain Week" in December 1938, which raised £1,600 worth of aid for Basque refugees (Viner, 1958, p.8-9). On matters that were more locally orientated, the SWRCL also started to develop its own autonomous policy proposals, particularly in economic planning. In September 1937 the EC took evidence from Professor H. A. Marquand, who had been responsible for an industrial survey of South Wales. In his evidence to the committee Professor Marquand asked the members to do

three things: apply for representation on the Industrial Development Council of South Wales; support calls for any further industrial development in London to be banned without a licence; and argue for the re-absorption of older men into industry (Minutes of the EC, 21.937). Although the committee took no immediate action, in its first report to conference it called for an industrial rehabilitation policy for South Wales that should be put under the control of a minister of cabinet rank (Report of the Executive Committee to Conference, 1938). Within its very first year therefore, in several key policy issues that were strictly beyond its original aims, the SWRCL EC started to take and develop positions that were autonomous from their parent bodies in London.

During 1938 and 1939 the Regional Council began to operate as an election co-ordinator. This role from the start involved both policy and organisational functions. In 1938 the Council organised a policy conference that formulated proposals that would be the basis of its attempts to influence the Party's election manifesto (Minutes of the EC, 13.12.38). It also supervised and agreed the selections of its prospective Parliamentary candidates by each of the CLPs, reporting that all its candidates were in place by January 1939 (Minutes of the EC, 24.1.37). More crucially, the council attempted for the first time to create a central fund at a South Wales level that would be held by the Council to distribute to the CLPs on a basis of need. In June 1939 the SWMF asked for a meeting to discuss its contributions to this fund (Minutes of the EC, 30.6.39). By the summer of 1939, less than two years after it had been conceived, the SWRCL had in place (albeit a weak one) the makings of its election campaign machinery at a regionally co-ordinated level for the first time. Before it could be tested, however, wider events overtook.

3.4   Welsh Labour's War, 1939-1945

By the time Britain declared war on Germany in September 1939, the Labour Party had to a significant extent recovered from the devastating effect of Ramsey MacDonald's defection. Labour's organisation was still weak, especially at the regional level, but the previous decade had seen significant

developments in the machine. The formation of the SWRCL in 1937 had provided a focus for strategic Party management within the region, and it had quickly established the makings of a distinct role for itself in policy, organisational and electoral terms. It had achieved some success. Electorally the Party nationally had seen its number of seats rise from just 52 at the 1931 election to 154 in 1935 (Laybourn, 2000, p.174). In Wales the increase over the same period was less dramatic, rising from 16 to 18 (Tanner et. al., 2000, p.294), but the so had its decline in 1931. Perhaps of more immediate significance was the accomplishment of one of its immediate tests; by 1939 the SWRCL had successfully dissipated the communist threat to the regional labour movement (Jones, Unpublished Notes on the Formation of the SWRCL). Yet in the five years leading up to the 1945 election, Labour would face some of its biggest challenges thus far, as a result of the demands placed on its by the war. These demands were not restricted to the national level where the Party joined Churchill's coalition government in May 1940. At the regional level too Labour would come under pressure to respond to the questions placed on its organisation and its unity. The successful negotiation of these tests would reap rewards that were at this stage only dreamt of by those in the movement.

From the very outset the scope of the SWRCL's actions widened considerably, and to varying degrees it was drawn into active management of the war effort. At its first meeting after the outbreak of war, the EC discussed air raid precautions throughout South Wales, and set up a special sub-committee to consult with local authorities to ensure adequate provision (Minutes of the EC of the SWRCL, 3.10.39). At the next meeting, already realising the need for a rapid response to events, it set up an Emergencies Committee that consisted of EC members who lived in the immediate proximity of Cardiff and who would be able to meet at short notice (Minutes of the EC of the SWRCL, 3.11.39). During the first year of the war, the Council was consulted by or co-opted onto various governmental bodies, including the Divisional Food Council and the Area Price Regulations Committee, and this trend continued for the duration of the war. Labour was also the controlling group on many local authorities in South Wales, and its local representatives would be responsible for delivering

municipal services during the war, including the heavily bombed Cardiff, Swansea and Barry. The legitimising effects of Labour's involvement in the war effort have been widely discussed both at national and local level. What is also important is the developmental effects of the demands placed on the organisation of the Party, and more generally on the labour movements. The war effort therefore had the effect of stimulating the growth of the movement's machinery. Those parts that were not drawn in to the war effort, such as the CLPs, were neglected, as were those functions that became temporarily unnecessary. Electioneering, for example, was given little attention after the electoral truce agreement whereby the major parties agreed not to contest by-elections in early 1940.

The trade unions too experienced similar developmental and legitimating effects as a result of the war. The return of full employment to South Wales, as elsewhere, gave the unions enormous power at a time when the country needed labour to be highly productive. As a result the unions were fully involved in the corporatist industrial policy as a laid down by Bevin as Minister of Labour. Unions in South Wales held a conference in February 1940 specifically to discuss their role during the war (Minutes of the EC of the SWRCL 4.12.39), and similar discussions were held during the next few years at meetings of the EC. There were disruptions during 1943-44 when miners in South Wales engaged in a variety of strike or "go-slow" activities, but these were limited and were nothing like the kind of revolts seen during the 1914-18 period (Morgan, 2000, p.167). Moreover, disputes were mainly concerned with local pay and conditions issues, as the leaders of all the major unions were strongly united in support of the war effort. The loyalist tendencies of the unions, like that of the Party, would do much to obtain for them a level of legitimacy and support they had never before enjoyed in the country at large, and this would do much to facilitate Labour's victory in 1945.

Yet the SWRCL, nor the movement more generally, was not entirely subsumed into the war effort and it continued to develop both its policies and its organisation. As early as January 1940 the Council organised a conference in South Wales to discuss Labour's "piece aims", and in 1941 it undertook a

major review of its sub-committees in order to reflect its policy priorities. These committees, which consisted of Machinery of Government for Wales, Agriculture and Rural Economy, Post-War Industrial Development, and Public and Social Services, would do much to formulate the Council's post-war programme (Minutes of the EC of the SWRCL, 11.11.41). The Council also discussed the policy proposals of the national Party, including the Beveridge Report in 1943. As well as policy development, the EC also continued to oversee more basic housekeeping functions such as the collection of affiliation fees. More significantly it also undertook a reorganisation of some CLPs, including Cardiff, as well as setting up a sub-committee to undertake an individual membership campaign (Minutes of the EC of the SWRCL, 1940-1). Therefore the ongoing work of the SWRCL continued in tandem with its involvement with the delivery of the war effort.

The most significant Party organisational development arose from three recorded discussions held within the movement concerning the creation of a Wales Council for Labour. The Organisation Sub-Committee of SWRCL held the first of these discussions in 1943. This first discussion concerned the proposal to include the North Wales CLPs within the SWRCL, implying that the North would inevitably be subsumed into the South. This, of course, reflected the relative strength and importance of the movement in the South, which would be in control of any merger. However, the Committee resolved that although it agreed in principle that there should be an all-Wales Council for Labour, there were financial and logistical problems that could not yet be overcome. It did agree that there should be an exchange of delegates between the SWRCL and the North Wales Federation of Labour Parties at their annual conferences; remarkably, this had not previously been done. (Minutes of the Organisation Sub-Committee of the SWRCL, 17.3.43) The second and third discussions were held in two special meetings of trade union officers held in 1944 and 1945. At the first of these meetings in November 1944, the trade union officers held a comprehensive discussion concerning the formation of Regional Council for Labour for the whole of Wales, and it decided to undertake a consultation of affiliated trade unions to seek their decision on whether or not to proceed. By their second meeting in April 1945, most union

officers had replied, and the SWRCL Secretary Cliff Prothero, who had replaced George Morris as secretary following his death in an air raid in 1943, reported that only two unions were against the proposals. The National Union of Railwaymen and British Iron and Steal Confederation dissented on the grounds that the time and cost of delegates from North Wales attending meetings in Cardiff would be prohibitive. Despite outstanding concerns, the meeting resolved that trade unions as a whole would agree to the formation of a council of Labour for the whole of Wales and that they would affiliate to it. They further agreed to ask that the SWRCL amend its rules to permit the development of such a body and to allow for the representation of the North Wales CLPs directly on its Executive Committee. (Minutes of the Meeting of Trade Union Officers, 27.6.45) Therefore before the War had ended, much of the detail of the proposals concerning the formation of a Welsh Regional Council for Labour, as well as the support of the trade unions, had been established, with just a few outstanding concerns relating to costs to be resolved.

There were also developments during the war in strategic trade union organisation in Wales. On 19 July 1941, a meeting of trade union officials took place to discuss the establishment of emergency trade union machinery for the region, which it was hoped would help to facilitate the increased demands placed on unions during the war. The TUC appointed a chair, deputy chair and a 12-member committee. The Secretary of the SWRCL, George Morris, would act as the body's secretary. (Minutes of the Emergency Sub-Committee of the SWRCL, 8.7.41 and 12.8.41) On an individual union basis there were also integrating developments, the most notable of which concerned the miners. Early in 1945 the SWMF voted to become one region within the nation-wide NUM (National Union of Mineworkers). This in part reflected the trend toward moving from district to nation-wide wage agreements, and was also further evidence of the integration of unions in Britain at an organisational level (Morgan, 2000, p.172). However, this trend was still patchy and some unions continued to be poorly integrated, which caused problems for the development of the SWRCL. A key example of these unions was the AEU, which had still not affiliated to the Council by 1944.

The problem arose from the fact that there were 12 different AEU district committees in South Wales, all of which had autonomy in this decision, and so it was not possible for the decision to affiliate to be taken for the whole of the area. (Minutes of the EC of the SWRCL, 13.11.44) It should be noted, however, that the individual district committees did gradually begin to affiliate hereafter. The case of the AEU was the exception; for the most part unions began to integrate as a result of the war pressures.

3.5   Advance; 1945-1951

Even whilst the war was still being waged the role of the SWRCL as a regional election co-ordinator continued to grow. The Organisation Sub-Committee of the SWRCL began its pre-election campaign planning at its June 1944 meeting. Over the coming months the Council would attempt to integrate all sections of the movement in Wales, and to this end the EC would hold joint meetings with the Welsh Group of the PLP (24.7.44) [though in general, interaction with the Welsh PLP Group proved to be difficult as they had no fixed meetings and only met when there was business to discuss (Minutes of the EC of the SWRCL, 15.10.45)] trade unions (5.9.44), and CLPs (21.10.44).   By the end of October 1944 the Party's programme of selecting possible Parliamentary candidates, appointing election agents, and training "key workers" was already well under way. The Party had also begun to think strategically about those constituencies most in need of special support, and the Organisation Sub-Committee suggested that a central fund be set up to help rural constituencies in particular. (Minutes of the EC of the SWRCL, 21.10.44) By February 1945 the Party had even begun to issue membership application forms to members of HM Forces (Joint Meeting of the EC of the SWRCL and Election Agents and CLP Secretaries, 3.2.45). However, the strength of the Party's position should not be exaggerated. For example, although the Secretary of the Council reported to the EC in January 1945 that he intended to compile a directory of local labour parties, ward parties etc., the fact that this had not been done already is an indication of poor organisational integration (Minutes of the EC of the SWRCL, 15.1.45). Furthermore, the financial and organisational strength of the CLPs was very poor, and they had

seen little action for the past five years (Joint Meeting of the EC of the SWRCL and Election Agents and CLP Secretaries, 3.2.45). The Council itself was chronically understaffed, and when extra staff was employed for the election, it was on a very temporary basis, one for four weeks and one for two weeks (Minutes of the EC of the SWRCL, 28.5.45). In the year or so preceding the 1945 General Election the SWRCL had achieved substantial advances in its organisational preparations for the campaign, although there were still glaring weaknesses and it was on a steep learning curve during its first significant campaign.

The role of the trade unions during the election camping was also in flux, as they too attempted to define their function. The key co-ordinating body of trade unions in Wales at this time was the Industrial Sub-Committee of the SWRCL, which had increasingly become semi-autonomous from the main EC. The only TUC machinery active within the region was the Emergency Committee, but this was far too new yet to have an overall strategic role beyond its purpose of providing for the TUC`s responsibilities at the sub national level in the management of the war effort. In September 1944 the Industrial Committee held a joint meeting with the district secretaries of the trade unions affiliated to the Party to discuss their role in the election campaign. What emerged was fairly unimaginative; the only real aid the unions offered to the Council was financial, and even here very few unions were able to provide monies over and above what they were already committed to giving to the Party nationally, paying in affiliation fees to the Council, or providing through their sponsorship of particular MPs. Although some unions did provide some extra funding, only the SWMF was in a strong enough position to provide extra funds of any major significance, and moreover, in Wales at least, for the first time it was prepared to financially assist seats in non-mining areas (Minutes of the Organisation Sub-Committee of the SWRCL, 1.5.45). In fact, the SWMF gave non-coalmining seats £1000 in addition to what it had already agreed to give seats that were in coal-mining areas. However, there was some disagreement about how the additional money should be distributed. The Regional Council proposed that the money should be handed over to a Regional Council Central Fund from where it

could be allocated to CLPs on a basis of need, but the Executive Committee of the SWMF refused and offered only to consult the Secretary of the Council. In the event the money was allocated only between CLPs in South Wales that were not in receipt of any other trade union assistance. These included Brecon and Radnor, Cardiff East, Monmouth, Pembroke, Cardigan, West Carmarthen, Llandaff and Barry. In addition, the SWRCL itself received £100. (Report of the Secretary to the EC of the SWRCL, 16.7.45) Although in the approach to the 1945 election there were initial signs the unions were beginning to recognise the role played by the SWRCL, partly as a result of the efforts of influential Industrial Sub-Committee, unions were still either unable or unwilling to hand over control of distributing their donations, which were entirely financial, to the Council.

As the War came to a close the organisational developments in the Welsh Labour movement continued a pace. With peace, the remit of the TUC Emergencies Committee, which had provided a valuable service during the War, came to an end. Having experienced the benefits of regional organisation, the TUC soon began to see the merits of having such a resource on a more permanent basis, albeit one that is controlled from Congress House in London. With this in mind the TUC convened a conference of full time trade union officers in each of its regions, including Wales. The purpose of these conferences was to ask regional trade unionists to set up a regional advisory committee, which would `...act as the agent of the TUC and undertake such industrial duties and investigations as may be required by the TUC General Council from time to time` (Minutes of the Industrial Sub-Committee of the SWRCL, 17.9.45). On the 29 September 1945 a conference was held in Cardiff to establish a TUC Regional Advisory Committee for Wales. However, controversy arose when it emerged that members of the SWRCL Industrial Sub-Committee, who were not otherwise full time trade union officers, were not invited to the conference (Minutes of the Industrial Sub-Committee of the SWRCL, 17.9.45). What this appeared to suggest was that the TUC sought a regional structure that was not dependent on some of its members links with the Labour Party. This was something the Industrial Sub-Committee identified and unsuccessfully attempted to thwart by proposing

that the Secretary of the SWRCL, Cliff Protheroe, be appointed as the secretary of the new Advisory Council, in the same way that his predecessor had been secretary of the Emergencies Committee until his death during the War. Within less than a year of the end of the War, the TUC appointed a permanent regional body, albeit one without a secretariat of its own, that was in theory at least not dependent upon the regional Labour movement organisation, though interaction between the two continued.

If anything, during this period interaction increased as industrial relations issues and correspondence from the unions increasingly dominated the agendas of the EC. So too did the number of joint meetings. Within a month of the TUC Regional Advisory Committee being formed, it held a joint meeting with the SWRCL, which was addressed by Stafford Cripps who was then President of the Board of Trade (Minutes of the Joint TUC Regional Advisory Committee and EC of the SWRCL Meeting, 24.11.45). The EC held a further joint meeting with the Regional Advisory Committee, and Welsh Members of Parliament in 1946 (Minutes of the Joint TUC Regional Advisory Committee, EC of the SWRCL, and Welsh Group of PLP Meeting, 1.10.46). In addition, regular contact was maintained between the Regional Advisory Committee and the Industrial Sub-Committee of the SWRCL. In 1949, in the space of just one year, three new unions affiliated to the WRCL, including Association of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen, the Association of Supervisory Staffs, Executives and Technicians, and the National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers (Minutes of the EC of the WRCL, 20.12.49). As one of the first actions of the 1945 Attlee Government, the repeal of the 1927 Trades Disputes and Trade Union Act had a significant effect on the Labour movement in Wales as elsewhere. In effect the repeal of the Act give unions far more scope for political action than they had had since the General Strike. The money that would become available by replacing contracting-in with contracting-out would allow the unions to assume greater freedom in promoting Parliamentary candidates, and the National Agent of the Party, G. R. Shepard, made it clear that the NEC expected that the Party would receive more financial aid from the unions for organisational and propaganda purposes. One of the most interesting questions to emerge in this period,

perhaps as a result of the Repealing of the 1927 Act, was that of trade union affiliation fees. In 1947 a major disagreement emerged over the level of affiliation fees paid to the SWRCL by unions. The Secretary had accused the unions of not increasing the size of its affiliation as the size of their membership had increased. He even asked the unions to provide details of their membership levels so that this could be compared to their affiliation (Minutes of the EC of the SWRCL, 4.6.46, 13.10.47). The unions did not provide the information requested, and in the absence of information there was little the Secretary could do but let the issue dissipate.

The most important development during this period was the formation of the WRCL (Welsh Regional Council for Labour) in 1947. Until 1947 Labour Party organisation in Wales had been based around the North Wales Federation of Labour Parties, which consisted of eight CLPs and had only a political function, and the SWRCL which consisted of 27 CLPs and had both political and industrial functions. The main problems with this set up were expressed by the EC of the SWRCL in its report to the 1947 conference, `North Wales movement sometimes feels a little isolated, and furthermore, there is not at present any one central organisation for the whole of Wales [however adding]...it must be remembered at all times that we are an integral part of the British Labour movement...` (EC Report to the SWRCL 1947 Conference, p. 14.). As we have seen, discussions on the formation of an all-Wales council for Labour were not new to this period, but there had always been apparently irreconcilable problems with such a venture. The geopolitics of the Welsh Labour movement determined that meetings would be held in Cardiff, creating problems for the North Wales representatives who would need to travel to Cardiff for meetings on a regular basis. The problem, however, was financial as well as logistical; the Party in Wales simply could not afford the expense. This problem was overcome in 1947 when the NEC agreed to give the Party in Wales a £100 grant, which had been requested in November 1946 (Minutes of the EC of the SWRCL, 18.11.1946), for two years to pay for the expenses of members from North Wales (Report of the EC of the SWRCL to the 1947 Conference). Therefore, together with a commitment to set up a North Wales sub-committee that would meet in North

Wales and have the same secretary as the WRCL EC, it was with the NEC's support that the establishment of the WRCL in 1947 became possible.

By 1947, the dynamics of Welsh Labour movement interaction had changed significantly, but the new WRCL should not be seen as a rupture with the past. It should also be clear that although the North Wales movement was certainly consulted; one such consultation meeting took place on 8th March 1947, this was not a marriage of equal partners from North and South Wales. The North Wales movement had always been less powerful and less important than the movement in South Wales. Its key organisation – the North Wales Federation of Labour Parties - consisted of just eight CLPs that were for the most part poorly organised, it had no permanent secretariat, and its links with the unions were sporadic. In fact, one of the CLPs affiliated to the North Wales Federation of Labour Parties was Hereford, which under the new arrangement would be excluded and would have to affiliate to the West Midlands Region (Minutes of the EC of the WRCL, 19.5.47). Therefore it was not surprising that the 27 member Executive Committee of the new WRCL allowed for representation for just 4 members from North Wales. Also, the new body inherited the bureaucracy, policies and programmes of its predecessor. Nor did the establishment of a North Wales subcommittee redress the balance, as it would meet only quarterly and it was very much subservient to the EC. The establishment of the WRCL can very much be seen as a case of the SWRCL subsuming the North Wales movement.

Even in 1945 the issue of devolution, of one kind or another, already had a long pedigree within the Welsh Labour movement. Soon after its formation in 1918 the South Wales Federation of Labour Parties passed a resolution in favour of "home rule", organised a conference in Cardiff on the issue, and succeeded in obtaining the support of a number of key unions. There were three key influences on the development of the Party's policy toward Wales in the next two decades. Firstly, the depression of the early 1920s conditioned social and political attitudes within the Welsh Labour movement. Secondly, after the MacDonald "betrayal" in 1931, the Party's economic policy all but dissolved and it would take most of the rest of the next decade for it to

recover. Thirdly, by the mid-1930s, the forced economic dependence of Wales was apparent to all, yet Wales had received little by way of assistance until the late 1930s. Therefore, as a result of these influences, discussion of devolution in this period was primarily in economic/industrial terms, rather than cultural, and began to draw in an increasing number of progressive intellectuals. When the SWRCL emerged in 1937, it inherited the debate and began to develop more concrete policies concerning the treatment of South Wales as an economic entity, the future of which should be systematically planned with direct intervention via a powerful voice in the Cabinet. (Tanner et. al., 2000)

In 1945 there was still a Welsh Parliamentary Party (WPP) that consisted of all Welsh MPs, which although dominated by Labour (25 from 36 members in 1945), should be distinguished from the Welsh Group of Labour MPs. It was the WPP that put the request, initially to Churchill in 1943 and subsequently to Attlee in 1946, for a Secretary of State for Wales to be appointed. (Butt Philip, 1975, p. 74) In 1944 the Policy Sub-Committee of the NEC met with both the SWRCL and the Welsh Labour Group of MPs to discuss the appointment of a Secretary of State. The initial meeting had been with the SWRCL who wanted to press the NEC on its desire to see the appointment of a Secretary of State as Party policy. The meeting with the Welsh Labour Group had been held as a consultation exercise by the Policy Sub-Committee. However, the Welsh Labour MPs unanimously refused to come to a view on the issue, as the matter was already before the PM and a Cabinet Sub-Committee as a result of the request put to him by the WPP. (Minutes of the Joint Policy Sub-Committee of the NEC and Welsh Labour MPs, February 1944) As long as the matter was before the Prime Minister, Labour MPs refused to be drawn into further discussions.

In August 1946, the Secretary of the Welsh Parliamentary Party, D. R. Grenfell MP, received a written reply from Attlee. Although there had been press reports that a reply had been received, it was not made public exactly what the response was until the WPP met at City Hall in Cardiff on 14th August 1946 to discuss it. On the morning of the same day, a meeting took

place at Transport House in Cardiff between the SWRCL, Welsh Labour MPs, and a representative of the newly formed TUC Regional Advisory Committee. Although the Secretary of the WPP was present at this meeting, as a Labour MP, he refused to divulge the contents of the letter he had received from Attlee in his capacity as Secretary until the WPP had a chance to discuss it latter that afternoon. At this point the meeting adjourned to reconvene at 2.30pm when the WPP had commenced at nearby City Hall. It was at this point that the meeting was addressed by Ness Edwards MP, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Labour, who revealed the contents of the letter to the meeting. The meeting then unanimously agreed to telephone a resolution to the Secretary of the Welsh Group of Labour MPs, who was attending the WPP meeting, which read: `That this Regional Council of Labour welcomes the decision of the Prime Minister to agree to an annual report on Wales, an annual debate on Wales in Parliament, and the integration of the regional organisations of the various ministries to provide a co-ordinated government machine in Wales`. (Minutes of the Joint SWRCL, Welsh Group of Labour MPs, and TUC Regional Advisory Committee, 14.8.46) Therefore, even though Labour dominated the WPP, close regard for proper procedure was observed in handling this procedure by Labour Welsh MPs, and although the SWRCL welcomed the response from Attlee it was not formally part of the process.

The issue of Welsh Devolution was not resolved by Attlee's response and the debate continued, with the Labour Research Department in particular continuing to develop policy proposals. In September 1946 the Research Department received a paper from H. T. Edwards, the President of the North Wales Federation of Labour Parties. The paper was entitled `The Problem of Wales`, and it dealt with what Edwards considered the outstanding problems in Wales, that it demanded a greater level of devolution than Attlee had proposed. However, the tone and content of the paper was very different from that espoused by the South Wales movement. Although Edwards accepted Attlee's ruling out of a Secretary of State on the grounds of Parliamentary time and the administrative difficulties involved, he argued that Wales represented a `...psychological problem...[that] can only be clearly

understood if it is recognised that Wales is a country, with its own language, culture and tradition`. In an attempt to overcome this "psychological problem", Edwards proposed the creation of a Commissioner for Wales and a small advisory committee, which would act as a conveyor of information to and from the Cabinet. (Edwards, 1946) Edwards` submission to the Research Department signalled a subtle change in the tone of the debate on Welsh devolution, one that increasingly began to shift away from the purely economic and toward the recognition of Wales as a nation.

The limitations of Attlee`s first set of reforms soon become apparent, and especially the Quarterly Heads of Department Conference, which were held in Cardiff. In particular it was seen to be merely a reporting body, with no satisfactory liaison between people in Wales or the Government. Moreover, it gave the impression that insofar as there was any co-ordination of government activity in Wales it was a by a bureaucracy. In 1948 the Welsh Group of Labour MPs argued that "psychological" problems similar to those identified by H. T. Edwards demanded further administrative reforms for Wales and Monmouth, although their remarks were couched in slightly more unitary terms. Indeed, they suggested that `there is no need for this reasonable sentiment to be perverted by political nationalism if social democracy shows itself capable of imaginative and effective action...`. To this end the MPs called for a Council for Wales and Monmouthshire. The Council should, they argued, serve three main functions: firstly, meet to facilitate an interchange of views and information in the economic field; secondly, it would provide a link between cultural organisations and the Government; and thirdly, it would advise the Government on the impact of legislation and where necessary suggest how it should be adapted to the special circumstances in Wales and Monmouthshire. The Council should be chaired by a Minister of Cabinet rank representing a Welsh constituency, and have a membership that reflected a mixture of economic and cultural life. What the MPs proposed was a further series of administrative changes to rectify the deficiencies of previous reforms that had been instituted just a few years previously.

The new all-Wales Regional Council for Labour, which had been set up in 1937, also became involved in the post-war debate concerning Welsh devolution and began to develop its own proposals for a Council for Wales and Monmouthshire. However, its attempt to integrate the development of the proposal with that of the MPs was hampered by reluctance on the part of the Welsh Group to get involved in discussions with the WRCL until it had reached its conclusions (Minutes of the EC of the WRCL, 11.2.48). By April 1948, three months after a request made to the MPs to jointly discuss their proposals, the WRCL decided to submit an emergency resolution to their own Annual Conference in May calling on the EC to prepare a document and to enter into consultation with the Government with a view to establishing a Council for Wales and Monmouthshire (Minutes of the EC of the WRCL, 5.4.48). It was only after the Conference, and after they had completed their own report in July, that the Welsh Group finally agreed to discuss the matter with the Regional Council. The result was the submission of a joint document to the Government during the summer of 1948 and a joint deputation to meet representatives of the Government in October, although it emerged in November that the Welsh Group had held separate and secret discussions with the Government, and had secured amendments to the joint document concerning membership of the proposed Council. The Government finally submitted its proposals to the House of Commons on Welsh Day, 29 November 1948, and for the most part they reflected the joint proposals of the WRCL and the Welsh Labour Group. In the event the Prime Minister would be responsible for the appointment of the Council's Chair and members, who would be drawn from panels, and the size of membership and its distribution would be altered. (Minutes of the EC of the SWRCL, 29.11.48, 20.12.48) The first Meeting of the new Council was in May 1949. Although the objective of both the WRCL and the Welsh Labour Group was achieved, the setting up of a Council for Wales and Monmouthshire, the degree of co-operation between the two had its limitations.

3.6   Learning from Defeat, 1951-66

During the period from 1951 to 1966 there were five general elections, three of which Labour lost, one which Labour narrowly won, and one that it won convincingly. This series of elections provided ample ground for incremental advances in the Party's electoral machinery in Wales. In particular the Party's co-operation with the unions during campaigns notably strengthened. This was in part a result of previous advances, but it was also a result of the Attlee Government's repealing of the 1927 Trades Disputes and Trade Union Act, as discussed above. In Wales a new, more strategic and better-organised approach began to be adopted shortly after the 1945 election. The Party recognised that its electoral victory had been the result of factors other than the strength of its campaign machinery, such as the wider effect of war-time socialism. Indeed, a report to the EC in 1945 stated that organisation and strategy had to improve significantly if the Party was to maintain the gains it had made at the election that brought it to power with a majority for the first time. This would have fundamental implications for the position of the Regional Council.

One of the key priorities in the drive to improve organisation was the need to secure a dependable financial support package from which to fight elections. Up until 1945 election campaigns had been sporadically funded. The SWRCL (South Wales Regional Council for Labour) had little financial muscle, and funding for the 1945 election campaign on the whole took place on a constituency-by-constituency basis, mainly as a result of trade union sponsorship of individual candidates. The new WRCL (Welsh Regional Council for Labour) soon recognised that if it wanted to have more oversight of elections it would need to gain control of Party finances in Wales. As early as August 1945, the SWRCL had begun to plan for next election by setting up a campaign fund. This fund saw only limited success, as many of the regional offices of the trade unions, which were the most likely contributors to such a fund, simply could not afford any additional contributions. Others had no local funds and requests for assistance were handed to their central offices. (Minutes of the EC of the SWRCL, 20.8.1945) The repeal of the 1927 Act

would do much to overcome some of the financial difficulties, but at this time the organisational structure of the labour movement did not include provision for the involvement of a regional co-ordinator. It was on this basis that the developments of the following years must be examined.

As the 1951 election approached, the WRCL held a series of meetings with trade union regional secretaries in an attempt to put in place a pot of money that could be used to fund the regional contribution to the campaign. One such meeting took place in October 1949, and although the meeting had ostensibly been called to `consider ways and means of harnessing the resources of the Labour and trade union movement throughout Wales`, it was in reality a meeting where the Party held out its begging bowl hoping the unions would respond. The new Area Committee of the NUM, again the biggest contributor to the fund, gave £1000; the allocation of which was discussed with the WRCL in 1949 (Minutes of the EC of the WRCL, 24.11.49). The meeting also considered in more detail than at any time in the past an approach to the up-coming election that would focus its limited resources on what it called "marginal" seats. The first reference made in the records of the regional Party to any kind of focusing on particular seats was in the Annual Report of the Welsh Regional Council for Labour in 1948, which had called on the EC to set up a "development fund" for the purpose of assisting "marginal" constituencies. The meeting identified 13 seats in Wales that it considered "marginal", five held by Labour and eight held by its opponents, and in addition to requests for financial support, trade unions were also asked to provide man-power resources to form mobile teams that would spend time in each of the marginal seats. (Minutes of the Joint EC Trade Union Officers Meeting, 29.10.48) This campaign was in place before the end of 1950 (Minutes of the EC of the WRCL, 27.11.50).

Another symptom of the previous financial order was that the Regional Council lacked a crucial power that would later ensure its strategic oversight and control in Wales, namely control of the purse strings. This gradually changed over these fourteen years. The WRCL set up regionally based election funds in advance of each of the 1951, 1955, 1959, 1964 and 1966

elections in order to have a strategic capability during the campaign, particularly in relation to the "marginal" constituencies. In 1956 the Wilson Report into Party organisation, with particular reference to election campaigning, recommended the Party draw up a national register of marginal constituencies in early preparation for the election that was held in 1959 (Minutes of the EC of the WRCL, 24.3.56). The Party also set up its "Into Action Campaign" in advance of 1959, which aimed at more strategic co-operation with the unions, and in particular in the distribution of their donations to CLPs (Minutes of the EC Meeting with Trade Unions Officers, 24.4.59). Meetings were also held again with union regional secretaries and with representatives of the TUC Regional Advisory Committee in the approach to subsequent elections. Increasingly union leaders recognised the authority and strategic role played by the regional council. In advance of the 1955 election the NUM give a grant to the Party in Wales, to the sum of £1500, the allocation of which was decided in close cooperation with the regional council (WRCL Election Debriefing, 27.6.55). By the time of the 1964 campaign the Council received its largest single donation to date, again from the NUM, amounting to £3000, and a significant grant from the T&G of £1100. Again the regional council played a key part in its distribution (Minutes of the EC of the WRCL, 3.7.63, 17.2.64). At the 1966 general ' election, the Labour Party gained 61 percent of the vote in Wales, its highest ever share (Tanner et. al.; 2000: 294). This was a clear indication of its success.

