

Basket weavers and true believers : the middle class left and the ALP Leichhardt Municipality c. 1970-1990

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Basket Weavers and True Believers
The Middle Class Left and the ALP
Leichhardt Municipality c. 1970-1990

by

Tony Harris

A thesis
presented to the University of New South Wales
in fulfilment of the
thesis requirement for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in
History

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Abstract

In the two decades between 1970 and 1990, hundreds of people passed through the ALP branches of Leichhardt Municipality. These were predominantly members of what this thesis calls a ‘middle class Left’, employed in professions and para-professions like teaching or the public service and motivated, to one degree or another, by the social movements and politics of the late 1960’s and early 1970’s. This is a social history incorporating the life histories of a selection of these people. It is set against the backdrop of conflicts with incumbent, conservative, working class-based political machines and the political climate of the times. The thesis is in four parts. Part I, the introduction, establishes the point of view of the writer as it shapes what is also a ‘participant history’. In this context, and that of the oral history interviews, the introduction addresses the relationship between memory and history. Parts II and III are the body of the thesis and each is lead by a ‘photo-essay’, recognising the complimentary importance of a visual narrative. Part II sets out the broad political topography of the 1970’s and early 1980’s. Chapter one describes the middle-classing of the ALP in Leichhardt Municipality, set against a review of the principal literature. It then moves through chapters two to four to examine the three loci of middle-classing: Annandale, Balmain and Glebe. Part III moves on into the 1980’s when the middle class Left ‘takes power’. It examines, in chapter five, the emerging, sharp, divisions among the Left on Leichhardt Council and in the contests for federal and state parliamentary seats. Chapter six examines the deepening of these divisions in the mid to late 1980’s, concluding with the climactic struggle over the Mort Bay public housing project. Chapter seven looks at the diaspora of the Labor Left in Leichhardt at the end of the 1980’s as the branch membership declined and many sought out political alternatives to the ALP. Part IV brings the thesis to its conclusion, focussing on the complexities and ambiguities of the middle class Left and drawing out the main socio-political themes of the two decades.

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Abbreviations

ALP	Australian Labor Party
NSW ALP	Australian Labor Party, New South Wales Branch
SLNSW	State Library of New South Wales
ALPR	NSW ALP Archive, Mitchell Library, SLNSW
ACOA	Administrative and Clerical Officers Association
BLF	Builders Labourers Federation of NSW
BLL	Balmain Leichhardt Labor
CBC	Campaign for Better Council
FEC	Federal Electorate Council (ALP)
LMC	Leichhardt Municipal Council
MBAG	Mort Bay Action Group
NAA	National Archives of Australia
PSA	Public Service Association of NSW
SEC	State Electorate Council (ALP)
RAC	Residents Advisory Committee, Glebe Estate.
SMH	Sydney Morning Herald

Note: The term ‘alderman’, and the plural ‘aldermen’, were the official titles for elected representatives on municipal councils during the time of this study and applied to men and women. This study will continue to use these terms in this de-gendered and historical context. The term ‘alderman’ has since been replaced by ‘councillor’.

PART I

MEMORY'S MOSAIC: AN INTRODUCTION

The challenge of history is to recover the past and introduce it to the present. It is the same challenge that confronts memory.¹

This is a history shaped by memory. In the first instance, it is shaped by my own memory of political issues and events with which I, and other members of the ‘middle class Left’², were involved in the inner Sydney municipality of Leichhardt, and the Australian Labor Party (ALP), during the decades of the 1970’s and 1980’s.

There is the memory I have, for example, of a warm, early spring night in 1980, when a group of 100 people or so crowded into the Mori Gallery on Catherine Street Leichhardt and spilled out onto the footpath. The occasion was a fund-raising party for two ALP candidates for the nearby Annandale Ward in Leichhardt Municipal elections, due at the end of September. The gathering was enthused by a celebratory anticipation of the results of these elections. These results would see a triumph for a middle class Left that had been locked in a fierce struggle with a conservative, masculinist and predominantly working class Labor Right within the ALP branches and wards of the municipality for a decade or more.

Late in the evening, one of those present, state ALP Left parliamentarian George Petersen, gave a rendition of the Wobblies’ (IWW) song *Bump Me Into Parliament* with the crowd chiming in on the chorus. If the irony of a politician singing this syndicalist and anti-parliamentary anthem at an electoral event was evident at the time, it becomes more-so in retrospect. The victory of the two Annandale candidates over incumbent Left aldermen in the ALP branch preselection earlier in the year had been achieved at a heavy price. The Annandale branch was divided and within months of their election, these two candidates, Hall Greenland and Bill Hume, would barely be on speaking terms themselves. The incoming Left-dominated council would be riven by personality and policy conflicts that

¹ Thelen, D., ‘Introduction: Memory and American History’, *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 75, No. 4, March 1989, p 1117.

signalled a wider opening up of political division within the ALP Left and the municipality. Later in the decade the ALP would lose the state parliamentary seat of Balmain, birthplace of the Australian Labor Party, and control of Leichhardt Council would pass to independents. Throughout the 1980's, the primary votes for Labor candidates at all electoral levels in the area would decline and many of those who joined the ALP throughout the 1970's and in the early part of the 1980's would (like me) desert the Party.³

The beginning of the 1980's was to prove to be the starting point of a downward arc of political radicalism among the middle class Left. This was a radicalism that had flourished in the extra-parliamentary, social movements of the late 1960's and early 1970's and in the hopes engendered by the 1972-1975 Whitlam federal Labor government. Petersen's rendition of *Bump Me Into Parliament* had been both a reminder and a harbinger of the pitfalls of parliamentary politics and the ambiguous relationship of the labour movement, as well as the more recent social movements, to parliamentarism. He would ultimately be caught in this contradiction himself; expelled from the Labor Party in 1987 for voting in the NSW parliament against the state Labor government's dilution of entitlements to workers compensation.⁴

This history is shaped then by this sense of ambiguity and contradiction and is set in a context of upsurge and downturn that characterised the political experience in Leichhardt Municipality, the ALP and in the wider political world during the 1970's and 1980's. Such an interpretation could be seen as fitting into the critical stream of labour history that Stuart Macintyre identified in his Manning Clark memorial lecture at the ALP National Conference in September 1994. Macintyre characterised this critical stream as dwelling on

² The use of the terms 'middle class', 'new middle class' and 'middle class Left' (which is preferred in this study) will be discussed in chapter one below.

³ This writer cannot recall the version of 'Bump Me Into Parliament' sung by Petersen but one version is presented in appendix B. See also Burgmann, V., *Revolutionary Industrial Unionism: The Industrial Workers of the World in Australia*; Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 1995.

⁴ George Petersen was a member of the NSW parliament from 1968 to 1988. He was expelled from the ALP in 1987 and died in 2000. See Greenland, H., 'George Petersen (1921-2000)' *The Hummer*, Sydney Branch ASSLH, Vol. 3, No. 4, Winter 2000, pp 40-42.

the “idea of a Faustian compact” as a central metaphor of the Labor Party’s historical quest for political power:

Childe and Fitzpatrick, followed by Ian Turner, Russel Ward, Miriam Dixon, Bob Gollan, Lloyd Churchward, Ken Buckley and Eric Fry, followed in turn by their students, yielded by the 1970’s a labour history that regarded the Labor Party with disfavour. At best it was a necessary evil; at worst, a brake on the better political instincts of the working class.⁵

F.B. Smith had earlier characterised this “interpretive framework”, in his introduction to Vere Gordon Childe’s *How Labour Governs*, as a “Doctrine of Primal Socialist Innocence and the Fall”.⁶

At a more intimate level, this history is further shaped by the interaction of my own *editorial memory* with that of around 70 people who were interviewed for this study. Alongside this oral testimony were memories that had, in the course of the intervening years, been ‘frozen’ in written form as minutes, internal ALP reports and newspaper accounts. The social history that results from the examination of this evidence will seek to explain the nature of this middle class Left, the origin and make up of its members and the factors that shaped their political consciousness and actions. This will be set against the intra ALP and wider political conflicts that manifested themselves in Leichhardt and the local ALP branches in these two decades.

⁵ Macintyre, S., ‘Who Are The True Believers?: The Manning Clark Labor History Memorial Lecture’ delivered at the ALP National Conference, Hobart, 28/9/94, printed in *Labour History*, No. 68, May 1995, pp 158 – 161. See also Macintyre and other contributors to Burchell, D. and Mathews, R., *Labor’s Troubled Times*, Pluto Press, Sydney, 1991.

⁶ Smith, F.B., Introduction to Childe, V.G., *How Labour Governs: A Study of Worker’s Representation in Australia*, second edition, MUP, Melbourne, 1964, vii. For an analysis of Childe’s approach to labour history and his relationship to this ‘critical stream’ see Gathercole, P., Irving, T., and Melleuish, G. (eds), *Childe and Australia: Archaeology, Politics and Ideas*, University of Queensland Press, 1995, particularly Irving, T., ‘On the Work of Labour Governments: Vere Gordon Childe’s Plans for Volume Two of *How Labour Governs*’, pp 82-94; Beilharz, P., ‘Vere Gordon Childe and Social Theory’, pp 162-182, and Hindness, B., ‘Sources of Disillusion in Labour and Social Democratic Politics’, pp 183-198.

The time period of this study was initially determined by my own political history in the inner city. I moved into Annandale, one of the six suburbs of Leichhardt Municipality, in 1972. I was already a member of the Labor Party having joined in Canberra in 1968, during my final university undergraduate year. My time in the ALP in Annandale was to encompass a time as branch secretary as well as a candidate in a local government election and a federal preselection. I was expelled from the ALP in 1984 and subsequently continued political involvement in the fragmented movement that was to become The Greens. I withdrew from The Greens and involvement in party and electoral politics in the early 1990's at a time of the political confusion that marked the end of the Cold War, the entrenching of neo-liberalism in Labor politics and the general retreat of the political Left.

I am all too well aware of the danger of imposing my own hopes and disappointments on an interpretation of past events. But perhaps my experience is also that of a generation. Looking about me at friends and associates, as well as at the general political landscape, I am convinced that the sense of the 1970's and 1980's as a cycle of hope and disappointment, elation and frustration, was not mine alone. In undertaking this localised study of Labor Party activism in the 1970's and 1980's, I hope to make a contribution to the critical labour history tradition, and its metaphor of the "Faustian compact", in a way that borrows from Marshall Berman's call to bring to life again a "dynamic and dialectical modernism". We must revisit the past, Berman reminds us, in a way that can "illuminate the contradictory forces and needs that inspire and torment us". For the more recent labour movement activists of the 1970's and 1980's, the dynamic of hope and disappointment, expressions of solidarity and destructive conflict, 'socialist innocence' and 'the fall', might be seen as part of an unavoidable and complementary process; the dialectic interplay that characterises modernity and political development. As Berman points out, such an approach can give us an understanding of:

the social and political forces that propel us into explosive conflicts with other people... even as we develop a deeper sensitivity towards

our ordained enemies and come to realise, sometimes too late, that they are not so different from us after all.⁷

A political road.

Like many of my political generation, my own development of a 'primal socialist innocence', really began at university. I went to the Australian National University at the beginning of 1966 having been brought up in a country town (Orange) as the child of parents who typified the post World War Two middle class. My father had come from a working class background and left school to work in the 'woollen mills' at Orange before fleeing the certainties of factory labour (in a reserved occupation) to enlist in the Second AIF. A prisoner of war after the fall of Singapore, he returned home after the war and built a successful small business as a contract painter. My mother also came from a rural working class background and met my father after the war on a bus on a hockey trip to Dubbo (they were both hockey players). Except for a brief period, my mother didn't do paid work during her married life though she 'did the books' for my father's business and kept the home. It was a comfortable upbringing for me in what was a happy and supportive, conventional post-war nuclear family (I have one sibling, a sister three years younger than me). I was interested in politics at my local high school and my memory is that it predisposed me to a more Left wing sensibility than that suggested by the more conservative political environment around me. This was a town that was part of Country Party electorates, state and federal, during the dominant anti-communism of the 1950's and early 1960's, though my father mostly voted Labor and my mother always did.

When I left Orange to go to university in Canberra, my political thought 'took-off'. This was stimulated by the more formal opening of ideas as part of my economics degree course as well as the climate of debate and sense of a changing world that was infused through university life in the late sixties. By the time of the 1966 federal elections I was a Labor

⁷ Berman, M., *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience Of Modernity*, Verso, London, 1989, p 35.

supporter and opposed to the war in Vietnam. It was from this perspective that I joined the Canberra branch of the ALP in August 1968. This was the same month that I turned twenty and around the time that I received my 'indefinite deferment' for national service. I am glad in retrospect that I did not have to face call-up; I am not sure what my response would have been. I was opposed to the war but was in a quandary as to whether to refuse call-up, or volunteer to go in a capacity as a medical orderly. There is an air of unreality that can often surround such situations, especially when young, and I cannot say with certainty what I would have done.

I was, however, certain that the election of a federal Labor government was the most assured way of bringing about a shift in Vietnam policy, as well as addressing the backlog of social ills that accompanied the long period of Liberal-Country Party rule. The Canberra branch of the ALP met at the ANU staff club, which was pretty indicative of its make-up. I can recall a social function there, probably in late 1969 or early 1970, to welcome the Whitlam 'sixty-niners' who came into parliament during Labor's 1969 electoral comeback. However 1969 and 1970 were not particularly happy or satisfying years. I had left university and entered the federal public service (Treasury) and while I attended the odd ALP meeting, and attended anti-war demonstrations outside parliament house, I remained on the fringes of an active political life.

Early 1971 saw me frustrated with my life and led to a cathartic separation from both Canberra and the public service. I headed off to Sydney to undertake a NSW Education Department 'crash-course' in teacher training. After living in Kings Cross for the six months of the course I moved into a shared house in Annandale and transferred my ALP membership to the (then small) Annandale branch. Annandale at that time had two branches, the other was Annandale South. The south branch at this time was the more radical of the two with an early influence of the middle class Left who would come to dominate the inner city branches (see chapters one and two below). I can recall the meetings of the (north) Annandale branch as being small with a large proportion of older

members. But it seemed as if I had entered the ‘real’ world (in contrast to Canberra), especially alongside my high school teaching at western Sydney high schools and the beginning of my involvement with the teachers union, the NSW Teachers Federation.

In the summer of early 1973, I was approached by the then secretary of the Annandale branch to take over that position. So began a more active involvement in the life of the inner city ALP. It is through this prism of personal involvement that the following history of party life in the Leichhardt Municipality is seen.

History, memory and the ‘participant-observer’.

It is quite common for writers in the fields of history and memory to be “an autobiographical presence in their work”.⁸ Sometimes this presence is quite overt, particularly in the case of the ‘participant historian’. For example, when writing about the anti-war movement of the late 1960’s, Ann Curthoys chose to use two voices: one the detached voice of the historian and the other, a personal narrative explaining her own involvement and feelings. As this thesis is also a participant history I have, like Curthoys, chosen to use two voices. I have written this introduction in the first person, incorporating my own life history into a discussion of the methodology of this study, particularly as regards the relationship between memory and history. The thesis proper will follow the more detached voice of the historian with my own participation referred to in the third person and, where necessary, additional comments or references provided in the footnotes as ‘the writer’.⁹

⁸ Darian-Smith, K and Hamilton, P, (eds), Introduction to *Memory and History in Twentieth Century Australia*, OUP, Melbourne, 1997, p 6.

⁹ Curthoys, A., ‘Mobilising Dissent: The Later Stages of Protest’ in Pemberton, G (ed.), *Vietnam Remembered*, Weldon, Sydney, 1990, pp 138 – 163; Curthoys, A., “‘Vietnam’: Public Memory Of An Anti – War Movement’ in Darian-Smith and Hamilton, (eds), *Memory and History*, p 118; Macintyre, ‘Who Are The True Believers’, *passim*.

The dependence of this kind of study on the memories of the historian, as well as other participants, requires coming to terms with the problem that memories are *reconstructions*. It is now widely accepted among historians that such memories are an organisation of recollections fashioned in the present and shaped not only by the contemporary situation but also the events, experiences and elements of hindsight that have intervened between the past and present.¹⁰ My earlier recollections of my feelings about the Vietnam War and my possibility of call-up in 1968 are a good example. This memory has been reconstructed in the specific context of trying to explain my political evolution as background to my own involvement in the Labor Party and the way that background and involvement may have shaped this project. While it seems like a fair description I still have doubts as to whether it properly reflects how I felt at the time. Subsequent to my deferral in 1968 my political consciousness evolved from a 'Left Laborism' to a more 'libertarian Marxism' associated with the politicised end of the urban 'counter culture'. Standing in London's Grosvenor Square near the American embassy in 1975, the morning after the fall of Saigon, I can recall not only a sense of relief that the war was over but a sense of joy at the triumph of the Vietnamese and the vindication of the anti-war movement. Since these moments, other factors have also intruded on the clear line of vision back to my past: anger at the West's (in particular the US) vindictive isolation of Vietnam, disappointment at the 'Stalinisation' of post-war Vietnam and the general political confusion of the post-Cold War Left. But how politically radical was I back in 1968 when I confronted the problem of call-up? I think I have got the memory right but not without a good deal of reflection.

The necessity for a writer of participant-history to be self-reflexive meshes in with the need for circumspection when dealing with oral history interviews. As Ian Watson points out, interviews can shift between the narrative devices of the "performance" of the informant

¹⁰ Wachtel, N., 'Introduction', *History and Anthropology*, Vol. 2, October 1986, p 210; Thelen, D., 'Introduction', pp 1119-1122; Hamilton, P, 'The Knife Edge: Debates About Memory and History' in Darian-Smith and Hamilton, *Memory and History*, pp 14-15; Watson, I, 'Class Memory: An Alternative Approach To Class Identity', *Labour History*, No. 67, November 1994, pp 27-28.

and the “conscious self identity” which an informant links to memory by teleology. Nonetheless Watson explains that

a ‘reconstructionist’ view of memory, as opposed to a ‘retrieval’ view does not imply that we cannot distinguish between different levels of veridical accuracy in oral history accounts, nor does it imply that memory and fantasy cannot be distinguished.¹¹

Crucial to an analytical reconstructionist approach to oral history and memory is an understanding of the collective nature of memory. As David Thelen points out, the construction (or reconstruction) of memory “is not made in isolation but in conversations with others that occur in the contexts of community, broader politics and social dynamics”.¹² Analysing a large number of interviews dealing with an area of interest such as this study requires awareness of the collective interactions that can shape and reinforce informants’ memories and the way in which individual interviews can “tap... collective memories within an individual’s story”.¹³

An example of this might be termed the ‘preverts (sic) and the trees’ story which surfaced with two informants. Both informants knew each other and had conversed between the two interviews (though I am not sure whether they had discussed this specific story). Both described how the conservative working class elements that dominated the inner city ALP before the ‘invasion’ of the middle class Left were hostile to the newcomers’ desires to see more trees planted in the inner city. To these older residents, trees shed leaves and created mess and allowed ‘preverts’ to hide behind them. The word ‘preverts’ (rather than perverts) was used by both informants to describe how these people felt but is probably not a word that traditional working class Australians would use. It is more a product of American popular culture. One can imagine it as emanating from the mouth of a conservative, 1960’s Southern sheriff, and it may be interesting as an insight into the cultural influences on these

¹¹ Watson, I, ‘Class Memory’, pp 28-29.

¹² Thelen, D, ‘Introduction’, p 1119, see also Wachtel, N, ‘Introduction’ pp 211-220, Hamilton, P, ‘The Knife Edge’, pp 18-22.

¹³ Hamilton, P., ‘The Knife Edge’, p 19.

two middle class informants. The word is a link to the common experience of the two but also the story resonated with me as interviewer. I have my own memory of a debate about trees taking place in the Annandale branch, probably around 1973 or 1974, which saw a polarisation between some of the older and newer residents. During this debate, a bus driver, who was aligned with the political right wing of the Labor Party, complained how the trees growing in one street forced him to get out of his bus one night and escort a female passenger home.¹⁴

On one level this story is collective reinforcement of a 'real' situation. Tree planting was to become one of the important local issues in the conflict for political power in the Municipality of Leichhardt. However there is a wider symbolism about attitudes to the environment and gender politics. Implicitly, for example, the telling of this story was a mocking rejection by these two feminist informants of the idea that trees were the agents of violence against women. The collectivised memory of informants and interviewer is reinforced in the conversation of the interview. However this story also reveals the attitudes and values of these participants and may reinforce the points made by David Thelen:

the social dimensions of memory are more important than the need to verify accuracy. People depend on others to help them decide which experiences to forget and which to remember and what interpretation to place on experience. People develop a shared identity by identifying, exploring, and agreeing on memories.¹⁵

But this does not invalidate the veracity of a story such as that described above. Drawing on the work of sociologist Maurice Halbwachs, Thelen points out that collective remembrance can be a verifying process:

When people look to others to assist them in deciding whether their associations have yielded an accurate narrative of an event or

¹⁴ Recorded interviews with Mary Jerram, 3/5/99 and Meredith Burgmann, 4/8/99. Another version of this story was also recounted some time later by Gretchen Gamble in a recorded interview on 15/12/00. Of course the use of the word 'preverts' may also be a sneer at the 'uneducated' working class.

¹⁵ Thelen, D., Introduction, p 1122.

experience, they acknowledge the need for a check on the subjective process by which they create a recollection.¹⁶

However there also needs to be an awareness of the process of the interview ‘conversation’ itself in shaping the way in which memory is constructed:

Now oral historians are coming to understand that the collaborative act of interviewing can often be the point of intersection between memory and history, a contested terrain, frequently the knife edge between the two. In some cases, the interviewer has in mind her knowledge of the seemingly accurate history (to be checked against the written documents) and asks questions that will shape the knowledge being produced, which conflicts with the unreliable and often less coherent memory of the interviewee’s experiences. The interview can become a site of struggle or negotiation between the story the interviewer wants to hear and that which the participant wants to tell.¹⁷

This struggle and negotiation is potentially intensified in a situation such as this study where the people who I interviewed were in some cases political associates, but other cases political opponents. It was important here, as in all the interviews, to maintain a conversational approach (to help both informants and interviewer to relax), to encourage informants to be ‘frank’ when particular incidents or issues were discussed and to give maximum opportunity for them to shape their own memories. Further, the shaping of a particular interview or memory construction can depend on a number of factors. This can include the time and place of interview, the work and life pressures on the informant, the passage of time, the informant’s subsequent political development and the ability to articulate past experiences. Interestingly some of the more informative interviews were from old political opponents.¹⁸

¹⁶ Thelen, D., ‘Introduction’, p 1122, with reference to Halbwachs, M, *The Collective Memory*, Trans, Ditter, F. J and Ditter, V.Y (1950; reprint New York, 1980). For further discussion see Rosenzweig, R. and Thelen, D., *The Presence of the Past: Uses of History in American Life*, Columbia UP, New York, 1998.

¹⁷ Hamilton, P., ‘The Knife Edge’, p 15.

¹⁸ As Charles Morrissey and other oral historians have pointed out, it is important to avoid ‘reduc[ing] interviewing to a set of techniques’ and employ instead a flexible and intuitive approach. See Morrissey, C., ‘On Oral History Interviewing’ in Perks, R., and Thomson, A., *The Oral History Reader*, Routledge, London, 1998, pp 107-113. See also other contributions in this volume, passim.

The interview process was initiated by a sending a ‘seeding’ questionnaire to people whose names appeared on the voting list for the 1981 ALP preselection for the federal seat of Sydney, and who could be located. The responses were followed up for interview and this list was augmented by ‘chasing up’ other leads from interviews to bring the total number of informants to almost 70. A considerable degree of subjective knowledge was applied in trying to ensure a ‘cross-section’ of the various factional tendencies involved in the inner city ALP at the time.¹⁹

As explained above, interviews themselves were kept conversational and where possible these were conducted at places comfortable for the informants. Mostly this was at home though in a few cases at work or in pubs or cafés. The importance of having a place that was convenient and comfortable to the informant was seen as more important than the impact on tape quality of background noise. The more ‘objective’ tasks that confronted me lay in the processing and interpretation of the interviews and their comparison with other interviews and the documentary evidence. However the process of memory construction is deeply embedded in this written evidence. Much written documentation is memory that has become fixed in time. Minutes of ALP branch meetings for example, are works of memory. So for the most part are newspaper reports. Many of those sources that historians rely on are constructed after the event. Again, this relationship between memory and history might be illustrated by a single event. This is the Balmain ALP ‘fire extinguisher incident’ of late 1977 (which will be discussed in context in chapter three). The knowledge of this event, the hurling of a fire extinguisher through the windows of Balmain Town Hall during a crowded and climactic ALP branch meeting, is located in the memory of those present. These memories in all probability were quickly collectivised, in conversations after the meeting,

¹⁹ For a small number of informants whose role in this study has been supplementary or where location outside Sydney made interviewing difficult, the ‘seeding’ questionnaires or correspondence has been used. See list of informants in appendix G. Other approaches to the tasks of selecting informants and analysing interviews could be taken. For example a more rigorous sociological survey approach might have been applied to selecting informants and a more comprehensive cross analysis of interviews undertaken. However it was felt that in the context of this participant history the presentation of memories of informants would be better left to stand by themselves, allowing the reader to evaluate them against each other and the written sources. By this means it is hoped that a more lively narrative can be constructed.

in pubs, and in local friendship and political networks. They were passed on to journalists, and written reports were furnished by various individuals to the Head Office of the NSW ALP, to the police or to Leichhardt Council (responsible for the hall).

One might argue, with some justification, that these earlier memories (especially those committed to paper), by virtue of their being closer to the event, are more accurate. However the contest for control of the ALP branches at this time made memory itself a field of conflict as evidenced in the written reports of the incident, from individuals in the rival factions, located in the ALP records at the State Library of New South Wales. These could well be seen as *less* reliable than a calm reflection years later.²⁰

It might be possible to distinguish between ‘memory-based’ documentation, which is a reflection of individually expressed (but socially collectivised) memory and other forms of documentation such as membership returns, membership records generally or correspondence conveying branch resolutions or providing administrative information or evidence based on tape-recorded or filmed events. However many historical documents may have been “the product of a certain sifting process”²¹ or editing, or might be unreliable. For example, some ALP branch membership records have become notorious for their fictional quality. Further, arbitrary processes can determine which documents survive, illustrated by the fact that many of the minute books of the ALP branches for the period of this study have gone missing. ‘Forgetting’ about the whereabouts of non-current branch records is the other side of the coin of ‘remembering’. The processes of memory reconstruction and the existence of documentary sources seem to blend along the spectrum of historical evidence and this complements the view of those historians who “argue for an integral relationship, an essential interdependence between memory and history, despite claims of great tension and conflict.”²²

²⁰ See chapter three below.

²¹ Wachtel, N., ‘Introduction’, p 210.

Finally, the construction of memory, as with the writing of history, must be seen as contested territory:

The struggle for possession and interpretation of memory is rooted in the conflict and interplay among social, political, and cultural interests and values in the present. The actors appeal for popular support by claiming the sanction of the past. People test such public appeals against their personal and private memories.²³

As will be shown in the following chapters, the struggle for the control of the ALP branches of the inner city of Sydney was also a struggle for the assertion of rival 'memories'. This was a struggle that took place in the field of what Marita Sturken has called "cultural memory" or "the many shifting histories and shared memories that exist between a sanctioned narrative of history and personal memory".²⁴ It is ultimately this "sanctioned narrative of history" that is at stake. In the course of these struggles participants sought to defend or establish what David Blight has called "cultural myths", myths which "are born of divergent experiences and provide the cultural weapons with which rivals contest for hegemony". Such myths he argues "are the mechanisms of historical memory".²⁵

As a participant historian who engaged in this, at times bitter, conflict I can do no more than attempt to construct a mosaic of the involvement of the new middle class in the Leichhardt ALP branches during the 1970's and 1980's. In doing so I hope to maintain an awareness of the integral relationship between oral and documentary sources, and between the contested territories of memory and history maintaining transparency as to the intrusion of my own, subjective, experience.

²² Hamilton, P., 'The Knife Edge', p 12.

²³ Thelen, D, 'Introduction', p 1127.

²⁴ Sturken, M, 'The Wall, the screen and the Image: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial', *Representations*, No. 35, Summer 1991, pp 119.

²⁵ Blight, D, "'For Something Beyond the Battlefield': Frederick Douglass and the Struggle for the Memory of the Civil War", *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 75, No. 4, March 1989, p 1161.

Structure

First the foundations. This introduction makes up the first of the four parts to this study. The body of the thesis is in parts II and III. Each of these parts is led by a short photographic essay. The four chapters of Part II, 'A Political Topography', describe the political landscape of the middle-classing of Leichhardt Municipality. Chapter one, following, engages with some of the literature that has been generated around the question of the 'middle-classing' of the ALP generally, and in the specific context of Leichhardt Municipality. This chapter will use this literature to establish the research questions which this thesis will attempt to answer: Who were the middle class Left? What factors shaped their political consciousness? How did they act politically in the context of the events and issues with which they were involved?

Chapters two, three and four will examine the middle-classing of the ALP in Leichhardt during the 1970's and into the early 1980's by focusing on the three localities of Annandale, Balmain and Glebe. In structuring Part II of the thesis this way I have borrowed from the description of the physical topography of Leichhardt, as a series of three 'ridges' contained in Max Solling's and Peter Reynolds' local social history. In many respects the political topography of the municipality in the 1970's and 1980's followed these physical fault lines. The Annandale ridge was where the middle class Left first gained ascendancy in a local ALP branch. It was also my own area of involvement and is important therefore in establishing the point of view from which this history is written. Balmain however was to be the most significant in the overall political changes that were to take place, and the most contentious, with the developments there linking in with the other suburbs along this major ridge, Rozelle, Lilyfield and Leichhardt. The third ridge of political activity, Glebe, is particularly interesting because of the location of the large working class population on the Glebe Estate. This had an impact on the situation of power within the Glebe ALP branches

which in turn was linked to the issue of the survival of the Estate itself, following its acquisition by the Whitlam government in 1974.²⁶

Part III of the thesis, 'Political Power and Its Discontents', brings the threads of Part II together to examine the climactic gain and then loss of political power by the middle class ALP Left in the 1980's. This is set against the changing fortunes for the ALP at the state and federal levels. Chapters five and six examine the periods 1980-1984, and 1985-1987, respectively. These two periods saw the principal political dramas through which divisions within the Left opened up. Chapter seven will bring together a number of strands in the late 1980's to examine those of the middle class Left who stayed in the ALP and those who left in the context of the wider political developments within the Party. The study will then be brought to its conclusion in Part IV.

²⁶ Solling, M., and Reynolds, P., *Leichhardt: On the Margins of the City; A social history of Leichhardt and the former municipalities of Annandale, Balmain and Glebe*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1997 p 9.

