Title       London Government in Transition

L.C.C. to G.L.C. 1962-1967

Name        Colin Roy Anderson

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LONDON GOVERNMENT IN TRANSITION
L.C.C. TO G.L.C. 1962 - 1967

by

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A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
of the University of Luton

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June 1996
DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Luton. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

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15th day of November 1996
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Abstract

This thesis concentrates upon a largely neglected subject within contemporary political history, that is the transition in London government from the London County Council (L.C.C.) to the Greater London Council (G.L.C.). It is a study of the actions and reactions of political parties at central government, county council, and district council level, and incorporates the role of non-political party pressure groups. The bulk of the thesis is concerned with the L.C.C. area. Consideration is, however, given to the non-L.C.C. area incorporated into the larger G.L.C. This work demonstrates that there was no consensus regarding the need for reform. It is argued that the lack of consensus led to compromises that failed to satisfy many interested groups and thus the G.L.C. was often perceived to be flawed.

This thesis derives from an exhaustive literature search and extensive reading. The records of political parties were very useful. Newspapers and journals aided research, as did a series of interviews with key surviving individuals. A further source of information were the minutes of various local authorities and connected bodies. Previously unavailable records have been used, for example, Conservative Party and Government records. With the aid of these new sources this work uniquely concentrates on exposing the political constraints and biases that caused a flawed local government system to be introduced.
Association and the British Medical Association allowed access to their records and offered advice even though such functions are no part of their respective remits. I thank them for their help.
Acknowledgement

Dr Mark Clapson provided the working title, now adopted as the formal title, and offered much initial advice on appropriate sources of evidence for this study. Although Dr Clapson has continued to provide apposite advice as and when requested, he has not sought to interfere in any way with the development of this thesis. It is likely the finished thesis bears little resemblance to Dr Clapson's original idea.

Particular thanks are due to Dr Karen Sayer of the University of Luton, Dr Gordon Phillips of Lancaster University and Dr John Davis of The Queen's College, Oxford. Their advice has been invaluable. Thanks are also due to my mother, Mrs Jean Anderson for the many hours she has spent carefully proof reading this thesis. Sir Ashley Bramall, Lady Denington and her husband Mr Cecil Denington, Mr Illtyd Harrington, Lord Jenkins of Putney, Lord Merlyn-Rees, Lord Plummer and Mr Enoch Powell are all due thanks for giving up some of their valuable time in order to submit to an interview. Sir Horace Cutler was too ill to see me personally, but he agreed to answer questions on the telephone and was kind enough to send a copy of his book The Cutler Files. I thank him for his kindness. Without the aid of the above politicians this work would be poorer. Many libraries and archives offered advice and helped to locate appropriate material as did several other organizations. Among this latter group the Association of County Councils, the London Boroughs
Chapter One
Introduction

This thesis is primarily concerned with the abolition of the London County Council (L.C.C.) and the creation of the Greater London Council (G.L.C.). Because the G.L.C. incorporated a very much larger area than the L.C.C. it is also important to examine the non-L.C.C. authorities which were merged into the new local government system within the G.L.C. area (this consisted of Middlesex and parts of Essex, Kent, Surrey and Hertfordshire).

The main events around which this thesis is constructed are as follows: the appointment of, the evidence given to, and the report of the Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London 1957-1960; the Government's white paper London Government: Government Proposals for Reorganization of 1961; The London Government Bill of 1962 and the London Government Act, 1963; the election to the G.L.C. and new London Boroughs in April and May 1964; the abolition of the old local government system and the assumption of power by the new authorities on the 1 April 1965; and the election and subsequent first few months of power of the first Conservative administration at County Hall in April 1967. Although the few years around the creation of the new local government system
form the main focus of this work it is important to provide a detailed account of the history and unique nature of local government in London. Thus the first chapters considerably pre-date the main chronological period of this work. This is necessary in order to allow a full understanding of the complex nature of the transition of London government in the mid-1960s.

It is not possible, nor is it necessary, to fully detail and analyse the whole topic of London government in transition. S.K Ruck and Gerald Rhodes, *The Government of Greater London* (1970) detail the transition in London government and W.E. Jackson *Achievement, A Short History of the London County Council* (1965) provides a history of the L.C.C.'s last years. However, extensive research among a wide range of secondary sources led to the discovery of a very important lacunae which has not been adequately researched. It is difficult to understand the nature of the G.L.C. without analysing the role of politics, primarily party politics, in the shaping of the G.L.C. It was created by politicians, through a process of negotiation and compromise. It was a political process in which vested interests, such as the Metropolitan Water Board anxious to avoid abolition, played an important part. Some could be accommodated, some could be ignored, some pressure groups could be bullied but others had to be allowed their own way. Once the new system was in place it remained firmly in political hands. The G.L.C. was dominated by party politics.

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as were the new London boroughs. The two dominant political parties did have ideological views on how best to structure local government. However, in the day to day running of local government in Greater London the nature of individual local authorities often influenced the views of the controlling political group more than did the local government philosophy of that groups national political party. The majority of Conservatives in London held very different views to the majority of Conservatives in Surrey. Similarly, the majority of Labour in London and the majority of Labour in Essex held different views. Yet it is not just the role of politicians, national or local, but also the politics of the many pressure groups and associations from doctors and nurses to teachers that matter. These organizations tended to be those that administered or used local government services. These bodies influenced and shaped the new local government structure for Greater London, and they continued to influence and shape the way the new system developed once it became operational.

II

This thesis, then, concentrates on the politics behind the transition in London government. There are some important secondary sources that touch on this topic. Among these, David Donnison and David Eversley *London Urban Patterns, Problems and Policies* (1973) deals with social problems such as housing, employment policy and finance. Such problems affected
local and national politics. Donald Foley Governing the London Region: Reorganization and Planning in the 1960s (1972), Edward Carter The Future of London (1962) and Peter Hall London 2000 (1963) are concerned with Town and Country Planning. This topic also affected politics, both national and local. There are many general works of political history, such as Andrew Saint (ed.) Politics and the People of London, the London County Council 1889 - 1965 (1989) and Ken Young and Patricia Garside Metropolitan London; Politics and Urban Change 1837 - 1981 (1982), but these studies, by their very nature, cover far too wide a period to do full justice to the events of the mid-1960s. There are works that look at individual political parties such as Ken Young Local Politics and the Rise of Party; the London Municipal Society and the Conservative Intervention in Local Elections 1894 - 1963 (1975). There are also several biographies of leading characters involved in London politics such as Bernard Donoughue and G.W. Jones's Herbert Morrison; Portrait of a Politician (1973). Once again these works, while of great interest, do not deal in any detail with the politics behind the transition in London government.

There are two useful works which deal with the changes in London government of the mid-1960s and do give attention to the politics behind the process. One book was written and the other edited by Gerald Rhodes, Senior Research Officer of the Greater London Group, at the London School of Economics and
Political Science, on behalf of that group. They are *The Government of London: the Struggle for Reform* (1970) and *The New Government of London: the First Five Years* (1972). These two works, both written shortly after the creation of the G.L.C. in 1965, chronicle the period leading up to the transition in London government and the following few years. Rhodes also gives a great deal of space to analysing the nature of the changes, the reasons for the changes and the effect of the changes. Rhodes' two volumes, however, are not beyond criticism. In the twenty-two years since the last was published many relevant official records have become available at the Public Records Office and there is greater access to the London Labour Party Records, now fully indexed, at the Greater London Records Office, the Conservative Party Central Office records at the Bodleian Library and the London Municipal Society's records at the Guildhall Library, City of London. It is now possible to identify the flaws in Rhodes' arguments and the missing details in both his narrative and analysis.

Rhodes does attempt to narrate the political struggles leading up to and throughout the process of transition in London government. His account is not complete, however. Although he gives a brief history of the Conservative organization, the London Municipal Society (L.M.S.), and the London Labour Party (L.L.P.), he does not fully explain their attitudes and actions, nor the conflicts between London wide political
organizations and the national political parties. An example of this is the L.L.P.'s various attempts to persuade the Labour Party's National Executive Committee to commit the national party to retaining, or returning to, the old local government system if Labour formed a government. Disagreements between the National Executive Committee's Local Government Sub-Committee and the L.L.P. are not discussed. This is also the case regarding the differences of opinion between the Labour controlled Metropolitan Boroughs Standing Joint Committee (a non-statutory body which represented the collective view of the twenty-eight Metropolitan Boroughs) and the L.L.P. Rhodes also fails to give much attention to the tensions that existed between the London wide organizations and the constituency and borough groups.

As mentioned above Rhodes was the Senior Research Officer for the Greater London Group, based at the London School of Economics and Political Science. The Group had been founded by Professor William Robson in 1958. Robson, Professor of Public Administration at the London School of Economics, had long argued that the structure of local government in Greater London needed radical reform. In 1939 Robson had published The Government and Misgovernment of London. In it he argued that all the existing local government units in the continuous urban area that, in his view, made up Greater London, needed to be replaced by a single regional authority dealing with strategic matters, complemented by a series of local
authorities capable of dealing with the majority of local government issues. It was a view Robson continued to argue, and he formed the Greater London Group in 1958 in order to provide the newly established Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London with well researched evidence in support of such a view. The Royal Commission acknowledged it was impressed with the arguments of the Greater London Group and incorporated much of its advice into the report of that Commission. Because he was an Officer of the Greater London Group, Rhodes' two works must be seen as representing the view of the Group on whose behalf they were produced. Thus, to an extent at least, they should be seen as polemical works. The two works are not completely separated from the subject they examine. However, Rhodes details all the minutia of the administrative changes engendered by the transition in London government.

There is no evidence to demonstrate that local government in London was beyond improvement in the 1950s. Traffic congestion was severe, co-operation between the many planning authorities in Greater London was not good, the provision of good quality housing for all was not keeping up with demand. These were just a few of the very many problems facing Greater London. It has been argued, for example by Hugh Clout and Peter Wood in London: Problems of Change (1986), that the size and complexities of London meant that there were no answers to these problems, and although piecemeal ad hoc measures could
have improved the situation, there was no complete solution available.

Some commentators have gone further and argued that not only was a reformed system of local government unlikely to solve a great many of London's problems, but that this was recognized by most individuals involved with the process of transition, and many had other reasons for their actions. Among these motives were the needs to defend entrenched positions or to enhance status. One such text adhering to this type of view is London: Aspects of Change produced by the Centre for Urban Studies in 1964, particularly the introduction by Ruth Glass. Two long quotes from Glass explain her view. She was writing of the proposed transition in London government:

...the prospects are not encouraging. For London, in particular, is also subject to the new fashion of putting the cart before the horse in matters of social policy - of preparing an administrative blueprint as a substitute for a policy programme. This is done on the assumption that shortcomings of national policies (or of resources for implementing such policies) can be a priori attributed to defects in the machinery of government, and especially to that of local government. Responsibility is thus shifted from central to local authorities; a new machine is constructed, rather strangely, without
knowing (or saying) exactly what it should produce, other than the magic word 'reform'. The history of the London Government Act, according to which the administrative structure of London will be recast, is an outstanding example of that kind of engineering - so laborious, so involved with tedious technicalities, that it is by no means easy to see the conservative intentions behind the deceptively radical operation.³

This extract suggests the politics behind the reforms were more important than the technicalities of the change. This thesis will demonstrate that Glass' view contains an element of truth. The second quote casts doubt on the need for change. It suggests that London was too complex for a change in the local government system by itself to solve many problems:

Nowadays it is the centre of London with its pull, its influences in other ways, which is the maker of a 'Greater London' that neither had, nor can have a fixed frontier. Hence the current pastime of re-drawing local government boundaries - in the belief that London can be contained by authorizing it to be a 'region' - is liable to be futile. It is based on a misunderstanding of the nature of the metropolis and its interdependence with the rest of Britain. Any administrative line is bound to be an arbitrary one, already out of date even before it is
established; and so a new line is not necessarily preferable to an old one, nor is a bigger administrative authority for London necessarily a better one.4

This view is not completely accepted in this thesis, but the theme that the old system did work, albeit imperfectly, and that the replacement system was far from perfect runs through this work. It will explain why certain groups and individuals demanded radical change and why others were as determined to defend the status quo. It will also explain the effects of the necessary compromises. Rhodes has provided a detailed analysis of the actual changes, thus allowing this work to concentrate on analysing the effects of the politics of the transition in London government.

A few of the most important secondary sources are recorded above. These, and many others, have enabled the basic structure of local government in London, the nature of party politics in London, and the nature of the majority of London's most intractable problems to be set out in the following chapters. Yet the detailed evidence presented in this thesis has, in the main, derived from a wide range of primary sources.
The Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London published its report in November 1960. The basic recommendations of the Royal Commission were for a new system of local government in Greater London whereby the existing system would be replaced by fifty-four London boroughs with populations ranging between 100,000 and 250,000. These were to be the primary units of local government, responsible for all services apart from a few that had to be provided on a regional basis by a new Greater London Authority. This Council for Greater London (as named in the Royal Commission's report) was to have an equal status with the boroughs. After a period of consultation the Government's white paper of 1961, London Government: Government Proposals for Reorganization, accepted most of the recommendations of the Royal Commission, apart from a reduction in the number of boroughs to thirty-two with an increase in the minimum population for these boroughs to 200,000 and a change in the recommended arrangements for the provision of education, which continued to be a contentious issue. A further brief period of consultation took place and in late 1962 the London Government Bill was introduced into the House of Commons, which subsequently became the London Government Act, 1963. This put into law most of the proposals in the 1961 white paper, although opposition from various quarters to the reforms continued. In April 1964 elections took place for the new G.L.C. and a month later for the new
boroughs. The following year, with the exception of Harrow and the City of London, all the old authorities were abolished and the new authorities that had been in place for a year assumed full responsibility for local government in Greater London.

Much newspaper coverage and Parliamentary debate suggests that during the entire process the Conservative Government and the Conservatives in the L.C.C. area supported the changes, and the Labour Party at all levels and most of the Conservatives in Greater London, but excluding the County of London, opposed the changes. However, research shows that at virtually every level in both main political groupings there was dissent. For example, two separate Conservative Ministers in the Department of Education did not approve of the original plans for education in Greater London, and this dissent was one of the primary reasons for the retention of the L.C.C.'s education service as the Inner London Education Authority. A further example: Labour Party archives show that the national Labour party was only half-hearted in its opposition to the reforms. It would have been very difficult for the new Labour Government, elected in October 1964, to reverse the whole process of reform within a few months of taking office, before the G.L.C. and the new boroughs assumed power in April 1965. However, neither the Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, nor the Minister of Housing and Local Government, Richard Crossman, attempted to change any aspect of the new system, with the exception of a short lived proposal to keep the L.C.C.'s
children's service as a unified service for all of inner London.

The nature of the politics behind the transition in London government is further confused by the large number of non-party political organizations and individuals involved in the process. Many of these had influence and definite points of view. One such important organization was the County Councils Association which opposed the changes. Four of its members were to lose territory (Essex, Kent, Surrey and Hertfordshire) and one (Middlesex) was faced with abolition. It also recognized that a local government system that relied on large district authorities as the primary units of local government would reduce the role of county councils, or even abolish the need for such councils.

A second such body was the Association of Municipal Corporations. It supported the changes. Although some of its members were facing abolition, municipal corporations in general would gain because of the introduction of a new more powerful type of local authority. The new London boroughs were to be most-purpose authorities and thus much less likely to be dominated by a county or regional authority. Both the above organizations were political in as much as they were controlled by local government Councillors from around the country (many from the Labour or Conservative Parties). There were also many professional groups, teachers, doctors, social workers and
others who feared for the futures of their own services, and perhaps their own careers. The new system would need far fewer Medical Officers of Health, for example. The majority of these owed little or no loyalty to any political party. Nonetheless, they were highly organized and quite capable of campaigning in much the same way as political parties. Many of the groups discussed above have detailed records of their role in the creation of a new local government system for Greater London.

Much of the political debate centred around how best to administer local government in Greater London, and what area best represented Greater London. Although the Conservative Government had given the Royal Commission a definition of the Greater London area this definition did not restrain further debate. This is reflected in the thesis, which draws on the many development plans, which by their nature attempted to differentiate predominantly urban London from its surrounding rural hinterland. Among the most important are J.H. Forshaw and Patrick Abercrombie's, County of London Plan (1943) and Professor Abercrombie's Greater London Plan (1945). Many other local government development plans were used in the course of research; these dated from the late 1940s to the early 1960s. The inadequacies of town planning in Greater London were perceived in the late 1950s and early 1960s to be one of the major failings of local government in Greater London. This can be seen in many of the sources used in the preparation of this thesis. The Royal Commission's report, the oral evidence given
to the Royal Commission, which was published at the time in four large volumes, and the other records of the Royal Commission stored at the Public Records Office form one of the greatest sources of information used in the compilation of this thesis. These records include all the research undertaken on behalf of the Royal Commission, the opinions of all the members of the Royal Commission and the minutes of all their discussions, and all the evidence and opinions given to the Royal Commission. The official Minutes of the L.C.C. since 1945, and the G.L.C. until 1970, have been of great use. These minutes, which include committee reports, help explain the attitude of both Councils to the transition in London government. They also contain copies of Council correspondence with the Ministry of Housing and Local Government. Although they include details of votes taken in the Council Chambers they do not include details of any debates in Committees or full Councils. Much the same applies to the Minutes of the County Councils Association and the Metropolitan Boroughs Standing Joint Committee. However, of greatest importance in demonstrating the validity of this thesis' propositions regarding political considerations dominating the transition in London government have been the records of the political parties. These include the L.L.P. archives at the Greater London Records Office and the records of the L.M.S. at the City of London's Guildhall Library. To complement these London regional records, the national Labour Party archive at the Museum of Labour History, Manchester and the Conservative Party
Central Office Records at the Bodleian Library, Oxford have been extensively consulted. Of real importance have been the insights gained from newspapers. The Times has an index, and thus all relevant information can, and has, been extracted for use in this thesis. The Evening Standard does not have an index but careful study of every issue between 1957 and 1970 has led to a mine of useful data. Selective reading of the Evening News has added other interesting data. The L.M.S.'s journals The Ratepayer and The Londoner and the L.L.P.'s journal London News have proven of great use as have various local newspapers.

A series of interviews with politicians involved with the transition in London government has proven of great value. Among those interviewed are Lady Evelyn Denington, a former member of the L.C.C., G.L.C. and St.Pancras Metropolitan Borough Council; Mr Enoch Powell, Director of the L.M.S., 1951 - 1956; Lord Mellish, a past Chairman of the L.L.P.; Mr Illtyd Harrington, formally a member of Paddington Metropolitan Borough Council, the City of Westminster Borough Council, and the G.L.C., Deputy Leader of the G.L.C. and Chairman of the G.L.C.; Sir Ashley Bramall, who has been member of the L.C.C., the G.L.C., the I.L.E.A. and Westminster City Council; Lord Merlyn-Rees, an expert on local government in Middlesex in the 1950s; Lord Jenkins of Putney, a former member of the L.C.C.; and Lord Plummer, once a member of Paddington Metropolitan Borough Council, the L.C.C. and the G.L.C. Some of the above
allowed the conversation to be recorded, others did not. All interviewees were initially allowed to talk freely of their own memories. The majority of interviewees were then asked specific questions designed to encourage them to expand on particular points. These interviews have helped to interpret information obtained elsewhere, have brought fresh information and helped to confirm or refute several ideas. They have also helped to identify some of the hidden agendas. An example of this was Mr Enoch Powell's admission that the Conservative's saw the destruction of Labour's hegemony in London as a very useful by-product of the local government reforms in Greater London. \(^5\)

The number of former politicians who were unable or unwilling to be interviewed was disappointingly high. This failure to identify more willing interviewees is compounded by the loss of other important records. The Public Records Office has the records of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, but these records do not contain any useful details concerning the Ministry's important role in the creation of a new local government system for Greater London. This loss has been compensated to a degree by the details available in other departmental and cabinet records. It has not been possible to trace the records of the Metropolitan Water Board, but this has been at least partially compensated for by other records (i.e. L.C.C. records of its role within the Metropolitan Water board). All the records of the London Teachers Association are stored at the Greater London Records Office, but have not been
indexed and are not available to researchers. These were the most important records, but by no means the only records, to be missing or unavailable. It is not possible to fully quantify the importance of missing records because it is not possible to judge how relevant such records would have been. The lack of certain records, however, may have distorted this thesis.

The nature of the evidence helped to establish the structure of this thesis. For example, the evidence gathered demonstrated the need to take account of the long term, intransigent nature of the problems causing dissatisfaction with the local government system in Greater London prior to the introduction of the G.L.C.

The very large range of sources available from the many local authorities and other pressure groups dictated that several chapters would be based on selective, representative examples. It has not been possible to study the council minutes of the 105 district authorities within the Royal Commission's review area. Nor has it been possible to study all the written evidence supplied to the Royal Commission.

IV

The second chapter establishes that the size and character of London has caused much concern for a very long time. Further, it shows that the social and economic problems faced by London
in the 1950s and 1960s were not very dissimilar from those that London had faced for very many years. It demonstrates that no system of local government in London has been totally successful. It establishes the uniqueness of London and its local government system. It aims to 'set the scene' for the following chapters. This chapter takes the narrative up to the establishment of the Royal Commission on London Government in 1921.

The third chapter discusses the period from 1921 to the establishment of the Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London in August 1957. It is more detailed than the previous chapter and it puts local government in London in a national context at a time when local government throughout Britain was seen to be failing. This chapter demonstrates how and why social and economic problems in Greater London were linked to a perceived failure of the local government system.

Chapter four continues the narrative through to the assumption of power by the G.L.C. and the new London Boroughs in April 1965. It briefly details the report of the Royal Commission, the Government's white paper on local government in Greater London of 1961, and the London Government Act, 1963. The major emphasis of this chapter is on the actions and reactions of the national Government, particularly the individuals who made the decisions within that Government.
Chapter five considers Labour in London. It details all strands of Labour thought and reaction, and includes some analysis of the national Labour Party's role. It is primarily concerned with the period 1957 to 1967. At the core of this chapter is the Labour Group of the L.C.C., which controlled that council, the L.L.P., and the Labour controlled Metropolitan Borough's Standing Joint Committee. There is not the space to consider the roles of every constituency party nor every Metropolitan Borough Labour Group, but representative examples of each are considered. As in other chapters the aim is to consider the politics behind the transition, in this case Labour politics.

The sixth chapter treats Conservatives in London in the same manner as the previous chapter dealt with Labour. It examines the relationship between the L.M.S., the Conservative Group on the L.C.C., and the Conservative and Unionists Party. One of the main functions of this and the previous chapter is to examine the process of political bargaining and compromise within the various strands of each party.

The Liberal Party and the Communist party of Great Britain both gave evidence to the Royal Commission. Neither party, however, were able to win more than a handful of seats on Metropolitan borough Councils and the new London boroughs, nor did they win any representation on the L.C.C or the G.L.C. There is no evidence either party had enough influence to play a
significant part in London politics. Consequently, they do not warrant any significant space in this thesis.

Chapter seven is about the county councils and the so called 'Surrey Plan' favoured by most county councils as an alternative to the G.L.C. It analyses why the initial cooperation between the county councils broke down and demonstrates how various of the county councils involved came to see their own best interests served by accepting the reformed system of local government.

As the title of this work suggests the main focus of this work will be upon the abolition of the L.C.C. and the creation of the G.L.C. However, the latter Council covered an area considerably larger than the former, and its creation necessitated the abolition of Middlesex County Council, Croydon, East Ham and West Ham County Borough Councils and the severance of the Metropolitan areas of Essex, Kent, Surrey and Hertfordshire County Councils. With the exception of Harrow all lower tier authorities in these areas were also abolished. It is not possible to fully investigate the role of these areas within the thesis, yet neither is it possible to understand the nature of the G.L.C. without some knowledge of the non-L.C.C. areas.

Chapter eight studies the role of the district authorities. At the core of this chapter is the role of the metropolitan
boroughs. The role of the boroughs will be amplified and emphasized in this chapter by case studies. Although the thesis has concentrated on the County of London the majority of district authorities affected by the creation of the new London boroughs were beyond the County of London, and so this chapter takes such district authorities into account.

Chapter nine expands the analysis of the politics behind the transition to the many organizations and individuals with points of view or vested interests. Although many bodies are briefly named this chapter examines three cases. Firstly, it explores the role of pressure groups in the decision to save the L.C.C.'s education service as the I.L.E.A. rather than to fragment it among the new boroughs. Secondly, it examines whether the Metropolitan Water Board, which wished to avoid losing its independence to the new G.L.C., was an effective pressure group, or whether other reasons account for its apparent success. Thirdly, it explains the role of the many pressure groups concerned with local government provision of public health, personal health and welfare services.

Chapter ten in conclusion, explores the nature of the new system in its first few years. It draws on the previous chapters to demonstrate why the G.L.C. was as it was, why it was prone to adverse publicity and certainly flawed. It amplifies important strands within the thesis, for example, that many of London's problems were almost ageless, and
solutions had never been found in the past, that most politicians and local government experts recognized the G.L.C. could not be a total solution to London's many problems, but the political process necessitated that it be 'sold' to the general public as an ideal solution. It emphasizes the effects, rather than the nature of politics, in the process of London government in transition.

In sum, then, the thesis explores the complex nature of many of London's long term social and economic problems, and how these have affected local government in the capital. The thesis aims to fill important gaps in our knowledge and to challenge some existing interpretations.
NOTES


4/ Ibid. p.xxvii.

5/ Private conversation with Enoch Powell, 6.10.93.
Chapter Two
The Development of London:
From City Walls to the Rise of Suburbia

The conditions that led to the creation of a new local
government system for Greater London in April 1965 had been
developing over a great deal of time. This chapter explains the
long term and intractable nature of many of the perceived failings of London government.

London has always provided a unique example of local government in Britain. The size of London, the wealth of London and its ability to act as a magnet to attract yet more wealth and more people has made London dramatically larger and richer than all other urban settlements in Britain for most of its long history. It has been suggested that as early as the Norman Conquest London required special treatment. William the Conquerer built the White Tower to the east and Baynards Tower to the west in order to demonstrate his power to the people of London, yet at the same time allowed the citizens to keep their pre-conquest rights and privileges because he recognized the need to keep the support of London.¹

William I's accommodation of what became the City of London was only the first in a long series of compromises between those
exercising national power and the local authorities in London. William I's Charter of 1067 recognized the City of London's existing status. It has left its mark to this day in as much as the City's constitution is recognized to have been in existence since 'time immemorial' and has left the Corporation's private funds, the City Chest, beyond the laws of ultra vires which control local government expenditure in the rest of Britain. However, in other respects the City of London has been allowed less freedom than many other large towns and cities in Britain. It was only in 1215 that the office of Mayor of London was officially recognized by the Monarch of the day, King John. Although the Mayor has been known as the Lord Mayor for many centuries this has become established by usage alone, and the title has never been formally granted.

It is not possible to give a date of the time at which London gained independence from the county of Middlesex which surrounded the City on its three landward sides. The status of the City of London was such that it automatically developed its own local government functions through the Monarch's Sheriffs and later the system of Justices of the Peace parallel to, but separate from, the county of Middlesex. By the fourteenth century a system recognizably similar to that of the modern Corporation of the City of London had come into existence. A system of Guilds, one for each trade or service in the City grew to control individual trades: they controlled prices, quality of work, apprenticeships, and wages. Only members of
these Guilds could become members of the Court of Common Councilmen or the Court of Aldermen, and only an Alderman could become a Sheriff or Lord Mayor. The area of the City of London did not remain static. The city walls followed the line of the old Roman walls, and until about the fourteenth century this allowed room for growth within the walls. Following this the City of London absorbed some areas just outside the walls. Yet the City of London's very success caused problems in as much as the rudimentary local authorities based on the Mayor, the Sheriffs, the Guilds and the two courts of Aldermen and Common Councilmen could not maintain control and impose direction over an increasing area of densely populated 'London' beyond the City walls. The City of London sought no further increase in its area after the fifteenth century. Any population beyond the few Aldermanic wards outside the City walls had no connection with local government in the City of London with the exception of some control imposed over Southwark. The population around the City of London continued to grow and the term London was applied to a wider, but vaguer area. It did, however, clearly include the built up area around the City of London stretching towards Westminster, and at least from Shakespeare's time, included developments on the south bank of the River Thames stretching out from Southwark.

Between 1085 and 1315 the population of London doubled from about 20,000 to approximately 40,000. London was the largest market in England. By 1480 farmers in North Kent were
specializing in supplying the London market. The population of London is estimated to have been 50,000 in 1485 and to have risen to about 250,000 in 1603. During the sixteenth century towns such as Kingston and Hertford and Lee valley villages grew into specialist centres orientated towards supplying London. Merchants organized some suppliers as far as a hundred miles from London. During the same period in bad or average years London's "supply radius crept outwards as far as York or Exeter." The wealth and trade of London continued to grow. There had been Italian bankers in London before the fourteenth century, but their influence declined after the London Goldsmith's Charter of 1327 allowed them to develop a banking function. Pollard and Crossley point out that over many centuries London merchants were richer than merchants in other centres in England. These richer merchants increasingly dominated trade. By 1548 ninety per cent of cloth exported from England was shipped from London. Pollard and Crossley also point out that London grew at a faster rate than other flourishing centres in England. For example London had a population three times as great as Bristol in 1334, but fifteen times as great as Bristol in the 1520s.

The old community based at Southwark at the southern end of London Bridge, spread along the south bank of the Thames. It had originally been a Liberty of the City of London, but obtained its own Charter, becoming a Corporation in its own right. This is one more indication that the rudimentary
authorities in the City of London could not cope with the rapid
growth of London from, approximately, the fifteenth century.
Urban settlements grew along the old highways leading out from
the old City gates,\textsuperscript{18} particularly towards Westminster, itself
growing in importance and size.

Until the dissolution of the Monasteries Westminster had been
dominated by the Abbey. This had shared its site with a Royal
residence for many centuries. As the Monarch of the day began
to spend more and more time close to London, and as more and
more central government functions such as Parliament and the
Judiciary became both settled in the London area and grew in
importance,\textsuperscript{19} many of England's (later Britain's) most powerful
individuals built large establishments close to London and
Westminster.\textsuperscript{20} Throughout London's history, particularly when
land denoted wealth and status, large and powerful land owners
often borrowed money from individuals in the City of London,
but very few wanted to see the power of the City of London's
bankers and merchants become too dominant.\textsuperscript{21}

From the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries many land owners
in the growing London area developed their estates into high
quality residential areas by careful control over the quality
of housing built and by selling leases rather than freeholds.\textsuperscript{22}
Very few rich or powerful individuals, such as the Dukes of
Bedford and Devonshire, or organizations, such as City livery
companies and Oxford colleges,\textsuperscript{23} in London, or its surrounding
semi-rural, area wished to see any diminution of their own power over their land.\textsuperscript{24} Despite the growth in the size of London very few individuals or groups with the power or influence to insist on the development of a proper local government system for London wished to see such a system. The wealthy sought to protect themselves against disease, against crime and against urban squalor in well designed, but expensive residential areas such as Bedford Square, Russell Square, Cavendish Square and Harley Street, rather than seek a communal solution through the development of local government.\textsuperscript{25}

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries many more of the rural and semi-rural parishes surrounding the urban areas of London became increasingly densely populated, entirely urban areas, but without local government functions capable of controlling or servicing their new populations. In the sixteenth century the urban area spread to include Covent Garden in the west, parts of Shoreditch and Whitechapel in the east, and Rotherhithe on the south bank of the Thames.\textsuperscript{26} In the seventeenth century the continuously built up area spread from the west at Chelsea through Marylebone to parts of Islington in the north and thence through parts of Hackney and Bethnal Green to Poplar in the east. To the south of the river the built up environment spread from northern Lambeth through Southwark, Walworth, Bermondsey and Rotherhithe to Greenwich.\textsuperscript{27} The authorities in the City of London retained their functions in the City of London, but continued to show little interest in
extending their jurisdiction over any larger area.\textsuperscript{28} Commercial interests allowed one exception, the protection of the rights of City traders and craftsmen over as wide an area as possible, for example through the control of markets for seven miles around the City, a right the City had maintained for several centuries.\textsuperscript{29} Into the nineteenth century, the rudimentary parish vestries, with some powers to help the poor of the parish, to keep law and order through the parish constable and highway maintenance through the parish surveyor, were the main local government units.\textsuperscript{30} Other functions such as the issuing of various licences, for example, required by the retailers of gin after 1751, were carried out by the County Justices of the Peace.\textsuperscript{31} By 1801 the population of urban London had grown to over one million,\textsuperscript{32} the urban area was several miles broad and several miles deep, although the continuous urban area did not extend out to the yet to be established boundary of the London County Council.\textsuperscript{33}

Such a large population concentrated around the centre of national power created a source of concern to those wielding central power.\textsuperscript{34} There are many examples of the 'London Mob' causing considerable concern to the central authorities, such as the Gordon riots in the 1780s, the Spa Fields riot of 1816, 'Bloody Sunday' in Trafalgar Square in 1887 when police and troops dispersed an S.D.F. demonstration, and the 'poll tax' riots of 1990. It is no coincidence that the first police force to be established by Parliament in Britain was the Metropolitan
Police force in 1829. This new force aimed to protect property and help to keep civil order, two of the longest established roles of local authority in Britain. The Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police was responsible to the Home Secretary who represented central authority, not local authority. This is a further indication of the uniqueness of London government. Even after the establishment of the London County Council the Metropolitan Police remained answerable to the Home Secretary. To an extent this was justified because the Metropolitan Police held jurisdiction over a larger area than the London County Council. Once created, however, the Greater London Council held sway over an area very similar to the Metropolitan Police district, but unlike any other area of Britain there remained no local government control, or even influence, over police matters.\textsuperscript{35} The City of London has retained its traditional independence from the rest of London. It has its own police force and associated police authority.\textsuperscript{36}

Large, densely populated areas not only present a danger to the maintenance of public order, they also present a danger to the maintenance of public health and safety. The City of London developed some controls over such matters from an early date. Two famous examples, but by no means the earliest, are the attempt to quarantine suspected plague victims in their own homes during 1665/6,\textsuperscript{37} and the imposition of strict building regulations to help retard the spread of fire after the great fire of London in 1666.\textsuperscript{38} Local government remained partial and
limited in its effect, even in the City of London. Bills of mortality had been kept in the City and neighbouring populous parishes since the sixteenth century, however as Gibbon and Bell state this was "largely so that the Court and others might be warned of the coming of the plague and seek a safer retreat." Even if this gathering of statistics equates to a local government function, it was of little use because there were no local authorities with power to act upon the information in anything but the most superficial manner until the nineteenth century. During the 18th century, Parliament did take some interest in disease and squalor in London. The result of one such interest was the Gin Act of 1751, which stopped the unregulated sale of gin. Cheap gin had caused very serious problems in the first half of the eighteenth century and the act forced local magistrates to licence all retailers of gin in the hope that restricting the supply would reduce drunkenness, destitution, lawlessness and premature death among very large numbers of Londoners.

Into the nineteenth century all aspects of local government in London, even in the City of London, although to a lesser degree there, remained extremely rudimentary. Royle points out that fourteen London Parishes had populations of over 20,000 in 1801 and the largest, Marylebone, had a population equivalent to that of Bristol. Royle also points out that while London's population breached the one million mark the next seven largest towns in Britain all had populations between 50,000 and
100,000. London's population was ten times as large as that of the next largest British town, yet unlike many other growing urban areas in Britain, such as Leeds and Manchester, there does not seem to have been any widespread view in London that a collective approach to the many problems of urbanization would be more appropriate than an individualistic ad hoc approach. However, by the beginning of the nineteenth century this seems to have been becoming progressively unrealistic.

II

There was no dramatic revolution in local government affairs in either London or the rest of Britain. But the nineteenth century brought about a radical change in government, both local and national. A single example is that of the 1844 Building Act which put District Surveyors on a more professional footing and increased their authority and powers within the developing local government structure. During the nineteenth century the functions of local government became more clearly defined, and these functions were continually expanded. The disposal of family refuse, personal hygiene and many other similar areas ceased to be purely personal matters and became the concern of communities. For example, in 1850 Edwin Chadwick in his Report on the Supply of Water to the Metropolis argued that London's water supply should be provided by a public concern, not a patchwork system of private companies. Science increasingly proved the need for major
improvements such as better sewerage disposal, better sanitation, healthier living conditions for the masses.\textsuperscript{47} The continuing growth of industrialization and urbanization created demands for better roads, better water supplies, efficient public transport. Britain's growing commercial and industrial success created sufficient wealth within the nation to finance organizations capable of providing all these new requirements. The dramatic increase in the size and status of the middle-class professions such as the medical profession and engineering not only provided the experts to administer the new technical services, it also gave them the additional status they needed to fight for bigger and better services and for a higher priority.\textsuperscript{48} One example is that of Dr John Snow, who in 1849 published his findings concerning the spread of cholera. His pamphlet \textit{The Mode of Communication of Cholera} demonstrated a link between the disease and impure water supply.\textsuperscript{49} In short, the nineteenth century saw the transformation of local government in Britain into a recognizable modern form in which modern abstract ideas such as democratic accountability and efficiency were clearly visible. London was part of this. However, London continued to develop along different lines to much of the rest of the country.

The population in the London area increased to 2,685,000 in 1851 and 6,586,000 in 1901.\textsuperscript{50} Thus, London remained over ten times the size of Manchester or Birmingham. Throughout the nineteenth century London continued to swallow up populous
parishes and large villages. By the middle of the century as communities like Brixton in the south-west and Hackney in the north-east began to merge into the general urban spread of London,\(^5\) it became possible to portray London as a series of interconnected, but separate communities rather than as a single cohesive unit.\(^5\) The issue of whether London is a single community or a series of many communities has yet to be decided. It has become one of the major issues in the debate as to how best to govern London.\(^5\) It has been aired many times in the politics of London whether at the old parish level, borough level, county level or in national politics. It has always been easier to identify what and where the majority of other urban communities are. London, unlike the City of London, has never been clearly defined.

The Municipal Reform Act of 1835 reformed and often transformed urban local government in England and Wales.\(^5\) However, it did not apply in London. As on many occasions during the nineteenth century and later, the City of London used its wealth and influence to gain an exemption from the reforms. The Public Health Act of 1848 did not apply in London. This act established a General Board of Health which in turn was empowered to establish local boards of health. Under an amendment to this act in 1858 local government boards were created instead of local health boards. This system developed into the pattern of rural district councils, urban district councils and borough councils throughout Britain, apart from
London. These new developments throughout the nineteenth century allowed the rapidly growing industrial centres such as Manchester, Leeds and Birmingham to become very large urban areas with a single local council controlling all local government matters. Parishes, villages, and later rural districts were swallowed up and incorporated within a unitary system of local government which became known as county boroughs. As these areas grew throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries local government services developed within the unitary system without reference to county councils created in 1889 by the 1888 Local Government Act. It was not without its problems. County boroughs such as Manchester and Salford or Birmingham and Wolverhapton merged into single urban conglomerations, yet remained determined to retain their separate identities. However, their problems were very different from those faced by London during the same period.

In London, during the first half of the nineteenth century, the old system of local government based on parish vestries remained in place. However, many of these were unable, or unwilling, to undertake some of the urgently required tasks. A series of *ad hoc* committee's developed controlling various aspects of local government. These were not new to the nineteenth century, but they grew in number quite considerably as new local government functions were identified. Some were large, some were small, some were powerful, some had little power, some were open and almost democratic, while others were
secretive and had self-perpetuating memberships. Perhaps even more importantly some were efficient and effective and others were the opposite. It is not possible to be more specific about these bodies, but the following quote from Gibbon and Bell demonstrate some of the worst points of these *ad hoc* committee's by mid-nineteenth century:

...there was, for various functions - sewers, paving, lighting, surveying buildings - a crowd of different authorities, in all no less than three hundred bodies comprising about 10,500 members, mostly self-elected and with no responsibility to the rate payers. They operated under about two hundred and fifty separate statutes, raised rates and loans according to their own fancy and had numerous unqualified and over-paid functionaries...In St. Pancras there were sixteen paving boards, yet a great portion of the parish was without paving and part of it under no jurisdiction whatsoever: they had accumulated a debt of £135,000.... The Strand between Northumberland House and Temple Bar was divided among seven different paving boards, some of them with only a few yards of the thoroughfare under their jurisdiction, and that for only part of its width...

It is also difficult to summarize the nature of the parish vestries. They tended to share similar powers, mainly along the
lines discussed above, yet some had acquired additional powers over such matters as street lighting and paving. As with the *ad hoc* committees some were large, some were small. Some parishes were efficient, some were not. Some were open vestries in which all rate payers in the parish had a right to participate, others had a small elected membership.\textsuperscript{57} Thus although London was often exempted from central government legislation concerning local government it was by no means void of local government in the first half of the nineteenth century. Space does not allow a list of all changes in the nature of local government in London. Neither does the scope of this present work allow a full analysis of the efficiency or otherwise of the system as it existed. By the middle of the century, however, those demanding reform, such as Sir Benjamin Hall, had become more powerful than the forces demanding the continuation of the *status quo*.

In 1855 Sir Benjamin Hall, M.P. for Paddington, by then an integral part of urban London, introduced the Metropolis Management Act into Parliament.\textsuperscript{58} Hall was not only a London M.P. he was also President of the General Board of Health, and thus somewhat of an expert in local government affairs. He was able to introduce a reformed system of local government for London that was seen to be better than the system it replaced, but was also acceptable to those with the ability to stop the measure of reform, such as the Corporation of the City of London, large land owners and influential rate payers.
The Metropolis Management Act created a Metropolitan Board of Works. The Board replaced the existing authorities responsible for drainage, paving, cleansing and lighting throughout an area of 75,000 acres covering a population of 2,800,000. The Board not only took control of these aspects of local government it was also given a responsibility for improving these services. The Board did replace many, but not all, of the *ad hoc* committees and it did not replace any of the parish vestries. All parishes in the Board's area had to establish a closed vestry, that is they could no longer be open to participation by all parish rate payers, only to an elected representative number. The vestries also had increased responsibilities to employ specialist staff, provide certain local government services and keep proper records. Smaller parishes without a sufficient rate base to undertake all their new responsibilities were obliged to merge their local government duties with those of similarly positioned neighbours to form local government boards to undertake the new functions.

In order to avoid controversy regarding the area of the Metropolitan Board of Works (hereafter the M.B.W.) Hall used a pre-existing area, that of the Registrar-General's area, for urban London. This area was based on that used for the Bills of Mortality, which had been periodically enlarged over two centuries to incorporate the whole of urban London, and some semi-rural areas. Because in 1855 it represented a pre-existing and accepted definition of London it was difficult to
criticize.62 The vestries and boards appointed members to the M.B.W., thus creating appointments for the most influential of the former members of disbanded committees.63 Because the M.B.W. was not elected it helped soothe fears about the possible expense and radical nature of a body dependent on the electoral support of a large numbers of Londoners. The limited nature of its functions also helped allay fears that the Board could cost rate paying Londoners dearly.64 The Corporation of the City of London appointed three members to the M.B.W. and the Board did exercise its functions in the area of the City. Yet the City lost little of its status, did not become a subordinate body and lost none of the powers most important to the City, thus enabling the Corporation to work with the M.B.W.65 Within the parishes those with influence and power gained because of the increasing role of the vestries as local authorities. Because the M.B.W. had forty-six members, mainly appointed by the parishes, the most powerful local vestry members were able to expand their influence via the M.B.W.66

The M.B.W. was a success in so far as it was more efficient than the many local ad hoc committees it replaced. It also had the ability to borrow large sums in order to undertake large scale projects which won popular support. Once established as a London-wide body with executive power, the Board, like its successors the London County Council and the Greater London Council, was able to attract more power. It was able to take responsibility for the embankment of the Thames, flood
prevention, many of the bridges over the Thames and for the London Fire Brigade. Despite popular and long lasting support for M.B.W. projects such as the Thames Embankment and main drainage and sewerage disposal schemes, much of the work undertaken represented the continuation of existing trends in local government rather than a radical change in the nature of local government.67 The Board improved efficiency mainly by allowing a single body to administer several London-wide functions. In a similar manner the changes at parish level allowed for greater efficiency by allowing a single authority to undertake functions undertaken by many smaller bodies. As Janet Roebuck has said: "The local government organization in London set up by the 1855 Act represented a stage in development rather than a completed system."68 As Roebuck goes on to explain, the vestries and boards in London developed into embryo boroughs.69 They gave way to the twenty-eight metropolitan boroughs of 1899 which preserved London's unique local government system in as much as they were different from any other borough in Britain. Similarly, the M.B.W. gave way to a London-wide authority, the London County Council, which also remained, throughout its life, a different type of authority to any other county council.

There were other attempts at major reforms of the local government system in London during the nineteenth century, but many of these were blocked by vested interests wishing to see the maintenance of the status quo, very often in the shape of
the City of London. The City retained its strong desire to preserve its independence from the rest of London, thus protecting its ancient privileges and stopping any dilution of its wealth. There were Royal Commissions established in 1835, 1853 and 1894 all of which examined local government in London. Select Committees of the House of Commons in 1861, 1866 and 1867 also examined the issue. All efforts to reform the Corporation of the City of London were overthrown. A London Government Bill, introduced by the Home Secretary Sir William Harcourt in 1884, ran out of time, defeated like many other measures by friends of the City of London. However, by the late 1880s, at the time of the creation of the London County Council, London did have a local government system which was as effective as local government in much of Britain.

London remained unique. It did not become a county borough like Manchester or Leeds. London became an administrative county, but because of the urban nature of the Administrative County of London it was unlike any other county in England and Wales.

III

The Local Government Act of 1888 established county councils in all counties in England and Wales. Throughout the country large towns with their own charters of incorporation retained their status as towns and counties in their own right with no administrative connections to the surrounding counties. The
new county councils replaced the system of rural county-wide administration undertaken by unpaid, unelected Justices of the Peace. Once again the reformed pattern of local government in Britain was inappropriate for London.

By the 1880s the M.B.W. had become tainted as corrupt and expensive. As members of the Board were appointed, not elected, it was not easy for ordinary rate payers to remove them. At that period the idea of an elected London wide administrative body was either popular or at least acceptable to enough Londoners to be feasible. Thus, the Local Government Act of 1888 made provision for the M.B.W. to be replaced by a County Council for London. It was to be the first urban county council in Britain and thus had different powers and duties to the other new county councils. As London had never been a county, an area very similar to that of the M.B.W. became the Administrative County of London. Its area was taken from the traditional, geographical, counties of Middlesex, Kent and Surrey. The City of London became part of the Administrative County of London, but remained a largely independent unit within the London County Council (L.C.C.) area. Davis describes the status of the City of London as close to a quarter session borough, retaining most of its privileges and remaining a judicial county within the Administrative County of London. The L.C.C. administered some local government services in the City of London, but appears to have enjoyed cordial relations with the Corporation of the City.
of London. The L.C.C. also seems to have had reasonable relations with all its neighbouring county councils. Such county councils, however, had a common fear of the continuing spread of urban London which could have resulted in the L.C.C expanding to incorporate large parts of those counties. The population of the county of London reached a peak of 4,500,000 at the 1901 census. Thereafter the population of the L.C.C. area declined, although the urban area and the population continued to grow beyond the L.C.C. area into Middlesex, Essex, Kent and Surrey. This gave rise to a completely urban Greater London of which the Administrative county of London became an increasingly smaller part.