Developments in Party organisation in this period were not wholly confined to general elections. On a wider basis there were changes too in the Party's bureaucracy, organisation, and interaction with the unions. There were also changes in the mixed fortunes of the movement in North Wales. Although The North Wales Sub-Committee continued its decline into powerless irrelevance, with its discussions increasingly dominated by low politics and its subservience to the main EC assured, it did benefit in other ways. For example, for the first time in 1961 the annual conference of the Regional Council was held in North Wales. It also benefited in 1952 when the first full-time Party official based in North Wales was appointed (see below). Perhaps

one of the most significant changes in this period was the removal of the word "regional" from the Council's name in December 1959, when the NEC acceded to a request forwarded from the regional conference earlier that year. The change must be viewed as a symbolic new emphasis in line with the Party's policy for Wales. The same request had been made in 1947, but at this stage, the EC of the Regional Council did not even support the idea (Minutes of the EC of the WRCL, 3.11.1947). Wales was now recognised as a nation by the Labour Party, and not just a region. (Minutes of the EC of the WCL, 14.12.1959)

The Party in Wales also suffered a series of setbacks. Until 1954 the Regional Council had been in receipt of a grant from central office in London, which effectively subsidised the Council over and above the amount it was entitled to as a percentage of national affiliation and membership fees. In 1954 this grant was withdrawn and from then on the Regional Council had to raise all of its own finances. (WRCL, Annual Account Books) The Party also faced a diminishing return from some of its most traditional sources of support. In 1964, Eddy Jones, the Secretary of the Monmouthshire Federation of Trades and Labour Councils, which had been one of the first affiliates, wrote to Cliff Prothero informing him that the Federation could no longer afford to affiliate to the council. Indicative of the gradual decline of the TLCs at this time is an auditor's report that outlined the weakening financial base of the Federation, and recommended disaffiliation from the Council. (Letter from Eddy Jones, 20.4.1964)

These financial setbacks would have repercussions for some of the Party's priorities in the following years, as the Party struggled to make up the financial shortfall. One means of attempting to redress this balance was a major membership drive, which it was hoped would increase the financial and organisational well-being of the Party. In 1961 just sixteen CLPs in Wales had memberships in excess of 1000, and only two had more than 1500 - East Flint and Pembroke. The Party would therefore organise a series of conferences and training events to train party workers in the methods of membership recruitment and retention. (Memo to the Organisation Sub-

Committee, 26.5.1961) Another means the Party tried to secure extra financial and organisational support was through its links with the unions, whose membership was on the rise at this time. In 1961 the Secretary/Organiser wrote to CLPs urging them to be stringent in obtaining the affiliation fees of unions at the local level, and that if they had any difficulties he would take the matter up with the relevant general secretary (Minutes of the EC of the WCL, 2.12.1961). The national party even appointed an assistant agent with specific responsibility for improving liaison with the unions, and in 1963 he spent several weeks in Wales (Minutes of the EC of the WCL, 17.6.1963). The removal of the central grant from London head office to the Welsh Labour Party and the financial necessity this created, contributed at least in part to the need for the Regional Council to be more innovative and active in the management of its organisation.

There were also innovations in policy. The 1950`s saw a dramatic shift in the Labour Party's policy for Wales. Labour's election manifesto at the elections in 1950 and 1951 contained no reference to Wales whatsoever. By the time of the 1955 election, although reference was at last made to Wales, where it was stated that `we respect and will safeguard the distinctive national cultures of these countries [also Scotland and Northern Ireland]`, there were no concrete proposals. All that the Party had to say in 1955 was that it would `overcome Tory neglect` by ensuring full employment as part of its UK-wide economic policy (Labour Party Manifesto, 1955). However, in 1959 the Party at last committed itself to appointing a Secretary of Sate for Wales in order to `recognise the special identity of Wales` (Labour Party Manifesto, 1959). This commitment was reaffirmed in 1964, together with more concrete proposals for both economic and social regional planning (Labour Party Manifesto, 1964).

As discussed above, the issue of devolution to Wales, and the appointment of a Secretary of State for Wales in particular, was by no means new. The prolonged period in opposition gave the Party ample time to reflect. In Wales this reflection began in earnest in 1952 when a sub-committee of the regional council was appointed to consider "Welsh Affairs". At its first meeting the

new committee resolved `we accept the assumption that Wales has its special problems [economic, social, and cultural]...` and that `we accept these problems are capable of solution along the line of socialism...` (Minutes of the Welsh Affairs Sub-Committee, 13.9.52). At its next meeting the committee went further and suggested that Wales` problems could be grouped together under four headings: education, government and administration, economy, and the Council of Wales (Minutes of the Welsh Affairs Sub-Committee, 22.11.52). Over the next year or so the Regional Council, under its Welsh Affairs Committee, undertook a review of the problems it identified in order to produce a policy response. The Regional Council published this report, which was entitled Labour Policy for Wales, in March 1954. The key recommendation of the Committee was that there should be a Minister for Welsh Affairs with a seat in the Cabinet (Labour's Policy for Wales, 1954, p.8). The publication of the report was a timely response to the Parliament for Wales Campaign, and it played a key part in the Aberdare by-election in 1954, which Labour won with a substantial majority.

The report of the WCL`s (Welsh Council of Labour) Welsh Affairs Committee, combined with work undertaken by the Group of Welsh Labour MPs and the NEC, fed into a policy document that was presented to Labour's 1954 Annual Conference in Scarborough. The document was entitled *Labour's Policy for Wales* and it stated that `the prosperity of Wales is bound up with the prosperity of the United Kingdom as a whole.... It follows from this that whatever powers a separate Welsh Parliament assumed, it would be unable to solve Welsh economic and social problems, for these problems cannot be separated from those of the United Kingdom as a whole` (Labour's Policy for Wales, 1954, p.3). The document made two key proposals: firstly, it stated that Labour would `...consider the possibility of further measures of *administrative* [my emphasis] devolution`; and secondly, it accepted the recommendation of the Regional Council's Welsh Affairs Committee that there should be a Minister for Wales with a seat in a Cabinet (Labour's Policy for Wales, 1954, p.8). In a paper in 1959 a tripartite committee of representatives of the NEC, WCL, and Welsh Labour MPs, claimed that it was never made clear in *Labour's Policy for Wales* whether or not this Minister

should have other departmental responsibilities (Tripartite Committee on Welsh Policy Statement, 1959). However, this document became the Party's policy, although it was not detailed in Labour's 1955 election manifesto, but further research, to be carried out under the auspices of the WCL, was envisaged in an appendix to the report.

In the years after the 1955 election, and before the publication of Labour's 1959 manifesto, the Party clearly accepted the need to appoint a Secretary of State for Wales. The initial impetus for this move arose from the Third Memorandum of the Council for Wales and Monmouthshire, published in 1957. The Council's two main conclusions were firstly that greater authority should be vested in the heads of some of the Welsh Office departments, as should ministerial responsibility, now vested in certain ministries whose activities cover both England and Wales. Moreover, the council further concluded that the Secretary of State should represent Wales in the Cabinet. (Third Memorandum of the Council for Wales and Monmouthshire, Cmd. 53, 1957) In April 1957 the Machinery of Government Panel of the Welsh Labour Group of the PLP endorsed the Council's recommendations, and a month later the Panel met with representatives of both the NEC and the WRCL who considered their endorsement. The joint meeting agreed to meet again, and in November 1957 the second meeting stated that `we must conclude that the case for a Secretaryship of State as not proven` (NEC Home Policy Committee, November 1957). Nor was the Eden Government any more convinced by the Council's recommendations; although some measure of great administrative reform was undertaken, these included further departmental devolution; strengthening the Quarterly Heads of Government Departments Meetings; and the appointment of a Minister of State in the Lords. It was in response to these initiatives that the Home Policy Committee of the NEC concluded that should the Tripartite Committee meet again, it should advise its representatives that the NEC wished to observe how these changes turned out before committing itself further on the issue (NEC Home Policy Sub-Committee Covering Note, January 1958).

When the Tripartite Committee met again in April 1959, it argued that the principle of administrative devolution, which it claimed the Labour Party had considerably strengthened to aid the detailed application of its socialist polices, had been undermined by the Conservative Governments of the 1950s. The Committee also maintained that the Party had kept its position on devolution under constant review throughout this period, and suggested that a more comprehensive review of the whole machinery of government was needed to examine its increasing complexity and its effectiveness in the implementation of policy. However, such a review would take some considerable time, and in the meantime the Committee had three specific proposals relating to Wales. Firstly, there should be a minister for Welsh Affairs, with a seat in the cabinet and without any other departmental responsibilities. Secondly, that a Welsh Grand Committee should be set up by Parliament to examine the implications for Wales of legislative proposals and to give detailed consideration to Welsh aspects of government activity and to Welsh estimates. Thirdly, that the principle of administrative devolution should be further strengthened by every practical means. (Tripartite Committee on Welsh Policy Statement, April 1959) It was on the basis of these conclusions that the Party presented its manifesto in 1959.

Shortly after Labour's defeat at the 1959 election the Party undertook a period of "modernisation". Under the influence of the "revisionists", whose case had been strengthened by yet another election defeat, and in a process that would be repeated in the late 1980s, it began reviewing its policies in a context where many believed it might never win another election. The Party published two documents, *Labour in the Sixties* in 1960 and *Signposts for the Sixties* in 1961, both of which argued that the Party needed to renew its image and policies to appeal to an electorate that was undergoing major socio-economic change. (Dorey, 1995, pp. 76-80) It was after the publication of the second of these reports, which had primarily dealt with the major social and economic issues, that some in the upper leadership of the Party started to turn their attention to other issues that were lower down the national organisation's policy-making agenda. In July 1962 James Callaghan, who was then Shadow Chancellor, wrote to the Secretary/Organiser of the WCL (Welsh Council of Labour), Cliff

Prothero. In the letter Callaghan proposed a review of the Party's Welsh policy, which had been outlined in the report of the Tripartite Committee prior to the election in 1959, with the objective of marrying it to *Signposts for the Sixties*. Callaghan argued that `there is no need for much fresh thinking to be done but I would like to give more concrete form to *Signposts for the Sixties* as far as Wales is concerned`. As an indication of the way conference agendas of the time were "managed" Callaghan also suggested that the document that was produced would give `...the Welsh Regional Council Conference next year a subject to discuss and perhaps get it away from concentrating on German troops in Pembrokeshire`. (Callaghan, 17.7.1962) Callaghan then proposed the creation of a new tripartite committee, which would consist of three members of the NEC, the Chair and Secretary of the Welsh Labour Group in Parliament, the two front bench spokesmen - James Griffiths and Cledwyn Hughes - and two members from the WCL.

The Committee that was set up as a result of Callaghan's proposals, which was called the Working Party on Welsh Policy, met throughout the end of 1962 and the beginning of 1963. It took evidence from each wing of the Party, but the key actors were undoubtedly the frontbench spokesmen on Welsh Affairs and Callaghan himself. One of the first submissions came from Cledwyn Hughes; this formed the basis of the final report that was presented to the Regional Council Conference in 1963 by James Griffiths and was unanimously accepted. *Signposts to the New Wales*, as the report was entitled, detailed three major problems facing Wales: high unemployment, depopulation, and threat to the public transport system. However, *Signposts to the New Wales* contained little that was specific to Wales. The Party still tied the prosperity of Wales to the success of its nationwide economic management policies and saw social services, as well as its proposals for rural areas, as part of the same agenda it was pursuing nationally. In education, the only specifically Welsh proposal concerned the need for the Welsh Collage of Advanced Technology in Cardiff to be included within the federal University of Wales, and one single four-sentence paragraph, containing no specific proposals, was devoted to the Welsh language. Even the proposals for Welsh administrative reform were a restatement of the policy document that was

finalised prior to the 1959 election, although they did contain more details on the proposals for the centralisation of government administrative activities in Cardiff. (Signposts to the New Wales, 1963) What was new was that the document formed the basis of the first separate Welsh Labour Party Manifesto, which was produced in a bilingual format and was presented to the Welsh electorate in 1964, and at the 1966 election.

3.7   Conclusions

Prior to 1918, the development of the labour movement in Wales lacked any strategic regional oversight and can best be described as sporadic. There were early calls for the creation of a regional organisation, but the prerequisites for such a development were not yet in place. Therefore, early developments in the creation of regional structures and organisation in the Labour Party and labour movement in Wales came about largely as a result of locally led initiatives. Changes such as the creation of the CLPs, brought about by the 1918 constitution, which aimed to improve Party organisation, facilitated these locally led initiatives, as did local strength and support of the trade union movement. The establishment of the CLPs under the 1918 constitution was a mile marker, and soon after the first regionally located bodies, the North and the South Wales Federation of Labour Parties were set up. However, each suffered from interminable weaknesses and neither had a policy-making role. Fears that such initiatives would be infiltrated by the communists led the NEC to strengthen regional organisation on its own terms, and under its control, in an attempt to counter this threat. To this end, largely under the direction of the NEC, the South Wales Regional Council for Labour was created in 1937.

The SWRCL quickly set about the task of combating communist infiltration, but its new Executive Committee members also sought to develop initiatives that went beyond this remit, particularly in organisational and policy terms. As early as 1938 the Executive Committee called for an industrial rehabilitation policy for South Wales, to be put under the control of a minister of cabinet rank, as well as formulating views on international developments and showing signs that it was preparing to act as a regional election co-

ordinating machine. Therefore the short period from 1937 to 1939 was crucial in the development of Labour's organisation in Wales. It was characterised by the construction of the SWRCL machinery, the successful undermining of the communists, and the gradual evolution of initiative and, to some extent, of independence of mind amongst Welsh labour movement leaders.

From the very start of the war in 1939, the SWRCL was drawn into the management of the war effort. The Labour Party was now the controlling group in many local authorities across Wales, but members of the Executive Committee of the SWRCL were also co-opted onto various regionally located governmental bodies. The trade unions were also strongly involved, and the demands of the war led the TUC to set up its first regional body in Wales, the TUC Emergences Committee. The SWRCL, however, did not lose sight of the need to develop its organisation and its policies for the post-war period. Discussions were held on a merger with the North Wales movement, and trade union support for this was obtained for this before the end of the war. By 1945, both the Party and the unions in Wales were in a stronger organisational position, and had gained respect for the efficient and mature manner in which they had met the demands placed upon them.

Even as the war was drawing to a close the Party's electoral machinery again began to swing into action. The trade union role in regional electoral campaigning was also developing, largely in terms of the financial contribution they made. However, the unions were reluctant to hand over the control of their financial input to the Executive Committee of the SWRCL. Organisationally too, the trade union movement in Wales continued to improve, as the TUC replaced the Emergency Committee with a Regional Advisory Committee. Although interaction between the trade unions and the Labour Party in Wales continued during this period, there was a very real attempt to differentiate between the two actors. The creation of the Welsh Regional Council for Labour in 1947 strengthened Labour Party organisation in Wales to an ever greater degree and for the first time ensured that one body

was responsible for the whole of the Labour Party in Wales, albeit effectively controlled by the South Wales movement.

As a result of key pre-war influences, the debate on devolution in Wales become conditioned primarily by economic and industrial concerns in the immediate post-war period. Requests had been made for the appointment of a Secretary of State for Wales both during the War to Churchill and immediately after to Attlee, but these had been made by the Welsh Parliamentary Party. Labour members of the WPP refused to discuss the matter with the Labour movement in Wales or with the Labour Research Department whilst a reply was awaited. In the event the reply was not what the WPP wanted as Attlee turned down the request. Instead he proposed some gestures of administrative reform, and it soon became clear that these were insufficient. The debate therefore continued, enhanced by a new awareness that Wales has its own distinct culture and heritage, which if ignored could become the focus of a successful Nationalist movement. There were, however, difficulties in reconciling all wings of the Welsh Labour movement. The Welsh Labour MPs in particular wanted to go their own way, despite a high level of similarity between their proposals and those of the Regional Council. The result of the debate was the establishment of the Council for Wales and Monmouthshire in 1949. The debate concerning devolution, however, continued within the Welsh labour movement throughout the 1950s and the 1960s.

Between 1951 and 1966 the Labour Party in Wales made significant improvements to its organisation, policy, and strategy. The role of the WRCL as an election coordinator was increasingly important and the trade unions began to accept the principle that donations to the Party in Wales should be made to the Regional Council, and not the constituency parties directly. Increasing cutbacks in central office funding of the WCL provided the impetus for the Executive Committee to be more innovative. In 1959 the name of the WRCL was changed to the Welsh Council of Labour, thereby removing the word 'regional'. This was an indication of the changing attitudes within the Labour Party, which began to see Wales as a nation in the cultural sense, and not just a region in the economic sense. This change in attitude also led to

changes in policy, by 1959 the Labour Party manifesto contained a commitment to appoint a Secretary of State for Wales, and for the first time in 1964 the Party in Wales produced its own Welsh manifesto.

In 1966 the Labour Party, in the midst of Wilson's "white heat" of modernisation, was brought to power with a significant majority and as the Party of renewal, following what many saw as 13 years of wasted Conservative rule. The Party in Wales emerged triumphant, achieving its highest ever share of the vote, and the organisation, strategy, and policies by the Party in Wales had been vindicated. The Welsh Party had overcome significant challenges in the period prior to 1966, most seriously from the communists. However, it should be noted that even in 1966, the Labour Party in Wales had still not faced any notable challenge from the Welsh nationalists. For the Labour Party in Wales the period up until 1966 was one of organisational, electoral and policy growth, and it successfully marginalized all of its political opponents. The Labour Party in Wales in 1966 appeared very much like an irresistible force. It had emerged though all of its difficulties confirmed and reinforced, and its future looked very bright indeed. Even as the Labour Party reached this pinnacle, however, there were subtle indications of problems not far beneath the surface.

Although the Labour Party in Wales in many ways appeared to be on the crest of a victory wave in 1966, there were a series of factors that cast doubt on the strength of its position. The size of the Labour Party's membership in Wales was still very low. The number of CLPs with a membership of more than 1000 was just sixteen, and this undermined the Party's claim to have a mass membership. Additionally, the Party's financial basis was far from secure. No longer funded at all from central office in London, and despite some fund raising ingenuity, the finances of the Labour Party in Wales were surrounded by uncertainty. To make matters worse the trade unions remained reluctant to make financial contributions to election funds directly to the Council for distribution. Nor had the Party resolved the debate within its own ranks concerning devolution. Although the Party had settled on the appointment of a Secretary of State for Wales, debate concerning further devolution was still

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unresolved. The administrative reforms the Party had accepted by 1966 had not challenged the central tenets of received socialist wisdom, and the founding principles of the welfare state – that a strong and united state was necessary to ensure that welfare was distributed on the basis of need not geography. Yet the unresolved debate concerning greater degrees of devolution was likely to have implications for these central tenets of received socialist wisdom, and would, for many in the Party and the union movement, prove too much. To complicate matters, the Party in Wales did not have a particularly strong policy-making process, and almost all of its manifesto was determined in London; as a policy-making body, the Party in Wales was nascent at best. Moreover, the authority of Welsh Council of Labour had still not been recognised by the Welsh group of Labour MPs. Perhaps most importantly, although the Party appeared to be totally dominant in Wales in 1966, its electoral performance was distorted by the First Past the Post electoral system. Although Labour won 34 of 36 seats in Wales, its actual share of the vote in Wales, although still a majority, was much lower than the number of seats it won would appear to indicate.

Weaknesses were not restricted to the position of the Labour Party in Wales. The trade unions too continued to experience limitations to their position in Wales. Although the unions were at the height of their power in Britain generally, with huge memberships, secure finances, and access to government at the highest levels, their position as actors at a Welsh level was particularly weak. These weaknesses derived from the lack of Welsh level structures in the trade union movement, and most trade unions were entirely dependent on their national parent bodies for direction. Just one trade union, the TGWU, recognised Wales in its entirely as a region within its organisation. All of the other unions, with the exception of the NUM, divided Wales into two parts, north and south, and merged these with their North West or South West of England regions. As a result Welsh politics, or even Welsh economics, tended to be a much lower concern and priority than those of Manchester of Bristol. Interaction between the unions in Wales was also limited. Although by 1966 there was a TUC Regional Advisory Committee in Wales, it was so weak and restricted that it could not possibly hope to form a collective Welsh trade

union viewpoint. This meant that even in 1966 the trade union movement in Wales was incapable of forming any collective policy position, and there was no sign that it would be able to do so in the near future. Therefore, although the Labour Party and the labour movement in Wales appeared to be unstoppable by the 1966 General Election, having overcome all of the obstacles and challenges that it had faced over the previous 67 years, serious weaknesses remained.

Chapter Four: Toward the First Devolution Referendum, 1966 to 1979

4.1 Introduction

By the beginning of the 1970s optimism surrounding devolution for Wales
was high. The Royal Commission on the Constitution, which received
evidence form the Welsh Council of Labour in 1970, would by 1973 deliver a
verdict in favour of elected Welsh and Scottish Assemblies. The evidence
submitted by the Welsh Council of Labour to the Royal Commission
represented a consensus view within the Labour Party in Wales on the merits
of devolution, and this consensus was to last until 1974. With the creation of
the Wales TUC, unofficially in 1973 and then officially in 1974, devolution
gained a powerful advocate. Moreover, the Labour Party had fought the 1970
general election and the two general elections in 1974 with a manifesto
commitment to introduce a directly elected assembly or council for Wales.
The initial optimism, however, was to be dashed by developments resulting in
insuperable obstacles to devolution in Wales during the 1970s. The first of the
difficulties was the reform of local government in Wales by the Conservative
government in 1974. The reform would mean that the Labour Party's policy
on devolution as part of a wider reform of local government would have to be
amended. It also led to divisions between trade unions within the newly
established Wales TUC. Other difficulties included the election of a minority
Labour government in February 1974, and a Labour government with a very
small majority in October 1974. This meant that the legislative passage of a
devolution Bill was likely to be fraught with difficulties. Coupled with this
was the Welsh Parliamentary Labour Party, which included newly elected
ambitious MPs who were opposed to devolution for Wales, and were in a
strong position to block any legislation due to the small majority of their own
government. These difficulties would be the cause of significant alterations to
Labour's devolution policy during the 1970's, and would eventually lead to
the Government conceding a referendum that was to prove unsuccessful.

This chapter focuses on the development of the Welsh labour movement's
policy on devolution during the late 1960's and the 1970's. In particular it

considers the role of the trade union movement in the development of the Labour Party's policy on devolution. In order to properly examine this process the chapter is divided into three sections. The first section examines the institutional characteristics of the trade union movement in Wales during this period. The second section considers the devolution policies of the trade union movement in Wales. Finally, the chapter examines the extent of the influence of trade unions over the Labour Party's policy process. By adopting this approach it will be possible to answer three questions. Firstly, did the trade unions have sufficient institutional coherence in Wales to form either individual or collective policies? Secondly, what was the nature of the individual and collective policies of the trade unions on devolution? Thirdly, how did the trade unions seek to influence Labour's policy and how successful were they?

4.2 The Institutional Character of the Trade Union Movement in Wales

In 1966 the labour movement institutions in Wales had reached a patchy stage of development. Many trade unions had regional offices in Wales and some treated the whole of Wales as one region within their national organisations, though most divided Wales into two parts with the North Wales area forming part of a North West Region, and South Wales forming part of a South Western Region. Commonly this latter trend of dividing Wales into two parts involved basing the regional bureaucracy of these unions in Manchester or Bristol, rather than in Cardiff. Unions in this category included AUEW and NUGMW. Those unions that did have Wales-wide regions based their regional offices in Cardiff. Unions in this category most notably included the Transport and General Workers Union and, in South Wales at least, the NUM. The TUC presence in Wales at this time was still centred on the North and the South Wales Regional Advisory Committees that had emerged after the Second World War from the TUC Emergency Planning Committees. These were lame institutions, however, that had few resources and no full time organisation or administrations; 'they were less than trades councils'(Wright, George: 8/5/02) in their power, remit and significance. With the possible exception of the TGWU, by far the most advanced labour movement

organisation in Wales at this time was the Welsh Council of Labour, which had a Wales-wide remit, a small full-time staff, and a headquarters in Cardiff. This meant that forming a collective "Welsh trade union view" in 1966 was difficult, if not impossible.

The period prior to the setting up of the Wales TUC in 1974 was largely conditioned by the fallout from the policies of the Heath government elected in 1970. Heath's industrial relations policy had led to a miners' strike that began in early January 1972 and lasted until the end of February. Although the strike ended with the miners being granted their pay claim, it highlighted weaknesses in trade union organisation and particularly coordination between unions. In Wales, where Dai Francis led the South Wales Area of the NUM, the sense of frustration with this lack of coordination was acute. Francis felt that the lack of a coordinating body in Wales, a function that the two Regional Advisory Committees of the TUC did not have as part of their remit and were in any case ill-equipped to fulfil, severely limited the ability of trade unions in Wales to fight major industrial disputes. (Francis, Hywel: 12/11/99) He also felt that the TUC in London was too remote to fulfil this task, and that the lack of a mining culture in London meant that the TUC was too distant to understand the problems faced by the miners. In the summer of 1972 after the miners strike had ended, Dai Francis approached the TUC with a request that they set up a coordinating body in Wales, which would be representative of Welsh trade unionists. His request was denied. (Wright, George: 8/5/02) Aware that there was likely to be another miners dispute within the next year or so, Dai Francis refused to let the matter die. He immediately began discussions with Tom Jones, the outgoing Regional Secretary of the TGWU in Wales, and the two concluded that the lack of coordination between unions had led to harmful divisions that had to be overcome (Wright, George: 8/5/02). When Dai Francis and Tom Jones concluded their discussions they decided to approach the incoming Regional Secretary of the TGWU, George Wright, who they both knew had powerful allies within the TUC General Council. Wright agreed to give his support for the formation of a Wales TUC.

The three key personalities who were to be instrumental in setting up the Wales TUC, therefore, were Dai Francis of the NUM, and Tom Jones and George Wright of the TGWU. Dai Francis was a longstanding supporter of devolving political and industrial power to Wales. Tom Jones had also been a strong advocate of devolving power to Wales. George Wright, who was appointed as Tom Jones` replacement in 1972, was to be the most important actor. Wright came to Wales, having been based in the Midlands TGWU, when he was promoted to become the Welsh Regional Secretary of the TGWU. Whilst in the Midlands he had gained the support and faith of several big national trade union leaders and had been taken under the wing of his own leader Jack Jones. Wright had developed the attitude, shared by Tom Jones and Dai Francis, that many decisions could be better taken at the local level closer to the people they most affected. In trade union terms, this meant empowering trade unionists to take decisions at a local or regional level by providing them with the necessary machinery and powers (Wright, George: 8/5/02)

When George Wright first approached the TUC about the idea of setting up a Wales TUC he met with vicious opposition, particularly from Vic Feather the outgoing General Secretary, who would concede nothing. Wright quickly realised that previous attempts to form a Wales TUC had failed because "somebody had gone to London to ask if they could form a Wales TUC" and that if he, Tom Jones, and Dai Francis were to be successful, then they would have to do it without the permission of the TUC (Wright, George: 8/5/02). Nevertheless there were problems that had to be overcome, and the largest of these obstacles was the issue of financing the proposed new body. Wright, Tom Jones and Dai Francis all knew that the TUC would not provide the funds necessary to form a Wales TUC, particularly since the money would be used to do something the TUC were opposed to. The other problem was that all of the trade unions in Wales were Welsh branches of British-wide unions, and the regional staff in Wales, if they existed at all, seldom had control of their own finances. The TGWU was different, as George Wright had control of his own region's finances, and he had the support of his General Secretary Jack Jones. Dai Francis also had some room for discretion. Therefore the TGWU

in Wales, with the support of the NUM, agreed to finance the setting up of the Wales TUC (Wright, George: 8/5/02).

In November 1972 the TUC was informed, to their annoyance, that the setting up of the Wales TUC was "a result of an executive decision on the part of the TGWU and the NUM" (Wales TUC; December 1972: Working Party Proposals). Conscious of the need to build a consensus of support from trade unionists in Wales for the proposed new body, and of the need to design it in such a way that unions would want to affiliate to it, a representative working party was set up in December 1972. The working party consisted of six representatives from the TGWU, three from the NUM, two from the AEUW, and one each from NALGO, USDAW, ASTMS, IRSF, APEX, NUR and GMWU. Trades councils were not invited to participate in the working party, but had shown an interest. George Wright became its secretary and George Rees, of the NUM, became the chairman. The working party's self-assigned task was to form a constitution for the Wales TUC that would be put to a special conference in February 1973 for approval. The special conference was held in Llandrindod Wells and was sponsored by the NUM. All trade unions, trades councils, and federations of trades councils were invited to participate in the conference. The Welsh Council of Labour was also invited to participate. One of the working party's conclusions was that "at this present time the Welsh Council of Labour is in need of assistance. We [the working party] were of the view that the creation of a Wales TUC which would operate in close conjunction with the Welsh Council of Labour, would strengthen the position of that particular body". As a result, the Working Party concluded that provision should be made for a liaison officer to sit on the General Council representing the Welsh Council of Labour. (Wales TUC; December 1972: Working Party Proposals)

The precise details of the proposed institutions put before the Llandrindod Conference, were that the new organisation would be called the Wales Trade Union Congress, and that there would be provision for an annual delegate congress. An honorary secretary would be elected annually by the delegate congress, as would a general council to consist of 30 members, representing

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trade groups, trades councils, federations of trades councils, and the Welsh Council of Labour. It was not envisaged that the Wales TUC would settle differences between unions, which would continue to be a matter for existing agreements, but that where requested it would help co-ordinate assistance on behalf of unions during disputes. The Wales TUC would also assist unions in education and training, research, and international co-ordination. The TGWU would provide initial funding for the Wales TUC, which was envisaged to be approximately £3,100 per year. A research facility would also be provided by the TGWU, which was developing its own research unit in Cardiff. (Wales TUC; December 1972: Working Party Proposals) Despite the fact that Victor Feather, General Secretary of the TUC, had advised all organisations affiliated to the TUC not to attend the conference, and that any move to create a Wales TUC should be delayed until the TUC working party on regional policy had reported, it was nevertheless well attended. One of the key issues raised at the conference concerned the proposed provisions of a place on the General Council of the Wales TUC for the Welsh Council of Labour. Representatives of the local government union NALGO, which was not affiliated to the Labour Party, stated that it would not be able to affiliate to the Wales TUC on this basis, as its own rules would precluded it from having formal contact with the Labour Party. The Working Party agreed to look at this matter further. Although the conference agreed in principle to establish a Wales TUC, as a result of the representations from Victor Feather, it deferred action for three months to enable further discussions with the TUC. (Welsh Council of Labour; March 1973: Minutes of the Executive Committee) These discussions proved fruitless and so on 1st May 1973, in Aberystwyth, the Wales TUC was launched unofficially, without the consent of the TUC. The only real opposition from amongst the ranks of the trade unions present was from Tal Lloyd, an official of the AEUW, and in order to neutralise him, Dai Francis supported and secured his election to the chair (Francis, Hywel: 27/5/02).