PART II

A POLITICAL TOPOGRAPHY



1. Flat developments and threats to Oybin and the ‘Witches Houses’ (top photos) stimulated the formation of the Annandale Association at the beginning of the 1970’s. As in Glebe and Balmain, there were close links between the formation of residents’ associations, environmental and heritage issues and the movement of the ‘new’ middle classes into the ALP branches. The bottom photograph was used in the 1974 municipal elections by unendorsed ALP Left candidates Tony Harris (left) and Hall Greenland (right) in Annandale ward. Outgoing ALP Left alderman Bill Hume (centre) was under suspension from the Party for supporting the independent council of 1971-73. *Writer’s papers.*



2. A rally held in Gladstone Park, Balmain in the wake of the November 1975 dismissal of the Whitlam Government. The dismissal saw an influx of new members into inner city ALP branches, spontaneously, or as part of the recruiting campaigns of Young Labor activists led by Peter Baldwin and Peter Crawford. *The Leichhardt Local* 9/12/75, SLNSW.

on Saturday
24th April 9.00am—1.00pm

Annandale Bazaar

at Hunter Baillie Church Hall
(the one with the towering steeple)

Jumble Sale

cakes
jam
books
records
junk
jewellery
arts & crafts
plants
hot food

Want to help? Then contact
Jenny Kelly 660-5446 or
Tony Harris 660-7392.



music from:
Bob Hudson
Uncle Bob's Band
Alistair Jones



**Tom Uren
& Roger Degen
will speak**

Proceeds to the ALP

Authorised by Hall Greenland, 180 Annandale St., Annandale, NSW, 2038

3. Annandale ALP branch leaflet circulated in Annandale in April 1976 to advertise a fundraising bazaar on the eve of the NSW state parliamentary elections. It reflects the enthusiasm and larrikinism of a variegated and largely non-factional Labor Left that had come to early dominance in Annandale. When formal Party activity in the municipality became dominated by bitter confrontation within the Left in the 1980's, activities like this would be fondly recalled as high points in ALP branch life. *Writer's papers.*



4. Members of ALP branches protesting against the Right dominated Leichhardt Council at NSW ALP Annual Conference in June 1976. Council was trying to bring in a new town plan that threatened a return to high population density and high-rise flat development. The protest was accompanied by the circulation of a document by Peter Baldwin, Peter Crawford and others, attacking the Leichhardt Labor Right. Glebe North ALP Left member Roy Garner was credited in *The Leichhardt Local*, along with Tina Colston, as one of the photographers. He was threatened with disciplinary action by the Party for this perceived act of disloyalty. *The Leichhardt Local* 22/6/76, SLNSW.





6. Branch recruiters and future parliamentarians Peter Baldwin and Peter Crawford (top left and right). Peter Baldwin's bashing by an unknown assailant in 1980 provoked major protests at NSW ALP Head Office (below). This 'transformative' incident swept away the power of the Right in much of the municipality at the beginning of the 1980's. *Challenge* 18/7/80 and June 1983, *SLNSW*.

Chapter 1

THE MIDDLE-CLASSING OF LABOR IN LEICHHARDT MUNICIPALITY

In December 1981, Paul Keating, President of the NSW ALP (and soon to be Treasurer in a federal Labor government) used a debate at the Party's NSW Council to launch an attack on the "Baldwinite extremists" within the state branch. He accused this group of young Left activists, based in the inner Sydney ALP branches, of trying to take over the more traditional, union based, Left faction, the Steering Committee; "seeking to do to that body what the Bennites are doing to the left of the British Labour Party".²⁷ This came a year after the NSW Party was plunged into turmoil over the violent physical assault on Peter Baldwin, then a member of the NSW Legislative Council and a central campaigner and 'branch stacker' within the inner Sydney branches of the ALP. Baldwin and his colleagues had been trying to move new members into branches that had been dominated by a conservative element within the traditional inner-city working class and aligned to Keating's dominant Right-wing faction within the state Party. The weekend before the NSW Council meeting Baldwin's strategy had born fruit. He succeeded in ousting the incumbent, Right-wing, member for the safe federal seat of Sydney in a party preselection ballot.

²⁷ Steketee, M., "Keating fears a UK-type split in NSW Labor", *SMH*, December 7, 1981, p 1.

Keating's speech created one of the enduring images that has characterised the debate over the political and social changes and the role of what might be called the 'middle class Left'²⁸ within the inner city of Sydney (and other Australian cities) and the Party generally:

[They] believe in wider nature strips, more trees and let's go back to making wicker baskets in Balmain. That is their policy.²⁹

From the mid to late 1960's there were major population shifts within the suburbs of Balmain, Rozelle, Glebe, Annandale, Lilyfield and Leichhardt, the suburbs that made up the Municipality of Leichhardt. As the population declined, the traditional 'blue collar' working class was replaced by 'white collar' workers and semi-professionals. This was reflected in the 1970's and through into the 1980's by the moving in to the ALP branches of teachers, university students and academics, white-collar public servants and other semi-professionals and professionals (such as lawyers) along with union officials from white-collar and semi-professional unions. Most of these had been in one way or another influenced by the global political movements of the late 1960's and early 1970's: the student movement and youth culture; the anti-Vietnam war and the women's movements; urban environment and "resident action" campaigns. In one way or another most were energised by both the coming to power, and the dismissal of, the first federal Labor government since 1949; the 1972-1975, Whitlam government.

These changes typified more general shifts in membership of the ALP as a whole. By the end of the 1980's and into the 1990's, there was an apparent domination of the ALP and its policy making by middle class professionals and semi-professionals. In this regard, Keating's 'basket-weaver' speech may have suggested a sense of anxious foreboding and concern. However, for the ALP branches of Leichhardt Municipality, this ascendancy of the middle class Left marked the beginning of a process of political disintegration. While Baldwin and others associated with the politics of the area were ultimately successful in

²⁸ As pointed out in the Introduction, this chapter will clarify the use of this term in preference to the terms 'new middle class' or 'middle class'.

²⁹ Steketee, M., 'Keating fears'.

dominating the inner city branches and in achieving parliamentary positions, it was a mixed success. During the 1980's, the middle class Labor Left was to win and then lose power on Leichhardt Municipal Council, and win and lose the state seat of Balmain; the birthplace of the Labor Party. By the end of the 1980's, large numbers of the middle class Left were to disengage from active involvement in the ALP branches. Those who stayed in the local Party branches probably did so on lesser terms than they might have accepted 10 years before. This was in the broader context of a swing during the 1980's in the Labor Party generally to market-oriented and conservative policies, a swing in which Keating and the NSW Labor Right were to be a key force.

This thesis then is about the 'basket weavers'. However in order to arrive at a clearer definition of who they were, and how they might be characterised as a 'middle class Left', this chapter will analyse some of the work of writers who have previously focused on the middle-classing of Labor, both generally and in the specific context of Leichhardt Municipality. It is then that the research problem of this thesis can be more clearly defined.

The middle-classing of the ALP in Victoria: Ian Ward.

This thesis draws on sound precedents in understanding recent changes in ALP membership. In the late 1980's, Ian Ward published research on the degree of middle-classing that had taken place within the Victorian branch of the ALP. His research was based on an analysis of a membership list compiled within the state office of the branch in 1961 compared to membership tickets obtained from the office for the years 1971 and 1981. The occupations revealed by these records were coded in accordance with the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Classification of Occupations, providing a basis for examining the shifts in Party membership. As Ward described it: "during these years the

Party lost its primarily working class membership and acquired a sizeable bloc of members with white-collar, professional occupations”.³⁰

Between 1961 and 1981, those members corresponding to blue collar, working class, ABS classifications dropped, as a proportion of the ALP membership, from well over half to just over a quarter. Lower middle class, white collar, occupations stayed fairly static, with the biggest rises in the proportion of membership going to the two ABS categories: “Professional, technical and related workers” and “Administrative, Executive and managerial workers”. Combined, these two categories comprised almost 15 per cent of the membership in 1961, 33 per cent in 1971 and 51 per cent by 1981. Further, these categories of membership became over-represented in the ALP compared to their significance in the working population as a whole, while blue collar and white collar (sales and clerical) occupations became under-represented.³¹

Ward went on to document the particular contribution to this middle-classing of the “Professional, Technical and Related” occupations. This category alone accounted for close to 40 per cent of the ALP membership in 1981 compared to over eight per cent in 1961. Of this grouping, the “one very dramatic change in the composition of the ALP since 1961” was accounted for by teachers. Primary, secondary and technical teachers accounted for just under four per cent of the membership in 1961 (though still at that time the largest professional component of the membership) while in 1981 this figure was close to 20 per cent.³²

³⁰ Ward, I., ‘The Middle Classing of the ALP: the Victorian Branch 1961 – 1981’, *Australian Journal Of Politics and History*, Vol. 34, No. 2, 1988, pp 206. Aspects of Ward’s research is also published in Ward, I., ‘Labor’s Middle Class Membership: A Profile of the Victorian Branch of the ALP in the Eighties’, *Politics*, Vol. 22, No. 2, November 1987, pp 84-91; and Ward, I., ‘Two Faces of the ALP in the 1980’s’, *The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 25, No. 2, August 1989, pp 165 – 186.

³¹ Ward, ‘The Middle Classing’, 1988, pp 205- 207.

³² Ward, ‘The Middle Classing’, 1988, pp 208-209.

Drawing on debates within sociology about the fragmented nature of the middle class, Ward saw teachers, along with other salaried, tertiary educated professionals being drawn into the ALP, as making up an ‘established’ new middle class³³. They were ‘new’ in that they were occupations that have grown with the expansion of the welfare state and salaried white-collar workforce since the middle of the twentieth century. They were seen as ‘established’ in order to distinguish them from more marginal, white collar and largely clerical workers who, in spite of their growth in significance in the workforce, were not being recruited into the Labor Party³⁴:

There are not more middle-class party members simply because there is a new and larger middle-class population from which to recruit. Changes in the wider occupational structure have not simply been reproduced or mirrored within the party. The transformation of the ALP has occurred on a scale which suggests it has not been merely a reflection of an underlying middle classing of society. This points to the need for an additional (and presumably political rather than sociological) explanation of why it is that Labor, since the 1960’s, has been able to attract a quite new clientele.³⁵

Ward’s conclusion about the highly politicised nature of the new middle class opened the door to exploring political motivation. Using surveys of Victorian ALP branch secretaries, as well as interviews, Ward explored the “instrumental” and “expressive” political approaches of the ALP branch membership. He concluded that the new middle class members of the ALP were more inclined to be concerned with the expressive politics of the defence of principles, even at the cost of losing political power. This was contrasted to the more instrumental approaches of the traditional working class members, “those whose primary reason for joining the ALP was a desire to work politically for specific goals or benefits, either for themselves or for a group with which they identified”.³⁶

³³ Ward, ‘The Middle Classing’, 1988, p 210; and ‘Two Faces’, 1989, p 167.

³⁴ Ward, ‘The Middle Classing’, 1988, pp 209 – 212. While clerical workers only increased marginally as a proportion of membership between 1961 and 1981, they increased from 13 per cent to 17.2 per cent of the workforce in that time.

³⁵ Ward, ‘The Middle Classing’, 1988, p 212.

³⁶ Ward, I., ‘Two Faces’ 1989, pp 164 – 165. This model draws on the work of Parkin, F., *Middle Class Radicalism*, MUP, Melbourne, 1968.

While he argued that the more formal, doctrinal impact of Labor's middle class recruits was diverse, this was only one aspect of the ideological impact of this group on the Labor Party. The new middle class mainly impacted on ideology through a change in the more informal party ethos. The result of this, for Ward, was a mixed blessing. On the one hand, this expressive approach to politics, reflected in a changing ethos, succeeded in altering prejudices against "intellectuals" and helped the Party streamline its policy making and administration and "polish" its image. However the new middle class recruits were more "fickle"; more likely to be frustrated by the *real politik* of Labor in government as well as the routine of branch life and the constraints imposed by the faction system.³⁷

The new middle class transformed the branches and the party ethos and became over-represented in the parliamentary parties and as activists. However the complexity of the organisation and the resilience of the traditional union base, along with the more instrumental structures and practices in the Party as a whole, created a dilemma:³⁸

Although having absorbed and been changed by a new middle class constituency tending to possess quite different motivations for involvement in politics, Labor nonetheless has, in government, often been unable to meet their expectations and sustain their enthusiasm for political activity. Thus the middle classing of the ALP which has been a major source of its electoral success in the 1980's appears also to be one cause of its organisational frailty.³⁹

It is this concern at the organisational frailty of the ALP that was to be a starting point for further analysis of the middle-classing of the Party by Andrew Scott.

³⁷ Ward, 'Two Faces', 1989, pp 171 – 184.

³⁸ Ward, 'Two Faces', 1989, p 172 and pp 182 – 184.

³⁹ Ward, 'Two Faces', 1989, p 184.

The middle-classing of the ALP in NSW: Andrew Scott.

The Victorian experience was by no means unique. Like Ward, Andrew Scott focused on the middle-classing of the Labor Party by professionals and semi professionals, in this case, NSW. In a similar fashion to Ward, he emphasised the “long term weakness ... developing in Labor’s relationship with the working class”.⁴⁰

Scott set his analysis against the background of the changing nature of the working class since the Second World War and shifting perceptions within the Party about the consequences in terms of a changing electoral base. In questioning artificial divisions between ‘blue’ and ‘white’ collar workers, Scott pointed to the “convergence, in recent decades, between the employment conditions of factory workers and those of routine ‘non-manual’ employees such as clerks, bank tellers and shop assistants”. He distinguished these from other wage and salary earners who pursue careers in work situations offering greater control over the workplace, and job security. In similar fashion to Ward he identified this grouping as corresponding in the (by now revised) ABS Classification of Occupations to the three groups “Managers and Administrators”, “Professionals” and “Para-professionals (including nurses, police and technical officers)”. For Scott then, these groupings identified the “middle class”. The remaining five ABS categories, covering white collar clerical, sales and personal service workers and traditional blue collar tradespersons, operators and labourers, identified the “working class”.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Scott, A., *Fading Loyalties: The Australian Labor Party and the Working Class*, Pluto Press, Sydney, 1991, p 2.

⁴¹ Scott, *Fading Loyalties*, p 10-14. The ABS categories had changed at this point from the eleven in Ward’s study to eight. These three categories used by Scott approximate to the categories ‘Professional, Technical and Related workers’ and ‘Administrative, Executive and Managerial workers’ used by Ward. Scott used income distribution data to show that the mean income of the first three ABS groups was above the mean for all groups while the mean of the lower five was below the all-group mean. Scott pointed out that while total wage and salary earners have expanded as a proportion of the adult population in the postwar period they have become fragmented internally with inequalities based on occupation, gender, ethnicity and age.

Using these two definitions of working class and middle class Scott went on to analyse ALP membership statistics (and particularly the records in NSW) to look at the changing membership base of the ALP. In absolute terms, the membership of the ALP grew after the Second World War until the 'Split' when it began to fall. It recovered in the Whitlam era but then fell off again from about 1983. The Party has never again attained the membership levels that existed at the time of the Split, in the mid 1950's. As with Ward's analysis, the most interesting changes were in the composition of membership of the ALP.⁴²

Scott examined the recorded ALP membership in 38 municipalities in Sydney from 1952 to 1988. He identified a clear decline in party membership in working class areas (those identified as having a below average proportion of professional and managerial occupations), while middle class areas (those with an above average proportion of professional and managerial workers) showed an increase in membership. The Party's membership became fairly evenly distributed between both types of municipality by 1978. From that year, middle class membership tapered off and both types of areas recorded falls in membership in the mid to late 1980's⁴³:

The primary reason for the decline in the ALP's urban membership since the War, then, is that the Party has lost much of the active support it used to receive from people living in low-income areas. On top of this long-standing weakness, the membership gains made in more affluent areas since the early 1970's have more recently been reversed ...

A steep, steady, decline in Party participation occurred, particularly among people in working-class areas, during the 1950's and 1960's, and has not since been reversed, despite a modest, temporary recovery under the Whitlam government and perhaps also in the early years of the Hawke government. Then, from the early 1970's, there was a swift upsurge in ALP involvement by people from middle-class areas, which was probably first inspired by Whitlam's reform agenda but which continued into the 1980's, until it began to fall away once the Hawke government took office.⁴⁴

⁴² Scott, *Fading Loyalties*, p 30.

⁴³ Scott, *Fading Loyalties*, pp 28–34.

⁴⁴ Scott, *Fading Loyalties*, pp 33-34.

The continued electoral success for the Labor Party in the 1980's, may, Scott argued, have been made possible by demographic shifts in the working class to the outer suburbs, providing a more advantageous balance of Labor voters across electorates. This, together with the ability of voters to record 'protest' votes with minor parties and independents (with preferences going to Labor) and compulsory voting, may have resulted in a short-term situation where the ALP's electoral prospects improved in spite of the erosion of its active support base. But as he went on to point out, it was "doubtful ... that the growing contradiction between Labor's membership and its constituency can continue to be reconciled".⁴⁵

For Scott, this frailty of traditional working class support was directly linked to the domination of the membership by the salaried career professionals that emerged in the Whitlam period. Drawing on the work of Hindness and Whitely, among others, he argued that:

The professionals and para-professionals who make up one of the more privileged sections of the of the contemporary labour force have succeeded in redefining Left politics to reflect their own interests, and in a way which marginalises the more 'boring', bread-and-butter concerns of the less privileged.⁴⁶

For Scott, this was a drift away from the Chifley era "vision of social reconstruction" which grounded in the "specific grievances of the working class". With the revival of Labor in the Whitlam era new visions crowded the Labor horizon:

The revival of Labor Party participation later in the 1960's relied heavily on an influx of young professionals and tertiary students, many of whom had marched, together with older, blue collar unionists, against the Vietnam War. While some of these new participants were from working class backgrounds, the majority evidently were not. They were attracted to the ALP less by a desire to attack the causes of class inequality than by an interest in implementing the policy ideals of the new social movements for feminism, peace and the

⁴⁵ Scott, *Fading Loyalties*, pp 61- 62.

⁴⁶ Scott, *Fading Loyalties*, p 47. Scott cites Hindness, B., *The Decline of Working Class Politics*, Paladin, London, 1971 and Whitely, P., *The Labour Party in Crisis*, Methuen, London, 1983.

environment. Some, notably schoolteachers, may also have been politicised around workplace issues, but their participation in the ALP, like their growing effectiveness in the union movement, depended on their being better versed in the discourse of political debate than those who had not undertaken professional training. Like others from the professions, they rarely saw themselves as being in the same social class as tradespeople or labourers, nor did they share the same outlook as shop assistants or clerks.⁴⁷

Many of these activists and other professionals, more recently recruited, continued to participate at all levels of the Party at the end of the 1980's. This was in spite of the experience of the Hawke government and its failure to abide by "Party policies and philosophies". This, Scott argued, had led by the end of the 1980's to an acceptance, even among members from working class occupations, that politics should be "a career pursuit for suitably qualified people":

Labor's great achievement last century in overturning the old, elitist attitude that 'common' people have no place in government has been sadly compromised by the progress, in recent decades, of this doctrine that 'ordinary' people have no real political role. The trade union movement is facing a parallel erosion of grassroots participation, in that the processes enabling *rank-and-file* workers to become senior officials have broken down in many major unions and peak councils.⁴⁸

The middle-classing of Labor also seemed to have favoured the increasing participation of women, up from 26 per cent of the NSW membership in 1961 to 31 per cent in 1981 and doubling in Victoria to 40 per cent between 1961 and 1986. While Scott argued that the "quality" of women's involvement in the Party improved considerably beyond "auxiliary" functions, he nevertheless pointed out that these "modest improvements at grassroots levels" were yet to translate into adequate participation at higher levels in the Party.

⁴⁷ Scott, *Fading Loyalties*, p 48.

⁴⁸ Scott, *Fading Loyalties*, p 49.

Similarly, some improvements in participation by people from non-English speaking backgrounds was identified as “less spectacular” than changes in the electorate at large.⁴⁹

Scott’s proposals for dealing with this membership imbalance within the Labor Party, and its weakening working-class base, centred around ideas of structural reforms to improve membership participation, in particular in conjunction with the union movement. Scott emphasised the importance of attracting participation from those employed in the white collar working class such as clerical, sales and personal service. This, Scott argued, might attract more women into participation from these female dominated work areas. As well, there was a need to attract migrants from non-English speaking backgrounds and young workers.⁵⁰

Scott went on in his later work to develop a comparative analysis of the political changes within the ALP and the British Labour Party. His work in *Fading Loyalties* remains, as with Ward, one of the major recent studies of the ALP’s changing membership. However, Scott did not quite establish the link between the ALP’s electoral fragility (in terms of the traditional working class vote) and the middle-classing of the Party. The potential for traditional Labor voters to abandon the ALP related, he implied, to market driven policies and federal ministers “ideologically committed to the contraction of the public sector”.⁵¹ In other words, the inference in his writing was that the changing nature of the Labor Party had led to a shift from concern with the more traditional “vision of social reconstruction”; from policies dealing with unemployment and social inequality.⁵² Yet, he also indicated that the middle class professionals were “frustrated by the Hawke government’s failure to adhere to Party policies and philosophies”,⁵³ policies and philosophies that were in many

⁴⁹ Scott, *Fading Loyalties*, pp 42–43. For a political and historical analysis of the role of women in politics in Australia, including the ALP, see Sawyer, M. and Simms, M., *A Woman’s Place: Women and Politics in Australia*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1984 and second edition, 1993. See also Deverall, K., Huntley, R., Sharpe, P., and Tilly, J., (eds) *Party Girls: Labor Women Now*, Pluto Press, Sydney, 2000.

⁵⁰ Scott, *Fading Loyalties*, pp 64–70.

⁵¹ Scott, *Fading Loyalties*, p 63.

⁵² Scott, A., *Fading Loyalties*, p 48 and text above.

⁵³ Scott, A., *Fading Loyalties*, p 49.

cases strongly based on opposing the “contraction of the public sector”. The possibility that the doctrines espoused by many of the middle class ALP professionals were in accord with the desires of working class Labor voters, was not explored. Further, Scott did not fully explain why party membership in middle class areas and working class areas *both* fell at the end of the 1980’s.⁵⁴ This might again point to *common* attitudes among both the middle class and the working class to the policies of the Hawke government. In other words he provided a similar explanation for middle class members leaving the Party, as for working class members leaving it.

As with Ward, Scott doesn’t follow up this political ambiguity of the new middle class/middle class which his analysis brings to the surface. On the one hand there is an implicit middle class ‘interest’ exercising increasing influence over the Party, to the exclusion of the interests of the working class. Yet opposed to this, using Ward’s term, is an “expressive” politics of the middle class. This may be exercised, as Scott implies above, in the same direction of a “vision of social reconstruction” as the working class. In other words, while both Ward and Scott try to delineate different sets of interests for the middle class and the working class, in the ALP, they appear unable to fully carry this through. There is an unresolved problem of reconciling, the often progressive, Left-wing, pro-working class concerns of many of the middle class (perhaps like Ward and Scott themselves), with the decline in Party activity by the working class. This problem, and the ambiguities associated with it, is that which this thesis will seek to address.

⁵⁴ Scott., A., *Fading loyalties*, p 33.

Michael Thompson and the gentrification of the ALP

The defection of the traditional working class from Labor was a problem that Michael Thompson sought to approach differently in his book *Labor without class: The gentrification of the ALP*.⁵⁵ Thompson directly linked the domination of the Labor Party by middle class professionals to the shifting of working class voter allegiance from Labor. He argued that this voter shift did not have anything to do with the rejection by the working class of the ‘economic rationalism’ of the Hawke government. Rather it had more to do with the changing ethos of the ALP and its capture by selfish, middle class special interests, preoccupied with feminism, the environment, aboriginal policy and multiculturalism. In opposition to Scott, Thompson suggested that the working class saw sound economic management, in a neo-liberal sense, as the true heir to the Chifley ideals of dealing with questions of employment and social justice.

Thompson’s book attracted great attention when it was published. Its vigorous and highly critical style, was very much in the tradition of the two people he cited as having encouraged him to write it: former federal Labor finance minister Peter Walsh and *Sydney Morning Herald* columnist P P McGuinness.⁵⁶ Thompson set out to revise the Whitlam legacy in the ALP. This was a legacy, he asserted, that had represented a “hijacking” of the Party by “the tertiary educated (with their contempt for the contribution to Labor of the under educated)” who he blamed for the “exodus of the post-war working class from the ALP branches”.⁵⁷ He drew in particular on warnings by Arthur Calwell, Bill Hayden and former Chifley adviser and political scientist Fin Crisp.⁵⁸ These were warnings of the undue

⁵⁵ Thompson, M., *Labor without Class: the gentrification of the ALP*, Pluto, Sydney, 1999.

⁵⁶ Thompson, M., *Labor without Class*, x. The way in which Walsh and McGuinness’s own writing about the ‘new class’ and their influence on the Labor party complements and perhaps informs Thompson’s work, can be seen in: Walsh, P., *Confessions of a Failed Finance Minister*, Random House Australia, 1995 and McGuinness, P. P., ‘Freeing – Up Australia: Social democracy, Markets and Welfare’, *Quadrant*, May 1985, pp 66-76. See also discussion of this concept of a ‘new class’ below in this chapter.

⁵⁷ Thompson, M., *Labor without Class*, ix.

⁵⁸ Thompson, M., *Labor without Class*, pp 87 – 89.

influence emerging in the ALP of what Calwell called “aggressive, assertive, philosophical, way-out people”⁵⁹ and Hayden, “middle class hedonists of the sixties” whose youthful revolt did not detract from their essentially bourgeois nature.⁶⁰

Thompson accepted Scott’s description of the changing nature of the working class as incorporating routine, non-manual, white collar workers and concurred with his focus on the managers, professionals and para-professionals as constituting what might be defined as the “career” oriented middle class⁶¹. However he rejected Scott’s proposals for correcting both the imbalance in the Party’s membership and the alienation of working class voters. These proposals for democratic, party reform, to encourage greater participation, were “likely to be deployed by the privileged tertiary educated to entrench themselves further”. For Thompson, Scott had been “too blinded by his support for the social movements to confront class-structured inequality”.⁶²

The essence of Thompson’s rejection of Scott lay in the fact that Scott, as with other writers who Thompson took to task, equated the ‘weakness’ of the working class support for the Labor Party with the Hawke government’s economic rationalism:

what the party has to get its head around is that ‘economic rationalism’ is not a dirty word among the contemporary working class. Their response to the changes caused by economic reform has not been wholesale rejection of such policies. Witness their acceptance of the Hawke government’s program of tariff reform, despite the economic insecurity it caused. What the party also has to get its head around is that, if the lesson from the 1996 election is that ‘political correctness’ drove the working class away, the lesson from the 1998 election is that, apart from fearing the GST, the working class will reject economic policies which lack credibility or fail to reward hard work.⁶³

⁵⁹ Thompson, M., *Labor without Class*, p 1.

⁶⁰ Thompson, M., *Labor without Class*, p 9-10.

⁶¹ Thompson, M., *Labor without Class*, pp 69-70.

⁶² Thompson, M., *Labor without Class*, p 85.

⁶³ Thompson, M., *Labor without Class*, pp 93-94.

Thus it was the “political correctness” of the “young bourgeois” with their “coercive and self-interested agendas” who offended the values of the working class; values of the fair go, hard work, the family and respect for government and the rule of law.⁶⁴ These were values which Thompson placed firmly within the vision of Chifley’s ‘light on the hill’⁶⁵.

The solution to class inequality for Thompson, was to accept the limitations imposed on public expenditures by market forces. This needed to be based on a realisation that market forces delivered the best outcomes, with some state interventions to assist transition and compensate losers.⁶⁶ The middle classes who had hijacked the ALP were seen as a threat to this more practical Laborist strategy, with their special pleading and demands on public funding. However in a mirror image of the limitations presented in Scott’s research, Thompson failed to address the questions raised in Scott’s figures as to why there was an ALP membership decline in *both* middle class and working class areas in the mid to late 1980’s. If the Hawke government’s economic management was what the working class really wanted, membership in working class areas should have risen during this period. It clearly did not. Thompson denies any ambiguity of class location or ideological motive as far as the ALP middle class are concerned, while Ward and Scott reveal this ambiguity yet do not follow it up.

A ‘new class’?

Thompson’s writing was in the tradition of ‘new class’ analysis that was developed by centrist and neo-conservative intellectuals in the United States during the 1970’s and 1980’s. This analysis constituted a revision of the radical political and social upheavals of the 1960’s and early 1970’s and targeted the “unaccountable, radical and self-interested administrators and policy makers profiting off public money” who emerged from those

⁶⁴ Thompson, M., *Labor without Class*, p 95.

⁶⁵ Thompson, M., *Labor without Class*, p 30.

⁶⁶ Thompson, M., *Labor without Class*, p 94 and *passim*.

upheavals.⁶⁷ In Australia, this form of analysis has found expression through writers such as P P McGuinness.⁶⁸

Ironically, this ‘new class’ style of analysis actually began among Leftist thinkers trying to come to terms with the emergence of an educated, salaried administrative and professional stratum. This was applied to the public and private institutions of capitalist societies, on the one hand, and the machinery of the ‘State Socialist’ eastern bloc on the other. Ward’s use of the term ‘new middle class’ is one of the more frequently used characterisations of the changing nature of the middle class. Others include “professional-managerial class”, “new working class”, “new petit bourgeoisie” and “technocratic labour”. Braverman emphasised the nature of the middle class as intermediate, “middle layers” between Capital and Labour and Erik Olin Wright in a similar vein sought to explore the nature of the “contradictory class locations” of these intermediate strata. More recently, in a contemporary Australian context, Belinda Probert located a middle class defined by “tertiary educational credentials, or cultural capital” in a four-class model that included an overclass, working class and underclass. This has been a long debate around what Connell and Irving have called “the particularly vexed issue in the idea of a ‘middle class’”. It has included theoretical attempts to reconcile the approaches of Marx and Weber, incorporate Antonio Gramsci’s understanding of the role of intellectuals, and deal with the conflict between Althusserian structuralism and the more fluid and historically contextual class analysis of E P Thompson.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Cahill, D, ‘The Re-invention of Class: A Historical Understanding of the Right’s new Class Terminology’. Abstract from paper delivered at *Retrospections*, Australasian Postgraduate Conference, University of New South Wales, November 1999. See also Cahill, D., ‘The Australian Right’s New Class Discourse and the Construction of the Political Community’, in Hood, R., and Markey, R., (eds) *Labour and Community: Proceedings of the Sixth National Conference of the ASSLH*, Wollongong, NSW, October 1999, pp 53-58; Brint, S, “‘New Class’ and Cumulative Trend Explanations of the Liberal Political Attitudes of professionals’, *American Journal of Sociology*, No. 90, July 1984, pp 30-34; ‘Our New Elite: For better or for Worse?’ and interview with Michael Novak ‘Power of the New Class “Is Extraordinary”’, *U.S. News and World Report*, No. 88, February 25, 1980, pp 69-70.

⁶⁸ McGuinness, P P, ‘Freeing Up Australia’, pp 74 – 75. See also McGuinness’s more recent writing for *the SMH*.

⁶⁹ Hyman, R., ‘Introduction: White Collar Workers and Theories of Class’ plus extracts by various writers in Chs 6 and 7 in Hyman, R and Price, R., (eds), *The New Working Class?: White Collar Workers and Their*

In the context of the shift in the focus of class analysis from the area of production to that of consumption, reproduction and the conflict over urban space, the 'new middle class' have come within the theoretical framework of 'gentrification' analysis. There have also been attempts to analyse the role of 'intellectuals' in relation to urban social movements.⁷⁰ In the specific context of the politics of the inner city of Sydney in the 1970's, a number of writers have examined the role of the middle class in relation to resident action groups and the history of the Builders Labourers Federation (BLF).⁷¹ Within the specific focus of Leichhardt Municipality, this thesis will now turn to examine the work of two writers who have linked the conflict over urban space, to the political changes within the ALP.

Organisations, Macmillan, London, 1983; Wright, E., *Classes*, Verso, London, 1985 Chs 1-4; McGregor, C., *Class in Australia*, Penguin, Victoria, 1997, Chs 2 and 7; Bloggs, C., *Gramsci's Marxism*, Pluto Press, London, 1976; Braverman, H., *Labor and Monopoly Capital*, Monthly Review Press, New York and London, 1974, p 407; Connell, R., and Irving, T., *Class Structure In Australian History*, Second Edition, Longman Cheshire, Melbourne 1992, p 9; Beresford, M., 'The Technocratic Labor Thesis: A Critique' in *Arena*, No. 39, 1975, pp 55-73, Burgmann, V., and Milner, A., 'Intellectuals and the new social movements' in Kuhn, R and O'Lincoln, T (eds), *Class and Class Conflict in Australia*, Longman, Melbourne 1996, pp 114-130; Probert, B., 'Growing Underclass demands a fairer Australia' *SMH*, 14/3/2001, p 16 and full text of this Sixth Barton Lecture at www.smh.com.