The first election for the L.C.C. took place in 1889, and this introduced a new aspect to London politics, the participation of organized political parties in local government. In 1889 a loose alliance of Liberal, Fabian, some Trade Unionist and some Socialist councillors organized themselves into the ruling group on the L.C.C., which adopted the name Progressives. Initially the L.C.C. had very similar powers to those of the M.B.W. However, the ruling Progressives were keen to use the council's powers to the utmost, for example by the provision of technical education, and where possible to increase its powers, possibly by the introduction of a municipal tram system. The Progressives had some success with both aspects. The Council comprised 124 directly elected councillors and twenty aldermen appointed by the councillors. Those members who
disliked the aims of the Progressives gravitated into a loose knit opposition. It is possible to simplify the aims of this opposition group into a desire to expand the council's services very cautiously, to keep rates as low as possible and to support a high level of parochial involvement in London government via the vestries and local boards. L.C.C. elections were fought every three years and at the 1892 election the Progressives retained their loose alliance and control of the council.

Those members of the council, and individuals beyond, who disliked the expensive, expansive, centralizing policies of the council, including such prominent national figures as the Marquess of Salisbury and Joseph Chamberlain, organized a more formal grouping to oppose the Progressives. The London Municipal Society (L.M.S.) was founded in 1894, and supported L.C.C. councillors who operated under the nomenclature of Moderates until 1906, Municipal Reformers until 1945 and thereafter Conservatives.

The Progressive group controlled the L.C.C. until the 1907 election at which time the Municipal Reform group won the largest number of council seats. Control of the council was retained by the Municipal Reformers until 1934, when they lost power to Labour. The Progressives had remained an alliance of Liberals, Fabians and other Socialist groups. Although London Liberals were usually radical within the Liberal
spectrum, the Progressive group always contained strains and differences between Liberals and Socialists. In 1914 the London Labour Party (L.L.P.) was founded and following the First World War fought L.C.C. elections in opposition to Progressives and Municipal Reformers. In the 1920s the remaining Progressive councillors, predominantly Liberals, were eclipsed by the Labour councillors and as mentioned above Labour won control of the L.C.C. in 1934. They retained control until the abolition of the L.C.C. thirty-one years later. The L.L.P. introduced far more discipline into party politics in London, forcing all who would oppose them to an equal party discipline and tough ideological approach.

It is difficult to judge the role of political parties or individual party members in the politics of the local government boards and vestries. After 1855 twenty-two parishes had retained their separate identity as local government authorities and fifty-six other parish vestries had been merged into a series of fifteen local government boards. In the Woolwich area, within the Administrative County of London, a health board had been established under the 1848 Public Health Act, the only one in London. The City of London and a few very small areas mainly concentrated around the Inns of Court and Westminster Abbey continued to exist beyond the parochial system and to undertake local government functions. Much of this system was swept away by the London Government Act, 1899 which established a series of twenty-eight authorities to
replace the boards and vestries (not the City or Inns of Court). The L.M.S. had circulated a list of its principle aims shortly after its foundation in 1894. Aim one stated:

To extend and complete the policy for the reform of London Government initiated by the Unionist Ministry of 1886-92 in the creation of the London County Council, by the establishment of District Councils or Corporations, and their endowment with adequate authority, so that every part of London may obtain the reality and advantages of self-government.

The L.M.S. had retained the support of Lord Salisbury, the Unionist Prime Minister after 1895. Conservative and Moderate opinion within the L.C.C. and within London generally remained opposed to the ruling Progressive groups expensive and expansive policies. The creation of the twenty-eight Metropolitan Boroughs was seen by the government of the day and its supporters as a rival, less expensive source of local government power in London. The Boroughs were given Charters, Mayors and a full set of municipal regalia in order to create authorities of high status which would develop a high level of civic pride. The L.C.C. had been negotiating with the vestries and boards regarding the possibility of transferring some of the county council's functions to district authorities. Consequently, their slightly more powerful successors were not seen as a major threat by the L.C.C. The L.M.S. organized Municipal Reform candidates for the first metropolitan borough
elections in 1900, and won control of a majority of the new authorities.

The Metropolitan Boroughs enjoyed an enhanced status compared to their predecessors, and some extra power. All the borough councils began as party political controlled organizations and continued as such throughout their existence. As we have seen the L.C.C. had developed into a similarly controlled body. Thus, by the beginning of the twentieth century local government in London was provided by twenty-eight boroughs, the Corporation of the City of London, and by the L.C.C. Although the powers and functions of each authority was established by law and clearly set out, tension developed between county and borough level authorities sharing the same geographical territory. Tension was increased due to political differences and by an increasing complexity in local government affairs. New functions and the expansion of older services led to debate regarding which level of government was best suited to take responsibility. Tension was also increased because the L.C.C. did not collect its own rates. It issued a precept each year and the boroughs had to collect the L.C.C.'s rate demand along with their own. This created a long standing contention in some borough circles that the L.C.C. was able to increase rates with impunity because the boroughs suffered all the unpopularity when rates had to rise.⁹⁴
Tension between different levels of local government was not unique to London. In the counties surrounding London the two-tiered system was enhanced by the Local Government Act 1894 which introduced the system of rural or urban district councils. This created a system whereby rural districts could gain more power and higher status by becoming urban districts, then incorporation as borough councils and finally the highest status of all as county boroughs with no local government connection to their county council. The status of a local authority was usually linked to its population. As the urban population around the county of London grew, local authorities in that area rose in status. The metropolitan boroughs were precluded from any such promotion. By the end of the first world war there were three county boroughs adjoining London (Croydon, West Ham and East Ham). Within Greater London, as defined by the Metropolitan Police area, a complicated system of county councils, county borough councils, non-county borough councils, urban and rural district councils and some new parish councils had developed. The pattern did not remain static in the nineteenth century or in the twentieth century, as authorities changed their status and occasionally their areas. There was a great deal of co-operation between various authorities, but there was also a great deal of tension and jealousy between neighbouring authorities and different levels of local government serving the same communities.
Within the County of London the L.C.C. continued to expand the range of its functions during the early part of the twentieth century. By 1900 the council had obtained the power to buy land and build council housing outside the county of London. One of the first L.C.C. estates built outside London was in Tottenham in Middlesex shortly after 1900. Out-county housing estates were often unpopular with the local authority in whose area they were located. The local authority had no control, no voice in the building, yet had to provide local government services such as personal and public health facilities, although the L.C.C. retained the income from council rents. By 1905 the L.C.C. had taken responsibility for the tram system in London and was busy trying to co-ordinate its service with services beyond the county boundary seen at the time as L.C.C. interference beyond its borders. In the last half of the nineteenth century, the M.B.W. and the L.C.C. had taken over the functions of a number of ad hoc committees culminating in the L.C.C.'s assumption of responsibility for education in London in 1904.

There remained, however, a number of ad hoc committees in the London area. These often existed because they provided a service over an area larger than any single local authority. One such was the Metropolitan Water Board (M.W.B.). The M.W.B. had been established in 1903 to provide a reliable source of fresh water to Londoners. It had not, however, been practical to limit its supply to London alone and the board had
been established to serve most of the continuous urban area, and indeed some semi-rural areas. The M.W.B. had sixty-six members, fourteen appointed by the L.C.C., one each appointed by the metropolitan boroughs and City of London and the rest by other local authorities served by the board. The existence of the M.W.B. and a growing number of other bodies serving areas beyond any single authority in Greater London added to the complexity of local government in the wider London area. The M.W.B. demonstrated that local authorities could work together, but it also added another source of tension and even conflict. An example of this took place years later when Middlesex County Council complained of only having four representatives upon the M.W.B. compared to the L.C.C.'s fourteen.¹⁰⁰

IV

By 1914 urban London had a highly complex system of local government. The urban area extended beyond the boundaries of the L.C.C. It constituted the largest town in the world and was still growing in size and population. It was riddled with vested interests and political rivalries. The local authorities provided a vastly increased range of services to their populations in relation to previous years. However, there were many calls for new services and claims that existing services were not adequately provided. At the centre sat the largest local authority in the world, the L.C.C. The complexity of government in Greater London allowed all who wished to, to
demonstrate very many failures in the system. Politicians, academics and journalists were able to find ample evidence to suggest their own 'pet' solution would be better than the system as it existed. In 1919 the L.C.C. further complicated matters by asking the government to extend its area quite significantly into that of its surrounding neighbours.
Notes


2/ Ibid.

3/ Ibid. p.10.

4/ Ibid. p.45.


7/ Ibid.

8/ Ibid. p.66.

9/ Hope, op. cit. p.47


11/ Ibid.
12/ Ibid. p.113.

13/ Ibid. p.77.

14/ Ibid. p.84-5, 121.

15/ Ibid. p.121.

16/ Ibid. p.79.


19/ Ibid. p.48.

20/ Weinreb & Hibbert, op. cit. p.852.

21/ Pollard & Crossley, op. cit. pp.75-82.

22/ Clout, op. cit. p.74.

23/ Ibid. See list of largest 100 estates in eighteenth century London.

25/ Weinreb & Hibbert, op. cit. pp.52, 53, 131, 376, 706.

26/ Clout, op. cit. p.58.

27/ Ibid. pp.64, 74.

28/ Weinreb & Hibbert, op. cit. p.177.

29/ Hope, op. cit. p.142.


31/ Ibid.

32/ Weinreb & Hibbert, op. cit. p.632.

33/ Clout, op. cit. p.88.

34/ Richardson, op. cit. pp.151-4.

36/ For brief history of City of London Police see ibid. p.180.

37/ Weinreb & Hibbert, op. cit. p.336.

38/ Ibid. pp. 287, 333.


40/ Clout, op. cit. p.73.


42/ Ibid. p.20.


44/ This can be traced in Jackson, W.E. Local Government in England and Wales (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1948) and Thornhill, op. cit.
45/ Weinreb & Hibbert, op. cit. p.620. Also Perkin, op. cit. p.120.

46/ Weinreb & Hibbert, op. cit. p.957.


48/ Ibid.

49/ Weinreb & Hibbert, op. cit. p.957.


51/ Weinreb & Hibbert, op. cit. pp.94, 359.


54/ Thornhill, op. cit.
55/ Briggs, op. cit.

56/ Gibbon & Bell, op. cit. pp. 22-23.

57/ Ibid.


60/ Gibbon & Bell, op. cit. pp.49-53. Also Weinreb & Hibbert, op. cit. p.527.

61/ Gibbon & Bell, op. cit. pp.49-53.

62/ Ibid.

63/ Ibid.

64/ Ibid.

65/ Ibid.

66/ Ibid.

67/ Ibid.

69/ Ibid. p.87.


71/ Ibid.

72/ Ibid.

73/ Thornhill, op. cit.

74/ Ibid.

75/ Gibbon & Bell, op. cit. pp.44-53.

76/ Ibid.


78/ Ibid.

79/ Young & Garside, op. cit. chapter five.
80/ Robson, op. cit. p.44


83/ Richardson, op. cit. p.174.


85/ For the involvement of Chamberlain and Salisbury and the creation of the London Municipal Society see London Municipal Society The London Municipal Society (1954).

86/ On the early Progressives see Thompson, op. cit. passim.

88/ See Thompson, op. cit.


91/ For a list of District Boards and Vestries responsible for local government following 1855 Metropolis Local Management Act see Davis op. cit. Appendix two.

92/ London Municipal Society, op. cit. p.5.

93/ Ibid. p.8.

94/ Davis op. cit. p.44 quotes from the Committee on Local Government Finance to show that most people were unaware of the existence of any precepting authority and consequently blamed the authority issuing the rate demand.
95/ for further details see Gibbon & Bell, op. cit. p.373.

96/ Young & Garside, op. cit. p.114.

97/ Richardson, op cit. p.174.

98/ Gibbon & Bell, op. cit.

99/ Weinreb & Hibbert, op. cit. p.958.

100/ Greater London Record Office, L.C.C. archive, file LCC/CL/GP/1/14-16, 18, meeting of Metropolitan Water Board 3.11.54.
Chapter Three
Ullswater Commission to Herbert Commission

I

From the end of the first world war until the early 1960s urban Greater London continued to grow. Throughout this period the services and functions provided by the local authorities in this area also grew. This chapter explains both why there were many demands for a change in the structure of local government and why no such change occurred.

For the duration of the first world war party politics were suspended by the two largest parties represented on the L.C.C. The Municipal Reform and Progressive coalition continued beyond the 1919 county council election and, despite misgivings among some sections of the Municipal Reform Party, the L.C.C. formally requested the Government to look into the desirability of reforming London government.¹

Progressive policy had called for the extension of L.C.C. boundaries since 1907.² The Fabian Society, by the end of the war linked to the L.L.P.,³ rather than, as before, the Progressive Party, had also recommended such changes.⁴ By the immediate post-first world war period, the L.C.C. was surrounded by a string of boroughs and urban districts forming parts of other counties, yet indistinguishable to all but
locals or local government experts from the administrative county of London. In the east, Poplar merged into West Ham, and Hackney merged into Leyton. In the north, Islington merged into Hornsey, Paddington merged into Willesden, and along the Wandsworth and Wimbledon boundary it was not easy to see where London ended and Surrey began. Similarly, north-west Kent and south-east London had begun to merge together into a suburban area more akin to urban London than rural Kent. Essex, Middlesex, Surrey and Kent had developed large, populous metropolitan areas which shared many of London's characteristics and problems. They were part of Greater London. In 1921 the Government appointed a Royal Commission on London Government under the Chairmanship of a former speaker of the House of Commons, Lord Ullswater. The terms of reference for this Royal Commission were:

To enquire and report what, if any, alterations are needed in the local government of the administrative county of London and the surrounding districts, with a view to securing greater efficiency and economy in the administration of local government services and to reducing any inequalities which may exist in the distribution of local burdens as between different parts of the whole area.

The Royal Commission confined itself to seeking the opinions of local authorities, individuals and groups within its review.
area. The Commission undertook no visits in order to see or hear for itself, and remained a passive body basing any opinions it expressed on the evidence taken from interested parties. In its official evidence the L.C.C. suggested its administrative area should be extended to include the entire built up area, and those areas likely to become so in the following few years.\textsuperscript{12} It was suggested in the evidence that the provision of some services, such as electricity and water, might necessitate further rural areas being included within the Greater London administrative area, thus enabling a Greater London authority to administer all regional services. The L.C.C. expected the lower-tier district authorities to continue.

Conservative opinion in London, most often represented by the Municipal Reform Group and the L.M.S., had long been primarily concerned to provide efficient minimalist local government.\textsuperscript{13} In order to achieve this, small local authorities sensitive to the needs of ratepayers as well as local citizens requiring aid from their local council, had often been seen as most appropriate.\textsuperscript{14} The L.C.C. had been seen by the conservative minded as a high spending, centralizing, social-reformist body, little concerned with limiting rate rises.\textsuperscript{15}

The Municipal Reformers, however, had been in control at County Hall since 1907, and several leading Conservatives elected to the L.C.C. felt that a regional administration was required in
London to complement the boroughs.\textsuperscript{16} To many it was acceptable to extend the area of that regional body in the name of efficiency.\textsuperscript{17} Many Progressives were also interested in efficiency though the provision of better and more wide-ranging local government services.\textsuperscript{18} However, after the 1922 L.C.C. election, the Progressive Party lost ground, squeezed between the Municipal Reform Party and the L.L.P. They held forty six places on the council in 1919, thirty in 1922, nine in 1925, six in 1928 and 1931 and lost all their members in 1934. Herbert Morrison, Secretary of the L.L.P., in his evidence to the Ullswater Commission, also called for a Greater London Authority, which would include the counties of London, Middlesex, Hertfordshire, Kent, Surrey and all but the north of Essex.\textsuperscript{19} For a brief period all the parties represented on the L.C.C. were prepared to see the County of London extended. Shortly after the Municipal Reformers rejected the council's position.

There was little support for the view expressed by the L.C.C. The majority of the local authorities abutting London rejected the idea, as did the majority report of the Royal Commission.\textsuperscript{20} It recommended the continuance of the status quo, and pointed out that even if it had identified a need for an extension of the L.C.C. it would have been difficult to impose in the light of the hostility that the idea had aroused.\textsuperscript{21} Despite the recommendations, however, the population and area of urbanized Greater London continued to grow, particularly in Middlesex
which had joined London as a predominantly urban county by the end of the 1930s.\textsuperscript{22} The Royal Commission majority report made one concession to the growth and increasing complexity of Greater London. It had recommended the establishment of a statutory committee, whose members would be drawn from local authorities in Greater London, to advise government ministers on local government matters in Greater London.\textsuperscript{23}

The government of the day took little action. Yet it had increased the complexity of local government through the introduction of town planning as a local authority function. The Housing and Town Planning Act of 1919 was not the first Act of Parliament concerning local government, but it was the first to impose a town planning function on all urban districts and boroughs with a population of 20,000 or more.\textsuperscript{24} All such authorities in Greater London had an obligation to produce plans to control new housing areas. Because of the high concentration of such boroughs and districts in Greater London there were many plans over a limited area, but with no controls to impose any form of co-ordination. Within the Administrative County of London housing powers were shared between the L.C.C. and the twenty-eight Metropolitan Boroughs (plus the City of London), and the duty to produce a housing plan was given to the L.C.C. This may have aided co-ordination in London, but it increased the differences between the the County of London and other counties within Greater London.\textsuperscript{25} It also further differentiated between the Metropolitan Boroughs and their
counterparts just beyond the L.C.C. boundary. These authorities beyond the county of London grew in population and in the range of functions many sought to enhance their status, often by applying for county borough status.²⁶ Few wanted their status reduced to that of the Metropolitan Boroughs by incorporation in an enlarged Greater London authority. The differences between London and other counties was enhanced, not reduced, as was the case between the L.C.C. and the Metropolitan Boroughs.

The L.C.C.'s housing programme extended beyond its own county boundary and added to the complexity of Greater London and its local government system. For example, by the end of the inter-war period the L.C.C.'s Becontree estate covered 2,800 acres, contained 26,000 houses and a population of 120,000.²⁷ It was the largest local authority housing estate in the world.²⁸ Essex County Council and the district authorities of Barking and Dagenham were required to provide the usual range of local government services. Coupled to the development of the massive Ford motor manufacturing plant in Dagenham, the entire nature of the area was changed. These inter-war developments at Dagenham helped the local authority to achieve incorporation.²⁹

The 1919 Housing and Town Planning Act along with subsequent Town Planning Acts did give Barking and Dagenham many controls over the L.C.C.'s development, yet this example shows how Britain's wealthiest and most populous county, London, managed to change the character of its neighbours quite considerably, sometimes without the full support of the local authorities.
involved. Such L.C.C. housing estates created the potential for widespread antagonism and tension between local authorities. As Middlesex grew towards complete urbanization it offered greater scope for tension, particularly as the L.C.C. continued to purchase land for housing. District authorities increasingly resented not just the L.C.C.'s presence in their area, but the fact that they had no control over the social class of the L.C.C.'s tenants, something which remained beyond the scope of Town Planning legislation.

Although local government boundaries remained unchanged during the inter-war period, changes in the nature of local government created a stronger identity for Greater London. As mentioned above large numbers of Londoners moved to L.C.C. housing estates beyond the county of London. These families were able to make cheaper and quicker journeys by public transport back to their old areas of residence. The London underground system continued to grow into Middlesex and Essex. Perhaps more importantly buses improved in this period. They became reliable, economic and flexible. It became possible for working men to retain their homes in one area yet work ten or more miles away. Men living in the old urban areas of Essex could travel from their homes in, for example East Ham, through the county of London to work in the new factories in Middlesex. As the underground system spread beyond the borders of the County of London, to areas such as Golders Green and Wood Green, speculative builders were able to fill these still semi-
rural areas with new houses. Many acres were covered with low density housing.

There had long been a trend for the few who could afford it to live on the coast in Sussex or Kent and commute to London, and the 1920s and 1930s allowed greater numbers than ever before to commute quite long distances. The spread of the electric railway into what became known as 'metro land', as the Metropolitan Railway spread into outer Middlesex and Hertfordshire allowed, large numbers of white collar workers to move their families to new private housing estates and to commute to work into London. By 1939, Watford, in particular, but also several other Hertfordshire towns such as St. Albans, had become London satellites. Although they remained market towns separated from London, with their own separate community identity, as more and more of their inhabitants worked and took their leisure in London they developed a new aspect to their identities as London dormitory towns. Towns and villages in Hertfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and as far away as parts of Bedfordshire, Oxfordshire, Hampshire and Sussex were culturally and economically linked to the ever growing amorphous Greater London.

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s controls on the siting of industry, and indeed other sources of employment, remained rudimentary. The same period allowed the almost indiscriminate
development of private housing, public housing, shopping facilities, leisure facilities and other services.\(^{39}\) The rapid development of electricity supply and efficient electric motors allowed many industries to develop within Greater London away from the more traditional sources of power.\(^{40}\) Local government boundaries did not change, but communities did. Greater London grew, and developed, yet it remained beyond clear definition in local government terms.

Nonetheless, various definitions of the Greater London area were established. As we have seen, the metropolis as defined by the Metropolitan Police area and the M.W.B. area were both considerably larger than the L.C.C. area. The London Traffic Act of 1924 established the London and Home Counties Traffic Advisory Committee.\(^{41}\) This Committee was to advise the government of the day on traffic and transport within a large area centred upon London, but covering over 1,800 square miles. It also created a definition of a Greater London region. The 1933 London Passenger Transport Act created the London Passenger Transport Board. This Board owned and operated the majority of public transport in the London and Home Counties Traffic Advisory Committee area including most buses and trams, the London underground and the Metropolitan Railway.\(^{42}\) This Board did not consist of appointees from the local authorities in its area of operations. The Board was appointed by five trustees, of which only two had any connection with local government in Greater London (the chairman of the L.C.C. and a
representative of the London and Home Counties Traffic Advisory Committee. The same Act of Parliament changed the nature of the London and Home Counties Traffic Advisory Committee, changing its constitution and increasing its functions to include reporting on the best methods of improving traffic flow and public transport. The Committee comprised forty members appointed for three years at a time by the various local authorities in the Committee's review area. Both the provision of public transport and the planning of traffic and transport facilities became linked to local government in Greater London, and the two new bodies provided a new definition of Greater London. It is possible these changes improved the bus service and provided a better traffic flow, but these considerations are beyond the scope of this thesis. The new provision added to the complexity of local government in Greater London and added to the scope for conflict. For example the L.C.C. appointed six members of the Committee, while the other county fully within the Committee's area, Middlesex, only appointed two. This was at a time when the population of the County of London was falling, but was rising in suburban Greater London, which included most of Middlesex. Also the only district authorities to appoint members were in the L.C.C. area and not evenly divided there; the City Corporation and the City of Westminster appointed one member each while the other metropolitan boroughs appointed six between them.
A further Committee established in 1927 which aided the growing awareness of the existence of Greater London was the Greater London Regional Planning Committee. The Committee had advisory powers only, but Neville Chamberlain, as Minister of Health, at that date responsible for local government in England and Wales, had given the committee its official status. This Committee shared the same area as the London and Home Counties Traffic Advisory Committee, but because of the very name of the Greater London Regional Planning Committee it added authority to claims that the Greater London Region was a coherent entity. The Planning Committee had a membership of forty-five and represented 152 separate local authorities, once again adding to the complexities of local government, or at least local government planning, in the area.

The Bressey Report of 1937 used the same area to define Greater London. This was a report by the Ministry of Transport's chief engineer, Sir Charles Bressey, concerning the problems of highway development in Greater London. This further added to the official recognition of the existence of Greater London. The report also recognized the need for planning and the provision of some services over an area considerably larger than the county of London.

A further acknowledgement of the growth of Greater London, and that this growth had caused problems both within Greater London and the rest of Britain, came with the report of the Royal
Commission on the Distribution of the Industrial Population in 1940. The report stated that between 1921 and 1937 the population of London and the home counties increased by eighteen percent. This compared with a population increase of eleven per cent in the Midlands, six per cent in Yorkshire and less than one per cent in Lancashire. The report also stated that during the same period the population had decreased by approximately one per cent in County Durham and Northumberland, and by nine per cent in Glamorgan and Monmouth. During this period the population of Great Britain grew by six per cent.48

As the population grew disproportionately in Greater London, so the same area attracted a disproportionate share of Britain's economic growth. The report quoted from an earlier report of 1936 by Sir Malcolm Stewart, the Commissioner for the Special Areas (England and Wales), which expressed the hope that industry that did not need to be located in Greater London could be encouraged to develop in areas of high unemployment. The Royal Commission report did recommend to the government of the day that a new central authority should be given power to regulate the establishment of new industrial undertakings in London and the home counties.49

The above report suggested that the continuing growth of London could be a threat to the wellbeing of the rest of Britain. By 1939 Greater London was larger than ever before,50 and was linked to an even larger area, the whole of South-East England. A number of small towns around Greater London such as Slough
and Luton had expanded as industrial centres. They were connected to London by good road and rail links, and they often found ready markets for their manufactured goods in Greater London. The Royal Commission report argued that many other areas of South-East England had also shared Greater London's growth and apparent prosperity during the inter-war period. This contrasted sharply with many other areas of Britain. South-East England was, and remains, a diverse area, yet it became possible for official reports such as the above to equate the whole area as a unified area with Greater London at the centre growing at too great a speed, drawing in too much of the nations population, industry, trade and commerce to the detriment of the rest of Britain. The Royal Commission report suggested a central government agency to help redress this imbalance. This in itself would not have needed any change to the local government system. Yet by its nature it would have had an impact on local government because of its influence on the growing field of local authority town planning, and by its proposed powers to encourage particular projects such as the L.C.C.'s 1935 plan to encourage the growth of a green belt around London. The second world war temporarily stopped any such developments.

Within the county of London there were no changes to the local government structure during the 1920s and 1930s. However, many
pre-existing tensions continued, and in some cases were heightened. Many local government services became increasingly technical and more expensive to provide. Demographic changes affected many of the Metropolitan Boroughs, as the County of London continued to lose population to the outer areas of Greater London.53 Some boroughs, such as Paddington,54 went through a period of 'gentrification', others, such as Islington, the opposite.55

Disagreements between the L.C.C. and the Metropolitan Boroughs regarding the best division of service provision continued.56 An example of the complexity of this problem is that of the school medical service. Because the L.C.C. was the education authority in London it provided the school medical service. However, many boroughs argued that most personal services were, and indeed should be, provided by the boroughs because they were smaller organizations more attuned to the needs of their residents, who knew where to find the town hall when in need. Supporters of the borough argument suggested that because the lower tier authorities provided maternity and child welfare services they would be efficient and responsive providers of the school medical service. This implied that if the school medical service was to continue to be linked to the provision of education that service would also have to be transferred to the boroughs. Some of the larger or richer boroughs had sufficient rate base or school age populations to become full education authorities, but if the Metropolitan Boroughs took
control of education the implications for very small boroughs, such as Chelsea or Holborn, could have been incorporation into their larger neighbours. Both the above authorities were unwilling to lose their independent identity. Because of the close relationship between many services, any change to the status quo could have wide-ranging consequences. Most suggested changes to the status quo aroused a high level of opposition, and consequently did not happen.

There were several Acts of Parliament, such as the Local Government Act, 1929, which added to the debate regarding which level would best provide each service. As a consequence of this Act all the Poor Law Unions and Boards of Guardians in London were abolished and their powers and functions transferred to the L.C.C. Although the Poor Law authorities had had no connection to the Metropolitan Boroughs they had derived from the old parishes, and often shared similar names and similar areas to the boroughs. Despite this, their functions were transferred from locally elected bodies to the London-wide, more impersonal L.C.C. Among the effects of this legislation was that the L.C.C. became responsible for most hospitals in London, but the majority of clinics dealing with many aspects of personal health remained borough services. A further result was that the county council became responsible for the provision of unemployment assistance throughout London. It fulfilled this function through a series of local committees, one in each borough, yet the boroughs lacked any control over
these committees. This aspect of the Act could be interpreted as a move towards the central direction of an essentially local service. A less familiar example of tension between the metropolitan boroughs and the L.C.C. is given by Gibbon and Bell:

In its most acute form this conflict arose over the new midwifery service set up by the Act of 1936, when the borough councils urged vigorously but unsuccessfully that they, not the [London County] Council, should be the authority under the new Act. The powers were given to the Council, which was already the supervising authority under the Midwives Act.

Because midwives were supervised by the L.C.C., but many maternity services were provided by the boroughs, an improvement to the state's aide to expectant mothers caused a major disagreement within London government.

Shortly before the second world war the L.C.C. expressed the opinion that: "...Greater London is already larger than is desirable either on proper planning principles or in the interests of the population of the County of London." As Greater London grew, the influence and importance of the L.C.C. in the centre declined. Demands for the L.C.C. to be supplanted by a regional Greater London Authority grew.
One of the most vociferous and articulate supporters of radical change was William Robson, Professor of Public Administration at London University. Robson continued to campaign for radical change until such change occurred in 1965. However, one of his most detailed critiques of London government appeared in 1939, *The Government and Misgovernment of London*. In this 500 page work Robson explained how the local government system in Greater London had come about, what he saw as its failings and detailed what he considered to be a better system. In very basic terms Robson argued for a Greater London Authority responsible for regional or strategic matters and a series of large local authorities capable of undertaking the majority of local government functions. Robson's work was detailed and thorough, yet his basic ideas could be rendered into a simplistic plan with great appeal to many unaware of the pitfalls implicit in such simplicity. This is especially possible when it is contrasted with the apparent archaic nature of London government. This archaism is demonstrated in Robson's own description:

The area known as Greater London contains the following medley of local government bodies: the London County Council; the City Corporation; 28 metropolitan borough councils; the Metropolitan Water Board; the Port of London Authority; the Thames and Lee Conservancy Boards; 5 county councils (Essex, Herts, Kent Middlesex and Surrey); 3 county borough
councils (Croydon, East Ham and West Ham); 35 municipal borough councils; 30 urban district councils; 4 rural district councils and 6 parish councils. The total is 117 organs of which all but 4 are directly elected.62

The above does not include the various advisory or co-ordinating committees which all helped to illustrate the system was over-complex to those who wished to draw such conclusions.

III

The war years were not years of actual reform for the British local government system. However, they were years of thought and planning and as early as 1941 the minister responsible, Lord Reith, called for a London development plan.63 As a consequence the County of London Plan was prepared on behalf of the L.C.C. and published in 1943.

A second war-time development plan was the Greater London Plan by Professor Patrick Abercrombie sponsored by central government. It was not as detailed as the L.C.C. development plan, but incorporated a far larger area of approximately thirty miles radius from Charing Cross. It went beyond the built up area of Greater London. The plan included many rural areas of the home counties. It extended to parts of Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire. It brought Luton and Slough
among many other towns within Greater London. The plan was published in 1945. The plan’s definition of Greater London had no local government status whatsoever. It was, however, one more formal recognition of the existence of a Greater London region. This was a region which incorporated more than the built-up area of Greater London. It was an area suitable for medium and long term regional planning although it did not include all areas of prosperous South-East England, as industrial areas such as Reading and Oxford were excluded.

The development of a 'green belt' around London helped limit the outward spread of built-up Greater London. This was an area considerably smaller than that in Abercrombie's plan, but a definable urban area. Abercrombie's Greater London region and Greater London, confined by the 'green belt', offered two competing images of Greater London. Perhaps one was best suited to town and country planning and one best suited to reform of the local government system, although both matters were interconnected.

During the war a system of regional commissioners had developed throughout Britain. Their main function had been to co-ordinate local government, particularly civil defence. These commissioners were not elected and did not long survive the war. They did, however, represent an embryonic regional system of local government, and thus enhanced the argument that regional government could work and was desirable. One such
demand had been accepted at the Labour Party's annual conference in 1943. This theoretically committed the Labour Party to introducing a system of regional authorities complemented by a much reduced number of subordinate district authorities throughout Britain.65

IV

The Local Government (Boundary Commission) Act, 1945 established a Boundary Commission to examine local authority boundaries in England and Wales. The Commission had executive power to change boundaries and merge local authorities (subject to Parliamentary approval) in order to create a reformed pattern of local authorities better able to reflect changes in populations and to promote efficient local government. However, the Boundary Commission had no powers to examine boundaries in the county of London or to recommend county borough status for any Middlesex authority.66 The white paper which preceded the Act, Local Government in England and Wales During the Period of Reconstruction (CMD 6579), acknowledged that there were concerns regarding whether the boundary of the county of London needed to be extended. The white paper suggested London government would be examined separately.

The same government white paper expressed the problem at the very crux of the 'Middlesex Problem', that because Middlesex
had become an almost entirely urban county, many of the district authorities had become very populous, and quite large enough to support separation from the administrative county of Middlesex by gaining county borough status. The boroughs of Ealing, Edmonton, Hendon, Heston & Isleworth and Tottenham plus the urban district of Harrow had population levels above the normally required minimum for county borough status.67 There were three further authorities, Hornsey and Twickenham boroughs, and Enfield urban district, with populations within 5,000 of the required minimum.68 If just one Middlesex district had gained that status there would have been little justification for denying it to the other authorities which met the criteria. The few areas left within the administrative county of Middlesex would not have been sufficient to maintain a county administration. Middlesex required either all county boroughs or no county boroughs, or possibly a new alternative within a Greater London authority.69

Two separate committees were established to examine aspects of London government. The Committee on London Government, known as the Reading Committee after its chairman Lord Reading, was established in April 1945. It was to examine and report on the most suitable number, size and boundaries of the metropolitan boroughs, and the distribution of functions between the boroughs and the L.C.C.70 The Reading Committee was wound up in October 1946 because the Labour Government claimed a wider investigation into London government was required.71 The other
committee, The London Planning Administrative Committee, chaired by Clement Davies M.P., had been established in February 1946, initially to co-ordinate town planning between all 143 planning authorities in Greater London, but it produced a report in late 1949 calling for regional planning authority for Greater London.

The Labour Governments of 1945-51 neither introduced legislation for local government reforms nor produced detailed plans for such reforms. Even the Boundary Commission had been abolished in 1949 after a disagreement between the Minister of Health and the Chairman of that Commission. Despite this, local government reform both in London and the rest of Britain remained an issue.

As detailed above, the L.L.P. had favoured reform of London government in the past. However, when Labour gained control of the L.C.C. in 1934 it was naturally keen to ensure its continued dominance at County Hall. Nonetheless, the Leader of the controlling Labour Group on the L.C.C., Charles Latham, investigated whether his group should adopt a policy aimed at reforming London government. As Mason has written: "At the end of 1940 Latham instigated and conducted the most thorough inquiry into the structure of London government ever carried out by Labour." The review had been undertaken by a committee of senior L.C.C. members and L.L.P. executive committee appointees, aided by representatives from the
Metropolitan Boroughs. The committee was unable to find a suitable scheme to allow a larger Greater London authority which remained centralized yet fully accountable to democratically elected members. The committee also failed to define the role of lower tier authorities which would have been considerably larger than those they would replace. Latham and his colleagues attempted to design a new local government system for Greater London that would have retained a great many of the characteristics of the system within the county of London. Creating a smaller number of larger second tier authorities with no greater powers than the metropolitan boroughs would, however, have increased the tensions between the two tiers of local government. An upper tier carrying out very many functions throughout a large area would have required a large bureaucracy with the possibility that senior officers would gain too much control. The committee collapsed by the end of 1942 without issuing a report.\textsuperscript{76} The exercise demonstrated the difficulties of designing a system that would allow Labour a reasonable chance of retaining power and of directing socialist policies throughout Greater London. The L.L.P. and the national Labour Party's recorded interest in regional government made it difficult for the L.L.P. to argue that it was opposed to a Greater London authority in principle. It could only logically argue it was opposed on the grounds of impracticability and inefficiency.
During this period Conservatives in London were also showing an interest in reforming London government. In August 1945 Geoffrey Hutchinson, former Conservative M.P. for Ilford in metropolitan Essex and a member of the L.C.C., was appointed as the Chairman of Conservative Central Office Local Government Committee.\(^7^7\) Hutchinson had a record of demanding change in London government. In 1943 he had suggested all the planning authorities in Greater London should be replaced by a single Greater London planning authority.\(^7^8\) Later, in 1952, while still Chairman of the Conservative Local Government Committee, he recommended that local government in Greater London should be radically changed with all county councils swept away and lower tier authorities in Greater London grouped into Corporations approximating to county boroughs, with a Minister for London to co-ordinate their activities.\(^7^9\) These ideas were given some support by the L.M.S.\(^8^0\) The Conservative Party went on to recommend a similar system for the whole of Britain in a Pamphlet, *Local Government Reform*, published in January 1954.

Although the post-war Labour Government was unable to find time to reform local government it did introduce several items of legislation which affected local government in London. The New Towns Act, 1946, allowed central government to finance a series of satellite towns around London in order to house London's surplus population displaced by large scale redevelopment. These new towns were to be developed by government appointed Development Corporations, and thus were outside the normal
local government system. They were to be developed along the
best town and country planning practices of the time, which
included encouraging industry and other employers to relocate
to these new sites. Hemel Hempstead, Stevenage, Harlow and
Crawley were the first new towns to be developed, but several
others followed in the South-East of England. These were not
developed for the exclusive use of Londoners, and indeed they
attracted job seekers from many areas of Britain, but many
firms retained business links with London, and many individuals
retained family and social links with London. They required
good links with London in order to thrive. From the 1950s these
new communities developed some of the characteristics of older
towns such as Watford and St. Albans. Such communities developed
very close ties with London, yet retained an identity separate
from urban Greater London. The new towns, by reducing the need
for L.C.C. housing estates within, or very close to, urban
Greater London, helped constrain the growth of Greater London,
which initially reduced the urgency of local government reform
within Greater London. The L.C.C. helped to finance new
housing in several local authority areas in South-East England,
some as far away as Bury St. Edmunds.

The 1947 Town and Country Planning Act obliged the county and
county boroughs in Greater London (and the rest of Britain) to
produce development plans, rather than the district
authorities. The Act reduced the number of planning
authorities in the Metropolitan police area to nine. Because
these authorities had a duty to plan in the spirit and pattern of the Abercrombie Greater London Plan, a high level of Greater London co-operation was required.

The post-war requirement for detailed town and country planning, backed with some elements of compulsion, changed the nature of the centuries old outward movement of urban London. The pre-war trend of closer links between London and surrounding, but separate, communities was intensified. The Abercrombie plan went beyond Greater London as defined by the built up area, and this trend continued. In 1946 the New Towns Act by-passed the existing local government system, and this trend also increased, particularly in the late 1950s and 1960s with bodies such as the South-East Regional Planning Council of 1965 and the South-East Economic Planning Council. Unless central government had reassigned almost all local government functions away from local authorities there remained a need for such authorities to take an interest in town and country planning. The building of a new library by a local authority, for example, needed to take account of local town and country planning policy. A new library might need to be situated in an area designated for high density housing rather than an area set aside for industrial use. Local authorities needed to work with town and country planners on a wide range of matters such as setting appropriate population levels and public transport services.
Although many aspects of town and country planning required regional co-ordination and direction, many consequences of a failure in planning were seen at a more local level. Both the L.C.C. and the Metropolitan Boroughs felt the consequences of failures in planning, and other functions, which were beyond their control. The local authorities in the county of London often had no power to interfere in issues causing problems. As Peter Hall shows, the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act allowed developers to add ten percent to the existing cubic capacity of individual office buildings, and coupled with a trend towards the lowering of ceilings, an extra forty percent of floor space could often be added to offices. Hall points out that the L.C.C.'s official development plan of 1947 did not anticipate the growth in office based employment in central London. Developers had no responsibility towards developing the infrastructure, nor did the individual firms creating new jobs in central London. Thus, the provision of offices and jobs was not linked to the provision of new roads and public transport. The existing planning legislation throughout the 1950s gave the local authorities in central London little power to control the development of employment, which added very large numbers of commuters to those already using the overcrowded public transport system in the London rush hour. The L.C.C. and the Metropolitan Boroughs did have some influence upon the London Transport system, but throughout the
1950s public transport in London lacked the massive funds required for major improvements to the public transport system. Some, such as the *Evening Standard*, blamed the L.C.C., others, such as Edward Carter, Director of the Architectural Association, in *The Future of London* (1962), recognized the L.C.C. was powerless. Both attitudes, however, expressed a view that London government had failed. On the one hand, it could have, and should have done more. On the other hand, it was incapable of solving the problem and thus required reform.

The period between the end of the second world war and the appointment of the Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London (1957) saw the continuation of several long term trends. One such trend was the afore-mentioned centrifugal dispersal of London's population. Many Metropolitan Boroughs continued to see a decline in their population levels, but in central London this was complicated by the growing number of workers commuting into the area to shops and offices. The City of London, the City of Westminster and the Metropolitan Borough of Holborn were the most seriously affected, but other boroughs, such as Paddington and Finsbury, were also affected. Because of the population density in 1899 many of the inner London boroughs were quite small, Holborn covered some 406 acres, even smaller than the City of London. The day-time population of these areas was becoming far higher than the night-time population. Holborn had a day-time population of 250,000 but a night-time population of 20,000. The L.C.C.'s
1960 review of its Development Plan identified an increase in employment of 15,000 per annum in central London, an increase almost twice as great as the rest of England and Wales.\(^9^5\) It acknowledged the many problems caused by such growth.\(^9^6\) The very nature of these inner London boroughs had begun to change, and with this change some local government functions declined while others were subject to growth or distortion. What failed to change was the size and functions of these authorities. This helped to add weight to the argument that local government reform was urgently required in London.

The L.C.C.'s development plan of 1951 had committed the L.C.C. and the boroughs to a plan of redevelopment in specific areas, the largest of which affected Stepney and Poplar in East London. Hall points out there were, however, several defects in this plan, mainly because the lack of resources required concentration on the most pressing areas to the detriment of problems elsewhere. In many areas of London such as North Kensington large houses had been sub-divided and left to decay by their owners. They were not slums as such and thus the local authorities allowed many such areas of poor housing to continue in existence through lack of resources to improve them. This left many Londoners in poor housing with the feeling that the local authorities were unable to solve London's housing problems.\(^9^7\) Because the L.C.C. and the Metropolitan Boroughs shared similar housing powers there were tensions between the two tiers on some housing matters. The Metropolitan Boroughs
Standing Joint Committee (M.B.S.J.C.) wanted the L.C.C. to concentrate on providing out-county housing and to leave the boroughs what land remained inside the county for their own housing schemes. Hall claims that Barlow, Chairman of the Royal Commission on the Distribution of the Industrial Population, and Abercrombie, author of the Greater London Plan, had been misled by demographers of the 1930s who had expected a static population in the South-East of England during the 1950s. This had proved to be wrong and by the early 1960s building land in London had virtually run out. This enhanced tensions within the local government system in London and provided further evidence to those wishing to conclude that London government required major reform.

Housing was by no means the only local government function causing tension between the L.C.C. and the Metropolitan Boroughs. The creation of the National Health Service (N.H.S.) shortly after the war induced change in the local government health services. County councils lost their hospitals to the new N.H.S. and the district councils were required to transfer most of their health services to the relevant county council. The L.C.C. arranged its personal health services through a series of health divisions, although the divisions were not coterminous with the boroughs, they demonstrated that personal health services needed to be provided through administrative units smaller than the L.C.C. The M.B.S.J.C. began negotiating with the L.C.C. to return personal health services to boroughs.
in 1954. Although the L.C.C. did not formally refuse to do so, the issue was not solved before the establishment of the Royal Commission in 1957. The ruling Labour group on the L.C.C. was reluctant to see powers transferred away from itself, although it acknowledged in principle some services, including personal health services, might be transferred. Issues such as this drove a wedge between the Labour controlled L.C.C. and Labour controlled Metropolitan Boroughs, and gave yet more ammunition to those calling for reform in London government.

The L.C.C. differed in opinion from the Conservative Government of 1951 to 1964 on several issues. One such issue was the L.C.C.'s support for comprehensive schooling. The 1947 London School Plan had projected the development of sixty-seven comprehensive schools, but these developed slowly, the first not opening until 1953, although the number continued to rise in the late 1950s and 1960s. Not all Conservatives in Parliament or the L.C.C. were opposed to comprehensive education, but many were. Thus the L.C.C. adopted an education policy unpopular with many Conservatives and education became a contentious issue, often dividing the L.C.C. from central government. Some of the metropolitan boroughs offended the Government by refusing to adequately prepare for their civil defence duties in event of war. Some Labour politicians of the period have argued that such controversial policies as education and civil defence influenced the Conservative
Government's decision to appoint a Royal Commission to investigate local government in Greater London.¹⁰⁶

In July 1957 Henry Brooke, the Minister for Housing and Local Government, announced the establishment of the Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London. Later, it was announced that it would be chaired by Sir Edwin Herbert, a leading solicitor in the City of London. Herbert and six colleagues were to study and recommend changes, if required, into local government in Greater London. It created little surprise, as reform of London government had been expected for several years. Both major parties in Parliament had shown interest in such reform. Although none of the county councils in the review area had demanded change, there were other interested bodies such as the Association of Municipal Corporations urging change. Local government in London had proven to be flexible and adaptable. However, the complex interrelation of district, county, and ill-defined region, and of planning, provision of services and regulatory functions, failed to operate to a standard which was self-evidently efficient. By 1957 criticisms of the existing system were numerous, as were the plans for reform, yet central government had failed to introduce change. Throughout the period from the Ullswater Commission to the establishment of the Herbert Commission, Greater London had changed and developed, yet the local government system had remained virtually static. The complex nature of Greater London meant any change to the local government system would risk
arousing the opposition of many interested parties. Any new pattern of local government risked becoming as complex and as prone to criticism as that it had replaced. Also the local government system did work, and ultimately it had to be a political decision whether reform would improve local government in Greater London, and if so what reforms would be most effective.
Notes


4/ Young & Garside, op. cit.


6/ Ibid. p.468.

7/ Ibid. p.405.

8/ Ibid. p.991.

9/ Ibid. p.992.


14/ Ibid.

15/ Ibid. pp. 11-12.

16/ Young & Garside, op. cit. pp.126 - 139.

17/ Ibid.

18/ Ibid.

20/ Young & Garside, op. cit. pp.164 - 168.

21/ Ibid.

22/ For discussion of urban nature of Middlesex by 1940s, see Abercrombie, P. Greater London Plan (London, H.M.S.O., 1945) pp. 22-27.

23/ Young & Garside, op. cit.


26/ Young & Garside, op. cit. p.131.


28/ Young & Garside, op. cit. pp.154-5.
29/ Weinreb & Hibbert, op. cit. for the inter-war history of Barking, p.41; Dagenham, p.226.

30/ Ibid. p.131.


32/ Weinreb & Hibbert, op. cit. p.911.


37/ Information from St.Albans City Museum, Hatfield Road, St.Albans.
38/ On Greater London and its satellite towns see Abercrombie op. cit. section 13 p.3-4 and chapter 1 pp 22 - 27.


40/ Stevenson, op. cit. p.110.

41/ Robson, op. cit. p.149.

42/ Weinreb & Hibbert, op. cit. p.911.

43/ Robson, op. cit. p.151.

44/ For details of this Committee see Robson, op. cit. p.153.

45/ Abercrombie, op. cit. sections 3 & 4, p.2

46/ Robson, op. cit. p.187.


49/ Ibid. Recommendation No.3.

50/ Weinreb & Hibbert, op. cit. p.632 for details of population growth in Greater London.


53/ Weinreb & Hibbert op. cit. p.632.

54/ Ibid. p.590.

55/ Ibid. p.425.

56/ Gibbon & Bell, op. cit. p. 598.

57/ Ibid.


59/ Ibid. p. 403.

60/ Ibid. p.598.