Over the course of the next year George Wright drew upon his personal contacts with the leaders of some of the most powerful unions on the TUC General Council, including his own leader Jack Jones, and the leaders of the NUM, NUPE, the Civil Service Unions, and one or two other smaller unions,

all of whom pledged their support. Wright also approached the incoming TUC General Secretary, Len Murray, who was much more open to discussion than Vic Feather, and eventually won him over. The TUC was adamant, however, that the organisation should not be called a Congress, which would rival its own supremacy. After much debate the General Council of the Wales TUC agreed to call the new organisation the Wales Trade Union *Council* not *Congress*. The new organisation would of course still be called the Wales TUC (Francis, Hywel: 27/5/02). On 1st May 1974, a year after it had been unofficially launched, the Wales TUC was formally set up with the blessing of the TUC, which was represented at the conference by the new General Secretary Len Murray. George Wright was elected as honorary General Secretary of the new body. The TUC also agreed to pay for the ordinary administrative expenses of the Wales TUC, though it was told that it should not occur any additional expenses without the prior agreement of the General Council. There were several changes to the proposed constitution, including the provision for the holding card votes at the annual conference, the General Council size was increased to 45, and provision for a representative of the Welsh Council of Labour to sit on the General Council was removed for the benefit of the non-affiliated unions. The TUC Regional Advisory Committees for North and South Wales were disbanded and their functions were subsumed into the Wales TUC. (Wales TUC; 1974: Annual Report)

In summary, the most significant development in the institutional character of the trade union movement in Wales during this period was the setting up of the Wales TUC. Prior to this the focus for trade union involvement in politics at an all-Wales level was through the Welsh Council of Labour, rather than the two TUC Regional Advisory Committees for North and South Wales, which had a limited remit and were organisationally and financially weak. Equally, the trades councils and county federations of trades councils were not, by their very nature, all-Wales actors. Dependence on the WCL as a forum for union activity, of course, meant that trade unions that were not affiliated to the Labour Party were excluded and a collective view of all trade unions in Wales was an impossibility. Individual unions had generally underdeveloped or nonexistent Welsh based structures; the notable exceptions to this were the

TGWU and the NUM, though the NUM only covered the South Wales area. The deficiencies of this underdeveloped trade union activity in Wales were highlighted during the 1972 miners' strike, where the lack of inter-union cooperation was seen as a weakness. As a result, three key trade unionists emerged to push for the creation of a Wales TUC: Dai Francis, Tom Jones and, most especially, George Wright. Wright used his control of the TGWU's regional finances effectively to pay for the setting up of the Wales TUC in the face of opposition from the TUC in London. Through his considerable personal contacts within the TUC General Council, Wright eventually obtained the consent of the TUC for the establishment of the Wales TUC. The creation of the Wales TUC provided Welsh trade unionism with an all-Wales forum, within which for the first time trade unionists in Wales were able to form collective inter-union attitudes and opinions on political as well as industrial matters affecting Wales. This was a crucial pre-requisite for their forming a collective policy on Welsh devolution.

4.3 Policy Characteristics of the Trade Union Movement in Wales

The 1973 conference of the unofficial Wales TUC agreed three key motions. The first of these, to help secure a Labour Government, had been achieved by the time the Wales TUC was formally launched a year later. The second motion was to create a centre to bring the labour movements in Wales together and to reduce fragmentation. The centre would serve as a home in Wales for the regional head quarters of individual trade unions, the Wales TUC, and the Welsh Council of Labour. This second motion was secured with the building of Transport House in Cardiff in 1978. The third motion, and the first policy motion of the Wales TUC, was to secure a manifesto commitment from the Labour Party on devolution for Wales (Wright, George: 8/5/02), even though the original motion on devolution was not detailed enough to include specific recommendations. (Wales TUC; Annual Report: 1974) For the first time ever, these motions represented the collective attitudes of the trade unions in Wales.

At the 1974 conference, a more detailed motion on devolution was overwhelmingly carried. Although the motion welcomed the lead shown by

the Kilbrandon Report in calling for the setting up of an elected legislative assembly for Wales, with powers over industrial and social affairs, it disagreed with Kilbrandon on the issue of Welsh representation at Westminster, and argued that there should be no reduction in the number of Welsh MPs. (Wales TUC; 1974: Annual Report) By the time the newly elected General Council met on 19th June 1974, a policy document on devolution had been prepared on the basis of the conference motion by George Wright and Dai Francis of the NUM, who was the First Chair of the Wales TUC. The document, entitled *Devolution for Wales*, contained specific recommendations on the nature of the proposed Assembly. It called for a 100-seat single chamber body, elected on simple plurality voting in multi-member constituencies. It argued for a cabinet system of government, and a separate Welsh civil service answerable to the Assembly. On the functions of the Assembly the document said,

> In relation to the transferred responsibilities the Assembly would make such laws and policies as they saw fit, and administer those laws. The ultimate power of the sovereignty of the British Parliament would be preserved. However, in the ordinary course, this power would not be used to legislate on transferred matters without the agreement of the Welsh Assembly.

Regarding finance, the document envisaged that the Assembly would be administered by a block grant from the UK Treasury, with maximum freedom of expenditure. All of these proposals were accepted by the General Council and subsequently included in the Wales TUC Annual Report for 1974. Only on the issue of Wales' representation in Westminster did the General Council amend the document. Although it agreed that Wales should retain the same number of MPs, and that there should be a Minister in Cabinet representing the interest of Wales, they disagreed with George Wright's view that the Office of the Secretary of State would end. They felt that it should continue and consequently altered this part of the document. (Wales TUC; June 1974: Devolution for Wales, Policy Document)

A further substantive document outlining the Wales TUC policy on devolution, entitled *The Wales TUC Recommendations on Devolution*, was submitted to its 1976 annual conference. This document was the most detailed

policy statement to date from the Wales TUC on devolution. The document expanded on the previous statement that Wales was inextricably bound together with the rest of the UK, and as a result an Assembly with full legislative power would be inconceivable. More specifically it stated that the trade unions in Wales would not wish to lose the protection and benefits of recent legislation at Westminster as a result of the setting up of a Welsh Assembly. Therefore what was needed, it was argued, were legislative powers to deal with specifically Welsh affairs. Although "the question of transferred power should be reviewed from time to time when changes could occur in the light of experience gained". The document also elaborated on the justifications for the creation of an Assembly. The Assembly was seen as a "logical extension of democracy", which was even more necessary to prevent a drift of decision-making away from the people, particularly "...because of our membership of the EEC". Indeed, the Wales TUC was opposed to British membership of the EEC and in 1975 formulated this policy on the basis of a TGWU motion, which stated "that this conference believes that continued membership of the EEC is detrimental to the people, the economy, and the culture of Wales".(Wales TUC; 1975: Annual Report) Devolution was also a recognition of the overload experienced by the government machine at Westminster, which an elected Welsh Assembly would help overcome. (Wales TUC; 1976: Recommendations on Devolution) In addition, by this time the Wales TUC, certain that there would be a considerable restructuring of Welsh industry, was aware of the insecure economic future of the coal and steel industries in Wales. This consciousness of problems ahead was important in conditioning their attitudes toward devolution. If these problems were likely to occur, the best place to deal with them, it was felt, was in Wales, and without humiliating financial support from central government. An elected Welsh Assembly would be central in the struggle to overcome the problems that lay ahead. (Wright, George: 8/5/02)

The *Recommendations on Devolution* document added three new elements to the Wales TUC policy on devolution. Firstly, in the light of the calls for a

referendum that were being made during this time[1] the document specifically stated that the policy of the Wales TUC was against the holding of a referendum. Secondly, it recognised that the present system of local government in Wales, as a result of the 1974 reorganisation, would be unworkable with the setting up of a Welsh Assembly, and that one of the first tasks of the new Assembly would be to undertake a further round of local government reorganisation. Thirdly, although there was a commitment to a Welsh civil service that would be answerable to the Assembly, it was recognised that civil servants were likely to be concerned about their promotional prospects and status. As a result the document proposed that the recruitment, pay and conditions of work would be identical to that of the UK civil service, and that "appropriate machinery" would be created to deal with the issue of promotion to and from the Welsh civil service to the UK civil service. (Wales TUC; 1976: Recommendations on Devolution) This last addition was a result of concerns voiced within the General Council by the civil service unions. The issue of staffing the Assembly was also a source of tension between unions, particularly the civil service unions, who wanted it staffed by civil servants, and the local government unions, who wanted it staffed by their own members. However, the civil service unions seemed to gain the upper hand in the exchange. A motion by NALGO at the 1976 conference, which stated "the Assembly should be staffed by public servants independent from the British civil service", was overwhelmingly defeated. (Wales TUC; 1976: Annual Report)

Up to and including the unsuccessful referendum campaign in 1979, the position of the local government unions, and particularly NALGO, was to prove the major source of disagreement within the Wales TUC over its devolution policy. A second concern, which the local government unions held, related to the further round of local government reorganisation envisaged in the Wales TUC policy. The experience of reorganisation in 1974, as a result of the Heath government's reforms had been sufficient to discourage the

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[1] One such call was a motion from ASTMS on the agenda for the 1976 Wales TUC Conference, but this was defeated overwhelmingly.

local government unions and the workers they represented from any further disruptions. However, local government reorganisation was central to the Wales TUC policy. Clearly such a position was incompatible with the policy of NALGO.

In an attempt to maintain a united Wales TUC position on devolution, a special conference was organised for 5 April 1978 to look at the possibility of amending the policy on local government reorganisation, and also to look at the question of how the Assembly should be staffed. (Wales TUC; 1977: Annual Report) In the event, the decision was avoided, and it proposed that the issue of how the Assembly should be staffed should be left to the Assembly itself to decide. (Wales TUC; 1978: Annual Report) This change in policy, however, did not appease the local government unions, who wanted an assurance that their members would staff the Assembly. The lack of a breakthrough pushed these unions into a position of greater opposition. By coincidence during the year 1977 to 1978 it was the turn of NALGO to hold the Chairmanship of the Wales TUC, and in his Chairman's address to the 1978 conference Glyn Phillips, of NALGO, was highly critical. He said,

> Unemployment is by far the most important question facing this conference. Yet, when one considers the amount of energy being put into devolution, it is, I think, salutary to remember that the establishment of an assembly will not create a single job in the principality. It is quite possible in fact that it will hinder the return to more acceptable levels of unemployment because of the degree of disruption and dislocation involved in getting a new system of administration underway. I would remind delegates that no one has more experience of this than the public sector trade unions in the last reorganisation of local government...[adding], the policy of the Wales TUC was for an independent staffing arrangement, but latterly we seem to have heard less of this proposal. (Wales TUC; 1978: Annual Report)

This last point was a result of the Wales TUC's attempts to maintain a semblance of unity with the Government on this issue, which was against the creation of a Welsh civil service. It was a point picked up by John Morris, the then Secretary of State for Wales, in his address to the same conference, when he said, "there are things in this Bill that we do not like. But it is the best we

could have done with a minority government and the situation in the House".
(Wales TUC; 1978: Annual Report) The Wales TUC recognised this fact, of
course, and were prepared to compromise. Only those unions that had a direct
personal interest in the issues, where compromise was most needed, were
unwilling to do so.

As the referendum approached, divisions opened up in the Wales TUC on the
desirability of devolution. The position in 1975, when just one speaker
opposed the NUM motion reaffirming the commitment to call for an elected
Welsh Assembly, became a distant memory of unity on the issue (Wales TUC;
1975: Annual Report). There had been differences of opinion on the precise
nature of the proposed Assembly, but few opposed the principle of an elected
legislative Assembly (WCL; 1974 to 1977: Conference Reports). NALGO
was originally in favour, but changed sides because it opposed the model that
was being proposed, and failed to get reassurances that its members would
staff the Assembly. Equally, the civil service unions failed to get the kind of
reassurances they were looking for, that their members would staff the
Assembly, while also remaining part of the UK civil service. NUPE remained
loyal to the Wales TUC policy, but many of its members and officials
deserted, partly because of their closeness to Labour local government groups.
This demonstrates that trade unions and trade unionists had multiple and
fragmented loyalties, which made it difficult to reach an agreed position. The
Labour local government groups were against because they feared the
scrapping of an entire tier of local government, and the consequent loss of
local government jobs and reduction in the number of council seats. By the
time the referendum was held, only the industrial unions, such as the TWGU,
the steal unions, AEEU, GMB and the Post Office Workers Unions, stayed
loyal. (Wright, George: 8/5/02) What emerged therefore, as the referendum
approached, was a split within the Wales TUC between those unions who had
a personal interest in working for the Assembly, and those who did not. The
latter group, which was larger, stayed loyal.

It was not just on the policy of devolution that the Wales TUC sought to have
an influence. On other policies and in other areas, the Wales TUC was

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innovative and influential. Soon after it was formed, the Wales TUC became an influential actor in Welsh politics. George Wright, the General Secretary at the time, has claimed that he could "get through the door even when the Tories were in government, more so than the TUC could on London. I could get into the Welsh Office by just going up the road; I didn't even need to make appointments". Every year after 1975, a delegation from the Wales TUC went to Number 10 Downing Street to make the case for the Welsh Economy. The Wales TUC developed significant expertise, particularly on the Welsh economy. In 1974, soon after it was set up, Tony Benn, the then Industry Secretary, invited the Wales TUC to undertake research into industrial and regional problems in Wales, and awarded them £20,000 for this purpose. Previously, the TUC had never taken money from any government; it was against their policy to do so, and so it instructed the Wales TUC not to accept the money, but the Wales TUC ignored this demand. (Wright, George: 8/5/02) The grant meant that the Wales TUC was able to significantly develop its policy and research activity.

One consequence of the enhanced policy and research abilities was that the Wales TUC was able to pursue policies independently of the TUC in this period. For example, during the 1970s there were frequent clashes between unions about who had negotiating rights, which had to be settled by the TUC. Unwilling to concede this responsibility to the TUC, the General Council of the Wales TUC agreed to establish a single union agreement. This enabled the Wales TUC to assure inward investment companies, from Japan and America in particular, that if they came to Wales they would only have to deal with one union. The Wales TUC would then line up the unions and ask the company to decide which one they wanted to deal with, and the Wales TUC "would then ensure all the other unions went away". Although the TUC did not oppose this policy, they were not in a position to carry it out. (Wright, George: 8/5/02) Another major policy initiative was the establishment of the workers co-operatives. These were the only union organisations in Britain that operated as businesses. Essentially, if workers were made redundant and wanted to form their own business, they could do it on a co-operative basis with the assistance of the Wales TUC. The workers co-operative centre was

established in Llandaff, Cardiff. The centre continues to exist, under the name Fairwater Consultancy, but it is still government funded and one of its greatest successes was Tower Colliery during the 1990s. (Wright, George: 8/5/02)

The determination of the Wales TUC to have its own policy in many areas led to a fractious relationship with the TUC in London. However, the one area where the TUC most closely supported the policy position of the Wales TUC was on the question of Welsh devolution. In March 1976 the General Council of the TUC published *A Statement of Devolution*. This was the first policy position paper the TUC published on devolution during this period. The short document dealt with both Welsh and Scottish devolution, and was published because the General Council recognised that there was a need for the labour movement to achieve unity on the issue, particularly given the wider implications of the Governments proposals failing in Parliament. Just two paragraphs of the paper dealt specifically with Welsh devolution, and merely endorsed the position adopted by the Wales TUC (TUC; March 1976: General Council Statement on Devolution). The TUC's policy toward devolution was further considered at the 1976 Congress in Brighton, which was addressed by George Wright on behalf of the Wales TUC, and the policy of the Wales TUC on Welsh devolution was adopted wholesale by an overwhelming majority. (Wales TUC; 1976: Annual Report)

More generally, however, the Wales TUC still viewed the TUC with a certain amount of suspicion. A debate was held at the 1978 conference of the Wales TUC on the merits of seeking the appointment of a full-time General Secretary. At this time the post was still honorary, part-time, and continued to be held by George Wright of the TGWU. During the debate, several compelling reasons were listed for such a move, including that the position had grown in stature due to the success of the Wales TUC, with consequent demands on the regional secretary and that it was unreasonable to put pressure on any one organisation to carry much of the organisational and administrative responsibilities of the Wales TUC, as the TGWU in Wales did. It was also felt that by virtue of these financial and time demands, only the larger unions in Wales could hope to carry out such a responsibility. However, just one key

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argument was put against. It was argued that "a full-time paid General Secretary at this time would lead to him being more constrained by the TUC than is the case at present. Indeed, the TUC's sympathetic attitude towards the creation of a full-time regional secretary is based on the assumption that these positions would be much more closely under the control of the TUC General Council" (Wales TUC; 1978: Annual Report). George Wright has argued that he had "tremendous strength in the fact that I was not employed by the TUC, I was the TGWU official and so not the kind of person who could easily be pushed around in terms of the position I held' (Wright, George: 8/5/02). As a result of this argument the 1978 conference overwhelmingly rejected the idea of the full-time secretary. Instead, it proposed the development of the research and administrative side of the Wales TUC, and to this end David Jenkins was appointed as Research Officer of the Wales TUC in the same year.

The Wales TUC's relationships with the WCL (Welsh Council for Labour) were more constructive than those with the TUC. The decision to exclude the WCL from the General Council of the Wales TUC by the founding conference in 1974 did not embitter the WCL. In fact very little concern was raised at all in either the Executive Committee of the WCL or at its annual conference. For their part the Wales TUC voiced no objection to a series of rule changes approved at the 1975 WCL conference. Amongst the most important of these was a change in its name from "The Welsh Council of Labour" to "The Labour Party Wales"[2]. Also important was a change to the rules concerning delegates at the annual conference, which added the clause "all delegates must be individual members of the Labour Party". (Welsh Council of Labour; 1975: Conference Report) This last point meant that for the first time, trade union delegates to the conference had also be individual Labour Party members. These moves demonstrated the formalisation of distance between the Party and the trade union movement in Wales, or at least between the Party and the TUC in Wales. However, in other areas, contact between the unions and Party was increasing, particularly with the Labour Party affiliated unions, though the Wales TUC was still a key actor. The first meeting of the Wales TUC/Labour

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[2] For clarity the organisation is called the Welsh Council of Labour throughout this chapter.

Party Wales/Welsh Group of Labour MPs Liaison Committee was held in September 1977 in Transport House, Cardiff. The principle objective of the committee was to find means of obtaining closer co-operation between the Party, trade union movement, and MPs. Over the next few years, joint meetings of Labour Party and trade union members were held throughout Wales, and the Liaison Committee itself met on an approximately monthly basis. (Welsh Council of Labour; 13.9.77: Minutes of the Liaison Committee) The Liaison Committee was also used as a forum for discussion of the issues surrounding devolution, which is discussed in more detail below.

During the 1970s, prior to the setting up of the Wales TUC, and to an even greater extent after, the trade unions had a high institutional profile within the WCL. Trade unions accounted for a third of the seats on the Executive Committee of the WCL, and at this time the block vote counted for half of all the votes cast at the annual conference. Trade union members of the WCL Executive Committee frequently held its chairmanship. For example in 1977 Emlyn Hughes of the NUM became Chairman of the WCL. The WCL was also a tenant of the TGWU in Wales, though a distinction must be drawn between the role of the TGWU and the role of the Wales TUC. Therefore once the trade unions had come to a decision and had reached a policy within the Wales TUC, it was highly likely to become the policy of the WCL should they choose to make it so. In practice, the trade unions seldom attempted to use their institutional strength within the WCL to force a policy position on the Party. In general the trade union role in the WCL policy process was a small one, to their mutual satisfaction. Therefore only in areas where there was a direct trade union interest, or where there was a consensus on the policy, did Wales TUC policy tend to become WCL policy. Such policies included ageism, rights at work programmes, and human rights. As detailed below, this position was seriously challenged over devolution policy, because important differences existed between trade unions and between the unions and the WCL. Generally, though, unity was more apparent than division. In fact, such was the closeness between the Executive Committee of the WCL and the Wales TUC that in February 1979, at the height of the Winter of Discontent, the Executive passed a resolution stating, "This Executive Committee is

totally opposed to pit closures except where reserves are exhausted, and then only where alternative jobs are available with equal pay and conditions" (Welsh Council of Labour; 19.2.79: Minutes of the Executive Committee). There was considerable overlap of leading personnel in the trade union movement and the WCL. George Wright was the Secretary of the Wales TUC, the TWGU in Wales, and was a member of the Executive Committee of the WCL. The NUM, AEEU, USDAW and others all had members who were the regional secretaries of their unions, on the Wales TUC General Council and the Executive Committee of the WCL. These trade union leaders would sit in a Wales TUC meeting in the boardroom of Transport House on one day, and in a meeting of the Executive Committee of the WCL in the same place the next day.

The most significant actor in bringing together the Wales TUC and the Welsh Council of Labour was the TGWU, which had a distinct role, and in particular its regional secretary George Wright. The TGWU was the most dominant actor in both organisations. The TGWU secured every motion it ever put to the Wales TUC conference during this period, and although both the NUM and the AEEU both had high success rates in this regard, they tended to withdraw motions rather that put them to the test, which the TGWU never did (Wales TUC; 1974-1979: Annual Reports). At its first conference, the constitution of the Wales TUC was changed to include provision for voting to be taken on a card vote, weighted for the size of each union (Wales TUC; 1974: Annual Report), which clearly favoured TGWU as the largest union in Wales at this time, though in practice very few card votes were actually held. The TGWU provided accommodation and services to the Wales TUC beyond what the TUC reimbursed it for. In fact, it was largely due to this help that the Wales TUC was so firmly established. (Wales TUC; 1974: Annual Report) The TGWU also had the largest representation of the General Council of the Wales TUC during the 1970's, with five members. The AEEU had four members, the GMB forerunner NUGMU had two seats, and all the other unions had one, including the NUM. Likewise, the TGWU had the largest delegation at the annual conference with 45 members. AEEU had 36, NUGMU had 20, and the NUM had 17. NALGO and NUPE both had 12

members. The trades council and county associations of trades councils had 15 members of the general council and 91 representatives at conference. (Wales TUC; 1974 to 1979: Annual Reports) Therefore the TGWU`s position was unrivalled. Its position was further enhanced, as discussed above, by the unique autonomy and strength of is regional organisation.

The area where perhaps most co-operation existed between the trade unions, particularly the Labour Party affiliated unions, and the Labour Party in Wales was in campaigning during General Elections. At each of the 1974 general elections, the trade unions in Wales provided significant financial and organisational resources to the WCL and individual CLPs. The biggest financial donors were the NUM, which provided £2,500, and the TGWU, which provided £1,960 to CLPs alone. TGWU, NUM and NUPE also provided much in the way of organisational resources. Most typically, this organisational support included use of office facilities and full-time or part-time use of trade union officials during the campaign period. (Welsh Council of Labour; 1974: Election Report) In the approach to the 1979 General Election, the TULV (Trade Unionists for Labour Victory) organisation, which already existed at a national level, decided to convene meetings at the level of Labour Party regions. It also decided that the TGWU and GWMU should be charged with convening such meetings at the regional level. In Wales this task was given to George Wright of the TGWU, who would also serve as the new regional organisations' co-ordinator. This move would better co-ordinate trade union assistance for the WCL during the 1979 general election, though more traditional forms of individual union support for the Party would continue, the NUM, for example, giving £7,000 divided between the CLPs. (Basnett, David et. al.; 8.2.79: Letter; Welsh Council of Labour; 1979: Election Report) Close co-operation also existed during the devolution referendum campaign, which will be discussed in more detail below.

In summary, the first policy motion of the Wales TUC was to secure from the Labour Party a manifesto commitment on Welsh devolution. The policy was steadily refined over first two years of the Wales TUC, and was largely developed by George Wright and Dai Francis. For the Wales TUC, devolution

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was essentially about two things. Politically, it was about bringing democratic decision making closer to the people it most affected. Industrially, devolution was necessary in order to deal with the difficulties that would emerge as a result of the economic restructuring in Wales over the next two decades. The Wales TUC predicted these changes, and wanted more control over policy in Wales. Unity over the Wales TUC policy on devolution gradually broke down as the policy became more detailed, and differences between unions became harder to resolve. The area where most difficulty emerged was on the staffing of the proposed Welsh Assembly, a function that both the civil service unions and the local government unions wanted to fulfil, and over the issue of when and how local government should be reformed to fit in with the proposed new system of government in Wales, which NALGO was particularly concerned about.

Even though devolution was an important policy area for the Wales TUC, particularly during this period, it was much more than just a forum for developing this policy. The Wales TUC developed an important research and training function for Welsh trade unionists, and began to develop policies in other areas that were more akin to the aims of Welsh trade unionists than those of the TUC in London. The Wales TUC was also, most fundamentally, about unity and cooperation between trade unions in Wales, which was the very reason it was set up. As a result its leading figures were willing to compromise on devolution, or at least some of the more detailed points of their policy, in order to try and maintain unity, even though the leading figures of the Wales TUC controlled the majority of votes and resources. The strength of these leading figures, trade unionists like George Wright and Dai Francis, and the fact that their unions, the TGWU and NUM, were affiliated to the Labour Party, meant that this desire to achieve unity and the willingness to compromise in order to get it, was part of the debate over devolution policy within the Welsh Council of Labour itself. The compromise policy position on devolution arrived at with the Wales TUC, became the policy of the WCL as well.

Having considered the policy characteristics of the trade union movement in Wales, and in particular the trade union movement's policy on devolution, in the previous section, we shall now move on to consider in more detail the process by which the trade unions attempted to influence the wider development of devolution policy in Wales, and in particular the policy of the WCL. The Royal Commission on the Constitution, or Kilbrandon, Report was published in October 1973. Although the Wales TUC had not been formed before the Commission had completed its work, other organisations in the Welsh labour movement did contribute evidence. These included the Welsh Council of Labour and the Association of Welsh Local Authorities. The only trade union organisation in Wales to submit evidence was the Welsh Committee of the National Union of Teachers, and although the TUC submitted evidence, the TUC Regional Advisory Committees in Wales did not have the remit to do so. (Royal Commission on the Constitution; October 1973: Report) Therefore the main avenue to voice the opinions of the trade unions in Wales was through the WCL, though this of course was limited to the unions affiliated to the Labour Party. This partly explains why only the NUT submitted evidence of its own in Wales; it was the only union big and organised enough in Wales, not affiliated to the Labour Party, to be able to do so.

The WCL submitted its evidence to the Commission on the Constitution in January 1970. Central to the WCL evidence was the belief that the sovereignty of the UK Parliament should be maintained. As well as rejecting an Assembly for Wales with legislative powers, the WCL equally rejected a talking shop. What was proposed was a

> Reform of the machinery of government for Wales based on a radical
> reform of local government functions and structures, the extension of
> democratic control over the numerous nominated or statutory bodies
> operating in Wales, on the need for closer scrutiny of administration in
> Wales of the wider UK polices over many fields of government, and
> based on the need to provide the machinery within Wales which will
> make it possible for the UK Government to devolve responsibility for

those decisions, and for those functions which can adequately and satisfactorily be taken and carried out at the Welsh level.

Furthermore, this could only be done if there was provision for an all-Wales Council built into the structure of re-organised local government. Such a Council would therefore have executive, administrative, and advisory powers, and it would be directly elected. Although the Council would operate within the legislative decisions of the House of Commons, it would be consulted on the legislation of Parliament effecting Wales. The Council would be funded by a block grant from the Exchequer. (Welsh Council of Labour; 7.1.70: Evidence to the Royal Commission on the Constitution)

In February 1971 the Welsh Office, under Conservative Secretary of State Peter Thomas, published a consultative document entitled *The Reform of Local Government in Wales*. The document proposed to replace the existing local government structure in Wales, which consisted of 181 county, borough and district councils and over 600 parish councils, with a two-tier structure of main authorities, with seven county councils and thirty-six district councils. The justification put forward by the government was that they believed that local government should be powerful enough to take its own decisions, establish its priorities and allocate the resources available to it. The existing authorities, it argued, were too small and poorly resourced to perform this task, but a smaller number of larger authorities would be better equipped to do so. With this in mind the new county councils would have responsibility for highways and traffic management, education and personal social services. The new district councils would have responsibility for housing, refuse collection, clean air, and prevention of nuisances. (Welsh Office: February 1971; Consultative Document) This was a different view of local government reorganisation to that proposed by the WCL in 1965, which envisaged a two tier system, with an elected Welsh assembly as the top tier, and a second tier consisting of most purpose authorities. This formed the basis of its evidence to the Kilbrandon Commission. However, the Conservative proposals, and their subsequent implementation, were developed in isolation from the Kilbrandon Report. The Conservative reforms were implemented in April

1974, as the Labour Government elected in February 1974 was too late to stop the reforms. Therefore Labour's policy for devolution, with the elected assembly for Wales as the top tier of a two tier local government system in Wales, would either have to be amended or would necessitate another round of large scale local government reorganisation.

The Labour Party decided to proceed with the proposals for the setting up of an elected Welsh Assembly, but that because of the upheaval in local government that had just taken place, the Welsh Assembly should not involve a transfer of powers from local government as originally envisaged. A transfer of powers from the Welsh Office and of powers over nominated bodies would continue. Within the Welsh labour movement, three sets of views on future reform of local government were expressed from the WCL Executive Committee, the Wales TUC and the Welsh Office under John Morris. All three of these actors wanted the Assembly to be set up before local government was reformed, and each of them conceded that further reform of local government was indeed necessary. However, there were differences over the decision on how local government should be reformed. The WCL Executive Committee and the Wales TUC both wanted to develop a policy and timeframe for implementation that a Labour administration in the Assembly would have to carry out, though both also did not want this to delay the formation of the Assembly. These positions were expressed during the Annual Conference of the WCL in 1975, where it was also agreed to instruct the Executive Committee to undertake a critical review of local government. (Welsh Council of Labour; 1975: Conference Report) As part of this review, and in an attempt to gain unity on this issue, the Executive Committee held a consultation process with Party units, trade unions, and Labour local government members. (Welsh Council of Labour; August 1975: Future of Local Government in Wales) At its 1976 conference the WCL, on the basis of the consultation undertaken, agreed the follow motion, `Conference calls on the government to make a firm commitment to restructure local government in Wales, merging County and District Councils into single tier multi-purpose authorities, as a matter of urgency`. (Welsh Council of Labour; 1976: Conference Report) In a series of meetings following the conference decision,

the Local Government Sub-Committee of the WCL attempted to pursue the matter with Secretary of State John Morris; however he was reluctant to impose such an obligation on the new Assembly and therefore did not accept or act upon the resolution. (Welsh Council of Labour; 2.6.76; 3.6.76; 12.6.76: Minutes of the Local Government Sub-Committee)

Despite John Morris' refusal to act on it, some members of the Executive Committee, particularly the constituency delegates, continued to press for the conference decision to be implemented. As late as January 1977 a senior constituency delegate placed a discussion document on the agenda of the Executive Committee on the issue. (Ken Hopkins; January 1977: Discussion Document) However, by this time developments within the Wales TUC had begun to influence the views of the trade union delegates on the Executive Committee. The officers of the Wales TUC and the WCL met in early 1977 to attempt to reach a joint attitude in support of the Scotland and Wales Bill. (Welsh Council of Labour; 14.2.77: Executive Committee Minutes) It was agreed by all parties that a common approach was needed, particularly on the contentious issue of staffing the new Assembly. On this it was agreed that detailed discussions should take place between the unions most closely involved, NALGO, NUPE, G&MWU, and the Civil Service Unison, and the Labour Party. As a result of these discussions, a consensus was reached to leave the matter of staffing to the Assembly itself. (Welsh Council of Labour; 13.9.77: Minutes of the Liaison Committee) The trade union members of the WCL Executive Committee helped to ensure that this consensus view was accepted. George Wright in particular played a key role in ensuring that the position of the WCL Executive Committee moved to bring it more into line with that of the Government. A consensus therefore emerged between the three actors, and although differences persisted within the Executive Committee in particular, these tended to be over the details rather than the fundamentals. (Morris, John: 28/5/02)

In June 1974 the minority Labour Government, and the new Secretary of State for Wales John Morris in particular, published a consultative document entitled *Devolution within the United Kingdom: Some Alternatives for*

Discussion, as the Government's initial response to the publication of the
Kilbrandon Report. This document provided the basis for a series of
consultations with many organisations in Wales, and then in September 1974,
the Government published its first White Paper *Democracy and Devolution:
Proposals for Scotland and Wales*. This White Paper summarised the results
of the consultations in Scotland and Wales, and set out the Governments
decision to establish a directly elected Welsh Assembly. The Government
published a further White Paper, *Our Changing Democracy: Devolution to
Scotland and Wales*, in November 1975. In August 1976 a further White
Paper was published, *Devolution to Scotland and Wales: Supplementary
Statement*, which made some modifications to earlier proposals arising from
the comments made on the previous paper.