⁷⁰ Katznelson, I., *Marxism and the City*, Clarendon, Oxford, 1992; Palen, J., and London, B., (eds), *Gentrification, Displacement and Neighbourhood Revitalisation*, State University of New York Press, Albany, USA, 1984; Horvarth, R and Engels, B., 'The Residential Restructuring of Inner Sydney' in Burnley, J., and Forrest, J., (eds), *Living in Cities: Urbanism and Society in Metropolitan Australia*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1985, pp 143-159; Smith, N., *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the revanchist city*, Routledge, London and New York, 1996; Ley, D., *The New middle Class and the remaking of the Central City*, OUP, 1996; Burgmann, V and Milner, A., 'Intellectuals and the new social movements'.

⁷¹ Sandercock, L., 'The BLF, Urban Politics and Inequality' in Mayer, H and Nelson, H., (eds) *Australian Politics; A Fourth Reader*, Cheshire, Melbourne, 1976, pp 294-295; Sandercock, L., 'Citizen Participation: the new conservatism' in Troy, P (ed.) *Federal Power in Australia's Cities*, Hale and Iremonger, Sydney, 1978, pp 117-132; Nittim, Z., 'The Coalition of Resident Action Groups' in Roe, J., (ed.) *Twentieth Century Sydney: Studies in urban and social history*, Hale and Iremonger, Sydney, 1980, pp 231-247; Jakubowicz, A., 'The Green Ban movement: urban politics and class struggle' in Halligan, J and Paris, C., (eds), *Australian Urban Politics*, Longman Cheshire, Melbourne, 1984, pp 149-167; Burgmann, M and Burgmann, V., *Green bans, Red union: Environmental Activism and the New South Wales Builders Labourers' Federation*, UNSW Press, Sydney, 1998.

The Leichhardt Context: Andrew Jakubowicz and Benno Engels.

Andrew Jakubowicz first drew attention to the impact on the ALP of middle-classing and the conflict over space in his early undergraduate work on the split in the Balmain ALP in 1968. This split occurred when local Labor councillors Nick Origlass and Issy Wyner, along with supporters, were expelled from the ALP over Origlass and Wyner's breach of municipal caucus. With the support of a large number of local residents, they had been in opposition to the construction of a chemical tank farm, which the Labor caucus majority endorsed.⁷²

In his published work in the early 1970's, Jakubowicz started out by identifying the 'new middle class' as those "(f)reed from the day to day job insecurity of the manual worker and from the entrepreneurial responsibility of the classic middle class". These were primarily those with "salaried jobs in large corporations, the public service or universities", most with a "university or tertiary education".⁷³ In moving into inner suburbs such as Balmain and Glebe, the new middle class were looking for an alternative to suburban life and space for their broader societal concerns:

Their development of a cosmopolitan life style has grown from the interrelationship of affluence, education and security, and they have sought territory ... to develop and sustain their concerns. Fleeing the suburbs that they dislike, and opting for proximity to work, they have gone to particular places, and sought a 'place' with a particular image which encompasses both the physical structure and design and the sorts of people with whom they would like to associate ... It is almost as though they have been trying to create defensive bulwarks against a

⁷² Jakubowicz, A., 'A Split in the Balmain Branch of the ALP', Undergraduate Thesis, Government Department, Sydney University, cited in Johnston, R., 'Participation in Local Government: Leichhardt, 1971 – 74' in Lucy, R., (ed.) *The Pieces of Politics*, Second Edition, Macmillan, Melbourne, 1979, pp 230 – 257. A copy of this thesis is also located in the Origlass Papers, SLNSW, MLMSS 7093/10/4. See chapter three below for further discussion of this split.

⁷³ Jakubowicz, A., 'A New politics of Suburbia' in *Current Affairs Bulletin*, April 1972, pp 339 – 340.

world that they see as being hostile to the identity they are trying to create.⁷⁴

The new middle class brought with them organisational skills and “middle class attitudes towards bureaucratic decision making”.⁷⁵ These skills were applied to efforts to rally around environmental issues and a need to develop a sense of “community” through resident action and resident associations.⁷⁶ This resulted in a ‘tribal’ conflict between the new middle class and the established working class residents. Jakubowicz argued that the inner city’s other newcomers, mainly Southern European migrants, “acknowledged the proprietorial rights pre-empted by the old Australians to their local political scene”.⁷⁷

The tribal interests of the traditional working class residents were represented by the inner city political machines of the ALP, which had become the expressions of a “strong, defensive community tradition”. These grew out of the necessities of socioeconomic defence during the Great Depression and were reinforced by strongly established family links and in many cases emotional and religious affiliations to the Irish wing of the Catholic Church. The result, according to Jakubowicz, was the existence of inner city Labor machines that were “authoritarian and hierarchical”, purpose built to control local councils and jobs and with “a possessive unforgiving ideology”.⁷⁸ While in some areas of the inner city this tribal sense found expression through Langite or Left-wing Labor forms, the ward machines of the Municipality of Leichhardt were “shrines to conservatism within the ALP”.⁷⁹

At first, the new middle class promoted the formation of resident associations which eschewed “political” involvement, concentrating on local issues and trying to build a sense

⁷⁴ Jakubowicz, A., ‘The city game: urban ideology and social conflict, or Who gets the goodies and who pays the cost?’ in Edgar, D., (ed.), *Social change in Australia: Readings in Sociology*, Cheshire, Melbourne, 1974, p 336.

⁷⁵ Jakubowicz, ‘The city game’, p 330.

⁷⁶ Jakubowicz, ‘A New politics’, pp 340-351.

⁷⁷ Jakubowicz, ‘A New politics’, p 343.

⁷⁸ Jakubowicz, ‘A New politics’, pp 342 – 343.

of 'community'. Eventually, however, more radical elements in the associations, and the new middle class generally, pursued more assertive and political "resident action". This was associated with an emerging "ideology of concern" and reflected in the formation of the Council of Resident Action Groups (or CRAG). In Leichhardt Municipality, the initial political reserve of associations, such as the Balmain and Annandale Associations and the Glebe Society, shaded into the more overt political behaviour of the "Campaign For Better Council". This local resident action coalition, in association with Balmain Leichhardt Labor, formed by expelled Labor councillors Nick Origlass and Issy Wyner, won control of Leichhardt Council at the 1971 municipal elections.⁸⁰

Jakubowicz also drew attention to the major role played in resident action groups by women:

Although this could be attributed simply to the more time available to women and their more intimate knowledge of local areas (both useful political resources), it also reflects the growing liberation of women within the new middle class itself.⁸¹

This would accord with Scott's observations above, that the middle classing of the ALP generally was accompanied by an increase in participation by women.⁸²

Jakubowicz created an image of a developing tribal conflict over the "whole mesh of politics" in the inner city, one that he argued was "reminiscent of two Tennessee hill families facing up to each other".⁸³ The early period of his study (the late 1960's to early 1970's) predated the more wholesale move by the new middle class into the ALP branches. But much of what he wrote about the emerging political/tribal conflict foreshadowed later

⁷⁹ Jakubowicz, 'A New politics' p 346 and 'The City Game', pp 332-334.

⁸⁰ Jakubowicz, 'A New politics' pp 343 – 351; Johnston, 'Participation in Local Government', passim; Greenland, H., *Red Hot: The Life and Times of Nick Origlass*, Wellington Lane Press, Sydney 1998, Chs 24-25.

⁸¹ Jakubowicz, 'A New politics', p 350.

⁸² For a critical analysis of approaches to the study of women's involvement in urban politics see Simms, M., 'The politics of women and cities: a critical survey' in Halligan and Paris, *Australian Urban Politics*, pp 129-140.

struggles for power over the control of the local Labor Party in Leichhardt. Interestingly too, at this early stage, was his recognition of the role of contradiction and human agency (set against the broader historical context) implicit in the differences within the new middle class between “resident action” and a more staid “association” approach to local issues.⁸⁴ This distinction is, however, one that largely disappeared in Benno Engels’ later analysis of the tribal conflict as it manifested itself in the context of his study of the gentrification of Glebe.

Benno Engels’ brought a “structural Marxian” approach to bear when focussing on the process of ‘gentrification’ in Glebe between 1960 and 1986, and its consequent effect on the Labor politics of Leichhardt Municipality.⁸⁵ Engels defined gentrification as “a residential process whereby middle class households move into low-income inner city areas, rehabilitate the dilapidated housing stock and displace or replace its working class occupants”.⁸⁶ Following in the Marxist approach to the analysis of gentrification by Neil Smith,⁸⁷ Engels linked this process to global capital movements and the emergence in the inner city of Sydney (as with other cities) of a ‘rent gap’. This was a ‘valley’ of a depressed or undervalued inner city property market relative to that of the city centre on the one side, or the middle distant suburbs on the other. The inner city housing market was ripe for targeting by the middle classes with the restructuring of the inner city labour market away from its traditional industrial, blue collar form. In the context of inner Sydney, this was

⁸³ Jakubowicz, ‘A New politics’, p 344.

⁸⁴ Jakubowicz, ‘A New Politics’, pp 345-346.

⁸⁵ Engels, B., *The Gentrification of Glebe: The Residential Restructuring of an Inner Sydney Suburb, 1960 to 1986*, PhD Thesis, Geography Department, University of Sydney, July 1989; Horvath, R., and Engels, B., ‘The residential restructuring of inner Sydney’ in Burnley, J., and Forrest, J., (eds), *Living in Cities: Urbanism and society in metropolitan Australia*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1985, pp 143-159.

⁸⁶ Engels, B., ‘Capital Flows redlining and gentrification: the pattern of mortgage lending and social change in Glebe, Sydney, 1960 –1984’, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, Vol. 18, No. 4, December 1994, p 629.

⁸⁷ Smith, N., and LeFaivre, M., ‘A Class Analysis of Gentrification’ in Palen, J., and London, B., (eds) *Gentrification*; pp 43-63; Smith, N., *The New Urban Frontier*, *passim*.

boosted by the abolition of state rent controls and restrictive “redlining” financial practices by banks and other institutions, both of which had held the property market back.⁸⁸

Engels linked into this structural explanation of economic forces the “human agency” of resident action; specifically the activity of the “gentrifiers” in The Glebe Society and the Glebe ALP branches, in ways that reinforced the underlying economic forces that shaped gentrification. The influx of gentrifiers into Glebe from the 1960’s brought them into conflict, by the early 1970’s, with the local Labor Party branches and Leichhardt Municipal Council. The gentrifiers were concerned to oppose flat developments, protect the historic housing stock, convert unused industrial land into open space and promote development of appropriate town planning schemes. The local conservative Labor politicians, representing a traditional working class constituency were concerned to provide housing and jobs and were therefore more inclined to accommodate developers. Thus Engels set the conflict between these two “tribes” over “turf” in similar fashion to Jakubowicz.⁸⁹

Engels traced the formation of the Glebe Society in the late 1960’s as the representative organisation of the gentrifiers. He outlined its early, and ultimately unsuccessful, attempts to get Leichhardt Council on side with its planning ideas and its support for the middle class, independent dominated council of 1971-73. He also linked the Society with those gentrifiers moving to take control of the local Labor branches and, ultimately, the successful takeover of Leichhardt Council in 1980.⁹⁰ This new council was a Labor dominated council, but of a very different kind:

Eight of the twelve aldermen on this new council were white collar, tertiary educated gentrifiers, who had joined the local branches as part of the 1970’s push to undermine the old machine and came to form the ‘new left’ which makes them distinctively different from the old left and right wings of the Labor Party ... At the local level these new leftist convictions come to be translated into more open and public

⁸⁸ Engels, B., and Horvath, R., ‘The residential restructuring’, *passim*; Engels, B., *The Gentrification of Glebe*, *passim*; Engels, B., ‘Capital Flows’, *passim*.

⁸⁹ Engels, B., *The Gentrification of Glebe*, Chs 8 and 9, *passim*.

⁹⁰ Engels, *The Gentrification of Glebe*, Chs 8 and 9, *passim*.

participation in municipal politics, upgrading of the local environment and responsible town planning which does not come to threaten the domestic property interests of the middle classes ... In effect, the inner city ALP had been gentrified and the next 4 years of local administration in Leichhardt would witness the 'aestheticisation' of politics.⁹¹

Engels' explanations of the *economic* processes of gentrification are convincing, and his chapter dealing with the Glebe Society and the local Labor Party branches provided some rich detail. However it is questionable whether he fully followed up his promise to examine "human agency", especially given his placing of the gentrifiers within a "heterogeneous middle class" and Erik Olin Wright's model of "contradictory class locations".⁹²

The gentrifiers of The Glebe Society, and ultimately the "new left" local Labor machine of the 1980's, were only permitted to play out their "agency" in strictly scripted roles within Engels' structural approach. He did not follow up the contradictions inherent in his statement above between "leftist convictions" and the "new left" gentrifiers defence of "domestic property interests". There were complex interactions between the middle class Left and the traditional working class, especially in relation to the politics of the Glebe Estate housing project, one of the central social and political dynamics of Glebe which will be examined in chapter four below. Further, Engels' characterisation of the "aestheticisation" of politics of Leichhardt Council during the early 1980's, glossed over some important political differentiations that opened up in the municipality and Labor politics at that time (see chapter five below). In this sense he placed himself in the same position as the other writers above. He did not follow up and fully explain the political ambiguities of the middle class, particularly in relation to involvement in the ALP.⁹³

⁹¹ Engels, *The Gentrification of Glebe*, p 499.

⁹² Engels, B., *The Gentrification of Glebe*, pp 350 to 356.

⁹³ The term 'gentrification' itself, seemingly ascribes a set of inherent bourgeois values to the middle class. The use of the term in this thesis should be read to refer only to the socio-economic changes in the inner city during the period of this study and not imply any judgements as to the political or social values of the middle class.

Posing the problem.

The work outlined by the five writers above has been invaluable in drawing attention to the problems posed by an unmistakeably middle-classing ALP. This is part of a wider concern around the middle-classing of the institutions and culture of the labour movement generally. It is a problem that bears close attention in terms of identifying the specific power links between middle class, labour movement professionals. These are parliamentarians, those on ALP parliamentary and ministerial staffs, and those employed in various educational, welfare and administrative roles in the public sector, in law and the judiciary, or in the structures of increasingly bureaucratised unions. There are also the links between these professionals and the formal structures of the Labor Party at all levels together with familial and friendship networks.

However, as a path to understanding the relationship of the middle class to the institutions of the labour movement, this thesis will focus on a specific locality study of the middle class Left of the ALP. It will be a study of the *subjectivities and contradictions of human agency set against a specific historical context*. That context is the Labor politics of Leichhardt Municipality in the 1970's and 1980's and the wider Australian political and social context that inter-linked with it. It is important to point out then, that this is *not* a work of class theory. However, by constructing this social history of the middle class Labor Left in Leichhardt, it is hoped that this thesis will deepen the understanding of the process and nature of middle-classing of the ALP and the wider influence of the middle class in labour movement politics. It may, as a result, draw conclusions of value to those who seek to place human agency at the centre of any understanding of the nature of the middle class generally.

In using the term 'middle class Left', this study draws on the broad description of the middle class/new middle class that is shared by the five writers above; a description which

approximates to the ABS professional categories outlined⁹⁴. By using the term 'Left', this middle class can be contextualised as those members of the middle class who were motivated in one way or another by the social movements and Labor politics to join the ALP and/or those recruited to the Party by ALP Left activists. By applying this term specifically to the period under study, any broader theoretical implications can be put to one side, pending those conclusions of the thesis that might shed light on the nature of the middle class generally.

Defining the Middle Class Left: the ALP and Leichhardt.

The middle-classing of the suburbs of Leichhardt Municipality can be seen in the census statistics for the period of this study. Benno Engels drew on census data to show changes in the occupational distribution in the period 1971 to 1981. In a similar fashion to Ward and Scott, he aggregated data to show the changing percentage of the workforce in 'professional and administrative', 'white collar' and 'blue collar' occupations, in the various suburban areas of Leichhardt Municipality between the three census years of 1971, 1976 and 1981.⁹⁵

These figures show the dramatic rise in the professional and administrative occupations as a proportion of the workforce, with an equally dramatic decline in blue collar occupations throughout the 1970's. White collar occupations showed a more modest rise. The figures also show the differing time frames of the impact of middle-classing. Balmain and Glebe were the 'frontline' suburbs showing the greatest proportion of professionals by the end of the decade, from 18 to 34 per cent in Balmain and 16 to 30 per cent in Glebe. Annandale

⁹⁴ It should be noted at this point that this ABS approach to defining class has its limitations in any broader attempt to understand class. There is no identifiable 'ruling' class or 'overclass', those making it up being subsumed into the middle class occupations. And of course the underclass and those not in the workforce are marginalised. Nonetheless these ABS classifications will be employed in a limited sense to identify those who constituted the two main contesting groups; those of the middle class and those of the working class, following on from its use by Ward, Scott and others.

⁹⁵ Engels, B, *The Gentrification of Glebe*, p 464. Engels used statistics derived from 1971, 1976 and 1981 Censuses, Australian Bureau of Statistics.

and Rozelle followed on (ten to 26 per cent and 11 to 26 per cent respectively) with Leichhardt and Lilyfield moving from eight to 13 per cent. This changing occupational make-up is reinforced by figures showing the percentage of the population with a university degree. This rose in Balmain from 2.9 per cent in 1971 to 14.3 per cent by 1981. Comparable figures for Glebe and Annandale are 4.3 per cent to 15.1 and 1.6 to 11.6 respectively.⁹⁶

Aggregated census statistics for Leichhardt Municipality as a whole for 1986 and 1991 indicate a continuation of the earlier trends. Professional, para-professional and administrative occupations made up over 40 per cent of the workforce by 1986 and over 47 per cent by 1991. White collar workers were almost 29 per cent by 1986 but fell back to just over 27 per cent by 1991. Blue collar workers were also 27 per cent in 1986 and just under 20 per cent in 1991. By 1991, over 20 per cent of the working age population of the municipality had a university degree or higher qualification.⁹⁷

In what way were these changes reflected in the changing membership composition of the ALP branches in Leichhardt Municipality? In seeking to answer this question, this study has used a different approach to examining ALP membership records from the approaches of Ward and Scott above. This study focuses on the membership categories for the period under study. These were determined by union affiliation and provide a measure of middle-classing. NSW ALP rules require that a working member must belong to a union covering their occupation, where one exists. Usually, only persons self-employed (and in circumstances where union coverage is not available) were excluded from this requirement. Union membership was related to the category of ALP membership. Members of unions affiliated to the ALP formed the first category of membership. A list of these unions in 1980-1981 is shown in appendix C. On the whole these were the traditional blue collar

⁹⁶ Engels, *The Gentrification of Glebe*, p 464. The blue collar workforce in 1971 was over 40 per cent in Balmain and Glebe and almost 50 per cent in Annandale. By 1981 it was, under 25 per cent in Balmain and Glebe and 32 per cent in Annandale.

unions. There were also white collar unions such as the Federated Clerks Union, the Health and Research Employees Association and Actors Equity as well as a union like the Municipal Employees Union which covered blue collar, white collar and some professional workers. The 'other' membership category covered members of unions not affiliated to the ALP. These came largely from the public sector and professional unions, affiliated to the ACTU and Labor Council but not the ALP. This category also covered the self employed and others not covered by a union. As will be shown below, members of 'non-affiliated' unions dominated this 'other' membership category and the proportion of ALP members in it is a good measure of the degree of middle classing of the Leichhardt branches.⁹⁸

There was also a 'concessional' membership category for those under 18 years of age, unemployed and pensioners, with a special category for pensioners of a number of years membership standing in the Party. This later category will be incorporated under the term 'concessional' for the purposes of this study. Women who worked at home often listed their occupation as 'domestic duties'. On the whole, this would have been considered unemployed in this concessional category, as would have been students over the age of 18 years.⁹⁹

Changes in the proportion of ALP branch members belonging to the three membership categories outlined above are shown in appendix D. The graphs in this appendix are based on the annual branch membership returns to the NSW ALP Head Office between 1973 and 1982. Prior to 1973 they listed members as men, women, juniors and rule H .14 Pensioners. After 1983, a new system of membership tickets issued from Head Office was introduced, with branches advising the number of members who had signed the register (a new procedure) at the local branch. In between these years, the branch returns showed numbers

⁹⁷ Occupation and Education Statistics for Leichhardt Municipality, Census Data, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra, 1986 and 1991.

⁹⁸ See Rules of NSW ALP, various editions, throughout the time frame of this study.

⁹⁹ See Rules of the NSW ALP. See also appendix D. The special pensioner category was under Rule H.14 and, after 1977, Rule H.13. It is possible that in some circumstances, women listing their occupation as domestic duties may have opted to be treated under the 'other' membership category.

in the branch in the various membership categories: affiliated union, 'other' (mostly members of unions not affiliated to the ALP) and concessional.¹⁰⁰

These figures confirm the general middle-classing of the branches as linked to the proportion of membership in the 'other' category. However, there are considerable variations specific to particular local branch histories. The Annandale branch shows the most consistent domination by the members of non-affiliated unions during the period, reflecting its early 'takeover' by the middle class Left. The Balmain and Leichhardt branches show quite specific shifts at particular points. The Balmain branch experienced a sudden turnaround in the composition of membership during the 1977 to 1978 period. This was the culmination of intense 'branch stacking' by the middle class Left (as described in chapter three below) with 'counter-stacking' by the conservative, working class Right. These events came to a head in the 'fire extinguisher incident' of October 1977 and the subsequent victory by the middle class Left in taking over the branch. A similar, though less dramatic change in composition occurred at the Leichhardt branch in 1980 to 1981, corresponding to the struggle for control of the branch at that time.¹⁰¹

The Forest Lodge branch was dominated by the working class Right during the whole of the period and this is reflected in the dominance of members in affiliated unions until 1982, when the branch absorbed the bulk of its much larger neighbour, Glebe North. The Glebe North branch was disbanded in an attempt to prevent its takeover by the middle class Left. Branch returns available for the 1970's show the more even balance between affiliated and non affiliated union membership status during the protracted conflict in that branch (see chapter four below). The concessional category was very high in Glebe North during this period, possibly reflecting the struggle within that category. Pensioners and non-working

¹⁰⁰ Appendix D. See also various editions of NSW ALP Rules for this period.

¹⁰¹ Appendix D.

spouses may have been more likely to be found among the working class Right while the Left drew on students in this suburb adjacent to Sydney University.¹⁰²

These branch returns do not enable a complete analysis of the involvement of women. Of the occasional branch membership list attached to returns (not a rule requirement) only some enable the identification of women by first names. Even so, this limited data appears to support the magnitude of women's involvement in the middle-classing branches as revealed in the Annandale and Lilyfield roll book figures (see below) and in Scott's figures discussed above. For example, Glebe North branch at December 1976 recorded just over 35 per cent female members out of a total of 184. These were mostly concentrated in concessional and non affiliated union categories. On the eve of being taken over by the middle class Left, Leichhardt branch in 1978 had 38 per cent women members out of a total of 66, mostly concessional but with some in the 'other' membership category. A Balmain list for December 1980 showed women as constituting 37 per cent of a total membership of 156, while membership lists for the Annandale branch for December 1980, 1982 and 1983 show women a consistent 42 per cent of membership.¹⁰³

The above trends in membership are confirmed by an examination of the roll books for the Annandale and Lilyfield branches, which were able to be accessed for this study. The Annandale ALP roll books were the most comprehensive and complete. They provide a portrait of the persons joining the Annandale, and Annandale South, branches between 1951 and 1983. These books record personal details, occupation and union membership at the time of joining, or transferring into, a branch along with details of the annual issue of a membership ticket. While they can be used to show an individual's length of membership,

¹⁰² Appendix D. ALP records do not reveal the percentage of members holding university degrees though this writer's own estimate of the 1981 federal preselection voting list for Annandale indicate that about 60 per cent of those members on the voting list, in this middle class Left dominated branch, held degrees. The occupations in the Annandale and Lilyfield roll books, as well as the evidence from the interviews and documents analysed in subsequent chapters also point in this direction.

¹⁰³ Branch Returns, *ALPR*, MLMSS 5095/611 (Balmain), 621 (Glebe North), 625 (Leichhardt). Annandale lists in writers papers.

they are used here to reveal union affiliation at the time of joining. That is they show the kind of people who were joining the branches during different periods.¹⁰⁴

Between 1951 and 1969, 133 new members signed on with the Annandale (or Annandale South) branch. Over 60 per cent of these were members of the affiliated unions with the Clerks, Metal, and Municipal unions the largest categories. In the early 1970's large numbers of members of non-affiliated unions began to join, and membership as a whole began to rise. Between 1970 and 1974, 112 new members signed on, close to 35 per cent of these were members of non-affiliated unions, compared to under 20 per cent for the affiliated unions. There was a further boost of 137 new members between 1975 and 1979, and 131 new members between 1980 and 1983. Members of non-affiliated unions stayed at close to 40 per cent of new members in the late 1970's dropping to just over 32 per cent in the early 1980's. Members of affiliated unions rose slightly to just over 23 per cent recovering to almost 30 per cent in the years 1980 to 1983.¹⁰⁵

There was some degree of middle-classing within the affiliated union category, especially the Municipal Employees Union. New members of this union included social workers and town planners. The early 1980's also saw some particular recruiting activity that may have favoured a recovery in affiliated union membership. Another factor was the presence in the branch of several 'entrists' elements from the Socialist Workers Party, Socialist Labor League and Spartacists who located themselves in more 'proletarian' occupations. On the whole, however, these figures reveal a shift in dominance from affiliated to non-affiliated unions in the branch. Members of non-affiliated unions were a fairly constant 73 to 74 per cent of the total 'other' membership category.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ Annandale Branch Roll Books, 1951-1983, *ALPR*, MLMSS 5095/653.

¹⁰⁵ Annandale Branch Roll Books.

¹⁰⁶ Annandale Branch Roll Books. The presence of members of the Left parties active in the branch was known to the writer at the time.

These figures also confirm the substantial increase in involvement by women indicated above. In the 1950's women represented about 20 per cent of new members, falling to 17 per cent in the 1960's. The early seventies saw a reversal of this trend, with women over 36 per cent of new members, rising to over 45 per cent in the late 1970's and early 1980's. This was accompanied by a rise in the number of women in both the affiliated and non-affiliated union categories during the 1970's and 1980's. Women were over 57 per cent of the non-affiliated new members in the late 1970's, falling back to just over 40 per cent in the early 1980's. For affiliated unions, the percentages for these two time periods were 33 per cent and 41 per cent respectively. This indicates that these rises in women's participation went beyond middle-classing. They were possibly the result of a general increase in the political involvement of women associated with the women's and other social movements of the time. However these figures might also be explained, as mentioned above, by a degree of middle-classing within affiliated unions or specifically local factors.¹⁰⁷

Women dominated the concessional category of membership: 80 per cent in the 1950's, 60 to 62 per cent in the 1960's and early 1970's and over 70 percent in the early 1980's. They were only 45 per cent of the category among new members in the late 1970's. There were considerable changes within the concessional category with a decline in the late 1970's and early 1980's of women in the 'domestic duties' sub category, and a rise in female students and unemployed.¹⁰⁸

A useful comparison to these changes in the 1970's and early 1980's in Annandale can be obtained by looking at the other set of roll books which were able to be accessed, those of the Lilyfield branch from 1980 to 1983. This was a branch which was 'restructured' and then taken over by the middle class Left in the aftermath of the bashing of Peter Baldwin in 1980. The previous branch secretary destroyed the old roll books and other records (see

¹⁰⁷ Annandale Branch Roll Books.

chapter three). Thus, the people signing the roll books were the entire membership (new and old) of this reconstituted branch.¹⁰⁹

A similar pattern of membership is revealed. Members of affiliated unions made up just over 25 per cent of roll book signatories, compared to almost 43 per cent for non affiliated unions. Women comprised 37 per cent of affiliated union membership and 43 per cent of non-affiliated union members; 41 per cent of the signatories as a whole. Women made up over 60 per cent of the concessional category.¹¹⁰

When examining the particular non-affiliated union membership in the Annandale and Lilyfield roll books, the dominance of the public sector unions stands out. Four key unions, the NSW Teachers Federation, the federal public service Administrative and Clerical Officers Association (ACOA), the Public Service Association of NSW (PSA), and University Staffs Associations, accounted for over a half to 60 percent of non affiliated union membership. Other public sector unions included the social welfare union, Nurses, Professional Officers Association and ABC Staffs Association.¹¹¹

Clearly, statistics can only tell so much and a deeper historical analysis is required to explain these changes. However, is it possible at this statistical level to establish the link between Left wing ideology, and the middle classing of the Leichhardt ALP branches? An answer to this question may be provided by comparing union affiliation/membership status on voting lists for the 1981 party preselection for the federal seat of Sydney, with the vote for Left or Right candidates. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, this preselection was hotly contested and resulted in the Left's Peter Baldwin ousting the Right's Les McMahon. These lists do not represent the full membership of a branch,

¹⁰⁸ Annandale Branch Roll Books. Those listing themselves in the roll books as performing 'domestic duties' (all women) have been treated in the concessional membership category.

¹⁰⁹ Lilyfield ALP Branch Roll Books, 1980-83 (held by branch secretary). See also chapter three below.

¹¹⁰ Lilyfield Branch Roll Books.

¹¹¹ Annandale and Lilyfield Roll Books.

though they do represent the core of activity; with 12 months membership and attendance at three branch meetings the prerequisite for voting.¹¹²

The Balmain, Annandale, Leichhardt and Lilyfield branches all demonstrate a link between dominance by the non-affiliated unions and the combined vote for the three Left candidates (see appendix F). The Forest Lodge and Glebe branches show the opposite link between affiliated union dominance and the vote for the incumbent Right federal member, Les McMahon. These branches were in fact the core of his support base throughout the electorate. McMahon lived in Forest Lodge and had close links to the rest of Glebe. It appears from these figures and those from the Annandale and Lilyfield roll books, discussed above, that the 'concessional' group of branch membership tended to 'follow' the dominant union grouping. It is probable that in branches dominated by the traditional working class, the concessional members tended to be pensioners and women listed under 'domestic duties'. In the Left leaning branches dominated by the middle class, there was a change in the class and ideological composition of women listed under 'domestic duties', as well as increasing numbers of students and unemployed. The large number of non-union members in the Glebe branch (based largely on the Glebe Estate) probably consisted mainly of pensioners and women listed under 'domestic duties'.¹¹³

The Glebe North branch is interesting in the more even balance of voting in spite of a dominance by the non-affiliated unions. This was a branch that saw a protracted struggle for control throughout the 1970's and by the early 1980's it was close to 'turning' to the middle class Left (see chapter four). Arguably, the working class Right were able to marshal a considerable section of the membership in the concessional categories. As mentioned above, the NSW branch of the ALP wound up the Glebe North branch and

¹¹² Appendix F.

¹¹³ Appendix F.

merged it into Forest Lodge branch 12 months after the preselection as part of an attempt to protect the sitting state member for Elizabeth, Pat Hills.¹¹⁴

The pattern of non-affiliated union membership on the preselection voting list shows, as with the Annandale and Lilyfield roll books, the dominance of the public sector unions. Again, use of initials rather than first names prevented the proper identification of women participants though records of the Annandale membership at the time indicate that around 40 per cent of voting members in that branch were women.¹¹⁵

It would be a mistake to conclude from these figures that all members of unions affiliated to the ALP were ideologically conservative or that the middle class were uniformly of the Left. Many involved in key leadership roles among the traditional working class that dominated the branches up to the end of the 1970's, and in some cases into the 1980's, were themselves of middle class occupations. As will be shown below, they included teachers, a medical practitioner, pharmacist, timber company executive, company personnel officer, solicitor, senior public servant and the manager of a welding company. There were on the other hand, many members of traditional working class affiliated unions who were ideologically aligned with the Left. Again, it needs to be emphasised that membership and voting statistics only tell part of the story.¹¹⁶

What these figures do provide, is a guide to the dominant membership and ideological changes in the branches of Leichhardt Municipality. The traditional working class that came to dominate the inner city ALP were, as Jakubowicz pointed out above, of conservative political tendencies. The middle class who moved in and eventually took

¹¹⁴ See chapters four and seven below.

¹¹⁵ See copies of preselection lists, writer's papers.