62/ Robson, op. cit. P.165. This is the Metropolitan Police area.

63/ The Times 5.4.41 p.2.

64/ Gibbon & Bell, op. cit. pp.509-11. Also Thomas, op. cit.


67/ Ibid. p.62.

68/ Ibid.

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72/ The Times 16.2.46. p.8.

73/ Ibid. 8.10.49. p.2.

74/ Pearce, op. cit. p.62.


76/ Ibid. pp. 255 - 258.

77/ The Times 1.8.45. p.2.

78/ The Times 27.10.1943. p.8.

79/ The Times 24.6.1952. p.3.
80/ Chapter Six pp.220-22, below.


83/ Ibid. p.56.


85/ Evening Standard 30.1.58 p.3.

86/ Young & Garside, op. cit. p.272.


89/ Ibid. p.23.

91/ Carter, op. cit. p.155.

92/ This is discussed in Chapter Eight above. Also Public Record Office file HLG 3/540, Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London, Digest of Facts and Summaries 1958 - 1960, contains details of population change in all local authorities in Greater London throughout the twentieth century.


96/ Ibid. paras. 84, 125, 150, 155, 190-192, 272.

97/ Hall, London 2000 op. cit. p.27. Also the Evening Standard contains many such criticisms of the L.C.C.'s housing policy, for example see 10.4.61 p.7

99/ Hall, London 2000 op. cit. p.80


101/ Ibid.

102/ See Chapter Five p.174, below. Also compare oral evidence given to the Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London by the L.C.C., Minutes of Evidence, 23.4.59 & 24.4.59, and the M.B.S.J.C., 5.3.59.

103/ Cole, M. Servant of the County (London, Denis Dobson, 1956). Margaret Cole was a member of the L.C.C.'s Education Committee.

104/ This issue is fully discussed in Chapters Five and Nine, below.

Based on private conversations with Lady Denington 5.10.1993 and Lord Jenkins 31.1.95, both former L.C.C. Councillors.
Chapter Four

Transition in London Government

Royal Commission to Act of Parliament

I

This chapter examines the constraints imposed upon the Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London before it began its deliberations. It demonstrates how these constraints effected the recommendations of the Royal Commission. Furthermore this chapter examines the pressures and influences upon the Royal Commission throughout its life and explains how these contributed to the Royal Commission's report. This chapter moves on to explain why the Government's response to the Royal Commission's report, the 1961 white paper, recommended a few significant changes to the findings of the Royal Commission. It then goes on to explain why the Government was forced to introduce a number of important changes to its own plans before the London Government Act 1963 became law.

On the 29 July 1957, Henry Brooke, Minister of Housing and Local Government, announced a Royal Commission would be appointed to examine local government in Greater London.1 There was no announcement regarding the exact terms of reference of the Royal Commission, nor of its members. These were not formulated for several months. This bare announcement was not controversial, and it received little attention in The Times or
the *Evening Standard*. Herbert Morrison, senior Labour politician and a former leader of the L.C.C., claimed there was no urgent need for change in the local government structure in London, and that previous Royal Commissions had failed to identify a better system for Greater London. This did not amount to bitter opposition, but Morrison was to become one of the most vociferous opponents of change.

Brooke had only been Minister of Housing and Local Government since January 1957. Thus, during the year the Royal Commission was established many of the Conservative Government's initiatives on local government were associated with his predecessors, Duncan Sandys and Harold Macmillan. Sandys had been Minister between 1954 and early 1957, and his words and actions set the scene for the Royal Commission. At the Conservative Local Government Conference at Llandudno in October 1956, Sandys said:

> There is no case for scrapping the present system of local government, which has stood up to the severest tests in both peace and war. On the other hand, while preserving the existing structure, we must undoubtedly take steps to bring it up to date. Considerable adjustments are necessary to take account of changes in the distribution of industry and population, in the scope of the social services and generally in the pattern of national and local
This general approach had been accepted by the Government which had caused a white paper to be published a few months earlier. This paper had suggested the best way to create the appropriate changes in the local government structure in England and Wales would be by the creation of two Local Government Commissions, one for each nation. The white paper, however, made it clear that if the recommended Local Government Commission for England was established it should have no power to examine the County of London, nor should it have the authority to create county boroughs in Middlesex. The Local Government Act, 1958, did establish the two Local Government Commissions, but not until after the appointment of the Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London (hereafter the Royal Commission or Herbert Commission). Hence, in August 1957 Government action regarding London and Middlesex was not unexpected.

Henry Brooke took a slightly different approach to that of his predecessor, in as much as a Royal Commission created the image (and in this case the reality) of a greater 'root and branch' investigation into the functions and boundaries of local government units than that previously suggested by Sandys. Brooke announced that previously the question of county boroughs in Middlesex had been dealt with by disallowing any such authorities in Middlesex, but the Royal Commission would
not be handicapped by the imposition of such a policy. It would have the authority to recommend far more than a little tinkering with the status quo. Brooke had one advantage his Conservative predecessors lacked: he had been an elected member of the L.C.C. for many years and had been leader of the Conservative group on that Council between 1945 and 1952. He did have personal experience of London government. This may have made it more difficult for Brooke's political opponents to claim he did not know what he was talking about, but it had the disadvantage that those same political opponents could argue that Brooke was motivated by a desire to destroy Labour's hegemony in London. Morrison was among the first and the most persistent in claiming that Brooke wished to destroy the L.C.C. because the Conservatives had been unable to win control of the council, particularly under the leadership of Henry Brooke. Four-and-a-half years later this accusation still persisted: a Labour politician claimed that the Royal Commission had been established in order to facilitate the abolition of the L.C.C. It was claimed that the Conservative Government was determined to push through such a Bill because "Mr Brooke would love to see the end of the L.C.C...." (thirty years after the creation of the G.L.C. this claim is still common among former L.C.C. Labour members.) There is no evidence to substantiate any such claim. Brooke and his allies and successors may have been happy to see the end of Labour's hegemony in London, but their primary aim seems to have been to create a more efficient local government structure for Greater London.
Greater London remained an ill defined area, or perhaps over defined in as much as there were many different definitions. Before a Royal Commission could inquire into local government in Greater London, Greater London needed to be clearly defined. Similarly, local government needed to be defined before any inquiry could be set in motion. For example, it was important to establish whether the provision of public transport, water, and the police should be included. Outside of Greater London these were normally provided by local government, but in Greater London they were not. The Minister needed to decide whether the prospective Royal Commission should consider these services before its terms of reference could be drawn up. Brooke and his advisors probably had in mind the need to give the Royal Commission a manageable task, to enable it to report in a reasonable time and to minimize the anticipated opposition before that opposition was aroused. At the same time Brooke had to be careful not to emasculate the Royal Commission. The Ministry of Housing and Local Government set in motion a process of consultation with many of the local authorities and other interested organizations in order to establish the attitude of such bodies regarding the desirability or otherwise of including them in the Royal Commission’s remit. As an example, the Ministry of Housing and Local Government wrote to the M.W.B. in September 1957 to enquire of the Board’s attitude towards the Royal Commission. The Board replied that the supply of water was a technical matter and thus should be beyond the scope of the Royal Commission. In the case of the
M.W.B. its opinion was accepted and the Royal Commission was given no power to examine the supply of water to Greater London.

In November 1957 details of the Royal Commission's terms of reference and its composition were announced by the Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan. It was normal for a government to consult with the interested parties before the announcement of any Royal Commission's terms of reference, thus the period between the announcement of the decision to establish a Royal Commission and the publication of its tasks caused little concern or suspicion. Neither The Times nor the Evening Standard passed comment on the delay. The full terms of reference were:

To examine the present system and working of local government in the Greater London area; to recommend whether any, and if so what, changes in the local government structure and the distribution of local authority functions in the area, or in any part of it, would better secure effective and convenient local government; and to regard, for these purposes, local government as not including the administration of police, or of water, and the Greater London area as comprising the Metropolitan Police District together with the City of London, the Boroughs of Dartford, Romford, and Watford, the Urban Districts
of Caterham and Warlingham, Chorleywood, Hornchurch, Rickmansworth, and Walton and Weybridge, and the Parish of Watford Rural in the Watford Rural District.\textsuperscript{12}

There were 111 local authorities within the review area. It included the whole of the Counties of London and Middlesex and parts of Surrey, Kent, Essex and Hertfordshire, and the county boroughs of East Ham, West Ham, and Croydon. It represented what was considered to be the continuously built up area of Greater London.\textsuperscript{13} Greater London was not, however, a geometrically perfect area. There were many open spaces, which remained rural, or at least partially rural in character. This was particularly so in areas between the 'ribbon development' which spread along the arterial routes out of London. Romford is an example. It was connected to urban Greater London at Ilford along the A12 and Dagenham along the A13, yet between these major roads it remained separated by a considerable area of semi-rural land.\textsuperscript{14} The irregular pattern of urban Greater London made it impossible to provide the Royal Commission with an entirely suitable review area. It proved to be large enough to allow authorities on the periphery to argue they were not an integral part of Greater London, yet too small to convince sceptics it could find solutions to region-wide problems.

The London Transport Executive provided a public transport system consisting of buses and the London Underground, both of
which extended beyond the review area. The London Transport Executive (L.T.E.) had replaced the London Passenger Transport Board in 1947, and like its predecessor retained links with the local government system in London. However, British Rail, which shared responsibility for public transport in Greater London with the L.T.E., had no connection with the local government system in Greater London. Not only had public transport provision allowed Greater London to spread ever more widely from the late nineteenth century, but it remained of vital importance to the pattern of work and leisure in Greater London. Edward Carter estimated that 1,148,000 people entered Central London daily by public transport in 1958. Commuters continued to travel over many miles in order to work in London, shoppers, theatre goers, tourists and many others continued to enter London by train or bus. It was the public transport system, coupled to the increasing use of the private motor car (a seventy-five per cent increase in six years to 1958) which had allowed the development of dramatically higher day-time populations, as opposed to night-time populations, in many inner London boroughs. A third of a million commuters entered the City of London to work each day, over 300,000 entered Finsbury and 100,000 Holborn.

Public transport had allowed the development of large scale employment and leisure activities in London, and continued in the late 1950s and early 1960s to carry the majority of individuals into London. Nonetheless the private car, with
its need for road space for transit and parking, had become a major issue by the time of the Royal Commission's examination of local government.²⁰ In December 1958, as the Royal Commission continued its deliberations, the Evening Standard produced an editorial claiming that traffic congestion had virtually brought London to a halt.²¹ The Evening Standard did not attribute blame entirely to the local authorities in inner London, nor did the editorial suggest the Royal Commission should give priority attention to the problem of traffic congestion. This problem was, however, one of London's most visible issues, and had been the subject of frequent debate,²² and although most acute in Central London, it also affected many other focal points in Greater London.

However, it was effectively beyond the power of the Royal Commission to tackle, partially because public transport was not part of the local government structure, and partially because the size of the review area did not allow any consideration of the impact within the review area of the many public transport routes initiated outside that area. For example, communities such as Loughton and Debden in Essex, both of which had large L.C.C. estates, were connected to London by both bus routes and the London Underground, but were outside the review area. British Rail brought people from further afield into London, but, once again, this was beyond the Royal Commission's remit. The Herbert Commission's report restricted itself to commenting that there may have been a case for the
municipalization of public transport, but it could contain no further suggestions because it was not the function of the members of the Commission to do so.\textsuperscript{23}

Public transport was an integral part of town planning.\textsuperscript{24} The county and county borough councils in the review area had a responsibility for the production of development plans and their periodic review. For example the L.C.C.'s 1960 review did consider public transport.\textsuperscript{25} These plans had to be tailored to the requirements of the 1944 Greater London Plan, discussed earlier.\textsuperscript{26} This plan, called the Abercrombie plan, after its author, included a far wider area than that to be reviewed by the Royal Commission. As the Royal Commission pointed out in its report: "Town and country planning is, and always has been, an essential function of local government."\textsuperscript{27} Thus, the Royal Commission's remit allowed it to examine the technicalities of planning in the various county and county boroughs within the review area, but not the overall plan itself. In essence, this meant that the Royal Commission had the power to examine whether, for example, the traffic congestion in London could be alleviated by changing the powers or the boundaries of the L.C.C. or metropolitan boroughs, but it could not offer a detailed critique of the overall development plan. To have extended the area under review would, however, have dramatically increased the work load of the Royal Commission.
At the time the Abercrombie plan had been published in 1944 it included 180 local authorities, including several county councils only partially within that review area. As well as urban Greater London it also included large rural areas. To have included this entire area within the Royal Commission's remit would have greatly increased the evidence presented to the Royal Commission and also greatly increased the range of issues that would have had to be tackled. This surely would have resulted in a far more complex report, and possibly a lack of unanimity among the members of the Royal Commission.

Brooke and his advisors could have adopted an earlier solution to the problem of selecting the ideal area. The Ullswater Commission of 1921 had been given greater scope to define its own area of review. It had been asked to examine local government in "...the administrative county of London and the surrounding districts....". It also had the freedom to define for itself what functions and which services were properly those of local government. Perhaps this greater freedom accounts for the earlier Royal Commission's lack of unanimity. It issued three separate reports. The Royal Commission, having a tighter remit, in effect had little choice but to divorce the problems of urban Greater London from those of South-East England despite the fact that in its report it acknowledged the problems of Greater London were inextricably linked to those of South-East England. In local government terms, and in terms of regional issues, this reinforced an already existing
dichotomy between urban Greater London and its hinterland.\textsuperscript{32} Although the Royal Commission had no remit to work against the broader planning concepts of the Abercrombie plan, and the Abercrombie region, its very terms of reference reinforced more traditional views regarding the strong differences between urban and rural local government structures.

After the publication of the Royal Commission's report Morrison claimed it had been unduly influenced by the Conservative point of view, and that there was not a single Labour supporter among the members of the Royal Commission.\textsuperscript{33} This view had been expressed by Labour members of the L.C.C. while the Royal Commission was still active,\textsuperscript{34} but there seems to be no further evidence of bias beyond the personal views of Labour politicians. The members of the Royal Commission were Sir Edwin Herbert, appointed Chairman, a prominent City Solicitor; Mr P.S. Cadbury, a prominent Birmingham businessman; Miss A.C. Johnson, a senior figure in the world of voluntary social services; Mr W.H. Lawson, serving as President of the Council of the Institute of Chartered Accountants when appointed to the Royal Commission; Professor W.J.M. Mackenzie, Professor of Government at Manchester University; Sir Charles Morris, Vice-Chancellor of Leeds University; and Sir John Wrigley, a retired Deputy Secretary at the Ministry of Housing and Local Government. Apart from the professional interest in local government of Professor Mackenzie and Sir John Wrigley, Mr Paul Cadbury and Sir Charles Morris had served as local councillors
in the past.\textsuperscript{35} It is possible that Morrison and his fellow critics were right and all the members of the Royal Commission were Conservative supporters. There is, however, no evidence of their personal political beliefs.

II

The Royal Commission worked hard in order to receive the advice and opinions of as wide a range of interested parties as possible. All the local authorities within the review area were invited to submit their opinions regarding the need, or not, of reform in the local government system. They were also invited to express their view on how best to reform the system if such reform was supported. The Royal Commission went considerably further than just the local authorities. Also invited to give evidence were local authority associations, government departments, regional political parties, various associations or trade unions whose members provided or administered local government services, research groups or individuals from British Universities, and a number of individuals.

Initially the Royal Commission received evidence in written form, but many of those submitting evidence were asked to attend the Royal Commission in order to present any further evidence orally and to answer questions from the Royal Commission. Sir Edwin and his colleagues undertook a number of visits to various locations within the review area. The Herbert
Commission also employed a Research Officer from the Ministry of Housing and Local Government in order to provide the Commission with its own research papers when required.

As the Royal Commission existed to provide the Government with advice, the Conservative Government was not asked to provide official evidence, nor were the other national political parties. A number of Members of Parliament, however, did give evidence as did the regional organizations of the national political parties. Three Labour controlled local authorities, the Metropolitan Boroughs of Bermondsey, Southwark, and Poplar refused to co-operate because they believed the Royal Commission served no useful function. They did not provide the Royal Commission with any evidence, and a number of other local authorities, predominantly Labour controlled, refused to give oral evidence and submit to examination by the Royal Commission. These authorities were listed in the final report, but there is no evidence that this lack of local information affected the nature of that report.

When the Royal Commission invited local authorities to offer their opinions in February 1958 it asked for comments on the six functions of local government it considered to be of greatest interest - education, environmental health services, housing, personal health and welfare services, town and country planning, and highways and traffic. It also asked for comments regarding the most appropriate size for a local authority.
charged with such functions. All were invited to present any other information they wished.\textsuperscript{38}

Many authorities took the opportunity to suggest local government could be improved by the enhancement of their own powers and prestige. Rhodes points out that if the Royal Commission had accepted all such advice it would have recommended twenty-seven new county boroughs.\textsuperscript{39} Vested interests permeated through much of the evidence presented to the Royal Commission - the County Councils Association defended the continued existence of the county council in the review area,\textsuperscript{40} the Association of Municipal Corporations argued that Greater London needed a unitary system of powerful municipal corporations.\textsuperscript{41} In a similar vein, the Labour controlled Metropolitan Standing Joint Committee allied itself with the Labour controlled L.C.C.,\textsuperscript{42} as did many of the Labour controlled metropolitan boroughs to defend the \textit{status quo} which remained Labour dominated.\textsuperscript{43} There are very many more examples of attempts to further vested interests in the published and unpublished evidence presented to the Royal Commission.\textsuperscript{44}

The Herbert Commission also faced a problem in as much as the majority of local authorities were reluctant to offer opinions on matters beyond their own jurisdiction. Local authorities had a right to express any opinion they wished upon the efficiency or otherwise of their neighbours, but it is hardly surprising that many refrained from doing so. The rules of \textit{ultra vires}
restricted local authorities in Britain from undertaking any role unless specific authority had been given for such a function. Local authorities, thus, tended to 'mind their own business', and attempted to foster harmonious relationships with their neighbours. As an example, when Sir Isaac Hayward gave oral evidence to the Royal Commission as leader of the L.C.C., he strongly supported the continuation of the status quo in the administrative county of London, but would not be drawn into what local government system would be most appropriate for the neighbouring county of Middlesex, despite the fact that that county council was also Labour controlled and its Labour members shared membership of the L.L.P. with Hayward and his L.C.C. colleagues.\textsuperscript{45} In a similar manner, Geoffrey Rippon, leader of the Conservative group of the L.C.C., answered the Herbert Commission's questions on behalf of his group. Rippon acknowledged the need for reform, and accepted that the boundary of the L.C.C. might require alteration, but he felt unable to comment on the matters concerning Greater London beyond the County of London.\textsuperscript{46}

The Royal Commission received all opinions with politeness, but the parochialism and vested interests of the local authorities lowered the esteem in which their views were held. The report stated:

\begin{quote}
...we do not feel that the attitude of the local authorities was entirely tactical. There seemed to us
\end{quote}
to be a genuine lack of understanding of the needs of London as a whole, due not to purely selfish reasons but to the concentration by each authority on local problems within the area for which it is responsible. 47

Most government departments were equally reticent to talk about local government in Greater London as a whole. The Home Office was prepared to offer comments regarding children's services in Greater London, but not education. 48 The Department of Education would discuss any aspect of education, but not the local authority provision of children's homes or foster parents. 49 The same disinclination to go beyond their own areas of expertise applied to the many associations representing professional groups employed in local government. 50 The Royal Commission received a very great deal of factual information explaining exactly how every aspect of local government worked in Greater London. Rhodes's comments illustrate the weight of factual information presented to the Royal Commission:

It also provided incidental illustration of that pride in achievement which is so characteristic of English local authorities. Perhaps the prize here should go to the Borough of Uxbridge whose 62-page volume of written evidence included information about geology, population, staff and their salaries, departmental organization and much more besides. But most authorities submitted fairly weighty memoranda
and it is not surprising that these fill four large volumes of nearly 2,500 pages in all in the printed version.\textsuperscript{51}

The Royal Commission was, thus, provided with detailed information explaining how local government worked in Greater London. It received suggestions that aspects of local government in Greater London did not work well, but no suggestions that the system did not work at all. Despite the dominant parochial outlook there were some major criticisms from local authorities. In both Essex and Middlesex several district councils criticized their county councils. A common complaint was that the system of delegation did not work well.\textsuperscript{52} Various local government services were the responsibility of the county councils, but they had an obligation to delegate the running of such services to certain district authorities. It was often the case that various Acts of Parliament had established a right for district authorities with populations above a fixed level to have such services delegated. The District Officers of Health (Greater London) Committee can offer an insight into why tension grew between county councils and district councils regarding delegated services. Dr Gordon, the District Medical Officer of Health in the Borough of Ilford in Essex, claimed that Essex had one of the most comprehensive systems of delegation in Britain. However, he claimed that Essex County Council was always interfering in the services it had delegated, and in the event
of a dispute it was always the county council that prevailed. In his evidence he claimed to receive up to five letters a day from the County Medical Officer concerning aspects of the delegated services. In Middlesex the delegation of education caused tension between the two tiers of local government. Members of the Royal Commission who visited Middlesex reported seeing at first hand the major failings in the system of delegation. In Kent and Surrey tension seems to have been less acute, and in London the Metropolitan Boroughs wanted services transferred not delegated.

The factual information offered to the Royal Commission added to the authority of its final report, and enabled the Royal Commission to confidently dismiss much local authority advice. As the report noted:

Notwithstanding the many virtues of local government today the parochial outlook that has been one of the great obstacles to any serious reform of London government is still very much alive.

The report went on to suggest there were only two options facing the authorities in Greater London, reform or the abdication of important powers to central government. Despite the need to propose a plan of reform that would be acceptable to the majority of interested parties, or at least not so unpopular that it could not be imposed, the Royal
Commission recognized it would have to disappoint, or even anger, many local authorities and, of course, some other groups or individuals. It was the function of the Royal Commission to suggest the best form of local government in Greater London, not the most popular.

The Herbert Commission did receive evidence recommending reform, including some from local authorities. As mentioned above, much was seen to be in pursuance of the enhancement of status, and much to ease tensions and minor problems. Some bodies, such as the Conservative dominated L.M.S., which aimed to end the Labour domination of the L.C.C., and the Association of Municipal Corporations, which hoped to improve the status of all boroughs, could be said to have had a vested interest in the abolition of the L.C.C. in the first case, and the county council system in general in the second case. Indeed, Herbert Morrison did claim both were politically motivated. The motivation behind the evidence did not, however, necessarily destroy its usefulness to the Royal Commission.

Some evidence calling for reform came from groups without apparent vested interests. One such which impressed the Royal Commission was the Greater London Group from the London School of Economics and Political Science. The Chairman of the group, Professor Robson, had published his proposals for reform many years before the appointment of the Royal Commission in 1939. Robson made clear in his evidence to the Royal Commission the
Greater London Group felt no need to submit just one plan of reform. The group, thus, submitted two plans, one of which closely followed the ideas suggested by Robson in 1939. The recommendations contained in the report of the Royal Commission resembled quite closely the Greater London Group's plan A. The report acknowledged this, and it also registered which local authorities suggested similar schemes of reform. It pointed out that evidence from the London School of Economics (schemes A and B), the City of Westminster, the Metropolitan Boroughs of Chelsea, Fulham, Hampstead and Kensington, and the Borough of Twickenham all supported the idea of a Greater London Authority and "adequate authorities to perform the more local functions." The report, however, went on to minimise the importance of the evidence from local authorities and to praise that of the Greater London Group. Speaking of that Group's scheme B, it commented:

This scheme was supported by much research material, which we found very interesting and valuable. Indeed, the diagnosis of the problem was common to scheme A and to Scheme B and to Professor Griffith [also a member of the Greater London Group]. We do not touch in any detail upon the proposals of local authorities referred to, because they coincide to a greater or lesser degree with scheme A from the London School of Economics, but were naturally not worked out in anything like the same detail or supported by
anything like the same wealth of material. We think it noteworthy, however, that it is those who have done the greater amount of work on the subject who have reached conclusions nearest to our own.\textsuperscript{62}

The Royal Commission seems to have been impressed by the analytical work of the Greater London Group, and a little wary of evidence submitted by local authorities. This could explain why the one local authority plan of reform that attempted to deal with all Greater London's administrative problems, and gained considerable support, was dismissed by the Royal Commission. This plan, put forward by Surrey County Council,\textsuperscript{63} will be fully discussed in chapter seven. Surrey County Council's initial evidence suggested a third tier of administration. This was to have been a joint board with its members appointed from the county and county borough councils within the area covered by Abercrombie's Greater London Plan. This joint board would take responsibility for all issues of a regional nature. The evidence, as provided by Surrey, did contain some detail, but remained a partial and flexible plan. Surrey did not envisage any major changes to the boundaries of the existing local government structure, and it did not recommend a wholesale redistribution of functions between the layers of local government. However, the Royal Commission could have taken the basic concept and suggested a more radical reform of the authorities below the new joint board if it had
not been for the various major constraints imposed upon the Royal Commission, as discussed above.

The Royal Commission's report, published in October 1960, did more than simply reproduce the Greater London Group's plan. It presented a detailed analysis of the problems of local government in Greater London, and explained the nature of the evidence it had received and why the members had unanimously recommended the detailed reforms outlined here in Appendix A. Among the strengths of the report was the fact that it did not destroy the underlying structure of English local government. It would retain a two tiered structure of district authorities and a regional authority. The district authorities were to be known as London Boroughs. They were to be the primary units of local government in Greater London, and they would also have large populations, in the range of 100,000 to 250,000 people. Like county boroughs they would be responsible for the majority of local government functions. However, unlike other geographic areas governed by county boroughs in Greater London, services which would have been uneconomic or inappropriate for the district authority were to be administered by a regional authority. It was not to be a county council, it was to be constituted as an equal authority to the boroughs, but with different functions. The report was quite clear on the point that the Greater London authority should not control the new London Boroughs. All authorities would be of equal esteem. To emphasize this equality between the two types of local
government, some services were to be the responsibility of the regional authority and the boroughs. There would be no delegation from a senior authority to a junior authority. Housing and education represent two such services. The Greater London Authority, termed the Council for Greater London by the report, was to be more than a residual body for services inappropriate to the new boroughs. The report recommended in strong positive terms that this regional body should have an active part in creating an efficient planning system of local government in Greater London. It suggested:

It is imperative in our view, that the Council for Greater London should organize a competent intelligence department to keep all these matters under constant study and research, the fruits of their labour being available to all the other departments, whether town and country planning, housing, traffic management, highway construction, planning and maintenance and education. To this central intelligence department all other departments should be able to turn for information and to it they should address requests for research and advice.

The report suggested that there should be fifty-two new London boroughs within the review area, thus requiring many existing district authorities to merge with neighbours. Also contentious was the proposed abolition of the London and Middlesex county councils. These were to be replaced together.
with the severed metropolitan areas of Surrey, Kent, Essex and a small part of Hertfordshire, by the proposed Council for Greater London. On the very day of publication, the Evening Standard printed the headline "Storm over plan to blot out L.C.C." The same issue reported that the leaders of London, Middlesex, Surrey and Essex county councils opposed the recommendations in the Royal Commission's report.

The Herbert Commission provided a blueprint for a new local government system in Greater London. It provided a detailed justification for the implementation of that blueprint. The Royal Commission had undertaken some independent research into the most appropriate area for its suggested Council for Greater London. This research had considered the local authorities on the periphery of the review area and had taken into account such matters as the extent of the built-up area, the pattern of employment among the local population, and the number of trains to central London each day. By a system of ratings based on these factors it had been able to state, in the Herbert Commission's view, the exact area of urban Greater London. The report suggested that South-West Hertfordshire, centred on Watford, Potters Bar, Waltham Holy Cross, and Dartford in Kent should be excluded from Greater London. Rhodes states that this amounted to 60,000 acres, or eleven per cent of the review area, and 276,000 people, or three per cent of the population of the review area.
The two major constraints imposed upon the Royal Commission, that is its inability to take into account urban Greater London’s relationship to its hinterland and the limitations regarding which functions or services could be considered, to a large extent, dictated the nature of its recommendations. Within those constraints the Royal Commission’s report represented a logical and well argued case in favour of the recommended reforms. From the publication of the report, it became the responsibility of the Government to act, or not, and the right of all other interested bodies to react to the Government.

III

The chronology and the details of the transition in London government have been detailed by Rhodes’ *The Government of London: The Struggle for Reform* and will not be discussed in detail here. Rhodes has also given much attention to discussions on London government reform in Parliament. Thus, this thesis will not fully discuss the Parliamentary process leading to the creation of the G.L.C. and new London boroughs. It will suffice to note that following the publication of the report the Government, through the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, sought the opinions of local authorities in Greater London.
In November 1961 the Government published a white paper on local government in Greater London. This paper accepted the recommendations of the Royal Commission in general, but with some changes. There are only two important changes worthy of discussion here. The number of London boroughs was to be thirty-two, (plus the City of London) rather than the fifty-two (plus the City of London) suggested by the Royal Commission. The major effect would be to increase the number of amalgamations among local authorities and to increase the size of the average population in each borough. It was the latter point which had induced the changed borough size. Brooke, Minister of Housing and Local Government until promoted to Home Secretary two days before the publication of the white paper, had insisted that all boroughs should be large enough to carry out all functions asked of them efficiently and without recourse to joint arrangements with neighbouring authorities. His successor, Dr Charles Hill, reinforced this point later in Parliament when he explained why a minimum population of 200,000 would create higher standards and greater economy in administration. He argued it was because of:

...a number of factors including the greater resources that would be available to boroughs of this size, the increased specialization of staff and institutions on all the personal services that would be practicable, and the special circumstances of the continuously built up area of Greater London.
The second major change to the Royal Commission's proposals put forward in the white paper concerned education. The Royal Commission had recommended that the provision of state education in Greater London be split between the new boroughs and the Council for Greater London. The Regional authority was to own all Greater London's schools and colleges and take financial responsibility for the education service. It was to take responsibility for the maintenance of educational standards and was to formulate an education development plan. The new boroughs were to take responsibility for the management and maintenance of schools. They were to appoint managers and governors, and employ the teaching staff.\textsuperscript{81} This recommendation, however, did not entirely coincide with the evidence given to the Royal Commission by the Ministry of Education, which had recommended unitary education authorities, and had expressed contentment with both the structure of the education service and the standard of education in the L.C.C. area. The Ministry was primarily concerned to provide students with a system of seamless progression through all levels of education.\textsuperscript{82} If a single education authority was to provide primary, secondary and a full range of further specialist education, it would need to draw upon a large population base to remain efficient.

As discussed above the Royal Commission was subject to many pressures and to many constraints. Its report contained many
compromises. Even within the local government provision of education, the Royal Commission had to balance several points of view. For example, the Metropolitan Borough of Hackney was one of several medium-sized authorities (in this case authorities with populations above 100,000 but not close to Eccles' desired 400,000, see below) which had suggested to the Royal Commission that education should become a borough function. Such requests conflicted with the advice offered by the Ministry of Education. The Royal Commission's recommendation on education can be seen as a compromise which gave the boroughs some control over education, yet allowed many of the existing medium-sized authorities to retain their own identities, rather than being merged with their neighbours into much larger units capable of becoming full Local Education Authorities. Other subjects such as the children's service and housing remained contentious but education seems to have been the only issue that split the Cabinet.

The Minister of Education, Sir David Eccles, strongly supported the point of view expressed by his Ministry to the Royal Commission. When the issue was discussed in Cabinet in July 1961 he argued for a single education authority in central London which would service a population of one-and-a-half million to two million. He wanted this to be a joint board of all local education authorities in the area. Eccles presented three reasons for this central London education authority: firstly, to save the core of the L.C.C.'s education service.
generally recognized as a good service; secondly, to preserve a wide choice of schools in the area; and thirdly, to avoid multiplying the number of education authorities to such an extent that there would not be enough staff to go around. Eccles also argued for a further series of joint education boards throughout the rest of Greater London. The members of these joint boards would be appointed from among the members of the London boroughs within the area of each joint education board. Eccles envisaged each education authority serving a population of about 400,000. The July Cabinet discussion on local government in Greater London discussed reducing the number of new London boroughs to forty with the possibility of some joint boards, but this did not satisfy either Brooke or Eccles. The latter continued to argue for a series of joint education boards large enough to cover all education functions and the former disliked the idea of a series of *ad hoc* boards existing because the normal local government structure was not adequate to cope with educational requirements.

A few weeks before the publication of the white paper, on the 5 October, Brooke wrote to Eccles asking him to think again. Brooke pointed out that the proposed London boroughs would be among the largest local authorities in the country. He pointed out: "The reorganization proposed by the Local Government Commission in the Black Country is not going to achieve county boroughs of the size proposed for the London Boroughs." County boroughs were education authorities. Thus Brooke's point
was that if new authorities in the Black Country were to be allowed to control education, it was illogical to refuse similar status to new authorities in London. By the time the white paper was published a compromise of sorts had been achieved. The new London boroughs were to take sole responsibility for education, but the average population level of each was to be increased, consequently reducing the number of boroughs as detailed above. The white paper also stated that a central London education authority would be established which would serve a population of approximately two million. Eccles and the Ministry of Education achieved much of what they regarded as necessary to allow the development of a high quality education system for Greater London.

Because of the lateness of the compromise regarding education the details of the new pattern of London boroughs in the white paper were rather patchy, as were the details of the central London education authority. The white paper gave no hint that the central London education authority was to comprise the whole of the L.C.C.'s education service. Education remained a contentious issue within the Conservative Government, as is attested by the Prime Minister's note to his new Minister of Housing and Local Government, Dr Charles Hill, of 10 October in which Macmillan instructed Hill to consult with the Chairman of the Conservative Party, Iain Macleod, over education in London. Macmillan described it as a "highly political subject".
The above details were not available to Rhodes, writing only a few years after the event. Nonetheless, as already stated, Rhodes has adequately detailed the process leading from the publication of the white paper to the establishment of the new system of local government in Greater London.\textsuperscript{91}

After the publication of the white paper the Leader of the Opposition, Hugh Gaitskell, made plain that his Party would not support the Government's proposed reform of local government in Greater London. Gaitskell promised to retain the existing system if his Party obtained power in time to stop the proposed changes.\textsuperscript{92} This lack of Parliamentary unanimity created the need for the Conservative Government to impose a very strict time-table upon the process of reform if the new authorities were to be in place before the next general election and a possible change of government. A Parliamentary Bill needed to begin its progress through Parliament in late 1962. This would allow the Bill to become an Act before the summer recess of 1963. Then the elections for the new authorities could take place in April and May 1964, before the last date for the general election in October 1964.\textsuperscript{93} It is not known if the desire to pass the London Government Act affected the timing of the general election or not, but the above time-table was achieved. However, it necessitated some changes.

Within a few weeks of the publication of the white paper the Ministry of Housing and Local Government issued a circular
showing the proposed groupings of local authorities in the new London boroughs. A few months later Dr Charles Hill announced he had invited four Town Clerks from beyond the Greater London area to investigate and recommend the final pattern of new London boroughs. In the House of Commons, in March 1962, he announced their terms of reference:

1/ To take into consideration the map showing the possible grouping of boroughs sent to local authorities in the London area of 16 December 1961 (subject to any amendment to the outer boundary which the Minister may indicate), and the views expressed and any alternative suggestions made by local authorities in respect of this map.

2/ To make recommendations (after such consultations with each other and with the Department as they may think necessary) for the creation of a pattern of London boroughs over the whole of this Greater London area (other than the City of London) mainly by the amalgamation of the existing local government areas.

3/ In making recommendations to have regard to the minimum population of around 200,000 wherever possible (some boroughs might be substantially bigger than this); and also to the present and past association of existing local government area, to the lines of communications, the patterns of development, and the location and areas of influence of service
Thus, by March 1962 the Government had decided on the nature of the new local government structure in Greater London. The four town clerks, Mr Littlewood from Cheltenham, Mr Lloyd Jones from Plymouth, Mr Plowman from Oxford, and Mr Young from South Shields, had no power to examine functions and no power to examine the extent of Greater London. This, of course, had been the function of the Royal Commission. The Town Clerks conferences were the last opportunity for the local authorities to express their opinions. The first conference was held on 9 April and the last 5 June, and their final report went to the Minister on 18 July. The Town Clerks recommended several changes, the most important concerning south-west London centring on Wandsworth and Battersea. Given the need to have the Parliamentary Bill drafted by the autumn the Minister can have had little choice but to accept the Town Clerks final report, and indeed he did so. The Town Clerks, however, had not been totally successful. Their new pattern had been created mainly by the amalgamation of existing local government areas, but four existing local authorities were to be split between more than one of the new London Boroughs.

The Minister's announcement of acceptance of the Town Clerks' recommendations caused little surprise and little active resentment. Many opponents of change had grown used to the idea that change was inevitable and were contemplating how best to
make the new system work in their favour. Issues such as rewarding the new boroughs and elections to the new authorities were becoming increasingly important by mid-1962. This pragmatic approach among the many did not stop the total opposition of a few, nor did it end the rhetoric of opposition among many former opponents of change. This may have caused confusion at the time, and since. Similarly the majority of local authorities had come to accept the inevitability of change by mid to late 1962. The majority were beginning the complex process of merging with neighbours whilst protecting a high level of local authority service and protecting the future of their staff. Many local authorities were also endeavouring to protect their municipal status through such methods as sponsoring their own name as that of the new borough and their own Town Hall as the new borough's Town Hall.\textsuperscript{99} Shortly before the first elections for the G.L.C. in April 1964, the \textit{Evening News} commissioned National Opinion Polls to test the public's attitude towards the new system of local government. A series of polls were carried out in Hounslow, Havering, Lambeth, Barnet, and Bexley. It proved that:

Almost 80\% of the electors knew that Middlesex County Council is to be abolished and its area absorbed by Greater London, but the majority of them were indifferent to this change in their local government. Almost half of the electors did not care about this change and the number who disapproved of
it was balanced by an almost equal number who approved.\textsuperscript{100}

In Havering, at that time still in Essex, the findings were similar - twenty-two per cent approved of the changes, twenty-five per cent disapproved, thirty-two per cent did not care, and twenty-one per cent did not know.\textsuperscript{101} In Bexley, then in Kent, twenty-six per cent approved, twenty-nine per cent disapproved, twenty-two per cent did not care, and twenty-three per cent did not know.\textsuperscript{102} In Barnet twenty-five per cent approved, twenty-four per cent disapproved, twenty-seven per cent did not care, and twenty-four per cent did not know.\textsuperscript{103} In Lambeth the figures were as follows - twenty per cent approved, nineteen per cent disapproved, twenty-six per cent did not care, and thirty-five per cent did not know.\textsuperscript{104} These figures are here used in a crude manner to indicate that public opinion was not overly concerned about the changes in local government.

During its investigations the Royal Commission had established that in many areas of Greater London the existing local authorities were not the centre of a strong community feeling.\textsuperscript{105} This was particularly so in Middlesex. Thus, the merging of authorities and the abolition of some county councils did not arouse great public anger. Research carried out for the Royal Commission found that there were seventy to eighty shopping centres, considered the most important centre for a community, which coincided with bus traffic centres.\textsuperscript{106}
There were also fifteen to twenty major centres such as Croydon, Kingston, Watford, Bromley, Brixton, Kilburn and Stratford which were second only to central London as centres of business, finance and shopping. The Royal Commission's researcher suggested that:

With an overall grasp of the patterns of centres and hinterlands of various grades, a pattern could be tailor-made to fit any desired break up of area.

The final pattern of new London boroughs took account of such non-local authority centres and created a new system which did not damage or challenge such community centres and thus appears to have caused little opposition to the new structure of local authorities.

On the periphery of Greater London opposition to change was stronger. In the process of consultation following the publication of the white paper the Minister met with strong opposition from several local authorities on the outer edge of Greater London. As was made clear in the remit issued to the Town Clerks, the outer boundary of Greater London was to be determined by the Minister. Banstead, Caterham and Warlingham, Cheshunt, Esher, Staines, Sunbury on Thames, and Walton and Weybridge were wholly excluded at their own requests from Greater London and Chigwell, and Epsom and Ewell were partially excluded. There were other authorities, such as Romford,
whose requests to be excluded from Greater London were not conceded, but by and large the remaining area represented a cohesive Greater London area, an area based on research and at least the tacit approval of a majority of its inhabitants. The exclusions by the Royal Commission, and later by the Minister, meant that Greater London was twenty-six per cent smaller in area and seven per cent lower in population than the original review area.

In May 1962 Hill announced that the L.C.C.'s education service would be retained intact, and it would form the expected central London education authority. If this decision had not been made an alternative education system would have had to be detailed in the London Government Bill by the Autumn of 1962. The earlier disagreements over the size of local education authorities in Greater London probably delayed consideration of this matter to such an extent there was not enough time to draw up an alternative plan. Although saving the L.C.C.'s education service was not popular among many Conservatives, the Ministers of Housing and Local Government and Education had little option at that late date. A further change to the Government's plans concerned the abandonment of plans to incorporate the M.W.B. within the G.L.C. This proposal had also to be dropped because it would have damaged the chances of the London Government Bill passing through the legislative process before the general election. These two topics will be discussed in detail in chapter nine, but it is important to illustrate that the period
between the publication of the white paper and the first reading of the London Government Bill in November 1962 was a period when the Government was forced to concede points, to change the nature of the new London government system, and to cut short much of the discussion surrounding the changes (in January 1963 the Government imposed a 'Guillotine' on Parliamentary discussion).

In July 1962, Dr Hill, along with several other Ministers, lost his job. He was replaced by Sir Keith Joseph. There is no indication that Hill's removal had any connection to his handling of the transition in London government, yet he seems to have had little real interest in the subject. London government is not mentioned in Hill's memoirs. Joseph had been an Alderman in the City of London, and his father had been Lord Mayor of London. By July 1962, however, it was no longer possible for the Minister to change any major aspect of the London Government Bill without endangering the delicate time-table. Joseph had little option but to follow the same policies as Hill. It is also unlikely that Henry Brooke would have been able to avoid making many of the decisions forced upon Hill.

The London Government Act, 1963 introduced a new system very similar to that recommended by the Royal Commission, with some important amendments by the Conservative Government as described above. The Royal Commission itself had been
constrained by its remit. That remit had been imposed by the Government, and as discussed in this chapter and earlier chapters the Government that appointed the Royal Commission had to work within a complex pattern of constraints. There is no evidence to suggest that the new pattern of local government in Greater London created by the London Government Act, 1963, was anything but a logical outcome of a rational process.

IV

The G.L.C. and the new London Boroughs were elected in April and May 1964 and assumed authority from their predecessors on 1 April 1965. The new system updated a nineteenth century system of urban county and urban district government. There seems to be no reason to doubt the findings of Rhodes and Ruck:

We have argued that the new structure of local government set up by the 1963 Act does by and large offer the means of dealing with London's local government problems. It does not offer an ideal or complete answer; no system could. It raises doubts to some directions; and some of its potentialities may not be realized in practice. But on the whole the advantages outweigh the disadvantages.115

In 1972 Rhodes published a second study of London government in which he analysed the new local government system and came
to the conclusion that the new system worked well. As a local government system for urban Greater London it may have worked well, although even here, as we have seen it did not serve the whole of urban Greater London as defined by the Royal Commission's own research. However, it failed to tackle any of the problems that had arisen from urban Greater London's complex relationship with the rest of South-East England. This is not surprising, since the whole process from the appointment of the Royal Commission to the introduction of the new system was not meant to address this issue. The new system was meant to improve roads and traffic flow inside Greater London, but not just outside. It did not even attempt to change public transport either inside or outside Greater London. There was no suggestion that the new local government system could ease the problems of large-scale commuting into central London. The new G.L.C. had responsibility for town and country planning, but only within its own boundary, and the new system had no improved apparatus for co-ordinating Abercrombie's Greater London Plan, nor for liaising with the New Town Development Corporations. The new local government system also lacked any guarantee of increased central government funding to tackle problems such as the ever present demand at that period for more and better council housing.

The new system did not exist within a vacuum and many of the above issues were the responsibilities of other bodies. Nonetheless, as with the previous local government pattern,
problems in Greater London were liable to be associated with failings in the local government system even when such problems were beyond the power of the G.L.C. and the new London Boroughs. The new system of local government may have been better, but it was not perfect, and many problems continued to bedevil Greater London. It seems unlikely, however, that any alternative plan recommended by the Royal Commission would have been any more successful. Also, if the Royal Commission had been given a less restrictive remit, it may well have been no more successful than the previous Royal Commission, the Ullswater Commission, that had such a wide-ranging mandate. In all probability the reforms introduced in 1965 were the best politically possible.
NOTES


2/ The Times 31.7.57, p.3 col.c.


5/ The Times 30.7.57, p.8.

6/ L.C.C. Minutes 17.7.45 and 7.10.52.

7/ London News June 1958, p.3.


9/ Confirmed in private conversations with Lady Denington, 5.10.93; Lord Mellish, 8.3.94; Lord Jenkins of Putney, 31.1.95.
10/ Public Record Office (P.R.O.), file PREM 11/3864, Prime Minister's Office archive, Correspondence between Ministry of Housing and Local Government and M.W.B. various dates.

11/ Ibid.


13/ This point was made by the Minister of Housing and Local Government when he announced the appointment of the Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London. Hansard, HC Deb. Vol. 574, 29 July 1959, Col. 917.

14/ This can still be seen on Ordnance Survey map 177 in the Land Ranger series.


17/ Ibid.
18/ Taken from statistics gathered by the Royal Commission, see P.R.O. file HLG 3/540, records of the Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London, Digest of Facts and Summaries.

19/ Carter, op. cit.

20/ Ibid. pp.147-62.


22/ For example see Evening Standard 20.5.57, p.1; 23.12.58, p.4; 28.7.59, p.4; 12.11.59, p.10; 19.11.59, p.1.


26/ See Chapter Three above, pp.81-82.


28/ See Chapter Three above, p.65.

30/ Ibid.

31/ Royal Commission report [Herbert Commission], op. cit. para. 720.

32/ This dichotomy is identified in Abercrombie, P. Greater London Plan (London, H.M.S.O., 1945) passim.

33/ Morrison made these claims when speaking to the South Lewisham Labour Party Annual General Meeting. See G.L.R.O., L.L.P. archive, file ACC 2417/A/43.


36/ Royal Commission report [Herbert Commission], op. cit. para. 157.
37/ Ibid.

38/ Ibid. para. 17.

39/ Rhodes, op. cit. p.271.


41/ Royal Commission, Minutes of Evidence, Evidence of the Association of Municipal Associations, qq. 2968 - 3135.

42/ Royal Commission, Minutes of Evidence, Evidence of the Metropolitan Boroughs Standing Joint Committee, qq. 1 - 134.

43/ For example, Royal Commission, Minutes of Evidence, Evidence of the Metropolitan Boroughs of Finsbury (qq.407-544), Greenwich (qq.663-816), Lambeth (qq.1267-1395), and Stoke Newington (qq.1896-2014).

44/ For example, Royal Commission, Minutes of Evidence, Evidence of the National Association of Divisional Executive for Education (qq.3136-3243), the Middlesex Excepted districts Association (qq.7304-7378), the London County Council Staff Association (qq.11746-11781), and the Association of Teachers in Technical Institutions (qq.12844-12882).
45/ Royal Commission, Minutes of Evidence, Evidence of the London County Council, q q. 2371-2519.

46/ Royal Commission, Minutes of Evidence, Evidence of the London County Council Opposition Group, q. 11925.


49/ Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London, Memoranda of Evidence from Ministry of Education.


51/ Rhodes op. cit. p.28.