During each year he was Secretary of State for Wales, John Morris addressed
the Annual Conference of the Wales TUC, and had bilateral discussions with
individual trade unions (Morris, John: 28/5/02). In turn the Wales TUC
responded to Morris' White Paper on Devolution for Wales by saying that the

> proposals for executive authority only, in place of legislative authority
> as proposed by the Wales TUC, is a serious defect, and will prevent the
> Welsh assembly from fulfilling its proper function to control all
> aspects of Welsh affairs, within the overall sovereignty of the British
> Parliament. It is essential for the trade union and labour movement to
> strive for the Welsh assembly to be granted legislative authority, and to
> have the maximum control over Welsh affairs...(Wales TUC; 1975:
> Annual Report).

The Wales TUC also wanted to see both devolution Bills wrapped up together
because they were fearful that the question of Welsh devolution would be
abandoned. (Wales TUC; 1977: Annual Report) During the legislative
process in Parliament, however, this objective was to be undermined. For
their part, on 15 July 1974, the WCL forwarded a copy of their evidence to the
Commission on the Constitution, and a new Document, entitled *Devolution
and Democracy* which was approved at a special delegate conference on 22nd
June 1974[3]. These formed the basis of the WCL policy at that time, and were

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[3] No Labour MP spoke against the setting up of the Council at this Conference.

also echoed in the development of the Labour Party's own national policy on devolution. (Jones, Emrys; 15.7.02: Letter to John Morris)

Shortly after the February 1974 General Election, the Home Policy Committee of the NEC set up a Working Group on Devolution to examine the possible options for implementing the Party's manifesto commitments on devolution. Alex Kitson of the TGWU chaired the working group, and in addition to members of the NEC Home Policy Committee, it also included co-opted members from Wales and Scotland, though all of its meetings were held in London. At its third meeting it was agreed that the crucial decision for the working group was whether to recommend the establishment of some form of elected assemblies for Scotland and Wales. Overwhelming support was received for such assemblies, and it was therefore agreed that future meetings of the group should be concerned with what powers should be vested in the proposed assemblies, and that particular attention should be paid to the views of the Scottish and Welsh Councils of Labour. (NEC; 25.6.74: Minutes of the Devolution Working Group)

At its fifth meeting on 21st August 1974, the Devolution Working Group considered the response of the WCL to the paper prepared by the London office of the Party, entitled *Devolution the Major Issues* (NEC; July 1974: Research Paper 111). On the issue of independent revenue raising powers, the WCL expressed its view that the Welsh Council should be financed by a block grant from the UK Treasury, but that `...the possibility of raising money independently as an important long-term objective should be considered`. The paper also addressed the regional economic and industrial plans and the relationship between the nationalised industries and regional government. The WCL reported that it was their policy that the Welsh Council should have the power to `...prepare, expand and revise plans for the consideration of the [UK] Government`. However, to make this power worthwhile the WCL insisted that the Welsh Council should have the power to obtain information from and ask questions of the UK Government, national industries, other public bodies and from private companies. The Welsh Council should also have representation on the Boards of Nationalised Industries. Therefore, the

policy was that 'Wales would fully participate in what would still be a UK decision'. On local government, the WCL did not believe in a further reorganisation in the near future and that the new structure should be given a chance to settle down. Because the WCL did not support full legislative powers for the Welsh Council, and as a result legislation effecting Wales would still be dealt with in Parliament, the WCL was against any reduction in the number of Welsh MPs at Westminster and against ending the office of Secretary of State for Wales. In addition, it opposed the introduction of any form of PR in elections to the Welsh Council, on the basis that first past the post was as fair as any alternative and that it would give members a clear responsibility for a particular area. The WCL favoured a local government system rather than a cabinet system, on the basis that it would provide for maximum involvement of all members of the Council, and that it didn't want to set the Council up as a duplication of Westminster. Finally, the WCL was opposed to a referendum on the basis that the Party had fought the last two general elections on the commitment to some form of devolution. (NEC; July 1974: Research Paper 132)

In September 1974, the Devolution Working Group reported to the NEC with a draft document for approval entitled *Bringing Power Back to the People*, and on 5th September the NEC approved the document, which itself largely embraced the policy of the WCL. The only departure from this was in the use of the word "Assembly" to describe the proposed new devolved institution for Wales, rather than the word "Council", which had been used by the WCL (Welsh Council of Labour; 5.9.74: Press Release). The WCL policy was further elaborated at a meeting of the Executive Committee on 13th January 1975, when their policy was outlined on the electoral arrangements for the new body, which it now accepted would be called the Welsh Assembly. The Executive Committee proposed a system of first past the post, with the electoral areas contained within the existing Parliamentary constituencies. These proposals differed from the electoral arrangements for Westminster on the number of seats per constituency. It was proposed that each of the Parliamentary constituencies would elect two or three members to the new Assembly, each for fixed geographical areas within the constituency.

Constituencies with less than 55,000 electors would have two representatives, and those with greater than a 55,000 electorate would have one extra representative. The Executive Committee also considered the implications for their policy on the Assembly in light of the imminent setting up of the Welsh Development Agency, responsibility for which would pass from the Secretary of State to the Welsh Assembly upon its formation. It was agreed that the exercise of the powers over the WDA by the Assembly would be done in full co-operation with the UK Government, so as to avoid competition between Wales and the other regional development boards, though the proposed mechanisms for this co-operation were not detailed. (Welsh Council of Labour; 13.1.75: Minutes of the Executive Committee)

The Scotland and Wales Bill was introduced in Parliament in December 1976, and received its second reading by a majority of 45 votes. During the second reading debate, the Government announced that after the Bill had passed all its Parliamentary stages, but before the Assemblies were set up, referenda would be held in Scotland and Wales. As early as June 1974, the WCL, like the Wales TUC a year latter, had already declared its opposition to the holding of a referendum when at a special delegate conference, an Executive Committee document entitled *Devolution and Democracy* was overwhelmingly passed. The document argued that the Party's policy on devolution had been put to the electorate in its manifesto in 1970 and at each of the 1974 general elections. It also argued that at each of these elections over 70% of the Welsh electorate had voted for parties in favour of devolution. (Welsh Council of Labour; June 1974: Policy Document) However, the debate was never fully resolved. In 1974, newly elected MP Neil Kinnock entered the debate surrounding a referendum. In a letter published in the *Guardian* on 28 August 1974, he said `this constitutional question will probably be settled most fairly by a referendum, partly because it is the most accurate opinion poll and partly because the proceeding public campaigns provide an opportunity for unequalled public political education`(Guardian Newspaper; 28.8.74: Letter from Neil Kinnock MP). The WCL remained adamant however, and on 6 December 1976 Emrys Jones, the secretary of the WCL, wrote to every member of the Cabinet again expressing the opposition of the WCL to the

holding of a referendum on devolution. The government nevertheless

conceded a referendum in an attempt to secure the passage of the Bill through

Parliament. After slow progress in Committee, the Government attempted to

introduce a timetable on the Bill, but on 22 February 1977 this move was

defeated by a vote of 29 in the House of Commons. The Government then

undertook further consultations with the other Parties in Parliament, and on the

26 July 1977 it was announced that the Government would introduce separate

Bills for Scotland and Wales in the 1977-78 sessions. The Wales Bill was

published in November 1977. (Welsh Council of Labour; 2.8.78: The Record

of the Labour Government in Wales 1974-1978).

Following the publication of the Bill, the General Council of the Wales TUC

instructed the General Secretary, George Wright, to make arrangements to

participate in a joint campaign with the Labour Party in Wales in support of a

devolved assembly for Wales. On 20 January 1977 George Wright, Secretary

of the Wales TUC, and Emrys Jones, Secretary of the Labour Party Wales,

held a meeting to agree a joint campaign, and began to outline a series of

concrete proposals. On 14th November 1978 the officers of the WCL met with

the Wales TUC for further discussions on a joint strategy for the referendum.

There would be a joint campaign committee consisting of the officers of the

Labour Party Wales and the Wales TUC, and George Wright and Emrys Jones

would be joint secretaries. (Welsh Council of Labour; 20.1.77: Minutes of

Meeting between George Wright and Emrys Jones) On the eve of the

referendum every trade union member in Wales whose union was affiliated to

the Wales TUC received a letter from George Wright in his capacity as

General Secretary of the Wales TUC. In his letter he called upon every trade

unionist to vote for the Assembly and listed twelve reasons why they should

do so, essentially restating the justifications originally put forward by the

Wales TUC for proposing the Assembly in 1975. The emphasis was placed on

strengthening democracy and bringing decision-making closer to the people of

Wales, though it categorically rejected separatism and saw the Assembly as a

means to end once and for all the demands of separatists. (George Wright;

1.3.79: Letter) This support was crucial during the campaign, because as

Wright has argued "if the Wales Labour Party supported devolution it was just

another political act, if the Wales TUC supported it was the workers supporting it, and they weren't all members of the same party" (Wright, George: 8/5/02). Despite the efforts of the joint Wales TUC-WCL campaign, during the subsequent referendum, on the 1st March Welsh people rejected the Governments proposals.

In summary, through their dominance of the WCL, the Labour Party affiliated unions had been central actors in developing the policy on devolution during the 1960s, which was eventually submitted as evidence to the Royal Commission on the Constitution in 1970. In the period prior to the formation of the Wales TUC the policy that was developed was a reflection only of the Labour Party affiliated unions. The precise nature of the trade union influence on the development of devolution policy in Wales during the 1970s was conditioned in large part by the reform of local government in Wales, undertaken by the Conservative Government, and implemented in 1974. The reform presented the incoming Labour Government, the Labour Party and the trades unions in Wales with a policy dilemma. Did they proceed with the policy position of the Welsh Council of Labour, agreed as long ago as 1965 and submitted as evidence to the Royal Commission on the Constitution, which saw Welsh devolution as being the creation of a Welsh Council as part of a reformed two-tier system of local government? Or did they did they alter their policies to maintain the reformed system of local government the Conservatives had forged, and have a Welsh Assembly that would take over the powers of the Welsh Office and some of Wales' nominated bodies whilst leaving local government intact?

Initially, divisions emerged over the policy dilemma on devolution, between the Government on the one hand, which opted for the latter option, and the WCL and the Wales TUC on the other, which opted for the former. Eventually, the Wales TUC chose the government's preferred option, both for the sake of unity between unions and in response to the local government unions, who did not want yet another round of local government reform. Additionally, their decision reflected a more general desire to achieve unity with the newly elected Labour Government. In turn, as a result of the

dominance of trade unionists, who wanted to secure the amended Wales TUC policy over the key governing institutions of the WCL, it too amended its policy toward the Governments position. On areas of devolution policy that were less crucial to trade unions in general, and the internal politics of the Wales TUC in particular, their dominance over the WCL policy process was less pronounced and they took a back seat. Once the debate entered its Parliamentary stage, where crucial changes were made, particularly the conceding of a referendum on the issue, the influence of Welsh trade unions was much more peripheral, though during the ill-fated referendum campaign itself, the unions were again significant financial and organisational actors.

4.5 Conclusions

The trade unions had a vital role to play in the development of devolution policy in Wales throughout the late 1960s and the 1970s. The key actors were George Wright and Tom Jones of the Transport and General Workers Union, and Dai Francis of the National Union of Mineworkers. These three men dominated the influence of the trade unions on this policy process because of their unique position of strength. Dai Francis had a strong personal standing amongst Welsh trade unionists, he had been leader of the South Wales Area of the NUM for many years and had led the miners to victory in the 1972 strike. Francis was also privileged to have significant autonomy due to the characteristics of the NUM's national constitution. Tom Jones was a long-standing advocate of devolution in Wales and he played a key role in influencing the attitude of his replacement when standing down as regional secretary of the TGWU. However, it was George Wright who was the single most important figure in Welsh trade union politics throughout the 1970s. His position as regional secretary of the TGWU was unique, as it was the only union of any significant size to treat Wales as a region in its entirety, and to allow its regional office financial and policy autonomy. Wright counted as personal friends the leaders of some of the country's most powerful trade unions, and received the support of his own national leader Jack Jones, who had taken on the role of his mentor. Wright used his position of strength to guide the influence of Welsh trade unions on the devolution policy. Therefore

the significance of personalities on the development of Labour's devolution policy during this period was considerable.

The successful creation of the Wales TUC provided Welsh trade unionism with a means by which it could form a collective view, and thereby invested that view with a greater strength of legitimacy than in the past. Even though the opinions of individual trade unions and unionists, particularly the NUM, had been important previously, never before had unions had the ability to form global views about the Welsh economy and politics. The Wales TUC gave them that ability. It is significant therefore that the first policy opinion formed by the Wales TUC was a call for Welsh devolution. The decision to call for devolution was most strongly based upon an understanding that the Welsh economy was likely to undergo significant restructuring over the course of the following two decades. Welsh trade unionists felt that the best way to deal with this was by having some measure of control over it in Wales, where they could have an influence and where decisions could be taken by those most affected. The desire to maintain unity amongst trade unions had a determining influence over the precise nature of the devolution policy called for, particularly as it related to local government reform. Nevertheless, some areas of the policy were to prove intractable, as some unions were unable to compromise on issues central to their own memberships. The issue of staffing the proposed assembly was an intractable division which divided the local government and the civil service unions and eventually pushed both sets of unions into opposing the creation of the assembly at all. However, these unions were always outnumbered in the Wales TUC by the large industrial unions that did not have a direct vested interest in the proposed assembly and were therefore willing to compromise.

The Welsh Council of Labour was the main avenue for influencing the development of the devolution policy throughout the late 1960s and the 1970s. The same large industrial unions that dominated the Wales TUC also had the ability to dominate the Welsh Council of Labour through its key governing institutions, the Executive Committee and the annual conference. This ability to dominate was applied only in certain key areas of the policy on devolution.

On the fundamental question of an elected assembly the trade unions were vital in securing the consensus of support that existed in the Welsh Council of Labour. The unions also applied their power in areas key to their interests, so for example the policy of the Welsh Council of Labour on local government reform was changed to accommodate the local government unions. However, in other areas the trade unions took more of a backseat role. They had little interest in the electoral method of the proposed assembly and in some areas their ability to influence limited. The Wales TUC had the ear of the Secretary of State for Wales, but there was a limit to this influence and in any case the Secretary of State was in turn limited by other factors such as the size of his government's majority. Once the debate entered the Parliamentary arena, the Wales TUC had very little influence.

The trade unions were a crucial influence on guiding the Labour movement in Wales toward a specific policy direction on devolution during the 1960s and 1970s. In areas where the policy most directly affected trade union interests, this influence was most apparent. In areas where the interests of trade unions were less directly affected, they tended to step back. When the devolution debate entered Parliament, the trade unions had very little influence. The Government's decision to concede a referendum on the Scotland and Wales Bills was a reflection of difficulties it faced in the House of Commons, and it was directly against the express policy of the Wales TUC and the Welsh Council of Labour. If the trade unions had been able to secure their anti-referendum policy, then the Welsh Assembly might well have been created during the 1970s. However, largely due to the efforts of the trade unions, devolution had become a major policy issue for the Welsh Council of Labour and even after an unsuccessful referendum campaign it was never likely to wither quickly.

Chapter Five: The Return of Devolution Policy, 1979 to 1992

5.1   Introduction

The period under review in this chapter begins with the defeat of the Labour Party's devolution proposals at the referendum in 1979, and ends with the publication of the Labour Party Wales` manifesto for the 1992 general election. It therefore covers a period in which Labour was never in a position to implement a policy on devolution. Despite this, however, the trade unions in Wales continued to attempt to influence Labour's policy on devolution, which underwent a complete reversal during the 1980s. Although the Wales TUC immediately restated its commitment to an elected Welsh Assembly after the defeat of the 1979 referendum, it soon became more pragmatic. For much of the decade, the Wales TUC placed immediate economic priorities at the top of its agenda and called specifically for the creation of a Welsh Regional Economic Planning Council, a policy which the Labour Party Wales subsequently adopted. The increasing distinction of two sets of relationships, one between the Wales TUC and the Labour Party Wales and the other between the affiliated unions and the Labour Party Wales, was a key institutional development. It meant that the affiliated unions were able to emphasise one perspective while the Wales TUC, with its much wider membership of non-Labour Party affiliated unions, was able to emphasis another. The effect of this development became increasingly significant as the decade progressed.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section considers the structure of the trade union movement in Wales from 1979 to 1992. This section also considers the relationships between the trade union movement and Labour Party in Wales during the same period. The second section examines the devolution policy preferences of the trade unions in Wales until 1992, following the referendum defeat in 1979. In particular, it focuses on the pragmatic approach to policy priorities within the Wales TUC during this period. The third section examines the Labour Party's devolution policy process, and attempts to detect the trade union influence on this process.

5.2   The Trade Union Movement and Labour Party Relations in Wales

During the 1970s, a small number of large unions acted as an inner circle within the Labour Movement in Wales. By virtue of the size of their collective block vote, these unions had the institutional ability to make the majority of decisions, within both the Wales TUC and the Labour Party Wales. Although this inner circle continued to operate during the 1980s, there were some important changes to its composition. At the beginning of the decade, the NUM was still a major force in the Welsh Labour Movement, but by the mid-1980s its position was undermined as result of a considerably reduced membership, and consequently it fell out of the inner circle. In addition, as its membership declined so the UK NUM could no longer afford to maintain a full time administration in Wales. As the NUM declined, other unions, most especially the TGWU, GMB and to a lesser extent the AEEU, became more important, the latter two in part because of a series of amalgamations which increased their size. Unison, which was itself the result of an amalgamation, became the largest trade union in Wales, but its power and influence were undermined by an unwritten pact against it between the other major unions. The explanation for Unison's marginalisation appears to lie in the personality and politics of the Regional General Secretary Derek Gregory, who was rarely able to secure the confidence of the other union leaders (Gale, Anita: 14.11.99), and whose politics were often in conflict with that of the inner circle (Lewis, Huw: 25.8.99; Hart, Edwina: 20.1.00). The change in the composition of the inner circle would have important implications for the policy goals of the Welsh trade union movement. These changes, together with the organisational factors discussed below, also contributed to altering the relationship between the trade unions and LPW (Labour Party Wales). By the end of the 1980s, there was an increasing distinction between the relationship of the Wales TUC and the LPW on the one hand, and the affiliated unions and the LPW on the other. In effect, there became two distinct sets of relationships between the trade union movement and the Labour Party in Wales.

During the 1980's the Wales TUC underwent a period of increasing professionalisation. The most significant development was the appointment of David Jenkins as full-time general secretary in September 1983, together with an administrator and a researcher (Wales TUC; 1983: Annual Report). Although previously resisted by the members of the Wales TUC, agreement was finally reached over the appointment of a full-time general secretary because of the wider devolution of administrative functions to the Welsh Office that took place under the 1979 to 1983 Conservative Government. As early as 1980, the new Conservative Secretary of State had begun the process of changing the funding for the Welsh Office from separate funding for different Welsh Office functions, towards a system of one block grant to be apportioned at the discretion of the Welsh Office. Anticipation of the greater demands that this change would put on the Wales TUC finally won the argument in favour of a full-time general secretary. The creation of this post meant that the head of the Wales TUC was no longer able to be head of a major Labour Party affiliated union or a member of the LPW Executive Committee, as George Wright had been. This would help to ensure, formally at least, a sense of detachment between the two organisations. Following Labour's defeat at the 1987 election, this professionalisation resulted in a major marketing exercise that would attempt to raise the public image of the Wales TUC, and would be part of a wider move to increase distance between it and the LPW. (Wales TUC; 1987: Annual Report)

The most apparent change in the Wales TUC's relationship with the LPW during this period was the decline of the Liaison Committee. As discussed in the previous chapter, the Wales TUC/Wales Labour Party/Welsh Parliamentary Labour Group Liaison Committee was established during the 1970s to facilitate coordination of policy across the three wings of the labour movement in Wales. (Labour Party Wales; April 1980: Report). Throughout the early 1980s, the Liaison Committee continued to play a central role, helping to coordinate policy on industrial matters, as well as health, education, and social services. (Labour Party Wales; 1980-1987: Minutes of the Liaison Committee) Indeed, the objective at the start of the 1980s, at least as far as the

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Wales TUC was concerned, was 'to establish closer links with the Labour Party Wales than had previously been the case' (Wales TUC; 1980: Annual Report). As the decade progressed, however, the Liaison Committee became less relevant, and the decisions reached within it less meaningful. Prior to 1987, there were 16 meetings of the Liaison Committee, but they were held with decreasing regularity and were sparsely attended by the both Wales TUC and Parliamentary Labour Party, and only the Executive Committee of the LPW continued to attend in any appreciable number (Labour Party Wales; 1979 onwards: Minutes of the Liaison Committee). Although no formal decision was ever taken to disband the Liaison Committee, after 1987 only three further meetings were held, the last one in 1991.

In other areas too, formal contact between the Wales TUC and the LPW declined. Throughout the early 1980s, trade union related issues regularly found their way on to the agenda of the Executive Committee (EC) of the LPW, but from the mid-1980s such references were rare. At the same time the resolutions passed within the LPW EC gradually became more moderate. For example, in 1979 the executive passed a motion which stated that "this Executive Committee is totally opposed to pit closures except where reserves are exhausted, and then only where alternative jobs are available with equivalent pay and conditions" (Labour Party Wales; 19.2.1979: Minutes of the Executive Committee). In 1981 a resolution from the Wales TUC was passed by the LPW EC that included a commitment to unilateral nuclear disarmament. After 1983, however, such resolutions were almost entirely absent, few were trade union related, and most were moderate. References to national politics were also absent during this latter period, and until the rise of devolution as a serious possibility again the work of the EC would focus on low politics. Formal contact declined to such as extent that in 1987, from about the time the Party abandoned incomes policy and embarked on its policy review, the TUC ended formal contact completely.

Throughout this period, however, informal contact continued, especially in Wales. Part of the reason why the Welsh Liaison Committee declined and another similar body did not rise to take its place was the administrative

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expense, and the Wales TUC and the LPW continued to be slimly resourced during the 1980s. Formal bodies and meetings are expensive to convene and administer, whereas the informal "down the corridor" meetings which were adopted were virtually cost free. (Jenkins, David: 16.4.02). This informal contact was reinforced by the geographical closeness of the labour movement in Wales, as in 1978 Transport House in Cardiff became home not only to the TGWU, but the Labour Party Wales, the Wales TUC and UNISON. The Wales TUC remained enthusiastic about maintaining communications with the LPW, but informal contact was now more practical. Nevertheless, the Wales TUC did start to place increasingly more emphasis on contact with Labour's front bench, rather than with the LPW (Jenkins, David: 16.4.02).

As informal contact became increasingly important as a means of cooperation between the Wales TUC and the LPW, the reverse trend became apparent in the relationship between the LPW and the Labour Party affiliated unions. At the start of the 1980s much was made of the informal relationships,

> the invaluable aspect of the Labour Party Wales is the day to day contact with full-time trade union officers and the way in which we assist one another in the general problems affecting the labour and trade union movement in Wales. The personal relationship development over a period of years is vital to the co-operation occurring across the whole field of industrial and political matters. (Labour Party Wales; April 1980: Report)

As the decade progressed, however, the affiliated unions increasingly relied upon formal channels as a means to ensue their objectives within the LPW. The trade union membership of the EC actually increased from 13 in 1979 to 14 by 1989. (Labour Party Wales; 10.1.83: Minutes Composition of the Executive Committee Sub Committee) This increased representation allowed the trade unions to help moderate the LPW EC, for example leading the expulsion battle against two Militant members of the LPW EC. (Smith, Kenneth, and Morgan, Hubert; March to April 1982: Correspondence)

The changing nature of the relationship between the affiliated unions and the LPW was in large part a reflection of the wider economic and societal changes

that took place during the 1980s, where the image of smoke filled rooms was an electoral liability. It became clear that the party's relationship with the unions would have to be tidied up. In Wales other factors, such as the role of personalities, were also important. The most important personal/informal relationship was between the General Secretary of the LPW and the trade union members of the EC. 1984 saw the retirement of Hubert Morgan, the Secretary of the Labour Party Wales, who had forged a close working relationship with trade unionists. The process of appointing his successor was fraught with controversy. LPW organiser Anita Gale eventually won on appeal, thereby defeating the preferred candidate of the Neil Kinnock and of the trade unionists on the LPW EC (Gale, Anita: 21.8.00). The politics of her appointment did much to undermine the crucial position held by the General Secretary of the Party in Wales, and damaged relationships with the Party Leader, the EC, and perhaps most crucially, the key trade unions in Wales. As a result the strength of a united organisation was undermined by bitter internal factionalism.

The position of the General Secretary of the Labour Party Wales is clearly a central one, but in general the holder of the post works in close co-operation with the officers of the EC, and in particular the Chair. Therefore both the role and appointment of the LPW Chair are important. Until 1990, for the purposes of electing the Chair and Vice Chair, the EC was split into three sections – trade unions, CLPs and other groups. The most senior member of each of these sections would become Chair and Vice Chair on a rotating basis. There was a high turnover of membership in the CLP section, and members sometimes became Chair or Vice Chair after only two or three years of service. This led to a change in the rules in 1990 that meant that the most senior member of the EC became Chair or Vice Chair irrespective of the section they were elected under. This rule change would, of course, benefit the section with the greatest security of tenure – the trade unions. Other sections of the EC had to face a much wider electoral system each year and the trade union section was effectively secured by a series of deals between the leading trade unions. On this basis, a member who represents a major trade union only had to maintain the confidence of their union general secretary to

remain in place for an indefinite period of time. As a result of rule changes during the 1980s, therefore, trade unionists were much more likely to become Chair and Vice Chair of the LPW EC than members of any other section of the labour movement.

From the mid-80s, the TULV/F/P Committee, a body of Party affiliated unions that continued to develop and mutate throughout the period since the late seventies, became more important as a means for cooperation. The original TULV (Trade Unionists for Labour Victory) set itself the task of improving Labour's electoral machine in advance of the 1983 general election. It developed four key features that would continue in its successor bodies, including an emphasis on project based aid, developing close links with CLPs particularly in "target seats", Party recruitment and training for both Party and union officials. In October 1986, the successor body TUFL (Trade Unionist For Labour) agreed a constitution that placed renewed emphasis on the need for training, and began to strengthen its commitment to CLPs. At the Welsh level, as at the UK level, criticisms were made about the TULV/F/P bodies. It was suggested that the project-based nature of the funding from these bodies was used to buy petty influence. It was also claimed that each union donated a derisory sum and that the TULV/F/P bodies suffered from a lack of co-ordination. (Lewis, Huw: 25.8.99) In defence of what was perceived to be a hoarding instinct amongst unions, one region general secretary has stated that "this is union money and it remains so until the unions decide to give it to the Party; the Party has no absolute right to it" (Hancock, Jim: 21.2.00). In general, although the TULV/F/P bodies had the potential to facilitate trade union involvement in the Labour Party, they suffered from internal weaknesses that limited their ability to do so.

In summary, during the 1980s there was an increasing distinction in the relationships between Wales TUC and the Labour Party Wales on the one hand, and the affiliated unions and the Labour Party Wales on the other. This was the result of two key factors: the implications of a change in the composition of the inner circle of leading trade unions and the increasing professionalisation of the Wales TUC. This had the effect of depoliticising the

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Wales TUC as an organisation, at least in an overtly partisan sense. It wasn't so much that the trade unionists of the Wales TUC were less willing or able to ensure that Wales TUC policy became Labour Party policy, but that the key issues of the LPW and the Wales TUC were increasingly different. The Wales TUC increasingly concerned itself with industrial rather than political matters. In practice this meant the decline of the Liaison Committee and of formal Wales TUC resolutions to the LPW EC, but these were supplemented by an emphasis on informal exchanges. As will be shown, the one exception to this was devolution policy. In the relationship between the LPW and its affiliated unions, the reverse trend happened, with increasingly formality in contact. The reasons for this were both electoral, at a time when more transparency was needed in the relationship, and linked to personalities. As a result trade union representation increased on the WLP EC, and a subtle rule change was instigated which meant that trade unionists were much more frequently Chair of the WLP, and an increased emphasis was placed on other bodies such as TULV.

5.3   The Trade Union Movement's Policy on Welsh Devolution

At its annual conference in 1979, just three days after the unsuccessful referendum, the Wales TUC restated its commitment to Welsh Devolution. The conference agreed the following statement:

> There are undoubtedly those who will say that the overwhelming rejection of the government's proposals by the electorate in Wales should cause us to abandon such a policy. This line of reason is an interesting one, since a similar view was also advanced after the referendum on continued membership of the EEC. It would seem to indicate that we should take more notice of referendum results than of electoral results, since we would certainly not abandon our support of the Labour Party in the event of the Party being rejected at an election.... When you find yourself in a minority you must redouble your efforts to convince others of the logic of your case. We campaigned on the basis of need, that need still exists. (Wright, George: 8.5.02)

The key exponents of devolution within the Wales TUC, however, did not "go in all guns blazing, shouting 'we lost because of you'"; instead they adopted

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the more gradual approach of rebuilding support (Wright, George: 8.5.02). During the 1980s, the Wales TUC conference would continue to debate and pass resolutions in favour of devolution, and trade union members of the Labour Party Wales EC would continue to seek to influence Party policy. Just as in the 1970s, the Wales TUC policy on devolution was underpinned by a strong commitment to regional economic policy. During a period of economic decline in Wales, the Wales TUC continually refined its regional policy, and pressed the Labour Party and the Conservative Welsh Office to introduce it. The sense of urgency increased as the levels of unemployment grew, but generally the Wales TUC moderated its demands and prioritised the industrial rather than the political. This was a subtle, but nevertheless significant, departure from its stance during the 1970s.