¹¹⁶ The influence of the middle class in the formation of ALP and its parliamentary representation has of course been a source of comment. See for example Childe, V., *How Labour Governs*, pp 20, 60 and Ch. 5; Beilharz, 'Childe and Social Theory', pp 171-172, Markey, R., *The Making of the Labor Party in New South Wales, 1880-1900*, UNSW Press, Sydney, 1988, p 176-179. On local middle class involvement in the early formation of the Labor Party in the municipality see Solling and Reynolds, *Leichhardt*, Ch. 10.

control were on the whole Left wing and motivated by the social movements of the late 1960's and early 1970's. This thesis will now move into the landscape sketched by these membership statistics and proceed to examine the people and events that shaped the changes within the branches. The next chapter will examine the first of the three areas of the municipality that will be given principal focus in the early part of this thesis: Annandale.

Chapter 2

‘ALL THE TROUBLE FOR US CAME OUT OF ANNANDALE’.¹

The inner city suburb of Annandale runs along the middle of the three sandstone ridges that make up the dominating topographical feature of the Leichhardt Municipality. The suburb developed much later than Balmain or Glebe, or Leichhardt itself, staying part of the landed estate of the descendants of Captain George Johnston. Johnston was the suppressor of the Castle Hill convict revolt and Rum Rebellion plotter who was given the land appropriated from original territory of the Wangel clan of the Eora in 1799. Johnston’s landed estate included 100 acres granted earlier in what is now Stanmore and where Annandale House, named after his home town in Scotland, was located. The modern suburb of that name is neatly bounded by Parramatta Road to the South, Johnston’s and White’s Creeks to the east and west respectively, with both these draining in to the northern harbour boundary of Rozelle Bay.²

After 1877, this area was purchased and developed by John Young, architect and engineer. Young began to develop the area as a planned, middle class suburb; a plan thwarted by the depressed real estate market of the late 1870’s. Development consequently proceeded as a mixture of some middle class housing, along the spine of the ridge around Johnston Street, with mostly working class housing on the lower land.³

Local government came to Annandale in 1894, and the suburb was a municipality up until its merger (along with Balmain) into Leichhardt Council in 1948. The reminder of Young’s

¹ Peter Crawford, Leichhardt Council Alderman 1980-1984 and state member for Balmain, 1984-1988, in a recorded interview 6/1/00.

² Solling and Reynolds, *Leichhardt*, Chs 1-2 and p 18.

dream is reflected in the grid layout of the suburb with wide streets running south to north; Johnston Street in the centre. Booth Street bisects these, cutting the suburb in two and it was this boundary between state electorates that provided the rationale (after 1958) for the existence of two ALP branches: Annandale branch north of Booth Street and Annandale South branch.⁴

Throughout the 1950's the branches were dominated by members who were, by and large, members of unions affiliated to the ALP; ie., predominantly the traditional blue collar and male dominated unions. Balmain and Glebe saw earlier impacts of gentrification and consequent incursions into the ALP of the middle class Left. However, circumstances conspired to enable the middle class Left to dominate the Annandale branches before either Balmain (1977) or Glebe (not until well into the 1980's).⁵

Moving In.

Bill Hume was typical of the newer middle class residents moving into the inner city from the mid sixties on and was one of the first of the middle class Left to move into the Annandale South branch. A primary school teacher, Hume, along with his wife Peggy, had originally bought a house in Glebe but moved to a bigger house in Annandale to accommodate a growing family. He was a coal-miner's son, born in Lithgow in 1929. He recalled that "the influence of family and neighbours had a lot to do with my political outlook". Trained as a teacher at Bathurst and Newtown, Hume was active at teachers college in "clubs and current affairs groups". He associated with ALP people when teaching at Mudgee and then joined the ALP at Fairfield when he moved to Sydney. After some time living in Paddington in the early sixties, Hume's move to Glebe and then

³ Solling and Reynolds, *Leichhardt*, pp 73-74.

⁴ Solling and Reynolds, *Leichhardt*, passim.

⁵ See appendix D and Annandale Branch Roll Books. See also chapters one, three and four.

Annandale brought him into contact with the “grouper element”, that controlled the ALP branches in Leichhardt Municipality.⁶

The membership of the two Annandale branches expanded rapidly during 1970 and 1971 and according to Hume the sheer weight of numbers, combined with the moribund nature of the branches, enabled the middle class Left to come to early dominance. The branches were poorly attended and dominated by “older members of the Holy Name society who took over positions of the aldermen at the time”. This rapid expansion of the membership enabled the middle class Left to prevail:

The doors in the Annandale branch had been closed for so long and there was such a small group involved. There was the likes of [Alderman] Peter Wilson [and Alderman] Jim Brady ... they were the dominant forces so there was probably their wives or relatives who would be dragged along to make up the numbers... but there was an influx of people interested in policy and also interested in [bringing] change into Annandale and the Right didn't have the numbers there to do anything about it and gradually the branch became more of a real political force.⁷

Like Hume, Gretchen Gamble was a teacher. Her impression of joining the Annandale South branch at the beginning of 1972 was of “resentment on the part of all these old bald and grey headed men; there wasn't a woman to be seen basically and it had been the men's club where ‘I look after you and you look after me and we all look after each other's children’”. Gamble (then Gretchen Seale) moved in to Annandale with her partner and

⁶ Recorded interview with Bill Hume, 24/2/00. “Groupers” is the name given to ALP members active in the Industrial Groups. While the groups included participation from anti-communist leftists, the term has often been applied, as it is here, to describe those associated with the anti-communist Catholic Action Movement active inside the ALP in the 1950's. See Murray, R., *The Split: Australian Labor in the Fifties*, Cheshire, Melbourne, 1972.

⁷ Bill Hume. See also Miles, J.A, Richards, R. W., and Rocks, C.A., Submissions Relating To ALP Defeat In Leichhardt Municipality In 1971 Local Government Elections, (submission to NSW ALP Local Government Administration Committee), Annandale and Annandale South Branches, undated, p 10 (copy in writer's papers). It should be noted here that as far as possible informants words have been transcribed as they were spoken. This may lead to some grammatical irregularities.

husband-to-be, Robert Gamble (also a teacher) in 1971. They first rented a house in Nelson Street next door to Bill and Peggy Hume.⁸

Gretchen Gamble was born in October 1944. Raised in Newcastle, she attended Newcastle Girls High School. Gamble's mother was a legal secretary who had come from a Labor oriented family. Her father had been raised by aunts from a conservative land-owning side of the family. Employed for a time "swinging a hammer" at the steel works after the Depression, he eventually graduated to an office job and, ultimately, department head. Her father's occupation plus the fact that "women tended to take on the politics of their partners in those days", meant that the Seale family politics tended towards the Liberal Party. For Gamble, this background was reinforced when she went to Teachers College and fell in with a "pretty conservative" group. As with many of her generation, Gamble's politics evolved with life experience. After teaching in Sydney for three years she travelled overseas where she mixed with a whole range of people and spent three years living in Greece:

When I came back I was very socially aware. From somebody who thought, "oh well, we really did need to go to the Vietnam war", I became very active against the Vietnam war.⁹

On her return to Australia, Gamble became alive not just to the war but also to the poor conditions and overcrowding of some inner city schools, particular those struggling to cater to a large influx of migrant children. In the 1970's she became involved in the Inner City Education Alliance. She also met Robert Gamble, who had come from a union oriented family; with a father and maternal uncles involved in the waterfront and maritime unions. Robert had joined the ALP at 16. They participated in anti-war marches together. Gretchen Gamble's feminist awareness also developed around this time:

I came back to that, there was none of that in Europe where I was. The only thing we benefited from was sexual freedom; I suppose that came about because of the pill. It wasn't till I came back here that I sort of

⁸ Gretchen Gamble.

⁹ Gretchen Gamble.

got involved in all the Germaine Greer stuff and the other people around who were writing on women's rights and what have you.¹⁰

The women's movement was to have central significance in the life of another person who transferred into the Annandale South branch later in 1972. Danny Sampson was born September 1944 and was brought up in "the leftie tradition". Her paternal grandfather had been a member of the Jewish *Bund* in Russia before the revolution and had left just ahead of the Tsarist police. Her father eventually emigrated from South Africa to Australia where he married her Scots-Australian mother. For part of her early life, Sampson lived with her "slightly bohemian" parents in George Street in the city. The family later moved to Kogarah and it was in Kogarah, in 1968, that she joined the ALP.¹¹

At home, politics was talked about all the time so political activity in the anti-war and women's movements came naturally. A clinical biochemist, Sampson was doing her post-graduate degree at the time of the Vietnam war moratorium marches. She had been involved in the early days of Women's Liberation in Sydney and was present at its inaugural meeting in Glebe in 1969. During her post graduate studies, Sampson moved into Glebe, with her partner, in her first gay relationship. She had liked living in the city as a child and with her partner also doing post-graduate work, Glebe "seemed like a very convenient area for where we were working"¹².

Sampson transferred her ALP membership into Glebe (probably Glebe North branch) which she remembered as being a branch that 'Doc' Foley ran¹³:

[It was] bizarre. Not all that different to be perfectly honest from the Kogarah ALP, but it was very patriarchal. Almost my first meeting in Glebe I was offered a job and it was basically tea lady. Women made

¹⁰ Gretchen Gamble.

¹¹ Recorded interview with Danny Sampson, 27/11/99. For historical reviews of the 'second wave' women's movement see Sawyer, M. and Simms, M., *A Woman's Place*, 1984, ch.9 (and revised version, 1993) and Lake, M., *Getting Equal: the history of Australian Feminism*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney 1999, Chs 9 and 10. See also Caine, B., (ed), *Australian Feminism: a companion*, Oxford UP, Melbourne, 1998 passim.

¹² Danny Sampson.

¹³ Foley was one of the legendary characters of the ALP Right in Glebe, see chapter four.

the tea. Men had the positions except there was a woman who was the minute secretary.¹⁴

Sampson eventually moved to Annandale to buy a house and joined the Annandale South branch. She recalled that branch life changed noticeably over the first few years, with the influx of new members: “That was a very interesting time to be in it, you actually talked about social issues.”¹⁵

The political preoccupations of these three individuals are typical of the middle class moving into the Annandale branches. The main initial period of influx, between 1970 and 1972, was the period of the moratorium marches, the development of the ‘Green Ban’ strategy of the BLF and the advance of the women’s movement. This was also the time of protests against the 1971 tour of the South African Springbok Rugby Union team as well as continued militancy among university students and teachers.¹⁶ In the Labor Party in NSW, there was ferment with the intervention of the Federal ALP Executive to restructure the branch and the temporary emergence of a more radical Socialist Left in contest with the established (Left) Steering Committee.¹⁷

At the local level, this general militancy was also reflected in the growing concern around issues of the urban environment and the formation, in late 1969 and early 1970, of the Annandale Association. This was a resident association modelled on its predecessors in Balmain and Glebe. The impetus to form the Association came with the threat of flat development and its impact on the ‘Witches’ Houses’, large houses with spired towers that

¹⁴ Danny Sampson.

¹⁵ Danny Sampson.

¹⁶ Bolton, G., *The Oxford History of Australia: Volume 5, 1942-1988, The Middle Way*; OUP., Melbourne, 1993, Ch. 8.

¹⁷ Wheelright, T., ‘New South Wales: The Dominant Right’, in Parkin, A. and Warhurst, J., *Machine Politics in the Australian Labor Party*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1983, pp 35 – 36; Hagan, J. and Turner, K., *A History of the Labor Party in New South Wales, 1891 – 1991*, Longman Cheshire, Melbourne, 1991, pp 217 – 220. See also Simms, M., ‘New South Wales: microcosm of a nation’ in Warhurst, J. and Parkin, A., *The Machine: labor confronts the future*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 2000, pp 91-108, for a more recent overview of the ALP in NSW.

had been built by John Young at the northern end of Johnston Street. This brought the new Association into conflict with the Leichhardt Council, which was in favour of the development and which was dominated by conservative aldermen from the Right-wing Labor machines of the municipality.¹⁸

Betty and Hugh Mason were at the centre of the foundation of the Association and Betty was to be its Secretary from its inception through until the 1980's. Betty was born in Ararat in Victoria in 1924 and brought up in the Melbourne suburb of Hawthorn. She worked for a vet after she left school and married at 22, but after living in Singapore left her husband and returned to Australia. She was introduced to Hugh Mason through a friend of her brother. Hugh was a New Zealander, an artist and journalist who had come to Australia and gravitated to work on the wharves. He was also a member of the Communist Party from which he was expelled in the aftermath of Krushchev's 1956 'Secret Speech'. Betty and Hugh originally lived in Glebe and then Leichhardt and moved into Annandale in 1967, into a severely run down house that had been found for them by Leichhardt alderman Nick Origlass. Origlass was a friend they had linked up with through Alan Roberts, another member of the CPA expelled at the same time as Hugh. Roberts associated himself with the Origlass-led, Australian Section of the (Trotskyist) Fourth International.¹⁹

In many respects, Betty and Hugh typified the overlapping relationship between the ALP and the resident associations of the municipality. Hugh had joined the ALP in Glebe in 1964 and renewed his membership in Annandale in 1974. Betty remained outside the ALP in large part because the constituency of the Association was varied (it included conservatives) though her politics also were anti-Liberal. She joined the ALP after the bashing of Peter Baldwin in 1980. There was a strong overlap between the membership of the Association and the new members of the local ALP branches, and activity in one for

¹⁸ Recorded interview with Betty Mason and Hugh Mason, 27/7/99. See also *Annandale Association Newsletter* passim and Papers of the Annandale Association, SLNSW, MLMSS 4143.

¹⁹ Betty Mason and Hugh Mason; Greenland, *Red Hot*, pp 223-224.

some complemented the other. Others active in the ALP and the Annandale Association were Jeff Miles and Warwick Richards.²⁰

Jeff Miles was a barrister, active with the Council for Civil Liberties. He was the first president of the Annandale Association and was also to be president (at different times) of the Annandale and Annandale South branches. Also active in the Association was Warwick Richards, a teacher and later, academic, who joined the Annandale South branch in May 1970. Richards had been active in the anti-war movement and was to become secretary of the South branch. Richards was also involved in a meeting at the Teachers Federation auditorium in August 1970, which drew up a 'Peoples Charter for the Preservation of the Environment'. He participated in organising, along with representatives of other Associations and groups, a subsequent public meeting on pollution at Sydney Town Hall. These initiatives appear to have meshed in with initiatives of the Annandale branches themselves. In September 1970 both branches organised a public meeting and discussion in Annandale on political issues with guest speakers Fred Daly, the local federal Labor member and federal Labor Senate leader and leading member of the ALP Left, Lionel Murphy.²¹

Some of the older, traditional ALP members reacted favourably to the influx into the Annandale branches of the newcomers. One was Ron Stuart-Robinson, secretary of the Annandale branch at the outset of the 1970's who was also to join the Annandale Association. Another was Charles Rocks, a Catholic brought up in Annandale, who was to become quite significant in the local Left. Rocks was in many respects a traditional white-collar working class conservative, but one who warmed to the new politics of the times not

²⁰ Betty Mason and Hugh Mason.

²¹ Annandale and Annandale South Branch Roll Books; *Annandale Association Newsletter*, No's 1 – 9, February – November, 1970 and Papers of the Annandale Association. See also Rocks, C, Kelly A and Jones, E, 'Balmain Revisited', Letter to the Editor, *The National Times*, 17-23/2/80, p 23. According to this letter (and most probably Rocks), the public meeting with Daly and Murphy aided the recruitment of new members into Annandale Branches.

least of all because he was gay (though with the closet door only slightly ajar). Rocks was secretary of the Annandale branch in 1972. Stan Howe, a retired postal worker, born in Annandale in 1900 and an alderman on Annandale Council from 1941-1944, was also to be strongly supportive of the middle class Left throughout the seventies.²²

The two Annandale branches were involved in attempts to assert federal ALP environmental policy in the face of the conservative local ALP. The branches organised a meeting in Glebe Town Hall between ALP members in Leichhardt Municipality and federal ALP president Tom Burns in April 1971. They faced hostility from some of the Right dominated branches and only one of the 14 sitting ALP aldermen attended (Mayor, Les Rodwell). In his address and during discussion Burns gave the assembled ALP members what they wanted. As Miles, Richards and Rocks reported it:

There was lively discussion following the President's talk in which he stressed the growing importance of environmental matters and the need for the ALP to grasp the initiative in this field. In answer to a question by W [Bill] Hume, the president stated that it was not only permissible but desirable for ALP members to participate in local residents' associations (so long as the associations did not field candidates at elections).²³

This latter reference is indicative of the threat that was being felt among the local Right Wing machines posed by the influx of the middle class Left, and the resident associations' opposition to the pro-development policies of Leichhardt Council. This was to intensify

²² The writer; Solling and Reynolds, *Leichhardt*, p 258; Miles et al., Submissions Relating to ALP Defeat, p 10; 'Little has changed in 74 years' (story on Stan Howe), *The Westgate Weekly*, 31/1/74, p 2. Stuart-Robinson's father, also R.J.Stuart-Robinson, had been a shop assistant, first elected to parliament in Camperdown in 1907. He was involved in the AWU faction in caucus, and in Labor State Governments through until the Lang Government in the 1930's. See Hagan and Turner, *History of the Labor Party*, pp 29, 105 and 118 and Nairn, B., *The 'Big Fella': Jack Lang and the Australian Labor Party 1891-1949*, Melbourne UP, 1995, pp 46, 72, 219 and 244.

²³ Miles et al, Submissions Relating to ALP Defeat, p 14. Glebe North ALP members were threatened with expulsion if they attended this 'unauthorised' meeting.

after the defeat of the Labor majority on Council in the 1971 municipal elections, with calls by the local Labor Right for membership in the residents associations to be proscribed.²⁴

It appears that in this early phase the Annandale South branch was by far the more radical of the two, and the main driving force. In July 1972 the branch organised a public meeting at Glebe Town Hall to hear an address on ALP foreign policy by ALP Federal Executive member, and former Victorian ALP State Secretary, Bill Hartley. The notice advertising this meeting asked ‘Will A Labor Government Support the NLF?’ and encouraged all ‘ALP members, supporters, sceptics and critics’ to attend.²⁵

About 60 people attended the meeting. *The Glebe* newspaper reported Hartley’s comments on the coming federal elections to the effect that “the election of the Labor Party was not going to change very much”. He criticised federal ALP economic policies and defended the Victorian branch’s resolution supporting a National Liberation Front victory in Vietnam. He went on to support the role of the Socialist Left as a catalyst in the Labor Party. Not surprisingly, this meeting was reported to the officers of the NSW ALP, who then complained to the Federal Executive about the absence of notification that Hartley was to speak in NSW, “with consequent problems for the NSW Branch”.²⁶

It is likely that the organising network for these meetings was wider than Annandale, incorporating Left contacts throughout the municipality’s ALP branches, the state ALP Socialist Left and the anti war movement. For example, anti war activists David and Robert

²⁴ For example, see the debate over the associations in the Leichhardt ALP Branch, Minutes of the Leichhardt Branch 1974-1979, *ALPR* MLMSS 5095/718; President’s Report, Glebe Society, *Glebe Society Bulletin*, no. 6, 1975 and ‘Society, Associations “political”: ALP outlaws four groups’ *The Glebe*, 26/3/75, p 1. *The Glebe* misreported a decision by the NSW ALP which was to emphasise that membership of the ALP was incompatible with membership of associations that formally contested public office, something which the Leichhardt municipality associations, nominally did not do.

²⁵ Papers of the Annandale Association; Papers of Assistant General Secretary Bruce Childs (including copy of *The Glebe*, 13/8/72), *ALPR* MLMSS 5095/265. The NLF was the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam.

²⁶ Papers of Bruce Childs.

Mowbray, two of three brothers who had resisted the draft, were members in Annandale.²⁷ These meetings, together with the connections to the Annandale Association, would be indicative of the linking together of radical Left politics and local environmental issues. This was underscored by the general ferment of ideas at this time as well as the tension between hope and scepticism among the Left for what a federal Labor government might bring.

Confronting the Machine: the Annandale Branches and the 1971-1974 municipal council.

The conflict between the middle class Left and the Right machines was to come to a head in the 1971 municipal elections, and in the independent dominated council that was elected. The Annandale branches, and alderman Bill Hume, were to play a crucial role.

As the elections approached, newer, middle class residents across the municipality began to organise an electoral challenge to the dominance of council by the old Right-wing Labor machines. These challenges arose out of growing concern over a range of environmental issues. These included development of high rise flats, threat to architectural heritage, the need for a more committed municipal leadership in opposition to expressways and a desire to ameliorate the impact on the area of commercial developments, such as containerisation. There was also the general whiff of scandal and corruption that attended this Labor *ancien regime*. While the 'associations', the Balmain Association, Glebe Society and Annandale Association, formally eschewed any involvement in electoral politics, it was obvious that their membership desired to support an electoral alternative to Labor.²⁸

²⁷ McGilvray, A., 'Righteous brothers maintain the rage', *The Australian* 1/1/01;

²⁸ See Johnston, *Participation in Local Government*, pp 231-253; Solling and Reynolds, *Leichhardt*, Chs 19 and 20; Greenland; *Red Hot* Chs 24 and 25.

This alternative emerged in the form of the Campaign for Better Council (CBC), an alliance of independents around these environmental and ‘quality of life’ issues. The CBC was convened by Balmain bookseller Philip Bray and ran candidates in five wards (Glebe, Rozelle, Lilyfield, Leichhardt and Annandale). The sitting aldermen in Balmain, Origlass and Wyner, ran under the name Balmain Leichhardt Labor (BLL), the name they and their supporters took after the two were expelled from the ALP in 1968.²⁹

It appears that this presented somewhat of a dilemma for the members of the Annandale branches. The situation in the combined branches in mid 1971 was fluid, with the middle class Left close to asserting full control. In the preselection ballot to choose the two ALP candidates for Annandale, Bill Hume and Charles Rocks stood in opposition to Right wingers Horrie Smith and Peter Wilson. Rocks was ruled out because he had lost continuity of membership and Smith then withdrew; leaving Hume of the Left to run for office with Wilson of the Right.³⁰

The Annandale branches pushed on and drew up a municipal policy. This policy was forwarded to the ALP’s Leichhardt Municipal Committee, the municipality’s ALP campaign organisation. It reflected the predominantly environmental issues pre-occupying the associations and the middle class Left in the ALP. It called for a suspension of high-rise flat and industrial development until a detailed town plan could be formulated. The policy argued that this plan should be developed “in maximum consultation with residents or residents organisations” and “based on projections for the improvement of public services and facilities and ... consideration for the optimum DESIRABLE population for the area”.

²⁹ Johnston, *Participation in Local Government*, pp 231-253; Solling and Reynolds, *Leichhardt* Chs 19 and 20, Greenland, *Red Hot* Chs 24 and 25. As mentioned in chapter one, Nick Origlass and Issy Wyner were expelled for opposing the siting in Balmain of a chemical tank farm. Both had been working class activists and Trotskyists in Balmain and the labour movement since the 1930’s and their later role on Leichhardt Council is woven through this study. See Greenland’s biography of Origlass, *Red Hot*, passim, for a full account of the life and times of these two Balmain political identities.

³⁰ Miles et al, *Submissions Relating to ALP Defeat*, p 10. Candidates for ALP preselection had to have continuous membership for two years. There were to be two alderman elected from each of the six wards of the municipality.

The policy also called for opposition to expressways, which were set to carve swathes across parts of the municipality (Annandale was to be effectively split in two). It also called for curtailment of aircraft noise and the curbing of air pollution, especially that from coal-fired, electric power stations at Balmain, White Bay and Pyrmont. The policy advocated improved sporting and council library facilities, aged, child-care and other welfare services, and provision of meeting rooms for varieties of local resident and political groups.³¹

The result of the election was a landslide against the Labor Right with only Les Rodwell from Lilyfield, Dan Casey from Rozelle and Peter Wilson from Annandale re-elected. In Balmain, Origlass and Wyner were returned. The CBC was successful in returning six to council: Eric Sandblom and David Young in Glebe, Bill Dougherty and Val Smart in Leichhardt, Philip Bray in Rozelle and Ern McIlveen in Lilyfield. Bill Hume was also elected from Annandale and as the only member of the ALP Left on Council, soon found himself outnumbered three to one in caucus.³²

For the first two years of its three-year term, council was dominated by the political interests of the middle class Left. These interests were expressed through CBC aldermen Bray, Sandblom and Young; through Hume and Wyner; and through the new Mayor, Origlass. The policies implemented by this council have been well detailed and include the implementation of the policy of 'open council', where resident participation at council meetings and on its committees was actively encouraged. This council also organised a major campaign against the western and north-western expressways. The new council developed, through public consultation, an 'outline town plan' that would, it was hoped,

³¹ Letter to Leichhardt ALP Municipal Committee, 20 July 1971, from Charles Rocks, Campaign Director, Annandale and Annandale South Branches conveying policy proposals (copy in writer's papers); Miles et al, *Submissions Relating to ALP Defeat*, pp 16a-16b. This policy was to a large degree endorsed by the Municipal Committee. With the Annandale ALP branches the only branches making policy submissions and the inability of the Right-wing alderman and party leaders across the municipality to mobilise an alternative program, the ALP went to the polls committed, nominally, to the policies of their opponents in the associations, the CBC and the Origlass-Wyner BLL! . See map and notes in appendix A concerning local ALP structure.

protect the architectural heritage of the area, limit high rise residential construction and control commercial development. The council also encouraged the Labor federal government, elected in 1972, to purchase the Glebe Estate for public housing.³³

Hume's willingness to risk his party membership, and earn two suspensions from the Party for voting against Labor caucus decisions, was crucial to the existence of this new regime. With the ALP in disarray, Origlass had won the mayoral election in 1971. The CBC soon split into conservative and reform oriented factions however, and the CBC conservatives and ALP Right formed an alliance by the time of the 1972 mayoral election. Hume was forced to break caucus in order to give Origlass support and his vote was crucial in enabling Origlass to be re-elected by a 'draw from the hat' after a tied vote.³⁴

Hume was suspended by the NSW ALP, after this vote, and this suspension remained in force until March 1973. Suspension meant that he could not participate in ALP structures, including caucus, though he was still bound by caucus decisions made in his absence. In September 1973, Hume was again reported for breaching caucus. He opposed the caucus attempts to block the appointment of a new town planner and defer the new outline town plan. He was again suspended, this time for two years. Hume points out that his suspensions were fairly mild. "I knew what I was doing", he said.³⁵ Certainly these penalties were not as severe as those handed out to Origlass and Wyner in 1968, for similar offences against Party rules. This probably reflected the pressure NSW ALP officials were under, in the aftermath of the 1971 council defeat, and the unfavourable attention the Right-wing Labor machine had attracted. Throughout this period on council, the Annandale

³² Johnston, *Participation in Local Government*, pp 245-248; Solling and Reynolds, *Leichhardt*, pp 241-243; Greenland, *Red Hot*, pp 274-275.

³³ Johnston, *Participation in Local Government*, pp 248-252; Solling and Reynolds, *Leichhardt*, pp 242-244, Greenland, *Red Hot*, Ch. 25. See chapter four for further discussion of the Glebe Estate.

³⁴ Johnston, *Participation in Local Government*, pp 248-252; Greenland, *Red Hot*, Ch. 25. Dougherty, Smart and McIlveen allied themselves with the three Labor Right aldermen and Origlass, Wyner, and Hume were in alliance with Sandblom, Bray and Young. Bill Dougherty was the rival candidate for mayor.

³⁵ Bill Hume.

branches sought to mobilise support for Hume and for what were perceived to be the progressive policies of the council.³⁶

Jeff Miles, Warwick Richards and Charles Rocks on behalf of the Annandale branches, had prepared a detailed submission for an enquiry into the 1971 municipal defeat to be held by the NSW ALP Local Government Administrative Committee. The submission described the defeat as “catastrophic” for Labor, and went on to explain that it was the result of the failure of the local ALP to allow “changes in the community” to influence the structure, composition or policies of the Party. The submission described these changes:

Because of proximity to (the) city, desire of many not to become part of the urban sprawl, closeness to universities the composition of the area partly changed from working class to wage-earning class with some academic influence. During this period membership of local civic associations increased rapidly but there was no comparable increase in ALP membership. Added to this was extra concern the electorate displayed in environmental problems.³⁷

The report went on to explain that the Annandale branches nonetheless were able to work towards an increase in membership by “holding public meetings on federal, environmental and local issues and increasing social activity”. The submission detailed the reasons for the ALP defeat. The domination of a “monolithic” municipal caucus system was singled out. While pointing out that the caucus system had some advantages in terms of “party solidarity”, the submission argued that in a Labor dominated area like Leichhardt, it only encouraged aldermen to hide behind caucus decisions and inhibited flexibility in terms of public debate on issues. The expulsion of Origlass and Wyner in 1968 was cited as an example of this and “the beginning of the decline of ALP credibility in the area”. The

³⁶ Correspondence with Leichhardt Municipal Committee, 1973-1974; ALPR MLMSS 5095/ 82. Papers of Bruce Childs, ALPR, MLMSS, 5095/265; Bill Hume. The writer had by this time become secretary of the Annandale (north) branch and later of the amalgamated Annandale branch and was involved in this mobilisation of support for Hume and the Origlass-led council.

³⁷ Miles et al, Submissions Relating to ALP Defeat, p 2.

submission pointed out that there were “several councils in the metropolitan area in which it is understood that the caucus does not control every council decision”.³⁸

The generation, and education, gap was evident in criticism of Labor aldermen. They were seen as “old in years, ideas or both” and “were conspicuously lacking in the capacity to cope with the mass of reading and research that real participation in contemporary municipal affairs entails”. Alderman Dan Casey was also singled out for his “enthusiasm for physical expressions of opinion”. On one occasion, he had promised Hume “a smack in the teeth”.³⁹

The report continued with criticism of the conduct of ALP branches in the area and their effective closure to new members, as well as the conduct of the Leichhardt Municipal Committee, and credentialing for the Party preselections. It also drew attention to the bad publicity earned by the previous council, over issues of nepotism in council staff appointments, the handling of the Glebe Old Men’s Home issue (see chapter four) and the widespread public dissatisfaction over the council’s approach to town planning. One of the examples of complaints by residents in Annandale was the handling of development proposals for the ‘Witches’ Houses:

The Council was also guilty of dismissing efforts to retain [the] character of neighbourhood as the work of “arty-craft” professionals who did not have public support and who did not matter to the ALP. The Annandale Aldermen were particularly abusive in open council of efforts to save a row of Victorian houses in Johnston St. (several prominent architects, artists and the National Trust supported these efforts.) Ald. Brady not only attacked the activists but even the owner of one of the houses on the ground that he held “winetastings” in his garden.⁴⁰

³⁸ Miles et al, Submissions relating to ALP Defeat, p 5. While ALP rules required that aldermen caucus around key issues such as the election of Mayor, there was no requirement for a caucus necessarily to impose a majority decision. See Rules of NSW ALP.

³⁹ Miles et al, Submissions Relating to ALP Defeat, pp 3-4.

⁴⁰ Miles et al, Submissions relating to ALP Defeat, passim and p 8.

The NSW ALP Local Government Administrative Committee failed to “constructively deal with the enquiry” into Labor’s Leichhardt loss. The submission was circulated among ALP members, with a covering letter expressing concern that the federal Labor government might be “acutely embarrassed” by this local “conservative clique”, as might the state Labor opposition in its run up to the next state election.⁴¹

This protest was indicative of the frustration that was being felt among the middle class Left in Annandale and elsewhere in the municipality. A “conservative clique”, protected by the Right-wing NSW ALP machine, was at odds with the climate of social reform and the initiatives of the Whitlam government. In September 1973, the Annandale branches called a meeting of all ALP members in the municipality to discuss town planning and the annual mayoral election due on September 25. These efforts came to nothing and Origlass lost the mayoral position to CBC conservative, Bill Dougherty, on another ‘draw out of the hat’, bringing to an end the dominance of the ‘open council’ group.⁴²

A shifting focus

Around the time of these events, the two Annandale branches amalgamated to consolidate in the face of a municipal Labor Right that was fiercely holding its ground. It was also around this time that there was a shift in the leadership focus within the unified Annandale branch. Tony Harris had become secretary of the Annandale (north) branch in early 1973, and as a political newcomer to the area had been taken under the wing of Hume, Richards

⁴¹ ‘Labor Crisis Looms in Leichhardt’, this covering letter to the Miles, Richards and Rocks submission was unsigned and undated but it is this writer’s recall that it was circulated in 1973, possibly just before the 1973 mayoral elections.