52/ This is further discussed in Chapters Seven pp.274-9, and Eight pp.318-20, below.

53/ Royal Commission, Minutes of Evidence, Evidence from the Medical Officers of Health (Greater London) Committee, q.11094.


56/ Ibid. para. 707.


58/ Morrison resigned from the Presidency of the Association of Municipal Corporations. He explained this was because of their anti-London, pro-Conservative approach at a meeting of the L.L.P. Executive Committee 4 May 1961. See G.L.R.O., L.L.P. archive, file ACC 2417/A/43.


60/ Royal Commission, Minutes of Evidence, Evidence from the Greater London Group, London School of Economics and Political Science, qq. 13004 - 13116.

61/ Royal Commission report, op. cit. para. 735.

62/ Ibid. para. 740.
63/ Royal Commission, Minutes of Evidence, Evidence from Surrey County Council, qq. 10439 - 10750.

64/ The basic structure and brief history of English local government is explained in Jackson, W.E. *Local Government in England and Wales* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1949)

65/ Royal Commission report, op. cit. paras. 741 - 744.

66/ Ibid.

67/ Ibid. para. 754.

68/ See appendix A for details of proposed educational responsibilities of the new boroughs and the Council for Greater London.

69/ Royal Commission report, op. cit. para. 760.

70/ Ibid. chapter 17.

71/ Ibid.

72/ *Evening Standard* 19.11.60, front page headline.

73/ Royal Commission report, op. cit. chapter 16.

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74/ Ibid. paras. 904-917.

75/ Rhodes, op. cit. p. 74.


77/ Ibid. p. 89.


81/ Royal Commission report, op. cit. paras. 800 - 822.


83/ Chapter Eight pp. 306-10, above.

84/ P.R.O. file PREM 11/4338, Prime Minister's Office archive, Prime Minister's Note C (61) 85 & 90, 5 July 1961.
85/ Ibid.

86/ P.R.O. file PREM 11/4338, Prime Minister's Office archive, Prime Minister's Note C (61) 185 & 188, 5 July 1961.

87/ P.R.O. file PREM 11 4338, Prime Minister's Office archive, Hand written aide memoire from Macmillan, 10 October 1961.

88/ Copy of letter in P.R.O. file PREM 11/4338, Prime Minister's Office archive,.

89/ Chapter Nine pp.357-60, below

90/ Copy of Note, Macmillan to Hill 10 October 1961 in P.R.O. file PREM 11/4338, Prime Minister's Office archive,.


92/ Gaitskell re-affirmed an earlier promise to Hayward, Leader of the L.C.C. Hayward announced this at a meeting of the L.C.C. Labour Group 2 March 1962. See G.L.R.O., L.L.P. archive, file ACC 2417/C/79.

93/ Rhodes, op. cit. p.171.

94/ Ministry of Housing and Local Government Circular 56/61, 16 December 1961.

96/ Rhodes, op. cit. p.145.

97/ This is fully discussed in Chapter Nine pp.314-6, below.

98/ See Chapter Nine below.

99/ All the issues raised in above paragraph are discussed in following chapters.

100/ Evening News and Star 5.3.64, p.13.

101/ Ibid, 12.3.64, p.8.


102/ Ibid, 20.3.64, p.8.

103/ Ibid, 2.4.64, p.6.


106/ Ibid.

107/ Ibid.

109/ P.R.O. file PREM 11/4338, Prime Minister's Office archive, Letter to Prime Minister from Ministry of Housing and Local Government 17.5.62.

110/ Ruck & Rhodes, op. cit. p.44

111/ Rhodes, op. cit. p.119.

112/ Ibid. p.124.


115/ Ruck & Rhodes, op. cit. p.185.

Chapter Five
Labour in London:
Attitudes, Actions and Reactions

This chapter is necessary because of the complexity of the Labour Party's reaction to the transition in London government. The attitude of the Parliamentary Labour Party was often different to that of the ruling Labour group of the L.C.C. Also Labour politicians concerned with county-wide issues often had quite different views to those more concerned with borough issues. Thus, this chapter is not solely concerned with Labour opposition to reform, but also with internal Labour Party politics when this impinged upon the reform of London government. It is explained below how Labour's lack of unanimity damaged its fight to retain the L.C.C. This chapter demonstrates that those Labour politicians who wanted more than a repetitive demand for the maintenance of the status quo were overruled. It goes on to show that this support for the status quo damaged Labour in London's ability to influence the nature of the new local government system.

At the core of Labour politics in the county of London was the London Labour Party (L.L.P.) and the ruling Labour Group of the L.C.C. However, both the national Labour Party and constituency Labour parties had roles to play within Labour politics in
London. This is also the case with Labour Groups within the metropolitan boroughs and the Labour dominated Metropolitan Boroughs Standing Joint Committee (M.B.S.J.C.). Consequently, this chapter will consider Labour politics in London in a wide context.

The politics of the transition in London government within the county of Middlesex and the metropolitan sections of Essex, Kent, Surrey and Hertfordshire are dealt with in chapters seven, eight, and to a lesser extent, nine. Consequently this chapter is concerned with the area central to this thesis; that is the Administrative County of London only.

II

The L.L.P. was established in 1914. It was affiliated to the Labour Party, and was subject to the normal rules of affiliation. The L.L.P. area formed one of nine Labour Party regions, and it was the only county-wide Labour organization to form a region on its own. It had the same status within the Labour Party as the Scottish and Welsh regions, for example.

Between 1914 and 1951 the L.L.P. covered the Administrative County of London only. In 1950 constituency Labour Parties in Middlesex were invited to affiliate to the L.L.P., and the following year all such parties did so, thus allowing one party to represent Labour within the majority of Greater London. From
that date the new enlarged party continued to have a single Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary and Executive Committee, but below that controlling level different structures existed to guide L.L.P. affairs in Middlesex and London. The remit of the L.L.P. never covered the affairs of Constituency Labour Parties in the metropolitan areas of Essex, Kent and Surrey.

Affiliated to the L.L.P. were the Constituency Parties, many London branches of Trade Unions and other appropriate organizations such as London Co-operative Societies.

Prospective candidates for both the L.C.C. and the Metropolitan Boroughs were selected by the Constituency Labour Parties in each area, and thus the L.L.P. had no direct responsibility for the choice of Labour councillors elected to the L.C.C. (or, indeed, Middlesex County Council). In 1934, for the first time, the electorate in London returned a Labour controlled County Council, and from that date until its abolition the L.C.C. remained Labour controlled. Within the Metropolitan Boroughs there was a little more variety: some such as Westminster remained consistently Conservative controlled, and others such as Poplar remained Labour controlled from the pre-war era until their abolition in 1965. In other boroughs political control changed occasionally. In 1959 Labour controlled nineteen boroughs and following the 1962 borough election Labour controlled twenty-one boroughs. Within
boroughs not controlled by Labour, its Councillors were organized in minority Labour groups.

It is impossible to mention Labour politics in London at any stage from 1915 to 1965 without mentioning one man, that is Herbert Morrison, Secretary of the London Labour Party from 1915 to 1940, Leader of the L.C.C. from 1934 to 1940 and from that time until his death, just before the final abolition of the L.C.C. in 1965, one of the most senior and influential of Labour politicians. At various stages of his career he was Minister of Transport, Home Secretary, Lord President of the Council and Deputy Prime Minister and briefly Foreign Secretary. Morrison developed the informal structure and the decision making system within London Labour politics and retained his close links with the L.L.P. until his death. Morrison took no direct part in the affairs of the L.C.C. after he ceased to be Leader.

The L.C.C. and the controlling Labour group on that Council, however, continued to be run in what has been identified as the 'Morrisonian' style. Sir Isaac Hayward became the leader of the L.C.C. in 1947. He had been a close ally of Morrison, having been the Labour whip and a member of Morrison's so called 'Presidium' which Morrison consulted on all important issues such as the appointment of chairmen of committees. Hayward perpetuated the same style of leadership, although, unlike Morrison, he never tried to dominate the L.L.P. as well
as the L.C.C. Discipline was imposed on the Labour group of the L.C.C. The Labour group was controlled by a policy committee formed of the group leadership, which dictated all Labour group business, which in turn was passed down to a full meeting of the Labour Group which discussed issues and tactics before these were discussed in L.C.C. Committees or in the Council. Hayward, thus, manipulated the agenda, and disagreements were aired in private rather than in committee or at the Council. Party discipline and a constant Labour majority on the Council allowed the policies and tactics of the Labour group leadership to become official L.C.C. policy at all times.

Hayward's management of the Labour group of the L.C.C. represents one aspect of the 'Morrisonian' system of controlling Labour in London. The other main aspect was that of close cooperation between the Executive Committee of the L.L.P. and Hayward's leadership team. Hayward and several other L.C.C. councillors were members of the Executive Committee throughout the period of opposition to change in London government. Hayward's team and the Executive Committee of the L.L.P. worked closely together, shared the same views and saw themselves as the leading and directing force of Labour in London. Two of the early meetings to discuss opposition to change show this. In October 1960 Peter Robshaw, Secretary of the L.L.P., sent out invitations to Labour Leaders (that is Leaders of Labour groups in the Metropolitan Boroughs) to a meeting to be held at County Hall arranged by Hayward. At a
further meeting of Labour Leaders in December 1960 Hayward, Labour Leader of the L.C.C., chaired the meeting and Robshaw, Secretary of the L.L.P., was among the speakers. In practice the leaderships of the L.L.P. and the L.C.C. were often composed of the same individuals and always worked closely together.

When the Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London started to take written evidence in early 1958 both the L.C.C. and the L.L.P. were asked to provide written statements regarding their views concerning the best structure for local government in Greater London. The evidence given by the two bodies was virtually identical, and amounted to an uncompromising assertion that there was no need for change. As early as 1954 the L.L.C. Labour group had debated the idea of transferring some of the Council's functions to the Metropolitan Boroughs, and the 1955 Labour L.C.C. election manifesto promised to transfer maternity, child welfare, nursing and health visiting services to the Metropolitan Boroughs. Such a transfer of services to the boroughs had not taken place, but both the L.L.P. and the L.C.C. made it clear to the Royal Commission that some minor changes to the functions of the L.C.C. and the Metropolitan Boroughs would be acceptable.

When Hayward led the L.C.C. party which gave oral evidence to the Royal Commission in April 1959 his advice did not vary from
the written evidence. The Evening Standard accused him of 'stonewalling' because he asserted there was no need for change in the structure of local government in the county of London and he had no opinion concerning the rest of Greater London whatsoever. A few months later Lord Latham, a former leader of the L.C.C., and Peter Robshaw gave evidence before the Royal commission on behalf of the L.L.P. Their evidence had been discussed by the Executive Committee of the L.L.P. and followed exactly that offered by Hayward on behalf of the L.C.C.

The report of the Royal Commission acknowledged that Labour had advised there was no need for anything more than the transfer of some services from the L.C.C. to the Metropolitan Boroughs. The report went on to dismiss this idea and to assert there were two alternatives only, reform, and radical reform at that, or the central government taking control of many issues concerning the whole of Greater London. The Labour leadership in London was disturbed by the Royal Commission's rejection of their arguments concerning the most appropriate structure for London government. Various meetings were arranged to gauge the view of Labour activists in London. The attitude of the L.L.P. and L.C.C. Labour Group, however, remained totally unchanged. The publication of the Government's white paper thirteen months later did little to change the attitude of the L.L.P. After the introduction of
the London Government Bill in late 1962 they were fighting for their very existence.\textsuperscript{32}

The last L.C.C. election took place in April 1961. At that time Labour had not conceded that the L.C.C. was doomed to be replaced and fought the election, not only on their record, but also as a referendum on the Government's plans for London government.\textsuperscript{33} Labour retained control of the L.C.C. with a comfortable majority, but they did lose seventeen seats to the Tories.\textsuperscript{34} However, at the previous election in 1958 Labour had their best ever result taking 101 seats out of a total of 126.\textsuperscript{35} It was an ambiguous result for Hayward and the leadership team. Labour had done well, but was it enough to be presented as a convincing 'no' by the people of London to the Government's plans? Neither The Times nor the Evening Standard argued the election results gave Labour in London a mandate to oppose the reform of London government. The L.L.P.'s own journal, London News, also failed to argue the voters of London had given the L.L.P. and L.C.C. Labour Group a mandate to oppose the Royal Commission's recommendation.\textsuperscript{36} Nonetheless, Labour retained control of the L.C.C. and continued its opposition to the reform of local government in London. In July 1962, L.L.P. opposition remained firm. Robshaw wrote to secretaries of all Labour Groups in London asking that they refuse to co-operate with the government on the issue of reorganizing London local government. Robshaw claimed: "It is
the Royal Commission and has become universally known as the 'Surrey Plan'. The Executive Committee of the L.L.P., in its initial response to the publication of the Royal Commission's report, recommended a indirectly elected London Regional Planning and Traffic Authority which would have authority within an area of about thirty miles radius from Charing Cross. This was to have been complemented by the transference of some L.C.C. powers to the metropolitan boroughs. The Labour Group of the L.C.C. discussed the 'Surrey Plan' on 15 January 1961 and came to much the same decisions as the L.L.P., but Hayward and his colleagues were concerned that such a joint board should not endanger the viability of the L.C.C. by assuming too many powers. For example, the L.C.C. Labour Group accepted that any joint board would have some housing powers, perhaps the ability to negotiate with local authorities prepared to accept some of Greater London's overspill population, but argued that such powers should not be at the expense of existing housing authorities, which included the L.C.C. The Labour group seems to have expected any such joint board to be principally involved in co-ordinating the work of the existing county councils within its area. Such a plan would have left the L.L.P. intact and left the L.C.C. with a major local government role and consequently offered a useful means of defence to Labour in London. This alternative reform, however, was not acceptable to the government.
However much power the leadership of the L.C.C. and the L.L.P. managed to concentrate within their own hands, there were other organizations and individuals who sought to, and often did, influence the general trend of Labour politics in London. One of the most powerful individuals was Norman Prichard, for many years chairman of the M.B.S.J.C. This committee had been created in 1912 and all the Metropolitan Boroughs, including the City of London were members. Because Labour usually controlled more Boroughs than the Conservatives, the organization had been Labour controlled for many years. Prichard remained chairman throughout the period of transition, but his power and influence was based on more than just this chairmanship. He was an Alderman on Battersea Borough Council, he was an L.C.C. Councillor and had been Chairman of the Finance Committee, and was also a member of the Executive Committee of the London Labour Party. He was a long serving and well respected expert on local government in London. Apart from Prichard's individual position, the M.B.S.J.C. was recognized by the Government, and by the L.C.C., as the collective voice of the Metropolitan Boroughs, and as such neither could afford to discount its opinions.

Like many other local government organizations the M.B.S.J.C. was primarily concerned to defend its own position, and, if possible, to enhance the role and status of its constituent
members. Consequently it hoped to see some of the powers and functions of the L.C.C. transferred to the lower tier boroughs. As a Labour controlled body, however, the M.B.S.J.C had a vested interest in ensuring any regional tier of local government in its area remained Labour controlled. The Conservative opposition on the M.B.S.J.C. objected to this, but like the Conservative opposition on the L.C.C. they had little or no power to influence formal decisions. Perhaps even more important to the M.B.S.J.C. was its attempts to defend the boundaries of the Metropolitan Boroughs as they existed prior to 1965, even though many of the Boroughs had seen many decades of decline in their population levels, and many were also quite small in area. Consequently Prichard and the M.B.S.J.C. saw their best chance of furthering their own interests by supporting the continued existence of the L.C.C. To a large extent Prichard's colleagues on the L.C.C. and the L.L.P. Executive Committee could rely on the support of the M.B.S.J.C. throughout their opposition to change.

In their evidence to the Royal Commission the M.B.S.J.C. offered three main points, which must have been of some comfort to the L.C.C. and the L.L.P. The M.B.S.J.C. argued that the two-tier system of local government in London, as it existed, was the most appropriate. Secondly, it argued that there was no need for changes in the existing boundaries of local authorities within London. However, the third point may have caused anguish to Hayward and his leading colleagues. The
M.B.S.J.C. argued there should be a "...substantial transfer of functions from the London County Council to the Metropolitan Borough Councils." The services recommended for transfer were:

All functions under the London Building Acts; all functions regarding the provision and management of parks; all functions regarding the provision and management of housing accommodation, including slum clearance, but overspill should be left with the L.C.C.; personal health and welfare; control of development under the Town and Country Planning Act, 1947, part III, plus concurrent powers for comprehensive development; other functions under Shops and Weights and Measures Acts, licensing and registration, and civil defence.

The report of the Royal Commission offered some comfort to the M.B.S.J.C. It may have caused some tension, but it did not split the alliance between Prichard's committee and the L.C.C. Labour leadership and the L.L.P. executive. The M.B.S.J.C. approved of the suggestion that the new London Boroughs should become the primary unit of local government. It argued that: "...any projected legislation should embody the principle in the most unequivocal terms." The Royal Commission report recommended that a series of new boroughs should be created with a minimum population of 100,000. This idea was rejected by the committee, since it was obvious to Prichard and his
committee that this would mean the forced amalgamation of many of the metropolitan boroughs. The M.B.S.J.C. was also forced to support the L.C.C. in their claim that many services should remain the responsibility of the upper tier authority. The M.B.S.J.C. could not argue that boroughs such as Shoreditch, with a population of 45,000, and Finsbury, with a population of 36,000, were populous enough to efficiently provide all the services suggested by the Royal Commission’s report. It was recognized they could not run a full education and children’s service. In order to aid the fight to save all twenty-eight metropolitan boroughs, Prichard’s committee recognized the need to defend the L.C.C. and to leave it with enough functions to remain a useful, efficient and practical level of local government. Like the L.C.C. and L.L.P. leadership the M.B.S.J.C. remained consistent in its views concerning London Government until the latter part of 1962 when it became obvious that the London Government Bill would become law in the early part of 1963. As late as November 1962, Prichard ordered officers of the M.B.S.J.C. to give no help in the reorganization of London government. Prichard and his Labour allies controlling the M.B.S.J.C. were tied to the Labour cause by more than party allegiance. If the L.C.C. was retained then the metropolitan boroughs were more likely to avoid forced mergers.
Sir Isaac Hayward and Norman Prichard were both of the same school of long serving, highly experienced local government politicians. They both knew London government intimately, they could, and did argue that local government in London worked, and that any major problems could be solved by more moderate changes (i.e. the 'Surrey plan'). The two men were colleagues on both the L.C.C. and the executive committee of the L.L.P., and there is no indication that they had anything but a harmonious working relationship.

Both men and their separate organizations developed slightly different approaches, while managing to present, for the most part, a united London Labour approach to local government in London. These two men and their closest allies represented a very long tradition (Hayward had been involved in London government since 1924, and a member of the L.C.C. since 1928), they had a deeply entrenched view of how London should be governed. In common with most Labour supporters they felt it was in the best interests of the majority of Londoners that Labour hegemony should continue. There were, however, some Labour members more concerned to see some reform of London government than saving the L.C.C.

Among the Labour controlled Metropolitan Boroughs the majority supported the general view of the overlapping leaderships of the L.C.C., L.L.P., and the M.B.S.J.C. Nonetheless, there was
some dissent, and it did damage the overall chances of Labour influencing the final nature of local government in Greater London. The Metropolitan Borough of Hackney informed the Royal Commission that it felt that the Metropolitan Boroughs should have the same education functions as other non-county boroughs throughout Britain. The municipal borough of Leyton in the County of Essex shared a common boundary with Hackney and under the 1944 Education Act Leyton had a right to receive delegated powers from the education authority (Essex County Council) which gave Leyton control over education in its area. Many other Boroughs in Middlesex, Essex, Kent and Surrey within the Greater London area had these same powers, but the London County Council was obliged under the same Education Act to keep all aspects of education in its own hands. The L.C.C. was happy to see this continue, but Hackney was not. Hackney was a large borough, with a population of 171,000, thus the Borough Council felt its own future was quite secure in any new system of local government in London. When Hackney was forced to merge with two of its smaller neighbours, Stoke Newington and Shoreditch, it became, in reality, a takeover of the two smaller boroughs by their larger neighbour. The new Hackney was dominated by the same Labour group as the old Hackney. Apart from loyalty to the L.L.P. view, Hackney Borough Council had little vested interest in helping to preserve the L.C.C. Thus, Hackney was able to demand the Metropolitan Boroughs take responsibility for education, plus the other services demanded by the M.B.S.J.C., even though the Labour controlled borough
must have been aware this would leave the L.C.C. dangerously close to redundancy with few useful functions, especially if the 'Surrey Plan' was also adopted. The Conservative L.M.S. identified this split within Labour views and gave it publicity in their journal The Londoner. Later this divergence of view within Labour in London was also reported in the Evening Standard.

Hackney was not the only Labour controlled metropolitan borough to publicly oppose the view of the London Labour leadership. Fulham went much further than Hackney. In its evidence to the Royal Commission it argued that there was a need for a radical change to the local government system in Greater London. Fulham supported the idea of a Greater London Authority as suggested by the Royal Commission, and this support continued throughout the process leading to the creation of the G.L.C. Once again the L.M.S. publicized this rift in Labour views. Hugh Jenkins, a Labour L.C.C. Councillor, also called for radical change. He became M.P. for Putney in October 1964, but even before this as a Parliamentary candidate he would have been a man of some influence. Jenkins was not a member of the national Labour Party's N.E.C. Local Government Sub-Committee, but his support, and the support of Fulham Borough Council, for radical change was noted by that Sub-Committee. Such opposition to the L.L.P. stance from within Labour in London must have helped the N.E.C. Local Government Sub-Committee to justify its extreme ambiguity in its support for the L.C.C.
L.L.P., M.B.S.J.C. point of view. The Sub-Committee steadfastly refused to commit itself to full support of the L.L.P. view. 82

The L.L.P. made several attempts to avoid differences of opinion arising among the various Labour organizations in the London area. There were many consultations, meetings and other requests to be kept in touch with the views of constituency parties throughout the entire period. 83 The leadership had definite views, and showed every sign of having developed a 'siege mentality', 84 but nonetheless the leadership recognized the need to carry all elements of London Labour with them. 85 Consequently this continuous two-way process of communications between the constituencies, trade unions and Metropolitan Borough Labour Groups led to the expression of some divergent views. Many of these were from small groups which lacked influence and the means to publicize their views. 86

Among those Labour groups expressing a very different point of view, however, was the Labour Group in the Metropolitan Borough of Woolwich which envisaged the end of the L.C.C. The Woolwich Labour Group suggested that Greater London be divided into five metropolitan counties, one of which would be a much reduced L.C.C.. This would contain the metropolitan boroughs of St.Marylebone, Holborn, Finsbury, Shoreditch, Bethnal Green, Bermondsey, Stepney, Southwark, Westminster and the City of London. This new L.C.C. would have a population of about 350,000. 87 The Woolwich Labour party had an associate
membership of several thousands due to the affiliation of the Royal Arsenal Co-operative Society. Its mere size gave the Woolwich party a great deal of influence. It had the financial base to promote its ideas if it wished to do so. The leadership could not afford to totally disregard the views of such powerful organizations, nor could the leadership afford to take on board such radical ideas without totally discrediting their own well known position. The consultations between the Headquarters of the L.L.P. and the various constituent organizations continued apace and individuals such as London Party Secretary Peter Robshaw was forced to write many letters assuring these organizations in vague terms of better co-operation and more devolution of power in the future.

The views of the Labour Party in Woolwich do not seem to have been much publicized at the time. This may have been due to L.L.P. pressure. Nonetheless, when the Evening Standard commented that many of the Labour controlled metropolitan boroughs were only half hearted in their opposition to the proposed reforms it was able to link this to a claim that the L.C.C. had shut their minds to the possibility of change, and thus emphasize differences within Labour in London. Intransigence at the top and less than wholehearted support from some of the constituent organizations must have damaged London Labour's chances of defending Labour's hegemony in London and trying to extend it to the whole of Greater London.
Despite all the outward signs of unanimity within the controlling Labour group on the L.C.C. there were differences of opinion within the senior controlling elements. Hayward and his main ally, Freda Corbet, had been able to maintain loyalty by offering committee chairmanships or vice-chairmanships to those who toed the party line. This method seems to have been quite successful in keeping many young and ambitious members loyal, although when members acquired seniority through length of service, and experience after the control of several high profile committees, they became too influential in their own right and could be neither sacked nor kept quiet if they chose to oppose the group leadership. One such member was William Fiske. It had been rumoured in 1959 that Hayward was to resign as leader of the L.C.C. and Fiske was tipped to be the new leader. Fiske was seen as a potentially modernizing leader of both the L.C.C. and the Labour Group. Hayward did not resign, but in March 1960 Fiske was elected to the post of chief whip, ousting Corbet from the job much to the annoyance of Hayward who relied on her. This effectively meant that Fiske held the number two job within the Labour group of the L.C.C. He was also a member of the executive committee of the L.L.P. and a member of the Local Government Sub-Committee of the N.E.C. of the Labour Party. Fiske was an influential man, who had his own supporters within the L.C.C. There is no sign that Fiske was anything but loyal to Hayward and the decisions of the Labour Leadership team (of which he was a member). Hayward and Corbet, however, did not forgive him, and he remained a
figurehead and a symbol for many of those within the Labour movement dissatisfied with the old guard leadership. Fiske did later emerge as the leader of the first Labour controlled G.L.C., and under his leadership there were no Aldermanships for Hayward or Corbet even though Hayward was on record as saying he would consider becoming an Alderman if offered a position as such.

Dissatisfaction with Hayward's leadership of the L.C.C. and with the leadership of the L.L.P. also manifested itself with a revival of a more radical left-wing agenda among some Labour activists. Although many of the established figures in London Labour politics, such as the leading L.C.C. Councillor Evelyn Denington, supported Fiske in his attempt to change the leadership without damaging the structure of Labour in London, many others saw a need for a more radical change. Some of these, such as Illtyd Harrington, gained places on the Executive Committee of the L.L.P. This growing left wing discontent permeated all levels of the party by 1963 when the leadership finally conceded defeat in the fight to save the L.C.C.. The leadership did contain the growing agitation within Labour ranks, but not without cost. Hayward's authority died with the L.C.C. and his place was taken by Fiske, but Fiske and his team failed to completely fill the vacuum left by the breakdown of the authoritarian L.L.P. and L.L.P. Labour Group structure.
The L.C.C. and L.L.P. leadership worked hard to keep all the various strands of Labour in London working together. To a large extent they were successful. Newspapers at the time covered the more public splits in London Labour views, such as the conflicting evidence given to the Royal Commission already discussed, but the two main London wide newspapers, the Evening News and the Evening Standard gave no indication of a major public split in the Labour stance. Maintaining this stance did take a considerable effort on the part of the L.L.P. as did the production of evidence to support the party line that no major changes were needed. This constant defence of the status quo, both externally and internally, could have aggravated the 'siege mentality' in the established leadership. It seems to have left the leadership with little time to develop any active policy designed to enhance its position rather than just articulate a continuous passive defence.

One of the few major active policies of the leadership was somewhat of a failure and probably damaged the position of the leadership. At a meeting of the L.C.C. Labour Group in early 1962 there was a suggestion that there should be established a non-party political organization with the sole purpose of bringing together and focussing all the opposition to the abolition of the L.C.C. This idea was taken up by the Executive Committee of the L.L.P., and the Labour peer Lord Longford was invited to become the chairman. There seems to have been no attempt to hide this organization's Labour
heritage: it was distanced from the L.C.C. and the L.L.P., and none of the London Labour leadership took an active role on it.\textsuperscript{109} By mid-1962 the Committee for London Government had been established, and it quickly became known as the Longford Committee. It did succeed in linking many famous names with the cause of saving the L.C.C., and among its official patrons were Dame Peggy Ashcroft, Dame Edith Evans and Sir Michael Redgrave.\textsuperscript{110} Its Treasurer was Lord Beveridge, and the Vice-Chairman was Sir William Holford.\textsuperscript{111} Such household names, however, did not guarantee the survival of the L.C.C. In September 1962 Lord Longford declared he wanted to raise a petition of 500,000 signatures against the abolition of the L.C.C., and this became the main task of the Committee.\textsuperscript{112} It failed. By February 1963 the Longford Committee had managed to raise a petition with 171,000 signatures. It was then presented to Parliament, but to no avail, and a few months later the Committee for London Government was wound up.\textsuperscript{113}

The failure of the Longford Committee showed that the leadership was unable to break through public apathy, and to mobilize massive public support for the continued survival of the L.C.C. By late 1962/early 1963, opposition to the leadership position was growing within London Labour, the end of the L.C.C. looked almost inevitable, and public apathy continued. A public opinion poll undertaken on behalf of the \textit{Evening News} shortly before the first G.L.C. election asked approximately 1,000 voters in Brixton their opinions. Sixty-
seven per cent knew the L.C.C. was to be abolished, twenty per cent approved of its abolition, nineteen per cent did not approve, twenty-six per cent did not care that the L.C.C. was to be abolished and thirty-five per cent expressed no opinion on the matter.¹¹⁴

V

It was not until the publication of the London Government Bill, and the gradual recognition of the inevitability of major reform, that the L.L.P committed to paper the idea that there was a need to defend the Labour position under the radically new local government system in Greater London.¹¹⁵ Not until the November 1963 Executive Committee meeting did the L.L.P. discuss the nature of the then urgently required Greater London Labour Party.¹¹⁶ On the 24 November 1964, after the first G.L.C. election (April 1964), the L.L.P. held its first and only recorded meeting of the Special Committee to Consider the London Labour Party Structure.¹¹⁷ This issue was aired once in the London News,¹¹⁸ but no decisions seem to have been taken by the L.L.P. before their written records stop towards the end of 1964.

This L.L.P. apathy can be partially explained by the fact that it had lost its main function, that of organizing and campaigning on a London wide basis. A Greater London Coordinating Committee had been imposed on all the Labour
organizations in the new Greater London Area, and the L.L.P. was able to appoint sixteen members to this Co-ordinating Committee, but that was then the end of the L.L.P.'s formal role in the first G.L.C. election.\textsuperscript{119} William Fiske became a leading member of this Committee, and later the first leader of the G.L.C. after the Labour victory in April 1964.\textsuperscript{120} Fiske and his new colleagues were busy with the G.L.C. Hayward and his remaining colleagues were occupied winding up the L.C.C. By mid-1964 Hayward had accepted the inevitable and became a member of a joint committee of the G.L.C. and the county councils it was to supersede.\textsuperscript{121} Prichard was fully employed as Chairman of the London Boroughs Committee, which had replaced the M.B.S.J.C.\textsuperscript{122} Constituency and Borough Labour Groups were busy in the new London Boroughs. Thus, the L.L.P. had little to do apart from drift along until it was replaced by the Greater London Regional Council of the (national) Labour Party in 1968.\textsuperscript{123}

VI

Despite appearances little in London politics happened without a logical reason, and the course followed by the L.L.P. and the controlling Labour group of the L.C.C. from 1957 until they were superseded was, indeed, logical. Sir Isaac Hayward, Herbert Morrison, Peter Robshaw and their colleagues were primarily concerned with the Administrative County of London (in Robshaw's case also Middlesex), not Greater London. They
were concerned with maintaining Labour hegemony and unanimity in their own area. Equally, the stance taken by the M.B.S.J.C., various Labour controlled boroughs, constituency Labour parties and individuals were all quite logical and, in their own terms, quite reasonable.

If the L.L.P. and L.C.C. Labour Group had been more flexible and attempted to extend Labour's hegemony to Greater London; if the G.L.C. had been accepted by London Labour after the publication of the Government's white paper in 1961; if a new Greater London Labour Party had been established in 1964, then the politics of local government in London might have been very different during the life of the G.L.C. Perhaps under the above circumstances Labour would have retained control of the G.L.C. in the 1967 election. However, it seems unlikely any action taken by the L.C.C. Labour Group and L.L.P. leadership in the early 1960s could have successfully extended Labour hegemony to the whole of Greater London. This was particularly so when so many normally Conservative dominated areas in suburban Surrey, Kent, Essex and Middlesex were included in the new area.

Yet, if Labour had taken a more active role in helping to establish the nature of the G.L.C. it might have been a different shape and a very different body. The national Labour Party was able to comment on the affairs of the whole of Greater London, rather than just the L.C.C. area, and in
November 1963 declared its opposition to the G.L.C. because its area was not large enough to be an effective planning and traffic authority. It also claimed housing provision would be inadequate and breaking up the children's services of the various county councils would injure the welfare of children.126 Perhaps a slightly more positive attitude from the Labour leadership in London could have produced enough pressure to see some of these criticisms taken into account in the final structure of the new local government system. A more powerful G.L.C. would have had a different relationship with the new London boroughs. This might have created a system better able to survive the 1980s.
NOTES


5/ Private conversation with Lord Jenkins of Putney, a former L.C.C. Councillor, 31.1.95.


7/ Ibid.


14/ Ward, op. cit.

15/ Ibid.

16/ Jones, op. cit. Donoughue & Jones, op. cit. pp.211-7

18/ G.L.R.O., L.L.P. archive, file ACC 2147/A/41, document 14384. invitation to Leaders and/or whips of Labour controlled boroughs and Leaders and/or whips of Labour groups on other boroughs.


22/ The Times, 6.3.55 p.4.


27/ Ibid, para 707.

28/ For example see letter from Lord Morrison to Secretary of L.L.P. 21.10.61 in G.L.R.O., L.L.P. archive, file ACC 2417/A/52; also report for Executive Committee of L.L.P. regarding the report of the Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London and minutes of Executive Committee meeting in L.L.P. archive, file ACC 2417/A/42 documents 14499 - 14607.

29/ For example see G.L.R.O., L.L.P. archive, file ACC 2417/A/42 documents 14508, 14612-13 which give details of several such meetings.

30/ G.L.R.O., L.L.P. archive, file ACC 2417/A/42 documents 14593-94.

31/ G.L.R.O., L.L.P. archive, file ACC 2417/A/44 documents 15147, 15156, 15186, 15230, 15241, 15299.


35/ Ibid. 17.4.58 p.1

36/ This monthly newspaper detailed the April 1961 L.C.C. election results in its May edition, but did not discuss the nature of the mandate given to the L.C.C. by the voters. Also no subsequent edition discussed this issue.


38/ G.L.R.O., L.L.P. archive, file ACC 2417/A 46 document 15656.


41/ This is fully discussed in Chapter Seven below.


44/ Ibid.

45/ Chapter Seven pp.244-5, 262-3, below.


48/ This is demonstrated by the Metropolitan Borough Council election results noted above (note 6)

49/ Who Was Who, op. cit.

50/ Private conversation with Lord Mellish, 8.3.94.


52/ This is demonstrated by the L.C.C.'s willingness to negotiate the transference of some L.C.C. functions to the metropolitan boroughs in 1954, see G.L.R.O., L.L.P. archive, file ACC 2417/C/79 minutes of L.C.C. Labour Group.

54/ L.B.A., Minutes of M.B.S.J.C. no complete date, but 1958.

55/ L.B.A., Minutes of M.B.S.J.C., meeting 8.10.62. Group Captain G.H. Price of the Conservative Group insisted that the Conservative support for the Royal Commission’s report be recorded, but this had no effect on M.B.S.J.C. policy.

56/ Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London, Minutes of Evidence, Evidence of the Metropolitan Boroughs Standing Joint Committee, qq. 102, 106.

57/ L.B.A., Minutes of the M.B.S.J.C., 1958, following page 68, held at the offices of the London Boroughs Association.

58/ Ibid.


60/ L.B.A., Minutes of the M.B.S.J.C. 28.11.60.


63/ Figures are for 1952 and are cited in The Londoner, April 1954, P.189.

64/ L.B.A., Minutes of M.B.S.J.C. 25.6.62.

65/ Ibid. 8.10.62.

66/ Private conversation with Lord Mellish, 8.3.94.

67/ Mr Illtyd Harrington related to me that he had visited Sir Isaac Hayward's home shortly after his death in 1975, and found that he left no records whatsoever regarding his political career. Thus we shall never know Hayward's true feelings regarding any of these matters. Conversation with Illtyd Harrington, 27.4.94.


74/ The Londoner, April 1954, this figure dates from 1952.

75/ Chapter Eight pp.310-11, below.

76/ The Londoner, January 1959.

77/ Evening Standard, 19.3.62, p.4.

78/ Royal Commission, Minutes of Evidence, Evidence from Fulham Metropolitan Borough Council, qq. 545 - 547.
79/ The Londoner, January 1959.

80/ Royal Commission, Minutes of Evidence, Evidence from Mr Hugh Jenkins, q.q. 11623 - 11690.


84/ P.R.O. file PREM 11/3864, Prime Minister's Office archive, briefing notes for the Prime Minister (undated). This note, from the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, details the attitudes of leading Labour Councillors on the L.C.C.


88/ This figure is based on a conversation with Illtyd Harrington, 27.4.94. Mr Harrington stated a figure of 55,000 members or associate members.

89/ G.L.R.O., L.L.P. archive, file ACC 2417/A/52.

90/ Ibid.


92/ Ward, op. cit.

93/ *Evening Standard*, 25.11.59., p.5.

94/ Ibid, 21.12.59., P.7, and private conversations with Lady Evelyn Denington, 5.10.93; Illtyd Harrington, 27.4.94; and Sir Ashley Bramall 19.5.94.

95/ Private conversations with Sir Ashley Bramall confirmed by Illtyd Harrington and Lady Denington

96/ Minutes of Local Government Sub-Committee of the Home Affairs Committee of the National Executive Committee of the
Labour Party 1957 - 1967, Fiske is shown to be a member throughout this period. Labour Party archive.

97/ Private conversations with Lady Denington, Illtyd Harrington and Sir Ashley Bramall, op. cit.


99/ Private conversations with Lady Denington, Illtyd Harrington and Sir Ashley Bramall, op. cit.

100/ Evening Standard, 17.1.64. p.4.

101/ Ward, op. cit. p.5. This move to the left was confirmed by Illtyd Harrington and Sir Ashley Bramall.

102/ Lady Denington acknowledged her support for Fiske, and his attempt to change the leadership style. This is confirmed by Illtyd Harrington and Sir Ashley Bramall.

103/ Illtyd Harrington acknowledged he was a 'fiery' left winger, and that he was impatient with the old leadership. He was often a member of the Executive Committee from the late 1950s.
104/ Private conversation with Illtyd Harrington, op. cit. confirmed in private conversation with Sir Ashley Bramall, op. cit.

105/ G.L.R.O., L.L.P. archive, file ACC 2417/A/52, this file contains a large volume of letters from the the Secretary of the L.L.P. to groups and individuals coaxing them to toe the party line, or at least keep quiet.


107/ Ibid.


109/ G.L.R.O., L.L.P. archive, file ACC 2417/C/81. Notes of a meeting of the Sub-Committee of the Policy Committee of the L.C.C. Labour Group regarding London Government 5.3.62 attended by Robshaw on behalf of the L.L.P.

111/ Ibid.

112/ Ibid.

113/ Ibid.

114/ *Evening News*, 2.4.64. p.6, a poll of approximately 1,000 voters in Brixton undertaken by National Opinion Polls. For further details of this poll see Chapter Four above, pp.139-40.


117/ Any other meetings were less formal and probably made no decisions which warranted a record being kept.


119/ G.L.R.O., L.L.P. archive, file ACC 2417/J/29/1-3 has details of this committee.

120/ Ibid.
121/ L.C.C. Minutes, 16.6.64.


124/ Chapter Ten p.378, below.

125/ This topic is discussed in Chapters Six and Eight below.

Chapter Six
Conservatives in London:
Attitudes, Actions and Reactions

As in the previous chapter it is politics within the County of London that are of primary concern here. As the previous chapter concentrated on Labour in London so this chapter is concerned with the Conservatives within the L.C.C. area. Although the primary purpose here is to explain the London Conservative role during the transition in London government it is necessary to provide a historical perspective in order to fully explain Conservative attitudes. This chapter will establish that there was a loss of faith among Conservatives of their ability to regain control of the L.C.C. It will also show that the L.M.S.' role within London-wide Conservative politics became marginalised. Also it will explain why the L.C.C. Conservative Group felt little fear from a reformed system of London government that promised to greatly improve their chances of electoral success. This chapter will demonstrate that opposition from London Conservatives, mainly within Metropolitan Boroughs facing abolition, failed to influence L.C.C. Conservative Group and L.M.S. support for the reforms.

The L.M.S.¹ maintained a closer relationship with the Conservative Group of the L.C.C. than the London Conservative
Union, whose primary role was to provide agents and organizers in the constituencies. Although the L.C.C. Conservative Group and the L.M.S. were separate organizations they worked together very closely. Thus, it is these two bodies which gain most coverage here.

Although the L.M.S. and L.C.C. Conservative Group retained a great deal of autonomy within the world of Conservative politics they were not immune from pressure and did not work in isolation. Thus, the Parliamentary Conservative Party, the Conservative Government, Conservative Party Central Office, Constituency Conservative Parties and metropolitan borough Conservative groups all influenced the London-wide Conservative organizations. Consequently when necessary their role is brought into this chapter.

II

From its earliest days the L.M.S. had allied itself with the Conservative Party. It, nonetheless, retained its nominal independence until the L.M.S. went into abeyance in late 1963. That independence, however, was only tolerated by Conservative Party Central Office because the L.M.S. had always been prepared to accept Central Office advice and to toe the party line, after the Second World War.
By the post-war period the main function of the L.M.S. had become that of organizing and supporting the Conservative campaign at L.C.C. elections. The L.M.S. also retained its role as a Conservative propaganda agency in the County of London. Since its foundation the L.M.S. had maintained lists of suitable candidates willing to fight L.C.C. elections on behalf of the Conservative cause in London, and to a lesser extent had helped in the selection of suitable candidates to fight the Metropolitan Borough elections, but the L.M.S. never wielded anything like complete power in this field. Constituency associations retained the power to select their own candidates for elections to both levels of local government in London. So Conservative Councillors elected to the L.C.C. had often been suggested as candidates by the L.M.S. but such Councillors were selected by the Conservative Constituency Associations, aided financially and organizationally by the London Conservative Union, and, of course, finally elected to the L.C.C. by the voters of London, who had the power to vote in an alternative candidate every three years. Consequently there was no formal control of the L.C.C. Conservative Group by the L.M.S., which had to accept that it had no right, and indeed no power, to force its views upon the L.C.C. Conservatives. This is shown by the L.M.S.' recognition that it could only advise the Municipal Reform Group to change its name to the Conservative Group for the 1946 L.C.C. election. By the 1950s the influence of the L.M.S. had been further reduced because Conservative Party Central Office had begun to take an
interest in the selection of prospective Conservative Candidates to fight L.C.C. elections. Central Office was concerned to make sure that the quality of candidates remained high. The Director of the L.M.S. (usually a young and ambitious Conservative M.P.) received lists of appropriate candidates from Central Office. This undermined one of the L.M.S.' primary roles.

Despite the lack of tangible power the L.M.S. retained a position of real influence, both in Conservative circles and in the field of local government in London. This influence did not spread to the rest of Greater London where the L.M.S. had no role. Nonetheless it was inconceivable that the L.M.S. would not be asked to give evidence to the Royal Commission. It was, however, constrained in the advice it could give by its own history and its very raison d'etre. Also, because the whole of the Conservative Party had come to accept the L.M.S. as one of the leading voices of Conservative opinion in London, all Conservatives were, to a large extent, obliged to accept the view of the L.M.S.

The reasons for the founding of the L.M.S. are discussed in chapter one. The Society gave the reasons for its foundation as:

To complete and extend the policy successfully promoted by the Unionist Ministry of 1886-92 for the
reform of London government... The Society will seek to supplement that reform by the establishment of district councils or corporations in areas corresponding as far as possible with existing districts; such bodies to be invested with the powers of various local authorities, including the present vestries and district boards, and with all the municipal powers and functions not necessarily discharged by the central body... proper dignity and importance would be imparted to the local authorities; the heavy and growing responsibilities of the central body would be lightened; and undue centralization would be avoided.  

Further it was stated that the Society aimed to secure a fair system of rates for the ratepayers of London. Within five years of the L.M.S.' foundation the system of Metropolitan Boroughs which existed until 1965 had been introduced, and candidates supported by the L.M.S. did very well in the first Metropolitan Borough elections of 1900. The L.C.C., however, retained a great deal of power and the L.M.S expressed a dissatisfaction regarding the relative powers of the new boroughs and the L.C.C.

The Metropolitan Boroughs had been created by a Unionist government, which made it difficult for the L.M.S. to express too great a disappointment. The L.M.S. continued to espouse
the same aims, that of cheap local government through the
pursuit of efficiency and the constant examination of the need
for all expenditure.\textsuperscript{25} The L.M.S. also continued to express
the view that the best method of achieving the above aims were
through the closer linkage of expenditure and the raising of
the necessary finance through the rates.\textsuperscript{26} The L.C.C. did not
collect its own rates, it issued a precept, and the
Metropolitan Boroughs collected the L.C.C.'s revenue from the
ratepayers in conjunction with their own rate demands. The
L.M.S. view was that a greater transference of power to the
Metropolitan Boroughs would mean that to a greater degree
those who were responsible for expenditure would also collect
the rates. Such borough councillors would be part of the local
community, and they would be more accountable, more careful of
their neighbour's money, and better able to decide what the
local community considered to be essential expenditure.\textsuperscript{27}

This general L.M.S. view helped shape its policies throughout
the seventy year lifetime of the organization. During the
inter-war period Labour replaced the Progressives as the main
opponents to the L.M.S.' Municipal Reform allies on the the
L.C.C. However, little changed in the L.M.S. and Municipal
Reform perception of their major opponents.\textsuperscript{28} As with the
Progressives, Labour was seen as a party committed to high
spending and the centralization of local government in London
into the hands of the L.C.C.\textsuperscript{29}
There was a period of some twenty-seven years in between the end of Progressive rule and the beginning of Labour's record thirty-three year rule at County Hall. During this period between 1907 and 1934 the Municipal Reformers, as the Moderates had become known, controlled the L.C.C. They worked closely with the L.M.S. Many Municipal Reform Councillors were members of the L.M.S.' Executive Committee. There was a restrictive limit to what the Municipal Reformers could do to change the local government system of London more to their liking. Change needed to come from Parliament, not from the L.C.C. whose powers and functions were derived from Acts of Parliament alone. Welfare reforms of various central governments (often Conservative dominated) after the First World War imposed new duties and greater expense onto the the Municipal Reform controlled L.C.C. The Ministry of Health took a growing interest in the L.C.C.'s housing policy, and encouraged the L.C.C. to invest heavily in council housing. Consequently, during Municipal Reform rule at County Hall the Council's powers increased and expenses rose. There was little the L.M.S. could do to ensure cheaper, less centralized local government, and politics dictated that any criticism of the Municipal Reformers or of Conservative central governments had to be very limited.

However, in 1934 Labour gained control of the L.C.C., never to lose control of the council during the rest of its existence. The Labour Leader of the L.C.C., Herbert Morrison, pursued a
policy of efficient and economical management coupled with a high level of publicity for such policies. The L.M.S., however, was able to return to its traditional attacks on the L.C.C. for its centralist tendencies, its inefficiency and its alleged financing of unnecessary services or projects. The Municipal Reform and Conservative manifestos written by the L.M.S. for all the remaining L.C.C. elections repeat the same basic formula, that the Labour controlled L.C.C. was too expensive and too inefficient and much more power needed to be transferred from the L.C.C. to the Metropolitan boroughs.