In 1980, the Wales TUC annual report restated its prognosis that Wales was facing major structural decline. As the decade progressed, its response to this structural decline altered. In 1980, the General Council continued to campaign for the maintenance of Wales' existing economic base, and called for the introduction of import controls on coal and steel. (Wales TUC; 1980: Annual Report) Even though the Wales TUC Conference continued to pass resolutions in support of protecting the coal industry in Wales until 1990, the General Secretary and most of the General Council had abandoned this as a realistic economic policy long before. (Wales TUC; 1990: Annual Report) As early as 1982, the General Council placed its emphasis on securing inward investment from outside Wales (Wales TUC; 1982: Annual Report). This change did not occur overnight, however; in 1981 the Wales TUC General Council was still suggesting that the main emphasis of regional aid should be on employment subsidies, even though a subsidy was proposed for the service as well as manufacturing industries. (Wales TUC; 1981: Annual Report) The Wales TUC, however, had radical plans for overcoming the problems in the Welsh economy. In its evidence to the TUC working party on regional policy in 1981, the Wales TUC General Council argued that

> an essential element in any national economic planning exercise was
> the establishment of a Wales Economic and Development Council for

would be responsible for drawing up and implementing an economic plan for Wales, a plan which would naturally be part of the national plan. This council would comprise of representatives nominated by the Wales TUC, CBI Wales, and the County and District Authorities and would include in its membership Welsh Office Ministers and other Welsh Office representatives. (Wales TUC; 1981: Annual Report)

The Wales TUC continued to argue for the creation of such a body, and by 1986 its policy had been endorsed by the Labour Party Wales, and a firm commitment had been given by Labour's front bench team that such a body would be established by a Labour Government. (Wales TUC; 1986: Annual Report) The policy was subsequently included in Labour's 1987 manifesto.

The changes in the composition of the inner circle of trade unions in Wales, referred to above, had important implications for the policy orientation of the Wales TUC and the trade union movement in Wales more generally. In particular, the decline of the NUM, always the most political of unions, as a member of the inner circle meant that the priorities of the trade union movement shifted from political to the industrial concerns. This led to a more pragmatic approach. Although the Wales TUC immediately renewed its commitment to Welsh devolution after the referendum in 1979, very little mention was actually made of it by either the General Council or the Annual Conference until a resolution from NALGO was agreed in the build up to the 1987 general election. The resolution instructed the General Council to ascertain the policy position of each of the main opposition parties in Wales toward devolution. The General Council's report stated that there was a degree of fluidity apparent in each of the policy positions of the parties. The report gave the General Council an opportunity to outline its own policy position, stating that

> the main priority of an incoming government must be to develop strategies to generate employment, it would not be logical to start restructuring local or regional government at a time when local government bodies would themselves be required to play a major role in any recovery programme envisaged by the main opposition parties...[and as for regional government] whilst constitutional changes aimed at extending democracy have many important and fundamental attributes, the time consuming nature of such reform would inevitably serve as an initial inhibitor to speedy implementation of change in other areas. As a result the Wales TUC would not support

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proposals aimed a regional or local government reform in the lifetime
of the next government. (Wales TUC; 1986: Annual Report)

This remained the policy of the Wales TUC until 1991. Therefore, the more
moderate character of the controlling group of Welsh trade unions led to
moderation in the Wales TUC's policy on Welsh devolution.

A TGWU resolution passed at the Wales TUC conference in 1991, which
came in response to a policy debate in the LPW about the future of Welsh
devolution, called for caution in the introduction of any changes. The
resolution argued that three factors should be taken into account: firstly, that
there must be no reduction in the number of Welsh MPs at Westminster;
secondly, that the Secretary of State should remain as a member of the
Cabinet; and thirdly that prior agreement should be reached on local
government reorganisation, with the duties of all participating bodies and the
powers and functions of an Assembly being clearly defined. As in 1986, the
Wales TUC General Council continued to argue that economic recovery was
an overriding priority, and that any such reform of the machinery of
government should take place only after a Labour Government had
consolidated its position based on economic and social priorities. Notably,
however, the Wales TUC policy did not explicitly rule out reform for the
lifetime of the next government, as it had in 1986. NALGO attempted to
amend the TGWU motion, by adding "public services should be administered
as closely as possible to the people of Wales by public servants independent of
central government", but this was lost on a card vote. (Wales TUC; 1991:
Conference Report) Part of the consideration when developing the policy in
the approach to the 1992 election was the fact that the Labour Leader Neil
Kinnock had opposed the proposals in 1979. The policy therefore had to be
couched in terms that were acceptable to him, or at least not in a way that
would make his backing of them look like an electorally embarrassing U-turn.

The Wales TUC policy on devolution in the 1980s and early 1990s altered
significantly from its position prior to 1979, which called for legislative
powers and reflected the "...old policies of the NUM and the left and

Communist Party in Wales". As the Wales TUC's devolution policy reformed after 1979, two aspects were emphasised: firstly, that devolution in Wales should only take place with a simultaneous reform of government in England; and secondly that changes in Wales should effectively be seen in the context of local government, rather than constitutional reform, though the Wales TUC continued to argue a that an elected Welsh Assembly should take over the powers of the Secretary of State in overseeing services like health, housing, and education. This remained the policy of the Wales TUC throughout the decade, "even as we [the Wales TUC] were moving forward into the 1990s when we were putting views into the Labour Party Shaping the Vision document we were still talking about it as being a matter of local government reorganisation". (Wright, George: 8.5.02)

5.4   The Development of the Labour Party Wales` Devolution Policy

The 1979 general election manifesto of the Labour Party Wales contained few specific recommendations on future devolution policy. Having seen its proposals defeated at the referendum just months before, the Party was in no mood to tackle such a divisive issue. The manifesto did state that the problems the Party's devolution proposals were designed to deal with remained, and these were listed as democratic control over nominated bodies in Wales, democratic control of the NHS in Wales, and a wasteful system of local government. The only policy proposal contained in the manifesto was for a strengthened Welsh Office, which would take the form of a single block grant from the Treasury, instead of funding for specific areas. This, the Party claimed, would give the Secretary of State for Wales "the power to re-allocate available funds between different programmes, so that he can respond more effectively to the needs of Wales and make sure that money allocated to Wales is used in the best possible way". (Labour Party Wales; 1979: General Election Manifesto) In the event it was a policy the Conservative Government would implement.

Devolution remained a little considered policy up until 1983. At a meeting of the Wales Liaison Committee in 1982, it was again agreed that the Party

should not put any specific recommendations for democratic devolution to the electorate at the 1983 general election. (Labour Party Wales; 23.7.92: Minutes of the Liaison Committee) The 1983 manifesto, however, did contain proposals for the creation of a new Economic Planning Council for Wales, which would have representatives from the Welsh Office, trade unions, employers and local authorities, and would be chaired by the Secretary of State for Wales. This was, as we saw above, originally a Wales TUC policy. The Wales TUC was also successful in getting Labour to accept its policies on the coal and steel import controls. (Labour Party Wales; 1983: General Election Manifesto) From 1986 onwards the idea of an elected Welsh Assembly increasingly started to feature on the agendas of the Executive Committee (Gale, Anita: 28.5.02). Increasing numbers of people were beginning to think that if Wales had an Assembly then many of the policies of the Thatcher Government could have been prevented in Wales (Touhig, Don: 10.5.02). The position of the Wales TUC remained cautions, however, as it believed that the issue of devolution was a potentially divisive diversion from the real priorities of any incoming Labour Government. Tackling unemployment was the first priority, and therefore more practical solutions were discussed; it was felt that only when this issue had been tackled effectively should Labour embark on any large-scale reform of local and regional government. Only after Labour's defeat at the 1987 general election did the Wales TUC began to rethink its position. (Jenkins, David: 16.4.02)

Though it did not specifically refer to an elected Welsh Assembly, the 1987 election manifesto of the LPW stated that reform of local government, although necessary, was not a priority and would only be implemented in the second term of a Labour Government. Instead, the priority for the next Labour Government would be tackling unemployment and economic decline. A joint LPW/Wales TUC document, which called for the introduction of Regional Economic Planning Councils, underpinned this policy. (Labour Party Wales; 15/16.5.87: Conference Report) On democratic change for Wales, which the Party saw in terms of local government reform, the manifesto was more circumspect. It simply stated that the proposed Council would, by creating jobs as a priority, help prepare the way for "later more radical change

in the machinery of government of Wales as in the rest of Britain...change in

Wales will proceed in step with the leading region or regions in England".

(Labour Party Wales; 1987: General Election Manifesto) Having lost a third

successive general election in October 1987 the LPW Executive Committee

set up a working party to review its policy on devolution. The working party

subsequently agreed to prepare a paper setting out all available options for the

future of local government in Wales. It also agreed a timetable for

consultation that would enable a policy to be agreed in good time for the next

general election. The consultation was seen as being part of the wider Policy

Review that was being undertaken by the NEC, and would call for the creation

of an elected Welsh Assembly and similar bodies in English regions that

requested them. (Labour Party Wales; May 1988: Executive Committee

Statement to Conference)

The *Options for the Future of Local Government in Wales* document, which

was the basis for LPW consultation, was a watershed document. For the first

time since before 1979, it was an EC document that was designed to address

the issue of an elected Assembly for Wales. The document listed its objective

as "a policy to promote good local services and strong local democracy

capable of winning public support and of implementation by the next Labour

Government". The four options detailed for consideration were:

1. No change in the structure of local authorities. Changes in finance to restore local democracy and provisions of resources to rebuild services.
2. Abolish county councils. All local government functions to be exercised by district councils. Elected bodies to be set up in Wales and those English regions which so request, to take over central government role exercised in regions.
3. Abolish county and district councils – replace them with a single tier of about 20 most-purpose local authorities in Wales responsible for all local government functions. Set up elected body for Wales to deal with Welsh Office functions and functions carried out on an all-Wales basis by nominated bodies, and similar elected bodies in English regions.
4. Single-tier most-purpose bodies based on county councils, with abolition of district councils and a stronger role for community councils as representative bodies for local opinion, with increased

spending powers. This could apply with or without elected
regional bodies.

(Labour Party Wales; May 1988: Executive Committee Statement)

Option two was the preferred option of the NEC, as detailed in its own

consultation document *Local Government Reform in England and Wales*,

whereas option three was the long-standing view of the LPW.

At the 1989 LPW Conference, the EC reported on the results of the first year

consultation. The report concluded that very few respondents favoured option

one, while about 60% favoured option three, the LPW's choice, and that

support was evenly split between options two and four. About 75% favoured

the establishment of an elected regional government for Wales in one form or

another. There was unanimity in maintaining the Secretary of State for Wales

and the same number of Welsh MPs in Westminster, and very few respondents

favoured a referendum. As a result the Executive Committee decided that the

second phase consultation should be a more detailed consideration of the

preferred option three. The second phase paid particular attention to questions

grouped under several headings. These included:

Powers and Functions:
1.   How should the present local authority functions be distributed in
      the new dual structure?
2.   Which Welsh Office functions, presently unaccountable, should be
      given to the regional government or devolved to the most purpose
      authorities?
Finance:
1.   Can the Wales regional government be given legislative powers
      without the right to levy taxes and raise the necessary revenue?
2.   Would an additional Wales tax be an unacceptable burden to tax-
      payers and could it prove a disincentive in attracting industry and
      much needed employment?

The Secretary of State for Wales:
1.   What should the role and powers of the Secretary of State be in
      relation to role and power of the leader of the regional
      government?
2.   Which of the present powers and functions of the Secretary of
      State will be transferred to the regional government?

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3. What should be done to meet the needs of thousands of civil servants and public service workers who will be affected by the redistribution of powers and functions in a reorganisation?

Elections and Boundaries:

1. How many elected members of the regional government should there be and how many regional government constituencies?

2. Should the proceedings of the regional government be based on the local government or parliamentary model?

(Labour Party Wales; March 1989: Executive Committee Interim Report)

There were four consultation sessions held throughout Wales for Party units and affiliated organisations to contribute, as well as a further invitation to submit written evidence. A meeting was also held with Welsh Labour MPs on 16th January 1990. Amongst the comments made at the meeting by Barry Jones, then Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Wales, was that Wales should move in parallel with England. Barry Jones also believed that Scotland would get its Assembly with legislative and taxation powers in the first year of a new Labour Government, England would not want the same and that as a result Wales should have neither legislative or taxation powers. Ann Clwyd suggested the inclusion of PR, whereas Ron Davies emphasised maximising powers for grass roots. Rhodri Morgan argued that it was wrong to treat local government reform and regional government reform as the same thing; Alan Michael did not comment. (Hopkins, Ken; 16.1.90: Hand Written Notes) The important point here is the fragility of support for devolution in the PLP Welsh Group. These MPs, who would go on to be leading figures in the development of devolution, were articulate in expressing their views but as will be shown below, did not always follow up on what they said.

On 6 January 1990, prior to the full EC of the LPW approving the final report on March 19th, for approval at the annual conference in May, the Chair of the Working Party, Ken Hopkins, wrote to Neil Kinnock to inform him of the position the consultation had reached in order to "put you [him] in the picture and ensure that it will be acceptable to you [him]". Hopkins stated that he was disappointed that he had not received detailed answers on some of the critical questions, though he added "perhaps we were expecting too much in hoping

that the Party units might be able to go into detail in answer to questions some of which require considerable expertise". On a more substantive point Hopkins spelt out the position his report would take; "my considered opinion is that the regional government should be the top tier of local government, a sort of County Council for the Whole of Wales...", and he asked "I am wondering how far you go along with this county council analogy for the Welsh regional government?" On a "politically sensitive point" concerning the size and area of most purpose authorities, Hopkins stated that there should be about twenty, as the Labour Party Wales Conference had already agreed. He also said that "I think it may well save the Party a great deal of bitterness if the decision on actual boundaries is left either to the Labour Government in office or to the first Welsh regional government". (Hopkins, Ken; 6.1.90: Letter)

Kinnock`s response was vociferous in its criticism. He stated that the "stronger the emphasis on local government the better", but it was on the issue of local government reorganisation that he was most damning. He felt that 20 to 25 councils would be insufficient, as it would mean that a lot of communities would be obliged to combine with others, and cited the example of Torfaen and Rhondda to illustrate his point. He added

If the crucial decision on boundaries, sizes and numbers of local councils is left to a Labour Government or a regional government, the central question will be dodged. Division or not, the party that wants to improve democracy must be a party with the guts to face up to the democratic duty of making a decision on this basic matter. If the Party won't do it then no Government that I lead will do it. How could we? What would be our mandate? And – by definition – if this decision doesn't pre-date the election, what would be the basis upon which we would engage in wholesale reorganisation of local government and the establishment of an elected regional government body anyway?

He went on to say,

The fact is that if the Party in Wales can't or won't confront the question of local government reorganisation the then whole business is absurd. There can only be validity in the Party's desire to have different local government and/or

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a system of regional government – Assembly or not – if the Party is willing not only to express desires but to produce <u>detail</u>. (Kinnock, Neil; 10.1.90: Letter)

Therefore the crucial issue at this junction was local government reorganisation, not the details of a Welsh Assembly. Kinnock knew that any attempt to reorganise local government, including the abolition of a whole tier of authorities, was likely to be fraught with controversy. The battle of the boundaries would set community against community, and perhaps more crucially, CLP against CLP. Reluctant or unwilling to take the responsibility Kinnock, wanted the LPW Report and its contributors to produce the detail on how it would be achieved.

In the months following Kinnock's letter, and before the publication of the final report that was approved by conference, detail was indeed produced, though it was not entirely what Kinnock had hoped for. The final report said that although the 1989 conference had agreed that the number of most-purpose authorities should be between 17 and 25, the second year of consultation revealed strong support for an increase in their number. The report therefore recommended that "the number of most-purpose authorities should be between 25 and 30, and that in designating their boundaries, due account should be taken of the sense of local identity, tradition, population density and geographical area and topography". It also said that the exact boundaries would only be determined by the Secretary of State for Wales after appropriate consultation. (Labour Party Wales; May 1990: Report) Therefore the Reports' conclusions were altered, to an extent, to accommodate the Leader.

The Working Party Report also contained recommendations on the creation of a Welsh Assembly. Although it was the Policy Review of the NEC that concluded Wales would have an Assembly, the LPW was charged with producing the detail of the policy. It recommended that there should be two elected members of the Assembly from each parliamentary constituency, who would be elected on a four year fixed term basis and that the proceedings of the regional government should be based on the local government model. Salaries were to be paid to members of the regional government and the most-

purpose authorities, but a decision on the method of election was deferred awaiting an NEC decision. The Report also concluded that the Regional government should not have the power of legislation or taxation, which would remain the power of Parliament, that the Secretary of State for Wales would remain a member of the Cabinet; and that it should be the duty of the Secretary of State to consult with the Assembly over legislation affecting Wales. (Labour Party Wales; May 1990: Report) These proposals formed the basis of the Labour Party Wales' 1992 manifesto. (Labour Party Wales; 1992: General Election Manifesto)

In summary, between 1979 and 1983 the LPW was in no mood to discuss the divisive issue of devolution. In 1983, the Wales TUC succeeded in getting the LPW to accept the idea of an economic council for Wales. Although the idea of democratic devolution was considered by the LPW EC in advance of the 1987 election, only after its third defeat did it take the issue seriously. Although it was the NEC policy review that determined that Wales would have an elected assembly, it was the LPW that was charged with producing the detail of the policy. In the event, the LPW EC settled on a model that was not the preferred option of the NEC. The contentious issue, however, was the creation of the assembly itself, but the consequent reform of local government in Wales.

5.5   Conclusions

During the 1980s, there were fundamental changes in the political characteristics of the inner circle of Welsh trade unions, the most significant of which was the decline of the NUM. These changes to the inner circle led to new types of relationships between trade unions and the Labour Party in Wales. For the first time, there emerged two sets of relationships between the trade union movement and the Labour Party. The Wales TUC relationship with the LPW became less formal with the decline of key institutions such as the Liaison Committee, which was designed to aid co-operation between the two bodies. There were also fewer and more moderate resolutions from the Wales TUC on the agenda of the LPW EC. The administrative expense of

formal meetings and bodies, coupled with the increasing professionalism of the Wales TUC, led to a greater sense of organisational and institutional separation between the two bodies. The appointment of David Jenkins as full-time general secretary of the Wales TUC increased the sense of distance, as Jenkins replaced George Wright who had also been head of the largest Labour Party affiliated union, the TGWU. However, the geographical closeness of the Wales TUC and the LPW, both housed in Transport House in Cardiff, ensured that informal contact and co-operation continued. In contrast, relations between the affiliated unions and the LPW became more formal. As the decade progressed, the affiliated unions had a more influential role on the EC of the LPW in line with their increasing representation. In addition, a completely new formal body for ensuring co-operation between the affiliated unions and the Labour Party, the TULV/F/P, was created and subsequently strengthened. This strengthening of formal relationships was in part a sign of the times. While there was a need for more transparency in relationships between the trade unions and the Labour Party, some personal relationships between key union and Party personnel had become strained, making informal contact difficult.

Throughout the 1980s, the Wales TUC pursued a predominantly cautious policy on Welsh devolution. Although it immediately restated its commitment to the creation of an elected Welsh Assembly after the ill-fated 1979 referendum, it soon weakened its position, though it would never reverse it. There was a renewed emphasis on regional economic priorities, so whereas the idea of democratic devolution was put to one side, the idea of economic devolution and in particular the creation of a new Wales Planning and Development Council was openly embraced. With a few modifications this position, which had been formulated prior to the 1983 General Election, remained the policy of the Wales TUC until 1991. By the time of the 1992 General Election the Wales TUC again called for the creation of an elected Welsh Assembly, albeit couched in terms of a reform of local government in Wales.

Devolution became a non-issue in the Labour Party Wales after the 1979. Although Labour's Welsh manifesto contained the Wales TUC policy on the creation of the new Economic Planning Council for Wales, it did not contain any recommendations on the creation of a Welsh Assembly or any moves toward democratic devolution. It was not until after 1987 that key trade unionists on the LPW EC put the issue back on the agenda of the Party. These key trade unionists used their positions on the EC and their votes at Party conference to gradually drive the issue forward. Winning the election and prioritising the economy, however, continued to be of paramount importance. After 1987, the NEC Policy Review conceded a commitment to create an elected Welsh Assembly. At the same time, the Labour Party Wales began a review to formulate specific policy on local government reform in Wales, of which the creation of an elected Welsh Assembly was a key element. Important trade union concerns were addressed, but as there were now effectively two distinct relationships between the trade union movement and the Labour Party in Wales, the affiliated unions were able to pursue a separate agenda within the Party from that of the Wales TUC, which had to concern itself with the divisive issue of local government employees and Welsh Assembly staffing that had divided the unions in the 1970s. Although as Leader of the Party, Neil Kinnock had the power to modify some of the detail of the policy, for the most part the policy was wholly formulated within the Welsh Labour movement, even to the extent of going against the policy of the NEC on the Welsh Assembly. Having put the issue of devolution aside following the defeat of its proposals at the 1979 referendum, for the first time in thirteen years, the 1992 General Election manifesto of the Labour Party Wales contained specific recommendations on the creation of an elected Welsh Assembly.

Chapter Six: Toward Victory, 1992 to 1997

6.1   Introduction

This chapter examines in detail the Wales Labour Party's policy debate on
Welsh Devolution between 1992 and 1997. In doing so, it aims to elucidate
the nature of Labour Party-trade union relationships during this period. The
chapter not only considers the changes that were made to the Party's policy,
but also the reasons for lack of change in certain key areas. The chapter
highlights the extent and role of the trade unions in the policy debate. The
trade unions were not the only influence on this process, or even in all cases
the most significant. Nevertheless, the trade union movement was a
significant part of this debate and it is doubtful that the same set of proposals
would have merged had its influence been absent. This chapter is divided into
two sections. The first section will deal with the factors that determined the
precise means by which Labour would review its existing policy and
formulate new policy. This section will examine the subsequent setting up of
the Party's Policy Commission, and will outline how the Commission
undertook its work in general terms, as well as identifying both the overt and
covert influences upon this process. The second section will focus on the
debates concerning key areas of the policy. In particular, it will examine
debates concerning the method of election to the Assembly, taxation powers,
and legislative powers. This format has been adopted because it allows us to
examine the role of the trade unions in determining how the Labour Party's
policy on devolution was reviewed, as well as examining their influence on
key areas of policy.

6.2   An Outline of the Devolution Policy Process

Determining the Structure for the Debate

In the aftermath of the 1992 General Election, the Wales Labour Party (WLP)
Executive Committee (EC) identified four options for taking its policy on
Welsh devolution forward. The first option was to do nothing and leave the

policy intact. Although a small number of people in the WLP believed this was a possibility in the immediate post-election period, it soon became clear that the Conservatives were intent on restructuring local government in Wales more or less in line with what Labour intended. As Labour's policy on the creation of a Welsh Assembly had been an integral part of its policy on the reform of local government the "do nothing" option would therefore be ruled out. The proponents of the "do nothing" argument, however, switched their attention to detailed areas of the policy, such as taxation and legislative powers. The second option was to change the policy incrementally through conference resolutions. The WLP EC and Party officials in Wales, however, were not keen to develop policy in an incremental way through conference debates and resolutions and resisted such moves. Attempts were made at the 1992 and 1993 WLP Conferences to push the EC into forming policy on the Assembly through conference resolutions. Resolutions from several CLPs and unions such as the FBU and MSF were tabled, but each was either withdrawn or defeated in favour of the Executive's Policy Commission process. (Wales Labour Party; 1992 and 1993: Conference Reports) Although the WLP Executive and the staff of the WLP dominated the Welsh Conference, there was a possibility that if this approach were adopted, the EC might lose a key vote and thus control over the direction of the policy. The approach might also weaken the Executive's domination of the Conference in way that will become clear below. (Gale, Anita; 28/5/02) Therefore, neither of these two options were serious possibilities.

The debates concerning the third and fourth options were closely interconnected. The third option was to join or form a constitutional convention in Wales, similar to that in Scotland, whilst the final option was to form its own internal policy commission. Although the idea for a constitutional convention was first raised by the Parliament for Wales Campaign prior to the 1992 General Election, it was never likely to succeed as the Labour Party already had its own policy in place. Following the 1992 election, the Parliament for Wales Campaign repeated its request for the WLP to participate in such a convention, but for a second time the Party refused. Shortly afterwards, in May 1992, the Wales TUC Conference passed a

resolution calling for the Wales TUC and the Campaign for a Welsh Assembly to take the lead together in establishing a constitutional convention. (Wales TUC; 1992: Annual Report) Coming as it did soon after Labour's loss of the 1992 General Election, this conference decision was in part the consequence of the resulting disillusion within the organisation. Many in the union movement had begun to question whether Labour would ever again win an election, and thought the best chance of getting devolution was with a constitutional convention rather than through a Labour victory. The Wales TUC General Council was divided over its response to the resolution, as the political affiliates with secure seats on the WLP EC were opposed to the constitutional convention route. These unions "...knew that they as individual union leaders would be able to guide where the Labour Party was moving on devolution". The non-politically affiliated unions supported the idea of a constitutional convention, and although these unions were led by Labour Party supporting individuals, "they wanted to know 'if all of this goes on inside the WLP EC when do we get our shout?'." Meanwhile, the civil service unions, who tabled the motion, gained the support of the teaching unions, other non-politically affiliated unions, and Unison". (Jenkins, David: 16/4/02). Although the Wales TUC is fairly evenly balanced between the political affiliates and the non-political affiliates, the political affiliates normally dominate due to their size and their strength of unity. (Hart, Edwina: 20/1/00) In this instance, the political affiliates were themselves divided and some, most notably Unison, sided with non-political affiliates on the constitutional convention route. (Thomas, Terry: 26.4.02) Unison was the exception among the politically affiliated unions, mainly because of the personality of its regional secretary, Derek Gregory, who was never able to secure the confidence of the other regional secretaries partly because they did not see him as a team player. (Hart, Edwina: 20/1/00)

The WLP EC and the Party staff responded to the Wales TUC resolution with alarm, as it could not be seen to be falling out with the unions over such a key issue, with its potentially damaging implications for both the Party's policy and its future election prospects. In the interests of investigating all the options, Anita Gale, the General Secretary of the WLP, met with the officers

of the Scottish Labour Party in 1992 and was told "don't touch a constitutional convention with a barge-poll". In any case, Gale felt that a constitutional convention would not have worked in Wales, partly because the structures were not in place for the Labour Party to consult with others in Wales, and partly because the Party as a whole would not have accepted the Executive working with Plaid Cymru. (Gale, Anita: 28/5/02) This view seems to have been supported by a majority of delegates at the WLP Conference in 1993, who declared opposition to the Party forming links with the All-Party Campaign for a Welsh Assembly, the organisation that succeeded the Parliament for Wales Campaign. (Wales Labour Party; 1993: Conference Report) Attempts would therefore be made to get the Wales TUC to change its position, or at the very least to arrive at a compromise.

For its part, the Wales TUC General Council was also reluctant to fall out with the Party on this matter and asked for a meeting with the WLP in order to agree a common approach on the issue of a Welsh Assembly and to find out more about the Party's view on how to proceed. This was not, however, before representatives of the Wales TUC had attended meetings of the Steering Committee established by the Campaign for a Welsh Assembly to investigate the possibility of establishing a constitutional convention. At the meeting between the Party and the Wales TUC, the General Secretary, Anita Gale, explained that both the WLP and the Welsh PLP had been approached by the Campaign for a Welsh Assembly for them to nominate members for a steering committee on the establishment of a constitutional convention. Both had refused to participate. (Wales Labour Party; 5.11.92: Meeting between Officers of the WLP and the General Council of the Wales TUC) The WLP EC had discussed its response to the request at its June meeting and had decided instead to establish its own policy commission, which would take evidence from within and outside of the Party. The EC was not keen to put itself in the position of the Scottish Labour Party, which it felt no longer had the ability to form its own policy on devolution. Instead, an internal policy commission route was chosen, which would, in a direct attempt to appease the Wales TUC, take evidence from outside the Party, allowing the Executive to retain control over the process and the policy. (Wales Labour Party; July 1992:

Minutes of the Executive Committee) At the joint WLP-Wales TUC meeting, the Wales TUC agreed to participate in the WLP's Policy Commission by submitting evidence, and not to participate any further in the Campaign for a Welsh Assembly Steering Committee. The meeting also agreed that the WLP-Wales TUC Liaison Committee should be reformed, but should meet only when there were specific topics to discuss. (Wales Labour Party; 5.11.92: Meeting between Officers of the WLP and the EC of the General Council of the Wales TUC)

The decision of the WLP EC to have its own policy commission, and to give the non-politically affiliated unions a chance to give evidence, was enough for the EC of the Wales TUC to win over the full General Council and to succeed in getting them to pull out of the Constitutional Convention Steering Committee. (Jenkins, David: 16/4/02) Therefore, although the WLP EC was determined not to go down the constitutional convention route, its decision to receive evidence from outside the Party was prompted by an attempt to deal with the Wales TUC's call for a constitutional convention, which it wanted to avoid. (Hughes, Gareth: 23/5/02) For its part, the Wales TUC General Council did not put up much of a fight on the constitutional convention idea because it knew that the Labour Party was ultimately the only means by which a Welsh Assembly would be created, and that public disagreement between the Party and the unions would be electorally damaging. (Thomas, Terry: 26.4.02) Within a year, the prospect of a Labour government became a serious possibility once again, and the majority in the Wales TUC returned to the view that only a Labour government would deliver devolution. The prevailing view, therefore, was that there was no point in either upsetting the prospect of a Labour government, or upsetting union relations with that Labour government by arguing for things that were unacceptable to the Party. (Jenkins, David: 16/4/02) With the agreement of the Wales TUC, the Policy Commission, which was chaired by Party stalwart Ken Hopkins, would be where any battles would be fought and won. (Davies, Ron: 5/10/99) Acceptance of this mode within the Wales TUC grew, and at its 1994 Conference the General Council ensured that a resolution from the Civil and Public Services Union, calling for closer links between the Wales TUC and

the Parliament for Wales Campaign, was withdrawn. (Wales TUC; 1994: Annual Report)

The Debate Process in Action

The WLP EC established its Policy Commission in June 1992, and instructed it to examine the Party's existing policy on the proposed Welsh Assembly. The EC also determined that the Policy Commission's membership would consist of representatives of the EC, who would be elected from amongst their number, representatives of Labour's Parliamentary front bench team, and staff of the WLP in a non-voting capacity. From its section the EC elected Ken Hopkins and Marline Thomas, representing the Chair and Vice Chair of the WLP, Terry Thomas, of the GMB, Brian Curtis, of RMT, Jim Hancock of the TGWU, Gareth Hughes, who was a constituency party representative, and Wayne David, who was leader of the Party's MEPs. Labour's front bench would be represented by the Shadow Secretary of State for Wales, Ron Davies and Rhodri Morgan, then a Welsh Affairs Spokesman. They would later be joined by Kim Howells, who was Shadow Home Secretary Jack Straw's junior. The Party staff would consist of the General Secretary Anita Gale, and the Policy Officer Andrew Bold. (Wales Labour Party; June/July 1992: Minutes of the Executive Committee)

The first meeting of the Policy Commission in September 1992 determined that in total the review would take three years to complete. The first year of the review would consist of an initial consultation of internal Party units on aspects of the existing policy, and the subsequent two years would consist of a wider consultation of other organisations. Although not formally part of the first phase consultation during 1992 to 1993, the Wales TUC nevertheless held an informal meeting with the WLP Policy Commission. (Wales TUC; 1993: Annual Report) As a result of the first consultation, the Commission published an interim report entitled "The Welsh Assembly: The Way Forward", which called for a further detailed examination of the likely powers and structure of the Assembly, and committed the Party to a wide-ranging process of consultation on the issues raised. (Wales Labour Party; May 1993:

The Welsh Assembly: The Way Forward) As a result the Commission issued a second consultation document in July 1994 entitled "Shaping the Vision", which covered the options on the future powers and structure of the Assembly. This second consultation document was issued to individuals and organisations outside of the Party in Wales, and six public consultation meetings were held across Wales. (Wales Labour Party; July 1994: Shaping the Vision: A Consultation Paper) This second consultation culminated in the publication of the "Shaping the Vision" Report in May 1995 (Wales Labour Party; May 1995: Shaping the Vision: A Report) and was followed by a further document in 1996 entitled "Preparing for a New Wales" that fleshed out how the Assembly would operate in practice. (Wales Labour Party; May 1996: Preparing for a New Wales) Finally, the Commission was asked by the WLP EC in 1996 to look again at the method of election to the Assembly, and as a result, the "Representing Wales" document was published in early 1997. (Wales Labour Party; 1997: Representing Wales) The detail of these documents will be examined below.