⁴² A copy of the notice for the Annandale meeting is in the Correspondence with Leichhardt Municipal Committee. The writer was also involved in organising this meeting and other informal attempts to rally support to Origlass. At the previous mayoral election, Tom Uren and Geoff Cahill (NSW ALP General Secretary) unsuccessfully sought to intervene with caucus. In spite of losing the mayor’s position and its casting vote, the ‘open council’ group were still able to exert some influence in the last year of the council’s life, including the adoption of the Outline Town Plan. See covering letter to Miles et al, Submissions Relating to ALP Defeat. See also Greenland, *Red Hot*, p 287.

and Rocks. He became secretary of the amalgamated branch in early 1974 at a time of a regrouping within the branch Left leadership. Jeff Miles moved away from Annandale and Richards and Hume also drifted away from active branch involvement. Hume, approaching the end of his term on council, could not recontest while under suspension from the Party. He wanted to retain his Party membership as well as spend time with his family. They had borne the brunt of the demands and stress that the council and its conflicts had involved. At the same time Harris forged close personal links with a group of newcomers, who were to have a significant influence on the future directions within the branch.⁴³

Hall Greenland and Margaret Eliot (then Margaret Greenland) were 'comrades' and friends, whose marriage had broken up. Hall's brother Peter, was completing high school and had been living with them since he and Hall's mother had died. Hall, Peter and Margaret wanted to transform this family relationship into one that functioned in the framework of a counter-culture, collective household, and asked a friend Steve Storey, then completing Teacher's College, to join them. All four moved into a house at 180 Annandale Street and became involved in the Annandale ALP branch.⁴⁴

Brought up in a 'libertarian socialist' Labor tradition by his mother, Hall Greenland joined the ALP at 16 and was active in student politics at university. He was one of the 'freedom riders' who with Charles Perkins toured country towns in a bus in 1965 to protest against the segregation of Aboriginal people. He and Eliot met when she was working at Fisher Library at Sydney University and completing a degree part-time. They were married and after completing university went to Europe, where they were involved in the British anti-

⁴³ Bill Hume, the writer. The amalgamation was approved by the Right-dominated SEC (which supervises branch boundaries) and the NSW ALP; but not without attempting to use the situation to destabilise the Annandale Left. It was probably agreed to because it reduced the Annandale representation on the Municipal Committee and electorate councils. See appendix A on local ALP structure.

⁴⁴ Recorded interview with Hall Greenland, 13/10/99; Hanford, B, 'An Anatomy of Balmain', *The National Times*, 10-16/2/80, pp 29-32.

Vietnam war movement and general Left politics of the late 1960's. They both returned to Australia at the beginning of the 1970's.⁴⁵

Apart from their desire to share a house as friends, the impetus for Margaret Eliot and Hall Greenland's decision to set up the house in Annandale along collective lines came from a number of directions. The first was feminism. Eliot became involved in the women's movement in Europe and was active in Women's Liberation on her return. Collective households were emerging as a practical way for women to restructure their relationships away from the restraints of nuclear families. The second was the ideology 'self managed socialism' that had developed within the 'Pabloite' tendency of the (Trotskyist) Fourth International and which was embedded in the outlook of the International's Australian section.⁴⁶

Greenland has given an explanation of the key ideas of 'Pabloism', and his own association with this ideological tendency in his biography of its chief Australian propagator, Nick Origlass. Pablo (Michel Raptis) had been secretary of the Fourth International and in essence the ideology he and the 'International Revolutionary Marxist Tendency' developed emphasised the political problem of 'substitutism'. This was the danger of a political leadership 'substituting' itself for the democratic actions of the 'masses', a notion that borrowed from the concerns of the younger, pre-Bolshevik Trotsky. The corollary of this concern was the belief in the importance of political control in a socialist revolution coming from the 'bottom up', that is, self-managed socialism. Pabloism was also keyed into the importance of revolution in the Third World, such as Vietnam. It was also more

⁴⁵ Greenland, *Red Hot*, p 243; Hall Greenland; the writer.

⁴⁶ Hall Greenland; the writer. For connections between women's liberation, the Left and the counter culture see Sawyer and Simms, *A Woman's Place*, 1984, Ch. 9. See also Lake, *Getting Equal*, Chs 9 and 10. Lake refers to Margaret Eliot (Greenland) presenting a paper on 'Women and Education' to a 1970 Melbourne women's conference at p 219.

sympathetic than some Leninist and Trotskyist sects to the revolutionary possibilities emanating from social movements, like the women's movement.⁴⁷

By the time the collective house had been set up in Annandale Street, 'Pabloism' was all but dead in its Australian organisational form. However the echo of Pabloite ideology remained and meshed in easily with the broader libertarian socialist tendencies that characterised the 'New Left' and much of the social movements of the late sixties and early seventies. It also meshed in with the participatory democracy that was flowering under Leichhardt's 'open council', itself directly influenced by Origlass and Wyner.⁴⁸

The other influence on the establishment of the house in Annandale Street was the counter-culture. This amorphous movement of people experimenting in everything from new ways of living and working, new forms of sexual relationships, through to developing an alternative culture in music, underground film-making, alternative theatre, and drug-taking. The efforts by the '180' household in creating a fusion of the values of the counter-culture with feminism, Pabloite socialism, and participation in the conventional politics of the ALP, had its tensions as Greenland pointed out:

There were a lot of the people in the broad Left, especially the old-timers but even people about my generation; lived, you know, with a wife and children but in settled kind of relationships. Whereas we were living in a collective or communal house in which there were regular meetings, decisions were taken by consensus, there were rosters there were dramas there were people coming, either interstate and so on, living there; so there was a counter-cultural element. But it was also considered to be weird and perhaps even threatening and on our part there was also a certain moral superiority that we were now living as independent, collective human beings in a democratic cooperative way and the backward ones were going to catch up. You

⁴⁷ Greenland, *Red Hot*, pp 202–243; Freney, D., *A Map of Days: life on the Left*, Heinemann, Melbourne, 1991; Raptis, M., *Socialism Democracy and Self-Management; Political Essays*, Allison and Busby, London, 1980; Deutscher, I., *The Prophet Armed: Trotsky 1879-1921*, Oxford UP, pp 89-97; Hall Greenland; the writer. Origlass used the term 'substitutionism' rather than 'substitutism'.

⁴⁸ Greenland, *Red Hot*, Chs 21-22; interview with Hall Greenland; the writer.

know they still had the traditional division of labour and children and marriage and all that kind of stuff.⁴⁹

The people dropping in to '180' included local ALP members, Eliot's friends in the women's movement and those associated with Hall Greenland in the collective that ran *The Digger*. This was one of the most remarkable media initiatives of the period, a (mostly) fortnightly broadsheet that started production in mid 1972 and finished just after the Whitlam dismissal. *The Digger* presented a fusion of libertarian Left politics and counter-cultural concerns. Articles dealt with feminism, unions, radical movements of teachers and students in education, prisons, rights for the disabled, collective living, music, and alternative arts. There was a close connection with the Melbourne counter-culture, centred on Carlton, and with the Australian Performing Group and Pram Factory.⁵⁰

The network of friends and local branch members associated with the convivial '180' household were to be an important catalyst in the life of the Annandale branch. The ability of this group to function was linked to the nature of the broader membership of the branch. As Greenland pointed out:

Up until about 1976, 77 the organised Left-wing faction within the Labor Party had little or no presence in the Annandale branch; they were busy over in Balmain and Glebe; they weren't in Annandale. We had a variegated, heterogeneous Left-wing in Annandale, all different types used to have the field to themselves. There were conflicts and differences and so on but that was it; the next meeting we'd all be agreed.⁵¹

There is no doubt however, that as with other branches, the amity and unity among the 'variegated, heterogeneous left' in Annandale was due in part to the necessity to unite against the Right. In spite of the dominance of the middle class Left in the branch by the

⁴⁹ Hall Greenland, Bolton, *The Middle Way*, pp 202-203. See also Cock, P., *Alternative Australia: Communities of the Future?*, Quartet, Melbourne, 1979, Chs 1 and 2.

⁵⁰ *The Digger*, Issues, August 1972 to December 1975.

⁵¹ Hall Greenland; the writer.

end of 1973, events would conspire to give the Right a redoubt within the branch from which a constant and wearying sniping at the branch majority could be conducted.

High Times: 1974-1976.

The period from 1974 to 1976 was a high water mark in terms of the unity of purpose of the ‘variegated, heterogeneous Left’ in the Annandale branch. This was a period that saw high hopes and disappointments, as well as constituting an interregnum before the more divisive factional politics that would come in the latter part of the decade. The defence of the reform initiatives of the Whitlam government was an overwhelming preoccupation of all the elements of the Labor Party, and of the Left, in the double dissolution election of May 1974. This election was also a high water mark for that government after its first eighteen months of energetic reform. It marked the beginning of its decline and the more ferocious political conflict within Australian society that was to characterise the period up to, and beyond, the 1975 dismissal.⁵²

The Annandale branch rose to the occasion and ‘180’ Annandale Street became an organising focus, particularly through the production of several editions of a newsletter, *The Annandale Line*, which was printed on an old Gestetner in the house and circulated throughout Annandale. The newsletter linked support for the Whitlam government initiatives and the progressive approaches of the Left (inside and outside the ALP) on the local political scene. It was during this time that future Left alderman on Leichhardt Council, Tim Kelly, joined the local ALP. Kelly was an artist and coordinated the screen printing of posters during the campaign.⁵³

⁵² McMullin, R., *The Light On The Hill; The Australian Labor Party 1891-1991*, OUP, Melbourne, 1991, Ch.14.

⁵³ *The Annandale Line*, No’s 1-5, April-June 1974 located in the writers papers. See below in this chapter re Kelly’s time as an alderman on Leichhardt Council.

In the aftermath of the 1974 federal campaign the attention of the branch turned to the preselections for candidates to contest the municipal elections in September. With Hume stepping down from council, and overwhelming hostility to Right-wing Annandale alderman, Peter Wilson, Tony Harris and Hall Greenland were preselected by the branch. In the aftermath of the preselection, at the urging of the local Labor Right, the NSW ALP Administrative Committee withheld endorsements. While official ALP endorsed candidates of the Right contested the municipal elections in the other five wards, in Annandale there was an election in which all the five candidates were unendorsed ALP members. Harris and Greenland represented the Left branch majority, Wilson and Ron Pursehouse the Right, and a local shop-keeper, Ross Maiorana, ran on his own. Withdrawal of endorsement meant that the candidates could not present themselves as ‘official’ or ‘endorsed’ ALP candidates.⁵⁴

The campaign was a vigorous one, with the Greenland-Harris ticket garnering unofficial support from the Annandale Association. The policies were generally in line with the preoccupations of the middle class Left and the ‘open council’ group on Leichhardt Council. The election tabloid newssheet produced by the Harris-Greenland team (*The Annandale Voice*) set out, a by now established policy line that included opposition to expressways and support for the outline town plan. *The Voice* went on to set the campaign in an historical, Labor framework:

The Australian Labor Party was founded back in the 1890’s in this municipality. It was founded to fight for the rights and interests of workers and citizens – not to provide the plums of office for a chosen few. Tony Harris and Hall Greenland are committed to the aims of the party’s founders.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ See Harris, T., ‘The Annandale Story’ in Greenland, H and Harris, T., *Politics On The Block*, Discussion paper circulated inside the ALP in Leichhardt, August 1979; Head Office Correspondence with Balmain SEC, 1973-1974, ALPR, ML/MSS 5095/67 and Head Office Correspondence with Leichhardt Municipal Committee, 1974, ALPR. Spurious allegations were made by Alderman Wilson of maladministration in the branch. These allegations were refuted but were nonetheless the pretext for withholding endorsement and would be used by the Right in the longer term to try and ‘restructure’ the branch. See also NSW ALP Rules.

⁵⁵ *The Annandale Voice*. See also *Annandale Association Newsletter*, September, 1974; election campaign material including *The Annandale Voice* is located in the writer’s papers.

However, the Annandale Left ticket was to suffer the same fate as that of the Origlass/Wyner/Left CBC group who contested the other wards under the name 'Open Council'. If voluntary voting had favoured their election three years ago, this time it failed. With the constant attacks on the council by *The Glebe* (which had supported the CBC/BLL campaign three years before) and a decline in the overall voter turnout, the Labor Right teams were handed an overwhelming victory across the municipality. Only Origlass survived, in Balmain Ward.⁵⁶ *The Glebe* was quick to celebrate this rout:

Reds crushed by ALP... It means the death knell of the Origlass-Wyner-Bray Revolutionary Marxist Tendency Group which for the past three years turned Local Government administration into a joke and a "milking cow" for hangers on.⁵⁷

In the aftermath of the election the Annandale branch fought off a Right-wing attempt at a Head Office takeover and 'restructuring' and settled down to endure the next three years of mutual hostility between the sitting Aldermen, and a small rump of their Right supporters, and the Left branch majority. However, this was not as troubling as it might have been, possibly due to the Right's pre-occupation with keeping the middle class Left out of power in other branches, notably Balmain (see chapter three). The upside was that this situation kept the diverse Left fairly united, though the environment was not an easy one for promoting a Left political agenda.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Solling and Reynolds, *Leichhardt*, pp 244-245; Greenland *Red Hot*, Ch 25, preference distribution figures for Annandale in the writer's papers.

⁵⁷ *The Glebe*, 26 September 1974, p 1. As Greenland has pointed out in *Red Hot* (pp 288-289), *The Glebe* had discovered the name of the Origlass/Pabloite faction and latched on to it in lurid tabloid style during the campaign. *The Glebe* is cited as a source throughout this study but its shifting political leanings need to be noted. It was initially set up to campaign against the Labor Right and was closely linked to the CBC/BLL majority on the 1971 council at the outset but then turned, around 1973, and linked up with the Labor Right. This continued until muted by the scandal around the Right at the end of the seventies. The paper changed ownership in the 1980's. See Greenland, *Red Hot*, Chs 24 and 25; Solling and Reynolds, *Leichhardt*, pp 242-245.

⁵⁸ Copy of letter to General Secretary, NSW ALP from Annandale Branch executive refuting allegations of impropriety in branch administration, 10 July 1974; Circular to ALP party members; 'Leichhardt Labor on a disastrous and reactionary course ...and Annandale Branch fights for its right to change this', November 1974; copy of notes by branch President, Charles Rocks, for address to Branch Boundaries Committee at Head Office, 15 November 1974; Annual report of Annandale Branch, submitted to Branch AGM, 17 February 1975; all documents in writer's papers. The two Labor Right aldermen from Annandale from 1974 to 1977 were Wilson and Ron Pursehouse, a driver on the staff of the City of Sydney council. See also the

Local losses were matched by national defeats. The dismissal of the Whitlam government in 1975 was a turning point for the branch, as for Labor politics generally. The supply crisis that preceded it and the subsequent dismissal and election, provided a rallying point and there was a surge in membership in the branch. However, in the longer term these events marked the beginning of a shift in the focus across the municipality to a *realpolitik*. This was ultimately to result in a sweeping away of the more libertarian Left that had predominated in Annandale in the seventies.⁵⁹

The Other Life.

As the history of the Annandale branch unfolded through the 1970's and into the 1980's, the gulf between the continued male dominance of the more formal and public life of the branch, and the increasing feminisation of the branch membership, became apparent. As the figures discussed in chapter one show, the increase in branch membership and its middle-classing was accompanied by an increase in the number of women as a percentage of branch membership.

However elected branch positions throughout the seventies and into the early eighties remained dominated by men. For example, in the period 1974 to 1985 women only held half the six executive positions on one occasion, 1983, and two positions in three other years. In 1975 and 1977 no women were on the branch executive. The most common position held was assistant secretary, largely responsible for taking minutes and held on five occasions. The position of senior vice president was held on three occasions and junior vice president and treasurer, once each. The first woman president elected in 1983, was

record of charges brought by the branch against a Right-wing member, Bill Donaldson, as an example of the administrative conflict within the branch, Disputes Committee, 1975, ALPR, MLMSS 5095/489.

⁵⁹ 180 Annandale street was to serve as an organisation point for a Sydney wide poster campaign by a network of Labor Party members and friends, including posters put up outside most Sydney metropolitan TAB's on Melbourne Cup eve, rather optimistically rating Malcolm Fraser's chances, prior to the dismissal,

Sandra Ridgewell, a teacher who transferred into the branch in 1980. In 1984 the branch elected a pharmacist, Jan Whalan, as secretary. The State Electorate Council (SEC) and Federal Electorate Council (FEC) delegate lists tell a similar story. The figures available in the minutes from 1980 to 1985 show that women never held more than one third of the delegate positions, and often it was less than this. In 1981 for example, of the 41 elected branch positions, women held 15. This included only one member of the executive, three of nine delegates to the FEC and one of eight delegates to the SEC's.⁶⁰

This pattern is confirmed by the electoral history of the branch outlined above which was dominated by male candidates and male 'leadership' figures. The 1981 federal preselection voting list had 19 women out of 55 on the list, just over 34 percent. Women made up over 40 percent of the general branch membership at this time. Inclusion on the list required 12 months membership and attendance at three meetings within the previous 12 months. All of these figures point to a considerable alienation of women from the formal and public processes of the branch and begs the question: what did women think of branch life? Two women who entered the branch in the middle of the seventies shed light on its culture.⁶¹

Sue Templeman and Monika Law met each other when they were both living in Enfield. They both joined Women's Electoral Lobby (WEL) together and both were to be school counsellors and active in the Teacher's Federation. Sue Templeman was the first to find herself in the Annandale branch, joining in 1973. Brought up in Chatswood and spending her first years as a teacher in the Blue Mountains she moved into the inner city after the break-up of her marriage. She had become politicised through WEL, through connections

as 100 to one, the writer. See Annandale Branch Roll Books, for late 1975 and early 1976 for indication of increased membership around this time, ALPR, MLMSS, 5095/653.

⁶⁰ Figures for the 1970's come from the Branch Returns, ALPR 5095/610; figures for the eighties come from the Branch minutes, ALPR, 5095/653. In the early 1980's, most of Annandale Branch came into the state electorate of Elizabeth, with a small part of the branch area part of Balmain electorate; thus the branch was affiliated to two SEC's (only one delegate to Balmain SEC). A perusal of the minutes for the Annandale branch for the late 1980's and early 1990's, still held by the branch secretary, indicate an increasing role for women in key branch executive positions of president and secretary.

⁶¹ Voting list in writer's papers.

with people who were active in the anti-war movement at the beginning of the seventies and through her concern in general with issues of “fairness”. Her joining the ALP came as a “natural progression” through the WEL activity of interviewing politicians on women’s issues. She offered this memory of the branch on joining it:

[There was] a sense of us and them, a sense of, it was young, a sense of mainly men; a strong sense that everything that happened had in fact been tried and tested previously and the battle lines were drawn so it was almost like if a particular person got up to make a speech well then they would automatically draw an outraged response from somebody else and that was totally predictable... So sometimes there was a sense that there wasn’t a lot you could do to actually change the set positions. The set players, who had been in the party, who’d been there a very long time, obviously knew the ropes and could be fairly scathing. So in some ways it wasn’t the most welcoming atmosphere and you sat with your mates because; I’d always had the sense that if I stuck my head out it could well get, you know, pushed around a bit... I found it foreign territory; I wasn’t used to meeting procedure or any of that kind of thing ...I mean I caught on but I don’t think I felt confident about speaking particularly although I felt strongly about some of the issues.⁶²

Templeman’s involvement in the branch however was shored up by her participation in the NSW ALP’s, Labor Women’s Committee and her involvement in the women’s movement generally:

Women’s Conference was wonderful when it existed, before it was disbanded. That really did give women an opportunity to learn and gain experience in a more supportive environment and I did go as a delegate to Women’s Conference. And pre-ALP I went to a Women and Politics conference in Canberra which was an amazing experience too.⁶³

⁶² Recorded interview with Sue Templeman, 26/10/99. See Sawyer and Simms, *A Woman’s Place*, ch.9 and Lake, *Getting Equal*, Ch. 10, for an overview of the relationship of WEL to the other elements of the women’s movement.

⁶³ Sue Templeman; The Labor Women’s Committee was based on a conference of women delegates from branches and unions and was referred to generally as ‘women’s conference’. The organisation was disbanded by the NSW ALP in 1986. See Rules of the NSW ALP Branch for the time and Sawyer and Simms *A Woman’s Place*, 1993, pp 178-180. The Women and Politics Conference referred to was held in 1975, as an International Women’s Year initiative, and funded by the Whitlam government. See Sawyer and Simms, *A Woman’s Place*, 1993, p 237, Lake, M. *Getting Equal*, p 259 and Grahame, E., ‘International Women’s Year’ in Caine, (ed.) *Australian Feminism*, p 439.

Monika Law also found involvement on Women's Conference the highlight of what was to be her relatively short period in the ALP. Law had been born into a Left-wing, intellectual Jewish family in Vienna in 1935. She came to Australia, with them, as a refugee, in 1938. Law was brought up largely in the Eastern Suburbs with a short sojourn at Earlwood where she attended the same public school that Prime Minister John Howard was to attend. A graduate of Sydney University she was knocked back for a position as a teacher's college lecturer because she was getting married. Law became active in WEL in the Strathfield area at a time when her marriage was breaking up. Though she didn't live in Annandale (she moved to Balmain in 1976) she used Sue Templeman's Annandale address and joined the branch there because of friendship networks: "I wouldn't have joined a branch where I didn't know people".⁶⁴ Her memory of branch life was even more critical than Templeman's:

It was so noisy and male dominated it was unendurable. The noise level. It was the men's voices going 'boom' whether from the Left or the Right. Women's voices just didn't come through, it felt to me, and I didn't feel like anything I said or did would anyway shape or affect the future in any way. Gradually it seemed perfectly clear that Labor Party policy was not determined in the branches and if it was... it wasn't by the likes of me.⁶⁵

It was the ALP Women's Conference she felt that was the "only place that most women in the Labor party could be heard". She recalled an incident at one Women's Conference, when, as a delegate from Annandale, she had successfully moved a resolution requiring ALP male officials and politicians, to leave the stage:

The body of the hall was full of women and there were a few women sitting on the stage as office-bearers. And behind them were rows of chairs and any politician who wanted to attend the conference could walk in and take one of these chairs. And of course they were all men, there might have been the odd woman. Speakers would go up on the platform and these men, sitting arms akimbo, knees apart, lord of the manor. And it infuriated me. I was so angry. I said to someone whom I knew 'I'm really cross' and she said 'move suspension of standing

⁶⁴ Recorded interview with Monika Law, 22/11/99.

⁶⁵ Monika Law.

orders' and I said 'I don't even know what that is' so she told me about that and she introduced me to Wyn Childs who helped me to decide what to say and when to say it.⁶⁶

For both Law and Templeman, personal-political connections were of great significance.

As Templeman put it:

Certainly the people who I met who I became friends with were wonderful. I mean wonderful connections and support and popping into houses; and it was fantastic, really fantastic. So for me I gained a lot in that way from the ALP but I don't know about claiming confidence in putting forward my beliefs and getting support for them.⁶⁷

Betty Mason's time in the branch came much later (she joined at the time of the bashing of Peter Baldwin) and coincided with division within the Left. When asked about her experience in the branch and whether she felt women preferred to be involved more directly in locality groups rather than the ALP she responded:

Definitely. I much preferred the Annandale Association people with their sometimes peculiar politics to, this is generalising, the ALP branch that seemed so abrasive and fighting. I don't like that. I prefer to get things done in a quieter way.⁶⁸

Gretchen Gamble, reflecting on her experience with the branch as well as with the Annandale Association and, in the eighties, the Save Rozelle Bay Committee, felt that

⁶⁶ Monika Law. Interestingly, neither Templeman or Law, or any of the other Annandale women interviewed, was able to remember the attempt at forming a women's group within the branch, probably around 1975/76. This writer recalls for, example that on one occasion this group planned a small piece of 'street theatre' to deal with one of the older, Right wing working class males who had been making offensive remarks in the branch towards women during debates in the branch along the 'you'll never get a husband' variety. It is this writer's memory that the group folded after a while, partly as the result of a male member of the branch 'lifting' ideas for a branch policy committee system from the group (via his partner) and wheeling them up to the branch as his own initiative. A copy of blank, pro-forma, meeting notices for the group is in the writer's papers.

⁶⁷ Sue Templeman. See also Monika law; Minutes of Annandale Branch, 1980-1985. Law stayed in the ALP for only a short time, preferring to focus on work place activity and the Teacher's Federation. Templeman joined the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) at the end of the 1970's and shored up by this was able to make more assertive interventions in the branch around issues such as uranium and US involvement in Central America. She left the ALP and the SWP around 1984 in the wake of expulsion from the SWP of people she respected. Like Law, she continued involvement in the Teachers Federation.

women were better organised than men but functioned better in a less formal framework. By contrast she argued, “men strictly adhere to rules and regulations”. She felt that women did not feel threatened and liked to air ideas: “if something doesn’t get followed through... they have many aspects of their lives [such as work and children] and it doesn’t really matter”. Men she argued were more vindictive as a consequence of being “reared to be more restrictive in the things they can do”.⁶⁹

While it appears that women then had less necessity to rely on the formal aspects of branch life, nonetheless many women did actively participate in them. Apart from Sue Templeman’s involvement outlined above, Sandra Ridgewell for example, who was to become the branch’s first woman president in the mid eighties, played a major role in the factional debates within the branch. When the Left split in the early eighties, she became a major critic of Hall Greenland during his term on Leichhardt Council from 1980 to 1982. Brenda Seymour, an official with the NSW Teacher’s Federation was a member of the branch for four years at the beginning of the eighties. She felt she had been given “due regard” in bringing forward the educational issues that concerned her however felt frustrated by the excessive concentration on local issues within the branch.⁷⁰

This latter point was a common complaint within the branch as the politics of the municipality jostled with wider ALP policy concerns within highly formalistic meeting procedure. To many of those drawn to the ALP in the seventies and in particular the libertarian socialist group within the branch, local conflicts were inextricably linked to the wider world and were therefore an appropriate focus for ‘grassroots’ action. To others associated with the more established Left politics of the ALP, local issues were a means to an end in overthrowing the local Right machines and in the wider factional struggle in the Party. The situation in the branch was not helped during the 1974 to 1977 period when the sitting Right aldermen were in conflict with the Left branch majority. Later in the decade

⁶⁸ Betty Mason.

⁶⁹ Gretchen Gamble.

and into the eighties, the branch was split over municipal issues within the Left and between different personalities holding municipal office (see below). The result was that often, with municipal reports taking precedence, wider issues such as national economic, social and foreign policies would be squeezed to the end of meetings. But even when debates on wider issues were held some, in retrospect, question their significance. For example, Danny Sampson made this comment when asked if she recalled any particular, significant debates in the branch in the seventies:

No, quite frankly, no. And that one of the things that really struck me about the ALP is that the debates were interesting but I would question their relevance and one of the things that I gradually grew to accept was that what happened in the branch was totally irrelevant to what the policy decisions were in the ALP. They might have been interesting debates, but significant in terms of changing ALP policy? Uh Uh. They were ‘feel good’ debates.⁷¹

The positive aspects of the formal debates and meetings in the branch were often clouded by the impact of factional division. As Greenland explained:

there were often meetings which were a great deal of fun, meetings were much more informal and there were an incredible range of characters. There was a richness and drama about branch meetings but too often in my memory there were these stomach, bowel-wrenching conflicts either with the Right or later on with the Left.⁷²

There was a considerable ongoing debate within the friendship network that arose around the ‘180’ collective concerning the clash between the new politics of collectivity and feminism and the politics of the branch which favoured the ‘grandstanding’ of political males. Eliot for example was a major participant in the life of the branch not so much through formal intervention in the branch as through the ongoing informal dialogue that underpinned political involvement. Greenland recalled that there was a “tension between the feminist impulse and the more male political impulse inside 180 Annandale Street”.

⁷⁰ Minutes of the Annandale Branch, 1980-1985; Recorded Interview with Brenda Seymour, 14/10/ 99.

⁷¹ Danny Sampson.

⁷² Hall Greenland. The writer recalls that among his friends in the branch at the time there was frequent comment on ‘branch stomach’; the nervousness that would precede a meeting where bitter conflict was likely.

Among the wider circle of middle class Left women in the branch, activity in work, unions, or in other local groups, and the use of informal, friendship networks, seemed to take priority over office-holding in the ALP. However, Labor Women's Committee delegations were always filled.⁷³

Not surprisingly then some of the warmer memories of branch life are the personal contacts or the more informal fund-raising functions or parties. Both Sue Templeman and Hall Greenland remembered the Bazaar held in the grounds of the Hunter Baillie Church on Johnston Street in May 1976, with a speech by Tom Uren and various live performances, including Annandale resident Bob Hudson's rendition of his 'Newcastle Song'. The bazaar was in many ways a focus for branch regrouping in the wake of the defeat of the Whitlam government and in the lead up to the election of the Wran Labor government in NSW. As Sue Templeman recalled:

I just remembered working whole heartedly for that and loving it and you know, baking cakes and getting plants together and setting up stalls. I've got lots of photos of it and it was a hugely successful day and it was just the greatest feeling of community and we were getting money to do really good stuff. It was really exciting.⁷⁴

Clearly then, focussing solely on the formal aspects of branch life would diminish any understanding of the full political culture of the branch and in particular the role that was played by women, most of whom approached Labor politics with a clear feminist political consciousness. Nonetheless, it was the contest over formal political power and public office, and the dominance in this of men, that was to shape a more divisive atmosphere in the branch in the late seventies and on into the eighties.

⁷³ Hall Greenland. the writer.

⁷⁴ Sue Templeman.

The branch divides.