Although the period of Municipal Reform control of the L.C.C. had failed to see structural or strategic changes in London government along the line hoped for by the L.M.S. it was a great disappointment to all Conservatives when their allies lost control of the council. This disappointment was compounded three years later when they failed to regain control of the L.C.C. at the 1937 election. The Municipal Borough elections of that year were also disastrous from the L.M.S. point of view.

In consequence the leader of the Conservative Party (the Prime Minister, Mr Neville Chamberlain), working through the Conservative Party Central Office, established a committee under the Chairmanship of the prominent Member of Parliament, and former member of the L.C.C., Sir Kingsley Wood. This Committee was charged with the task of examining the
Conservative Parliamentary and local government election organization in London. Its primary aim was to identify any changes needed to allow the Conservative party or their close allies to regain control of local government in London. The report of this committee was not ready until early 1939. As the primary Conservative organization in the London area the L.M.S. had received the most criticism after the two consecutive L.C.C. election defeats. The report, however, was careful to be constructive and to avoid too much criticism. Despite this it did suggest there should be much closer cooperation between all Conservative organizations in London. The report suggested that three members of the London Conservative Union, which was directly responsible to Conservative Party Central Office, and three Conservative M.P.'s representing London constituencies should be appointed to the Executive Committee of the L.M.S. This change was accepted by the Society, but not carried into effect until after the war. The major consequence of this change was to tie the L.M.S. into the Conservative Party system very closely. The loss of the elections and the subsequent enquiry also led to the growth of an air of failure in London Conservatism.

Because of its position the L.M.S. could not escape from some of the blame for the failure to regain control of the L.C.C. After the second world war Conservative fortunes in London did not revive. The first post war L.C.C. election took place in
1946, and the Labour victory seems to have been expected, and thus was not seen as a major setback. The 1949 L.C.C. elections resulted in the Conservatives, as the Municipal Reformers had become known since the 1946 election, taking more votes than Labour, but giving both main parties on the L.C.C. an equal number of Councillors. This enabled Labour, by the use of its existing Aldermen, to retain full control of the council. It also allowed the blame for this Conservative failure to be pinned onto what was seen as Labour's shoddy behaviour. Nonetheless, it was yet another setback, whatever the reason. The L.M.S. put a great deal of effort into the 1952 L.C.C. election, seemingly convinced they could do better and actually win. The result must have been a disappointment, since Labour regained much of the ground it had lost in 1949, and took a clear majority of the votes. The Conservatives failed to do appreciably better in 1955, 1958 and 1961. The results alone suggested that nothing the L.M.S. could do would result in Conservative victory at an L.C.C. election, and this had occurred to some quite early on. Within Conservative circles there was a growing call for radical changes in the size and nature of local government in London which began before the second world war.

III

A Royal Commission, the Ullswater Commission, had been appointed in 1921 in order to enquire into whether there
should be any changes in the area or the structure of local government in Greater London. The L.M.S. was asked to give evidence to this Royal Commission, which the Society did, and it argued there was no need to change the structure of local government in Greater London. However, it was not too many years before this point of view was being challenged within the L.M.S. In January 1935 the Rev. A.G. Prichard, L.C.C. Municipal Reform member for West Islington, stated: "The time has arrived when Greater London should be brought within one co-ordinated London government." Young quotes from a secret report of the London organization committee of the Conservative Party of June 1938, which shows the attractions of a major change in the nature of London government to the Conservatives, by that time in opposition on the L.C.C.:

Suggestions have been made to us that there is a real case for an early examination of the present boundaries of London...From a political point of view witnesses have urged that with a larger London boundary which would include areas to which many middle-class residents of London have now moved our prospects would be much more favourable.

The report goes on to discuss the possible repercussions of such a change:

...it would involve many difficult questions and
might well mean prolonged controversy and oppositions for localities who might not desire to be merged in a greater London, ...\textsuperscript{59}

It might have been expected that one of the difficulties would be that in a new system the L.M.S. would lose its very raison d'etre: the nature of the society meant that no L.C.C. would, in all likelihood, have meant no L.M.S. Of course, a greater London authority if directly elected would need a Conservative organization covering the entire area, but the L.M.S. with its restricted aims and technical independence from Central Office would have found it virtually impossible to adapt enough to survive. However, the Society was tied to Central Office policies, and was in many respects a failure. It lacked the ability to follow any other policy other than that supported by Central Office even if that meant the L.M.S. supporting policies that would inevitably lead to its own demise.

The L.M.S., and its close ally, the L.C.C. Municipal Reform or Conservative group, had to at least take account of, if not react to, the opinions of other bodies. There were many other organizations and individuals concerned about London and its government. In October 1942, an editorial in The Times called for local government reform to introduce regional authorities.\textsuperscript{60} In November 1942, Lord Kennet, Vice-President of the Association of Municipal Corporations (of which most
Metropolitan Boroughs were members) wrote of his organization's ideas concerning local government reform. In February 1943, the National Association of Local Government Officers published its ideas for the reform of local government, and this included large single tier authorities which would have necessitated the breakup of the L.C.C. The Ratepayer, the L.M.S.' own journal, discussed this scheme and announced the disapproval of the L.M.S. In April 1943, a Labour Party conference debated the then future shape of local government. This also called for the introduction of regional authorities and would have led to the abolition of the L.C.C. In October 1943 the Conservative M.P. Geoffrey Hutchinson espoused his ideas for changes in the nature of London government which would have taken account of a perceived need for regional planning. Once again, The Ratepayer discussed several of the suggested plans of reform, and announced the L.M.S. was not convinced that any of them were entirely appropriate. In May 1944, the National Liberal Party published a document setting out its view on local government. In February 1945 an article in The Times discussed the need for change in the nature of London government, and in December 1948 a Times editorial tackled the issue of the failings in local government. In May 1950, the eminent academic and leading Fabian, Professor W.A. Robson, wrote to The Times calling for a dramatic change in the nature of London government. In October 1950, in an editorial The Times put forward its own views on how to change
the system of local government in greater London, and called for a regional authority and larger district authorities in Greater London. In February 1951, the former Chairman of the Local Government Boundary Commission, Sir Malcolm Tristram Eve, put forward his own views on what form of local government would best suit Greater London, which would have led to the break up of the L.C.C. and an indirectly elected Greater London Authority.

There were many other organizations and individuals expressing views concerning local government reform, including reform of local government in London. The role of the L.M.S. as a conservative-minded 'think tank' on local government in London meant the Society collected the published views of other groups concerning London and had a duty to make available the Conservative view. The L.M.S. probably took into account the views of others it had collected when formulating its own plans for local government in London. This Conservative approach needed to appeal to the voters of London, which meant persuading more than the traditional Conservative voters, who had been inadequate in number to return the Municipal Reformers or Conservatives to power, that a Conservative controlled county council was to their good. The L.M.S. needed to develop a view on local government in London which not only took account of traditional Conservative views of London government such as local control of expenditure and the need
for efficiency, but coupled this with an appeal to the voters capable of overturning the Labour domination of the L.C.C.

In December 1946 The Ratepayer called for the development of a plan for the future structure of local government in London. A few years later in November 1950 the Executive Committee of the L.M.S. recognized that one of the Society's most urgent matters was to clarify its view concerning the most appropriate boundaries and the functions of local government units in greater London.

In May 1952 a young Conservative M.P., J. Enoch Powell, was appointed Director of the L.M.S. Powell developed a L.M.S. plan for the future local government of London. It became known as the Powell Plan and was completed shortly before the Royal Commission on London Government was appointed. This plan represented years of accumulated thought by the L.M.S., and years of accumulated outside influence upon the L.M.S. It fitted with the entrenched aims of the L.M.S. and fitted with many strands of Conservative thought throughout the country. The plan suggested the L.C.C. should be abolished and should be replaced by about seven new county boroughs, each with a population of about 450,000. Although these were larger than the Metropolitan Boroughs they were considerably smaller than the L.C.C. They would collect their own rates and were considered small enough to be in touch with the wishes of their own ratepayers. It was suggested that the boundaries of
the new county boroughs would be so arranged as to provide each with enough likely Conservative voters to give Conservatives a reasonable chance of winning control. The plan accepted there was a need for some form of regional co-ordinating body which would control such London wide services as main drainage, the ambulance service, the fire brigade, and the planning of main roads.\textsuperscript{77}

In January 1958 The Londoner (as The Ratepayer had been renamed) carried an article 'The L.C.C., London's Big Brother', and this reiterated the time-honoured views of the Society:

The London County Council with its present powers is too large for local knowledge on the part of Councillors to mean much when proper decisions have to be made. On the other hand it is not big enough to provide any co-ordination either of sentiment or over-all services for London as a whole. These deficiencies have been apparent for years. The Government have now appointed a Royal Commission to consider the whole question.\textsuperscript{78}

This makes it quite clear what position the L.M.S. would take when offering evidence to the Royal Commission, and a few months later the same journal carried a report detailing the evidence offered by the Society. The L.M.S. offered three
different plans, the first of which was the Powell plan as above. The second plan called for the amalgamation of the twenty-eight metropolitan boroughs into fifteen new authorities. The third suggestion was that the smaller metropolitan boroughs would be merged. This plan envisaged ten Boroughs being merged, but twelve would be unaffected. Despite offering three levels of radicalness or otherwise in boundary changes, the L.M.S. stuck firmly to its belief that there existed a need for a radical redistribution in the powers of each level of local government. It argued that the lower tier of local authority should become the primary unit of local government and the upper tier nothing more than a strategic depository which only carried out those local government functions which the smaller units were totally unfit to manage efficiently. The society was, however, torn between the need to adhere to many decades of political rhetoric and the need to accept the inherent complexities of London government. Thus, it was suggested that although the lower tier authorities should be responsible for primary and secondary education, the strategic authority would need to be responsible for further and higher education.\textsuperscript{79} Also, that although the new boroughs should be responsible for health and welfare, they would not be large enough to run all aspects of these services alone and some boroughs would need to combine to provide some aspects of the health and welfare provisions required of a local authority.\textsuperscript{80} The L.M.S. also recognized that planning would have to be in some manner shared by the
boroughs and the new strategic authority. Because the L.M.S.'s remit ran only to the boundaries of the Administrative County of London it was unable to offer any but very general comments on local government problems in the rest of Greater London, but felt there was a need for some form of regional co-ordination. The L.M.S policies, if accepted, would have led to a new strategic authority for the whole of Greater London which would have had to be quite powerful, more powerful than much of the L.M.S.'s own rhetoric over the years would suggest it was entirely happy to accept.

The L.C.C. Minority (Conservative) Group was also invited to submit evidence to the Royal Commission. Its evidence followed very closely that of the L.M.S. This is not surprising. When nine L.C.C. Conservative Councillors attended the Royal Commission in order to present their case, five were members of the L.M.S. Executive Committee. They included the Leader of the Conservative Group, Councillor Geoffrey Rippon and Conservative Chief Whip, Councillor Francis Bennett.

When the report of the Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London was published, the L.M.S. and the Conservative group on the L.C.C. expressed themselves happy with the recommendations. Sir Percy Rugg, the new Leader of the Conservative Group, and member of the L.M.S. Executive Committee, said he was happy with the report. Sir Samuel Salmon, Chairman of the L.M.S., claimed he was pleased with
the report which closely followed L.M.S. advice. However, many Conservatives outside London, but within Greater London, were far from pleased or happy, and vigorously attacked the report. The Conservative Chairman of Surrey County Council said: "I have no doubt Surrey County Council will oppose it." Some Conservatives in London also disapproved of the report, particularly those with strong links to the smaller Metropolitan Boroughs likely to disappear under the report's proposals, such as Chelsea. Thus, the L.M.S. and Conservative Group of the L.C.C.'s view of local government did not coincide with the attitude adopted by many Conservatives, but it did tally with the view taken by the Conservative Government.

Following the publication of the Government's white paper concerning the reform of local government in Greater London Sir Percy Rugg said:

I am sure, too, that the L.C.C. could not have withstood the strain of its present work very much longer....The new boroughs will be able to carry out the local government work which is now to be entrusted to them far more effectively, economically and democratically than at present, while the Greater London Council will provide the overall co-ordination increasingly necessary in some fields.
Once again many Conservatives in greater London failed to share the enthusiasm of the L.M.S., the L.C.C. Conservative Group and the Conservative Government. Councillor George Coulson, Conservative Leader of Middlesex County Council, claimed the new system would be: "...more costly and less efficient." Sir Cyril Black, Conservative M.P. for Wimbledon and a member of Surrey County Council, said he was: "Confident that the proposals will in the main be unacceptable to Surrey County Council." Alderman Ripley, Chairman of Surrey County Council, expressed his regret that the Government had not accepted the alternative plan put forward by the counties.

Chapter seventeen of the Royal Commission's report recommended the creation of fifty-two new London boroughs, but the Government's white paper had reduced this to thirty-four (both figures exclude the City of London, whose status and functions changed but little). Consequently, the old metropolitan boroughs were to be merged into much larger units with a high level of lost identity as old names were set to disappear from the local government map and town halls were earmarked to lose their status, leaving many Conservatives in London disappointed and dispirited. For example, the Royal Commission's proposals would have allowed the Metropolitan Borough of Battersea to retain its identity, but the Government's reduction in the number of new London boroughs threatened Battersea with becoming part of neighbouring Wandsworth. The minority Conservative group on Battersea Council had supported the L.M.S. view while the future of
Battersea Council seemed secure. When faced with the threat of abolition it joined forces with the ruling Labour group of the Council to oppose the Government's white paper. It wrote to the Conservative Party Central Office expressing its new found opposition. The L.M.S. and the Conservative Group of the L.C.C. offered loyal support to the Conservative Government. This was not enough, however, to break down the opposition of Conservatives beyond the County of London to being incorporated in a Greater London area, whether that area was called a county or a region, or left imprecise, as was the case. The L.M.S. was not in a position to claim for itself the role of the Conservative voice in Greater London, although the surviving L.M.S. records give no indication this was ever their wish. Despite its support for the Government position the L.M.S. and Conservative Group of the L.C.C. were not always successful in their relationship with the Government. Before the introduction of the London Government Bill in late 1962, the L.M.S. attempted to change one aspect of the Government's plans, that of the creation of a special inner London education authority catering for the educational needs of about two million people. Mrs Townsend, opposition leader on the L.C.C.'s Education Committee, wanted the new inner London boroughs to be education authorities like the new outer London boroughs. However, the L.M.S. was unsuccessful, and failed to change the Government's position regarding education.
Following the introduction of the London Government Bill in 1962 the L.M.S. had no role left to play.

Immediately following publication of the Royal Commission's report in October 1960, Sir Toby Low, Deputy Chairman of the Party Organization, chaired a Committee of all Conservative organizations in the review area. This committee, however, was unable to come to any decisions regarding future Conservative Party organization in Greater London until the Government's proposals regarding reform of London government were known. Immediately following the publication of the Government's white paper, a further Committee, Chaired by Sir Eric Edwards of the National Conservative Union, was convened to decide on future Conservative organization in Greater London. Sir Percy Rugg of the L.C.C. and Samuel Salmon of the L.M.S. were members of this committee. It decided in favour of a conventional area organization under Central Office control and such an organization was operational by October 1963. At the same time the L.M.S. voluntarily wound up its affairs, although Ken Young has claimed that not all senior members of the L.M.S. were happy at this and there were some attempts to perpetuate the Society.

IV

The Conservatives failed to win the G.L.C. election in April 1964 and won only thirty-six seats. Although some of the
former leaders of the L.M.S and L.C.C. Conservative group such as Sir Percy Rugg were members of the new council, many of the new leading Conservatives were from outside the old Administrative County of London. Sidney Ripley, formerly Chairman of Surrey County Council, and Horace Cutler, formerly Chairman of Middlesex County Council, were among the senior Conservatives influencing party policy at County Hall. When Sir Percy Rugg resigned from the leadership of the Conservative group in 1966 he was replaced by another former member of the Executive Committee of the L.M.S. and former member of the L.C.C., Desmond Plummer. Plummer, however, was no ideologue. Plummer claimed the L.M.S.' long standing views on London government had little effect on his pragmatic approach to local government.  

In April 1967 the Conservatives won control of the G.L.C. with a majority of sixty-four. As Leader of the G.L.C. Plummer was primarily concerned with the good running of the G.L.C., even if the cost was the abandonment of long held principles of the L.M.S., which the L.M.S. had apparently felt were enshrined in the London Government Act, 1963. Plummer had called the G.L.C. virtually a regional government, and he had called for a London Ombudsman to deal with the complaints of Londoners. He also called for a London traffic 'overlord' who would be responsible for London Transport, British Rail within greater London, traffic control and police enforcement, and wanted the G.L.C. to investigate the idea.
Once in power Plummer was persuaded by Barbara Castle, the Minister of Transport, that the G.L.C. should take control of London Transport.\(^{107}\) Plummer and his new Conservatives did little to challenge the general style of regional government which the Labour Governments of 1964 - 70 and the Labour controlled G.L.C. of 1964 - 67 had managed to infuse into the G.L.C.'s remit.\(^{108}\) Plummer and his allies were able to talk about efficiency, and did actually make headway with transferring the G.L.C.'s housing stock to the new boroughs,\(^{109}\) but their administration continued to allow the G.L.C. to develop into a very large, very powerful regional government rather than a small scale strategic authority which the L.M.S. and the Royal Commission had envisaged.

\(^{107}\)\(^{108}\)\(^{109}\)

The stance taken by both the Conservative Group of the L.C.C. and the L.M.S. towards the nature of local government in Greater London seem to have been logical. However, many other Conservative organizations in greater London opposed the reorganization. The L.M.S. itself had defended the status quo in 1923, and perhaps if the L.M.S. had been less concerned about retaining the goodwill of Conservative Party Central Office, the Society might not have been so opposed to all attempts to save the L.C.C., especially as we have seen some Conservatives within the County of London, such as those in Battersea and Desmond Plummer, were quite pragmatic and often
prepared to perpetuate policies contrary to the general aims of the L.M.S. For the L.M.S. to support the continued existence of the L.C.C., however, the Society would have had to accept that Conservatives were likely to remain perpetually in opposition on the Council, or that a dramatic change in the structure or attitudes of London voters would, at some future date, allow the Conservatives to win back control of the L.C.C. It seems unlikely any political group in the position of the L.M.S. could have accepted either proposition. It seems likely that the Conservatives in London, unlike their colleagues in many other parts of Greater London could see no other chance of power other than through the abolition of both their county council and their own political organization. Thus, with the logical support of the L.M.S., the Conservative Party was able to force through radical changes which remained unpopular in many quarters including in many Tory groups. As chapter eight will show, the loyalty of some Conservatives in the smaller Metropolitan Boroughs were strained by the process that forced them into mergers with larger neighbours.

Nonetheless if the L.M.S. had been able to follow a similar line to the Conservatives in Surrey and Kent, who fought hard to retain the existing local government system in Greater London with the addition of a non-elected planning board for Greater London, the consequences could have been substantial. There might have been a far less radical reform of local
government in Greater London. Perhaps a series of individual *ad hoc* changes to deal with individual problems could have left the county council system as it existed in 1963, with Greater London having five county councils. While Conservatives in areas such as metropolitan Surrey and Kent saw the G.L.C. as a threat, many in the County of London saw the transition in London government as a means to regain power. It was logical for such Conservatives to wish to see the end of the L.C.C., and their support may have been the essential factor which allowed the Conservative Government to impose the new system.
NOTES

1/ Chapter Two above, p.46 ff.


3/ Ibid.

4/ Ibid.

5/ Chapter Two above, pp.47-9.

6/ Young op. cit, pp. 23-27.


13/ Private conversation with Enoch Powell, op. cit.
14/ Nearly all L.C.C. seats were contested by at least the Conservatives and Labour in the post-war period. See L.C.C. election results in The Times 8.3.46 p.4, 9.4.49 p.4, 5.4.52 p.4, 25.4.55 p.8, 17.4.58 p.5, 15.4.61 p.6.

15/ Guildhall Library, London, London Municipal Society archive, file MS 19528 vol.3 Executive Committee Minutes 25.11.37. (The scheduled L.C.C. elections of 1940 were delayed until after the war.)


17/ Ibid.

18/ Ibid.

19/ This point is demonstrated by the L.M.S.' representatives on the Conservative Party Central Office's National Advisory Committee on Local Government. See Bodleian Library, Oxford, Conservative Party Central Office archive, files CCO 4/6/48, CCO 4/7/63, and CCO 4/8/40.

20/ Chapter Two above, pp.47-9.

22/ Ibid

23/ Ibid, p.31, 794 Councillors from a total of 1,362.


25/ The London Municipal Society, op. cit. pp.11-12

26/ Private conversation with Enoch Powell, 6.10.93. As Director of the L.M.S. 1952-56, Powell had been responsible for the research and writing of the 1954 L.M.S. History of the Society, although not accredited as author, Powell remains an expert on the history of the L.M.S.

27/ Ibid.


29/ Ibid.


33/ Young, K. & Garside, P. op. cit. pp. 105-218.

34/ The total expenditure of the Council was 38s per head in 1905-06. This had risen to 170s 4d per head in 1930-31, of which 44s 7d was in respect of services transferred to the Council in 1930. Gibbon, G. & Bell, R.W. History of the London County Council 1889 - 1939 (London, Macmillan, 1939) p.183.


36/ See The Ratepayer February 1934, February 1937; The Times 2.2.46 p.2, 3.2.49 p.4, 18.3.52, p.3, 17.3.55 p.4.
37/ This can be seen in the Guildhall Library, London, London Municipal Society archive, file MS 19527 Minutes of the Council, file MS 19528 Minutes of the Executive Committee; Also The Ratepayer, journal of the L.M.S.

38/ Ibid.

39/ Ibid.


41/ Ibid.


43/ For details of the report and the L.M.S' initial reaction see Guildhall Library, London, London Municipal Society archive, file MS 19528 Minutes of the executive Committee 23.2.39.

44/ Young, 'The Conservative Strategy for London.' op. cit. p.75.
45/ For details of the report and the L.M.S' initial reaction see Guildhall Library, London, London Municipal Society archive, file MS 19528 Minutes of the executive Committee 23.2.39.

46/ Ibid.

47/ Ibid.

48/ Guildhall Library, London, London Municipal Society archive, file MS 19528 Minutes of the Executive Committee 7.11.45 contains a comment that Labour was likely to be in power for a very long time.

49/ The Ratepayer, April 1946, p.938, points out the results were not as good for Labour as the most optimistic Labour predictions, and represented a decline in Labour support compared with the 1945 general election.


51/ The Times 13.4.49 p.4 Henry Brooke, leader of the Conservative group at County Hall called Labour's tactics "politically immoral."
52/ L.C.C. Elections; April 1952. Campaign Guide, issued by the L.M.S., written by the Director, Iain Macleod, M.P. This guide makes the claim that the Conservatives could win the 1952 L.C.C. election. Also London County Council, Conservative Members Report of and Papers Relating to Study Conservative L.C.C. Policy, Appointed by Mr Henry Brooke, in March 1951, (unpublished document, copy stored at Greater London Record Office, Library). This document evaluated each L.C.C. service and suggested the most appropriate Conservative response to each service. The explicit aim of the document was to make the Conservative campaign for the 1952 L.C.C. election the best possible campaign.

53/ For full election details see The Times 9.4.49 p.4, 5.4.52 p.4, 25.4.55 p.8, 17.4.58 p.5, 15.4.61 p.6.

54/ See this Chapter pp.211-5 above.

55/ Chapter Three above, pp.65-8.


57/ The Ratepayer, January 1935, p.25.

58/ Young, 'The Conservative Strategy' op. cit. p.75.
59/ Ibid.

60/ The Times, 8.11.42, p.5.

61/ Ibid, 17.11.42, p.5.

62/ Ibid, 3.2.43, p.2.

63/ The Ratepayer, March 1943, p.573.

64/ The Times, 13.4.43, p.8.

65/ Ibid, 27.10.43, p.8.

66/ The Ratepayer, March 1944, p.573.

67/ The Times, 1.5.44, p.8.

68/ Ibid, 15.2.45, p.5.


70/ Ibid, 23.5.50, p.5.

71/ Ibid, 31.10.50, p.5.

72/ Ibid, 7.2.51, p.3.
73/ The London Municipal Society, op. cit. pp. 13-16, explains the L.M.S.' role as a library and centre of Conservative thought concerning London.

74/ The Ratepayer, December 1946, p.1059.

75/ Guildhall Library, London, London Municipal Society archive, file MS 19528 Minutes of the Executive Committee, 8.11.50.

76/ Ibid, 26.5.52.

77/ Young & Garside, op. cit. p.292. Also private conversation with J. Enoch Powell, 6.10.93.

78/ The Londoner, January 1958, p.8.

79/ Ibid, July 1958, p.117.

80/ Ibid.

81/ Ibid.

82/ Ibid.


85/ Ibid.

86/ Ibid. Also, see Chapter Seven pp.261-66, below.

87/ Chapter Eight pp.298-9, below.

88/ *The Times*, 30.11.61, p.6.

89/ *Evening Standard*, 30.11.61, p.11.

90/ Ibid.

91/ Ibid. Also, see Chapter Seven below.


94/ Young & Garside, op. cit. pp. 312 - 314, but also p.105 ff., for history of Conservative opposition to inclusion in Greater London.

95/ Though it should be noted that the London Municipal Society's records contain several gaps.

96/ Chapter Four above, pp.135-9, and Chapter Nine pp.356-7, below.

97/ The Times. 22.2.62, p.4.


100/ Evening Standard 10.4.61, p.1.
101/ Private conversation with Lord Plummer, 16.8.94.

102/ Evening Standard, 14.4.67, p.18.

103/ This can be seen in Plummer's paper The Londoner and His Environment, (copy at Greater London Record Office, Library), presented at a conference of leaders of the capitals of Europe in Budapest 26 - 28.9.72.

104/ Evening Standard, 5.7.65, p.11.

105/ Ibid. 28.9.66, p.20.

106/ Ibid. 10.11.66, p.11.


108/ Chapter Nine below.


110/ Chapter Seven below, pp.260, passim.
Chapter Seven
The counties and the 'Surrey Plan'

The review area of the Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London included two complete counties, London and Middlesex, and parts of four other counties, Surrey, Hertfordshire, Essex and Kent. It also included three county boroughs, East Ham, West Ham and Croydon. Although this work is concerned with the politics behind the abolition of the L.C.C. this is inextricably linked to the creation of the G.L.C. and since the G.L.C. incorporated more than just the L.C.C., this work must take these other areas into account.

This chapter explains how and why the L.C.C. fought against the process that led to the transition in London government. It shows how London co-operated with its neighbouring councils in the campaign to avoid radical changes to the local government system in Greater London. It will explain why their alternative less radical plan failed to win any support outside the counties and county boroughs within the review area. This chapter then moves on to examine why the other upper-tier authorities in Greater London were opposed to major change, but one-by-one abandoned their opposition to the new local government system before the L.C.C. accepted the inevitability of the reforms.
Although the nine counties or county boroughs all had slightly different views and different strategies there is one idea, an alternative plan to that offered by the Royal Commission, that linked the majority together. This plan was that the existing counties and county boroughs should be left in place, but that some of their powers and functions, which could be more effectively exercised over a wider region, should be transferred to a regional planning board. Surrey County Council suggested such as board to the Royal Commission and suggested what powers and functions the board might have. Hence the adoption, at the time, of the title 'the Surrey Plan' for this alternative. Surrey suggested it should be a joint planning board whose members were appointed by the planning authorities in a larger Greater London Region. As Peter Hall has pointed out, town and country planning is an ill-defined function, which can incorporate many activities from slum clearance, building new roads, regulating industry and employers to planning and building entirely new towns. Consequently, a joint planning board could have meant slightly different things to each council sponsoring the idea, but the flexibility allowed the idea to gather support. This superficial unity among the majority of affected county councils allowed influential local government politicians such as Alderman Sir Cyril Black, M.P. of Surrey County Council, and Alderman Sir Isaac Hayward of the L.C.C., to present a united opposition to the Royal Commission's proposals.
The 'Surrey Plan' was also able to gather support because there had been two similar bodies in existence before. They had not encroached on the powers or the dignity of the county councils because they lacked any real power. In 1921 Neville Chamberlain, as Minister of Health, had created the Greater London Regional Planning Committee. All the planning authorities in Greater London were represented on this committee, but it was wound up in 1931. However, the Standing Conference on London Regional Planning was established in October 1937, and once again all the planning authorities in Greater London were represented. It was this Standing Conference which the Minister of Health asked to consider how best to produce a regional development plan for Greater London from which developed Abercrombie's Greater London Plan, 1944. There were some suggestions that such a standing conference be given some executive powers.

Despite the appeal of the idea of a joint planning board as a means of survival for the county councils there was little coordination between the councils. There remained many differences among the county councils, and one, Hertfordshire, even refused to accept that a joint planning board was needed in its own area. Consequently, this chapter concentrates on each county separately.

Although much has been said about the L.C.C. in previous chapters the first section of this chapter treats the L.C.C. as
a single entity with less emphasis on the role of party politics.

II

The L.C.C opposed the transition in London government. This is not surprising for the process threatened the end of the L.C.C. This opposition lasted from the announcement of the Royal Commission until after the London Government Bill gained the Royal Assent in July 1963. It took various forms. The Council sought to explain its reasons for opposition, it sought to justify its continued existence, it sought to rally all opposition, and it sought to engender alternative plans of reform that would save the L.C.C.

The L.C.C. provided both written and oral evidence to the Royal Commission, and on both occasions explained in detail why the L.C.C. and Metropolitan Boroughs as then constituted provided the County of London with an efficient and thorough local government system. The L.C.C. refused to consider Greater London as a whole in any detail. The written evidence amounted to eighteen pages, yet offered no advice to the Royal Commission on matters beyond the boundary of the County of London. Similarly the oral evidence offered no comments on matters beyond the L.C.C.'s boundary, even when the Leader of the Council was drawn on this point by the Chairman of the Royal Commission. While presenting the above evidence,
however, the Leader of the Council was forced to concede that if a system of local government for Greater London were to be designed *de novo* it would not be the system as it existed.\(^{10}\)

This concession by the L.C.C. that the system was not perfect was compounded by the evidence presented by the Council's minority group, once again, both written and oral. The Conservative opposition was the only county council opposition group asked to provide oral evidence. This may have been because the L.C.C. was the only county council within the review area that failed to achieve a reasonable level of unanimity between the controlling political group and opposition groups. The evidence provided by the minority group did not seek to discredit the L.C.C. entirely, it merely suggested that the system was outdated and no longer as efficient as possible. It suggested that the L.C.C. was by that date an inappropriate size and poorly constituted for many of the functions it undertook.\(^{11}\)

This lack of unanimity within the L.C.C. may have damaged its fight to defend its own vested interests, but the fight continued after the publication of the Royal Commission's report in October 1960. The *Evening Standard* reported Sir Isaac Hayward, Leader of the L.C.C., as opposing the proposals within the report while in the same article the leader of the Conservative opposition, Sir Percy Rugg, expressed his satisfaction with it.\(^{12}\)
Following the publication of the report the L.C.C.'s General Purposes, Education, and Finance Committees issued their own reports upon the likely implications of the proposed reforms for Londoners, both as users of local government services and as ratepayers. Much of the work on these reports had been undertaken by various officers of the L.C.C., but the final reports were the responsibility of each Committee, each controlled by the majority party on the Council. The implication in each of the reports was that the outcome of any reform based on the Royal Commission's recommendations would lead to Londoners experiencing a lower standard of local government services to those they had been used to. As was normal procedure the reports were debated in full chamber by the L.C.C. in February 1961. This process produced no change in the L.C.C. position. The majority group was able to impose its will, and the minority group continued to demand acceptance of the proposed reforms. However, the detailed nature of the criticisms within the L.C.C.'s own reports did enhance the process in as much as some of the technical problems involved with the introduction of a new local government system were brought into the public arena. In the council chamber, in the press and in other areas of political debate, the technicalities of the process of transition were often used as ammunition in political debate. Technical points were often used to support very general principles. Yet behind the political use of technical problems officers worked hard to ensure services remained thorough and efficient even during the
last stages in the process of transition. This can best be seen in the records of the M.B.S.J.C. which show that from 1961 L.C.C. and Metropolitan Borough officers worked hard on identifying the implications of the reforms and on ensuring as little disruption as possible to local government services. The records contain numerous reports of various joint working parties of L.C.C. and M.B.S.J.C. officers. These detail how the transition was achieved without a major breakdown in any local government service. They pinpoint problems and how these problems were overcome. Some of the reports are minuscule in their detail and highly technical. It is hardly surprising that only selective pieces of this information impinged on the political debate. Local government politicians put in motion this process of joint working parties, and retained a right to interfere in the process, while still continuing to oppose reform. Nonetheless, all the work of local government employees during the process of change proved that a smooth transition could be achieved and the new system could be made to work. The L.C.C. was unable to use any of the technical information at its disposal to prove conclusively that the proposed reforms would not work. This was particularly so after the government's concessions of 1962.

Following the L.C.C. debate, in February 1961, and the formal re-confirmation of the L.C.C.'s opposition to any major change in the local government structure, there were few debates on the topic. This did not impinge on the campaigning of L.C.C.
politicians of both parties outside the council chamber as discussed elsewhere in this thesis. Following the publication of the Government's white paper, London Government: Government Proposals for Reorganization, the Leader of the Council announced: "The L.C.C. cannot do otherwise than continue to oppose a scheme which it believes to be fundamentally unsound." The minority group also maintained its usual stance.

Once again the L.C.C. machinery took some time to consider the white paper and to produce a long, closely argued case against the Government's proposals. The General Purposes Committee offered few new points in its report, but it was able to point out for the first time, due to the release of more Government proposals, that the G.L.C. would have 110 councillors to represent a population of eight million, creating the largest local government constituencies in Britain (each councillor would represent 73,000 residents). The report also gave support to the idea of a Joint Planning Board. It condemned the proposed G.L.C. as too large to be a local government body yet too small to be a proper regional government and the new boroughs for being too large and remote from many communities. It also went on to detail the adverse effect the proposed reforms would have on all the functions undertaken by the L.C.C. The report and the criticisms contained therein were debated by the L.C.C. The official recommendation of the L.C.C. Leadership that opposition continue was accepted by the full
Council with the majority and minority parties voting according to their existing views. The L.C.C. document actually voted upon was an eight point summary of the criticisms recorded in the report. So the L.C.C.'s formal position was both negative, in as much as it condemned various points in the government's white paper, and positive in as much as it offered alternatives based on the retention of the L.C.C. It is not necessary to reproduce all eight points in order to demonstrate that the political debate was only partially connected to the technicalities of providing a local government service. Point five claimed:

The fundamental planning and transport problems springing from the area around London, of which the Greater London area is only a part, are not met by the establishment of a Greater London Council, which moreover appears unlikely to be able to function authoritatively or to command the interest of the electorate;...¹⁹

It is not possible to detect how much of the above point was produced by officers of the L.C.C. and how much by politicians. It contained broad principles, such as the argument that the Greater London area was too small and that the new Council would not engender public support, not an analysis of why the proposals would not work. Because the L.C.C.'s process of opposition to change was a political campaign with some technical input, not the reverse, long technical arguments were
largely expunged from the cutting edge of the campaign. The majority party's Policy Committee had decided that the Council's officers would not be allowed to produce a detailed critique of the white paper's proposals because the officers' arguments could be countered by the opposition, who would then be in a position to seek other expert opinions to demonstrate that the proposed system would work.20

In place of detailed technical argument the majority party sought other means to defend the L.C.C. The majority party's Policy Committee attempted to manipulate the Council meeting which was to discuss the L.C.C.'s response to the white paper. It arranged a large number of speeches from the Labour Group and gave adequate time to the opposition to respond. As planned, this led to the longest sitting of the full Council in its history. The committee hoped this would create a great deal of publicity for its cause.21 The meeting did create publicity - the Evening Standard reported "Tempers rise as L.C.C. debates its future."22 The Evening Standard had supported the Royal Commission's recommendations and the white paper's proposals.23 L.C.C. publicity, however, did little to change the pre-existing views in the Evening Standard, or elsewhere. The L.C.C.'s stunt and the display of passionately held beliefs and bad tempers did little to change opinions, or to save the L.C.C. from abolition.
After the points had been carried, and adopted as official L.C.C. policy, a copy was sent to the Minister of Housing and Local Government and to the Prime Minister with a request that the Prime Minister receive a deputation from the L.C.C. This was to allow the Council to explain its stance and to ask the Government to reconsider its position. The Prime Minister agreed to see a deputation from the L.C.C. The meeting of the Prime Minister and Minister of Housing and Local Government with the deputation from the L.C.C. took place on 6 April 1962, but on the Government's side there was no intention of negotiation or any intention to act upon any of the L.C.C.'s proposals. The meeting allowed both sides to be seen to be consulting and discussing the issues, and it allowed both sides to gain publicity for their respective causes. The Government hoped to break down the L.C.C.'s opposition, at least partially. The Ministry of Housing and Local Government advised the Prime Minister to meet with the delegation from the L.C.C. and argued:

The Ruling party in the L.C.C. need to be told very sharply that their attitude towards this business has been ignominious from the start and says little for their sense of responsibility towards local government in general or London in particular. They pretend that the proposals for reorganization are a political manoeuvre to get rid of the Labour controlled L.C.C....They refused to co-operate with
the Royal Commission, thus refusing to help in arriving at the best solution; and now their tune is simply that we should ignore the facts of history and leave them alone.

It is possible that if they were told roundly how their attitude will look to posterity they might become more reasonable; and though they have unfortunately committed themselves publicly to a stupid and irresponsible line they might be persuaded to think again.\(^2\text{5}\)

It is not known what exactly the Prime Minister and the delegation from the L.C.C. discussed, but the meeting produced no consensus. The meeting was followed by a formal exchange of letters between the Prime Minister and the Leader of the L.C.C. Neither letter expressed any change of attitude by the Government or the L.C.C.\(^2\text{6}\) After this rebuff by the Government the L.C.C. continued its campaign for survival in exactly the same manner. The L.C.C. requested a further delegation be received by the Prime Minister, but this time their request was turned down. In its advice to the Prime Minister regarding this request, the Ministry of Housing and Local Government stated:

> The Minister feels sure that the Prime Minister can very reasonably refuse to receive another delegation. This is not a question where there is some small difference in outlook which might be bridged by further discussion. The London County Council would
be content with nothing less than the abandonment of the Government's policy.\textsuperscript{27}

The above view from the Ministry of Housing and Local Government proved correct, and the official view of the L.C.C. did not change. Yet the Prime Minister's refusal to meet the L.C.C. a second time added further evidence for the L.C.C., and anyone else interested, that the Government was going to press ahead with its plans. A short while later, in July 1962, the L.C.C. received a request from the Ministry of Housing and Local Government that officers of the Council be allowed to provide the Ministry with information to aid the reorganization of local government in Greater London.\textsuperscript{28} At the same time the Ministry invited the L.C.C.:

...to be represented on a working party and in consultations between the Ministry and interested authorities on the general principles which should be adopted on a number of questions in forming legislation to bring about the proposed reorganization.\textsuperscript{29}

In July 1962 the L.C.C. voted against taking up its place on the Ministry's working party.\textsuperscript{30} Thus, the L.C.C. refused its final chance to influence the details of the London Government Bill then in the process of being prepared for Parliament. However, as a concession to the growing awareness of the inevitability of radical change, the L.C.C. allowed its
officers to co-operate with the Ministry insofar as officers were given permission to supply the Ministry with limited facts.\textsuperscript{31} The L.C.C., for the first time, tacitly conceded the need to co-operate with the Government on local government reform. However, it was not a signal for the end of opposition, nor did the L.C.C. concede the reforms were inevitable.

Following the introduction of the London Government Bill into Parliament, the L.C.C. further debated the likely effects of the proposals in the Bill and what attitude the L.C.C. should take towards the proposed changes in London government. As had happened before, this debate centred on a report produced by the Council's General Purposes Committee. This report recommended that the Council continue to oppose the Bill, and suggested that the proposals would not work and that the Council's alternative reforms were more practical. The report called the proposed G.L.C. a "...vast unwieldy organization..." that was "...contrary to the whole concept of local government and constituted a serious precedent for, and grievous threat to, local government throughout the country..."\textsuperscript{32} The vote went in favour of accepting the report's recommendation, and the L.C.C.'s position remained much as before, even though the Parliamentary progress of the Bill was proceeding to the Government's satisfaction.

During January 1963, as the Bill went through its Committee stage in the House of Commons, all the committees of the L.C.C.
produced reports for the Council which continued to criticise the Bill. Nonetheless, these reports represented a change in L.C.C. policy, as for the first time they recognized the inevitability of the Government's changes going ahead. In general each report continued to oppose the proposed reforms, but they offered constructive advice aimed at improving various aspects of the London Government Bill. The reports all accepted that the L.C.C. would be succeeded by the G.L.C. and were primarily concerned to point out how to improve the efficiency of the G.L.C. For example, the Town Planning Committee report suggested that the Bill's provisions for Town Planning were at fault because both the G.L.C. and the new London boroughs would be planning authorities. The G.L.C. was to prepare a general plan and the boroughs were to produce detailed plans, but the G.L.C. would have no powers to change or reject a borough plan unless it failed to fit the G.L.C.'s general plan. The Committee also pointed out that the Bill contained no provision for day-to-day co-operation between the planning authorities. The L.C.C.'s Town Planning Committee recommended that the G.L.C. be made the only planning authority, but that it be obliged to delegate the detailed planning to the boroughs. The Children's Committee, the Education Committee, the Health Committee, the Housing Committee, the New and Expanding Towns Committee, the Parks Committee, the Public Control Committee, the Rivers and Drainage Committee, the Roads Committee, and the Welfare Committee all identified faults in the London Government Bill and suggested amendments to the Bill. Only
the Fire Brigade Committee and Supplies Committee were relatively content with the Bill.\textsuperscript{36} It was far too late. The L.C.C. had missed its last chance to influence the nature of the London Government Bill.

The L.C.C. did not change its formal position, and continued to espouse its view that the new local government system for Greater London was not needed. Nevertheless, following the recognition of the inevitability of changes the L.C.C. progressively involved itself in ensuring as smooth as possible transition in London government. In June 1964 none other than Sir Isaac Hayward, long-time leader of the L.C.C., one of the most intransigent opponents of change in the local government system, became the L.C.C.'s representative on the Greater London Council Joint Committee. This joint committee of the county and county borough councils in Greater London and the G.L.C. was to oversee a smooth transition. Sir Isaac and the L.C.C. were pledged to fully support this process.\textsuperscript{37}

A few months later, in November 1964, within six months of its abolition, Hayward told a meeting of the L.C.C. majority party's policy committee that the old boroughs and the L.C.C. were no longer listened to.\textsuperscript{38} He went on to point out that only the G.L.C. and the new boroughs had any influence with the Government or the Ministry of Housing and Local Government. It was pointed out at the same meeting that the only faint hope of a dramatic change, or a reprieve for the old system of local government, was the possibility of a further meeting of the M.L.C. and the L.C.C. at the end of the month.
government in Greater London, had vanished. For, as is discussed elsewhere, the national Labour Party had opposed the Government's reforms, but the Labour Government elected in October 1964 would not repeal the London Government Act because the L.C.C. was, by that time, the only local authority recommending that action.39

III

Surrey County Council, at least initially, opposed the reforms as vigorously and as bitterly as the L.C.C. Surrey County Council was united in its opposition, and there was no split between the ruling and opposition groups. One man in particular, Alderman Sir Cyril Black, M.P., led Surrey County Council's opposition. He was chairman of the County Council's General Purposes Committee. He was also Conservative Member of Parliament for Wimbledon, a constituency in the south-west of Greater London, but a borough in Surrey at that time. Black was also a member of the Parliamentary and General Purposes Committee of the County Councils Association, including the Local Government Reorganization Sub-Committee of that Committee. An over-view of newspaper coverage suggests that Black was second only to Sir Isaac Hayward of the L.C.C. in his opposition to reform, and in his ability to publicize his views. Black's opposition went to the extent that he was one of only three Conservative Members of Parliament to vote against the Government over the reform of London government (the other
two being the M.P. for Croydon north-west and the M.P. for The Hartlepools).

Black led the Surrey County Council campaign to avoid the loss of the metropolitan part of the county. As such he was prepared to work with other opponents of the Government's proposals for change. Black met Hayward of the L.C.C. on many occasions, but the two most vocal, and possibly influential, local government politicians fighting the Government's plans did not work closely together, and certainly did not create a joint campaign to save the existing local government system. The L.C.C. was not trusted. This wish to avoid too much L.C.C. interference in Surrey affairs went deeper than Black and the County Council, since many district councils distrusted the L.C.C. The Royal Commission noticed this when Paul Cadbury, investigating Surrey, commented that everyone in Surrey feared incorporation in a Greater L.C.C. This feeling was particularly strong among the numerous Conservative Constituency Associations in Surrey which took the trouble to write to Conservative Central Office to complain. In February 1962 Black's own Constituency Association voiced its opposition to Wimbledon being submerged in a new, larger borough, which in turn was to be within the area of the new Greater London Council. Although the L.C.C. opposed the creation of the G.L.C. in Surrey it was often suspected of wishing to extend its own area. Surrey County Council and the majority of Surrey district councils were dominated by the Conservatives or Conservative allies and
showed little sign of wishing too close a relationship with the Labour dominated L.C.C. Perhaps a lack of whole-hearted cooperation between the counties of London and Surrey damaged the individual campaigns of the county councils, although it is not possible to prove this.

Nevertheless, Surrey County Council and the L.C.C. did share the belief that a joint planning board could provide regional co-ordination and leave the county councils in Greater London with a future. Black, when giving evidence to the Royal Commission, pointed out that the London Planning Administrative Committee, chaired by Clement Davies, which reported in 1949, recommended a joint advisory committee to facilitate major planning throughout Greater London. Surrey supported such a joint planning committee and recommended it should be responsible for:

The distribution of employment and population, including overspill; the control of mineral working; the development of regional transport facilities, both road and rail; the distribution of open space; the assessment of the priority to be given to the proposals of local planning authorities in relation to regional needs; and green belt.

Surrey pointed out that its suggestions for the joint committee were only provisional and could be changed. Surrey had suggested such a committee in its written evidence to the
Royal Commission. In its evidence Surrey had suggested that the Committee would draw its members from the county and county borough councils in the area covered by Abercrombie's Greater London plan of 1944. It would have been an indirectly elected forum for discussion, debate and co-ordination. Control and power would have remained with the local authorities sending members to the committee. By the time it came to present oral evidence Surrey supported the idea that such a joint planning board be given some executive power to impose its will upon the constituent authorities. This seems to have been a recognition that a body without executive power would not be considered viable by the Royal Commission or the Government.