Though the Policy Commission and the WLP EC had a formal policy and decision making process, there was also an important covert process behind it. "There were always two sets of meetings, the Executive Committee and informal meetings of key personnel before hand". (Gale, Anita: 28/5/02) Whether overt or covert, the trade unions, particularly the affiliated unions, had a major influence on the process. Two of the largest affiliated unions, the TGWU and Unison, were extremely keen on devolution, and this was in large part due to the personalities involved. The TGWU was led throughout this period by George Wright, who had been a key player in the devolution debate during the 1970's, and he continued to be a strong supporter. Although Wright was no longer a member of the WLP EC, the TGWU's representatives on the Executive were also strong supporters of devolution. Unison, and its General Secretary Derek Gregory, was also keen to see the devolution debate driven forward. Both George Wright and Derek Gregory had close personal relationships with Ron Davies, and these relationships would be crucial in gaining support for Davies' moves to drive devolution in the way they he wanted it to go. (Davies, Ron: 1/5/02) Other smaller unions were also keen on

devolution, and these included the NUM, which was by now a shadow of its former self, FBU, UCATT, and RMT, whose representative of the WLP Executive Committee, Brian Curtis, became a member of the Policy Commission. Two other large Labour Party affiliated unions, AEEU and GMB, were less supportive of devolution. Although AEEU was generally supportive at conference, its representative on the WLP EC was "a political non-entity" (Davies, Ron: 1/5/02). The GMB was even less supportive. Each of these unions had organisational structures that split Wales into two regions. North Wales was included in their North Western Region along with Manchester, and South Wales was included in their South Western Region along with Bristol. In each case the North Western Region played no part in Welsh politics, and although each union had offices in South Wales and had officers who played a part in Welsh politics, their regional head quarters and their regional general secretaries were based in Bristol. As a result, in each case the union official most active in Welsh politics was not the regional general secretary. In the case of the GMB it was the regional political officer Terry Thomas, who was personally opposed to devolution. (Davies, Ron: 1/5/02) However, he would not "rock the boat", and in any case as he was not the most senior GMB official he would not ultimately have to carry union policy. (Gale, Anita: 28/5/02)

The importance and influence of a union within the Labour Party is in part determined by the size of its affiliation, which determines the strength of its representation and vote at Party conference. In 1992, GMB affiliated the largest number of members to the WLP at 60,000, the TGWU affiliated 51,000, AEU 41,000, NUPE 37,000, and EETPU 35,000, as well as other smaller unions with affiliations less than 30,000. Size of affiliation, however, is not the only determinant of the influence particular unions have over the process. For example, Unison was the largest union in Wales, yet for the reasons outlined above, its general secretary Derek Gregory was never able to secure election to the WLP EC. Some smaller unions may be more influential for other reasons. The RMT had more influence on the devolution debate because their representative on the WLP EC was elected to the Policy Commission. There is also a certain amount of negotiation between unions of

different sizes, and personal relationships are very important in this process. (Davies, Ron 1/5/02; Lewis, Liz: 9/4/02; Taylor, Neville: 10/5/02)

Each union traditionally had a political fixer, a particular officer responsible for dealing with the Party on political matters and who would deliver union votes for Party officials on crucial decisions at conference and in other Party bodies. Only during Ron Davies' time, however, was this facility used at a regional level by the Shadow/Secretary of State for Wales; previously it had only been used by the Party staff or at national level by the Party Leader. (Davies, Ron: 5/10/99) For others too the trade unions were "always very helpful; if we [the Party staff] needed to get something through at conference they would supply the votes". (Gale, Anita: 28/5/02) The Shadow Secretary of State for Wales was a key actor throughout this period. Barry Jones, who was Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Wales for much of the 1980s and up until the 1992 election, was, according to the General Secretary of the Wales Labour Party, "under the thumb, he would deliver anything the Party wanted". (Gale, Anita: 28/5/02) In 1992 Ron Davies became Shadow Secretary of State for Wales, following a brief tenure from Ann Clwyd. Ron Davies was a "...gung-ho devolutionist and believed and argued that devolution was the prerequisite to achieve all the other issues that the WLP and the trade unions were putting at the top of the agenda". (Jenkins, David: 16/4/02) Some in the Party took a critical view of Davies. For example, the former General Secretary Anita Gale has stated that "Ron wanted to do everything his own way" adding "I wanted to do it my way, and that is why we didn't get on". (Gale, Anita: 28/5/02) According to his closest advisors Ron himself wasn't particularly impressed with Anita Gale either. The relationship of the WLP staff with the Shadow Secretary of State, and particularly Ron Davies, wasn't an easy one to manage and not just because of personal differences. Structurally, the WLP staff looked in two directions, to the WLP EC and to Milbank, and as a result Ron Davies, as Shadow Secretary of State, would occasionally find himself excluded. (Adams, John: 28/5/02)

Even when the Policy Commission completed its report, the document still had to be approved by the WLP EC and annual conference. In part, the WLP

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conferences had become less confrontational because of the prevailing desire for unity born out of successive election defeats, and after 1992 the predominant view was that divisions cost votes. (Touhig, Don: 10/5/02) The EC would exploit this prevailing attitude to increase its own dominance of the conference, and this, together with the support of the trade unions, meant that, approval of conference for the reports of the Policy Commission was always assured. The big affiliated unions, who tended to vote on block, dominated the WLP EC itself. Therefore in order to pass anything through the EC, as well as the conference, the support of the unions had to be gained. The CLP members of the EC rarely had any significant length of tenure, unlike the trade union members. (Brennan, Kevin: 19/4/02), though not all the trade unionists on the Executive had a uniform influence. Some of the trade union members of the EC were lay officials, and these tended to follow the lead of other union members, lacking as they did any real grasp of the issues, or any access to the "loop". (Thomas, Pam: 18/4/02)

6.3 Key Policy Areas

The Policy Commission identified three major changes that had taken place since Labour formed is policy for the 1992 General Election: the Conservative Government's plans to introduce unitary authorities in Wales by April 1995 had been achieved; a rise in both the number and the expenditure of QUANGOS in Wales; and a number of controversial QUANGO appointments in Wales. The first consultation reported a majority in favour of greater powers for the Assembly than the Party's previous policy proposed, and decided that the timescale for the introduction of legislation for a Welsh Assembly would be in the first year of a Labour Government. This was in contrast to the previous policy that legislation would only be introduced during a full Parliament. (Wales Labour Party; 1993: The Welsh Assembly: The Way Forward) Despite these changes, the Policy Commission argued that the fundamental points of the Party's existing policy were still valid. The Assembly should still take over the budget and functions of the Welsh Office and have responsibility for the QUANGOS in Wales. (Wales Labour Party; 1993: The Welsh Assembly: The Way Forward) The Commission's second

report argued that the Assembly would adopt a local government committee model and not the adversarial parliamentary system. (Wales Labour Party; 1995: Shaping the Vision: A Report) The Commission also supported wider powers for the Assembly to debate and make recommendations on any matter relating to Wales. In three key areas - elections to the proposed Assembly, and powers over taxation and legislation - there were intense debates. The remainder of this chapter will now focus on these debates.

Elections

The WLP`s 1992 policy on elections to the Assembly stipulated a 76-member body, with two members elected from each of the 38 Westminster seats, with one man and one woman from each seat elected on the FPTP system (Wales Labour Party; 1990: The Future of Local Government in Wales). The Policy Commission's 1993 Report, initially intended as an interim report, stated that the Party's policy on the method of election to the Assembly had been excluded `at this stage` because the Commission wanted to await the publication of the NEC Working Party on Electoral Systems (the Plant Committee) in the summer of 1993. (Wales Labour Party; 1993: A Welsh Assembly: The Way Forward) The Chair of the Policy Commission, Ken Hopkins, was also a member of the Plant Committee. In the event the Plant Committee did not consider or report on elections to the Welsh Assembly as it had been asked to do, though it did express approval for AMS for Scotland. (National Executive Committee; 1993: The Plant Report) As a result, the Policy Commission, which had anticipated that the issue would have been addressed for them by the Plant Committee, was forced to include the method of election issue in its second phase consultation document. This document, entitled Shaping the Vision, included the briefest of sections on electoral systems, and limited the options to First Past The Post (FPTP), Additional Member System (AMS), and Regional Lists. (Wales Labour Party; 1993: Shaping the Vision: A Consultation Document)

Most of the key actors in the Welsh Labour movement entered the debated concerning the method of election favouring the FPTP system. The General

Secretary of the WLP, Anita Gale, favoured an 80-member body with two AMs elected from each of the existing Westminster constituencies on the grounds that it would not only increase the chances of a Labour majority, but would also facilitate gender equality in the Assembly, something she considered an important priority. Although the overriding factor for Anita Gale were the views of the Party Leader. (Gale, Anita: 28/5/02) The majority of EC members also favoured FPTP, because they saw this as the best way to ensure a Labour majority in the Assembly (Hain, Peter: 24/4/02). The EC were prepared to accept gender equality as an objective under the FPTP 80-member Assembly because men would also be assured of a nomination in every constituency. Few EC members considered gender equality to be an important enough priority to prevent man from having a right to seek nomination in every constituency. (Gale, Anita: 28/5/02) This attitude was even more prevalent within the CLPs, nearly all of whom favoured FPTP because it bettered their chances of getting a Labour majority. The Co-Op Party and its representatives on the EC and at the WLP Conferences shared these views (Touhig, Don: 10/5/02), as did the Chair of the WLP Policy Commission, Ken Hopkins (Hopkins, Ken: 22/4/02; Hughes, Gareth: 23/5/02). For many, therefore, FPTP provided a happy medium – a Labour majority would be virtually guaranteed, but it would also be a painless way to help ensure gender equality.

Key amongst those supporting PR was the Shadow Secretary of State Ron Davies. Davies felt strongly that devolution could not be firmly established without some form of PR, because of the fragility of support that existed for it. Following the decision to hold a referendum on the Assembly, Davies would also argue that the referendum could not be won without PR, because Labour could not be seen to dominate the new body. (Hain, Peter: 24/4/02) A `Glamorgan County Council on stilts` would not be acceptable. Labour leader Tony Blair was considered to be generally uninterested in the policy process that was taking place inside the Wales Labour Party, and although he would later declare his support for PR, this decision, it was argued, principally arose out of the need for an easy concession to the Liberal Democrats whom he was courting. (Davies, Ron: 1/5/02; David, Wayne: 12/4/02)

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The views of the trade unions on electoral methods were mixed. The Wales TUC believed that the issues of the electoral method was an interesting side issue, but not of central importance. In fact the Wales TUC had no established policy on this particular aspect of devolution, although they were unwilling to give an advantage to non-Labour Wales, and they were not keen on the prospect of coalition government. (Jenkins, David: 16/4/02) The electoral method was of much more significance to individual Labour Party affiliated unions. Foremost among these, with an established policy against PR, was the GMB, whose political officer Terry Thomas was vehemently anti-PR. Oblivious to charges of Labour domination, Thomas believed that the election of a strong Labour majority in the Assembly was the most important concern. (Thomas, Terry: 26.4.02) Most of the other affiliated unions shared his view, but with varying degrees of intensity.

With the majority of opinion staked against him Shadow Secretary of State for Wales Ron Davies failed to secure the inclusion of a form of PR in this part of the debate. Davies had has claimed that he was preoccupied with dealing with the Conservative reorganisation of local government until about February 1994 (Davies, Ron: 1/5/02), though the General Secretary of the Wales Labour Party at the time, Anita Gale, argued that local government was an organisational matter dealt with by her office and not Davies' concern. (Gale, Anita: 28/5/02). Wayne David, the former Leader of Labour MEPs, claims that Davies' failure had much to do with his approach to the debate, "rather than saying 'this is what I want as Shadow Secretary of State, will you back me?', he was always in the business of playing people off each other and engaging in backroom deals, which created a lot of suspicion and unnecessary problems". (David, Wayne: 12/4/02) Either way, Ron Davies did not become Shadow Secretary of State for Wales until late 1992, and it would inevitably have taken time for him to establish himself in his new position and decide what his priorities for the new Assembly should be. During his initial period in office, it is not surprising that Davies wanted to determine the lie of the land, or that his authority was not fully established, particularly with the weight of opinion against him.

The Policy Commission draft document did not arrive at a decision about the electoral method, because it stated that opinion had been split between FPTP and AMS. Instead the Policy Commission put the two options before the EC for it to make the decision on which system the final report submitted to conference would recommend. It was claimed that in order to influence the EC decision, Ron Davies contacted the members individually in advance of their meeting to try to persuade them to vote in favour of AMS, which had been the option preferred by the majority of consultation respondents. (Thomas, Terry: 26.4.02) It is also claimed that he offered members of the EC certain rewards when he became Secretary of State for Wales. (Gale, Anita: 28/5/02) Terry Thomas, GMB Political Officer, threatened to publicise this at the 1995 WLP Conference, and was only prevented from doing so when his own General Secretary brokered a peace deal between him and Ron Davies, in which Davies agreed to sign a letter effectively saying that he wouldn't do it again. (Thomas, Terry: 26.4.02) Davies having failed to get the EC to back AMS, FPTP was dually approved by the 1995 Conference in an EC Report entitled Shaping the Vision.

The policy reached in Shaping the Vision regarding the electoral method was altered subsequently at the WLP Annual Conference in early 1997. The Representing Wales document overturned the Party's policy to include an element of PR. It proposed that the Assembly would now be a 60 member body, with 40 AMs, one from each of the 40 Westminster seats, elected on a FPTP system, but with an additional 20 elected by AMS, four from each of the five European seats in Wales. (Wales Labour Party; 1997: Representing Wales) What happened in the period between the approval of Shaping the Vision and its reversal in Representing Wales, was achieved by the loss of control by those who had been in control of the debate prior to 1995, and the at least partial success of Ron Davies.

Ron Davies' strategy after Shaping the Vision was agreed at the 1995 Conference was that he would either ensure that the policy was changed before Labour came to office, or, failing that, that he would never implement

the policy when he became Secretary of State for Wales. Davies believed that he could change the wording of the policy during the Clause Five Meeting between the Shadow Cabinet and the NEC, which determines the manifesto, to include a form of PR. If that failed, when Davies became Secretary of State for Wales and Labour was in office, the method of election would become a government bill over which he would have responsibility, in which case he would be prepared to disregard the wishes of the Party. (Adams, John: 28/5/02) The key factor that would make Ron Davies' immediate strategy unnecessary was the intervention of Tony Blair. Until this stage, Blair's position as far as Wales was concerned was characterised by disinterest. When Blair decided in favour of PR for the European elections, he told Wayne David, who was then Leader of the Labour MEPs and of the Socialist Group in the European Parliament, that "the reason he went for PR was to keep Paddy Ashdown happy", but Wayne David does not believe that there was a similar motivation for PR in Wales, rather that it was a result of Ron Davies putting pressure on Number 10. (David, Wayne: 12/4/02)

Tony Blair was drawn further into the debate on PR as a result of his decisions on a referendum. Whilst Blair drafted the Road to the Manifesto document, he determined that there must be a Referendum in Scotland, much to the consternation of George Robinson. Then, according to Ron Davies, Blair turned his attention to Wales. When Davies met Blair, Blair did not insist that he wanted a referendum in Wales, because he didn't see the Welsh Assembly as a serious constitutional change. Davies took a different view, believing that if Scotland were going to have a referendum then there needed to be one in Wales, as his arguments for more powers for the Assembly would not otherwise have been tenable. So although Davies did not want a referendum, he felt that a Scottish referendum would make a Welsh one tactically inevitable. (Davies, Ron: 1/5/02) Others, however, argue that the decision to hold a referendum in Wales was exclusively Tony Blair's idea. (Adams, John: 28/5/02; David, Wayne: 12/4/02; Hain, Peter: 24/4/02) Davies had denounced a referendum in the *Western Mail* a few days previously, and it is generally agreed that he decided in favour of a referendum in order to secure Tony Blair's support for an element of PR in the Welsh Assembly elections. Davies

successfully argued that without PR, the Welsh people were likely to perceive the Assembly as a Labour-dominated body. (Hughes, Gareth: 23/5/02) Davies therefore used the referendum issue to get Tony Blair's support for PR, against the wishes of the majority of the Labour Party in Wales. (Hain, Peter: 23/5/02)

The next stage in the process was to convince the WWLP EC of Blair's support for PR. Ron Davies knew that if he was going to get the WLP to change its policy then he needed to get the support of key individuals, the most important of whom were Terry Thomas, Ken Hopkins and Anita Gale. (Gale, Anita: 28/5/02) Initially, Davies merely informed Thomas, Hopkins and Gale that Blair now wanted PR in Wales. However, this was not the first time Davies had made this claim, and on previous occasions it had been unfounded. They therefore requested that Blair himself should explain his position, and Davies arranged a meeting with Blair in his office in the House of Commons, which was attended by Blair, Ron Davies, Ken Hopkins, Terry Thomas, and WLP Policy Officer Andrew Bold. At this meeting Blair confirmed that he wanted a "measure, no more than that, of proportionality in the policy on the Welsh Assembly". (Thomas, Terry: 26.4.02; Hopkins, Ken: 22/4/02) As a result of this meeting, a resolution was drawn up between Davies, Terry Thomas and Ken Hopkins, which would be put before the EC of the WLP. This would effectively reconstitute the Policy Commission to look again at the electoral system for the Assembly. In order to emphasise his expectations in this matter, Tony Blair became the first Labour Leader to address a meeting of the EC. (Davies, Ron: 1/5/02) Leading members of the EC were therefore persuaded to take the compromise position of the 40:20 split. The trade unions, therefore, effectively conceded that the Labour Party would not dominate the body they were helping to create. (Brennan, Kevin: 19/4/02) Some unions who had previously opposed PR then had the problem of justifying their changed position. Terry Thomas of the GMB, who had been the most vocal and active of trade unionists in his opposition to PR, was faced with the biggest task. Although he had changed his mind because he did not want to create discord or oppose the wishes of the Party Leader, he could not publicly admit that this was the reason. In the end, the issue was allowed to fade into obscurity. (Thomas, Terry: 26.4.02)

The Policy Commission, following another consultation period in which the majority now apparently favoured PR, presented a fresh report to the 1997 WLP Conference that included an element of proportionality. Although the trade unions had by now all been rallied into support, and even the constituency delegates were unlikely to stir up controversy this close to an election, there remained one more obstacle. The Co-Operative Party had a policy opposed to PR and unlike the trade unions they had not been persuaded to accept the Party line. Although the Co-Op Party has few financial resources, it does have a sizeable affiliation and would therefore have about 30 delegates at the conference. Although not enough to affect the outcome, if 30 people put their hands up to oppose the policy that close to the election, it would be very damaging. (Adams, John: 28/5/02) When Ron Davies addressed a hastily arranged meeting of the Co-Op delegates and Co-Op Party MPs, a significant amount of pressure was put on their delegation. Davies argued that their opposition would do untold damage to the Labour Party's electoral prospects in Wales. The Co-Op delegates were eventually persuaded to abstain. (Touhig, Don: 10/5/02)

The Party's policy proposed that the Assembly would consist of 60 members in total, one each of the 40 existing Westminster seats who would be elected by FPTP, and four each from the five European seats in Wales who would be elected under AMS (Wales Labour Party; 1997: Representing Wales). This policy effectively meant that while the majority of seats would continue to be elected under the same FPTP system used in Westminster elections, a third of the seats would be elected from each of the wider European constituencies according to the vote achieved by each party in the Westminster seats within that area.

The smaller Assembly proposed in 1997 would have implications for the operation and running of the Assembly if and when it was set up. The policy change meant that there would be a virtual halving of the number of AMs that would be elected on a FPTP system from each of the Westminster seats. This meant that Labour, which was likely to win an overwhelming majority of the

constituency seats, would be in a less privileged position, and in any event would certainly not dominate the Assembly as it was likely to under the 1992 policy. Labour was at best only likely to win one or two of the 20 seats elected on the AMS element of the 1997 policy due to the method by which these seats were apportioned. This meant that Labour was effectively institutionalising a strong basis for opposition parties in the Assembly. The 20 AMS members of the Assembly would break the constituency link, which was a key stipulation of Labour 1992 policy. In terms of Labour's internal politics, the breaking of the constituency link would effectively mean that no grass roots reporting structure would exist for the Party's candidates and representatives elected as AMS Assembly Members as they did for the FPTP constituency candidates and representatives. This would have enormous implications for selection and accountability within the Party. Under the 1997 policy only one Assembly member would be elected from each of the Westminster seats, whereas under the 1992 policy there would have been two. Gender equality was assured in 1992 as the Party stipulated that one of the two constituency seats should be reserved for a man and one should be reserved for a woman. Under this policy ambitious men and women within the Labour Party were both assured an equal opportunity to seek selection within their own constituencies. In 1997, however, there would be just one Assembly seat for each of the constituencies. As Labour was likely to win only one or two of the AMS seats this would mean that if equal gender representation were to be assured then Labour would have to consider all-women shortlists. This process was always likely to be fraught with difficulties. The WLP view in 1992 was developed by self-interest and electoral advantage. The hybrid system proposed in 1997 would mean that other parties were likely to receive more representation.

Taxation Power

Labour's policy statement on the taxation powers of the proposed Assembly, made in its 1990 document The Future of Local Government in Wales, stated that "the power of taxation should continue to rest with Parliament and that, in relation both to taxation and overall expenditure, Parliament, and the Secretary

of State for Wales as a member of the Cabinet, should retain such control as necessary for the effective management of the economy". This 1990 document further argued that "the clear majority view [of the Policy Commission's consultation] has been that what has been described as an additional 'Wales tax' would prove an unacceptable burden to the people of Wales and could well prove a disincentive to attracting inward investment and much needed employment". (Wales Labour Party; 1990: The Future of Local Government in Wales) This position and the arguments surrounding it were virtually identical to those contained in the Shaping the Vision document published in 1995, which was the policy Labour took into the 1997 General Election. Shaping the Vision stated "...Wales is a comparatively poor country, which under any devolved system of government will continue to have fiscal requirements that exceed its tax-raising capacity...government expenditure in Wales is 9% higher than the UK average. The Welsh people are not in a position to bear a significant additional tax burden". Moreover, the report stated that its consultation found that a significant majority believed that the Assembly should continued to be financed by a block grant from the UK Treasury. The report, however, also stated that the Assembly would be able to determine its own priorities for expenditure and that it could channel any savings it could make from waste into front line services. (Wales Labour Party; 1995: Shaping the Vision: A Report) Ultimately, no changes were made to the policy on taxation during this period, but there was a significant debate within the Party concerning these powers.

Following Labour's loss of the 1992 election, the WLP Policy Commission decided to review its policy on the taxation powers of the Welsh Assembly alongside other areas of policy such as elections and legislation. The first consultation period, from 1992 to 1993 asked for opinions on whether the Assembly should have power to raise a proportion of the revenue it spent. The results were published in the 1993 document A Welsh Assembly: The Way Forward, which reported that all respondents who favoured giving the Assembly powers to raise a proportion of its own income were unanimous in wishing to continue block grant payments from the Treasury, in recognition of the need to redistribute wealth from richer parts of Britain. Emphasis was

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given to the need to ensure that the overall tax burden in Wales was not greater than the other parts of the UK. (Wales Labour Party; 1993: A Welsh Assembly: The Way Forward) These responses were then incorporated into the Shaping the Vision consultation, which provided four options on financing the Assembly: all revenue covered by the allocation of a central government grant similar to that presently negotiated by the Welsh Office; power to vary income tax rates; assignment of a proportion of VAT receipts; and precepting on local authorities. (Wales Labour Party; 1994: Shaping the Vision: A Consultation Paper)

The 1995 Shaping the Vision Report concluded that there was no majority in favour of the Assembly having powers of taxation. This was a fairly accurate finding, not only in terms of the Party as a whole in Wales, and of the wider labour movement, but also of the key actors. Not even Ron Davies, who was one of the most ardent devolutionists, argued for taxation powers to be vested in the Assembly. Although a policy statement that Davies submitted to the Welsh PLP in February 1994 called for a system of PR and a system of primary legislation, it did not call for powers of taxation. It is worth noting that the Welsh PLP unanimously accepted Davies' paper. (Davies, Ron: 1/5/02) The one important body that did call for taxation powers was the Wales TUC, which wanted the Assembly to have the power to put a precept on the council tax in the same way that the police authorities do. (Jenkins, David: 16/4/02) When the Policy Commission received the result of its first consultation in 1993, it found that although a substantial number of respondents from within the Party favoured tax-raising powers of some description, there was no majority. This finding was duplicated in the results of its second phase consultation of the wider labour movement in Wales. (Hughes, Gareth: 23/5/02) Therefore taxation was not a central factor in the Commission's deliberations or in the subsequent approval of the Shaping the Vision document either in the WLP EC or in the WLP Conference that approved the document.

Legislative Powers

In 1997 the WLP ruled out primary legislative powers for the new National Assembly for Wales just as it had in 1992. Labour's 1990 policy document The Future of Local Government in Wales, had ruled out legislative powers for the proposed Assembly and this position had not changed. In 1992 the Party argued that,

> it will be important for the regional government itself to have the opportunity to scrutinise any Parliamentary legislation and regulation with relevance to Wales so that it may make appropriate representations on them to the Secretary of State and the Government of the day. Equally, it shall be the responsibility of the Secretary of State's responsibility to consult with the Assembly on these matters. (Wales Labour Party; 1990: The Future of Local Government in Wales)

The 1995 Shaping the Vision document called for the proposed Assembly to have the power to "pass secondary legislation within the terms of primary legislation passed at Westminster, where the act identifies matters of specific relevance to Wales". In addition, the 1995 document also argued that the Assembly should have the power to debate and make recommendations on any matter relating to Wales. (Wales Labour Party; May 1995: Shaping the Vision: A Report on the Powers and Structure of the Welsh Assembly).

The WLP Policy Commission's initial consultation exercise concluded that there was majority support amongst Party members in Wales for the Assembly to have a legislative role, but that there was no consensus on what form this should take. The report, published in 1993, concluded that there where two main views: that the Assembly should have the power to scrutinise and express views on proposed Westminster legislation; and that the Assembly should be given the powers to legislate on all matters formally within the responsibility of the Secretary of State for Wales. (Wales Labour Party; 1993: A Welsh Assembly: The Way Forward) Some within the Welsh Labour movement wanted to push the agenda through more speedily. At the 1993 WLP Conference the FBU tabled a motion in support of a Welsh Assembly

with legislative powers elected under PR. However, this resolution and others like it were defeated in favour of amendments from the TGWU and the GMB, which called for the Party to await the EC consultation. (Wales Labour Party; 1993: Annual Conference Report) The second consultation document, Shaping the Vision, listed four legislative options: a statutory duty on the Secretary of State for Wales to consult with the Assembly; legislative powers covering all areas except specified UK wide responsibilities; secondary legislative powers; and legislative powers covering the existing powers of the Welsh Office. Outlining these options, the consultation document stated quite clearly that "granting legislative powers to the Assembly could provoke demands to reduce the role of the Welsh MPs at Westminster". (Wales Labour Party; 1994: Shaping the Vision: A Consultation Paper) It was with this warning that the consultation document was issued to Party units and the wider labour movement in Wales.

In a policy statement presented to the Welsh PLP in February 1994, Ron Davies argued for primary legislation for the proposed Assembly. Davies claimed that although the Welsh Group unanimously accepted his document, it nevertheless caused concern elsewhere in Labour's frontbench team. In particular, Jack Straw, who had overall constitutional responsibility, was successful in getting his deputy, Welsh MP Kim Howells, put on the WLP Policy Commission. Howells, who had raised no objection when Davies presented his policy statement to the Welsh Group, together with Terry Thomas, Ken Hopkins, and Wayne David, would later oppose Davies` same policy statement when he presented it to the Policy Commission as his evidence. (Davies, Ron: 1.5.02) The trade unions were divided. The GMB was totally opposed to any legislative power. Other unions varied in their level of support, some favouring legislative power and others not. (Thomas, Terry: 26.4.02) View varied from "legislative powers over our dead bodies", and "full primary legislative powers on all but the most essential issues such as foreign affairs, defence, economic policy and social security". (Thomas, Terry: 26.4.02) The Wales TUC argued felt that the Assembly should have secondary legislative power, but its Annual Report in 1995 made clear how far it was prepared to go. It stated that, "the Wales TUC does not support a

nationalist agenda. It follows that we do not want a reduction in the number of Welsh MPs at Westminster or to lose the Secretary of State in the Cabinet. Therefore, we do not support powers or structures in the Welsh Assembly that would undermine these". (Jenkins, David: 16.4.02)

A draft report of the Policy Commission was completed prior to the Islwyn by-election. This first draft of its report recommended that the Assembly should have law-making powers, though not tax-raising powers. The Commission then gave the task of finalising the details to the WLP Policy Officer Andrew Bold. When it next met, the Commission was presented with a report that had been substantially changed, and the proposals on law-making powers had been dropped. Some members of the Policy Commission felt that "Andrew Bold had clearly had his marching orders from London and rewrote the document at their behest". (Hughes, Gareth: 23/5/02) Ron Davies claims that although he tried to amend the document at the meeting, Terry Thomas, Ken Hopkins, Wayne David and Kim Howells simply voted everything down. (Davies, Ron: 1/5/02) Ultimately, the Commission presented a report that did not contain recommendations on primary law-making powers for the Assembly. Determined to reopen the issue, Ron Davies secured a clause in the document stating the matter might need to be readdressed. The report concluded that most respondents wished to see the Assembly have the power to pass secondary legislation within the terms of primary legislation passed at Westminster. The report also concluded that the case had not been made for general powers of primary legislation to be devolved to the Assembly. Crucially, the commission conceded, as a result of Ron Davies' intervention, that this matter would be kept under review by Parliament and by the Welsh Assembly. (Wales Labour Party; 1995: Shaping the Vision)

6.4   Conclusions

This chapter has examined the debate on the Labour Party's Welsh devolution policy between 1992 and 1997. It has concerned itself both with the process of debate and the substantive changes that were made to the policy. It has also highlighted changes that were not made to the policy, but which were

considered during the process of the debate. As a result of events that were beyond its control, the WLP was forced into reviewing its existing policy on devolution following the 1992 general election. The Conservative's reform of local government in Wales made it necessary to review Labour's existing policy on the Welsh Assembly, which it saw as the top tier of a package of reforms for local government in Wales. Additionally, as the UK Labour Party effectively abandoned the idea of English regional governments in the approach to 1997, the Welsh Party could not continue to argue that Welsh devolution was simply a part of this wider process, as it had in 1992. The strengthening of the Party's commitment to Scottish devolution also had implications for Wales, as the Party could not be seen to be arguing for devolution in Scotland but not in Wales. Moreover, yet another Conservative victory at the 1992 general election meant that the idea of Welsh devolution was more widely accepted by local government councillors. As a result, there was an increased opinion in favour of the Party's proposals. Therefore, not only was the WLP forced into reviewing its existing policy on devolution, but there was also an important attitudinal shift within the Party in Wales that meant it would be more amenable to a reinforcement of its policy.