The divisions within the branch Left were to begin in the period of the Leichhardt Council from 1977 to 1980. With the approaching municipal pre-selections of 1977, Hall Greenland and Tony Harris, who had been the Left's candidates in 1974, might have been expected to try again. However for both, the political focus had shifted. There was somewhat of a post-Whitlam pall over politics and the ALP during the Fraser years. In this climate, the prospect of doing battle against an entrenched Right-wing Labor majority on council was not a pleasant one. Greenland's focus had shifted to trying to start a book on Origlass and Trotskyism in Australia, a project that would not reach fruition for another twenty years. Tony Harris left Annandale in late 1977 and did not return until early 1979. In both cases, their reluctance to run also reflected a libertarian socialist, and counter-cultural, ambivalence to electoral politics and the formalities of ALP life.⁷⁵

As the preselections approached, three members of the branch Left put themselves forward against the incumbent Right Aldermen, Wilson and Pursehouse. The three were Charles Rocks, Bill Hume and Tim Kelly. Right preferences put Kelly and Rocks in over Hume and both went on to be endorsed by the ALP Administrative Committee. They were elected to council and eventually teamed up with Evan Jones, from Leichhardt ALP branch and ward. Jones was a fairly 'straight' ALP traditionalist but he had been 'on the outer' of the Right machine in the municipality. He teamed up with some of the middle class Left who had begun to move into the branch (see chapter three). In particular he linked up with Ann and Jock Roxborough. Jock Roxborough, a teacher, contested the preselection in Leichhardt ward but lost on an appeal to the NSW ALP by the other candidate, Bill Dougherty (see chapter three). Dougherty was the former conservative CBC Mayor who defeated Origlass for that position in late 1973. After his re-election as an independent in 1974, he associated himself with the Rodwell/Casey, Labor Right, majority and was subsequently admitted to

⁷⁵ Greenland, *Red Hot*; Hall Greenland; the writer. The difficulties faced by Greenland in writing this book related in large part to his complex personal relationship with Origlass. See his discussion of this in *Red Hot*.

the Labor Party. In Balmain ward, Issy Wyner rejoined Origlass on council but in Glebe, Rozelle and Lilyfield wards, the Labor Right dominated. Jones, Rocks and Kelly were thus in the minority in a ten member Labor caucus. Ultimately, in 1979, the three would challenge the majority, publicly.⁷⁶

In the early years of the council Kelly in particular was isolated. Both Jones and Rocks, as Labor traditionalists, were less likely to breach caucus. As mentioned above, Kelly was an artist who moved into the ALP in Annandale at the time of the 1974 federal election. He had been brought up in Sydney's southern suburbs in a "small 'l' liberal, tolerant household" and became attracted to the Labor Party in his teens. He was called up for national service in 1965 and politicised as a result. Narrowly missing out on being sent to Vietnam, he was roughed up by military police for attending an anti-war rally in uniform. After national service, he returned to art school and got a job as assistant curator at the Power Gallery of Contemporary Art. He was completing his art diploma at Alexander Mackie College when elected to council in 1977. He was initially taken aback when two or three people suggested he run for council and after some thought, realised it might be interesting and an opportunity "to do something".⁷⁷

Kelly's first surprise was the size of the business paper delivered to his home by a council driver just three days before the Friday caucus meeting. The second was the caucus meeting itself:

When I went to the first caucus meeting, I mean, I thought it was going to be very ideological with all these bloody battles over stuff and it wasn't. They were all on about who they hated and who they didn't hate and who they could get back at and I was totally taken aback by all of this and I thought well you know there's obviously things that they care about you know and things that they don't care about ... I realised early on that actually it was possible to get things

⁷⁶ Minutes of the Leichhardt Branch 1977, *ALPR*, MLMSS 5095/718; Head Office correspondence with Leichhardt Municipal Committee, 1977, *ALPR*, MLMSS, 5095/82. Recorded interview with Ann Roxborough and Jock Roxborough, 7/7/00; Solling and Reynolds, *Leichhardt* pp 247 – 248. See chapter three below for further discussion of the situation in the Leichhardt branch.

⁷⁷ Recorded interview with Tim (Anthony) Kelly, 9/10/99.

done as long as they weren't placed in some kind of Left-Right context and of course I know that people saw me as somehow compromising myself and stuff like that but you know, I mean, ultimately I had three years on the council with lots of things to get done. The revolution wasn't going to happen in Leichhardt or anywhere.⁷⁸

For Kelly, "the first year was like a fog". The practical difficulties of dealing with a hostile caucus, and working out how the council was managed, led him to focus on the things he could do something about. He realised it was impossible to fully get on top of the business papers and "in some degree" gave up reading them, focussing instead on trying to "pick the eyes out" of them and concentrate on what he thought was important. "Most of my blues" he argued "were with the senior staff trying to get them to do things".⁷⁹

An example of what Kelly was able to get done was improving children's playgrounds, raising their safety standards to the national level. He also drew attention to the need for council to observe existing town planning requirements, such as the foreshore building code, as well as to observe correct procedure for appointment of council senior staff. On discussion of one appointment he recalled telling caucus:

I don't care how many of your mates you put on the garbage trucks and you give em jobs you know, working in the park ... at the end of the day it's probably going to be the same blokes who get these jobs anyway, even if they are all members of your branch and vote for you in preselections. But when it comes to middle management or above we really ought to appoint people on merit ... these are the people who really run the council. I know we all think we run it, but the people from middle management and above, they're the ones who really run the council and the council fails or succeeds on the basis of what they do.⁸⁰

Generally, the caucus deferred to ward aldermen in relation to matters in their wards, giving Rocks and Kelly some degree of freedom in Annandale over development issues. However as the council proceeded through its term, the pressure on the two Annandale aldermen to

⁷⁸ Tim Kelly.

⁷⁹ Tim Kelly

emulate Origlass, Wyner and Hume, and breach caucus over wider municipal issues, grew. There was mounting concern over town planning issues, in particular the growth in town house developments, often on former industrial sites. In Annandale, the pressure on Rocks and Kelly came in particular from Greenland and Hume. Hume was eager to return to council. Greenland had turned away for a time from his history project began to refocus his attention on the immediate practicalities of trying to support the Balmain aldermen and advance the 'open council' agenda.⁸¹

The pressure increased and Rocks, Kelly and Jones began to take a more critical stand of the caucus majority after the publication of Interim Development Order Number 27. This new planning scheme threatened to return the municipality to high density, high rise residential development. The Labor Right had made an earlier attempt, in 1976, to undo the planning controls of the 1971-1974 council, but had been frustrated by public opposition and the State Planning Authority. In July 1979 council approved a development in Annandale contrary to the wishes of the Annandale Aldermen, and Rocks, Kelly and Jones 'broke' caucus to oppose it. They were charged by caucus with a breach of the ALP rules.⁸²

⁸⁰ Tim Kelly.

⁸¹ Tim Kelly, Bill Hume, Hall Greenland. Greenland, H., 'The Leichhardt Story' in Greenland, H., and Harris, T., *Politics on the Block*, August 1979 (document circulated to ALP members, copy in writer's papers). An example of the friction between Origlass and Wyner and the radical element in the Annandale Branch on the one hand and Rocks, Kelly and Jones on the other was the 'Nuclear Free Zone' issue. With uranium trucks passing through the municipality on their way to ships in White Bay, Origlass and Wyner proposed that council make Leichhardt a nuclear free zone and attempt to use all its formal and political power to block the trucks. Kelly, Rocks and Jones were able to wring out of caucus a decision to put up signs saying 'Help Make Leichhardt Council Nuclear Free'; a stance that the radicals found inadequate. See also Hanford, B., 'An Anatomy of Balmain' in *The National Times*, 10-16/2/80, pp 29-32, and a letter of reply from Rocks, Kelly and Jones, *The National Times*, 17-23/2/80, p 23. The Hanford story, written in the 'gonzo' style, aggravated the political situation with major omissions and errors in the history of the Annandale branch and of Left activists in Balmain.

⁸² Greenland, 'The Leichhardt Story'; Solling and Reynolds, *Leichhardt* pp 245 – 248; documents relating to the charges against Rocks, Kelly and Jones and their counter charges against deputy mayor Danny Casey, together with other references to Casey vis a vis the Royal Commission into Drug Trafficking in New South Wales and Casey's relationship to General Secretary Graham Richardson are located in Graham Richardson's papers, ALPR, MLMSS,5095/294,297,299; and Disputes Committee ALPR, MLMSS, 5095/491. See also Hanford, 'An Anatomy of Balmain' and letter in response by Rocks, Kelly and Jones (cited above).

This conflict in the municipal caucus occurred at a time of increasing pressure on the Right as the result of a campaign of ‘branch-stacking’ by the Left through the municipality. This emanated from the successful work by Peter Crawford, Peter Baldwin and others and was accompanied by bad publicity about the ‘rorting’ of membership records by the Right machines and alleged criminal influence (see chapter three below). This was especially linked to allegations about deputy mayor Danny Casey and his Rozelle East branch of the Party. The three charged aldermen were able to counter-charge Casey as being unfit for membership of the ALP and refused to vote for him as deputy mayor. All these matters came to a head in August 1980 when Peter Baldwin was assaulted. The effect of the bashing was to sweep away the Right machine in most of the municipality and ultimately hand control of Leichhardt Council to the Left.⁸³

While Baldwin’s bashing saved Kelly, Rocks and Jones from disciplinary action, in Annandale it did not save Kelly and Rocks from being narrowly defeated in the 1980 municipal preselections by Greenland and Hume. This whole episode left a legacy of underlying bitterness and breached friendships. To Rocks and Kelly’s supporters, the branch majority, and Greenland and Hume in particular, had been disloyal to two of its number who had endured a difficult period on council. The two incumbent aldermen had, after all, placed their Party membership at risk. To supporters of Greenland and Hume, however, Kelly and Rocks deserved, and received, support for their belated stand but nonetheless had failed to pay sufficient attention to the precedents set in the open council period of 1971 to 1974. They had been too willing to put survival in caucus before a willingness to oppose development and accede to the demands of resident participation in decision making. In many respects, Kelly and Rocks were caught between the political

⁸³ Solling and Reynolds, Leichhardt, pp 247 – 248. See also *ALPR* relating to Rocks, Kelly, Jones and Casey, referred to above. Also see Wilkinson, M., *The Fixer: The untold story of Graham Richardson*, William Heinemann Australia, Melbourne 1996, Chs 6-9; Cumming, F, *Mates: Five Champions of the Labor Right*, Allen and Unwin, 1991, pp 246-276; Richardson, G., *Whatever It Takes*, Bantam, Sydney, 1994; Hanford, ‘An Anatomy of Balmain’ and Rocks et al, responding letter. The rival Left tendencies in the branch both supported Rocks, Kelly and Jones in the face of the disciplinary action against them, see Minutes of Annandale Branch, 5/5/80.

expectations of the past and the political realities of the future, a dilemma that was to repeat itself in the decade ahead. When asked whether he felt let down by people in the branch, Kelly responded:

Yeah. I'd thought that. I mean I'd really stuck my neck out on stuff. I put my party membership on the line. The only thing that saved me was that Peter Baldwin was bashed. At the end of it I felt that all the things I did had just been repudiated. I mean I just thought there was a moral obligation in the branch to support Charlie [Rocks] and I because of what we had done and obviously a majority of people didn't think that way ... I know that Hall [Greenland] and Bill [Hume] were going around saying things about me that were really untrue and really pissed me off ... I walked away from it. I wasn't really bitter, I was disappointed you know? I was disappointed in people.⁸⁴

The personal divisions that were to emerge among the middle class Left during this episode were harbingers of worse to come in the early to mid eighties. From 1979 on into the early years of the new decade, the Left in the branch would start to divide into two broad tendencies: a continuing but shrinking 'variegated' and libertarian Left and those in the branch who increasingly associated with the formal factional Left, the Steering Committee. However the situation was still fluid with agreement on a whole range of Left issues such as support for unions, Aboriginal land rights, foreign policy issues and the anti-nuclear campaigns. And, for a time at least, there was a fair degree of convivial interaction around fund-raising and social activities.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Tim Kelly. Kelly moved from Annandale and dropped out of the ALP around 1983. He now lives in Millthorpe near Orange and for some years edited a small local newspaper. He still organises the local polling booth for the ALP during elections. See also, Hall Greenland, Bill Hume. The writer was active in support of Greenland and Hume's candidacy.

⁸⁵ Minutes of the Annandale Branch, 1980-1985; the writer. As the bitterness and division increased in the branch in the early 1980's, people looked to social activities as a way to heal the breach. In his President's report to the branch in early 1982, Bob Howard laid emphasis on the importance of 'reviving the social life of the branch', looking forward to an upcoming branch fund-raiser in support of the Polish union movement Solidarity as a 'start in this area'. Twelve months later, when the factional split within the Left in the branch had worsened, branch secretary Richard Archer, in his annual report to the branch, lamented 'the pathetic degeneration into point scoring' in branch debates and suggested that improving the level of debate trust among members could well depend on initiatives of the branch social committee. He pointed out that 'the problem is that the absence of such extra-branch meeting socialising is both a cause and effect of destructive factionalism'. Annandale Branch President's Report, Minutes of the Annandale Branch, 8/2/82 and Annandale Branch Secretary's Report, Minutes of the Annandale Branch, 21/3/83.

The greater Steering Committee presence in the branch was also associated with the moving in to the branch of figures associated with that faction. Two union officials who were of significance were John Cahill and Barry Cotter. Both came from Labor families though from very different backgrounds. Cahill was the grandson of a Labor State Premier, son of a NSW Industrial Court judge and nephew of a state member of parliament. Unlike his elders however, he was associated with the Left faction of the Party. He had developed his political education through the Left dominated Mosman branch of the ALP, Left politics in Young Labor, and at Macquarie University in the early seventies. An officer with the NSW PSA since 1978 (he became Assistant general Secretary in 1987) he moved into a shared house in Annandale in the early eighties and transferred into the branch.⁸⁶

Like Cahill, Cotter also became a union official and was, by his mid-twenties, secretary of the state branch of the federal public service union, the Administrative and Clerical Officers Association. Cotter was brought up in a working class family in Newtown. His father was a truck driver and his early Labor political orientation started at home, especially on Friday and Saturday night gatherings of his dad's mates:

It was a traditional Australian upbringing of card nights at home and a lot of entertainment occurring in the home rather than outside the home because you didn't have money to go elsewhere. I couldn't help but be engaged in the conversation and hear what they were talking about so it sunk in without it ever actually; you never thought of it as politics, it was just there.⁸⁷

On leaving school he joined the public service and went to university part-time. The politics of the anti-war movement had attracted him there, rather than the study. Cotter also moved into the Annandale area and the branch at the beginning of the eighties.⁸⁸

Both Cahill and Cotter would only stay in Annandale for a short period but both during these times would play significant roles in the politics of the Party in the area (see below).

⁸⁶ Recorded interview with John Cahill, 24/11/99.

⁸⁷ Recorded interview with Barry Cotter, 7/12/99.

Two academics who moved into the area and who would be associated with mainstream, Steering Committee politics were Bob Connell and Bob Howard. Connell, a historian and sociologist, stood apart from the more overt factionalism of the Steering Committee but was seen as providing some of the intellectual leadership of the faction through his columns for *Challenge*, the left newspaper set up by Baldwin and Crawford (see chapter three below). He was also influential through his publication, in 1978, of a monograph, *Socialism and Labor: An Australian Strategy*, which became a manifesto for many among the middle class ALP Left. Connell would also be involved at the beginning of the eighties in establishing a political education discussion group within the branch, which was to disappear under the wave of factional conflict after 1980.⁸⁹

Howard joined the Labor Party in Armidale when teaching at the university there in 1972 and as a result of the “rush of enthusiasm in the run up to the Whitlam election”. Howard’s political awareness shifted to the Left as a result of the Vietnam war, especially during his doctoral studies at the Australian National University in the late sixties. But also on domestic issues, he moved away from “the totally different view of domestic politics” of his family, not least of all that of his brother and future Prime Minister, John. Howard would, at the outset at least, be one of those who crossed more easily between the two major tendencies within the branch Left, but would become part of the ‘Baldwinite’ grouping within the Steering Committee and would serve as president of the Sydney FEC.⁹⁰

All these four would play a significant part in the political life of the branch particularly as the more libertarian tendency lost hold and ultimately (in the case of Harris, Greenland and others) left the Labor Party for the Greens (see chapter seven below). In completing this study of the Annandale branch up to the beginning of the 1980’s it is useful to mention two

⁸⁸ Barry Cotter.

⁸⁹ See Minutes and Roll Books, Annandale Branch; Connell, R.W., *Socialism and Labor: an Australian Strategy*, Labor Praxis Publications, 1978; see *Challenge* April, 1979 for debate on Connell’s monograph by George Peterson MLA; see *Challenge* passim for Connell’s ‘Society at Large’ column.

⁹⁰ Recorded interview with Bob Howard, 11/8/99. See also Annandale Branch minutes, 1980-85.

other personalities who would shape the conflict in the branch in the mid eighties and the political scene in the municipality as a whole.

Bill Brady was an old-style Leftist who moved into Annandale in 1974 from Glebe with his wife Olive. Brady was a vaudevillian who had become active in Actors Equity (see chapter six). He would serve four controversial years as mayor of Leichhardt Municipality in the mid to late 1980's. His principal protagonist in the Annandale branch in the mid eighties would be another controversial future mayor of the municipality, Larry Hand. Hand was a high school teacher, active in the Teacher's Federation, who joined the Annandale branch at the beginning of the eighties. The conflict between these two personalities and their role in the politics of the municipality will be developed further on in this study.⁹¹

It might be an exaggeration to say, as former state member for Balmain Peter Crawford did, that "all the trouble for us came out of Annandale" but it was certainly a branch that acted as a thorn in the side of the dominant political forces in the area. At first this was to the Right machines up to 1977 and from that time through into the early eighties, to the particular Left forces that came to dominate the politics of the municipality. These Left forces would become established along the ridge of branch activity from Balmain, through Rozelle and Lilyfield to Leichhardt and to understand them it is necessary to go to their point of origin, the place credited as the birthplace of the Labor Party: Balmain.

⁹¹ Recorded interview with Bill Brady, 30/11/99; recorded interview with Larry Hand, 16/12/99. See chapters five to seven below for further developments associated with Brady and Hand.

Chapter 3

BALMAIN AND 'THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF BRANCH STACKING'.¹

The major political developments in Leichhardt Municipality were to swing around recruitment or 'branch stacking' battles that follow its dominant natural topography; emanating from Balmain and running through the ridge of ALP branches: Rozelle and Rozelle East, Lilyfield and Leichhardt. Balmain is a place steeped in the history of the labour movement and the Labor Party. One of the oldest settled inner Sydney suburbs, its colonial origins were as a land grant to the first fleet surgeon who gave it its name. Starting out as a location of boat-building and related waterfront activity, as well as a place of residence for the colony's middle classes, Balmain achieved local government in 1860. By the end of the nineteenth century, it was a major location of the city's maritime related industry, including the largest single employer, Mort's Dock. Balmain was home to one of the earliest unions, the Balmain Workers Union. It was also the place where the first Labor Electoral League was formed, in 1891, at the site of what is now the Unity Hall Hotel. Into the mid twentieth century, Balmain, like the other suburbs of the municipality, developed largely as a working class suburb. Many of its residents worked at the Colgate-Palmolive factory, Mort's Dock, Cockatoo Island and a variety of waterfront and other industries.²

In 1945, Gow Street, Balmain was still a dirt road. It was here, to one of a collection of three rented terrace houses, that six year old Tony Geoghan moved, with his family, one

¹ Comment by Geoff Cooke when explaining his coming into contact with Peter Baldwin and his rejoining the Balmain Branch of the ALP in the mid 1970's. Cooke had left the branch in the aftermath of the expulsion of Nick Origlass and Issy Wyner from the ALP in 1968. Recorded interview with Geoff Cooke, 15/2/00.

² Solling and Reynolds, *Leichhardt*, passim; Wyner, I., *With Banner Unfurled: The early years of the Ships Painters and Dockers Union*, Hale and Iremonger, Sydney 1993, passim.

week after the end of World War Two. Like many who lived in Balmain, Geoghan's father worked in local industries; at Dunlop at Birkenhead, at a box factory and then as a ship's painter and docker. Geoghan's mother worked at a milk bar and also in the tuck shop at the Christian Brothers school in Thames Street, where Tony went to school from third grade through until he completed his Intermediate Certificate. Like many youngsters of his age and time he wanted to break the mould of an upbringing in a working class suburb that might have seen him prepared for an apprenticeship in one of the local industries on the Balmain peninsula.³

Geoghan managed to complete his senior high school at the Catholic Cathedral school in the city. After school he was employed at the Sydney City Council Library. While working there, Geoghan completed studies at technical college to become health inspector and at 21 was transferred to the city's health section. In 1968, when the city boundaries were altered and Glebe moved to Leichhardt municipal area he opted to move to the Leichhardt staff where he stayed until retirement in 1993.⁴

In some respects Geoghan was typical of the inner city, Irish Catholic, working class. He was also an example of a process of middle-classing that saw some members of the working class move into semi-professional occupations more typical of the middle class Left. In Geoghan's case though, it was very much in the framework of local government and its links to local Labor Party politics. Geoghan had been interested in politics and his work generated involvement in the Municipal Employees Union and, after 1960, the Health Inspectors Association. It was to be ironic for someone who was to become a key figure in the Right machine in Balmain that his entry into Labor Party politics, at two key points, was with the encouragement of two people on the Left. Geoghan was encouraged to join the Balmain branch of the ALP around 1958 by then Labor alderman, Nick Origlass, who struck up a conversation with him outside a polling booth during an election. In 1968, when

³ Recorded Interview with Tony Geoghan, 20/5/99.

⁴ Tony Geoghan.

Origlass and Wyner and a large number of their supporters were expelled from the branch, over opposition to the siting of a chemical tank farm near White Bay, Geoghan was approached by Wyn Childs and encouraged to become branch secretary. Childs had been the Geoghan family doctor. Like some of the Left in the branch, including her husband, union organiser, future Party Assistant General Secretary and federal Senator, Bruce Childs, Wyn Childs did n't want to follow Origlass, Wyner and their associates out of the Party. As the political conflict between the middle class Left and the Right sharpened in the next decade, Geoghan was to be the key Right protagonist in the branch. He was at the centre of a legendary incident in the history of Labor in Balmain, the theft of the branch records at what came to be remembered as the notorious 'fire extinguisher' meeting of late 1977 (see below).⁵

Early Days

The incursion of the middle class Left into Balmain occurred much earlier than Annandale and was associated with the formation of the Balmain Association in 1965. However, the 1968 expulsions from Balmain branch, and the continued political life of Origlass and Wyner as independent aldermen, diverted large numbers of the middle class Left, for a time, from the Balmain ALP. Two of those, who left the Party in 1968, but who were to return later, were Alicia Lee and Geoff Cooke.⁶

Alicia Lee was born in India in 1930 (her father was an official in the Raj) and came to Australia in 1940. A psychologist, she moved into Balmain in 1967 or 68 "before it became gentrified". Living near Mort Bay, Lee became an active campaigner against container trucks and their effects on the local residents as they traversed Balmain's narrow streets

⁵ Tony Geoghan; Greenland *Red Hot*, Ch 23. As both Geoghan and Greenland in different ways point out, there was residual hostility to Origlass and Wyner from some Left sections in the branch relating to their Trotskyist past, Origlass's conflict with the Communist leadership within the ironworkers union in Balmain in the 1940's and their general criticism of the political performance of the ALP Left Steering Committee.

⁶ Greenland, *Red Hot*, Ch. 23; Johnston, *Participation in Local Government*, passim.

(Mort's Dock closed in 1958 and became a container terminal). Opposition to the trucks brought her into contact with Origlass and Wyner, who were siding with the residents on this and other issues and she joined the Balmain ALP branch. Lee was also active in the formation of the 'Balmain Battlers' a local action group more radical than the Balmain Association. In the early seventies, she was active in the establishment of the Coalition of Resident Action Groups (CRAG) which was linked to groups across Sydney and to the militant BLF. Lee was also active in the Anti-Vietnam war movement, and in the early days of Women's Liberation and helped to set up the first rape crisis centre in Sydney. After her expulsion from the ALP with Origlass and Wyner she moved to Lilyfield (in 1973) and was recruited to rejoin the ALP in Lilyfield as part of the 'branch-stacking' campaign at the beginning of the eighties.⁷

Geoff Cooke, came from a poor lower middle-class background in a country town. On leaving school he attended teachers college in Wagga Wagga. After teaching in a bush school he found his way to Leichhardt Boys High School and moved into Balmain in 1965. Cooke studied at Sydney University during the evenings, which brought him into contact with the Labor Club and the ideas and campus personalities of the time. He participated in the first anti-Vietnam War march in Sydney in 1965 and joined the local ALP branch in the same year. He remembered the branch as being literally "a smoke filled room", of mainly men, and came quickly to appreciate that it was under the control of Origlass, Wyner and their associate, branch secretary Alan Graham. This was an "odd little enclave" in the midst of other local machines dominated by the Right.⁸

⁷ Recorded Interview with Alicia Lee, 27/2/00; Lee, A., 'Some historical and political considerations of the early local environment protest movement', monograph, July, 1978 (copy of paper given to this writer at time of interview); Solling and Reynolds, *Leichhardt*, p 219; for general background to resident action and CRAG see Nittim 'The Coalition of resident Action Groups'; Sandercock, 'The BLF, Urban Politics and Inequality'; Jakubowicz 'The Green Ban movement: urban politics and class struggle' and Burgmann and Burgmann, *Green Bans, Red Union*, passim.

⁸ Geoff Cooke.

Geoff Cooke, and his wife Helen, became active in the campaign that built in opposition to the chemical tank farm near White Bay, along with Alicia Lee and remembered this as being an important part of his political education: to Cooke, it was a feeling “that one is involved in doing something. It was political activism”. When Origlass and Wyner breached municipal caucus over the tank issue and were expelled, Helen and Geoff Cooke followed Lee and others (including Balmain Association president John Power) out of the Party.⁹

The Cookes left for a three year stint overseas shortly after the expulsions, but during the earlier phase of involvement in Balmain, Geoff Cooke had seen the beginning of the ‘baby-boomer’ influx. He remembered it as a “congenial and exciting place” and a “hive of Left-wing personalities”. It was not surprising then that after his return to Australia in the early 1970’s he was called upon by a recent arrival who was to be a central figure in the shift of power in the Balmain branch and other branches in the municipality, Peter Baldwin.¹⁰

The Coming of the ‘Two Peters’, I.

Peter Baldwin was born in Aldershot, UK in 1950 and was a nephew of the leading British Labour politician, Dennis Healey. While a student of electrical engineering at Sydney University, he was recruited to the Labor Party in the northern Sydney suburb of Hornsby, in the same manner he later applied in Balmain. His father, who was of a Left Labor disposition, had signed a petition against the war in Vietnam. The petition was used by Norm Hanscombe, an ALP Left activist on the North Shore, to encourage Baldwin senior to join the ALP. Peter was “dragged along”. As he recalled, “the first few meetings were fairly

⁹ Though Geoff Cooke argued that there was some confusion as to whether he was actually expelled, his name being confused with that of another branch member, Arthur Cook. See also Greenland, *Red Hot*, Ch 23.

¹⁰ Geoff Cooke recalls that he did not initially follow up Baldwin’s invitation to try and re-enter the Labor Party, partly because of a lack of enthusiasm for the Whitlam Government’s embracing of funding for private schools and partly due to his wife’s resistance. Helen Cooke, like many other politically active women was,

confusing with these various structures and entities that make up the Labor Party; FEC's, SEC's and so forth. It was all Greek to me I recall at the time".¹¹

Baldwin's "natural impulses" however were "with the ethic of left wing politics; the belief in social equity". With his family background (his brother was a member of the Communist Party of Australia) and the contact with his Left-wing Labor recruiters, he soon learnt the language of factional conflict within the NSW branch of the ALP. After being involved in these "significant" factional struggles on the North Shore he decided to turn his focus to the safe Labor area of Balmain, where political activity would be more productive:

It struck me at the time that there wasn't a huge amount of point battling for control of branches in areas which are basically safe Liberal seats, so quite apart from my own personal ambitions (which as I said weren't fixed on becoming a member of parliament at that time; I aspired more, I guess, to making some sort of contribution to strengthening the Left's position in the party)... it seemed far more useful to be doing that sort of activity in an area where the Labor Party actually controlled public office than in an area where it clearly didn't and probably never will. I actually sat down and thought about it and spoke to a few people and examined maps and decided quite deliberately to move to that part of the world in order to become involved in the politics of the local Labor Party.¹²

Baldwin moved into a "bit of a dive"; a bed-sit in a block named "Casablanca" in Walkely Street, Balmain and transferred his ALP membership into the branch in 1972. He spent a year settling in and became fully active by 1973. In visiting some of the former expellees, Baldwin called on Nick Origlass and gave this comical account of this first meeting:

One of my earliest acts was to try and make contact with him [Origlass] and see if he could help with recruitment. I spent an extremely boring evening down at Nick's flat. When I door-knocked

according to Geoff Cooke, more sceptical of involvement in the ALP. Cooke re-entered the party in 1975, see below.

¹¹ Recorded interview with Peter Baldwin, 25/10/99; Geoff Cooke.

¹² Peter Baldwin. In non-Labor electorates, like those on Sydney's North Shore, the main value for the Left lay in winning control of branches which in turn would enable control of SEC's and FEC's and delegates from those bodies the ALP State Conference. Control of branches also meant control of branch delegates to Young Labor and Women's Conferences. See appendix A.

him I accidentally intruded on some little Trotskyist cell, you know, International Marxist Tendency gathering he had down there, and there was these two young blokes with note pads and pens you know taking down the wisdom of the great man on the history of the Balmain Ironworkers' Association. So I thought, I was invited in, took a seat and thought at some point I'd be able to raise with him what I wanted to raise but this monologue for the benefit of these two characters just continued on and I thought "Oh Well, I'll just wait for a break in it" but the break never came so eventually I had to interrupt and sort of excuse myself. A distinctly unproductive evening.¹³

While there was a Left minority within the now Right-dominated Balmain branch, Baldwin set out to use his skills to recruit new members. He obtained copies of anti-Vietnam war lists and petitions and "just started approaching people". Baldwin reflected that he had been conscious of the need to prevent the exclusion or marginalisation of the "traditional party membership". However the people he approached were, by virtue of their identification with the anti-war movement or local town planning issues, part of the "variety of people of left-wing position for one reason or another who chose to live in the inner city". That is, principally "counter-cultural types, bohemian sort of people" or "more respectable middle class sort of people". As the local Right machine became aware that there was "a challenge on" it reacted by using "more traditional, Tammany type networks" to counter-recruit and the conflict began to develop a "new resident versus traditional people" character.¹⁴

Geoff Cooke described how Baldwin's determined recruiting had effect; in spite of the fact that he was, as many of those interviewed have described him, fairly shy and lacking the outgoing bonhomie of a traditional politician:

I think a lot of people signed up with Baldwin because they admired just his sheer doggedness and really his courage in actually going

¹³ Peter Baldwin. Clearly Baldwin didn't appreciate the full benefits of listening to Origlass. As Bruce Hanford, writing in the *The Digger*, October 21 1972, pp 6-7, wrote: "he [Origlass] could even get along with *freaks*, who could appreciate how *far-out* Origlass really is ... four hours of his rap is a *stone*".

¹⁴ Peter Baldwin.

along to meetings and standing up to people and I could see that one person can actually make a difference.¹⁵

However Cooke also pointed out other factors at work in Balmain:

Something special worked for Baldwin here which is a bit hard to put one's finger on but [he] tapped into existing social networks here in Balmain and they worked for him. A lot of people would invite Baldwin home, they'd invite him around for dinner. At dinner they would introduce him to a few other people and he would get names and addresses and phone numbers from people who opened up to him.¹⁶

The conflict between the Left and Right in the Balmain branch, and more specifically its two protagonists, Baldwin and Geoghan, shows up in the records of the Disputes Committee of the NSW ALP in October 1973. Baldwin had charged Geoghan with breaches of the Party's rules during the previous twelve months which frustrated new members from joining the branch. He accused Geoghan of not attending branch meetings and failing to give the membership ticket books to the Assistant Secretary, not bringing the pledge books to the meetings for new members to sign and failing to issue tickets at the direction of a branch meeting.¹⁷

The annual cycle of an ALP branch determined the pattern of recruitment campaigns, especially, as the Party rules stood at the time, the crucial October and November meetings. Only members of three months standing could vote at the Annual General Meeting, and elect the secretary and other officers, in February the following year. New members

¹⁵ Geoff Cooke.

¹⁶ Geoff Cooke.

¹⁷ Disputes Committee, 1973-1974, *ALPR*, MLMSS, 5095/488. See also Credentials Committee, 1973-74, *ALPR*, MLMSS 5095/48. The control of an ALP branch hinged on controlling the position of secretary and the 'books' of the branch for which that officer was responsible: the minute books (which recorded the admission of members), the membership ticket books (replaced by a centralised Head Office ticketing system in 1983/84); the roll or 'pledge' books which recorded membership history and the signed pledge to abide by the rules and support endorsed ALP candidates (replaced by a Branch Register in 1983/84); and the attendance books which validated attendance at meetings during the phases of joining a branch and for the purposes of determining voting eligibility in party candidate preselections (twelve months membership and attendance at a minimum of three meetings in that time). See Rules, NSW ALP for the time.

introduced in October, 'credentialled', and admitted at the November meeting, could change the power balance. This time of the year would see sharp conflict in the years that followed, notably in 1976 and 1977 (see below), as each side in the Balmain branch tried to process new members. The absence of the secretary or the branch 'books' could and did delay and frustrate the branch's Left opposition.¹⁸

As a result of Baldwin's charges, NSW ALP Head Office supervised the branch elections in which Geoghan was returned as Secretary by a vote of 48 to 38. In defending himself against Baldwin's charges Geoghan complained about stacking of the branch:

People who signed a Moratorium petition were being called on and asked to join the branch ... a member's daughter was asked if her address could be used for prospective members ... new members had a bad record as far as working on polling day was concerned. Mr Symes [sic] had supplied a keg at his home to encourage people to go to branch meetings. Thirty-three Llewellyn Street was a very popular address for branch members'.¹⁹

These early skirmishes were to herald the more significant ones to come. The tension of the conflict in the Balmain branch would rise after 1974. That year saw the defeat of the independent dominated Leichhardt Council and the return of the Right machine as well as rising anger and frustration over the obstruction of the political agenda of the Whitlam, Labor government.²⁰ This was fertile ground for Balmain Left recruiters who in 1975 were joined by the second of the 'Two Peters', Peter Baldwin's friend and associate from the earlier battles on the North Shore, Peter Crawford.