Because Surrey County Council had a good relationship with its district councils there was no demand for the abolition of the County Council. The majority of district authorities supported the 'Surrey Plan', and, as the Royal Commission noted, the local government system in Surrey worked efficiently, with the one exception that Surrey local authorities were prone to ignore the Greater London dimension of local problems. In the same memorandum, the Royal Commission noted that a "...body with super-county powers covering the whole area...", perhaps indirectly elected, could work. It pointed out that in a system which gave extra power to the districts and gave power to a new regional body, the existing counties would lose much of their power. Nonetheless, local people would be happy to see local town halls gain extra power and as long as the county council
retained some power people would feel their links with the county had not been severed.\textsuperscript{53}

Like the L.C.C., Surrey County Council was prepared to transfer some of its functions to the district authorities, and had in place a good system of delegating powers to the district authorities.\textsuperscript{54} In London, Surrey and Kent the district and county councils were able to work well together, and so in these counties the majority of district councils wished to see the county councils survive intact.\textsuperscript{55} In the county of London the M.B.S.J.C. supported the joint planning board, but wanted the Metropolitan Boroughs to be represented on it.\textsuperscript{56} There seems no reason why this could not have been accommodated, perhaps in the same manner as district councils were represented on the M.W.B. In Essex and in Middlesex the situation was different: both county councils supported the 'Surrey Plan', but both councils had poorer relationships with their district councils. Many district councils in Middlesex and Essex saw their own best interests served by supporting the general principles of the Royal Commission's report and later the Government's white paper.\textsuperscript{57} Thus, the case for a joint planning board was weakened by the lack of support for such a plan among district councils in Middlesex and Essex. The County Councils Association, however, added its support for the idea of a joint planning board. In March 1961 it called for a:

Master planning authority for a wider area than the
review area drawing its finance from local authorities and composed mainly of representatives of local authorities, whose proposals to the Minister should be mandatory when approved by him.\textsuperscript{58}

Despite this widespread backing from the county councils in the Greater London area, support was not unanimous among the upper-tier authorities. Hertfordshire did not subscribe to the plan. Under the Royal Commission's proposals Hertfordshire County Council was set to lose 9.7 per cent of its population, 2.3 per cent of its area and 10 per cent of its rateable value.\textsuperscript{59} Although Hertfordshire could not have known the exact findings of the Royal Commission in advance, the county council must have judged it would be less affected by the proposals of the Royal Commission's report than it would have been by the 'Surrey Plan'. This would have imposed the joint planning board over the whole of Hertfordshire. The L.C.C. Labour Group Policy Committee claimed this accounted for Hertfordshire's opposition, and the same report noted that the proposed joint planning board would affect Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire and that Buckinghamshire had already voiced its opposition to the plan.\textsuperscript{60}
Although Hertfordshire opposed the establishment of a joint planning board, it did not wholeheartedly support the Royal Commission's report or the Government's white paper. In its evidence to the Royal Commission Hertfordshire County Council argued that the areas on the south-west borders of the County (Cheshunt and Barnet) were not truly urban and that the people in that area agreed with the County Council. It also argued that Watford should not be allowed the county borough status it had long argued for because "...we do not think it is the best solution for the local government administration of the area."\(^6\) Despite its opposition to the joint planning board Hertfordshire County Council persisted in its fight to keep the county intact after the publication of the white paper. The Times reported in February 1962 that Hertfordshire was continuing to make representations to have Cheshunt and Barnet removed from the proposed G.L.C. area.\(^6\) The nature of Hertfordshire on the periphery of the review area allowed the County Council quite a success in defending its own vested interests. It lost Barnet to the G.L.C., but Cheshunt retained its connections with Hertfordshire County Council. Originally the Chairman of the Royal Commission had suggested that Watford
and some of the surrounding area should be excluded from Greater London, but be given county borough status. The Royal Commission's report simply recommended the exclusion of Watford from the Greater London Authority, but Watford never achieved county borough status. It is no part of this thesis to establish why that is so. Hertfordshire County Council, however, retained its right to a share of the rich rate resources of prosperous Watford. It became the only affected county council to successfully defend its position.

Because only a small portion of Hertfordshire was within the original review area the removal of Watford and Cheshunt did not critically damage the Royal Commission's report or Government's white paper view of local government in Greater London. Hertfordshire, however, was an integral part of the 'Surrey Plan'. It was inconceivable without Hertfordshire. Given the lack of support for the 'Surrey Plan' by many district councils in Middlesex and Essex, such as that expressed to the Royal Commission by the Middlesex Excepted Districts Association and the South-West Essex Authorities, it is unlikely that Hertfordshire's lack of support was the
primary reason for the failure of the campaign to create a joint planning board. Nonetheless Hertfordshire's lack of support must have further damaged the credibility of a joint planning board in the view of the Royal Commission and the Government.

The report of the Royal Commission dismissed the suggestions for a joint planning board claiming:

...that we do not think consultation, whether in the form of a joint advisory committee or otherwise, between nine different authorities and many more housing authorities can really produce a plan which takes account of the various factors in the review area as a whole. 65

The 'Surrey Plan' was presented as a series of broad principles rather than as a detailed proposal with an in-depth analysis. It gave the plan flexibility, but it allowed the Royal Commission to dismiss it in rather brusque terms. The white paper was equally dismissive of the joint planning board. It argued that such a joint board denied the vital premise of the Royal Commission that the built up areas of the Home Counties were part of Greater London. 66 It also argued that such a board would be indirectly elected, thus democratically inferior to the proposed G.L.C., and it would be a third tier
of local government with the county councils sandwiched between it and the district councils. Furthermore the white paper argued that with such a joint board the district councils would not be given the powers they deserved. Dr Hill, as Minister of Housing and Local Government, criticized the 'Surrey Plan' in much the same terms, adding that any joint planning board would lack power. He pointed out that though it would be able to recommend new roads, a different authority would have to build them. The Times added to the criticisms and argued that the 'Surrey Plan' would not eradicate each member council's vested interests any more than the existing system.

These criticisms did not amount to an insurmountable case against a joint planning board, but the lack of detail in the 'Surrey Plan' made a detailed rebuttal of that plan difficult. The Royal Commission's report offered the Government a detailed plan, backed by detailed research from the London School of Economics' Greater London Group and by its own research undertaken by experts from the Ministry of Housing and Local Government. The 'Surrey Plan' had no such detailed research to back it. The evidence presented to the Royal Commission by University College London did not suggest a joint planning board, but in suggesting social and economic planning was more important than the structure of local government it could have complemented the 'Surrey Plan'. The Centre for Urban Studies at the University College London felt the existing system of local government worked as well as was possible and felt no
more than a few minor boundary changes were needed. The Royal Commission made little of University College London's ideas.

It is possible that any attempt to impose a joint planning board may have aroused more antagonism and damaged more vested interests than those aroused by the actual reforms. It is difficult to judge. With the backing of the Royal Commission and the resources of the government the 'Surrey Plan' may have been made to work. A review of the evidence presented to the Royal Commission demonstrates that support for such a plan was limited. The 'Surrey Plan' was an idea used by local government politicians, such as Sir Isaac Hayward, in the hope that it would gain support, and allow much of the status quo to be preserved.

Despite the criticisms and the inherent problems, the idea as an alternative to the Royal Commission's report and white paper lingered for some time. Surrey County Council first called for a meeting of planning authorities in Greater London in December 1959, and a first meeting of the county and county borough councils in the Greater London covered by the Abercrombie plan took place in April 1960. This meeting did not lead to a joint planning board with executive powers. The majority of Planning Authorities may have wanted such a board as a viable alternative to the proposed Greater London Authority, but the other Planning Authorities beyond urban Greater London showed little interest in such a board. These discussions, however,
led to the creation of the Joint Standing Conference on Greater London Planning in 1962. Apart from the L.C.C., the councils of Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Kent, Middlesex, Croydon, East Ham and West Ham were all invited to join.73 The new Joint Council was expected to consult widely and recommend actions but it would have no powers of compulsion. It was no realistic alternative to the G.L.C. but it was never intended to be so. It is difficult to know whether the 'Surrey Plan' mutated into the Joint Standing Conference on Greater London Planning, or whether they were two separate ideas sharing a common original notion, which sprang from the Davies Committee of the late 1940s. Nonetheless, the 'Surrey Plan' withered away and the Standing Joint Conference flourished even after the creation of the G.L.C.

In February 1962 the County Councils within the review area were invited to meet at County Hall in London. After the meeting they issued a simple request that the Government should think again on its plans for Greater London.74 Hertfordshire did not attend the meeting. Kent also stayed away. Two weeks later, Kent announced it would no longer oppose the proposed reforms.75 As opposition among the county councils died, so did the 'Surrey Plan'.
Having considered Surrey and Hertfordshire in conjunction with the 'Surrey Plan' in the previous section, this section will consider the remaining county councils - Kent, Essex and Middlesex.

Kent County Council stood to lose over one third of the county's rateable value (in 1957/58 the rateable value of Kent stood at £22,406,926 and the rateable value of that portion within the review area stood at £8,080,009). Over a third of the population of Kent lived within the review area (in 1957 the population of Kent was 1,613,800 and the population within the review area 533,615). Thus, the loss of rateable value was slightly greater than the loss of population. Under the Royal Commission's plans and those of the white paper, the truncated county of Kent would be smaller and poorer. This was ample reason for the Conservative dominated County Council to oppose the Conservative Government. In late 1960 Kent-based Conservatives accused the Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan, a Kent M.P. (Bromley), of abandoning them purely to create a Greater London Authority of which the Conservatives could win control.

Majority and minority groups on Kent County Council were united in their opposition to the proposed reforms. Among the district councils, however, opinion was split, although the majority
favoured some continued association with Kent County Council. In its evidence to the Royal Commission Kent, pointed out that although several district authorities wished for county borough status, only one wished to sever all links with the County Council. Kent also argued that its metropolitan area was considerably different from London. North-west Kent had grown from a series of villages and these still remained the centre of each local community. Also, the entire area was less urban in character and lower in population density compared to London proper. Sir John Wrigley in his general observations on the county of Kent for the Royal Commission, came to similar conclusions. Wrigley pointed out that only one district authority wished to sever all links with Kent County Council, and that if the Ministry of Transport took control of trunk roads the existing district authorities would be able to adequately cope with all local government matters. He even went on to point out that "The over-riding limitation on roads has been the restriction of expenditure imposed for many years by government policy." 

Kent County Council expressed its opposition to the proposed reforms and associated itself with the 'Surrey Plan'. In March 1962, however, despite its earlier opposition, Kent was the first of the county councils supporting the 'Surrey plan' to abandon its opposition to the reforms. Kent County Council declared it would fight any proposal to extend the G.L.C. further into Kent. Kent was probably the first county council
to abandon its opposition because, after Hertfordshire, it had the least to lose by the reforms. By early 1962 after the Government had set in motion its series of consultations regarding the white paper, pressure increased for politicians to take the pragmatic approach and acknowledge the inevitability of the reforms. For example, in March 1962 Dr Hill announced that the proposed reforms would go ahead, but with the possibility of some minor changes.82

Taken away from the problems of Greater London as a whole, Kent, like Surrey, was able to demonstrate that existing local government within the county worked reasonably efficiently and that there was little demand for radical change. It was the counties to the north of the River Thames which lacked a harmonious relationship between county councils and district councils. This added weight to the case for major reform.

Under the reforms, Essex lost more than Kent. The Royal Commission calculated it would lose 8.5% of its area (81,541 acres out of 959,403), over half its population (990,154 out of 1,754,600 at 1957 figures), and nearly two thirds of its rate base (£13,553,689 out of £21,975,942 at 1957/58 figures).83 The County Council opposed the reforms, but unlike Kent and Surrey it could not rely on support from a majority of district authorities.84 In his evidence to the Royal Commission, Councillor Bennet, on behalf of Essex County Council, said:
...I believe the fundamental basis of our local government in Essex is that the strong should help the poor, and by rich and poor I am not talking about money - money is incidental - but the richness of thought, varying cultures, the brilliance of mind - those are the things that make local government work. To combine the rich and poor areas today at the county hall as we have at the moment is very like having a very good car that has a very good brake and a very good accelerator. I would classify the South-West Authorities as the accelerator. They have been responsible through their members for assisting in developing the county from what it was many years ago to a county today which has excellent services. And I quite believe that if you remove the brake they would probably travel a lot faster but the consequences of being without a brake can be very disastrous in the end.85

This long quote illustrates the major problems of local government in Essex. It was in many respects two different counties, rural Essex and urban Essex, both different in character. The urban area contained the largest population and contributed the highest percentage of the County's rates. The local authorities in metropolitan Essex had combined to give evidence to the Royal Commission (it included the two county boroughs of East Ham and West Ham but not Waltham Holy Cross
U.D.C.). They had recommended far greater independence from the County Council.⁸⁶ Despite the wealth that the metropolitan area brought to the county, the Royal Commission's report pointed out that some of the rural local authorities in Essex also wished to see the urban section of the county removed to allow the truncated county to concentrate on rural issues.⁸⁷ Research undertaken by the Royal Commission noted this urban/rural split within the county:

Essex County Council is now on the whole dominated by the inner Essex majority; but they seem to take no pleasure in ruling rural and sea-coast Essex, and doubtless the latter reciprocate.⁸⁸

Speaking of the Royal Commission's report, Alderman C.E. Leatherland, Chairman of Essex County Council, said the Commission's "revolutionary" proposals would mean the creation of not merely a new county "but what appears virtually to be a new Country."⁸⁹ What Alderman Leatherland was probably suggesting was that Essex County Councillors from the metropolitan part of the county feared moving from a dominant position in one county to a position of relative impotence as a small group fragmented on party lines within the Greater London Council.

Essex County Council was controlled by Labour, and followed the party line in giving no formal support to the Conservative
Government's plans for Greater London government. Nonetheless, with support for reform from many district councils, the county council had to come to terms with the reforms, and in February 1962, the County Council held a meeting with the district council's affected by the proposed reforms and decided to give maximum support to the district councils on the periphery who wished to avoid incorporation in Greater London and to ensure that if the reforms did go ahead the new Greater London and Essex boundary was at the inside edge of the Green Belt not the outside edge. Thus, as early as February 1962 Essex County Council was forced into following a pragmatic policy which tacitly accepted the reforms.

Middlesex County Council was in a very different position to Essex. Like the L.C.C., it faced abolition. With a population of 2,234,543 while not as large as that of the County of London, it was large enough to ensure that its representatives on a Greater London authority would have a sufficient presence not to be swamped. Like the county of London, Middlesex was almost completely urban in character and the historical county of Middlesex included virtually the whole of the L.C.C. to the north of the Thames. So, paradoxically in some respects, Middlesex County Council had less to lose than the other county councils. The local government structure in Middlesex, moreover, was suffering from greater strains than any other area in Greater London.
 Nonetheless, Middlesex County Council opposed the Royal Commission's recommendations. At the 1961 County Council elections, political control of Middlesex County Council changed. Conservatives took power from Labour. The County Council continued to oppose the suggested reforms. Middlesex Municipal Association had made plain its opposition to the Royal Commission's report to Conservative Party Central Office and had sent them details of how Middlesex Conservatives, at least those elected to the County Council, saw the 'Surrey Plan' working. So it was the Labour Leader of Middlesex County Council, George Pargiter, who said of the Royal Commission's report: "I have yet to be convinced that these changes will make for better local government in London" and Conservative Leader of the Council, George Colson, who said of the white paper:

[It] seeks to needlessly destroy the character of all existing boroughs, county boroughs, and counties and to sweep away that which has been patiently built up and tested throughout seventy years. This might be forgiven if it was going to result in cheaper administration or a better standard of service to the ratepayers. But I believe it will be more costly and less efficient.

Despite the tension within the local government system in the County, the County Council was able to build a creditable
defence around the points raised by Colson. When giving evidence to the Royal Commission, Leader of the Council Pargiter argued that the County Council worked well and claimed that "Middlesex is a recognised entity,..." and that it was the district authorities that lacked clear identities. The Chairman of the Royal Commission acknowledged that to be true and noted that he found, when visiting Middlesex, people often did not know which district authority they were in. The County Council argued that if any local authorities required reform it should be the district councils, not the County Council. The Royal Commission's own investigations in Middlesex came to the conclusion, however, that both upper and lower tier authorities were rather artificial and that neither level created a great deal of loyalty among their residents.

Middlesex managed to devise a defence, but it could not demonstrate that the existing county council and district councils could work harmoniously and efficiently. The County Council could not demolish the belief there was a 'Middlesex Problem' requiring radical reform.

V

Although the L.C.C. sat in the middle of the review area, with the largest population and highest rateable value, it did not lead a united campaign of the affected county councils. If indeed any county council took the lead, it was that of Surrey.
Even the 'Surrey Plan' failed, however, to unite all the County Councils because Hertfordshire rejected the idea. The 'Surrey Plan' was hardly a plan at all. It lacked detail, it lacked proper research and each County Council supporting the idea had slightly different views regarding its proposed functions and powers.

The County Councils were united in their opposition to the Royal Commission's proposals to create a Council for Greater London, but had many other differences. Although County Hall in London attempted some co-ordination of the opposition to reform, the various county councils fought their own battles. Each had a slightly different perspective. The very fact that the defence of the status quo was so fragmented and often presented in parochial terms must have damaged that defence and encouraged all those who saw the need for greater co-ordination and co-operation in Greater London to support the Government's plans for reform.
NOTES


2/ Ibid.


5/ Ibid.

6/ Ibid.

7/ Chapter Three above, p.85.


9/ Royal Commission Minutes of Evidence, Evidence from the London County Council, q.2423.
10/ Ibid.


12/ Evening Standard, 10.10.60 p.1.

13/ Three Reports, Debate and Votes, L.C.C. Minutes, 16.10.59.

14/ For example Lord Morrison's speech in the House of Lords as reported, criticisms of speech in the Evening Standard, 22.12.60 p.6.

15/ Metropolitan Boroughs Standing Joint Committee archive, Special Sub-Committee Minutes 1961-63.

16/ Evening Standard, 30.11.61 p.11.

17/ The Times, 30.11.61 p.6.


19/ Recommendations following report of the General Purposes Committee of the L.C.C. 5.3.62 in L.C.C. Minutes 12.3.52.

21/ Ibid, Policy Committee meeting 5.3.62.

22/ Evening Standard, 12.3.62 p.12.

23/ For example for support of Royal Commission Report see Evening Standard, 19.10.60 editorial p.6; for support of Government's white paper see Evening Standard, 29.11.61 editorial p.6.

24/ Public Record Office (P.R.O.), file PREM 11/3864, Prime Minister's Office archive, Letter from Ministry of Housing and Local Government to Prime Minister's Private Secretary 16.3.62.

25/ Ibid.

26/ Text of both letters in L.C.C. Minutes 29.5.64.

27/ P.R.O., file PREM 11/3864, Prime Minister's Office archive, Letter from Ministry of Housing and Local Government to Prime Minister's Private Secretary 23.5.62.

28/ L.C.C. Minutes, 17.7.62.
29/ Ibid.

30/ Ibid.

31/ Ibid.


33/ All Committee reports reproduced in L.C.C. Minutes, 5.2.63.

34/ Report reproduced in L.C.C. Minutes, 5.2.63.

35/ Reports reproduced in L.C.C. Minutes, 5.2.63.

36/ Ibid.

37/ Report of the General Purposes Committee of the L.C.C. 1.6.64 reproduced in L.C.C. Minutes, 16.6.64.

38/ For details of this discussion see G.L.R.O., L.L.P. archive, file ACC 2417/C/81, L.C.C. Labour Group Policy Committee meeting 2.11.64.

39/ Ibid.

40/ The Times 21.2.62 p.10.
41/ This claim is based on private conversations with a number of local government politicians, mainly from the L.C.C. Seven knew Hayward and Black but none believed they had ever worked together.


43/ P.R.O., file HLG 3/41, records of Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London, Memorandum by Paul Cadbury The County of Surrey in Relation to the Rest of Greater London.


45/ Ibid. Letter from Wimbledon Conservative Association 20.2.62.

46/ Ibid. Various letters; Young & Garside, op. cit.; Records of Royal Commission, memorandum by Paul Cadbury, op. cit.

47/ Royal Commission, Minutes of Evidence, Evidence from Surrey County Council, qq. 10,439 - 10,750.
48/ Ibid. q.10,450.

49/ Ibid.

50/ P.R.O., file HLG 3/540, records of Royal Commission, memorandum by Paul Cadbury op. cit. Also Records of Royal Commission, Digest of Facts and Summaries, entry for Surrey County Council.


52/ Ibid.

53/ Ibid.

54/ Ibid.


60/ G.L.R.O., L.L.P. archive, file ACC 2417/C/81 L.C.C. Labour Group Policy committee meeting 15.1.61.

61/ Royal Commission, Minutes of Evidence, Evidence of Hertfordshire County Council, q.5521.


64/ Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London, Minutes of Evidence, Evidence from South-West Essex Authorities, qq. 3462 - 3824, also Evidence from Middlesex Excepted Districts, qq. 7304 - 7378.


68/ The Times, 28.2.61, p. 13.

69/ Royal Commission, Minutes of Evidence, Evidence of the Centre for Urban Studies, University College London, qq 15891 - 15949.

70/ Ibid. q.15894.

71/ L.C.C. Minutes, 16.10.62.

72/ L.C.C. Minutes, 2.10.62.

73/ L.C.C. Minutes, 16.10.62.

74/ The Times, 17.2.62, p.5.

75/ The Times, 1.3.62, p.7.

77/ Ibid

78/ Evening Standard, 15.11.60, p.9.


81/ The Times, 1.3.62 p.7.

82/ Evening Standard, 15.2.62 p.12.

83/ P.R.O., file HLG 3/540, records of Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London, Digest of Facts and Summaries
84/ Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London, Minutes of Evidence, Evidence from South-West Essex Authorities, qqs. 3462 - 3824.

85/ Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London, Minutes of Evidence, Evidence of Essex County Council, q.3827.

86/ Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London, Minutes of Evidence, Evidence of South-West Essex Authorities, qqs. 3462-3824.

87/ Royal Commission Report, op. cit. para 165.


89/ Evening Standard, 19.10.60 p.6.


91/ Middlesex County Council 76 Years of Local Government, 1 April 1889 - 31 March 1965, (no date) p.27.

92/ Chapter Eight pp.317-21, below.
93/ *Evening Standard*, 14.4.61 p.5.


95/ *Evening Standard*, 19.10.60 p.6.

96/ *Evening Standard*, 30.11.61 p.11.

97/ Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London, Minutes of Evidence, Evidence from Middlesex County Council, qq.8535 - 9059.

Chapter Eight

The Metropolitan Boroughs and other District Authorities

The role of the twenty-eight Metropolitan Boroughs is given prominence in this chapter. Nonetheless district authorities in the rest of Greater London are not ignored, as they had an influence upon the process of local government reform. This chapter will show, however, that the influence of the Metropolitan Boroughs and other district authorities was very limited. It will explain that their small geographical area and wholly locally orientated functions poorly equipped the lower-tier authorities to understand the needs of urban Greater London as a whole. This chapter will demonstrate that as a consequence their views were discounted by both the Royal Commission and the Government.

District authorities reacted to the process of change very differently to the upper-tier authorities. This is hardly surprising as the two types of authorities had very different, often opposing, interests. There were 105 district authorities in the Royal Commission's review area.\(^1\) They had widely divergent interests, which led to many differences of opinion among the authorities and a lack of unity among lower-tier authorities.
As discussed, the role of party politics in Greater London was of importance to the transition in London government. The majority of district councils were controlled by one of the two major political parties. Many of the councils loyally followed the line taken by their controlling political party's regional or national organization. Other matters, however, such as the economic and social structure of the district, the geographical size, population level and its rate of decline or increase, and many other factors influenced the stance taken by each district authority. In short, the views of such authorities were parochial in outlook and principally motivated by self-interest. This was apparent to the Royal Commission, whose Chairman noted: "The view of the bottom tier authorities seemed to depend on the treatment they had received from the county council." Local authorities reacted to the situation around them, and they did not, on the whole, contemplate how Greater London could best be governed. The Royal Commission's report acknowledged this parochial outlook and felt it was inevitable that the district authorities would concentrate on local affairs and would lack an understanding of Greater London-wide affairs.

Thus, as discussed in chapter four, much of the evidence presented to the Royal Commission by the district authorities was of little use to the Commission when drawing up its plans for Greater London. Nonetheless the sheer number of authorities offering opinions to the Commission and the combined bulk of
that evidence probably influenced the process. As has been
detailed the publication of the Royal Commission's report was
by no means the end of debate concerning the future shape of
local government in Greater London. Thus, many district
authorities, either singularly or in combination, continued to
attempt to influence the final shape of any reform.

II

It is not possible to detail the part played by each of the
twenty-eight Metropolitan Boroughs. Thus, a limited range of
examples has been used. Chelsea and Kensington, two
Conservative controlled boroughs are used to demonstrate how
the very small borough of Chelsea feared merger with Kensington
while the much larger Kensington welcomed joining Chelsea in a
new authority. The City of Westminster, St.Marylebone and
Paddington's incorporation into a single new London Borough is
used as an example of how three loyal Conservative controlled
authorities merged despite the loss of identity by two of the
old authorities. Holborn has been selected because it was the
smallest of the Metropolitan Boroughs. Wandsworth receives much
attention because it was the only Metropolitan Borough to be
split between two of the new London Boroughs. Wandsworth's
fight to avoid being split inevitably brings in Battersea's
attempts to avoid merging with Wandsworth. Hackney is used to
demonstrate how one medium-sized, Labour controlled, borough
attempted to express divergent views to those of the L.L.P.
while attempting to support, as far as possible, the L.L.P./L.C.C. position.

Although the views of no two boroughs were identical, it is possible to identify certain trends in the types of view held. Large Conservative controlled boroughs often had similar ideas regarding the reform of local government. Small Conservative controlled boroughs often shared a common attitude, which was a little different to that of the larger Tory boroughs. Similarly, large Labour controlled boroughs often held similar views, while smaller Labour controlled boroughs had much in common but varied from the general opinion of the larger Labour boroughs. All Metropolitan Boroughs were controlled by one or the other of the two main political parties and most remained loyal to the same party at each municipal election. At the May 1959 election, only St. Pancras Borough Council changed political control from Labour to Conservative. Three years later Labour won back St. Pancras and also won control of Wandsworth. These were the only changes of political control in the metropolitan boroughs between the establishment of the Royal Commission in 1957 and the abolition of the old councils in 1965.

Kensington was a fairly large borough of 2,290 acres and a population of 167,623 in 1957. Its population had stood at 175,859 in 1921, a limited fall, in contrast to the decline in several other of the Metropolitan Boroughs. Between 1901 and
1952 the population had risen in just four of the Metropolitan Boroughs and had fallen by less than ten per cent in only five others. Kensington was among the group of five showing only a small decline. Kensington was a solid Conservative borough, despite the fact that parts of the north of the borough consisted of poor quality rented accommodation. The prosperous southern part of the borough made it a wealthy authority with adequate rate resources to maintain normal local authority services. Thus, Kensington had no reason to oppose the standard L.M.S. and L.C.C. Conservative Group view that the L.C.C. should be abolished and many of its functions taken over by the Metropolitan Boroughs with a strategic authority to control only regional functions. The Royal Commission's report acknowledged Kensington's support for such a reformed system. Kensington was of sufficient size to have gained extra powers from the Royal Commission's proposed reforms, without loss of status. The Royal Commission had recommended Kensington merge with its small neighbour Chelsea, but at three times the size of Chelsea, it must have seemed more like a take-over to Kensington Metropolitan Borough Council. Even after the Government's white paper had been published in late 1961, Kensington still stood to lose little. By merging with its smaller neighbour, Chelsea, the new borough would have a high enough population to meet the Government's suggested minimum of 200,000. This was the solution suggested by the Town Clerks who had been set to recommend the best pattern of mergers.
Kensington was quite happy to merge with Chelsea, but Chelsea was opposed to the idea.\textsuperscript{15}

Chelsea had been one of the Metropolitan Boroughs mentioned by the Royal Commission, along with Kensington, as supporting a reformed system of local government which would give more power to the district authorities.\textsuperscript{16} Chelsea was, however, the third smallest of the Metropolitan Boroughs, covering only 660 acres.\textsuperscript{17} It also had a modest population of 50,401 in 1957 which had fallen from 63,697 in 1921.\textsuperscript{18} Thus, under the Royal Commission's plan of reform, Chelsea would be forced to merge, and with a population only one third of that of Kensington, it would lose much of its identity. When the new borough's wards were drawn up, the majority of Councillors were set to come from Kensington.\textsuperscript{19}

Like Kensington, Chelsea was dominated by Conservatives.\textsuperscript{20} Unlike other Conservative controlled boroughs, such as Westminster and Holborn, the Chelsea Conservatives were unwilling to spend a high level of their resident's rates on expensive welfare services and consequently had a poor relationship with the L.C.C.\textsuperscript{21} Chelsea had a poor record of providing council housing,\textsuperscript{22} and throughout the late 1950s and early 1960s was in dispute with the L.C.C. over the borough's plans to build a large council housing estate on the World's End site.\textsuperscript{23} Chelsea wished to build the new estate in such a manner that it could accommodate a high number of residents per
acre, thus cutting the borough's housing list quite significantly. Chelsea's proposals would have broken the Government sanctioned population per acre level required in new housing developments as stated in the L.C.C.'s official Development Plan. Consequently the L.C.C. was refusing to co-operate with Chelsea. Chelsea wanted to see the L.C.C. abolished in order to stop it interfering with Chelsea Borough Council's policies. Chelsea told the Royal Commission that small boroughs would be quite capable of running the minimum required level of local government services; that they could be run quite efficiently by coming to joint arrangements with neighbouring boroughs.

Chelsea's brand of Conservatism saw no need for an expensive, interfering upper-tier authority. It also saw no need for a series of larger boroughs. Like other Conservative controlled district authorities, Chelsea was prepared to support reform, but not to the extent of supporting its own demise. Yet, ultimately it followed the party line, even though this meant merging with Kensington, without any formal dissent.

The City of Westminster was also a large Conservative controlled borough. It covered 2,503 acres and had a population of 92,032 in 1957. The population had declined by almost one third since 1921, but the borough remained very wealthy. Like Kensington and Chelsea, it had recommended to the Royal Commission that the majority of local government functions
should be undertaken by the lower-tier authority. Westminster had expressed itself happy with the Royal Commission's recommendations. It was particularly satisfied with the recommendation that the new London boroughs should be the primary unit of local government. Westminster's only criticism was that the report did not recommend that the boroughs should become Local Education Authorities. Westminster did not feel the Royal Commission's education plans would work. The City of Westminster had little to fear from the Royal Commission's report, even if that led to a merger with a neighbouring borough, because they were all wealthy Conservative controlled authorities. There is no evidence that Westminster Conservatives had a prior commitment from the Ministry of Housing and Local Government that the name of any new borough would be the City of Westminster, but the location of Parliament, Whitehall, Westminster Abbey, St. James' and Buckingham Palace's all within the old borough of Westminster must have made the chances of the name being continued very high. Hence the Conservative controlled borough of Westminster had little to lose by any change along the lines of the Royal Commission's recommendations. In early 1962 the City of Westminster was reported to be entirely happy with the Government's plans for reform.

The City of Westminster was merged into a new borough with Paddington and St. Marylebone, the new borough becoming the City of Westminster. Paddington and St. Marylebone were both
Conservative controlled boroughs, both slightly smaller in area, although at 120,042 in 1957, Paddington's population was higher than Westminster's (St. Marylebone had a 1957 population of 72,023). Both boroughs had sufficient rate base and were unlikely to increase the rate burden in the area of the old borough of Westminster. Although there was little reason for Westminster Conservatives to oppose the views of the Conservative Government, the Conservative opposition on the L.C.C., or the L.M.S., its neighbours did have some cause for complaint. Desmond Plummer, later to be leader of the G.L.C., was a member of Paddington Borough Council. He explained that initially the Conservative controlling group had wished Paddington to retain its independence, but it had not been prepared to criticize the Conservative Government. He felt that most Conservative groups in London were good Conservatives and followed the party line, even when it damaged their own vested interests. Nevertheless, as we have seen, there were some Conservatives, such as those in Chelsea, prepared to voice some opposition when their own vested interests were under threat.

Plummer's view of Conservative borough groups certainly seems to have been the case in the Metropolitan Borough of Holborn, the smallest of the London boroughs and Conservative controlled. Holborn covered 406 acres and had a population of 22,186 in 1957. The population had fallen by just under one half in thirty-six years, but its location in central London,
sandwiched between the Cities of London and Westminster, had allowed the borough to attract many offices and other forms of employment and about 100,000 commuters travelled into Holborn to work each day.\textsuperscript{39} Holborn Council did not believe it needed to be merged into a larger authority. However, in order to produce a credible argument in its defence, the borough had to abandon much of the Conservative view adopted by many of the larger Conservative controlled Metropolitan Boroughs. Holborn argued to the Royal Commission that it was large enough to perform all the duties expected of it under the system as it existed.\textsuperscript{40} Holborn suggested that it should regain control of personal health services, should be the sole housing authority within the borough and should take control of Lincoln's Inn Field from the L.C.C.,\textsuperscript{41} but it also argued for the retention of the L.C.C.\textsuperscript{42} Although Holborn suggested many L.C.C. functions should be transferred to the Metropolitan Boroughs, it wanted to preserve much of the status quo. Any wholesale reform was likely to sweep away such a small authority as Holborn.

Holborn Conservatives were unsuccessful in defending their borough. It must have been obvious that in any new borough their own area would be swamped by the rest of the new authority. Following the publication of the Royal Commission's report in late 1960, it was suggested that Holborn would be merged with Finsbury and Shoreditch,\textsuperscript{43} both small authorities in area and population. Such a borough would have had a
population of 98,000. Although Holborn had the smallest population of the three authorities, in such a borough the Conservatives from Holborn would not have been completely swamped by the other two areas. Both Finsbury and Shoreditch, however, were Labour controlled and the Holborn Conservatives must have recognized that such a borough was highly likely to contain a comfortable Labour majority. Despite its earlier opposition to the Conservative L.C.C. Group and L.M.S. stance, when giving evidence to the Royal Commission, it was only the Labour opposition group in Holborn which publicly argued against the acceptance of the Royal Commission's plans. Holborn Conservatives accepted the party line, even though it ran contrary to their own previous view, for the sake of party unity.

Following the Town Clerks report it was announced that Holborn would merge with Hampstead and St. Pancras in a new borough. Holborn was by far the smallest of the three boroughs. Hampstead covered 2,265 acres and had a population 97,057 in 1957, St. Pancras covered 2,694 acres and had a population of 131,622, more than Holborn and Hampstead combined. Labour regained control of St. Pancras Council in the 1962 council election and the Conservatives lost council seats in all three boroughs. The new borough, dominated by St. Pancras, was quite likely to be Labour controlled, yet the Holborn Conservatives refrained from criticizing the Government's reforms. The Conservative Mayors of Holborn and Hampstead both rejected
St. Pancras as a suitable name for the new borough, and this seems to have been the extent of local Conservative opposition to the reforms.

The new borough was named Camden. When the new wards were arranged Holborn contained only two, each to return three Councillors to the new council. Thus Holborn was to send six Councillors while Hampstead was to send twenty-four and St. Pancras thirty. Holborn would only have ten per cent of the new council, and thus little chance of developing into a powerful pressure group capable of looking after its interests. In the 1964 borough council elections the Conservatives won all six seats in Holborn, while Hampstead returned seventeen Conservatives and seven Labour, and St. Pancras three Conservatives and twenty-seven Labour Councillors. Holborn Conservatives formed a small part of the opposition group in Labour controlled Camden and still offered no criticism of the Government's reforms. It seems Lord Plummer was correct. In Holborn at least, loyal Conservatives in London followed the party line even when their own vested interests were at stake. Conservative party discipline allowed regional and national party interests to sweep aside local interests without major dissent.

The majority of metropolitan boroughs were Labour controlled - nineteen of the twenty-eight after the May 1959 elections, and twenty-one after the May 1962 elections - and thus there
were more Conservative opposition groups than controlling groups within the Metropolitan Boroughs. No Metropolitan Borough opposition Conservative Group was invited to give oral evidence before the Royal Commission and few sent written evidence independently of their Borough Council's submission. Nonetheless, these groups were subject to the same pressures as controlling groups. They had a need to reconcile party loyalty with local attitudes. This did lead to some guarded opposition to the process of transition.

Lewisham in South-East London was a very large borough, one of the few with a population larger in 1952 than 1901. The borough covered 7,015 acres and although the population had declined from a peak of 227,000 in 1951 to 220,756, it was still large enough to meet the criteria for the new boroughs as set out in the Government's white paper, that is, a minimum population of 200,000. Thus, the borough's minority Conservative group were able to criticize the details without criticizing the Conservative Government's general plan. Lewisham was a marginal Labour borough. Although the Conservatives had failed to take control in both the 1959 and 1962 borough elections, the plan to merge Lewisham with the much smaller, but solidly Labour, borough of Deptford would have damaged the Conservative's prospects of winning control of an enlarged Lewisham. Thus, when such a merger was first suggested, the local Conservatives felt aggrieved. Their letter of complaint remains in the Conservative Party Central Office.
files, yet like the majority of Conservatives in London there is no evidence that they took their complaint any further. If the reforms were to go ahead the small borough of Deptford needed to be merged into a neighbouring borough and Lewisham was a logical choice.

Battersea Conservative minority group had a similar complaint which they took to Conservative Party Central Office. Southwest London presented the Town Clerks and the Ministry of Housing and Local Government with a serious problem, because there was no clear cut method of merging the existing authorities. At least one of the existing boroughs needed to be split between two of the new boroughs. Both the ruling Labour group and the opposition Conservative group in Battersea favoured their authority taking some of neighbouring Wandsworth's wards into an enlarged Battersea. This proposal was not accepted and Battersea was submerged into the new borough of Wandsworth. Battersea Conservatives appear to have accepted the loss of their borough without major complaint.

While many Conservatives saw their own authorities gaining from the new system, such as those controlling Kensington and the City of Westminster, many others were set to lose by the reforms, such as those in Battersea, Chelsea, Paddington, and Lewisham, but they refrained from any concerted campaigns to damage the Conservative Government's plans. In some boroughs, such as, Islington, Hackney and Bethnal Green, local
Conservative's consistently held no council seats at all and the voice of local Conservatism is hard to identify in such areas. Consequently, it is hard to discern whether the majority of Conservatives were in favour of the new pattern of local government in London or not. However, if all Conservatives who expressed some doubts had fully opposed the new pattern of local government it would have made it more difficult for the L.C.C. Conservative group and the L.M.S. to wholeheartedly support the reforms. In turn, that would have made it more difficult for the Conservative Government to push through the London Government Bill. It is not possible to quantify whether Tory loyalty saved the Government's reforms of London government, but it certainly made the process easier.

Among the Labour controlled Metropolitan Boroughs, much the same factors influenced the nature of each borough's stance. Although the majority of such boroughs took account of the stance of the L.L.P., there were several boroughs prepared to voice their opposition. Although Chelsea and Holborn were Conservative controlled, all the other very small boroughs such as Finsbury, Shoreditch, Stoke Newington, Bethnal Green and Deptford were Labour controlled and had a vested interest in opposing the process of transition. Larger Labour boroughs such as Hackney, Islington, Lambeth and Lewisham had less to lose and more to gain from the new system. Yet the majority of Labour Councils took a fairly pragmatic approach. They defended their own best interests, while attempting to preserve party
unity. When faced with the new system of local government, however, there is no evidence that Labour Councillors worked any the less hard than Conservative Councillors to make the new system work.

There were no Conservative Councillors on Hackney Borough Council. Thus, the views of the Borough were those of the controlling Labour Party alone (although we do not know what outside factors influenced these views). Hackney had a population of 164,927 in 1957, it covered 3,287 acres, and the population had declined by over one quarter since 1921. Nonetheless, it remained a large populous borough during the period leading up to the introduction of the new local government system. Hackney Council was confident of its own abilities to manage local government affairs. The local newspaper pointed out:

Hackney points to the indisputable fact that the boroughs admixture of commercial, industrial and residential elements make it more comparable with a provincial town than some other parts of the county.

Other Labour controlled boroughs of similar or even larger size, such as Islington, Lewisham and Woolwich, also consisted of similar mixes.
Fulham was the only Labour controlled borough to suggest the Labour controlled L.C.C. should be replaced by a Greater London authority. Even Woolwich, within which the ruling Labour Group had urged upon the L.L.P. the need for radical reform, put aside its private views in order to support the party line. Hackney went some way to oppose the L.L.P. view when it suggested to the Royal Commission changes to the existing system, but without a major restructuring. Hackney argued that, although the existing system was made to work by goodwill, it could be improved by transferring several L.C.C. functions to the Metropolitan Boroughs. Hackney's written evidence to the Royal Commission explained:

We consider that primary and secondary education constitute what we term a "personal service" in that it directly and intimately affects the family lives of the great majority of the ratepayers. National standards are largely guaranteed by the direction and advice of the Minister of Education and in our view such aspects of education as admit of local initiative and interpretation should be administered at the lowest efficient level. The localization of control could not fail to strengthen local interest in the management and conduct of the schools. We consider therefore that the powers in relation to primary and secondary education (including nursery schools) should be transferred to the boroughs.
Hackney suggested that health and welfare, other personal services and planning should be transferred from the L.C.C. to the Metropolitan Boroughs. Conservative Wandsworth suggested to the Royal Commission that a similar range of services should be transferred to the boroughs. After Labour gained control in May 1962, it made no attempt to abandon the borough's earlier stance.\textsuperscript{73}

Hackney recognized that there had to be a balance between local accountability and efficiency brought about through the large scale provision of services, but its arguments undermined the L.L.P. stance:

With these points in mind we wish to suggest that in the County of London the transfer of the major functions of personal health and education could be made to depend upon the voluntary amalgamation of boroughs to provide minimum areas of population which would in the Commission's view, justify the transfer. We express no opinion on what the specified areas and population should be but we think a limit should be placed on the period allowed for the voluntary amalgamations and this should not exceed 10 years. The Minister should have the powers subject to the usual safeguards to introduce compulsory amalgamations.\textsuperscript{74}

With the exception of Fulham, Hackney was the only Labour
controlled borough in London to suggest forced mergers between unwilling boroughs. Hackney offered no opinions as to whether the L.C.C. would be left with any useful functions after a series of amalgamations of boroughs which, in turn, would acquire many of the L.C.C.’s functions. Hackney refrained from directly attacking the L.C.C., but its stance can have little helped the L.L.P. and L.C.C. Labour Group efforts to defend the status quo.

Once again the local newspaper in Hackney summed up the position of the borough after the publication of the Royal Commission’s report as "Shocks at Town Halls." It went on to explain that Hackney had little to fear, and was likely to gain, but many boroughs like "proud little Stoke Newington" would lose. Indeed the Royal Commission recommended Stoke Newington and Hackney be merged to form one of the new boroughs. After the Town Clerk’s report, Shoreditch was also merged into the new borough. The new borough adopted the name of Hackney and used the Metropolitan Borough of Hackney’s Town Hall as its Town Hall. The combined populations of Stoke Newington and Shoreditch was 94,242, considerably less than the population of old Hackney. Both Stoke Newington and Shoreditch were Labour dominated, which meant there was no realistic possibility of the new borough being anything other than Labour controlled. At the first meeting of the new borough in May 1964 one of the longest serving members from the old Shoreditch Borough Council became Chairman of the new Council,
while a long serving member of Stoke Newington Borough Council was appointed as the Deputy Chairman. Thus, politicians from Stoke Newington and Shoreditch were not excluded from all power. Nonetheless, the majority of the members represented wards in the old borough of Hackney. They had the power to control all the policies of the new borough if they had wished to. It must have seemed very much like business as usual to them.

Finsbury was submerged in its large neighbour Islington. Deptford became part of Lewisham. Battersea became part of the new Wandsworth. Faced with the London Government Bill’s progress through Parliament, the large Labour controlled boroughs had little option but to merge with their smaller neighbours. These large boroughs, however, were not as vociferous as the smaller Labour boroughs in defending the status quo, and they certainly argued hard to make sure the new boroughs retained their old names and used their old town halls.

Many of the smaller Labour controlled boroughs adopted a position as dogmatically opposed to the reforms as the L.C.C. and the L.L.P. Many of these faced a complete loss of identity. Deptford took its case to the Privy Council in an attempt to save its historic name, with no success. Bermondsey argued that it should not be merged with Camberwell and Southwark because the new town hall was outside Camberwell so it would be
too remote and services to local people would suffer. The Leaders of Camberwell, Bermondsey, Bethnal Green and Hammersmith all wrote articles for the L.L.P.'s journal London News attacking the Government's white paper. They attacked the then proposals in exactly the same manner as the L.C.C. This was hardly surprising, as their interests were so closely linked. The Leader of Hammersmith Borough Council argued that any enlarged borough in West London would be unable to run many welfare services because there was only one children's home in west London and 900 places in L.C.C. old peoples' homes were outside the county and would not be available for the new boroughs. The Labour Leader of Stoke Newington attacked the white paper, drawing on Lord Morrison for support: "I echo the remark of Lord Morrison in the House of Lords when he said 'My Lords. The Government is mad.' I think the proposed amalgamation is absurd and would be disastrous to local government."

Other Labour borough spokesmen tried to turn the Royal Commission's arguments against the proposed reforms by arguing that larger boroughs would be less democratic or less efficient than the existing system. Councillor Kathleen O'Connor, Mayor of Stepney, claimed: "I think the present boroughs are working extremely well and if these changes are made we will lose touch with the people. Local government is at its best when run in smaller units." The Labour M.P. for Finsbury and Shoreditch, Alderman Michael Cliffe, speaking on behalf of the two Labour
controlled boroughs he represented, argued that democracy worked better in small units rather than large.85

At the district council level the arguments for or against reform were all contained within the separate counties. No Labour boroughs in the County of London developed a joint campaign against the new system with neighbours across county boundaries, even if such authorities were as equally opposed to the Government's plans. Within London, the larger Labour controlled boroughs, with much to gain from enlargement and greater powers, were less vocal in their support for the old system. This must have damaged the L.L.P. and L.C.C. Labour Group campaign. The L.L.P. had hoped to counterbalance the lack of enthusiasm among some Labour boroughs with support from a few Conservative controlled boroughs faced with unwelcome mergers with larger neighbours. L.L.P. intelligence expected the Conservative boroughs of Holborn and Hampstead to oppose the new system.88 As shown above this did not happen. Conservative's retained a higher level of unity than Labour in London which helped tip the balance towards acceptance of the reforms.

The majority of Labour controlled boroughs accepted the new pattern and set about making it work when it became evident the changes were unavoidable. At the first meeting of the new Tower Hamlets Borough Council, the Mayor of Poplar, Joseph Gillender said: "We will weld Tower Hamlets into one body working for the
betterment of the borough." This was a typical positive Labour response to the changed situation when reform became inevitable.

One major problem within the county of London unified Labour and Conservative opinion locally. This was the problem concerning Wandsworth and Battersea. The latter borough had a population of 111,709 in 1957 and was thus too small to stand alone under the white paper's recommendation of a minimum population of 200,000 for the new boroughs. Battersea's neighbour, Wandsworth had a population of 337,444 and thus was of adequate size. If the two boroughs had merged it would have created a borough with a population greater than that of many counties in Britain, and would have been over twice the optimum size recommended by the white paper. Battersea was almost surrounded by Wandsworth and the River Thames. Its only connection to any other Metropolitan Borough was a small common boundary with Lambeth. The Royal Commission had proposed that Battersea merge with part of Wandsworth and this had also been recommended by the Government following the publication of the white paper.

Conservative and Labour councillors in Wandsworth consistently opposed their borough being split in two. Roland Freeman, Leader of the Council, said shortly after the publication of the white paper that: "We shall fight the plan to partition Wandsworth, it is absurd to cut a borough in two when the aim
of reform was to get large councils for London." In February 1962, while still Conservative controlled, and before the Town Clerks had studied the issues, Wandsworth recommended changes to the new pattern of local government. Wandsworth argued that the section of the borough recommended to merge with Battersea contained the town hall and the central library, and such a split would leave the new Battersea with two town halls and two central libraries while the new, smaller Wandsworth would have no town hall or central library. Neither ruling Labour group nor the minority Conservative Group in Battersea showed any concern for the view of Wandsworth Borough Council. Wandsworth suggested that a minor boundary change between Battersea and themselves would allow Battersea to merge with Lambeth, but this required the pattern of mergers in the whole of South London to change. They recommended that Camberwell, Southwark and Bermondsey could merge, as could Deptford, Greenwich and Woolwich. Thus, with a barely changed Wandsworth and Lewisham, and the merged Battersea and Lambeth, there would be five boroughs south of the Thames in the old county of London. Thus, faced with the possibility of the borough being split in two, Conservatives in Wandsworth were prepared to oppose the Government's plans and work with the borough's Labour group.