The process the Party choose for reviewing its existing policy on Welsh devolution had significant implications for the policy that resulted. This chapter has demonstrated that the Labour Party's Welsh devolution proposals, although influenced in certain areas by events outside of Wales, were largely the result of a policy process that took place within the Welsh labour movement. The decision of the WLP to form its own policy commission, rather than join an all-party constitutional convention, meant that the Party would retain control of its own policy. In an attempt to appease the Wales TUC, which had initially decided to participate in a constitutional convention, the WLP agreed to receive evidence from organisations that were not affiliated to it, though the Party would remain in control of the process. Party decisions, however, were significantly determined by leading trade unionists, who controlled the trade union influence. The trade unions represented the largest single block on the WLP EC, controlled the majority of votes at the WLP Annual Conference, and counted for three of the seven members from the EC

that were members of the Policy Commission. Individual trade unionists played a key role at every stage in this debate. These unionists had a significant influence over the means by which Labour decided to review its policy, the agenda of the WLP Policy Commission and the questions it would include in its consultation, and had a central role in each of the key policy debates at conference. On issues and policy areas where trade union interests were most concerned, unionists placed their own interest at the top of their list of objectives, though they were often willing to compromise. On issues where the immediate interests of the trade unions were not at stake, unionists commonly played a supporting role to the interests of others, such as the Shadow Secretary of State and the WLP EC. It should be noted, however, that this supporting role was not entirely selfless, as these trade unionists were often engaged in private negotiation, or were unwilling to fall out with the Party over issues that were not central to them.

This chapter has highlighted the role of personalities during the debate that took place between 1992 and 1997. As in the previous chapters, it has been shown that the role of personalities not only affects the informal debate that takes place in the Welsh labour movement, but is also a crucial factor in conditioning the formal debate. Key trade unionists were able to use the power of their union's representation to direct the policy debate within the Labour Party in a direction that they personally wanted it to go. In other areas too, personalities played a central role. The deep personal mistrust between the General Secretary of the Party and the Shadow Secretary of State during this time meant that the debate was always likely to be fractious. Mistrust prevented an integrated debate.

Although the powers and structure of the proposed Assembly remained largely the same in 1997 as they had been in 1992, at a more detailed level there were significant changes. The most important changes related to the electoral system that would be used. The inclusion of a form of PR would mean that the Assembly would be a politically very different body, as there would be much more opportunity for parties other than Labour to secure a substantial representation in Wales. Also, although the Party continued to oppose

taxation powers for the proposed Assembly, it now argued that it was not against the Assembly having taxation powers in principle, only that it was currently impractical. Furthermore, the policy on legislative powers changed, not to the extent that the Assembly would be given primary legislative powers as in Scotland, but that it should be given secondary legislative powers. Therefore, although on a general level the Party's proposals for the Welsh Assembly would remain largely the same, there was a distinct attitudinal change of emphasis. Whereas in 1992, the Party saw the Welsh Assembly as something more akin to a County Council on stilts, by 1997 this had changed and the Party began to see the Assembly as an important symbol of Welsh nationhood. By including a form of PR, the Party demonstrated that it valued the proposed Assembly more highly as a representative of Welsh political opinion, than as an instrument for Labour to dominate. By giving it some legislative powers and by not ruling out taxation powers in the future, the Party also accepted that the Assembly should be capable of growing when it became practical for it to do so.

By 1997, little ostensible change had occurred in the Labour Party's policy for Welsh devolution. The powers and structure of the proposed Welsh Assembly, aside from the inclusion of secondary legislative powers, were little altered. It was in the emphasis that the Party placed on its policy, however, that the largest change was detectable. The Party no longer saw the Assembly as simply being the highest tier of local government in Wales, but as a symbol of Welsh nationhood. The means by which the Party chose to review its policy, however, did not help secure a firm body of support behind the policy either within the Party or among the Welsh population. The position of the Shadow Secretary of Wales, whose aim was to secure major changes to the policy as soon as practicable, meant that the debate was far from settled as the Party entered the 1997 general election campaign. The implications of the choice of electoral system, and the unresolved issue of how the Party would secure gender equality, would mean that difficulties remained to be faced. The commitment to hold a referendum made it inevitable that that any divisions within the Party would be very much on public display during a referendum campaign. For now, however, the desire to win the general

election above all else, meant that differences would have to be put to one side.

Chapter Seven: Building the New Polity, 1997 to 2003

7.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the debates within the Wales Labour Party (WLP) in the post-devolution period from 1997 to 2003, and draws particular attention to the role of the trade unions. During this period, the WLP was forced by Tony Blair into fighting a referendum campaign on its proposals for Welsh devolution, something it had hitherto opposed. This, added to the campaign fatigue the WLP and the trade unions were suffering in the aftermath of the election, meant that enthusiasm for devolution was at a low ebb. Even after it helped secure a "yes" vote in the referendum, the WLP had to contend with a series of deeply damaging internal issues, mainly centred upon the selection of its candidates for the Assembly and on the election of the leader of the Assembly Labour Group, which were to be the subjects of high-profile public debates. The divisions and ingrained factionalism that were exposed, and the highly undemocratic way they were resolved by the leaders of the Party and the unions, would shatter much of the unquestioning support the WLP had received from its heartland areas and cause great harm to the Party's performance in the 1st Assembly election.

7.2 The Referendum

The landslide victory at the 1997 General Election was no guarantee that Labour would implement its devolution policies, since the commitment Tony Blair had given was merely to hold a referendum on Labour's proposals for Welsh and Scottish devolution. The referendum, which was held prior to the Parliamentary passage of the Bills, was scheduled take place as soon as possible after the 1997 General Election in an attempt to take advantage of the strong pro-Labour support present at that time. The WLP Strategy Committee, which had overall control of the Labour Party campaign for a "yes vote" in the referendum, was set up on 7th May 1997, just a few days after the general election. The membership of the

Strategy Committee consisted of the officers of the Executive Committee (EC); Terry Thomas of the GMB, Elizabeth Pleece of the TGWU, Alun Williams of USDAW, Jim Hancock of the TGWU, and Marlene Thomas, who was a CLP representative. The Strategy Committee also included Harry Jones from the WLGA, Welsh Office Minister Peter Hain, and Alan Barnard from the UK Labour Party referendum unit, as well as the WLP's own Special Projects Officer Andrew Davies. (Wales Labour Party; 7.5.97: Minutes of the Executive Committee) Ron Davies attended only two of the Party's own Strategy Committee meetings (Davies, Ron: 1.5.02), preferring instead to concentrate on his own Welsh Office campaign, from which the WLP was virtually excluded (Touhig, Don: 10.5.02). This meant that four of the nine-strong Strategy Committee, and all but one of the EC representatives, were from the affiliated unions. They were to play a central role in the strategic management of the campaign.

Very little work had been done to prepare for the campaign. The Party's referendum coordinator Andrew Davies, although appointed in April 1997, did not start work on the referendum campaign until the month after the election in May. (Davies, Andrew: 29.9.99) When the WLP did start to consider the campaign, significant strategic differences emerged. Alan Barnard, from the UK Party's referendum unit, believed that the campaign should appeal to the loyalty of core voters. This view was shared by WLP chief organiser, Huw Lewis, who felt that as public recognition of the issues was so low, the best way to get people to vote "yes" was to build on the popular support enjoyed by the new Labour Government. (Lewis, Huw: 23.4.02) Part of this strategy involved running a traditional campaign of knocking on as many doors as possible. On the other hand, the new Secretary of State for Wales, Ron Davies, felt that the Party was never going to knock on enough doors during the campaign to win, but they just might win enough people over if they could get as much positive news coverage of devolution policy as possible. (Davies, Ron: 1.5.02) Ron Davies' views were

shared by the all-party `Yes for Wales` campaign, which itself concentrated on high profile events, rather than doorstep campaigning.

According to Peter Hain, who was asked by Tony Blair to be the Referendum Coordinator for the Government in Wales, Labour's Welsh Office team was divided. Hain says that Ron Davies was unhappy that he had been asked by Tony Blair to be the Referendum Coordinator, as he wanted this post for himself. Differences also existed over strategy. Hain felt that Davies` overtures to other political parties in Wales in order to try and build a broad based campaign was "just a waste of time". In particular, Hain felt that Ron Davies had become obsessed with not upsetting the nationalists and would never personally criticise the nationalist agenda, but Hain wanted Davies to say that the Assembly was not a stalking horse for independence. (Hain, Peter: 8.9.00; 24.4.02) These views were shared by the WLP staff (Lewis, Huw: 23.4.02).

Differences also existed over what relationship the WLP campaign should have with the all-party `Yes for Wales` campaign. At a meeting of EC of the WLP on the 7th May 1997, the most pro-devolution members of the EC argued the merits of working closely with others for a `Yes` vote, while other members, particularly trade unionists such as Terry Thomas of the GMB, argued that the Party must not be diverted from its existing policy by working with others. (Wales Labour Party; 7.5.97: Minutes of the Executive Committee) The Wales TUC, however, was represented on the `Yes for Wales` steering Committee, and set up a `Yes for Wales` working group as part of its General Management Committee structure. (Wales TUC; 1997: Annual Report) Ironically, `Yes for Wales` was a Welsh Office initiative. (Hain, Peter: 24.4.02) Shortly after the referendum was announced in 1996, Peter Hain, with Ron Davies` approval, held private meetings with members of the other pro-devolution parties in Wales and assembled a coalition of people to launch `Yes for Wales`, though neither Hain nor any other of the political representatives had anything further to do with it. (Hain, Peter: 24.4.02) At meetings soon after this, members of `Yes for Wales`, many of

whom were leading members of the Labour Party, gave assurances that their campaign would not be used as a Plaid Cymru platform. (Francis, Hywel: 27.5.02) Even so, some CLPs simply refused to cooperate with 'Yes for Wales'; the Secretary of the Rhondda CLP, Ken Hopkins, even told 'Yes for Wales' that he didn't want them in Rhondda. (Hopkins, Ken: 22.4.02) Many local 'Yes for Wales' campaigns were run by just a handful of CLP activists, who were eager to stand as Labour candidates for the Assembly. (Brennan, Kevin: 19.4.02) For his part, Ron Davies decided, without informing the WLP staff, that his Welsh Office team were going to work with 'Yes for Wales' regardless of what the Strategy Committee decided to do.

Neither the Wales TUC nor the majority of Labour Party affiliated unions had wanted a referendum and only grudgingly accepted it at the behest of the Party Leader. Consequently, few gave much commitment to fighting it. Despite devolution being a key Wales TUC policy, its lack of commitment to fighting the campaign is surprising. This lack of interest was endemic within the Wales TUC. According to its General Secretary David Jenkins, no individual union ever said that "the Wales TUC should be doing more" and no member of the General Council ever asked "how can I get involved and what can I do?". (Jenkins, David: 16.4.02) Nor was there much support for the campaign at the union grass roots level (Hopkins, Ken: 22.4.02). Therefore, although the majority of the trade union movement certainly supported the creation of a Welsh Assembly, and welcomed the result as "...a vote against Welsh nationalism and one which would reject the nationalists narrow separatist agenda" (Wales TUC; 1998: Annual Report), for the most part they did not actively campaign for it. This attitude was shared by the affiliated unions.

The explanation for this was that as soon as Labour won the 1997 general election many Welsh trade unionists began to feel that they didn't need devolution now there was a Labour Government in Westminster. (Wright, George: 8.5.02) This point is significant because it highlights the nature of trade union priorities. Trade

unions are lobbying organisations, focussed on defending their members' rights. During the Conservative governments from 1979 to 1997 devolution was regarded as the means where Welsh trade unions defended their members' rights. With Labour in power this was no longer the case. The new Labour government had a programme to introduce legislation, which would benefit Welsh as much as English trade unionists, and putting barriers between London and Wales might impede this legislation. Moreover, such was the scale of Labour's landslide in 1997 that many trade unionists thought that Labour would be in power for some considerable time. This is not to say that the trade unions did not play a part in the campaign, but that the part they played was not as active as would have been anticipated.

The Labour Party head quarters in Milbank and the WLP itself were the main sources of funding for the WLP `yes` campaign, although the trade unions also gave financial support. (Lewis, Huw: 9.4.02) Milbank was the biggest donor and provided £1/3m and 20-25 seconded staff during the campaign (Lewis, Huw: 9.4.02). Alan Barnard was the UK Party official responsible for channelling Milbank resources into the campaign. (Wales Labour Party; 30.6.97: Minutes of the Executive Committee) Terry Thomas, who was Chair of the WLP and of the trade union funding body TULP [Trade Unions for Labour Party], resented Barnard's interference and the two were frequently at loggerheads during meetings of the Strategy Committee. (Davies, Ron: 1.5.02) Some have argued that Terry Thomas used his control of the TULP money to buy him influence on the Party's Strategy Committee, which slowed things down. (Hain, Peter: 24.4.02) The WLP staff were aware that in Scotland TULP had simply given the Party a cheque for £250,000, whereas the WLP got money from TULP in £100s. (Lewis, Huw: 23.4.02) Thomas felt, however, that as the trade unions were helping to fund the campaign they should have a say in how that campaign was fought and how their money was spent. Thomas also wanted public recognition of the trade union role in the campaign. Therefore, there were two sets of views evident in the Strategy Committee, the trade union view that wanted public recognition of its

support for the Party's campaign, and the Party view that did not want to advertise the fact that the trade unions were helping to finance its campaign (Roberts, Huw: 5.4.02). The Wales TUC, at least, produced a range of its own materials, placed articles in union journals and advertised in the wider press in the week prior to the referendum itself (Wales TUC; 1998: Annual Report), individual unions were generally inactive. The FBU had very little appetite to campaign as a union and gave little support (Jones, Ann: 16.4.02), and the AEEU did not have a campaign at all and contributed neither financial nor organisational help to the WLP campaign (Smith, Graham: 8.4.02) Some unions such as Unison (David, Wayne: 12.4.02), and the TGWU and GMB were more supportive. The `Yes for Wales` campaign, which was left with an £8,000 debt, received £2,000 from the GMB and TGWU to help pay this off (Francis, Hywel: 27.5.02).

In summary, although the referendum delivered a `yes` vote, this was by the smallest of margins. The narrowness of the result can be attributed, at least in part, to the conduct of the WLP `yes` campaign. The entrenched factionalism within the Welsh labour movement meant that it proved impossible to form a united and broad based `Yes` campaign. Strategic differences in the WLP campaign were amplified by personality differences, and this particularly affected Ron Davies` involvement, who preferred instead to concentrate on his own Welsh Office campaign. Some of the affiliated unions played a part in the campaign, but for the most part this was through the finances of TULP, a process which was itself marred with controversy. The Wales TUC played no part in the WLP campaign, and only a token part in the `Yes for Wales` campaign. Having helped fight and win the 1997 general election the trade unions were organisationally and financially exhausted, and had lost much of their incentive to campaign for devolution. In the end the unions offered little support during the campaign.

7.3 Internal Controversies: Twinning and the Selections Process

After the referendum victory, devolution policy became the exclusive
responsibility of Ron Davies. As Welsh Secretary, he steered the Government of
Wales Bill through Parliament. The labour movement in Wales, however, still
had to contend with two related issues; the selection of its candidates for the
Assembly elections and the implementation of its policy of gender balance.
Embedded in both issues were damaging internal divisions, exacerbated by the
enlargement of the traditional policy process involving the WLP and the trade
unions, which was now enlarged to include Labour's Welsh Office team. Gender
balance was official Labour Party policy. In January 1998, the WLP EC decided
that their preferred method for achieving this aim was twinning. In considering
its proposals, the WLP EC considered three main factors: that the number of
women Labour candidates in Wales has been historically low; that equal numbers
of male and female candidates must be selected for the constituency seats, as
Labour was unlikely to win many of the Additional Member Seats; and that they
must limit the chance of a legal challenge. This last point was particularly salient
given that a male Labour Party member had recently won an industrial tribunal
against the Party for its use of all-women shortlists. (Wales Labour Party; 19.1.98:
Executive Committee Minutes) With these considerations in mind, Labour's
twinning system would `twin` constituencies based on geographical and political
considerations, including winnability. Each pair of `twinned` constituencies
would then select one man and one woman, who would become Labour
candidates. The other policy issue the WLP EC had to contend with was whether
and how to generate an approved list of candidates from which CLPs could make
their selections.

There was great reluctance within the Labour Party in Wales to accept twinning.
Many CLPs felt that the mechanism removed their power to select their own
candidates and that candidates should only ever be elected on the basis of merit.
At its meeting on 19th January 1998, the WLP EC received thirteen separate

resolutions from CLPs in Wales declaring their opposition to twinning. Some, like Rhondda CLP, wanted to return to the Party's original policy of two seats per Westminster constituency with one man and one woman per seat, whilst others rejected any mechanism and asked for the EC to simply trust CLPs to select equal numbers of men and women candidates. Other CLPs wanted the decision on whether to have twinning or not to be put to an OMOV ballot. (Wales Labour Party; 18.1.98: Executive Committee Minutes) Despite the objections raised, an overwhelming majority of the EC supported twinning as their preferred option. In a final attempt to appease critics, however, the EC conceded a consultation. When the consultation reported on 23rd April 1998, twenty CLPs welcomed twinning while nineteen opposed it, two women's councils favoured twinning and three were against; and of the seven affiliated unions that responded, six favoured twinning and one opposed.

Welsh Secretary, Ron Davies, was also opposed to twinning, a position which allowed some in the WLP to paint him as part of the `old guard`. Davies' views, however, were privately shared at `a high level` in the UK Party, where there was a great deal of concern over how twinning would be viewed across the UK. (Roberts, Huw: 5.4.02) Ron Davies unsuccessfully attempted to secure the support of the trade unions. (Gale, Anita: 15.11.99) The TGWU, like many other unions, had a policy that was opposed to twinning and its representatives on the WLP EC were instructed to vote against the policy. At least one of the TGWU's representatives on the EC, however, defied this instruction and followed their personal conviction to vote in favour of twinning. (Lewis, Liz: 9.4.02) There were a significant number of resolutions at the 1998 Conference, most of which were opposed to twinning, and all of which the Executive defeated in favour of its own statement approving twinning. The only union to oppose twinning was the TGWU, whose amendment was defeated. (Wales Labour Party; 1998: Conference Report)

The WLP was equally divided over the EC decision to have an approved list or panel of candidates. The most strongly opposed were the CLPs; the following resolution to the EC from Conwy CLP was typical of the concerns held by many CLPs:

> Conwy CLP wishes to register its deep, fundamental and overwhelming repugnance at the opposition to any attempt by the Executive Committee to deprive local party members of their fundamental democratic rights, by imposing upon us a list of appointees from which to make our selection of Constituency Labour Party candidates to stand as a member to the proposed assembly; and that we will do all in our power to ensure that the candidate nominated to represent the Labour Party in the constituency of Conwy is of our own choosing, unless Central Office can prove the unsuitability of our own nominee. (Wales Labour Party; 13.12.98: Minutes of the Executive Committee)

Objections to the process, however, were not restricted to CLPs. One member of the EC was concerned that some of the other members of the Committee, who were considering seeking selection for the Assembly elections, would also be determining the process of their own appointment by voting on matters concerning the procedure. The Chair of the EC, however, instructed members that they were under no obligation to abstain, and in the event only one member did so. (Hughes, Gareth: 23.5.02)

Two other key points were raised by critics of the approved panel proposals on the WLP EC. The first concerned the selections board. EC Chair, Terry Thomas of the GMB, and Jim Hancock of the TGWU felt that the Chair of the selections board should not be someone from "above the fry of Welsh politics" as the NEC had proposed, but someone from within the Labour Party in Wales. Jim Hancock also stated that he felt the role of the Secretary of State for Wales, Ron Davies in relation to the selections board should be purely advisory. These two points were accepted by the EC. Concerns were also raised within the EC about the minimum length of time that members seeking nomination should have been members of the Party. The NEC stated that this should be 12 months, but the EC felt it should be 24 months and agreed that this would be a condition in Wales, even though this

would give any members excluded on this basis the right to appeal to the NEC. (Wales Labour Party; 13.12.97: Minutes of the Executive Committee) Therefore despite the NEC's objections, the WLP EC was determined to press ahead with its 24 months rule.

Another controversial issue concerned the appointment of members of the selections board. Terry Thomas, GMB member EC, took great exception to the people Ron Davies wanted on the selections board, and particularly to Davies' desire to have historian K. O. Morgan as its chair. (Thomas, Terry: 26.4.02) There were also differences between the EC and the NEC, who wanted to nominate the majority of members of the selections board. In the event the selections board consisted of five members of the EC, five members of the NEC, five "independent" members of the Labour Party in Wales, and five professional advisors. Three trade union members of the WEC were appointed to the selections board, Terry Thomas of GMB who became its chair, Jim Hancock of TGWU, and Jean Brady of UNISON, as well as two members of the professional advisors section, one from USDAW and one from Unison. (Wales Labour Party; 1998: Report to the Executive Committee) Although training had also been arranged for members of the selections board (Wales Labour Party; 16.3.98: Report to the Executive Committee), for some members it was an opportunity to settle old scores. (Hagendyk, David: 19.5.00) Despite some controversial exclusions, such as the Chairman of Tower Colliery, Tyrone O'Sullivan, and subsequent appeals, the EC approved the panel of candidates at its meeting on 13 February 1999 by a vote of 20 for and 6 against. (Wales Labour Party; 13.2.99: Minutes of the Executive Committee)

The twinning and selection issues launched a period of fractious debate within the WLP. The twinning issue, according to Ken Hopkins who had been the chair of the WLP Policy Commission on devolution, had a devastating effect on Party morale. (Hopkins, Ken: 22/4/02) Although the WLP EC got the results it was

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looking for on these issues, Party policy-making in Wales was proved to be a failure. It produced the desired result of the Party leadership in Wales, but only at the cost of exposing deeply damaging internal divisions that became the backdrop to Labour's disastrous campaign in the first election to the National Assembly for Wales. Underlying this debate was the general feeling by critics of both proposals that they were the means by which Blairite candidates could be selected and left-wing members of the Party in Wales cold be prevented from being selected. This undercurrent of feeling was brought to a head over the leadership issue.

7.4 Leadership

Shortly after the 1997 General Election, the newly appointed Secretary of State for Wales, Ron Davies, held a meeting with Cardiff West MP Rhodri Morgan after it became clear that Tony Blair would not be appointing Morgan as a Minister in his government. The two men discussed the possibility of Morgan standing for election to the leadership of the Assembly Labour Group. Davies, at this stage, displayed no interest in standing for the post himself. This was because the proposals for the Assembly structure were at the time more akin to a local government committee model, in which the post of First Secretary would be far less prestigious. Therefore, it was with the apparent backing of Ron Davies that at the 1997 Labour Party Conference, Rhodri Morgan announced that he would stand for the Leadership of the Assembly Labour Group. At the meeting, Morgan secured the crucial, albeit verbal, support of leading trade unionists in Wales, such as Jim Hancock of the TGWU (Brennan, Kevin: 19.4.02). As the Government of Wales Bill made progress through Parliament, the proposals for the Assembly shifted from a local government committee system toward a cabinet system. The post of First Minster then became much more prestigious. At this stage Davies, apparently enticed by the new structure, announced he would stand for the Leadership of the Assembly Labour Group. Pressure was put on Morgan to stand aside, and the initial support Morgan had received began to fall away. This was particularly true of the leading trade unionists in Wales who had previously

backed Morgan. What this shows is that the trade unions were more concerned with power and its holder than with personalities. In fact, having fought battles against Davies in opposition over the development of the WLP's devolution policy, the unions had no reason to back Davies above Morgan other than the fact that he was Secretary for State for Wales and Tony Blair's preferred candidate.

As it appeared that an election for the leadership of the Assembly Labour Group was inevitable, the problem for WLP EC was that it had no rules for an election of this type. At the spring conference of the WLP, Morgan's agent Kevin Brennan argued that the leadership election should be on the basis of an OMOV vote, but the motion was remitted. Brennan claims that it became clear that a system most favouring Ron Davies was being conceived by the WLP EC. (Brennan, Kevin: 19.4.02) Following a decision by the Scottish Labour Party EC to have an electoral college for its leadership election, the WLP EC opted for the same system. The electoral college proposed, unlike the system that was used to elect Tony Blair as Leader of the Party, would not compel the trade unions to ballot their members. This was partly because leading trade unionists on the WLP EC had argued a traditional trade union line, that the Party should not tell the unions how to run their own internal affairs. The trade unions wanted to have the freedom to choose how they decided to cast their votes. In the event, Ron Davies won the election convincingly in every section of the electoral college, including the Constituency Party section (Roberts, Huw: 5.4.02). Morgan received little support from the MPs section of the college, but his team did not criticize the MPs having a vote as much as they criticized the unions having a vote. Morgan also received support from the Fire Brigades Union and NGA, neither of which held an OMOV ballot, and the leaders of which had personal ties with Morgan (Jones, Ann: 16.4.02). Ron Davies, however, benefited to a far greater extent from the lack of OMOV ballots in trade unions; for example, the AEEU regional political committee decided to support Ron Davies for no other reason than that he was Secretary of State. (Smith, Graham: 8.4.02)

Shortly after Ron Davies was elected as Labour's Welsh Leader, he was forced to resign following his 'moment of madness'. There was a general feeling within the WLP at this stage that Tony Blair was determined that Rhodri Morgan should not benefit from Ron Davies' resignation and become Labour's candidate for leader of the Assembly. In the immediate aftermath of Davies' resignation several names were suggested as possible preferred leaders, including Peter Hain and MEP Wayne David. Neither of these men showed interest in the position, and eventually Alun Michael, who had been Jack Straw's number-two at the Home Office, was appointed as Welsh Secretary and persuaded to stand. The WLP was again faced with a leadership election it had no rules for, and again opted for the electoral college system, although this time around it announced that there would be an OMOV ballot in the Party members section, but there would still be no compulsion for the unions to hold OMOV ballots. Morgan's team was convinced that this time, with an OMOV ballot, they would win the majority of votes in the Party members section (Brennan, Kevin: 19.4.02). The MPs section of the electoral college was widened from the previous Davies-Morgan election to include the Party's MEP's in Wales, and the Party's candidates for the Assembly, who had by now been selected. Although the constituency seat candidates for the Assembly had been chosen by the CLPs, the appointment of its candidates for the regional lists was in the hands of the WLP EC. Morgan's camp argued that these candidates were packed with loyalists, whose sole purpose, knowing that Labour was highly unlikely to win any regional top-up seats, was to vote for Michael. In addition, Welsh Labour MPs argued that their ballot papers had been numbered, and that it was possible for the Party leadership to determine who they had voted for in an supposedly secret ballot (Essex, Sue; Flynn, Paul; Jones, Jon Owen: 24.3.00). With these controversies, Morgan was doubtful that he would win a majority in this section.

The anti-trade union nature of Morgan's campaign was an attempt to shame unions into balloting their members (Brennan, Kevin: 19.4.02). Although Morgan succeeded in portraying the union leaderships as undemocratic "dinosaurs", in the

event most failed to hold a OMOV ballot. Terry Thomas of the GMB has admitted that there was a major democratic deficit in the way he helped get Alun Michael elected. (Thomas, Terry: 26.4.02) The behaviour of Terry Thomas and others had not gone unnoticed by Rhodri Morgan, and in a letter to the EC in January 1998 he expressed concern over the open support given by Terry Thomas and Jim Hancock to Alun Michael's leadership campaign. Rhodri Morgan claimed they should withdraw, as this was a clash with their duty on the EC's Electoral Council, but a vote in favour of their continued membership was held in the EC and only three members voted against. (Wales Labour Party; 23.1.99: Minutes of the Executive Committee) Of those unions that did hold an OMOV ballot, the majority backed Morgan, whereas those that didn't backed Alun Michael. The three largest unions in Wales, AEEU, GMB and TGWU did not hold an OMOV ballot, but all voted in favour of Michael. The next biggest union, UNISON, did hold an OMOV ballot and came down in favour of Morgan. Michael did not win a single trade union OMOV ballot, whereas Morgan won the support of all the unions that did hold an OMOV ballot. (Flynn; 1999: pp. 193-194)

The result of the election overall, though close, was an Alun Michael victory, but the way in which Michael's victory was secured left major divisions in the WLP and particularly in the Party's candidates for the Assembly. Since Michael had won the majority of his support from the Assembly candidate in the list section, few in the Labour group that were elected were Michael supporters, since Labour won only one list member – Michael himself. With such fragile support amongst Labour AMs, and in any case only a minority Labour administration, Michael's position was fragile from the start. In was not long before the weakness of Michael's support from his own Assembly group became apparent. On the issue of matched funding for European Structural Funds, Michael's enemies built allies with opposition parties and openly conspired against their own leader. Though his group supported him in the motion of no confidence tabled by the opposition parties, it was clear that for most, this was a token gesture. Knowing that

Labour's lack of majority meant that he would be defeated, Labour AMs had no intention of supporting Michael any further.

A special meeting of the WLP EC was held on the evening of Wednesday 9th February 2000. At the meeting the Chair reported that following the resignation of Alun Michael the Labour Group in the Assembly had unanimously endorsed the Cabinet's decision, which was itself unanimous, to appoint Rhodri Morgan as Acting First Secretary, and requested that the EC endorse this. The EC did so unanimously. (Wales Labour Party; 9.2.00: Minutes of the Executive Committee) On Friday 11th January 2000, the EC and the Assembly Labour Group held a joint meeting in Transport House. The only item of business was to invite nominations for the post of Leader of the Labour Group and Labour's candidate for First Secretary. Rhodri Morgan was the only nomination and was agreed unanimously. (Wales Labour Party; 11.2.00: Minutes of the Joint Meeting between the EC and Assembly Labour Group) Within months Michael had resigned as a Member of the Assembly and returned to Parliament. Therefore, the leadership issue was only finally resolved when the trade union role in the selection of a new leader was marginal. What the Alun Michael leadership election revealed was an attempted reassertion of central control over the WLP. Up until this period the general trend has been for growing autonomy of the WLP because of the particular circumstances in Wales over the last 100 years. The imposition of Alun Michael on the WLP by the UK Labour Party was an attempt to roll back the frontiers of the WLP's autonomy. The UK Party was aided by the loyalty of Party staff in Wales, and by taking advantage of the trade union preoccupation with power and office holders. The trade unions at this stage were not prepared to damage their relationships with the UK Labour government. In the final analysis, however, this attempted reassertion of central control failed with the rejection of Michael at the first opportunity. This was facilitated again by particular Welsh circumstances, in this case the existence of a resentful Assembly Labour Group, in which ultimately the trade unions played very little part.

One of the debates to emerge from the chaos of the third leadership election concerned the need to have a proper process for appointing future leaders of the Assembly Labour Group. At the WLP Annual Conference in March 2001, an EC Statement was endorsed on the procedures for electing future leaders of the Assembly Labour Group. The document stated that in future, normal leadership elections should be conducted on the basis of an electoral college. One third of the votes in the college would be allocated to each of the following sections:

a. Individual members, allocated on the basis of an OMOV postal ballot.

b. AMs, MPs, and MEPs, allocated on the basis of an OMOV postal ballot.

c. Affiliated organisations, on the basis that each will ballot its members and allocate its votes proportionately.

The document also made clear that any serving member of the Labour Group at the Assembly would be eligible to stand, provided that they receive nominations from 20% of the group. However, if an emergency leadership election is required, as in the case of Alun Michael, then the same procedure that was used following the resignation of Alun Michael should be used. In that event, the leader elected on this basis would continue to serve until the end of that Assembly. (Wales Labour Party; March 2001: Executive Committee Statement) Therefore, only after three deeply damaging changes in leadership did the WLP finally agree fixed rules about future elections for the Leadership of the Assembly Labour Group. It was only now that the unions agreed to submit to an obligation to hold an OMOV ballot.