¹⁸ Disputes Committee 1973-74; *NSW ALP Rules*.

¹⁹ Disputes Committee 1973-74. Then NSW ALP Organiser, Graham Richardson's report on these events in the Disputes Committee records is dated 11/3/74. Geoghan's report to the Disputes Committee put the early 1974 branch membership at 125 compared to 14 after the 1968 Origliass/Wyner expulsions. Murray Sime, who contested the Vice-Presidency of the branch at this election, was one of the 'first bohemian wave' that moved into Balmain in the 1960's. A lawyer sacked from the Crown Solicitor's Office because of anti-war activities, he went on to become an executive with Citibank and died in 2000. See his obituary by Frank Moorhouse, *SMH*, 18/3/2000, p 52.

²⁰ McMullin, *The Light on the Hill*, pp 351-375.

The Coming of the ‘Two Peters’ II.

Peter Crawford, born in Ashfield in January 1949, was brought up in Dulwich Hill and Burwood before his family moved to Wahroonga in 1962. While coming from a fairly conservative family background he attended Fort Street High School and went through school sitting next to his friend and future political associate, Rodney Cavalier. Crawford was very much influenced by the processes of education and the world that was opened up by reading. While still at school his study of history and the influence of his teachers saw him gravitate to the ideas of Fabian socialism. After going to Sydney University in 1966, his study of anthropology and reading of Bertrand Russell and James Frazer broke down his Presbyterian beliefs. While not enamoured of student politics, and initially “in two minds” about opposing the Vietnam war, he nonetheless developed a liking and fascination for the “colourful and charismatic” characters of campus and political life and an appreciation of the gifts of oratory. As most of his friends were drawn to the anti-war movement and to the ALP, Crawford followed and entered the Party in Gordon, coming into contact with Norm Hanscombe.²¹

After a successful time, like Baldwin, winning branches and numbers for the Left on the North Shore he, and his then partner, Susan Tweedy (they met at a church fellowship meeting in Wahroonga) moved to Balmain in 1975. Tweedy had been born in London and emigrated with her parents when she was eleven. By the time she had moved to Balmain she had commenced an Arts degree at university studying anthropology, sociology and history. Both she and Crawford were attracted by the atmosphere of inner city life, and while Tweedy was not as heavily involved in the door-knocking itself she found the political life exciting:

It was a great place to go and live. My memories of Balmain... were just endless meetings with Peter Baldwin who would arrive at ten or eleven o'clock at night and we would go for long walks until twelve or one and then go to bed. And then I'd either go to work or go to

²¹ Recorded interview with Peter Crawford, 6/1/00.

university... and feeling a sense of separation from it all and a sense of complete fascination and being just basically an observer watching all these people.²²

Initially, like Baldwin, Peter Crawford saw his role as that of strengthening the broader position in the Party with struggles for control of branches, electorate councils and ultimately state conference rather than confronting local sitting members, like state member for Balmain, Roger Degen:

At that stage I was interested in the Labor Party as a game... I was interested in the State Electorate Council delegates, the Federal Electorate Council delegates, oratory at the [ALP] conference, the challenging of Charlie Oliver, the challenging of John Ducker on the floor of the conference... as part of this romantic, democratic political maelstrom ...or turmoil that I loved so much.²³

Crawford's, and Baldwin's, involvement was also very much part of a network of friends, active in Young Labor. These included Rod Cavalier in Hunters Hill, John Faulkner in the Pennant Hills/Normanhurst area and Laurie Ferguson in the Western Suburbs as well as Max Pierce and Sandra Nori:

So much of political activism is based on tribal and group loyalties. In my case it was. I would never have been able to do it without all my friends; Peter Baldwin, Laurie Ferguson, Rod Cavalier; and it was the esteem among those friends that drove me on to these extraordinary achievements of organisation. It was wanting to be the most impressive player in the team, and also I was about politics a lot for the charisma, the entertainment value and the colour...²⁴

Like many who were to become involved in the politics of the ALP at this time, there was also the oppositional focus of uniting against a common enemy:

there was an extraordinary motivational side of hatred. I found that it was exhilarating to hate so many people. All my own frustrations in life and disappointments and things no doubt came through in this

²² Recorded interview with Susan Tweedy, 9/7/00.

²³ Peter Crawford. See also Peter Baldwin.

²⁴ Peter Crawford. See also Susan Tweedy and recorded interview with Sandra Nori, 7/1/00. According to Tweedy, some of this Young Labor friendship network had originated within the Socialist Youth Alliance (which later became the Socialists Workers Party and then the Democratic Socialist Party).

way. Everyone who wasn't on the Left was targeted. It was the old Christian, Pauline, view: he who is not with us is against us. And that has a certain, I don't know, exhilarating or romantic quality where you feel you are fighting for good against the rest of the world.²⁵

In many respects, Baldwin and Crawford achieved success in encouraging people into the Balmain branch in spite of perceptions of them as being eccentric and having somewhat clumsy personal skills; the first, shy but determined and the second, the garrulous rhetorician. As Susan Tweedy explained, "they got people in because there was a focus... They did actually believe in something and they were both exceptionally bright and so people believed in them".²⁶

With an established tradition of alternatives to ALP involvement in Balmain, most notably resident action and support for Origlass and Wyner, Baldwin and Crawford had to frequently convince people that the ALP was the place to be. However in many cases it was just a matter of giving the final impetus to those already moving in that direction. This was particularly so in the lead-up to, and aftermath of, the Whitlam government dismissal. One of those inspired to join the ALP for these reasons was Mary Jerram, and her then husband Ian Cameron, who applied to join in October 1975.²⁷

Jerram and her family had moved into Balmain a few months before, to a terrace house two doors down from the London Hotel in Darling Street. A New Zealander, who moved to Sydney in 1969 with Cameron and their two small children, she had been thinking of joining the ALP when living at Beecroft but had put it off because of the move to Balmain. This move was seen as a one to "more of a community" on the harbour where "you didn't have rolling lawns and cut the grass every Saturday morning". Most of the people she had come to know who had political ideas were "inner city people" and she liked the mix of older working class and newer people in their twenties and thirties. Jerram had come from a

²⁵ Peter Crawford.

²⁶ Susan Tweedy.

²⁷ Mary Jerram.

fairly conservative middle class family in New Zealand, though a “black sheep” uncle had been secretary of the Communist Party. She had gone to university there. However it was in Sydney that she had really begun to think about wider political issues and feminism in particular.²⁸

As a voracious reader she was stimulated by feminist writers like Kate Millet, Betty Friedan and Germaine Greer as well as by writers like Carolyn Grahame in the *Nation Review*. She recalled also going to hear cartoonist Bruce Petty speak at the pre-school near where she lived in Beecroft:

there was a lot of stirring up going on; there was a lot of making you think for the first time. For me it was a really strong feeling that there was more out there than looking after the house. Even though I worked, I'd always worked, but teaching was what women did then of course if you worked at all.²⁹

The teaching was with the Catholic school system. Later in the seventies, Jerram would go to work full time for the union, the Independent Teachers Association, as an organiser and industrial officer. But it was feminism, an interest in the wider political world and the Whitlam government that had prepared the ground for Crawford's knock on the door:

It was the Whitlam effect, the achievements, it was exciting, something you wanted to be part of then. I wanted to be part of a movement that's going to do all these things and change the way we live. And I have to give Crawford some credit for it because he really did work. He was a darned nuisance actually. He used to come around. We lived on Darling Street and I was just in the middle of, or perhaps I'd just started, my SAB and I was teaching, so I always had to study late at night and we had those funny glass bricks in the terrace and you could tell if the light was on. And I had a desk right near the window on the footpath and he used to see [it] and bang on the door and come in. He was interesting because he did know his history and he used to

²⁸ Mary Jerram.

²⁹ Mary Jerram.

talk about that. It wasn't that I needed persuading, it was that he was actually making the administrative side of it easy.³⁰

The administrative side according to Crawford was often difficult, organising for people to make sure they were on the electoral roll and members of an appropriate union as well as ensuring they were available for a visit by the branch credentials committee. New members applied at one meeting and were admitted at the next, after this committee reported. With the added difficulty of delays by the branch's Right-wing officials, it took persistence to keep people coming to meetings.³¹

Another person who joined the branch during 1975 was Alan Rogers. Rogers had been born into a working-class family on the Central Coast of NSW and had left home at 15 to start an apprenticeship. He first moved to Balmain in 1968. A technician, who worked at Garden Island naval dockyard, his left leaning politics was shaped by his family and experiences of working life. He was the convenor of the branch of his union, ADSTE and Garden Island was a centre of active unionism and debate over issues like the Vietnam war. Rogers was also influenced by the BLF Green Ban approach and became active in local issues. He supported local bookseller, Phillip Bray in the Campaign for Better Council in the 1971 municipal elections and came into contact with people like Origlass, Wyner and Annandale ALP alderman, Bill Hume. Rogers was also for a time on the executive committee of the Balmain Association. However it was not until his marriage broke up and he had returned from an eight month trip overseas (including Vietnam and East Timor) that he joined the branch. Rogers explained why he thought he and others of his generation had gravitated towards the ALP:

Well most of them were looking for something. Looking for some sort of involvement ... The majority of them were odd-bods in a way ... they certainly weren't the beautiful people; there weren't all that many good-looking people involved in it or anything like that. So it wasn't

³⁰ Mary Jerram. SAB is the Solicitors Admission Board course. Jerram went on after working for the ITA to become a public defender in local courts and then a Magistrate. She is now Deputy Chief Magistrate of NSW.

³¹ Peter Baldwin; Peter Crawford; NSW ALP Rules.

the 'chardonnay set' at all. It was the bloody cask wine set if it was anything and the 'drank beer' set ... most of the people were nice enough but were all a little bit, oh I don't know, seemed to be looking for something, had a void somewhere in their life. There were obviously the odd ones who were in the middle of study, happily married and things like that but for most of them they were either single or separated or divorced.³²

For Rogers, involvement in the politics of the branch was a political education gained through meeting and talking to people like Crawford and Baldwin, with their knowledge of Labor history and politics, as well as with the practicalities of leafleting and "earbashing" as part of the recruitment campaigns. As with most of those interviewed, socialising was to play a large part particularly through local hotels such as The London, The Riverview, The William Wallace and the Forth and Clyde and through local friendship networks and parties. Someone who was to become a friend and political associate of both Rogers and Mary Jerram during this period was lawyer Rod Madgwick.³³

Madgwick was one of those members of the Left involved in the branch at an early stage. He was already a member of the ALP when he moved into Balmain around 1971 or 1972. Brought up in a Housing Commission house in the Sutherland area, he joined the ALP there in the 1960's, while a law student. The ALP in Sutherland was controlled by Left-winger Arthur Gietzelt. As Madgwick pointed out, "where you were recruited determines where your factional position or lack of it is. I went to a meeting and was asked my attitude to the DLP [Democratic Labor Party]. On suitably defaming them I was welcomed".³⁴

Madgwick had spent the period from 1966 to 1970 in Papua Nuigini as a union official, helping to set up a union structure for the local public service, and was admitted to the bar

³² Recorded interview with Alan Rogers, 19/4/99. See also *Balmain Association News Sheet*, October 1972. ADSTE was the Association of Drafting, Supervisory and Technical Employees. The reference to 'chardonnay socialists' was originally in the question asked by the writer (as to whether this often-used term was valid in describing those joining).

³³ Alan Rogers.

³⁴ Recorded interview with Rod Madgwick, 27/5/99.

on his return, before moving into Balmain. According to Madgwick, Whitlam had a huge impact in winning over the ‘small l’ liberal members of a conservative profession to the Labor Party and converting some of them into firm Labor supporters. The networks of these Labor lawyers were important:

[There was a] sense of kinship in those days with any lawyer who was in the Labor Party whatever their factional position; kinship because you were peopled together with some similarity of outlook in a sea of conservatism and that friendship cut across factional alliances that might be manifested in a branch context or in a preselection fight or something of that kind. Quite a few lawyers moved into Balmain and joined the Labor Party.³⁵

With wider connections to the ALP Left and the legal profession, Madgwick was like some who came into Balmain who were initially not as concerned with local branch activities. While he admired Baldwin and his “dedication to getting the numbers and changing things” he found the level of fanaticism and the attention to “trivia” that the rule-oriented, branch-stacking tactics required, to be sometimes out of proportion. In the 1980’s, some of the tensions between those pre-occupied with recruitment and those more pre-occupied with a broader policy agenda and Party involvement would surface. But in the mid 1970’s, the desire to combat the incumbent machine had a unifying force and Madgwick underscored the importance in this of friendship and social networks linked to activity in the local branch:

People used to go and have a drink [after branch meetings] and we were much of an age and somewhat irreverent and all drank too much and there was a fair bit of sex too. I think people met partners ... after ALP meetings and it was a really important socialising thing for me and I think probably a lot of other people.³⁶

³⁵ Rod Madgwick. Balmain ALP members who moved on in the legal profession included Madgwick, now a Federal Court judge, Harry Bauer, a judge of the NSW Industrial Commission, Mary Jerram who is now Deputy Chief Magistrate of NSW and Nick O’Neill who became President of the Guardianship Tribunal of NSW. In the mid 1980’s, barrister and future NSW Attorney General, Jeff Shaw moved into the branch. See Shaw, J., ‘Ten Years Hard Labor’, *The Hummer*, Publication of the Sydney Branch, Australian Society for the Study of Labour History, Vol. 3, No. 5, Summer, 2000-2001, pp 23-30.

³⁶ Rod Madgwick.

Ann Catling, like Madgwick, Rogers and Jerram, would find herself in opposition to the Baldwin and Crawford forces within the Left in the 1980's. A "country girl" who studied economics at Sydney University, and went to work for the Reserve Bank in 1966, she bought a flat in Birchgrove in 1971. Catling became a critic of mainstream economics and spent a good part of the early seventies overseas, studying development economics, which stimulated her to be more involved in political change in Australia. While not a Party member, she had developed informal links to people active in policy development in the Labor Party. She was to become a close political confidant of Tom Uren, working with him and others in the Party to develop a uranium policy in the late seventies. She also worked on policy development, with a network of Labor women like future Left parliamentarians Ann Symonds and Jeanette McHugh. Catling had realised that to have any effective policy input in the Labor Party she had to "earn her spurs" and joined the Balmain branch in 1975. This was the same year that she became active in her union, the Commonwealth Bank Officers Association.³⁷

Catling recalled that she had been conscious, even at this early stage, of the difference in the branch Left between people like herself, who had decided to join the Party independently of the Baldwin/Crawford campaign, and the latter's' burgeoning recruitment machine. Like Madgwick, she had reservations about the intense pre-occupation with local recruitment, arguing that "wresting the inner city seats from the Right wasn't something you'd oppose but wasn't your priority." Catling was to be at the centre of the first conflict within the Left when she opposed Peter Baldwin in the pre-selection for the federal seat of Sydney in 1981 (see chapter five below). However, in the mid-seventies, she was, like others in the Balmain branch, caught up in the events and conflict of branch life as tension between the Left opposition and the Right incumbents reached its climax.³⁸

³⁷ Recorded interview with Ann Catling, 7/5/99.

³⁸ Ann Catling.

1976-1977: A pregnant lady, a beer belly and a fire extinguisher.

The minutes of the Balmain branch meeting of the tenth of November 1975 contain no reference to the events preceding the dismissal of the Whitlam government the following day, other than a letter from NSW ALP Head Office warning branches to be on a “campaign footing”. Indeed the minutes were dominated by a debate over trees. A motion criticising the sitting Right alderman Stan Hoy and Leichhardt Council for failing to take advantage of federal government money for tree planting was lost by 33 votes to 17. However, a broader follow-up resolution calling on council to respect the “inviolability of parks” and protesting against the alienation of parks for any purpose was carried. A further resolution expressing a vote of confidence in the Right dominated Leichhardt Council was carried by 25 votes to 10, with Left-wing member and NSW Teachers’ Federation organiser, Tony Avenall asking that his name be recorded against. A further proposal calling on local Alderman Stan Hoy to attend the branch and report on Council matters lapsed when a motion adjourning the branch was carried. This set of resolutions reveal the political tug-of-war that was developing around local issues linked to growing intensity of conflict over admission of new members.³⁹

The dismissal of the Whitlam government in November 1975, coming on top of the earlier defeat by the ALP Right of the 1971-74 independent-dominated Leichhardt Council, gave new impetus to the efforts of Baldwin, Crawford and others in the branch’s Left. As Peter Baldwin pointed out:

Post 1975, post the Kerr Dismissal etc, it was extremely easy in the several years after that event to recruit people into the Labor Party

³⁹ Minutes of the Balmain Branch 10/11/75. Photocopies of minutes from November 1975 to October 1976 located in NSW ALP Credentials Committee files, 1967-1978, *ALPR MLMSS*, 5095/481. Stan Hoy was one of those nominally ‘new middle class’ people who was nonetheless connected to the Right. A graduate in commerce, teacher and former Methodist Minister, his running mate was Don Allen, another ‘middle class Right’ member, also Commerce graduate and friend of Hoy’s. Allen was a former teacher and Teachers’ Federation Organiser who became a personnel officer with waterfront employers at White Bay. Both Hoy and Allen were in many senses ‘on the outer’ from the dominant Right grouping in the municipality led by mayor Les Rodwell and deputy mayor Dan Casey. See *The Link*, 4/8/71, p 1; recorded interview with Don Allen and Valda Allen, April 1999. The other Ward Alderman from Balmain from 1974 to 1977 was Nick Origlass.

because as well as being able to mobilise people against the corrupt local machine you also had a ready willingness on people's part to get in. You had that residual anger over the 1975 events and people were quite ready to join up and support the Labor party.⁴⁰

The focus on the "local machine" in 1976 began to swing largely around the attempt by the Right wing council to bring in an amended town plan that would have undone the work of the previous 'outline town plan' that was approved in the dying days of the 1971-1974 council. The amended town plan would have allowed for higher population densities and the returned threat of high-rise flat development. The amendments would have opened the municipality up to development generally with impacts on historical preservation, waterfront land and traffic loads. Mayor Les Rodwell defended the new proposals in terms of bringing benefits of development to the municipality and halting population decline. He criticised the previous plan as having emanated from a council that was "dominated by people who had been expelled from the Labor movement and so-called independents".⁴¹

Rodwell's proposals to increase planning densities and flat development were to be modified by the State Planning Authority but the issue saw a major petition and campaign by residents. About 200 people forced the doors of the council chambers and invaded a closed meeting between the council and State Planning Authority (SPA) officers. The Left within the Balmain branch pushed the issue. They succeeded in forcing a special meeting in May 1976, attended by Rodwell, at which the Mayor was challenged over the plan. The branch carried a resolution, by 25 votes to five, that the proposed 1976 amendments were "not in the interests of the ALP and residents" and requested the NSW ALP Administrative

⁴⁰ Peter Baldwin. The Annandale Branch also saw a surge in members in the aftermath of the dismissal, independent of any recruiting campaign.; see Annandale branch Roll Books, ALPR. See also Minutes of the Balmain Branch, 12/1/76, Credentials Committee, ALPR and Head Office Correspondence with Balmain Branch, 1974-76 ALPR, *ML MSS*, 5095/53.

⁴¹ Solling and Reynolds, *Leichhardt*, pp 244-247. A copy of mayor Les Rodwell's submission to the new Labor state planning minister Harry Jensen, defending the 1976 amended plan, is located in Graham Richardson's papers, ALPR, *ML MSS*, 5095/299. See also, Leichhardt in Turmoil, leaflet distributed to 1976 NSW State Conference of the ALP, signed by Peter Baldwin, Peter Crawford, Peter Tiernan, Max Pierce, Susan Tweedy, Penny Jools, Robyn Floyd and Al Svirskis, copy in records of Disputes Committee, 1977, ALPR *ML MSS* 5095/489.

Committee to direct Leichhardt Municipal caucus to hold a referendum on the plan. Later in the year, the Left within the branch also pushed for the withdrawal of ALP endorsement from Leichhardt ALP local candidates for the 1977 municipal elections.⁴²

Baldwin, Crawford and their supporters also distributed a leaflet entitled “Leichhardt In Turmoil” at the State Conference of the ALP, held during the June, 1976, long-weekend. The town planning proposals and their “obscure” modifications were attacked as posing a threat to the “historical atmosphere, architectural styles, scenery, social life and general residential qualities” that had made the area “one of the finest in Sydney”. The leaflet also drew attention to other policies that had brought the local Party into disrepute. This included cutting back on tree planting, threatening to sell or demolish town halls, destroying public participation in council decision-making, attempting to prevent the Communist Party from renting council owned halls and supporting the establishment of a conservative Christian, and anti-abortion, Festival of Light Centre in the municipality. The leaflet commented on the general “crudities in speech and manner” that characterised behaviour on council, particularly that of the pugilistic deputy mayor, Danny Casey. The distribution of the leaflet was accompanied by demonstrations by ALP members and residents at the Conference.⁴³

Elections held for branch officers in February 1976 had resulted in the Right retaining control. Branch president Jean Wakefield, who was also president of the Balmain Hospital Board, beat off left challengers Ed Walker and Harry Bauer. Tony Geoghan defeated Peter Crawford for secretary by 82 to 33. Most of the conflict in the branch was, like Annandale, led by men. There are few references in the minutes for this period of women moving or seconding resolutions. However it is clear that women were making up a strong proportion

⁴² Minutes of Balmain Branch, 3/5/76 and 9/8/76; Solling and Reynolds, *Leichhardt*, p 246; ‘Council Accepts Town Plan’, *The Link*, 28/7/76, p 1; ‘Melee at Council Meeting’, *The Link*, 4/8/76, p 3.

⁴³ *Leichhardt in Turmoil*. See also *The Leichhardt Local*, 22/6/76 which included photographs of the demonstrations. *Leichhardt Local* photographer Roy Garner, (who was an ALP member in Glebe) plus the authors of *Leichhardt in Turmoil* were all reprimanded by the Right-dominated head office for bringing these issues into the public domain, Disputes Committee *ALPR*.

of the new applicants. A list of names included in the minutes for September 1976 showed seven women applicants out of 16. But women's activism in the branch was well established before this. In July 1975 a meeting described by the Balmain local newspaper, *The Link*, as being "mainly attended by women" had "grilled" the Mayor of Leichhardt, Les Rodwell, for two hours over council's decision to refuse to set up a Women's Needs Committee as an International Women's Year initiative. The meeting rejected an offer by the mayor to talk with Margaret Whitlam, who had just returned from the International Women's Conference in Mexico, and instead carried the following resolution (20 votes to five):

The Balmain branch wishes to register a protest at the cavalier manner in which ALP members of the Leichhardt Municipal Council shelved the International Women's Year submission for a Women's Needs Committee to report to Council on necessary activities and facilities to promote the welfare of women in this area. We call upon the Municipal Caucus to reverse this decision at the earliest opportunity.⁴⁴

During 1976 and 1977 the tension between the factions in the Balmain branch increased. Interviews with women reveal that they were present and keenly involved. Ann Catling, for example, was a door-keeper in October 1977, the night of the 'fire extinguisher incident'. However there is also a sense in which women were to be marginalised by the male violence that was to give the Balmain branch its notoriety. The increasingly threatening atmosphere had a perverse sexist element in that Left women were not so directly targeted by the increasingly hostile and threatening behaviour by Right males. Mary Jerram was not as involved or outspoken in these, her early years, as an ALP member and recalled that "the old right used to ignore you really, especially if you were a girl". However Susan Tweedy recalled the changing atmosphere as the tension rose, particularly among rank-and-file Right males when "they were starting to lose and they were starting to get scared". This

⁴⁴ 'Mayor Cops Roasting: Grilled by Women', *The Link*, 17/7/75, p 1. See also report on council's attitude to the IWY proposal in *The Glebe Society Bulletin*, No 7, 1975. Balmain was of course one of the major sites of activity for women in the women's movement. Marilyn Lake in *Getting Equal*, pp 258-259, describes a meeting of around 200 women in Balmain Town Hall, in January 1975 which took the federal government, and its advisers like Liz Reid, to task over IWY funding priorities.

was perhaps because of her close relationship to one of the key Left protagonists, Peter Crawford:

I do remember to this day receiving quite a few derogatory comments... just really crass. "You fuck that bloke with that sort of head on him do you?" and that sort of thing. And it got to the stage where none of us could walk past The Cricketers' Arms; we'd cross the road. The sheer straight personal sort of abuse that would be levelled, even in terms of what you looked like.⁴⁵

The precursor to the violent incident of December 1976 was the November meeting, which was visited by deputy mayor Casey, and a number of his associates thought to be from the Rozelle East branch. This was the branch that shared the Balmain peninsula, occupying the Rozelle end, north-east of Victoria Road. Rozelle East branch was at the heart of the allegations of 'rotting' within the municipality. Its membership, which swelled to 270 prior to its restructuring in 1980 (in the aftermath of the bashing of Peter Baldwin) was seen by Baldwin and the Left as essentially bogus, with rigged records. Earlier in 1976, Casey had been implicated in a violent incident at a meeting of the Sydney FEC.⁴⁶

Casey had attended the November 1976 meeting of the Balmain branch with the apparent intention of disrupting the meeting and forcing a situation where it would be adjourned. This would have frustrated the credentialing of new members and influenced the outcome of the branch elections in the new year. The method of disruption, apart from a threatening physical presence of himself and his supporters, was the usual one of interjection, though their appearance on the page understates the overall disruptive effect. One of his favourites

⁴⁵ Susan Tweedy. See also Mary Jerram and Ann Catling. Women became more active in branch executive positions after the Left took power in early 1978 but mainly in the Assistant Secretary or Treasurer positions. As with Annandale, women's involvement in executive positions increased in the 1980's.

⁴⁶ See letter, 7/12/76 from Peter Baldwin and Rod Cavalier, outlining irregularities in the Rozelle East branch, together with a response by its Secretary, Vic Sliteris, in the records of the Credentials Committee 1967-78, *ALPR*. See the papers of Graham Richardson, 1980, *ALPR*, MLMSS 5095/294 concerning his friendship with Casey as well as Wilkinson, M., *The Fixer: The untold story of Graham Richardson*, William Heinemann, Melbourne, 1996, Ch. 6. See also *Abuse of Power: The Crisis in NSW Labor*, pamphlet by the ALP Membership Defence Committee, April 1982, pp 3-4; Solling and Reynolds, *Leichhardt*, pp 247-248. Charges against Casey over the incident at Sydney FEC in June 1976 were dismissed by the State ALP Disputes Committee, see 'Balmain ALP member may be expelled', *The Link*, 3/11/76, p3.

apparently was to enquire of speakers “who’s that goose” but others directed at speakers during the meeting included: “shut up”, “you’re mad”, or “he/she is an idiot”. According to Cecily Rennard, who reported these remarks in a statement to the NSW ALP Organising and Branch Boundaries Committee enquiry into the December violence, these comments were backed up by “at least four or five tall, strongly built young men” who would “move forward in a threatening manner”.⁴⁷

Tony Avenall, Teachers’ Federation Organiser and one of the most prominent Left activists in the branch at this time was used to the “rough and tumble” of debate and “spirited heckling” in his union and had been a member of the ALP since 1963. However he considered Casey and his supporters’ behaviour was aimed at intimidating members of the branch and that the branch officers conducted the branch meetings with “scant regard” for procedure. He himself had been called “goldilocks”, he was actually greying, and “a long-haired poofter” while speaking at the November meeting. Avenall argued that because the Left had the numbers at this meeting, Casey was not able to get an adjournment.⁴⁸

The violence at the December meeting broke out when an attempt was being made by the Left to censure Casey for his behaviour at the previous meeting. As was normal, December and January were the busiest ‘ticketing’ months in the branch. The smaller meeting room downstairs in the Balmain Town Hall was crowded and the night was hot. While the meeting was under way a line of members were attempting to take out their annual tickets with the Secretary, Tony Geoghan, at the front of the room. The various statements in the Organising and Branch Boundaries Committee report vary but there are common threads. Apparently a member tried to push into the line at the front. It would be argued by some that he was attempting to get his pregnant wife into the line so that she would not have to

⁴⁷ This and other statements by branch members, providing a good picture of the of the incident at the December 1976 meeting and its lead up, are contained in the reports of the Organising and Branch Boundaries Committee, 1974-1984, *ALPR*, MLMSS 5095/480

⁴⁸ Organising and Branch Boundaries Committee, *ALPR*. Members of the ALP were permitted to visit other branches and with the permission of the branch, speak, but they could not vote. This did not stop Casey who, according to several accounts in these records, tried to participate in the vote to adjourn the meeting.

wait long, though this, according to some who saw the incident, was not the case. A member in the line, Richard Harland, complained to the chair about people pushing in. The member who had pushed in turned and by some accounts spat in the complainant's face, by another account, bit him on the cheek. However this altercation was eclipsed when Alan Rogers, sitting at the back of the hall, and in all probability unable to see what was actually happening, interjected. He commented, jokingly, along the lines that "that's not a pregnant woman it's a beer belly". The person associated with the beer belly/pregnant woman took exception and grabbed Rogers, others intervened and a fight broke out. The memory of this altercation, as it became committed to paper by various witnesses, reflected the political leanings within the branch.⁴⁹

Don Allen, who was assistant secretary, was helping with the ticketing procedure and played down the incident, arguing that the fight did not involve many and only lasted for a half to one minute. He went on to say that "in no way did I consider that the incident was premeditated – it happened in the heat of the moment". However Geoff Cooke emphasised the aggressive behaviour of the person who had pushed into the line. Concerned the incident might get out of hand, and that people would be hurt, he tried to leave the hall and bring the police from the station next door. He was caught outside and beaten by two men while a third held him against the wall. Cooke argued that he was "convinced that this disruption to the meeting was premeditated. It did not arise from events in the meeting and it is misleading to call it a 'brawl'".⁵⁰

J.E. Rooney emphasised that "a man and his *very* pregnant wife" were quietly discussing the possibility of entering the queue when "a voice from the back of the queue then made the most disgusting statement that I have ever heard: IT LOOKS LIKE A BEER GUT TO ME". Rooney went on to say that he did "not blame the man for being outraged by this remark" and that "rightly or wrongly he lunged at the person concerned and a brawl

⁴⁹ Organising and Branch Boundaries Committee, *ALPR*.