The Town Clerks suggested that the eastern part of Wandsworth - the wards of Larkhall, Clapham North, Thornton (east of the railway), Streatham Common, and Streatham South - be
transferred to Lambeth, and the remaining bulk of Wandsworth be
merged with Battersea. This recommendation was accepted by
the Minister of Housing and Local Government. The new borough,
reflecting the larger of the two partners, adopted the name of
Wandsworth. Battersea lost its separate identity. Consequently
neither Conservative nor Labour groups in either borough got
their own way. The Conservative Government, with its recourse
to a wide range of experts, greater resources and a certain
flexibility won, while Battersea and Wandsworth lost.

III

Within Greater London, but outside the County of London, many
similar views were expressed, such as a fear of being submerged
into a large neighbour. Party politics played a role in the
majority of areas. Many of the other vested interests which
came to the fore during the development of the new system have
been discussed elsewhere in this work, such as poor relations
with county councils, or a fear of being swallowed by an
expanding L.C.C.

Some local authorities, such as Romford in Essex on the
periphery, argued that they should be excluded from the Greater
London area. Romford had initially supported the Royal
Commission's recommendations, because the borough would gain
more power under the G.L.C. than under Essex County Council,
but went on to change its mind, to no avail. It became merged into the new borough of Havering.99

District authorities beyond the L.C.C. boundary, but not quite on the outer edge of urban Greater London, could not argue that they should be excluded from the G.L.C. They had to be included, or the entire new system changed. The M.P. for Dagenham could not argue his area was outside of Greater London. Consequently, he argued that he could not support the new system because it reduced the influence of his area. Dagenham sent seven representatives out of 140 to Essex County Council, but would only send one out of 110 to the G.L.C.100

Several local authorities argued over merging with neighbours. One of the most contentious was that of Willesden and Wembley. Neither was happy about the merger. Wembley approached Harrow about a possible union, but Harrow would not consider it, because it was of sufficient size to avoid the need to join with any other authority.101 Willesden wished to retain its own identity. The local M.P. told the House of Commons that Willesden wished to avoid merging with a neighbour by increasing its population to a size which would allow it to become a new London borough without any amalgamation. It hoped to do this by taking a small part of five of its neighbouring authorities.102
The three county boroughs in Greater London were unitary authorities and thus although close to district authorities in size, were closer to county councils in their powers. Croydon consistently opposed the reforms despite its Conservative controlled council.\textsuperscript{103} Croydon saw its own best interest as maintaining its county borough status, rather than following the Conservative Party line. East Ham likewise opposed the reforms, but because of its Labour majority, did not have to abandon Party loyalty.\textsuperscript{104} West Ham was also Labour, but broadly supported the reforms. As early as the 1890s, shortly after it had gained county borough status, some members of the council had sought to become a Metropolitan Borough within the L.C.C. because supporting a full range of council services alone was expensive for the ratepayers of West Ham.\textsuperscript{105} The Royal Commission had come to the conclusion that East Ham was also too small in population and rateable value to remain an efficient County Borough.\textsuperscript{106} The M.P. for East Ham South argued that West Ham could merge with the non-county borough of Leyton and East Ham with the non-county Borough of Barking, thus increasing their populations to the level suitable for county boroughs.\textsuperscript{107} There is no evidence as to whether the views of Leyton and Barking were sought; the county boroughs may have been more concerned with saving their own independence than the views of their neighbours. Whichever, the county boroughs exhibited the same parochial outlook, and pursual of vested interests, as the majority of other local authorities.
The new London boroughs were all to have fewer councillors than the total number from their constituent old authorities. This required all boroughs to draw up plans for new wards. The rewarding of boroughs became a highly political issue because the position of ward boundaries dictated the likely outcome of the political colour of elected councillors. In Finsbury, the Conservatives, Liberals and Communists complained at the new wards drawn up by the Labour controlled boroughs of Islington and Finsbury, which were due to merge. In Hammersmith and Fulham Councils, the Conservatives were critical of the new wards drawn up by the Labour controlled boroughs of Islington and Finsbury, which were due to merge. In Holborn, the Conservative and Labour groups accepted the need to divide the borough into just two wards but could not decide on the boundary between the two. The Home Secretary, who had the final responsibility for such matters, accepted the Labour Group's plan. In Middlesex, in the area to become Hillingdon, Conservatives in Ruislip and Northwood argued that Labour members in Hayes and Harlington, and West Drayton and Yiewsley had introduced a plan which dismantled the strongest Conservative wards. There were many such arguments; they probably increased party political antipathy but made no impact on the nature or the speed of the reforms themselves.

IV

With the exception of the three county boroughs, the new London boroughs had more powers and more duties than those they
replaced. They were the primary units of local government in Greater London and were powerful enough to be invited to join the County Boroughs Association. The new boroughs did work, and there is little sign of crisis after they took control in 1965. Analysing the first five years in detail, Rhodes concluded it worked. Lord Plummer felt that some boroughs took up to a decade to become fully efficient, but the system did work at least as well as that it replaced.

The old district authorities do not appear to have had a great deal of influence over the process. Their views were usually tainted by parochialism, by party politics and by a determination to look after their own vested interests, without reference to what was best for Greater London as a whole. With such a divergent range of district authorities there was no consensus among them regarding the best system of local government. The Royal Commission took account of their views, as did the Government. Nonetheless, the Government was able to create a new system which angered many district councils, Conservative as well as Labour. The second-tier authorities were divided and marginalised.
NOTES


7/ Evening Standard, 8.5.59 p.10.

8/ Ibid. 11.5.62 p.18.


10/ The Londoner, April 1954 p.189.
11/ Metropolitan Borough Council Elections

Kensington

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source *Evening Standard*, 8.5.59 p.10 and 11.5.62 p.18.


13/ Royal Commission report, op. cit. para 735.

14/ Chapter four, pp.140-2 for the role of the Town Clerks.

15/ *Evening Standard*, 10.4.62 p.13

16/ Royal Commission report, op. cit. para 735.


18/ Ibid.

19/ *Evening Standard*, 10.4.62 p.13
20/ Metropolitan Borough Council Elections

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source *Evening Standard*, 8.5.59 p.10 and 11.5.62 p.18.


22/ Ibid. p.30

23/ Ibid. p.27.

24/ Ibid. Chelsea wanted a population per acre of 280, but the L.C.C. Development Plan only allowed a population per acre of 136.


28/ Ibid.

29/ Royal Commission report, op. cit. para 735.

30/ Holborn and Finsbury Guardian, 3.2.61 p.5.


32/ Metropolitan Borough Council Elections

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Source: Evening Standard, 8.5.59 p.10 and 11.5.62 p.18.


34/ Ibid.
35/ Private conversation with Lord Plummer, 16.8.94.

36/ Metropolitan Borough Council Elections

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source *Evening Standard*, 8.5.59 p.10 and 11.5.62 p.18.


38/ Ibid.

39/ Ibid. Although Holborn Metropolitan Borough Council, in its oral evidence to the Royal Commission, claimed a day-time population of 200,000 - 250,000.


41/ Ibid.


44/ Ibid.

45/ Metropolitan Borough Council Elections

Finsbury

Councillors elected 1959 1962
Conservative 5 2
Labour 29 32

Shoreditch
Conservative 0 0
Labour 33 33

source Evening Standard, 8.5.59 p.10 and 11.5.62 p.18.


47/ Chapter Four above, pp. 140-2.


49/ Ibid.
50/ Metropolitan Borough Council Elections

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source **Evening Standard**, 8.5.59 p.10 and 11.5.62 p.18.

51/ **Holborn and Finsbury Guardian**, 8.3.63 p.5.

52/ **Camden, Holborn and Finsbury Guardian**, 15.5.64 p.1.

53/ Ibid.

54/ **Evening Standard**, 8.5.59 p.10.

55/ Ibid. 11.5.62 p.18.

56/ P.R.O., file HLG 3/540, records of Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London, Digest of Facts and Summaries, this file contains a brief indication of the views expressed from within each local authority.


60/ Metropolitan Borough Council Elections

Lewisham

Councillors elected 1959 1962
Conservative 29 26
Labour 33 36

source Evening Standard, 8.5.59 p.10 and 11.5.62 p.18.

61/ Metropolitan Borough Council Elections

Deptford

Councillors elected 1959 1962
Conservative 3 3
Labour 29 29

source Evening Standard, 8.5.59 p.10 and 11.5.62 p.18.


63/ Maps and appendix one, below.


66/ Ibid.


70/ Greater London Record Office (G.L.R.O.), L.L.P. archive, file ACC 2417/A/52 Letter from Miss M. Crout, Whip Woolwich Labour Group, 23.1.61. Also see Chapter four p.171.

72/ Ibid.


75/ Hackney Gazette, 21.10.60 p.1.

76/ Ibid.


78/ Metropolitan Borough Council Elections

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source Evening Standard, 8.5.59 p.10 and 11.5.62 p.18.

79/ Hackney Gazette, 22.5.64 p.1.


82/ Ibid. 21.11.62 p.21.


84/ Ibid. May 1962 p.4.


86/ Ibid.


89/ *Hackney Gazette*, 22.5.64 p.1.

91/ Ibid.


93/ Ibid.


99/ Rhodes, op. cit. p.119.


103/ Evening Standard, 15.2.62 p.12. Also private conversation with Sir Ashley Bramall, 19.5.94.


108/ Holborn and Finsbury Guardian, 25.10.63 p.1

109/ Evening Standard, 24.4.63 p.16.

111/ Ibid. 17.1.64 p.1


113/ Minutes of the London Boroughs Committee, agenda 27.4.65.


115/ Private conversation with Lord Plummer, 16.8.94.


117/ For example, P.R.O., file PREM 11/4338, Prime Minister's Office archive, letter from Ministry of Housing and Local Government to Prime Minister 17.5.62 regarding the attitude of several local authorities in Greater London.
This chapter will demonstrate the complexity of the reform process. It will show the wide range of non-party political organizations which attempted to influence the process and assess their impact. By the use of three case studies it is possible to illuminate several important aspects of the role played by pressure groups. We can judge whether these three groups had any great impact on the process or not.

It is not possible to separate the role of party politics from the role of other pressure groups. In this chapter the term pressure group is used to cover the broad spectrum of organizations and individuals who had a point of view on London government, or who had a position to defend or to enhance during the process of transition. Under such a definition the political parties were pressure groups, but this chapter goes beyond the role of organized political parties.

As has been discussed in chapter two, during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries local government in Greater London, as with the rest of Britain, provided a growing range of services and employed an ever increasing workforce. By the late 1950s many local authority employees were highly skilled, highly
qualified and highly vociferous professionals. Many of these staff were members of professional organizations. Such bodies were among the numerous pressure groups involved in the process of transition. Some, such as the London Teachers' Association, part of the National Union of Teachers, were only concerned with London. Other organizations, such as the Residential Child Care Association, were nation wide, but concerned with one aspect of one local government service. Others such as the Town Planning Institute were concerned for the welfare of their members employed in local government. For example, it claimed in 1963 that neither the G.L.C. nor the new boroughs were planning to employ enough town planning staff. It was, however, also concerned with very broad issues. The Town Planning Institute, along with the Town and Country Planning Association and the Royal Institute of British Architects, claimed the G.L.C. covered too small an area for proper planning.

There were many instances of pressure groups whose members or special interests were in central government-sponsored administration, yet had reasons to be concerned with the nature of local government in Greater London. Among these were the Metropolitan Police, who provided written evidence to the Royal Commission regarding certain aspects of traffic regulation and supervision, but who took no other part in the debate surrounding the transition in London government. Other state owned bodies such as British Rail were not directly involved in
the process, but were brought in by other groups. For example, the London and Home Counties Electric Traction Society argued that British Rail should take control of the London Underground. A further example which will be dealt with in greater detail is that of medical provision in Greater London. Many services were provided by the National Health Service, responsible to the Government, yet many other functions, including the Ambulance services, were provided by the upper-tier local authorities. Medical provision was further complicated by the semi-independent nature of general medical practitioners, who worked with the N.H.S. and local authorities. The complexity of medical provision in Greater London led to a multiplicity of pressure groups concerned with medicine and health, and to several differences of opinion within these pressure groups.

Because this thesis is primarily concerned with the local government structure of Greater London, it is possible to forget that Greater London contained, and indeed still does contain, a highly complex mixture of private organizations, individuals and functions - that is non-government financed or controlled - offices, shops, banks, manufacturers, small businesses, large businesses, the headquarters of multi-national firms. It also contains very many private buildings and plots of private land, also private houses and council owned housing. There can be few that were not touched by local government, and thus many wished to influence the nature of the
transition in London government. As an example, the Association of Land and Property Owners and the Associated Owners of City Property both told the Royal Commission that the L.C.C. should be abolished and required no upper-tier replacement. This advice was directly opposite that of the London Standing Conference of Housing Estates Community Groups who wanted to retain a London-wide strategic housing authority and passed a motion calling for the retention of the L.C.C. in May 1962. A further example will help illustrate the diversity of the pressure groups offering opinions. The Federation of Theatre Unions claimed that to split town planning functions between the G.L.C. and the new boroughs would "cause the Government's plans for the theatre to fall between two stools." Some groups such as the co-operative societies, trade unions and some housing associations had an input into L.L.P. decision making, and their role is often recorded in party records. It is more difficult to know which organizations attempted to influence Conservative Party decisions on Greater London government, and party records do not help.

It is impossible to judge with any certainty how many individuals or groups attempted to influence the process of transition in London government, particularly those who attempted to influence the process outside the fairly open procedures of the Royal Commission, or through the media. We do not know all the factors which influenced the Government's decisions. For example we may not know all the factors that led
to the preservation of the status of the City of London and the Inns of Court, even though the Royal Commission acknowledged that logic suggested the City of London be merged with the City of Westminster. 8

Apart from the specific fears of individual pressure groups there were some concerns regarding the potential nature of local government in Greater London which were shared by several such groups. For example, several bodies were worried that transferring services from the old county councils to the new borough councils could lead to the fragmentation of local government services. Although this chapter is based on three case studies it will draw out such common themes.

II

The first pressure group to be considered is the Metropolitan Water Board (M.W.B.). As has been described earlier, 9 the M.W.B. was responsible for the supply of water in most of the review area, but not all of it. Members of the Board were appointed by local authorities within its area. As the largest of these local authorities, the L.C.C. appointed the most members, fourteen of the sixty-six, 10 but did not have enough members to dominate the Board. Members tended to reflect the political complexion of their appointing local authority, but were not necessarily local government councillors. For example,
several of the L.C.C.'s appointees were senior trade unionists.\textsuperscript{11}

As described in chapter three the functions undertaken by the M.W.B. had been excluded from the Royal Commission's remit.\textsuperscript{12} When asked their opinion, the M.W.B. had argued that although its constitution was based upon the representation of the local authorities within its area of supply, the function of water supply was one which was necessarily governed by special, particularly hydro-geological, factors, and thus should be excluded from the terms of reference of the Royal Commission.\textsuperscript{13} When the Minister decided, however, after the M.W.B.'s advice not to include the supply of water in the Royal Commission's remit, he made it clear in Parliament that the supply of water would be considered separately later.\textsuperscript{14}

The government's decision to exclude the M.W.B. may have been taken in order to ease the complexity of the review, or to reduce the work load of the Royal Commission, or perhaps to reduce the number of pressure groups demanding change in the early processes of transition in London government. After all, the M.W.B. had made it plain in 1957 that it would oppose any detrimental change to its status. Yet the government, through the Minister of Housing and Local Government, planned such a detrimental change without consulting the M.W.B. In April 1962, after the publication of the report of the Royal Commission and the Government's white paper, Dr Hill, Minister of Housing and
Local Government, told the M.W.B. that it was to be taken over by the proposed G.L.C. and he allowed the M.W.B. only one month in which to reply to his proposals.¹⁵

Despite the lack of time, the Board tried to mobilize a defence of its position. It became one of many pressure groups attempting to defend their own vested interests. The M.W.B. was saved not by its own campaign, but because of the lack of time available to the Government to legislate for the change in the administration of Greater London's water supply.

The M.W.B. was unable to devise a powerful argument in defence of its continued existence. In its reply to the Minister it pointed out that the G.L.C. would cover 747 square miles and the M.B.W. only covered 419 square miles, and that 121 square miles of the Board's area was outside the G.L.C. area. The M.W.B. also argued that the Board worked well, that it was bigger than the next six largest water undertakings in Britain put together. Also, that it had successfully maintained normal water supplies during the drought in the summer of 1959, was efficient and had kept the water rates down to seven per cent during the six year period 1956 to 1962, which no other water undertaking had managed to do.¹⁶

There is no reason to doubt these facts. However, the M.W.B. could not argue that the actual water supply to Greater London would necessarily be damaged by the abolition of the Board. The
technical supply system was not to be changed, neither was the administration of the supply of water to be changed, only the political oversight of water provision was to change. In the Ministry's reply to the M.W.B. it pointed out that, of the M.W.B.'s six million customers, only 280,000 lived outside the G.L.C.'s area. The Ministry also felt that the fact that some people in the G.L.C. area would still be supplied by other water undertakings did not matter. The point was that an ad hoc body like the M.W.B. could not really be justified when a directly elected body like the G.L.C. could supervise the supply of water through a Water Committee.

The M.W.B. was not without allies. One of these was the L.L.P., which was closely tied up with the fight to save the L.C.C. and so had a vested interest in saving the M.W.B. which would help to insure the maintenance of the status quo. The L.L.P. argued that the Minister wished to abolish the M.W.B. out of "punitive pique" because the Labour controlled Board had recently offered its staff a high pay award, which broke the Government's pay pause. It is not possible to prove or disprove this claim. As a defence of the M.W.B., however, it fails to tackle the Ministry's argument that the G.L.C. was a more appropriate body to supervise water supply than the Board. The L.L.P.'s journal London News argued that there was no operational reason to transfer the M.W.B. and that it would preclude participation in the Board's replacement by the London boroughs. Yet once again this defence failed to tackle the
argument that, as a directly elected Greater London-wide authority, the G.L.C. was better suited to the supervision of regional services than indirectly elected *ad hoc* Boards.

Shortly after the announcement of the M.W.B.'s forthcoming abolition in April 1962 the Board asked the Prime Minister to receive a delegation. In June 1962 the Ministry of Housing and Local Government wrote to the Prime Minister explaining why he should reject the M.W.B.'s request. This letter, quoted at length, explains exactly why logic suggested that if the Royal Commission and Government view on local government was to be accepted then the M.W.B.'s days were numbered.

The real reasons for our actions is that the Board will be an unnecessary body when the Greater London Council is set up....The Board has, successfully enough, supplied water to London for 60 years, but it is neither far sighted nor quick moving. It has far too many members on it - nearly 90 - and many of these are of poor quality; its procedures are extremely cumbersome. The Board has its problems because of its size and the need to treat raw river water, but every water undertaking has its problems.... We are not impressed with its claims to economy; any water undertaking which supplies water to such a densely populated area with no long unproductive mains ought to be able to do so fairly
This echoes very many of the arguments used to support the creation of the G.L.C. and new boroughs. The M.W.B. and local authorities in Greater London were neither far-sighted nor quick moving, they were both extremely cumbersome. Thus, if the old system of local government was to be swept away the M.W.B., as a pressure group, had little chance of preventing its own abolition. This is also the view of S.K. Ruck and Gerald Rhodes, who wrote after the creation of the new system that: "There was, however, an obvious case for water to be a G.L.C. function."22

However, the M.W.B. survived. If the London Government Bill had sanctioned the abolition of the M.W.B. and the transference of its functions to the G.L.C., the nature of the Bill would have been transformed. It would have become a Hybrid Bill, rather than a Public Bill. Because Hybrid Bills affected private or limited interests such interests were allowed to employ legal arguments, and legal counsel, in their defence during the Committee stage of the Bill's Parliamentary progress. If this had happened to the London Government Bill it would quite likely have been significantly delayed in passing through Parliament. This would have dramatically decreased the chances of the new system of local government for Greater London being in place before the General Election due by October 1964. The Conservative Government was not prepared to take such a risk.
Consequently, the plans to abolish the M.W.B. were postponed and the London Government Bill remained a Public Bill.  

In November 1965 membership of the Board was reduced and adjusted to reflect the pattern of new authorities in Greater London. This was the only significant alteration within the time scale of this thesis. The M.W.B. survived because of legal arguments over the London Government Bill, not because it was a successful pressure group. As a pressure group, it failed to force the Government to change its plans, and it failed to develop a logical case to justify its own survival within a radically changing system of local government.

The argument was not about the technicalities of water supply. The Government accepted that the M.W.B. was reasonably efficient. It was about the most appropriate form of political control over strategic regional-wide services, such as the water supply. The M.W.B. was able to build a defence around the argument that the G.L.C. did not cover the entire M.W.B. area, and that it would cut out the role of the London boroughs. The Government's argument that a change in the control and, or, administration of a local government function, rather than a change in the funding and, or, technicalities of such a function, would produce a more appropriate service was applied to more than just Greater London's water supply, as this chapter will show.
The second example is that of medical services. This covers a broad range of pressure groups and a wide variety of services, not all of them local government functions. The N.H.S. hospital service was little affected by the restructuring of local government in Greater London, but the ambulance service was provided by the upper-tier authorities. There were many clinics, health centres and other medical services provided by local authorities. These services employed a wide range of professionals - doctors, nurses, midwives, health visitors, public health inspectors and many more. It was often possible to distinguish between public health and personal health services, but the two were linked and occasionally difficult to separate. Because of this complexity, and because of the large number of professional groups representing different aspects of London's medical profession, there were several different points of view and many differences of emphasis among these various pressure groups. It would not have been possible for the Royal Commission, or the Government, to accommodate the views of all pressure groups, nor to create a new system of seamless medical provision.

One group which spanned the divide between public health and personal health was the District Medical Officers of Health (Greater London) Committee. Members were qualified medical doctors, and also experts in public health. They were, however,
employed by the district authorities and their interpretation of what was best for Greater London reflected that. This committee felt that the prevention of disease was undervalued, that it should be given a higher priority and in many ways was more important than the curing of disease. The Committee felt that the great majority of personal and public health matters should be the responsibility of the district authorities so they could be co-ordinated with services like drainage, sewerage and the removal of household waste. The Royal Commission accepted this point:

You are making the point that has been made to us very frequently, that you cannot in effect divorce the environmental health services from the personal health services, that the environmental health services, it is convenient to put them in a separate category, are just as much health services with the accent on prevention as the other health services; that is really the point is it not? - Yes, I think that is so. In arguing for the majority of medical services to be the responsibility of the district authorities, the District Medical Officers failed to agree among themselves. One of the representatives from a county borough in Essex felt the ambulance service was efficiently run by the county boroughs, and could remain a district authority service, while members from other district authorities felt ambulances were best
provided on a regional basis, that is by the county councils. Because the system as it existed worked only reasonably well, differences of opinion could develop. It worked well enough to avoid an absolute need for change, but services were not so efficient that calls for change were avoided altogether. Flexibility and co-operation allowed the county boroughs in Greater London to provide reasonable services. All over Greater London district councils and county councils had developed ways of co-operating with each other. Thus, the ambulance service could be, and indeed had been, provided reasonably efficiently by both county councils and county borough councils. District Medical Officers of Health offered advice on how to improve medical services, but only recommended changes that were not detrimental to their own status or that of their councils.

Many personal health services had been provided by the district authorities until 1946, when the government of the day had imposed the provision of these services upon the county councils instead. Several of the county councils in Greater London had negotiated with their district authorities to return these services, but this had not happened. At the centre of Greater London, the L.C.C. had agreed to return these services to the Metropolitan Boroughs. It had been argued within the ruling group of the L.C.C. that these services had only been transferred to the county councils by the Minister of Health in order to compensate the county councils for the loss of their hospitals, which had been transferred to the new N.H.S. Such
views, whether true or not, helped to move the argument away from the basic question of which type of local authority, regional or district, was best suited to provide a comprehensive range of related services. Many pressure groups used arguments based on historical precedent, or the preconception of what was fair, rather than what was most efficient. The medical services were highly inter-connected and difficult to allocate without additional arguments.

The L.C.C. argued that although many personal health services could be transferred to the boroughs, health, welfare and children's services could not be treated as a whole. Domiciliary services could be transferred to the boroughs, but aspects, such as old people's homes, which had developed without regard to borough boundaries needed to be left under the direction of the county councils.\textsuperscript{32} The provision of old people's homes was not directly part of personal health provision, but clearly had a close connection to such services. The L.C.C. also argued that it needed to retain control of the ambulance service, mental health provision, the school health service and other specialist health services such as its three T.B. hospitals and two holiday homes.\textsuperscript{33}

The decision as to which medical services needed to be provided by the regional authority and which by the district authority, depended to a large degree on the population levels of the new district authorities. The District Medical Officers of Health
(Greater London) Committee suggested that a population level of 60,000 to 200,000 would allow such authorities to efficiently provide virtually all services.\textsuperscript{34} The Royal College of Midwives, however, felt a population level of 200,000 to 400,000 would be more appropriate.\textsuperscript{35} They felt that only authorities of such size would be able to fully support a proper midwifery service. The Royal College of Nursing was primarily concerned to keep all personal health services together - health visitors, district nurses, nursery matrons, school nurses and others. It was particularly concerned that the school medical service be administered by the same authority as the children's service and welfare service.\textsuperscript{36} Thus, quite large district authorities were recommended, unless all services were to be run by the regional authority, especially if the school medical service was to be provided by the same authority as the education service. The Association of Public Health Inspectors and Guild of Public Health Inspectors also felt strongly that all public health matters should be the responsibility of one type of authority. They felt a grievance because some aspects of public health were split between the L.C.C. and the metropolitan boroughs:

The division of responsibility for the health and welfare of shop workers is indefensible and all this work should be placed in the hands of boroughs and district councils as recommended by the Gowers Committee.\textsuperscript{37}
A great deal of the professional opinion regarding public and personal health argued for an integrated service, which, of necessity, required large district authorities. As has been detailed in earlier chapters, the transition in London government led to such a development. However, because of the diverse nature of medical services, not all professional groups were happy with that situation. The Local Medical Committee for the County of London did not wish to see any major change. The Local Medical Committee was part of the British Medical Association and represented general practitioners in the County of London. They were not employed by local authorities in Greater London, but worked very closely with local authorities. Through the N.H.S.' London Executive Council, the Local Medical Committee appointed some of its members to serve on the L.C.C.'s Divisional Health Committee's, thus G.P.'s had a direct influence on the L.C.C.'s medical services. The Local Medical Committee argued that prior to the National Health Service Act 1946, medical services in London had been fragmented and as a consequence G.P.'s had little influence, but after that date they were able to influence the L.C.C. in order to benefit the whole of London. The Committee cast doubt on the ability of even quite large boroughs to carry out health services as well as the L.C.C. One of the Committee's members giving evidence to the Royal Commission spoke of his experience of working in Leeds, suggesting the same would happen if large London boroughs were responsible for such services:
It is a small unit, thinking is much slower, the type of person who serves on a council, and a man who has a responsible job to do in a large way has a much wider view of things and usually is much more tolerant and much more able.  

Thus, the larger the unit the better quality of staff.

The Local Medical Committee did not get its way. By incorporating some solutions to its major concerns in the new system, however, the Government was able to keep the Local Medical Committee reasonably content. The London Executive Council, an N.H.S. body established to oversee the N.H.S. work of G.P.'s, became the Inner London Executive Council. The Local Medical Committee supplied eleven members from a total of thirty-nine and was thus able to influence the nature of G.P. services in the area of the old County of London. Although the Committee lost its direct influence on L.C.C. health services, as these were transferred to the new boroughs it was able to retain some influence over the new system through its appointees on bodies such as the Central Council for District Nursing, which was involved in establishing some aspects of local government health services in the new boroughs. Minor changes were sufficient to allay the fears of some pressure groups like the Local Medical Committee.
The Royal Commission's report, the Government's white paper and the London Government Bill all took note of the criticisms mentioned above. Populous boroughs were created and were given responsibility for all personal and public health matters with the exception of the ambulance service, refuse disposal and main sewers. Even though local government public and personal health services were extremely complex, and even though a multiplicity of pressure groups held slightly differing views the principles of the new system met with little opposition from the professionals expected to run such services. This had as much to do with the underlying compatibility of many of the views expressed by pressure groups as with the Government's ability to listen and act upon their advice.

In his review of the new local government system in Greater London, five years after its creation, Rhodes' research team detailed several faults in the provision of personal health and welfare services. He also suggested that many services suffered because they were no longer provided on a larger scale by the L.C.C. Desmond Plummer, the first Conservative Leader of the G.L.C., pointed out that in many cases it took ten years for the new boroughs to become as efficient as the old system. Thus, although much of the advice of the medical related pressure groups was accepted by the Royal Commission and by the Government, the new system was not capable of incorporating all the best aspects of the old system. The old system of public and personal health worked, and if the new
system was better, it was still not perfect. This was probably inevitable, but if blame is to be apportioned, the various pressure groups must take some of it.

IV

The third area to be looked at in depth is education, and in particular the L.C.C.'s education service. Education presented many of the same problems as local government health services. Education in the whole of Greater London was a function of the county councils and county borough councils. However, in Greater London outside the L.C.C. there was a statutory obligation upon county councils to delegate some of their educational functions to the larger district authorities in their respective areas. Many district authorities both inside the L.C.C. and the rest of Greater London wanted greater powers over education. As with health services, the provision of education was within the Royal Commission's remit, and thus members of the Commission had the opportunity to recommend any change they felt desirable.

In common with personal and public health services, the provision of education was a complex matter. The L.C.C. was responsible for primary and secondary education, for many aspects of further education, technical education and special education. In the County of London education had developed with little regard to borough boundaries. Education was closely
linked to other local government functions such as the school medical service and children's service, it also relied on other county council departments such as finance, architects, and supplies.

Even though the Royal Commission recommended larger boroughs in Greater London, it was still unable to design a simple education system for Greater London. The Commission suggested that the Council for Greater London should be the local education authority for Greater London, but with a statutory obligation to delegate very many of its education functions to the new boroughs. The Royal Commission's review area contained 1,150,000 school children, 3,500 schools and 43,000 teachers. The County Councils Association was one of a number of organizations which felt that the Council for Greater London was far too big to be an effective education authority and that having to share education with the new boroughs would make the situation even worse. The L.L.P. came to much the same conclusion. It felt that the Royal Commission's proposals were much the same as the system as it existed in Middlesex, which had caused a great deal of tension. The Middlesex Excepted Districts Association told the Royal Commission that the County Council had not fully co-operated with the district councils over the issue of delegation. The Association wanted its members to be full education authorities. The L.L.P. also claimed delegation did not work. It argued that the Royal Commission had designed the Council for Greater London to suit
traffic and planning and education had been grafted onto that system: "In plain words, education has been subordinated to traffic." \(^5^0\)

The L.C.C. argued against the Royal Commission's proposals on education, as on most other matters. The L.C.C. did not feel the new London boroughs would be able to provide adequately for further education and special education. It pointed out that 6,300 disabled children attended special day schools, and 2,400 of these had to attend outside their home borough. \(^5^1\) The L.C.C. had several useful allies in its fight to save the L.C.C.'s education service. The London Teachers Association represented a great many of London's school teachers, and several groups such as the London Education Protection Committee represented parents, school governors and parent/teacher associations who wanted to save the L.C.C.'s education service.

The Government's white paper offered a different plan for education in Greater London. As has been detailed in chapter four, \(^5^2\) both the Minister of Education at that time, Sir David Eccles, and his Ministry saw the need for local education authorities to cover large populations. The white paper's local education authority for Central London became the I.L.E.A. which preserved the L.C.C.'s education service. \(^5^3\)

At the time, many saw this as a victory for the pressure groups which had attempted to save the L.C.C. or at least its
education service. Some were spurred on to ask for more L.C.C. services to be saved in a similar manner. The Hackney Gazette certainly believed the various pressure groups had been central to the Government's decision to save the L.C.C.'s education service. It pointed out:

Protests were so very spontaneous and widespread that the Government has declared that London's present educational system will not be disrupted - at any rate for the time being. 54

It went on to point out:­

The Metropolitan Juvenile Courts have issued a joint letter to the effect it would be a tragedy if the children's services of the L.C.C. were destroyed. 55

The Association of Child Care Officers and the Residential Child Care Association both argued shortly after the publication of the Government's white paper that child care should remain a responsibility of county councils. 56 This claim was used by the L.C.C. and others to demand that the L.C.C.'s children's service be treated in the same way as its education service. 57 The L.C.C. went further and claimed other L.C.C. services should be saved in the same manner as education. 58 By allowing the L.C.C. education service to survive the Government allowed pressure to develop to save other county council services. Yet the Government had little choice. The Ministry of Education did not approve of the Royal Commission's educational
proposals, but to create even larger boroughs in order to placate the Ministry of Education would have been a challenge to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government's position on London Government. It would have also have dramatically changed the pattern recommended by the Royal Commission, and as such would have given those opposing any reform a stronger case, and at the same time weakened the Government. The process of reform could have collapsed if the Government had failed to keep the authority of the Royal Commission's findings behind it. If the Government had announced the L.C.C.'s education service was to continue in its white paper, while clearly stating there were to be no further concessions, it is possible the Government would have avoided appearing to have backed down. This may have dampened the calls for further concessions from various pressure groups. The Government, however, did not have such an option. Less than a month before the publication of the white paper the Minister of Education and the Minister of Housing and Local Government were still unable to agree on the issue of education.59

Many Conservative's were bitterly opposed to the L.C.C.'s policy of increasing the number of comprehensive schools in London. Both national and local Conservative politicians wanted an end to the L.C.C.'s education service, seeing this as the best way to preserve London's grammar schools. Sir David Eccles acknowledged this in 1962:
I am sorry to have to say this, but I am aware - because they have made me aware of it - that some of my hon. friends feel that the L.C.C. has shown itself so doctrinaire in its educational planning that it would be worth almost any price to hand its responsibility to the boroughs. 60

Many Conservative's wanted the new inner London boroughs to be education authorities. 61 Thus, the preservation of the L.C.C.'s education service was a major set-back to many Conservatives.

The 1947 London Schools Plan projected a total of sixty-seven comprehensive schools in London, and at that time the Conservative opposition on the L.C.C. acquiesced. 62 It was not until the schools started to open and to threaten the continued existence of grammar schools that Conservatives began to oppose the spread of comprehensive schools. Sir David Eccles, while showing no opposition to grammar schools, was prepared to see more comprehensive schools than many of his Party colleagues would have liked; in 1955 Eccles declined to speak in Paddington during the L.C.C. elections because he did not agree with the Conservative group's education policies. 63 In July 1962 Eccles was replaced as Minister of Education by Sir Edward Boyle. He was on the left of the Conservative Party and had even fewer reservations concerning comprehensive education than his predecessor, although once again he demonstrated no outward hostility to grammar schools. However, as his biographer points

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out, that would have been impossible for a Conservative Minister of Education in the early 1960s.\textsuperscript{64}

In early 1962 the L.C.C. announced that it was to merge fifteen of its twenty grammar schools into comprehensive schools.\textsuperscript{65} The following year it announced plans to abandon the eleven plus examination with the support of Boyle.\textsuperscript{66} These were only the last of a long line of educational decisions that had won some support from Conservative Ministers of Education, but which caused great opposition among many other Conservatives. The L.L.P. recognized that a Conservative controlled G.L.C. with educational powers would attempt to end comprehensive education.\textsuperscript{67}

There is no evidence to suggest that the Royal Commission was influenced by the debate concerning the merits or demerits of comprehensive or grammar education. The issue, however, did affect the Government’s decisions. Even though the two Ministers concerned were not opponents of comprehensive schooling, party politics meant they had little choice but to attempt to find some alternative to saving the L.C.C.’s education service. Enoch Powell confirmed that education was the most divisive topic in cabinet and the I.L.E.A. was only an acceptable compromise, because of the promise to review its future after five years.\textsuperscript{68} Delays in accepting the necessity of the I.L.E.A. heightened the sense of victory among those pressure groups wishing to see the L.C.C.’s education service

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preserved, and, in turn, increased the belief among some that other L.C.C. services could also be treated in a similar manner.

The L.C.C.'s education service was saved mainly because the Government was unable to find an alternative solution. The various groups seeking to retain the L.C.C.'s education service were no more responsible for its retention than the M.W.B. had been for its continued independence. Nonetheless both cases were open to the misinterpretation that the interested pressure groups were responsible for the changes in the Government's plans for local government in Greater London.

V

It can be seen that pressure groups were a vital part of the process of transition. The Royal Commission's report drew from the opinions and advice of pressure groups - political, professional, academic. These were the people who made local government work, or had at least studied in-depth the problems of local government, and thus the process could not have worked without their co-operation. Not all opinions could be accommodated within the new system.

Some pressure groups, such as the majority of those concerned with public and personal health, presented their cases with the minimum of publicity, yet must have influenced the shape of the
new London government. Others, such as those concerned to save the L.C.C.'s education service, claimed success for their campaigns, when it was not so much their campaigns that won the day, but the Government's inability to find an alternative plan.

Other potential pressure groups were neutralized. There was no Governmental attempt to make the G.L.C. a police authority, thus the issue was kept from the agenda. The same principle and practice applied to London Transport. The issue of whether a Greater London Authority should control public transport was raised, but it was beyond the scope of the official review and failed to become a major issue which could have brought many pressure groups into the equation. Water supply was brought into the process in April 1962, but at a late date which limited the time available for pressure groups to organize any opposition to the Government's plans. It was the limited time span available which forced the Government to abandon its plans for the M.W.B.

Pressure groups were an essential part of a complex process such as the transition in London government. The advice of many such groups was sought by the Royal Commission. However, it is not possible to evaluate the effectiveness of any unofficial and unrecorded pressure that may have been applied to the Royal Commission or the Government during the transition in London government. What this chapter does illustrate is that very few
local government functions within Greater London were so clearly in need of reform that various pressure groups, often defending a vested interest, were not able to devise a defence for the *status quo*. It also demonstrates that on many occasions those defending the existing structure in individual services were introducing broader issues that concerned local government generally. Among such issues was whether transferring services to district councils away from county councils would fragment and damage services or whether it would lead to a greater responsiveness to local needs.
Notes

1/ Chapter Two above, pp.34-40.

2/ Evening Standard, 21.11.63 p.15


4/ Evening Standard, 12.9.58 p.9

5/ Ibid. 13.6.58 p.7


7/ The Times, 13.3.62 p.5.


9/ Chapter Two Above, p.52.

11/ For L.C.C.'s official involvement with the M.W.B. see G.L.R.O., file LCC/CL/1/14-16, 18. This file appears to contain all the L.C.C.'s records on this matter.

12/ Chapter Four above, pp.113-4.


14/ Hansard, Parliamentary Debates (fifth series), H.C. Deb 28.11.57 Cols. 1279-80.

15/ See G.L.R.O., file LCC/CL/1/14-16, 18. L.C.C.'s records concerning the M.W.B.


17/ P.R.O., file PREM 11/3864, Prime Minister's Office archive, letter from Ministry of Housing and Local Government to the Clerk of the M.W.B.

18/ Ibid.
19/ G.L.R.O., L.L.P. archive, file ACC 2417/A/45 Executive Committee Meeting 5.4.62.


21/ P.R.O., file PREM 11/3864, Prime Minister's Office archive, letter to Prime Minister from Ministry of Housing and Local Government.


24/ G.L.R.O., file LCC/CL/1/14-16, 18. L.C.C.'s records concerning the M.W.B.


26/ Ibid. q.11092.

27/ Ibid. q.11088.

29/ For example, see *The Times*, 19.5.53 p.4.

30/ Reported in *The Times*, 8.7.55 p.4.


35/ Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London, Minutes of Evidence, Evidence of the Royal College of Midwives, q.11293.

36/ Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London, Minutes of Evidence, Evidence of the Royal College of Nursing, q.11405.
37/ Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London, Minutes of Evidence, Evidence of the Association of Public Health Inspectors and Guild of Public Health Inspectors, q.11471.

38/ British Medical Association, London, Finance and General Purpose Sub-Committee of the Local Medical Committee for the County of London.

39/ Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London, Minutes of Evidence, Evidence of the Local Medical Committee for the County of London, q.12660.

40/ Ibid. q.12662.

41/ British Medical Association, London, Finance and General Purpose Sub-Committee of the Local Medical Committee for the County of London.

42/ Ibid.


44/ Private conversation with Lord Plummer, 16.8.94.
45/ Chapter Four above, pp.135-9 and appendix A below.


50/ Ibid.

51/ L.C.C. Minutes, 12.3.61.

52/ Chapter Four above, pp.135-9.

53/ Ibid.


55/ Ibid.

57/ L.C.C. Minutes, 5.2.63.

58/ Ibid. 29.5.62.

59/ P.R.O., file PREM 11/4338, Prime Minister's Office archive, letter from Brooke to Eccles 5.10.61 and letter Macmillan to Hill 10.10.61.

60/ Hansard, Parliamentary Debates (fifth series) H.C. Deb. 20.2.62. Vol.654 col.245.

61/ The Times, 22.2.62 p.4. Also Lord Plummer in private conversation, 16.8.94.


65/ Evening Standard, 1.2.62 p.8.
66/ Ibid. 5.7.63 p.12.

67/ G.L.R.O., L.L.P. archive, file ACC 2417/A/41, Executive Committee Meeting 3.11.60.

68/ Private conversation with Mr Enoch Powell, 6.10.93.


70/ Ibid. Also the Evening Standard, 28.2.63 p.4.

71/ All oral evidence presented to the Royal Commission was published, see Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London, Minutes of Evidence, four volumes. (London, H.M.S.O., 1959). Also all written evidence presented to the Royal Commission is available at the Public Records Office indexed under HLG 3.
Chapter Ten
Continuity and change
the G.L.C. in Action

I

This final chapter is concerned not with the creation of the G.L.C., but with its operation. It will analyse the nature of local government in Greater London from the first G.L.C. election, in April 1964, to the end of 1967, eight months after the second G.L.C. election and the coming to power of the first G.L.C. Conservative administration.

This chapter will examine whether there were any unexpected problems within the new local government system for Greater London. It will also examine whether the G.L.C. developed into a different organization to that created by the London Government Act, 1963, and if so, who was responsible, and why. It also aims to examine how the G.L.C. was perceived by those elected to it, by the new London boroughs, by other local authorities, by the Government, by the media and by Londoners.

II

On the 9 April 1964 the first election for the G.L.C took place. Labour won a comfortable majority, winning sixty-four seats to the Conservative's thirty-six.¹ A month later the
first elections for the new London boroughs took place, and again Labour did well, taking control of twenty borough councils to the Conservatives twelve.² The national unpopularity of the Conservatives at the time seems to have played a part in the Labour victories.³ The reason is of little consequence. For whatever reason, for the first three years of their existence, and the first two years of power, within the new local authorities in Greater London Labour was to have the greater share of power.

Just under one year later on the 1 April 1965 the G.L.C. and the new boroughs took power as the old mixture of authorities passed into history. (With the exception of the Corporation of London and Harrow which continued to exist, but with the new powers and functions of London boroughs.)

One two-tiered system had been replaced by another, but attempts had been made to create two levels of local government that could work together as co-equals, one regional and strategic in outlook and one serving the day-by-day needs of local communities. Much effort had been put into insuring good co-operation between the G.L.C. and the new boroughs, rather than the lack of understanding and even conflict which had often been the case between the old counties and their district councils. As a Conservative policy document expressed the local government system in London:

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The key to success is a real, active and friendly partnership between the London Boroughs and the Greater London Council. Their roles are complimentary not conflicting. We will not allow to develop again a situation where a remote London County Council has dominated the Metropolitan Boroughs.  

Unfortunately the policy document did not make it clear just how such a harmonious relationship could be maintained at all times. There were many areas of conflict between the G.L.C. and the London boroughs. The very division of responsibility necessitated that the G.L.C. should have a strategic view of the whole of the Greater London and that the London boroughs should confine their functions to their own neighbourhoods. This created two very different modes of thought, and often concerning the same subject. Clashes were inevitable.  

The compromise over education had created two classes of London boroughs: those in outer London, which were Local Education Authorities, and those in inner London, that had no education functions. The Inner London Education Authority was not an ordinary G.L.C. committee. All G.L.C. councillors from the twelve inner London boroughs were members of the I.L.E.A. and each of those twelve boroughs along with the City of London appointed one of their own councillors to the I.L.E.A., thus giving the boroughs some limited influence over inner London education.
The financial arrangements for inner London education allowed the I.L.E.A., not the full G.L.C., to set the level of the precept to be issued to the inner London boroughs and to set its own borrowing requirements. The G.L.C. had no control over these finances, yet was responsible for issuing the rates precept to the inner London boroughs. So, although the I.L.E.A. was a special committee of the G.L.C. and was dominated by G.L.C. councillors, used the G.L.C.'s County Hall as its own headquarters, and used G.L.C. officers in its own administration, the G.L.C. lacked control over the I.L.E.A. This created a huge potential for conflict because the inner London boroughs were to be told each year to raise, through their rate demand, a sum to be handed to the G.L.C. to pay for the education provisions over which each borough had little control. This did cause some resentment within the inner London boroughs. The G.L.C. was blamed, because it was so closely connected to the control of the I.L.E.A.

Although there were wide differences in population levels among the London boroughs, the inner London boroughs did not, generally, have smaller populations than the outer London boroughs. Thus, they could have become as efficient education authorities as the outer London boroughs. Initially the London Government Act, 1963, established the need for a review of the administration of educational facilities in inner London by not later than March 1970. This review could have abolished the I.L.E.A. and given the inner London boroughs the additional
role and status of Local Education Authorities on the same basis as the outer London boroughs. The need for this review was rescinded by the new Labour Government elected in October 1964, which reduced the likelihood of the inner London boroughs gaining the same educational status as the outer London boroughs.

In February 1965, even before the new authorities took power, the Camden, Holborn and Finsbury Guardian pointed out that the I.L.E.A. was set to cost inner London ratepayers £87,045,000 in the following year which was a seven-and-a-half per cent increase over the cost of the L.C.C.'s education service for the year ending 1965. As the article pointed out such an increase in costs was likely to add to the tension between the G.L.C. and the boroughs. Because the I.L.E.A. took control of the L.C.C.'s education service and because political control remained firmly in Labour's hands, many of the pre-existing tensions continued, particularly the politically sensitive issue of the future of grammar schools. If education had been in the hands of the boroughs, the issue would not have gone away, but it would have been an issue dividing central government and some of the London boroughs, not a cause of tension between the boroughs and the G.L.C. In the initial years following 1965 the new boroughs and the G.L.C. were too busy ensuring their own efficiency to worry overmuch about demanding a change in the division of powers but as early as May 1967 the G.L.C. and Greenwich were in dispute over the
I.L.E.A.'s determination to impose comprehensive schools on the schoolchildren of that borough.¹²

In April 1967 the Conservatives won control of the G.L.C. and I.L.E.A. with a massive G.L.C. majority. They won eighty-two seats to Labour's eighteen.¹³ Yet, whatever the personal feelings of Conservative Councillors they had a statutory duty to continue the I.L.E.A. Thus, the new Conservative administration could do little to ease any tension between the inner London boroughs and the I.L.E.A.