7.5 Conclusions

Having helped secure a landslide election victory in 1997, the WLP was immediately thrown into another campaign, though this time the result was far from certain. The other problem for the WLP was that both it, and its largest

supporters the trade unions, were suffering from organisational and financial fatigue so soon after the General Election campaign. During the referendum campaign, the support of Labour Party headquarters in London was vital, particularly as the trade unions played only a limited role. Although the trade unions played little role in the actual campaign, providing only limited resources through the TULP committee, leading trade union members of the WLP EC were highly represented at the strategic level. All but one EC members of the Strategy Committee were trade unionists. These trade unionists, however, appeared to do no more than help ensure that the WLP campaign did not too closely get involved with the all-party yes campaign. This point in particular divided the WLP, with many believing that a single united "yes" campaign was more likely to deliver a positive result. The biggest supporter of a single all-party campaign was Ron Davies. This only amplified the division within the Party. These factors help explain the closeness of the result.

Even after the referendum had been secured, the WLP still had to go through two deeply damaging internal debates. The first of these, twinning, concerned the means by which the WLP was to achieve its goal for gender balance in its candidates for the Assembly elections. Twinning was deeply divisive, not only because it stoked up sexism in many local parties, but more importantly because it cut across the traditional freedom of CLPs to choose their own candidates. Although trade union votes secured the EC`s twinning proposals at the WLP conference, the TGWU remained hostile. The other divisive issue was the selection procedure used by the WLP EC, and in particular the use of an approved list or panel of candidates from which the CLPs could make their choice. There was a general mood within the WLP that this process was simply a means by which Blairite candidates could be selected and left-wing candidates could be eliminated, and it was therefore bitterly opposed by many CLPs. Unlike twinning, where the unions played only a supporting role with their votes at conference, in the selections process they played an active part, accounting for a

majority of members of the selections board charged with approving the candidates.

Another key issue the WLP EC had to contend with was the selection of the leader of the National Assembly Labour Group. In total, there were three elections and three different leaders, and each of these exposed deeply ingrained factionalism in the WLP. The trade unions role in these was highly public and deeply damaging for the Party's electoral prospects. The divisions exposed, however, were not ideological. Rather what emerged was a division between those who felt an automatic compulsion to support whatever the national Leadership of the Party wanted, and those who took a more antinomian perspective. The former were encapsulated in the views of most of the regional secretaries of the large unions and the Party staff in Wales, whereas the latter were encapsulated in the views of the Party and union rank and file in Wales. Therefore what the leadership elections showed more than anything else was that the majority of trade union leaderships, above all, gave their support to what the national Party Leadership wanted, as did the Party staff in Wales. So for example, initial support for Rhodri Morgan fell away as soon as Ron Davies decided to run for the leadership of the Assembly himself – even though there were deep personal differences between Davies and many of the trade union leaders who now backed him. When Davies was forced to resign, support instantly switched to the new preferred leadership candidate Alun Michael, even though he had previously shown no interest in the post. Rhodri Morgan was only finally elected as the result of a coup by Labour members of the National Assembly, which the unions, along with the Party Leadership, were then forced into supporting. Ultimately, an attempted reassertion of UK Party control of the WLP failed because of particular Welsh circumstances, and a general mood to protect the autonomy that had been won over the previous 100 years.

Chapter Eight: Conclusions

8.1 Introduction

This thesis has been concerned with the institutions of the Labour Party-trade union relationship – how they operate, how decisions are made within them, how they change over time, how they inter-relate, how their inter-relationships change, how they are affected by outside forces, and how they affect wider change. The relationship between the Labour Party and the trade unions has tended to be seen as one which occurs primarily through UK level institutions based in London. Research conducted upon this assumption has concluded that the trade unions play a negative role in the affairs of the Labour Party, tending, on the whole, to prop up the Party leadership by providing votes in Party institutions to support their policies. This thesis argued that the Labour Party-trade union relationship is a much richer and fuller one than is generally acknowledged, and it has rejected the assumption that the relationship is only something which takes place between UK level institutions. The thesis has also examined, through a historical approach, the emergence of devolution in Wales, which it argues, has taken place primarily through the Labour movement institutions in Wales. The thesis therefore seeks to make a contribution not only to the debates concerning the Labour Party-trade union relationship, but also to those concerning devolution. A key argument has been that devolution is a by-product of Labour Party-trade union interactions, and that within this relationship, the trade unions in particular have been the drivers of institutional and territorial change. The development of labour movement institutions in Wales, therefore, was an important precursor to the development of governmental devolution. Devolution is seen to be the result of almost a century of building a distinctive Welsh political capacity through the institutions of the labour movement.

The examination of the relationship between the trade unions and the Labour Party and of the development of devolution in Wales has been conducted through a case study based on the relationship between the unions and the Labour Party in Wales. This is not a comparative study. Although comparisons between Scotland and Wales are commonly made, the decision was taken here to focus exclusively on Wales. This is because it has undertaken an extremely detailed level of analysis of the Labour movement institutions in Wales, an exercise which has been largely neglected within the literature. There is, however, insufficient space within this study to accommodate the same degree of detailed analysis of both Wales and Scotland. This is in no way an attempt to argue against the merits of comparative study. What this thesis has done, is identify the weaknesses in the body of literature on this subject, which has typically been written as a result of research upon UK level institutions. Caution has been exercised over generalisations about arrangements elsewhere as this would undermine one of the key argument of this thesis. As has been argued both previously and below, generalisations on the basis of research undertaken in one particular location should be treated with caution. It is anticipated, however, that the findings of this thesis can be used as a basis for comparative analysis with Scotland as well as elsewhere. Readers who are particularly interested in comparing the findings of this thesis with other studies of Scotland, may wish to consider some of the following literature: Bogdanor (2001), Clarke (2002), Hassan (2002), Hassan (2004), Keating (2005), Laffin and Shaw (2006 Forthcoming), O'Neill (2004), Pilkington (2002), Taylor and Thomson (1999), and Trench (2005).

The remainder of this chapter is divided into seven sections. The first section outlines the thesis arguments concerning the existence of an institutionally, financially and strategically distinct Labour Party and trade union movement in Wales. The second section details the arguments concerning the nature of the relationship between the trade unions and the Labour Party in Wales. The

third section moves on to identify where the drive to innovate, which has been a constant process throughout the history of the Labour movement in Wales, has emanated from; whilst the fourth section details the thesis claims that the trade unions have been the source of much of this drive to innovate. The fifth section identifies the other contextual factors which have influenced the development of Labour movement and governmental devolution in Wales, before finally concluding by summarising the key arguments.

8.2   A Distinct Labour Party and Trade Union Movement

The first consideration addressed by this thesis was whether a distinct and, at least, semi-autonomous Labour Party and trade union movement exists at the regional level in Wales. The prevailing view in the literature has been that the regional level is inconsequential, and emphasis instead has varied between Labour Party and trade union acceptance of parliamentary and cabinet government, and the Labour Party as an instrument of the working classes. Research has tended to derive from London-based studies, with little attempt to explore the regions. McKenzie (1955), for example, claimed that the regional organisations of the Labour Party only served as regional organisers of the vote gathering machine and were forbidden to discuss national or international issues. Even those who have considered the regions have been quick to downplay their significance. Jones and Keating (1982) argued that electoral strength in the regions lead the UK Party to limit the power of the regional organisations. Shaw (1988) went further, arguing that as all parties need a minimum level of internal cohesion, a formal framework of rules apportioning rights and duties amongst the various tiers of the organisation was required. It should be noted that Shaw paid little attention to the regions, preferring instead to concentrate on UK level institutions and processes. Minkin (1991) at least hinted that the territorial transgression of linking bodies like TULV was a possible source of challenge to the "rules" governing UK-level relationships between the trade unions and the Labour Party, but he

made no attempt to elaborate on this. There has, then, been a failure thus far to undertake a significant study into the regional movements and to address the issue of whether regionally autonomous Labour Party and trade union movements exist. The empirical findings presented in this thesis have sought to overcome this deficiency and have proved that a distinct and, at least, semi-autonomous Labour Party and trade union movement does indeed exist in Wales. The empirical findings can be grouped under three headings: the existence of formal structures; control over regional finances; and control over regional work programme and policies.

Prior to the Labour Party constitution of 1918 no formal regional organisation existed in Wales. The key innovation in 1918 was the introduction of CLPs, which afforded the trade unions in Wales the opportunity to help create the North and South Wales Federations of Labour Parties. This first initiative was a kind of indigenous mutual aid exercise, but, by 1922 the Labour Party nationally was divided into nine regions with organisers appointed in each, including Wales. The emerging Welsh regional structures, however, presented an opportunity for the Communists to exploit. This threat was recognised by the NEC, which soon saw the benefits of setting up a formal regional council as a means to combat this threat on its own terms. The result was the setting up of the SWRCL in 1937, which became the WRCL in 1947, two years before any other such body had been established elsewhere in the UK. The Industrial Sub-committee of the SWRCL and later the WRCL, which became increasingly semi-autonomous from the main Executive Committee, was the key forum for coordinating trade union activity in Wales until the creation of the Wales TUC in 1974. Prior to the establishment of the Wales TUC, the only TUC structure in the region was the Emergency Planning Committee, which had a weak strategic role and lost its remit with the end of the Second World War; and the TUC Regional Advisory Committees for North and South Wales established shortly after the War. These bodies had little power, and were in any case poor coordinators of trade

union activity. The setting up of the Wales TUC in 1974 was a major step forward.

Many trade unions during the early 20th Century were linked to particular geographical areas. The Labour Party benefited from the affiliation fees of these unions at a UK level, but the regional and local Labour Party only benefited from trade union support in the particular areas where unions were located. This was important because the Independent Labour Party was no substitute for the power and the resources of the trade unions. The South Wales Federation of Labour Parties, although suffering from constant internal bickering, drew significant strength from the affiliation of the South Wales Miner's Federation. Though it should be noted that there was always a reluctance by the unions in Wales to simply hand over the funds without wanting to play at least some part in the decisions regarding allocation. With the setting up of the SWRCL, and later the WRCL, the Labour Party in Wales was for the first time entitled to its share of UK affiliation fees, and it also received an initial additional grant from the NEC to jump start its activities. These finances were allocated on the basis that they could be used according to the priorities of the Regional Council without undue interference from the NEC. Although the Regional Council always argued that it was short of funds, and it was certainly understaffed, it nevertheless gained control over its own finances at a very early stage. This is also partly true of the trade union movement in Wales, which thanks mainly to the NUM and the TGWU, was able to force the hand of the TUC in the pre-emptive setting up of the Wales TUC.

A more important test of regional autonomy addressed by this thesis, and a more difficult and contentious one to prove, is the extent to which the regional Labour Party and trade union movement have had control over their own destiny, work programme and policies. It is important to note that the setting up of the first regional structures in Wales, the North and South Wales

Federation of Labour Parties, was an initiative of CLPs and trade unions in Wales as a result of the opportunities arising from the 1918 constitution. In addition, the Wales TUC was set up by the trade union movement in Wales and, initially at least, was very much against the wishes of the TUC. In terms of policy control, having successfully combated the Communist threat, the SWRCL soon began to develop its own policy initiatives, and these included international issues such as the Spanish Civil War and the Japanese invasion of China. On domestic policy, having lead the way in a campaign against Means Test, the very first report of the SWRCL called an industrial rehabilitation policy to be placed under the control of a minister of cabinet rank. In 1954 a Welsh Labour Party manifesto was published, which included distinct policies for Wales that had been largely drawn up by the Party in Wales. The WCL's evidence to the Royal Commission on the Constitution in 1970 represented a consensus view of the movement in Wales. Even though the referendum that was later conceded by the Labour Government was not the policy of the Welsh movement, most of the WCL evidence was largely adopted.

In the process leading to the successful setting up of the National Assembly for Wales in 1999, two particularly controversial debates seemed to suggest that the Labour Party in Wales was being controlled by the Labour Party in London. These debates concerned the proposed electoral method for the NAFW, and the leadership election contest between Alun Michael and Rhodri Morgan. This thesis has argued that on each of these points the decision was reached largely as a result of a debate that took place within the Welsh movement. On the issue concerning the electoral method, the thesis has argued that AMS was finally chosen largely because of the efforts of Secretary of State for Wales, Ron Davies, who it cannot be denied was an actor within the Welsh labour movement. On the second aspect, although it cannot be denied that Alun Michael was very much the choice of, and was strongly supported by, the UK leadership, the election contest was again a

result of a debate that took place within the labour movement in Wales. It should also be noted that Rhodri Morgan almost won the election, and in any case finally prevailed over Alun Michael as First Minister of the NAFW. For the second time, however, the conceding of a referendum was not a policy of the Welsh movement. Despite certain weaknesses, therefore, a distinct and at least semi-autonomous Labour movement does exist in Wales, and there is undoubtedly a subject worthy of research and analysis.

8.3   A Relationship Between the Trade Unions and the Labour Party

An important distinction identified within the literature on this topic has been between the formal, codified and direct, and the informal, uncodified and indirect. McKenzie (1955) observed that under the Labour Party's rules the formal position of the leader is restricted, but that in practice it is a very different story. This is because, he claims, the position of the leader as Prime Minister or Prime Minister in waiting is far more important than internal structures in determining the role of the leader. In rebutting McKenzie, however, Minkin (1978) claimed to have proved that each policy area produces a different distribution of power, and on some issues the restrictions on the Party leader are significant. Although Minkin did accept that there was certainly a distinction to be made between formal and informal. Harrison (1960) attempted to explain the contradictions for formal versus informal, arguing that although under the Party constitution the unions have power to dominate, they do not do so because they realise that the position of the political wing would become intolerable if they did.

Another important theme within the literature on the Labour Party-trade union relationship is the recognition of the divergent priorities of the trade unions and the Labour Party. Harrison (1960), for example, claimed that the central dynamic is between the trade union elements, who are predominantly concerned with bred and butter issues, and the non-trade union elements, who

are predominantly concerned with ideology. Taylor (1987) added to this argument, claiming that it was an unstable relationship, because the Labour Party's concept of socialism transcended the sectional interests of the trade unions. Jones and Keating (1982) added another dimension to this theme by recognising that the views of UK and regional trade union leaders were divergent. They argued that the UK trade union leaders' attitudes toward devolution tended to accept that some political devolution was acceptable, whilst denying economic devolution. On the other hand, regional trade union leaders tended to argue that devolution should be used to get the maximum benefit for the working classes within their regions. Although Jones and Keating ensured that a territorial dimension was added to the debate concerning divergent trade union and Labour Party priorities, the link between the first theme, formal versus informal, and the second theme, divergent views, had not been made. This thesis has begun to address this omission by examining in detail the Labour Party-trade union relationship in Wales as a distinct phenomenon.

The 1918 Labour Party constitution was in large part designed to simplify and formalise Labour Party-trade union relationships. Despite this, the Labour Party and the trade unions in Wales, perhaps more so than at a UK level, continued to be intertwined and complicated. As discussed, the key co-ordinating body of the unions in Wales until the 1970s was the Industrial Sub-committee of the SWRCL, later the WRCL and WCL. Even though this had become increasingly semi-autonomous from the main Executive Committee, the trade unions in Wales lacked a capable co-ordinating body of their own that was not dependent upon their relationship with the Labour Party. The relationship did become more formalised following the setting up of the Wales TUC in 1974, although it should be noted that initially at least it was proposed that the WCL be given a seat on the General Council. This provision was withdrawn, although only for the benefit of the non-politically affiliated unions. In 1977, soon after the creation of the Wales TUC, a

Liaison Committee between the Wales TUC, LPW, Welsh PLP was formed, further cementing the closeness between the actors. During the 1980s there was an increasing distinction between the Wales TUC relationship with the LPW, and the relationship between the affiliated unions and the LPW. The effect of this was that for the first time the unions were able to emphasise different policy priorities in their relationship with the Labour Party in Wales. The separation of different trade union relationships was the result of two key factors: a change in the composition of the inner circle of leading trade unions; and the increasing professionalisation and depolitisisation of the Wales TUC. By the end of the 1980s, therefore, there were two relationships between the trade unions and the Labour Party in Wales.

The relationships continued in tandem into the 1990s. Even after the 1992 General Election, when relationships between the unions and the Labour Party were being downplayed at the UK level, the internal Policy Commission established by the LPW to review its policy on devolution included three key trade union members of its Executive Committee. The Wales TUC, uniquely amongst outside organisations, was invited to contribute to the first stage consultation designed only to include Party members and affiliated organisations, as well as being entitled to contribute to subsequent stages. The role played by the affiliated unions also continued to evolve in this period. Each union in Wales traditionally had a political fixer, who would help ensure support and deliver votes at the regional conference and elsewhere. This facility had commonly been used by Party staff in Wales, but it was only used by the Shadow/Secretary of State for Wales when Ron Davies was the incumbent. A common argument in the literature has been that the unions only supplied these votes at conference in cases where their own interests were not at stake or where they were engaged in a trade off with the UK leadership of the Party, thereby providing a negative propping up mechanism for the leadership. This thesis has argued that, in Wales at least, this has not always been the case. Although it is true that the trade unions were usually

prepared to compromise on issues unless they had a direct interest, this did not manifest itself as simply providing votes at the behest of the Party staff or the Executive Committee of the LPW on issues where they did not have a direct interest. Rather their ability to compromise often meant that the unions were more willing to play a full, active and constructive part in debates.

8.4   A Drive to Innovate

McAllister (1982) argued that the dominant electoral position of the Labour Party in Wales lead to particular organisational weaknesses and the emergence of a small caucus-based party, where decisions were taken by small groups of people. As a result there was, for McAllister, an institutionalised inability to innovate within the Labour Party in Wales. Paradoxically for McAllister, therefore, Labour's electoral dominance in Wales was the cause of its biggest weakness. Some aspects of McAllister's argument are persuasive. There is, for example, strong evidence to support his claim that decisions are reached by small groups at the centre of the Labour Party and trade union movement in Wales. When the history of the movement in Wales is examined, however, the problems in McAllister's thesis become apparent.

Contrary to McAllister's theory, this thesis has argued that there has been a strong drive to innovate in the labour movement in Wales, with a continual evolution of structures, strategy, relationships and policy. The structural, strategic and relational innovations have been outlined already, but it is worth highlighting a few of the policy innovations here. The SWRCL was inaugurated in 1937, two years before any other such body had been established elsewhere in the UK, and it soon began to develop policies for economic devolution to Wales. Emphasis began to shift in the late 1940s from purely an economic industrial perspective on devolution towards the recognition of Wales as a nation. The removal of the word 'regional' from the title of the Council in 1959, although symbolic, was an important recognition

by the Labour Party that Wales was a nation and not just a region. In 1959, the Party committed itself to appointing a Secretary of State for Wales and published its first Welsh Manifesto in 1964. The evidence submitted to the Royal Commission in 1970 by the WCL represented a consensus view. The key point is that if, as McAllister argued, there has been an absence of multi-party competition, where has the drive to innovate derived from?

This thesis agrees that there has been a lack of any significant electoral competition in Wales since the decline of the Liberal Party during the early 20th Century. Certainly the Labour Party in Wales has never faced any serious challenge from the Welsh nationalists. Part of the problem with McAllister's argument is that it could be used to support arguments that the Welsh nationalists were responsible for Welsh devolution by electorally pushing a reluctant Labour Party into accepting their proposals on devolution. This thesis rejects this notion. Plaid Cymru have only gained representation in the NAFW in any appreciable size because of the particular electoral method chosen by the Labour Party for elections to it. Instead, a key argument of this thesis has been that the development of the labour movement in Wales acted as a pre-curser to the development of devolution.

Although there has been a degree of enlightened self-interest, the debate concerning devolution in the labour movement in Wales has developed as a result of a much stronger and deeper commitment to the idea of devolution within the movement. An example of this can be seen during the debate in the 1990s concerning the electoral method. The Labour Party in Wales could easily have justified the use of the Westminster FPTP approach. This process would have almost guaranteed it a majority in the new NAFW, and would have provided an easy means of achieving gender balance by having two AM seats per Westminster seat. This would have avoided the foreseeable problems with "twinning". Although this was a controversial debate within the movement, with many people against the policy, it was nevertheless

eventually adopted. The reason for this was that the prevailing view of the labour movement in Wales was that it was more important that devolution be firmly established, than it was to secure its own dominance of post-devolution Wales.

8.5   The Positive Contribution of the Trade Unions

The prevailing argument within the literature on the relationship between the Labour Party and the trade unions is that is that the unions have played a negative role in the relationship. Harrison (1960) claimed that policy initiative came from the political movement, and that at most the trade unions take sides. McKenzie (1955) assigned the unions a negative propping up of the Party leadership role, arguing that as long as Party leaders maintain the confidence of a small group of trade union leaders no hostile majority will form against them from within the Party. Minkin (1991) explained the behaviour of the unions by claiming that the relationship between the Party and unions is governed by unwritten "rules", which are informed by the trade union values of freedom, democracy, unity and priority. This, Minkin said, lead to the playing of different roles in the different industrial and political spheres. Again, these studies have generalised on the basis on research conducted on UK level institutions, and there has been little attempt to consider the trade union relationship with the Labour Party at a regional level. The empirical evidence presented in this thesis, based on a study of the relationship between the Labour Party and the trade unions in Wales and primarily through the vehicle of devolution policy, assigns the unions a much more positive role.

One of the earliest calls in support of devolution came from David Thomas, a North Wales trade unionist, in 1911. Shortly after this the introduction of the CLPs enabled the trade unions to help introduce the first regional labour movement structures, the North and South Wales Federations of Labour

Parties. Although these developments relate to the devolution of labour movement structures to Wales, the devolution of the labour movement, this thesis has argued, acted as a necessary precursor to the development of the Party's policy on governmental devolution. The formation of the Wales TUC in 1974, for example, gave the trade unions in Wales the ability to form truly collective views. The first policy document of the Wales TUC, entitled Devolution for Wales, committed the unions to support devolution. The document called for a 100 seat chamber elected on simple plurality voting in multi-member constituencies, a cabinet system of government, a separate Welsh civil service and a block grant from the UK Treasury. Although it opposed full legislative power it did support legislative powers over specifically Welsh affairs. An elected Welsh Assembly, the Wales TUC argued, would help overcome the problems it anticipated over the restructuring of the Welsh economy during the 1970s and 1980s. It should be noted, however, that tensions later emerged between the civil service unions and the local government unions over whose members should staff the Assembly. Eventually in the late 1970s the support of the local government and civil service unions for devolution fell away, though the majority of the Wales TUC, who did not have a direct interest in the staffing issue, remained strongly in support of the policy and actively campaigned during the referendum campaign. This fits with the earlier argument that the unions were always more able to engage in the debate more fully when their own immediate interests were not at stake and where compromise was possible.

During much of the 1980s the Wales TUC placed economic priorities at the top of its agenda and it called for the creation of a Welsh Regional Economic Planning Council, a policy which was subsequently adopted by the Labour Party. Arguments for democratic devolution were only seriously considered again following Labour's defeat at the 1987 election. By the time the 1992 manifesto was published the Labour Party was again arguing for Welsh devolution, although this was couched in terms of local government reform.

The fact that there were now two sets of relationships between the trade unions and the LPW, as discussed above, meant that the divisive issue of staffing the Assembly would be more easily overcome. As we have seen above, the Policy Commission established following the 1992 election defeat by the LPW included three key trade union members of the Executive Committee, and took evidence from the Wales TUC at each stage of the review process. In its evidence, the Wales TUC declared its support for the new Assembly to have secondary legislative and taxation powers. The trade unions therefore, played a full and active part in the development of the Labour Party's devolution policy for Wales.

Despite the view of some trade unionists that devolution was not as important as it had been following the election of a Labour Government in 1997 with a massive majority, trade union support for devolution continued. The nine-strong WLP Strategy Committee formed soon after the 1997 election to fight the referendum campaign included four key trade union members of the Executive Committee, and the Wales TUC itself was part of the all-party 'Yes for Wales' campaign. The trade unions could have played a more active part in the referendum campaign, but when considering that the trade unions are essentially lobbying organisations it is remarkable that this support continued at all. To be sure, during the 1980s with a hostile government devolution was very much seen as the way forward to ensure trade union access to decision making in Wales, but with the election of a Labour government with a programme to improve trade union rights devolution was not as important. Yet trade union support for devolution continued, and not just through words. TULP funding was an essential part of funding the Labour Party's referendum campaign in Wales, despite the fact that huge amounts of this money had been used up only months before during the general election. Financial support was not limited to Labour's own campaign, the GMB and TGWU helped to pay off the debts of the all-party 'Yes for Wales' campaign following the referendum.

8.6   Other Contextual Factors

This thesis has not argued that the development of Labour's devolution policy or of labour movement institutions in Wales was a result solely of the relationship between the trade unions and the Labour Party. Nor does the thesis argue that the unions were always the most important element in this process. Instead, what is argued is that the unions play an important and full part in the debate, to an extent greater than that ascribed to them within the existing literature on the Labour Party-trade union relationship. The literature on this subject has considered the context within which the labour movement is situated. McKenzie (1955), for example, considered the Labour Party in relation to how it dealt with the conventions of the parliamentary and cabinet government. Miliband (1961) also claimed that the labour movement is responsive to and deeply conditioned by external factors. Beer (1965) more fully argued that politics is a struggle for power which is conditioned by fundamental moral concerns, and that the particular answer to the question of how ought we be governed at any one time will determine the nature of the consensus in a particular era. Therefore, according to Beer, pluralistic democracy can exist within the Labour Party without endangering its cohesion as long as there is agreement over fundamentals. Others have used changing contextual factors to point to the instability in the relationship, Taylor (1987), for example, pointed to the shift from blue to white collar unions as a potential challenge to the stability of the relationship. What has not been considered in the literature are the contextual factors pertinent to the devolution of labour movement and wider constitutional devolution.

Two key factors identified in this thesis have had a significant effect on the development of the labour movement institutions in Wales: the actions of UK level Labour Party and trade union movement; and, the growth spurt effects of the Second World War. As discussed, by 1922 the NEC had divided the

Labour Party into nine administrative regions, one of which was Wales, and appointed organisers in each. This helped the development of the North and South Wales Federations of Labour Parties. The downside of this was that the developing, though as yet strategically uncontrolled, institutions presented an opportunity for the Communists to exploit, particularly in South Wales. The NEC`s response was to create the SWRCL with the intention that it should combat the Communist infiltration of the movement in South Wales. Even though the SWRCL successfully achieve this goal, by facilitating the development of regional structures the NEC also strengthened the drive to undermine the absolute administrative dominance of London headquarters. Therefore the NEC had successfully aided the creation of the key regional labour movement institution in Wales, an institution which also provided a focus for trade union co-ordination. The demands of the war effort were felt at a regional level of the labour movement as well as at the UK level. During the first year of the war, the Regional Council was co-opted onto the Divisional Food Council and the Area Price Regulations Committee. This trend continued throughout the war and effectively strengthened the legitimacy of the regional movement. The development of trade union machinery at the regional level also increased during the War. In 1941 the TUC set up the Emergency Planning Committee for Wales. At the end of the War, having seen the benefits of a regional organisation, the TUC set up the permanent Regional Advisory Committee for Wales.

The development of Labour`s devolution policy for Wales also took place within a wider context, and this thesis has identified several factors. Devolution in this period was very much seen in economic and industrial terms. The depression of the 1920s conditioned social and political attitudes within the Welsh labour movement and, together with the disintegration of Labour`s economic policy after McDonald's 'betrayal' in 1931, emphasis within ideas about governmental devolution for Wales rested on economics. Emphasis began to shift, however, in the late 1940s from a purely economic

and industrial perspective on devolution toward the recognition of Wales as a nation. As noted above this was no a result of any threat from the Welsh nationalists, who had not presented any threat until after the 1966 General Election, by which time many of the labour movements priorities for Welsh devolution had been established, and the Labour Party had committed itself to the appointment of a Secretary of State for Wales. It should be noted, however, that other contextual factors did not always have a positive effect on the development of devolution policy in Wales. The consensus within the labour movement in Wales over devolution after 1974, for example, was undermined by three key developments. These included; the Conservative government's reform of local government in Wales in 1974; the election of Labour governments with either no, or small, majorities; and the actions of newly elected, ambitious, Welsh Labour MPs. More positively, during the 1980s and 1990s support strengthened for devolution in Wales as a result of the actions of the Conservative governments, particularly as a result of issues like the increase in the number of QUANGOs, QUANGO expenditure and the controversial QUANGO appointments.

8.7 Conclusions

The literature concerning the Labour Party-trade union relationship has thus far failed to consider in any detail the regional dimensions of the movements, but has instead dismissed them as irrelevant. This thesis has proved that a distinct and at least semi-autonomous Labour Party and trade union movement exists in Wales. The evidence has not only demonstrated that there are complex formal structures at the regional level in Wales, and that these have control of their own finances, but also that they have a long history of control over own work programmes and policies. Even though there are particular weaknesses, a semi-autonomous labour movement exists in Wales, which is certainly worthy of research and cannot be dismissed as irrelevant. This thesis has, then, undertaken a detailed analysis of the Labour movement in Wales. A

key aspect of this study has been concerned with the institutions of the Labour Party-trade union relationship in Wales. An important distinction has been made between formal and informal arrangements and practices, and this has been recognised within the existing literature. Another important theme detectable within the literature is a recognition that the Labour Party and the trade unions have different priorities. Although Jones and Keating (1982) ensured that a territorial dimension was added to the debate concerning these differences, the link between the first theme, formal versus informal, and the second theme, differing priorities, has not been made. This thesis has argued that the Labour Party and the trade unions in Wales have continued to be intertwined. Although it is true that the trade unions have usually been prepared to compromise on issues unless they had a direct interest, this did not mean that they simply provided votes on demand for the Executive Committee of the Labour Party in Wales on issues where they did not have a direct interest. Their ability to compromise on certain issues has meant that the unions were often more willing to play a full, active and constructive part in these debates.

One of the few texts to consider the Labour Party in Wales as a distinct entity, McAllister (1982), argued that the Party's dominant electoral position lead to an institutionalised inability to innovate. Contrary to this theory, this thesis has identified a strong drive to innovate in the labour movement in Wales. In the absence of significant multi-party competition the drive to innovate has derived from within the labour movement itself. This drive to innovate extended to the debate concerning devolution. A key argument of this thesis has been that the development of the labour movement in Wales acted as a pre-curser to the development of devolution. An increasingly devolved labour movement in Wales gradually developed a deep ideological commitment to the idea of governmental devolution. The trade unions have been an important aspect in this process. The prevailing argument within the literature is that is that the unions have played a negative role in their relationship with

the Labour Party. The empirical evidence presented in this thesis, however, proves that in Wales at least they have had a much more positive role. The trade unions have played a full and active part in the development of the Labour Party's devolution policy for Wales.

It has not been the intention of this thesis to argue that the development of Labour's devolution policy for Wales or the labour movement institutions in Wales was exclusively the result of the Labour Party-trade union relationship. Nor has the thesis argued that the unions were always the most important element in this process. Instead, what has been argued is that the unions play a more constructive part in their relationship with the Labour Party in Wales than is ascribed to them by the existing literature. The Labour Party-trade union relationship must be seen as a multi-level relationship, rather than as a single monolithic entity centred on London politics. Arguments that are based on *the* Labour Party-trade union relationship, which have been the mainstay of the literature on this topic, are inaccurate because there is not one Labour Party-trade union relationship, but many. Caution must therefore be exercised over generalised statements concerning trade union-Labour Party relations.

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