In late 1964 the new Labour Home Secretary considered amending the London Government Act, 1963, so that the L.C.C.'s children's service could be saved in much the same manner as the L.C.C.'s education service. This would have reduced the functions of the inner London boroughs. In consequence it would have further increased the differences between inner and outer London boroughs and added to the possible causes of tension between the G.L.C. and the boroughs. The G.L.C accepted the Home Secretary's recommendations and was prepared to administer the L.C.C.'s children's service.¹⁴ In early 1965, however, the Home Secretary decided not to amend the London Government Act. Consequently, the inner London boroughs took control of the L.C.C.'s children's service as originally intended. This move by the Labour Government demonstrated that the powers of the new London boroughs were not sacrosanct and that it was possible for a government to enhance the power of the G.L.C. at
the expense of the boroughs. There is no direct evidence that this incident increased the tension between the G.L.C. and the London boroughs, but it is possible.

Education was not the only policy area that caused tension between the G.L.C. and the new boroughs. As a county council the L.C.C. had been unusual in having any housing powers at all. No other county council within Greater London had had such powers. The L.C.C., however, had had the right to purchase land outside the county of London and had developed large housing estates in very many parts of Greater London. The London Government Act, 1963, gave most of the L.C.C.'s housing functions to the G.L.C. for a period of transition, up to, but not exceeding five years. Even after this period, the G.L.C. was to have extensive housing powers, although most of its building was to be outside Greater London. Nonetheless the G.L.C. was allowed to build within Greater London with the permission of the borough involved but without the borough's permission in some limited cases. This gave scope for disagreement over land use.

Even before the G.L.C. had formally replaced the L.C.C., there arose a dispute over a newly vacant twenty acres of land in the Metropolitan Borough of St.Marylebone. Both the G.L.C. and the borough wanted to develop the site. The Chairman of the G.L.C.'s Housing Committee called St.Marylebone selfish for not handing the land to the G.L.C.. Shortly after the new Labour
Government announced that it was relying on the G.L.C. to meet London's housing needs without reference to the role to be played by the boroughs.\textsuperscript{17} In a further example, Illtyd Harrington, later to be Chairman of the G.L.C., recollected that the Government gave the G.L.C. large areas of land at the site of the old Hendon airport and at Thamesmead.\textsuperscript{18}

In the early years of the G.L.C. there were cases of the authority not getting its own way regarding re-development of sites. In October 1966, Sutton Borough Council demolished a row of old dilapidated almshouses in order to build a new school. The G.L.C. had argued they should have been refurbished, but Sutton told it to mind its own business.\textsuperscript{19} The same G.L.C. Housing Chairman, Evelyn Denington, who had called St.Marylebone selfish, also argued with Bexley over the G.L.C.'s wish to build houses in the borough.\textsuperscript{20}

Sir Keith Joseph, the last Conservative Minister of Housing and Local Government before the Conservatives lost the October 1964 general election, had announced that he envisaged a major housing function for the G.L.C. even after most of the inherited L.C.C. housing powers had ceased to function following the transitional five year period.\textsuperscript{21} Nonetheless, it was clear from the provisions of the London Government Act that the majority of council housing stock in Greater London was to be owned by the individual boroughs after the five years of transition. The first Conservative administration to take
control of the G.L.C., in April 1967, made an effort to ease tension regarding housing and redevelopment through a plan to transfer the G.L.C.'s inherited housing stock to the boroughs. This was to be in three stages, the last to be in the mid-1970s. Sir Ashley Bramall, however, a senior Labour member of the G.L.C., pointed out the Conservative controlled G.L.C. found it difficult to transfer such large numbers of dwellings quickly, and it was not until 1985 that the last G.L.C. housing estate was handed over to the borough's control. (Tower Hamlets in that case.)

From the earliest days of the new system the building of new council housing, redevelopment of land and even the control of existing housing stock caused tensions between the G.L.C. and the boroughs. Other areas of local government service, such as education, also caused tension. The G.L.C. and the new London boroughs were not designed to be rivals, but in many fields they soon became so. According to Bramall, Newham and Croydon simply resented the G.L.C.: they disliked any interference because they had been county boroughs. Thus, some inherent tension existed in the system even before the operation of the new system created yet more tension.

III

Much effort during the period of transition had been put into devising the optimum size for the new London boroughs. Many
functions undertaken by the previous upper-tier authorities were to be the responsibility of the new boroughs, yet they were to remain small enough to be sensitive to local needs and issues. There had been fears that they would prove too small to undertake some of the new tasks expected of them. The Local Government Sub-Committee of the Labour Party's National Executive Committee had expressed fears that many services, such as children's, education, and health, previously undertaken by county councils would be fragmented and less efficient. As detailed above, the Labour Government elected in 1964 considered transferring some of the L.C.C.'s children's service to the G.L.C. rather than to the boroughs because of this. Under this plan, the G.L.C. was to be allowed to provide some residential accommodation, and it would have reviewed the amount of accommodation available in remand homes, children's homes and in hostels. Also under the Labour Party proposals, several L.C.C. and Middlesex County Council remand and children's homes would have been transferred to the G.L.C., rather than individual boroughs. These changes to the new system were not introduced, but their mere consideration demonstrated that the new Labour Government had fears that the boroughs were not suitable for all the services they were expected to provide.

Seven years after the introduction of the new system, Gerald Rhodes of the London School of Economics' Greater London Group edited a book, The New Government of London: The First Five
Years. Much of this volume was taken up by an analysis of the efficiency or otherwise of the new boroughs and the services they were providing. In summary, the findings of the study were that the worst fears of those who felt the boroughs would be incapable of coping had not been realized: the new boroughs were performing most of their functions to a reasonable standard. However, some of the earlier predictions of a drop in the quality of some services had, to a certain extent, come true. The analysis of children's services in the new boroughs had found that they tended to employ less professional staff than the old counties, that staff had to deal with the broad range of children's issues rather than specializing, and that the small numbers employed could lead to staff shortages during times of sickness and holidays among the staff. The analysis of education services in Greater London found that, in the case of special schools and colleges, the boroughs were trying to tackle problems in isolation rather than co-operating with each other and the boroughs consequently did not have the facilities to offer a wide range of courses. Rhode's book found similar faults in borough housing services, in transport and highways planning (responsibility was shared between the boroughs and the G.L.C.), and in some other aspects. Rhodes was certainly not arguing that the new system was a failure, and he was not arguing that it was beyond further improvement. What the closely argued and detailed analysis in his book does show is that not only were there many problems
associated with the newness of the London boroughs, but that the years of detailed research and debate leading up to the introduction of the new system had failed to find a perfect size for the new district authorities or a perfect distribution of functions between district and regional authorities. The book also implicitly acknowledges that no perfect system was possible. Desmond Plummer, the first Conservative Leader of the G.L.C. was also of the opinion that the boroughs were far from perfect. He felt that it has only been since the 1980s that many of the complex services provided by the boroughs have began to work properly.  

There had also been considerable debate concerning the size and functions of the regional authority for Greater London and the establishment of the G.L.C. did not stop such debate. Peter Hall in his book London 2000, published in 1963, just before the new local authorities were elected, argued that the new system had produced a good balance between the new boroughs and the G.L.C. He also supported the creation of a regional authority, but felt the G.L.C. was too small to be a proper regional planning authority. Before the election of the Labour Government in October 1964, the Labour Party spokesman on local government, Michael Stewart M.P., also argued that the G.L.C was too small. He pointed out that the G.L.C.'s main functions were to be housing, education in inner London, and planning. Moreover, he argued the G.L.C. would be encouraged to work with the surrounding counties because:
...the commuters in Surrey, Hertfordshire, etc beyond the G.L.C. border are part of London's traffic problem. The Tory refusal when passing the London Government Act to establish a South-East Regional Authority shows their failure to grasp this problem.31

There had been other similar concerns expressed about the G.L.C.'s powers. The Royal Institute of British Architects had argued that the G.L.C. needed stronger planning powers. It used the example of the scheme to segregate vehicles and pedestrians in the City of London and Holborn and argued that the G.L.C. needed to be able to supervise the boroughs concerned.32 The Town Planning Institute was similarly concerned and felt that neither the G.L.C. nor the boroughs were likely to employ enough town planners.33

The Conservative Party when in government and politically responsible for the nature of the G.L.C. had recognized that it was not an ideal size for all of its functions. In a research document, London's Government, produced by the Central Office's Research Department in October 1963, it was accepted that there would be a continuing need for all the county councils in the South-East of England to co-operate on many planning issues. The document goes on to claim, however, that the G.L.C. would have some worthwhile planning functions.34
Because the G.L.C.'s size and range of functions were not sufficient to tackle all Greater London or South-East England regional problems, other bodies, often the central government, had to fill such vacuums. Greater London Conservatives, in their first G.L.C. manifesto for the 1964 G.L.C. election, demonstrated (probably inadvertently) that some aspects of planning and redevelopment were beyond the powers of the new regional authority. The London Conservatives promised London voters that if elected they would endeavour to persuade the Government to double expenditure on new roads and to invest in new underground and over-ground railway lines. Thus, the Conservatives were admitting that the G.L.C. was powerless to tackle such issues: all it could do, like its predecessors, was attempt to persuade central government to tackle problems concerning roads and transport in Greater London.

At the same election the Leader of the Labour group of candidates, and after the election first leader of the G.L.C., William Fiske, was able to be more explicit in his criticism of the G.L.C. His party had consistently opposed the creation of the council. Fiske told the electors of Greater London that if a Labour Government was elected at the forthcoming general election it would hope to introduce a truly regional system of government. He held out the prospect of a regional government for South-East England and the re-establishment of both the Middlesex and London County Councils.
In 1963 Peter Hall had written:

Today, in the early sixties, we stand on a critical watershed in the history of traffic planning in London. For the first time in decades, the money is being made available for major roads building: £10 million a year over the next ten years in the L.C.C. area alone. In the late sixties, as the main network of inter-city long-distance motorways is completed, the pace of urban construction is likely to increase even further. Already in 1963, work had begun on London’s first urban motorway: the M4, to join west London with London airport and the Great West Road beyond Maidenhead. The seeds of the American vicious circle are thus already sown: construction generates traffic, generates demand for more construction, generates votes, generates election promises, generates more construction. Unless we lay the foundation now of a coherent transport policy for the decades to come, the process bids to overwhelm us - and London.37

This was a prediction that London would be overwhelmed, but a prediction that the G.L.C. was virtually powerless to act upon. Most of the money and most of the direction came from central government. In July 1966, shortly after the G.L.C. had published the second part of its own London Traffic Survey
which predicted that the number of cars in Greater London would double by 1981, the *Evening Standard* called for: "More Motorways to stop the suburbs seizing up." Yet the G.L.C., responsible for urban Greater London alone, did not have the powers or the finance to undertake such a programme. In April 1967, the Chairman of the Highways and Traffic Committee, Jane Phillips, argued that there was no room in London for two-car families. Yet once again the G.L.C. had no power to implement any policy aimed at restricting the number of cars owned by Londoners.

The related issues of planning, roads and traffic demonstrate that the G.L.C. was unable to solve some of Greater London’s problems. The limited range of powers conferred upon the G.L.C. did restrict its ability to serve Londoners. It would be possible to find many other issues beyond the control of the G.L.C. - the N.H.S. was beyond G.L.C. control, as were most other aspects of Greater London’s health services. The G.L.C. had no power over commuters and limited powers over their employers. The G.L.C. had to attempt to influence central government to aide the creation of work when employment began to become sparse. Even in London’s dock area the G.L.C. had little influence over redevelopment when the docks closed in the 1970s and 1980s. Horace Cutler, the last Conservative Leader of the G.L.C., argued that the Secretary of State for the Environment, Peter Walker, refused to listen to the G.L.C. in 1971 when it recommended a local solution involving the
G.L.C. and the relevant London boroughs to solve the growing problems faced by the increasingly derelict docklands area.\textsuperscript{40}

As with the new London boroughs, there had been no claim that the G.L.C. would be faultless, and there had never been a suggestion that central government would cease to take an active interest in the affairs of Greater London. Nonetheless, the G.L.C.'s inherent limitations soon became apparent and loyal Conservatives such as Horace Cutler were able to argue it required dramatic reform to both its area and its functions.\textsuperscript{41}

IV

Unlike many other local authorities in Britain during the 1960s, both the G.L.C. and the new London boroughs were subject to party political control.\textsuperscript{42} Before the introduction of the new system there had been 290 county councillors in Greater London and this had been reduced to 100 members of the G.L.C. The 2,995 borough or district councillors in Greater London had been reduced to 1,920.\textsuperscript{43} All G.L.C. councillors belonged to either the Conservative or Labour groups. Within the boroughs only sixteen Liberals, three Communists and fifty-six ratepayers or Independents interrupted the Conservative and Labour pattern.\textsuperscript{44} Initially, Conservative controlled boroughs had to work with a Labour controlled G.L.C. This was followed by a period when the Labour controlled boroughs had to work with a Conservative G.L.C. At periods in its history, a
Conservative controlled G.L.C. had to co-operate with a Labour national government and a Labour G.L.C. with a Conservative national government. By and large local government services continued unaffected by such issues, but such political complexities probably created tensions between the national government and the G.L.C.

The deeply party political nature of local government in Greater London did heighten tensions in the system. It created more argument and a greater exploitation of weaknesses in the system by local politicians. For example, Jane Phillips' comments about Greater London not having room for two car families mentioned above caused political controversy. The Conservative opposition on the G.L.C. attacked the argument in the press not in the council chamber. There is no evidence in the G.L.C. minutes that the issue was ever discussed by the full council. The Evening Standard, described by one leading Labour Councillor as "Not Friendly" towards Labour, carried the Conservative Group Leaders arguments against Jane Phillips' case. Unfriendly or not, the same newspaper also detailed William Fiske's defence of his Chairman of the Highways and Traffic Committee. After the Conservatives won control of the G.L.C. in April 1967, the council remained as politically divided as before. Conservative policies regarding education, housing, and many other areas were covered in the Evening Standard and elsewhere. Press coverage usually included the Labour opposition Group's view, often the reverse of that
Conflict between the political parties on the G.L.C. was common, as were conflicts between boroughs and the G.L.C. Horace Cutler identified a further case of tension - that between G.L.C. Councillors from inner London and from outer London. He felt the Conservative Group, particularly when in opposition, was dominated by an outer London ethos and the Labour Group, particularly when in opposition, was dominated by an inner London ethos. Many of these differences of opinion received full coverage in local or regional newspapers.

The very large size of Greater London, and the resources of the G.L.C., caused many problems for the council. By the mid-1960s Greater London's half million acres had a population of just under 8,000,000 people. The following quote from F.E. Hamilton, although it refers to the mid-1980s, gives a good impression of the wealth of Greater London.

...Greater London's economic size by its gross regional product... amounted to U.S. $78b in 1985, equal to 17.1% of the U.K. G.D.P. and 3.9% of the E.C. G.D.P. - making the City the 25th largest economic unit among the world's 212 independent territories or nations. London created as much G.D.P. as all the last 108 smaller and least developed of
those 212 states combined. And its G.D.P. exceeded the sales turnover of all the multinationals excepting only G.M. and Exxon.51

Only a very small fraction of this wealth was at the disposal of the G.L.C. Consequently at no stage of its history did the G.L.C. have the resources to solve all of Greater London's social and economic problems. Nevertheless, such statistics helped to create an image of a wealthy region with the G.L.C. at the political pinnacle of that region. Although the G.L.C. received all its powers from Parliament, which retained the power to legislate the G.L.C. out of existence, there were signs of unease and perhaps jealousy among national politicians about the size, power and wealth of the G.L.C.

The Ministry of Housing and Local Government treated the G.L.C. not as just one more local authority, but gave it a special status of its own, the equivalent of the six Local Government Associations.52 This meant, at its crudest interpretation, the influence of the G.L.C. within Whitehall was as great as all Britain's county councils in combination. Because London was the centre of national power, the seat of government and national administration, the G.L.C. was physically closer to the centre of power than any other local authority. Many politicians were able to make the move from County Hall to the House of Commons, and many national politicians were able to maintain close links between Parliament and G.L.C. This gave
the G.L.C. great influence, as Richard Crossman pointed out in his diary shortly after being appointed Minister of Housing and Local Government in the new Labour Government of October 1964:

My God! The L.C.C. pressure group is a formidable thing in a Labour cabinet. There they all were, Gerald Gardiner, our Lord Chancellor, once an L.C.C. member; Barbara Castle - her husband Ted on the G.L.C.; Michael Stewart, with his wife a member too; all there pressuring, levering, to try to help the G.L.C. to get its way against the Lord President and the Chief Whip and myself,...Well, we were pressured and pressured but we kept them at bay.53

Crossman did not mention that Audrey Callaghan, wife of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, James Callaghan, one of the most powerful men in the Cabinet, was also a member of the G.L.C. It is possible that James Callaghan chose not to try and influence the Cabinet in favour of the G.L.C. There were also a number of other Ministers and backbenchers who had connections with the G.L.C. As Crossman showed, the G.L.C. did not always persuade the government of the day of its view, but it had influence at the heart of power. When Edward Heath formed his Government in 1970, one of his closest allies, Geoffrey Rippon, was a former leader of the Conservative Group on the L.C.C. and other Conservative M.P.'s had connections to the G.L.C. There is,
however, no evidence of the G.L.C. having influenced any particular government policy through informal cabinet links.

Many members of the G.L.C. were quite aware of the power, influence and prestige of the G.L.C. Illtyd Harrington said of the first Labour administration at the G.L.C. that it had a civilizing mission that it had inherited from the L.C.C.:

...it was under people who knew about relationships with government, and in fact this interface between politicians at Westminster and us was very good indeed....The Labour Government wanted to help,...it was like we had been given this Kingdom to work on....We had a budget bigger,...well, if we had gone into the United Nations we used to say we would have been the nineteenth nation. When I was responsible for the budget in the 1970s it was £5,000m so you had a sense of government,...

When Desmond Plummer became leader of the G.L.C., following Conservative success at the April 1967 G.L.C. elections, the Evening Standard referred to Plummer as London's new Prime Minister and referred to his new Cabinet. Plummer does not seem to have ever used either term himself, but when speaking at a conference in Budapest in 1972 he referred to the G.L.C. as the first 'super' council, the first regional authority in
Britain and pointed out that as leader he was backed up by a team of 120,000 permanent staff.56

It seems hardly surprising that the size, power, wealth and influence of the G.L.C. and the confidence and pride of leading G.L.C. Councillors were capable of causing fear, distrust and possibly jealousy among national politicians and others vying for power and influence.

The G.L.C., while sharing local government power with the boroughs, represented for the first time a regional authority capable of controlling and co-ordinating many more regional services than the old county councils. The G.L.C.'s area almost coincided with the Metropolitan Police's area, and it included almost all of the Metropolitan Water Board's area. It had been the Conservative Government's intention in 1962 that the G.L.C. should take control of the M.W.B., and it had been suggested, by Mr T. Iremonger, Conservative M.P. for Ilford, that the G.L.C. should become the Police Authority for the Metropolitan Police.57 There were many other public services which could have been transferred to the G.L.C., services which the old fragmented system of upper-tier authorities in Greater London would have found it difficult to control and co-ordinate. This could have included British Rail short distance commuter lines, or government N.H.S. and social security services.
One such service the G.L.C. did take control of was London's bus and underground railway systems. Barbara Castle, the Minister of Transport in the Labour Government, initiated the idea. She argued that in a climate of increasing road use there was a need for democratically accountable passenger transport authorities with a remit to expand public transport and integrate road and rail services. Castle felt the G.L.C. was ideal for such a passenger transport authority, and at a meeting with William Fiske, leader of the G.L.C., Jane Phillips, Chairman of the Highways and Traffic Committee, and her husband (he was a member of the G.L.C.'s Highways and Traffic Committee) in November 1966 got the G.L.C.'s support. Castle explained in her diary:

...we must break through the vicious spiral of rising fares, falling use of public transport, declining services and so on. My aim is to make the G.L.C. sit up and do something radical about parking. It isn't their fault that it has taken them two years to build up the necessary staff for effective traffic management. Nor is it their fault they have to share their powers with the boroughs.... But nonetheless it is time the G.L.C. showed some fight. I left them absolutely scared by the thought of a massive fares increase and, I hope, ready to demand action.

So, even when reluctant, the G.L.C. could be bullied into
accepting more powers and into plans of action it would not necessarily have adopted if left alone. Castle was offering to supply a government subsidy to keep public transport fares low if the G.L.C. would accept responsibility for London Transport and co-ordinate it with traffic management schemes. Fiske and his colleagues had only been a little concerned about the financial implications to the G.L.C., but the Conservative Group were opposed to the principle. Desmond Plummer argued for a Traffic 'overlord' for Greater London who would not be a G.L.C. officer and who would co-ordinate London transport, British Rail, traffic control and police enforcement.\textsuperscript{61}

Castle, a long serving labour politician called the G.L.C. election of April 1967: "Catastrophic! Nothing less than a massacre."\textsuperscript{62} She did not have such an easy relationship with Plummer as she had done with Fiske, but she set about forcing the Conservative controlled G.L.C. into accepting her plans.\textsuperscript{63} Castle pushed and the G.L.C. gave way. The Transport (London) Act, 1969 transferred London Transport to the G.L.C. In 1970 the London Passenger Transport Board became the London Transport Executive and political control passed to the G.L.C. Ruck and Rhodes explained the magnitude of the G.L.C.'s new powers:

The fundamental purpose of the proposals in the white paper was to give the G.L.C. the powers to enable it to integrate planning, major highway
functions, traffic measures and the broad direction of passenger transport services.⁶⁴

Even with doubts from the Labour controlled G.L.C. and outright opposition from the Conservative controlled G.L.C., the council had been given major new powers. With control of buses and the underground it was able to exercise functions that spilled out into neighbouring counties. It seems likely neighbours saw the G.L.C. as over-powerful and capable of further extensions to its powers, its area, and its influence. It is also possible that the G.L.C.’s ability to attract more powers and its latent potential to take control of other region-wide services from central government, or other bodies, caused the G.L.C. to be resented and feared. To individuals or groups fearing the power of the G.L.C. it may have made little difference whether the G.L.C. asked for extra functions or whether they were imposed upon the Council.

VI

As has been shown throughout this thesis the new system of local government was based on a long series of compromises. This blunted the radical nature of the new system - the boroughs did not gain complete responsibility for housing or planning and in central London they were deprived of education. The G.L.C. also lacked powers that may have enhanced its chances of solving more of Greater London’s problems. In 1981,
for example, the G.L.C. suffered a humiliating defeat when its policy of heavily subsidizing London Transport's bus and underground system was challenged in the courts and found to be illegal. The London Borough of Bromley was able to prove that the G.L.C. did not have the right to demand the ratepayers of Greater London pay the price of a heavily subsidized public transport system. The Labour controlled G.L.C. had no option but to abandon its scheme, and was hamstrung in its attempts to encourage the use of public transport, a key element of that administration's policy.\footnote{55}

The new system was firmly based on dividing urban Greater London from the surrounding counties. It was also firmly based on a not entirely satisfactory division of powers between a regional authority and the district authorities. The G.L.C.'s Greater London Development Plan, for example, suffered because the Council shared its planning powers with the London boroughs and the City of London. The plan also suffered because the G.L.C. had no responsibility for British Railway's commuter lines leading out to London's hinterland.\footnote{56} It seems unlikely, however, that a more radical break from this traditional pattern would have survived the many pressures to abandon reform. The price of a change to the system was compromise between the Government sponsoring the reforms and the many powerful groups intent on protecting their own interests. As we have seen the Government was quite prepared to accept change to
its original plans in order to get the general pattern of reforms accepted.

The transition in London government was a political process, and it had to take account of what was achievable. The Conservative Government through Henry Brooke and the Ministry of Housing and Local Government set the agenda by establishing exactly what the Royal Commission's remit was. The Royal Commission did not have the power to suggest a reform so radical a Conservative Government could not accept it. The Royal Commission's report did offer the sort of reforms favoured by Conservatives such as Enoch Powell, who had produced a plan for reform when Director of the London Municipal Society in the mid-1950s. The Government's white paper took the Royal Commission's plan and developed it just enough to create a blueprint acceptable to most Conservatives. It created a new system that was acceptable to a majority of interested bodies, even if some had to be cajoled and others allowed a few more concessions. The London Government Bill followed the same process and incorporated a few modifications over the white paper in order to make it acceptable.

There is no evidence that Henry Brooke was working for purely party political purposes with no other motive but to destroy Labour hegemony over the L.C.C. In all probability Brooke, his civil servants and the Conservative Government, were primarily concerned to create a better system of local government for
Greater London, one which could efficiently tackle most of the tasks allotted to local government. What was created, however, was a new system tainted by a Conservative philosophy of what was good local government. Labour squandered much of its opportunity to influence the new system. As shown in chapter five the L.L.P. and the labour controlled L.C.C. have to share the majority of the blame for this. More important than the party political influence was the impossibility of removing local government reform from the general political arena. The G.L.C. and the new boroughs were formed and shaped by what was politically possible rather than by an attempt to create as near as possible an ideal system.

There were no more upper-tier and lower tier authorities in Greater London. The boroughs were the primary units of local government. Yet the new boroughs and the G.L.C. had to co-exist and co-operate. This allowed tensions to develop between boroughs and G.L.C. and many of the causes of such tension were the same as existed under the pre-reformed system. In 1979 the London Borough of Tower Hamlets served Public Health Notices on three houses owned by the G.L.C. because the borough objected to the quality of the houses. This is one small example of how the existence of G.L.C. housing within Greater London allowed conflicts of opinion to develop between the boroughs concerned and the G.L.C. These were exploited by political parties as they had been under the old system. There was never any intention of ending the role of party politics in London.
government, as this would probably have been impossible. Thus, party politics continued to exploit tensions and weaknesses in the new system. Because the boroughs were more powerful than their predecessors political parties within the new boroughs had more scope for disagreements. The G.L.C. was born as a high profile body and remained so throughout its existence. Politicians within the council highlighted what they perceived to be the errors of their opponents, and very often such disagreements were detailed by the press. London based regional newspapers such as the *Evening Standard* and the *Evening News* always reported the affairs of the G.L.C. Thus, if the council failed to reach high levels of efficiency or failed to offer effective solutions to Greater London's problems, the G.L.C. could be, and often was, accused of failing Londoners. This high profile of the G.L.C. allowed the Council's Conservative opposition to highlight the grants that the Labour controlled G.L.C. gave to various bodies in the early to mid 1980s. Although the sums given by the G.L.C. formed only a small part of the Council's budget, the policy of giving grants was portrayed as a heavy expense on the ratepayers of Greater London. Of the voluntary organizations given G.L.C. funding those deemed to be most unpopular with the voters of London and with central government were given the most publicity.\(^6^9\) Such high profile political activity by both the Labour controlled G.L.C. of 1981 to 1986 and the Conservative opposition directly contributed to the abolition of the Council.\(^7^0\)
Enoch Powell was among those who saw that the G.L.C. had failed to live up to expectations. It had developed into a form of super-county council, even though that had never been intended, and it soon developed flaws. As an expert on London government, Powell felt both points were inevitable, and no better system could have been designed.71 Desmond Plummer thought much the same way as Powell. Plummer argued that when he left office as Leader of the G.L.C., in 1973, it was still far from working well. He acknowledged, however, that given it had had only eight years to develop it was the best that could be expected.72 The academics S.K. Ruck and Gerald Rhodes came to much the same conclusion when they wrote in 1970:

We have argued that the new structure of local government set up by the 1963 Act does by and large offer the means of dealing with London's local government problems. It does not offer an ideal or complete answer; no system could. It raises doubts in some directions: and some of its potentialities may not be realized in practice. But on the whole the advantages outweigh the disadvantages.73

The new system of local government did work, but not perfectly, but then so did the system it replaced, and a Joint Planning Board could also have been made to work. The G.L.C. and new boroughs were probably the best workable system of local government for Greater London. The G.L.C. and the new
London boroughs were created through compromise, and bitterly condemned by political opponents of the reforms before they took power. Their first few years of existence showed the new system to be open to criticism. From these early imperfections it can be seen that the seeds of the G.L.C.'s early demise in 1986 developed. The G.L.C. lacked the ability to change itself or the intractable problems of Greater London and South-East England. Any reform to the London government system, however minor or however major in character, would have met with severe criticism and dogmatic opposition from some quarter or other. Compromise would have been as necessary with any other local government structure. It seems highly likely that any London government apparatus, whatever its nature, would have met with as much criticism as the G.L.C.
NOTES


2/ Evening Standard, 9.5.64 p.18.

3/ Evening Standard, 7.4.64 p.6 article blamed Conservative Party Leadership for Conservative failure to win control of the G.L.C.


5/ Details of the I.L.E.A. taken from private conversation with Sir Ashley Bramall 19.5.94, a former Leader and Chairman of the I.L.E.A.; also from an unpublished history of the I.L.E.A. by Bramall.

6/ Ibid.

7/ Ibid.

8/ Ibid.

10/ The editorial in the *Camden, Holborn and Finsbury Guardian*, 19.2.65 p.4 makes this point.


12/ *Evening Standard*, 10.5.67 p.11


14/ *G.L.C. Minutes*, 22.12.64.


16/ *Evening Standard*, 22.1.65 p.11.

17/ Ibid. 12.3.65 p.11.
18/ Private conversation with Illtyd Harrington, 27.4.94.

19/ Evening Standard, 5.10.66 p.11.

20/ Private conversation with Lady Denington, 5.10.93.

21/ G.L.C. Minutes, 23.6.64.

22/ Details of plan in G.L.C. Minutes, 5.12.67.

23/ Private Conversation with Sir Ashley Bramall, 19.5.94.

24/ Ibid.


26/ G.L.C. Minutes, 22.12.64.


29/ Private conversation with Lord Plummer, 16.8.94.


32/ The Times, 19.2.62 p.6.

33/ Evening Standard, 21.11.63 p.15.


35/ Evening News, 2.3.64 p.7.

36/ Ibid. 6.4.64 p.6.

37/ Hall, op. cit. p.118.


39/ Ibid. 5.4.67 p.12.

41/ Ibid. p.160 for Cutler's recommended G.L.C. area, p.180-1 for recommended functions of the G.L.C.

42/ See Jones G.W. & Norton, A (eds) Political Leadership in Local Authorities, particularly chapters one and two for examples of non-party political control.

43/ L.C.C. Minutes, 7.12.62.

44/ Results from Evening Standard, 9.5.64 p.18 (partial result).

45/ Private conversation with Illtyd Harrington, 27.4.94.

46/ Evening Standard, 5.4.66 p.12.

47/ Ibid.


49/ Cutler, op. cit. p.92.


52/ Sharp, E. The Ministry of Housing and Local Government (London, George Unwin & Allen, 1969) p.27. The six local authority associations were - the County Councils Association, the Association of Municipal Corporations, the London Boroughs Association, the Urban District Councils Association, the Rural District Councils Association, and the Association of Parish Councils.


54/ Private conversation with Illtyd Harrington, 27.4.94.


56/ Plummer, D. The Londoner and His Environment, a paper presented at Budapest, September 26-28 1972.

57/ The Times, 2.1.61 p.9.


60/ Ibid. p.213.

61/ Evening Standard, 10.11.66 p.11.


67/ Chapter Six above, p.220-1.

68/ Henney, op. cit. p.212.


71/ Private conversation with Enoch Powell, 6.10.93.

72/ Private conversation with Lord Plummer, 16.8.94.

73/ Ruck and Rhodes, op. cit. p.185.
Chapter eleven

Conclusion

This thesis demonstrates that the search for administrative efficiency was intricately tied up with party politics. The transition in London government cannot simply be classified as a quest for a more effective form of local government. Nor can it be labelled as political manipulation designed to bring electoral success in local government to the political party forming the national government. Such an accusation was made by the Labour Party of the Conservative Government.¹

There is no reason to doubt the sincerity of the politicians involved in the transition. As this thesis demonstrates, the L.C.C. and the other local authorities in Greater London did work quite efficiently. Sir Issac Hayward and his allies were right in many of their claims in defence of the status quo. The L.C.C. was able to demonstrate to the Royal Commission that function by function the local authorities in the Administrative County of London were serving the people of London adequately.² Nonetheless, this view is shown to be true in a certain contexts only. It took no account of tensions between district authorities and County Hall, for example. Equally the L.M.S. and L.C.C. Conservative view can be seen to reflect an element of reality. As has been shown some functions of local government, such as town planning, lacked co-ordination throughout urban Greater London while other
services, such as children's and personal health services, could be efficiently provided by large district authorities. Both Labour's belief in centralized, comprehensive service provision and the Conservative belief in localized, carefully targeted local government services could be, and were, argued to be the most effective means of administering central government sponsored functions. Both methods worked in Greater London. Political ideology allowed each approach to be defended.

This thesis went on to demonstrate that in a complex urban area such as Greater London basic party ideologies could manifest themselves in quite different attitudes in various parts of the region. An example is that of the Conservative county councillors in Surrey who wished to preserve the county and county borough councils of Greater London, while their political allies elected to the L.C.C. were happy to see the nine such authorities replaced by a single regional council. These divergent Conservative views do not reflect a fundamental difference of opinion, but a reflection that in Conservative dominated Surrey Conservative local government ideologies prevailed. Local Tories saw no need for change, especially if such change could risk being subsumed in a long feared expanded, but still Socialist dominated, L.C.C. At the same time L.C.C. Conservatives saw the creation of a single regional authority as the best way of bringing electoral success to their party, and thus, introducing Conservative ideologies.
which, in turn, would lead to a higher level of administrative efficiency. There were differences of opinion between Labour members in different parts of Greater London, which also reflected local circumstances, rather than a difference in basic ideology. One such example, explained in the text, is the difference of opinion between Labour borough councillors in London and Essex.

As is demonstrated in this work, population density often dictated the area of district authorities. The centrifugal force of population from the inner areas of urban Greater London to the outer areas of the metropolis had created small inner-area boroughs, once densely populated, but by the 1950s with declining populations, and larger authorities, with stable populations, in the outer area. Such factors as these, which were beyond the control of local authority politicians, shaped local opinions. The small authorities, such as Holborn, Chelsea, Finsbury and Shoreditch, wished to avoid merging with larger neighbours. This did reflect a defence of vested interests, but only because the elected councillors felt their council better served the local populace than would a larger authority. This belief among elected councillors that they knew best seems to have also existed among the various pressure groups involved in process of transition in London government. Consequently, as is shown throughout this work, the defence of self interest was often also an altruistic belief that change
would be detrimental to the individual Londoners effected by any such change.

It is shown throughout this work that there was among all participants in the process of change a commitment to a democratic system. This can be seen in that all parties were committed to, either all directly elected authorities, or, a mixture of directly and indirectly elected authorities. More importantly, the procedure of designing and introducing a new local government system was open to all interested bodies to offer constructive advice and criticism. Nonetheless, there were areas not so open. The freedom of the Royal Commission was limited by its remit. The roles played by the Conservative Government and the Ministry of Housing and Local Government in the process of designing an improved local government system of Greater London were not public. Thus, this thesis shows that openness had its limitations. As is shown, the Government decided which of the bodies opposing its own views it wished to meet. The Government, for example, was able to initially ignore the wishes of the M.W.B., which only survived because of a technicality. This thesis shows that even a populous and rich local authority, such as the L.C.C., was no match for the central government. Central power in Britain was able to impose its will on the biggest local authority in the country. This shows that in the 1960s Britain remained a highly centralized state.
This thesis shows how the need to create a reasonable level of consensus actually weakened the new local government system in Greater London. The very large number of organizations and individuals who provided evidence to the Royal Commission, and the Government's wide-ranging consultations, brought many bodies, such as local authorities, trade unions and professional associations, into partial engagement with the decision making process. This meant the opinions of these groups were taken seriously. The process itself created partial agreement. This, however, left other views beyond that consensus with the legitimacy and status of being evidence, based on research and experience, produced as part of the process of transition and able to damage the new settlement. We can see how this worked in the case of the M.W.B. which, when asked its views, based its claim for continued existence on the well argued case that it worked effectively. The Government countered this argument by suggesting that a directly elected G.L.C. was more appropriate to oversee Greater London's water supply than the indirectly elected M.W.B. Nevertheless, once both sides of the argument were in the public domain, the Government's view was damaged by the opposite view - why abolish the M.W.B. when its range of functions were adequate for Greater London's needs and it was efficient in its operations?

As is shown in this work the complexity of local government in Greater London was such that no perfect system was possible.
This was recognized by all those involved in creating a new system, or in defending the old. The G.L.C. and the new London boroughs were, thus, incapable of solving many of the problems of Greater London, such as commuters from outside urban Greater London overcrowding public transport and roads. The very process that had created the new authorities also allowed to develop many criticisms of the new structure. The local government structure in Greater London was subject to many of the criticisms that had been levelled at the old. As is shown, there were claims that the G.L.C. was both too large and too small and that it was both too powerful and too weak, as had been the L.C.C. before it. As had happened to the L.C.C., the G.L.C. was constantly under attack from some quarter or other. The system that had created the G.L.C. was incapable of creating a local government structure that would satisfy all interested bodies or individuals.

It is evident, therefore, that no Royal Commission, nor any apparatus of governmental consultations could have created a system less open to criticism. The complexities of Greater London and its relationship to South-East England made that so. The abolition of the G.L.C. has not altered this situation, and the present lack of a regional authority for Greater London is as heavily criticized as was the G.L.C. The pressures for change, the forces for conservation, and the compromises and conflicts engendered by this, developed within a democratic framework which allowed all concerns to be made public. This
system did not, however, provide a comprehensive resolution to all concerns. The impossibility of a political synthesis which could be reflected in a consensual system of metropolitan local government has, it is hoped, been demonstrated in this thesis. The Victorian M.B.W., the L.C.C. from 1889 to 1965, and the G.L.C. after twenty-one years of life, succumbed to similar processes.
NOTES

1/ Chapter Four above, p.112.

2/ Chapter Seven, above, pp.248-61.

3/ Chapter Six, above, pp.220-1.

4/ Chapter Seven, above, p.262.

5/ Chapter Two, p.48, and Chapter Six, pp.206-44.

6/ Chapter Seven, pp.276-8, and Chapter Eight, pp.307-17.

7/ See Chapter Eight.

Appendix A


THE GREATER LONDON COUNCIL

Royal Commission | 1963 Act

1. AREA

| As in Royal Commission report but excluding in addition most of Chigwell UD (Essex): Cheshunt UD (Herts): Staines UD, Sunbury on Thames UD, (Middlesex): Banstead UD, Caterham and Warlingham UD, Epsom and Ewell MB, Walton and Weybridge UD (Surrey). |
2. FUNCTIONS

(i) Education


(ii) Planning

Greater London Development Plan. Applications to be referred by boroughs: (a)
departure from plan; (b) extraction of minerals. Certain applications relating to the 'central area' (to be defined by Minister).

(iii) Highways and Traffic Management

Responsibility for traffic management throughout Greater London. Planning, construction, improvement, maintenance and lighting 'main roads' (to be defined by Minister, may include trunk roads). Close contact with L.T.E., B.T.C. to prepare and subsequently amend G.L.D.P. Applications to be referred by boroughs: as prescribed by Minister. Minister may also prescribe that other classes of application shall be referred by boroughs for G.L.C. to give directions.

Responsibility for traffic management (subject to Ministers consent on trunk roads). Provision of parking places (subject to boroughs consent). Highway authority for 'metropolitan roads' (specified). Licensing of motor vehicles and drivers
(iv) Housing

Powers to make provision for housing outside Greater London under Town Development Act 1952. Powers to build within Greater London (a) large redevelopment schemes; (b) boroughs unable to meet own needs. Houses built within Greater London to be transferred ultimately to boroughs. Power to co-ordinate borough housing lists.

Powers to make provision for housing outside Greater London under Town Development Act, 1952. Powers to build within Greater London but require borough consent except: (a) comprehensive development; (b) re-housing persons displaced by G.L.C. activities. Temporary inheritance of L.C.C. housing powers and accommodation. Record of housing needs and facilities for exchanging housing accommodation.

(v) Personal Health

Ambulance service.

Ambulance service.
(vi) Environmental Health

Refuse disposal. L.C.C. and M.C.C. main sewers

Certain large open spaces (e.g. Crystal Palace; Hampstead Heath.)

Land drainage where more than one borough involved.

(vii) Research and intelligence

Intelligence department to be set up for research into problems of Greater London.

Research and information organization to be set up. Publicity for Greater London amenities.
(viii) Other functions

Fire service. Cost of administration of justice.
Appointment of coroners.
Possibly some aspects of civil defence. Provision of art galleries, museums and entertainments (concurrently with boroughs).

Public control measures, as determined by the Minister.

Building regulations

Fire service. Cost of administration of justice. Appointment of coroners. Certain civil defence functions. Provision of entertainments (concurrently with boroughs); L.C.C. powers and property in relation to concert halls, museums etc. (e.g. Royal Festival Hall, Geffrye museum).

Licensing of theatres and other places of public entertainment; licensing of greyhound racing tracks for betting; licensing of premises for storing petrol. Provision of smallholdings.

Building control (inner London). Power to supply boroughs, voluntary organizations.
3. FINANCE

 Implicit view that council should precept on boroughs. Clearing house for new type rate equalization scheme. Special procedure for raising loans similar to that of L.C.C.

 Power to precept on boroughs. Minister may make scheme for rate equalization involving G.L.C. Power to promote annual Money Bills for raising capital. Power to establish insurance fund. Power to establish superannuation fund. Transitional payments to Essex, Herts, Kent and Surrey.

4. CONSTITUTION

 One member for the area of each parliamentary constituency in Greater London.

 Two, three or four members for each borough area (total 100) as an interim measure; ultimately one member for each Parliamentary
triennial elections at same time as borough elections. Aldermen a national issue.

THE LONDON BOROUGHS
1. AREAS
52 Greater London Boroughs.
32 London Boroughs

2. FUNCTIONS
(i) Education
Management and maintenance of schools.
Appoint managers and governors. Administration of youth service and youth employment service.
Appointment of teachers.
School health service

constituency.
Triennial elections, ultimately on same day as borough elections. 16 Aldermen (one sixth of councillors).

20 outer London boroughs to be local education authorities.
12 inner London boroughs (and City) to be 'minor authorities' e.g. for purpose of appointing managers of primary schools. Joint schemes by I.L.E.A. and inner London boroughs (and City) for
(ii) **Planning**

Primary authorities for considering and deciding applications, except for those to be referred to G.L.C.

Local planning authority for preparation of borough development plans. Reception of planning applications and decisions on all except those referred to G.L.C.

(iii) **Highways and traffic management**

Construction, improvement, maintenance and lighting of all except main roads.

Highway authorities for all except trunk and metropolitan roads. Provision of parking places.

(iv) **Housing**

Housing authorities, including ancillary functions, e.g. improvement grants.

Housing authorities for all purposes. No provision of housing outside Greater London without Ministers agreement.
(v) **Personal health, welfare and children's service**

All services except ambulances.

(vi) **Environmental health**

All services except those listed under G.L.C. City to remain Port Health Authority.

(vii) **Other functions**

Art galleries and museums, entertainments, libraries.
Public control powers as determined by Minister. Possibly some aspects of civil defence. Remaining functions wherever possible.

- Provision of entertainments etc.
- Slaughterhouses, diseases of animals etc. Offices, Shops Railway Premises Act.
- Certain civil defence functions. Licensing of riding establishments etc. Any residual powers of a county borough.
3. FINANCE

Rating authorities. Boroughs to make transitional payments to affected counties.

Rating authorities. Authorities to whom general grants payable. Also rate-deficiency grants. Provision for rate equalization scheme. Power to establish superannuation fund.

4 CONSTITUTION

As for Municipal boroughs outside Greater London.

As for municipal boroughs outside Greater London, except (i) triennial elections; (ii) number of Aldermen to be one sixth of number of councillors; (iii) maximum number of councillors to be 60.

Appendix B

Chronological Table of Main Events, 1957-1965

1957
18 January Mr Brooke replaces Mr Sandys as Minister of Housing and Local Government.
29 July Announcement of proposal to set up a Royal Commission.
10 December Appointment of Royal Commission (Chairman: Sir Edwin Herbert).

1958
17 February Commission invite evidence from local authorities.

1959
5 March Commission begin oral hearings.

1960
2 February Commission end oral hearings.
19 October Publication of Commission's report.
28 November Ministry of Housing and Local Government invite comments on the report from local authorities.
21 December House of Lords debate on the Report.
1961

April County Council elections.


16 December Ministry of Housing and Local Government Circular 56/61 issued. showing proposed borough groupings.

1962

January First borough joint committee set up in Bromley.

19/20 February House of Commons debate on the white paper.

12/13 March L.C.C. debate on the white paper.

14 March House of Lords debate on the white paper.

23 March Dr Hill announces the names of the four Town Clerks to investigate borough groupings and their terms of reference.

31 March Deadline for local authority comments on proposed borough groupings.

4 April Dr Hill tells the Metropolitan Water Board that they are to be taken over by the proposed Greater London Council.

6 April L.C.C. Deputation to the Prime Minister.

30 April Dr Hill announces the exclusion of Banstead, Caterham and Warlingham, and Walton and Weybridge from Greater London.

3 May Dr Hill announces the decision to retain the L.C.C. education service intact.

18 May Dr Hill announces decisions on other areas seeking exclusion from Greater London.

5 June Final conference on borough groupings.

15 June Ministry of Housing and Local Government invite local
authorities to discussions on the problems of the change-over.


13 July Government changes: Sir Keith Joseph replaces Dr Hill as Minister of Housing and Local Government; Sir Edward Boyle replaces Sir David Eccles as Minister of Education.

2 August Sir Keith Joseph announces acceptance of the proposals on borough groupings made by the four Town Clerks.

20 November First reading of London Government Bill.

10/11 December Second reading of London Government Bill (House of Commons).

1963

23 January Beginning of committee stage on the Bill (Committee of Whole House).

29 January Government move 'Guillotine' motion.

5 February Bill in Standing Committee.

21 March Completion of Committee stage (House of Commons).

1/2 April Re-committal, report and third reading (House of Commons).

23/4 April Second reading of the Bill (House of Lords).

2 May Membership of London Government Staff Commission announced.

9 May Beginning of Committee stage on the Bill (House of Lords).

30 May Completion of Committee stage (House of Lords).

24 June Beginning of report stage (House of Lords).

2 July Completion of report stage (House of Lords).
8 July  Third reading of the Bill (House of Lords).
25 July Commons consider Lords amendments on the Bill.
31 July  Sir Keith Joseph addresses L.C.C. Staff Association.
23 August London Government Staff Commission issues first circular.
23 September Sir Keith Joseph addresses N.A.L.G.O.

November Metropolitan Boroughs' J.C. circulate memorandum of proposals for transfer of L.C.C. services to inner London boroughs.

1964

13 February  Ministry of Housing and Local Government circular on method of appointment of borough town clerks etc.
9 April First election for Greater London council.
7 May First election for London boroughs.
15 October Labour victory in General Election.

1965

2 February  Government announce that they do not propose to make changes in the London Government Act except to repeal the provision for a review of the Inner London Education Authority.
1 April London Government Act 1963 comes into operation.

Maps


Note: the sewerage area marked on the map does not correspond to that of the M.W.B.
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