⁵⁰ Organising and Branch Boundaries Committee, *ALPR*.

ensued". Ralph Catts of the Left on the other hand pursued the 'beer belly line', arguing that he had seen "a man of medium height and moderate build with a prominent beer gut" push into the queue. Catts argued that the provocation was deliberate. This was evidenced, he said, by the behaviour of the beer-bellied man, the people waiting outside to prevent people seeking police intervention, the intervention of others in the brawl and the timing of the incident as a censure motion against Casey was being put to the branch.⁵¹

These and other accounts present a mixture of the disturbing and the comic, the spontaneous and the pre-meditated. Crawford managed to leave the meeting and returned "accompanied by constables". The branch president adjourned the meeting over the protests of the Left, preventing some members from getting their membership tickets. Several of the Left members caught up in the melee, including Rogers required hospital treatment. The political outcome was that for the next year an uneasy stasis would exist in the branch. Head Office response to the incident was to implement a 'power sharing' arrangement where the Left was given the branch presidency (Jim Rennard) and the Right retained the key position of secretary (Geoghan) with a Left assistant secretary, Tom Foley. However the stacking and counter-stacking continued and the conflict would come to a head again in October 1977.⁵²

One of the most interesting submissions to the Party enquiry into the December 1976 incident was that by P.P. McGuinness. McGuinness would go on to hold a position of vice-president in the branch after the Left took control in early 1978, and his home was frequently the venue for Left, after-meeting gatherings. His account of the events was accompanied by a detailed, seven-page, assessment of the political situation in the branch. McGuinness confirmed that the changes taking place in the branch reflected the changing social structure in Balmain and were accelerated "both because of Labor's term of office in Canberra and because of its loss of office". While criticising the local, Leichhardt Council

⁵¹ Organising and Branch Boundaries Committee, *ALPR*.

based, Right machine of being “careless and corrupt” he nonetheless acknowledged the role of this machine in providing for “upwards social mobility or at least income mobility amongst the traditional inner-suburban working class”. Newer residents, he argued, “especially young and prosperous property/mortgage holders” had other opportunities for upward mobility, largely through their education and the prospect of good jobs.⁵³

McGuinness went on to give a break-down of the diverse branch membership that was opposed to the incumbent Right leadership of the branch. It was, he said, an “amorphous collection” of people of “Labor sympathies” from other branches or rejoining, “schoolteachers, who in some cases are actually employed by the Teachers’ Federation” and “other beneficiaries of the Labor government in Canberra who wish to continue to live in the style to which they were rapidly becoming accustomed”. There were also “a large number of students, bohemians and like minded people who identify to a greater or lesser extent with varying brands of ‘Leftism’” as well as “quite a few” older members who abhorred the incumbent executive, or had some sort of commitment to socialism. There was also “a small number of people who are disproportionately active and influential” and associated with the wider Left-Right conflict within the ALP. McGuinness summarised this branch opposition by saying that “the great majority of the opposition faction would identify with the ‘left’ and indeed tend to vote with it but have no real knowledge of, or organisational connexion with it”.⁵⁴

Notwithstanding any complexities within the opposition, the polarisation within the branch continued throughout 1977 with the stacking and counter-stacking reaching its height by the time of the October meeting. At one meeting the Right brought about 70 new applicants, at the next, the Left brought over 100 and the Right retaliated with what Crawford called a “crook list” of 300 names (ultimately overruled by Head Office). The

⁵² Organising and Branch Boundaries Committee, *ALPR*. ‘ALP Orders Clean-up: Leichhardt Aldermen told hands off branch’, *The Link*, 16/3/77.

⁵³ Organising and Branch Boundaries Committee, *ALPR*. See also Peter Crawford.

⁵⁴ Organising and Branch Boundaries Committee, *ALPR*.

October meeting was held in the main, upstairs, hall of Balmain Town Hall to accommodate the hundreds present. What happened next became one of the legends of the fights for control of the inner-city branches and here again we see the collectivised and contested nature of political memory. As Rod Madgwick recalled the event he pointed out that “to tell the truth, it’s very difficult to know what are my recollections and what are other people’s that have been hashed over”. Several of those interviewed recalled the event and confirm in general detail, the version told by Crawford, albeit a version, like many, that seems to have the refinement of a tale well told. According to Crawford the incident occurred just near the beginning of the meeting when a cry of “bullshit” interrupted proceedings:

and then another one at the back of the room came “bullshit” then another one from the side “bullshit” and everyone seemed terrified by this. There were three hundred people at the meeting and three hundred people were just terrorised by what could have been no more than four people [Crawford explained that the chair, Jim Rennard later recalled it was about eight people]. Then it was so quick, the lights went out. We were in total darkness in the upstairs part of Balmain Town Hall, the doors appeared to be locked ... and then what appeared to be a shot-gun blast was heard and what it was somebody pounding a fire extinguisher through the upstairs window.⁵⁵

The fire extinguisher also made a noise as it hit the footpath in Darling Street, just as one branch member, Peter Newton was crossing the road. Injury or death to a pedestrian had been a possibility. In the darkness, the books of the branch, in Geoghan’s briefcase, disappeared. The light switch panel had been pulled off the wall so the meeting adjourned to the Methodist Hall nearby. The Methodist minister, Ron Page, was a member of the branch and two Party officials, Bruce Childs (Left) and Seamus Dawes (Right) were summoned to ‘sign off’ on the attendance sheet. This, along with the Left assistant secretary of the branch, Tom Foley, keeping a second set of branch minutes for the year,

⁵⁵ Peter Crawford. Mary Jerram, Rod Madgwick, and Alan Rogers were among those who recounted the event. Crawford and Geoghan’s original written accounts of the incident, together with Geoghan’s account of the December 1976 incident, are located in Head Office Correspondence with Balmain Branch, ALPR, MLMSS, 5095/57.

and the general flurry of bad publicity for the ALP over the incident, meant that the attempt to prevent Left control over the branch failed. Like the bashing of Peter Baldwin three years later, it was an act that produced the opposite of its intention. In the branch elections in early 1978, the Left assumed control.⁵⁶

Refining the Art.

By the time of the October 1977 meeting, Peter Baldwin was a member of the state upper house, the Legislative Council and had moved on from Balmain. For a time he tried to renovate the Pyrmont-Denison branch, home branch of Sydney City Council power-broker, Sid Fegen. When this proved to be a Herculean task, Baldwin moved to Marrickville and became involved there. He was elected to the Legislative Council in 1976 under the old method of election by both houses of state parliament and was able to use what was then a part-time position as a base for branch stacking. Crawford would later join the staff of deputy premier Jack Ferguson, also as effectively a paid organiser for the Left. However one initiative which they had both undertaken in 1976 would help shore up their political power base, and to a certain extent counter the allegation that they were just pre-occupied with the numbers.

This was the setting up of a factional newspaper, *Challenge*, which circulated among the ALP Left of the Labor Party. Baldwin and Crawford approached a member of the Glebe North branch, Les Carr who was working on a local newspaper, *The Leichhardt Local* (see chapter four). *Challenge* got under way initially with Carr as the full-time worker producing the paper and Crawford looking after subscriptions and donations to keep it afloat. Rodney Cavalier was one of the supporters of the paper. The paper was set up as a company to keep it independent of the Steering Committee establishment. When the first edition came off the press in October 1976, one of the group, in the middle of the night, put

⁵⁶ Recorded interview with Peter Newton, 1/12/99. Tony Geoghan, Peter Crawford, Peter Baldwin.

a copy under the door of Left Assistant General Secretary, Bruce Childs. The statement of objectives in the first edition pointed out the aim of the paper was to remedy the situation where “one of the more depressing features of the NSW Branch of the ALP” was that there was a “lack of genuine debate over policies between the various factional groupings”. It went on to note that “disputes have tended to be over questions involving the interpretation of rules, preselection ballot outcomes and so on”. The paper was to provide a fairly wide-ranging debate of policy issues through until it ‘ran out of steam’ in 1985. At the outset at least, the founders endeavoured that it should not just be a mouthpiece for Steering Committee politicians. Its ability to cover a wide range of issues also owed itself to Carr, who tried to keep the paper away from the internal divisions within the Steering Committee. According to Baldwin, the Steering Committee establishment gradually accommodated themselves to the paper.⁵⁷

Meanwhile, in Leichhardt Municipality, the attempts to break the hold of the Right on the branches continued. The Left’s take-over in Balmain occurred not long after the Leichhardt municipal elections of September 1977. Stan Hoy and Don Allen of the Right had defeated two candidates seen as closer to the Casey machine in the preselection, and contested the Balmain Ward at the local elections. They were defeated and Origlass was re-joined by Wyner on the Council. As explained in chapter two, the Labor Right held Lilyfield, Rozelle, Glebe and one position in Leichhardt. The Left’s Rocks and Kelly were elected in Annandale and aligned themselves with Leichhardt’s Evan Jones. The position of the Left in the 1977 caucus could have been stronger if Jock Roxborough’s preselection as a candidate for Leichhardt had not been overturned. This situation in the Leichhardt branch was to make it the next prime target for recruiting.

Jock and Ann Roxborough had transferred into the Leichhardt branch in 1976. They had both originally joined the Homebush branch in 1973, not long after returning from

⁵⁷ Recorded interview with Les Carr, 12/8/99. See also Peter Baldwin and *Challenge* October 1976 and later editions. A paper under the name *Challenge* still comes out occasionally, as the organ of the ALP Socialist

overseas. Both were inspired to join the Labor Party in order to rally to the Whitlam government. Jock had originally come from a socialist family background. His mother's family were immigrant Scots and coalminers who settled in Lithgow and his father had been a 'Geordie' and a member of the Labour Party. Jock's politics mainly developed as a teacher through activity in the Teachers' Federation and experience through country schools in the late sixties. Ann Roxborough came from a family that was not as political. Brought up in Broken Hill, her father was a mine manager though her family voted Labor. It was the Whitlam government and her involvement in the inner-city Labor politics that was her political awakening.⁵⁸

In 1977, there was a knock on the Roxborough's front door. Bill Dougherty, the local Labor Alderman, asked for signatures to his nomination for Party preselection for the next council elections. Jock Roxborough "had a blue" with him and their dog Minnie, who normally loved people, bit Dougherty. As explained in chapter two, Dougherty had been elected as part of the CBC team from Leichhardt Ward in 1971 but as the CBC split he sided with the Rodwell-Casey Labor Right. Re-elected in 1974 he was admitted to the ALP and imposed on the Leichhardt branch. This must have upset some Labor traditionalists in the Leichhardt branch, including Evan Jones. Jones was a foreman/estimator with the public works department and branch president and had stood as the endorsed Labor candidate against Dougherty in Leichhardt Ward in 1974. The Roxboroughs had already come across Dougherty's name in Homebush. He actually lived out there, not in the Leichhardt ward he represented, and was felt to be of Liberal sympathies. Hence Jock's reaction to his request for nomination.⁵⁹

Left.

⁵⁸ Recorded interview with Ann Roxborough and Jock Roxborough, 7/7/00.

⁵⁹ Ann and Jock Roxborough. Evan Jones did have a fairly conservative side to his politics. As part of his, and running mate Ron Eagles', municipal campaign in 1974 he argued for the location of a Festival of Light Centre in Leichhardt. This was in direct opposition to the Whitlam government funded Leichhardt Women's Health Centre. A copy of the 'how to vote' with this proposal is in the writer's papers.

Jock Roxborough went to see Jones and asked him who was going to run against Dougherty in the preselections. Jones replied “you” and both he and Jones contested the ballot. The vote was close with Jones and Roxborough winning on the first ballot. However, as explained in chapter two, Head Office overturned the result and Jones and Dougherty won a second ballot and the Party’s endorsement. Jock Roxborough was glad in retrospect that he wasn’t elected as he, along with Jones, Kelly and Rocks would have been in the caucus minority. But as Ann Roxborough jokingly pointed out “you don’t cross the Roxboroughs” and in the next three years, she and Jock became more involved in the local area and joined the Leichhardt-Lilyfield Association. Jock met Bill Hume from Annandale and Hume took him to meet Origlass and Wyner and gave them “a tremendous amount of information on the locality”. They also became close friends with Evan Jones.⁶⁰

The Leichhardt branch was a small and conservative branch but fairly honestly administered and, prior to 1977, was outside the main attentions of the Rodwell-Casey machine. Its secretary was Violet Sherden. In the aftermath of the Balmain victory and with the political situation developing in the branch, Peter Crawford turned his attention to it and linked up with the Roxboroughs. According to Jock, Leichhardt turned from being a “backwater” to being “the centre of the conflict”. Ann acknowledged that “Peter Crawford was the driving force in building the branch in Leichhardt”. She was pregnant with their first child at the time and went out with Crawford driving around looking for doors, or cars out the front of houses, with political stickers, such as those with ‘anti-uranium’ slogans. They would knock on a door and Crawford would “tell them the story of what a drastic situation we had with the current council and how things needed to be changed and the only way they were going to be changed would be for people to join the local Labor Party and have a voice”. Ann would make a point of saying to people “I’ll be there [at the branch

⁶⁰ Ann and Jock Roxborough. See Leichhardt Branch Minutes, 6/7/77 and 20/7/77, ALPR, MLMSS 5095/718.

meeting], I'll look out for you". Ann and Jock Roxborough were also able to recruit from their associates in the Leichhardt-Lilyfield Association.⁶¹

The recruitment into the branch mainly developed through 1979. For a branch which rarely had a meeting attendance greater than thirty throughout the seventies, the attendance rose to a peak of 84 at the October 1979 meeting. At the following year's AGM, the Left took control, with lawyer Anna Katzmann as secretary. According to Crawford, the task in Leichhardt had been a lot easier than in Balmain, only requiring the recruitment of about fifty people. The situation in the branch had also sharpened in the context of the 1979 planning scheme under IDO 27, which promised to revive the higher density proposals of the 1976 plan (see above and chapters two and five). This not only helped to galvanise a new wave of people into the ALP but was also part of the developing situation on council. As mentioned in chapter two, Evan Jones, along with Kelly and Rocks from Annandale, was challenging the Right. The chief Right protagonist in the branch at this time was the 'likeable rogue', Bill Donaldson. He had transferred back into Leichhardt from Annandale, where he had been a thorn in the side of the Left there in 1977. However his counter-recruitment was only able to contribute to a delay in the Left takeover.⁶²

Leichhardt was to become one of the key branches along the Balmain-Leichhardt ridge. It was a key support base for Peter Baldwin and Peter Crawford in their respective campaigns for parliamentary seats and was significant because of Roxborough's role on Leichhardt Council from 1980 to 1984. It was also to be the home branch of Kate Butler, who, with husband Barry, moved from Lane Cove to Leichhardt at the beginning of the eighties. Kate Butler worked as the librarian at Leichhardt primary school. She had already been active in the Labor Party in Lane Cove and in the NSW ALP, Labor Women's Committee. She had attended the International Women's Conference in Mexico City in 1975 and was president

⁶¹ Ann and Jock Roxborough. See also Minutes for the Leichhardt Branch for the period 1974 to 1980, *ALPR*.

⁶² Peter Crawford. See also Minutes and Attendance Book, Leichhardt Branch, *ALPR*. See chapter two above concerning the minority Right disruption of the Annandale branch between 1974 and 1980.

of Labor Women's Committee from 1979 until the NSW ALP abolished it in 1986. In 1987 she would be elected to Leichhardt Council.⁶³

The remaining branches along the ridge were located in Lilyfield and Rozelle and were the foundation of the Rodwell/Casey machine on council. Lilyfield was Rodwell's home branch and its Secretary was Jack Degen, father of state member for Balmain, Roger Degen. He was a less likeable 'rogue' who, like Bill Donaldson, had a reputation for visiting other branches to disrupt meetings. In Lilyfield, a friend and associate of Baldwin and Crawford, Jim O'Brien, was involved in trying to recruit members but was running up against Degen's obstruction. O'Brien and his associates in the branch, Geoff Sim and Adrian Heber, initiated eleven disciplinary charges with Head Office against Degen and other branch officers between November 1979 and July 1980. These related to obstruction of new members joining. O'Brien described the branch as "the Fawltly Towers branch of the ALP", and cited reasons given by Degen or other officers when obstructing new members as including: "We don't want women in this branch", "There are no vacancies at this time" and to a 26 year old applicant, "fancy joining the ALP at your age".⁶⁴

Rozelle East was to be the centre of attention for allegations of 'rorting' of branch records. Al Svirskis and Robyn Floyd had been members of the branch since moving into the area in the early seventies. Both school teachers, and activists in the Teachers' Federation, they mainly concentrated, along with a few other allies in the branch on keeping an 'eye on things' while the stacking conflicts went on in Balmain and elsewhere. In Rozelle East the problem wasn't stacking but the fact that the branch claimed huge numbers of members even though few turned up to meetings. The situation in the branch had worsened after the death of former state ALP minister and branch secretary, Jack McMahon and his replacement by a fiercely anti-communist Lithuanian-Australian, Vic Sliteris. This was around the time that Les McMahon won the preselection for the federal seat of Sydney,

⁶³ See chapter seven below. Also see recorded interview with Kate Butler, June 1999 and *Rats in the Ranks*.

replacing former House of Representatives Speaker, Jim Cope. While branch meetings were usually short, they were so unpleasant that, just before Peter Baldwin was beaten up, Robyn Floyd was going to meetings only to keep up her ‘three meetings’ to qualify to vote in preselections. Crawford argued that it had become “physically dangerous” to go to meetings at the branch.⁶⁵

As it turned out this fear was not unreasonable. The potentially fatal bashing of Peter Baldwin in his house in Marrickville occurred in the aftermath of reports on ‘rorting’ in Rozelle East and in branches in the Marrickville area. This was related to the probability that Rozelle East ‘members’ would be transferred into Marrickville to influence preselections there. The assault and its aftermath swept away the power of the Rodwell-Casey machine. Casey himself resigned from the Party and the NSW ALP was forced to address concerns over the ‘rorting’ of branches. The Lilyfield and Rozelle East branches were restructured which meant that they were taken over by Head Office administrators and their membership and applicants fully credentialled. The assault saved Rocks, Kelly and Jones from major disciplinary action for their caucus breaches (see chapter two). It also prepared the ground for Left control of Leichhardt Council and for the ‘Two Peters’ to reap a Parliamentary reward: Baldwin in the federal seat of Sydney and Crawford in the state seat of Balmain.⁶⁶

The assault also gave Peter Baldwin’s name to the network of young activists and recruiters in Leichhardt municipality and elsewhere, the term that Keating used so contemptuously in his 1981 ‘basket weavers’ speech: the ‘Baldwinites’. It also marked the re-affirmation of

⁶⁴ Details of the charges by O’Brien and others are in the papers of Graham Richardson, *ALPR*, *MLMSS* 5095/297. See also *The National Times* of February 10-16, 1980, pp 29-32.

⁶⁵ Recorded interview with Robyn Floyd and Al Svirskis, 3/7/99; Peter Crawford. See also Wilkinson, M., *The Fixer*, Chs 6-9; Cumming, *Mates*, pp 246-276, Solling and Reynolds, *Leichhardt* p 248. The small Rozelle Branch, to the West of Victoria Road was sandwiched between Lilyfield and Rozelle East. The home branch of state member Roger Degen, it did not play a major part in the recruitment struggles along the Balmain-Leichhardt ridge.

the practice of ‘branch-stacking’ as vital part of Party life. The term itself of course is somewhat pejorative (as opposed to ‘recruitment’), and Baldwin and his associates grappled with the ambiguities of the practice in these terms:

For a considerable period of time, probably since the party’s inception, factions in the Labor Party have sought to strengthen their position by the recruitment of people of a like viewpoint as to the direction the party should take. It has become a standard method of political contestation ... On the face of it, the recruitment of new members to the party should have a strengthening, rather than weakening effect ... But there are undoubtedly some cases where the pejorative term ‘stacking’ is appropriate. This would include instances ... where a pecuniary reward is used to entice people to join; or where people are misled as to the purpose of their joining; or where there is ‘book doctoring’ to produce fraudulent attendance records. In general, though, recruitment done on a bone fide political basis, even if a major motive is factional advantage, probably has beneficial effects for the party.⁶⁷

An *esprit de corps* had developed among the recruiters, which would carry through into other areas in the eighties. John Faulkner and Sandra Nori would have great success in Glebe in the early eighties (see chapter seven). Sheree Waks was to start out her life in the ALP in the early eighties door-knocking the whole of the Pyrmont-Ultimo area in an attempt to recruit people to the Pyrmont-Denison branch. She would go on to be a key player in Peter Crawford’s campaign for the state seat of Balmain in 1983. This included recruiting people into the Stanmore branch, which was in the Balmain electorate. She went through the electoral roll and selected people by occupations, which the rolls then indicated. She targeted people like “teachers and lawyers” who were seen as more likely to support the Left. Waks would make up lists of names, street by street, and her record was recruiting 13 people into the ALP in one night. Later she would spend some time as a paid recruiter on the staff of Peter Baldwin, when he became federal member. Apart from the established method of getting people to sign “Labor supporters against uranium” petitions

⁶⁶ See papers of Graham Richardson, *ALPR*, MLMSS 5095/294, 297,299; Disputes Committee 1980, *ALPR*, MLMSS 5095/491. Wilkinson, *The Fixer*, Ch 9; Cumming, *Mates*, pp 264-267, Solling and Reynolds, *Leichhardt*, p 248.

she revealed another technique of recruitment. This was to take down the number plates of cars with particular political stickers and then use a state Labor minister's office to trace the address through the state motor registry.⁶⁸

Peter Baldwin also emphasised the team spirit among the recruiters but also the tensions emerging with others on the Left:

During the height of that branch-stacking period in the inner city we developed a real cadre of people who, you know, branch stacking was their life, this kind of strange life and there was a real *esprit de corps*, you know sort of a contest to see who could recruit the most in a single day and so on. So there was all that, and that's not inconsistent with having a genuine ideological commitment to Left ideas or a capacity to frame policy positions etcetera but there was another group that was sort of not part of that, that was also in the Left and also in the organised Left faction, who tended to look down on the people who do these things as some kind of lesser breed that basically exists to create opportunities. They tended to see themselves as the policy people as against the narrow machine hacks.⁶⁹

Waks characterised this tension which was to emerge in the Steering Committee in the 1980's as being between a "meritocracy" gathering around state Labor minister Frank Walker and the more "practical" branch based recruiters. The latter were aligned with the Fergusons, principally Deputy Premier Jack, and son Laurie. The 'meritocracy' she argued also tended to look down on what were perceived to be some of the more eccentric characters among the recruiters. This would ultimately feed into the conflict between 'hard' and 'soft' sub-factions (respectively) within the Steering Committee, and later Socialist Left, as the eighties progressed.⁷⁰

Baldwin admitted that the recruiters' approach did tend at times to put ideology and policy questions into the background but justified it in these terms:

⁶⁷ *Abuse of Power*, p 13.

⁶⁸ Recorded interview with Sheree Waks, 20/9/99.

⁶⁹ Peter Baldwin.

The ideological stance of ‘the policy first’ if you want to call it; if you look after the policy, the numbers look after themselves was a proposition you would frequently hear. You don’t have to worry about the numbers, get the policy right and the numbers will be fine as a consequence. Well I can say after years, decades, of stuffing around in the Labor Party that that is empirically a false proposition. In fact, if anything the reverse is the case. If you can almost create an organisational machine out of policy thin air and it sort of develops a logic and existence of its own; you know it’s not just the Labor Party that demonstrates that. There’s some of these religious groups that have a real recruiting culture like the Mormons and so forth, they’re the ones that grow at a rate of knots, not the established churches that have refined ideological debates. I mean policy development and formulating policy positions is obviously important in its own right; I mean it’s the *raison d’être* of it all at the end of the day but it is a simple fallacy to imagine that by policy making and putting out policy papers then the numbers automatically come your way. That’s bull-shit.⁷¹

There is no doubt that this approach bore fruit politically in Leichhardt Municipality and helped to generate enormous personal loyalty to the recruiters, principally Crawford and Baldwin. In the latter case, this was also underscored by his own physical suffering. But there was also an element of fragility in the political edifice constructed out of “policy thin air” as Geoff Cooke explained:

I don’t think [Baldwin and Crawford] realised the extent to which people were actually helping them. I think that they were a bit immature about this. They were great recruiters and they were great activists, great branch-stackers. But they were receiving a lot of genuine help from people and I don’t think they fully appreciated it ... They tended to look upon these people who were helping them instrumentally and that meant they looked at those people in narrow terms of their own criteria and they pocketed them [as to] whether they thought they were too Right or too much this or that ... They talked too much about other people, they pigeon-holed them too much, they took them for granted and in the long run those people lost interest in the whole thing. They went into the ALP pretty easily but they came

⁷⁰ Sheree Waks. See also Leigh, A., ‘Factions and Fractions: A Case Study of Power Politics in the Australian Labor Party’, *Australian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 35, No. 3, November 2000, pp 427-448.

⁷¹ Peter Baldwin. When interviewed, Peter Crawford also referred to the example of religious recruiters like the Mormons.

out of it pretty easily. So again I learnt that it's not just enough to stack branches. If you want supporters, you want real supporters, you've got to take care of the social-emotional, if you like, side of those relationships and they didn't. They looked at them instrumentally. They were numbers men you know and those that live by the numbers, die by the numbers.⁷²

⁷² Geoff Cooke.

Chapter 4

GLEBE: ‘... A SORT OF BRIGADOON’?¹

The last of the three ridges dominating the physical topography of Leichhardt Municipality is that running from south-east to north-west and defining the suburb of Glebe. Glebe Point Road runs in this direction from the point on Rozelle and Blackwattle Bays to the boundary of Parramatta Road. Near this latter end, at number 49 Glebe Point Road, is a renovated, two story building housing *Gleebooks*. It is one of the leading bookshops in Sydney and a temple to the literate preoccupations of the middle classes who have come to dominate the political life of the municipality. Near the front door, set into the pavement is a perspex-covered container housing a pair of bronzed boxing gloves. This memorial recognises the building’s prior use. It housed Tom Laming’s ‘Golden Gloves Boxing Gymnasium’ on its upper floor, with Laming’s second hand goods shop, the ‘Dealatorium’ on the ground floor.²

The plaque on the wall near this monument celebrates boxing as “an important part of Glebe’s working class identity and pride”. However there are a number of messages conveyed by the display. In some sense it is a ‘working class identity and pride’ that was vanquished. Laming’s Gym was located in the middle of the large section of rented working class housing that had become known as the Glebe Estate and Tom Laming was active in the local, Glebe ALP branch. He was also a member of the Residents Advisory

¹ This description was applied to the Glebe Estate by Dennis Minogue, ‘For \$17.5 million the Commonwealth Government has bought a sort of Brigadoon’, *The Age*, Saturday Review, 13/4/74. ‘Brigadoon’ was the name of a mythical Celtic (in fact Scottish) village that appeared from the mists of time in the musical and Hollywood movie of that name.

² The artists who created this monument were Ian Lisser Sproule and Nicki Lisser Sproule. See plaque at Gleebooks, 49 Glebe point Road and ‘Street Art Packs a Punch’, *The Glebe*, 10/2/99, p1. See also, Jopson, D, ‘A rebirth is taking place in Sydney’s ring of grey blight’, *The National Times*, 16-22/11/80, pp 42-43.

Committee (RAC) of the Glebe Estate, which represented residents from 1974 to 1985. This was from the time the estate was sold to the federal government, to the time it was taken over by the Housing Department of New South Wales. The original working class 'community' which the federal project was supposed to protect gave way ultimately to old age and the more parsimonious eighties style of 'welfare housing' for the marginalised, reflected in the waiting lists of the state housing department. The bronzed boxing gloves also speak of the pugilistic and conservative male politics that dominated the Glebe Estate and the ALP branches of Glebe well into the eighties, but which ultimately went down to the middle class Left.³

Glebe takes its name from its original purpose: a land grant of 400 acres to provide an income for the first representative of the Church of England in the new Port Jackson Colony, the Reverend Richard Johnson. These lands were broken up by the church corporation in 1828. Some of the smaller lots close to Blackwattle Swamp on the northern side went to entrepreneurs engaged in commercial activities such as distilleries and slaughter-houses, while the larger, more elevated, blocks in Glebe North saw construction of villas for the colony's merchants, officials and professionals. The church retained land at the south-eastern end of Glebe, between what is now St Johns Road and Parramatta Road. This was divided into two parts. St Phillips was the area of land north-east of (what is now) Glebe Point Road and was originally attached to St Phillips church in the city. Bishopthorpe was the area on the other side of Glebe Point Road, so named as the lands of Sydney's first Church of England Bishop. Both of these areas were developed at different times during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries under leases to private developers. It wasn't until the 1960's and 1970's that the church reclaimed full control as landlord over these two areas known as the Glebe Estate. By this time, Glebe as a whole, as with other

³ Jopson, 'A rebirth is taking place'. The relationship between the Glebe Estate and the local ALP is dealt with below in this chapter. The juxtaposition of the memorialised boxing gloves and the restored 'heritage' building housing Gleebooks constitutes an interesting public history site. For discussion of the relationship between memory history and such public history sites and their contested nature, see Glassberg, D., 'Public History and the Study of Memory', *The Public Historian*, Vol. 18, No. 2, Spring 1996, pp 7-23 and subsequent roundtable discussion with various contributors in Vol. 19, No. 2, Spring 1997, pp 31-72.

suburbs in the municipality, was working class with many of the bigger houses divided up into flats and boarding houses. Indeed, from the Depression on, Glebe and in particular St Phillips was seen as “unsavoury” and shared the reputation of many inner city areas as a “slum”.⁴

As one of the early fringe suburbs of Sydney, along with Balmain, Newtown, Redfern and Paddington, Glebe gained municipal government in 1860, one year after Balmain. It retained its own local council until 1948 when amalgamations saw it incorporated into an enlarged City of Sydney. In 1968, a Liberal state government broke up the city and Glebe was attached to Leichhardt Municipality which in 1948 had absorbed Balmain and Annandale. At the local government elections of 1968, three aldermen were returned to Leichhardt Council from Glebe: Greg Johnston, Les McMahon and Horace ‘Doc’ Foley. Each of these represented the three ALP branches of Glebe.⁵

Greg Johnston worked for the City Council and has lived on the Glebe Estate since 1940. Johnston had been brought up in a working class Labor tradition and joined the Glebe branch of the ALP in 1949. He became its secretary in the early fifties and, with the exception of one year, has been its secretary ever since. The Glebe branch, with some boundary variations, approximated to the area of the Glebe Estate (see map in appendix A). Forest Lodge branch took its name from that part of Glebe that had originated in the estate of early Sydney chemist, Albert Foss. Forest Lodge was an area located to the south of the Glebe suburb (see map). The Forest Lodge branch was dominated by the extended family connections of the McMahons and Les McMahon, an official with the Plumbers Union and member of the state ALP Executive, was to go on in 1975 to become the member for the federal seat of Sydney. Both of these branches were to prove difficult for the middle class Left to penetrate. The Glebe branch which was rooted in the demography of the Irish

⁴ Solling and Reynolds, *Leichhardt*, passim; *Glebe Project*, Report of the Department of Housing and Construction, AGPS, 1980, Introduction. See map in appendix A.

Catholic, working class, Estate and the small Forest Lodge branch, presented a wall of obstruction, by McMahon, to any attempts by those not connected, to join. Accordingly, the major, initial, point of contact between the middle class Left and the Right establishment came in Glebe North. The branch encompassed the remaining north-western area of Glebe but included a section of the Glebe Estate. ‘Doc’ Foley was its dominating eminence.⁶

First Contact: Glebe North.

Doc Foley was a medical practitioner and former Langite who had built up political and social connections with the Glebe working class over a long period of time. He had given free medical treatment to the poor during the hard years of the 1930’s and had a liberal attitude to issuing medical certificates to workers. Foley was elected to Glebe Council in 1934 and served as mayor for two years before the council was dismissed, in 1939, over allegations of maladministration. Foley’s role in that council was to be disinterred by the Left in the seventies and used in the struggles inside Glebe North and in the municipality generally.⁷

Before the main tide of the middle class Left began to move into Glebe North branch, there was a more traditional working class Left opposition to Foley’s dominance of the branch.

⁵ Solling and Reynolds, *Leichhardt*, Ch 6 and pp 220-221; Solling, ‘The Labor Party in Inner Sydney’, *Leichhardt Historical Journal*, No. 22, 2000, pp 3-10, 44, passim; Engels, *The Gentrification of Glebe*, pp 417-432. See map and notes, appendix A.

⁶ Solling and Reynolds, *Leichhardt*, pp 220-221 and Ch 20; Solling, ‘The Labor Party in Inner Sydney’, pp 7-10; MacDonnell, F., *The Glebe: Portraits and Places*, Ure Smith, Sydney, 1975, pp 39-44; Engels, *The Gentrification of Glebe*, pp 417-432. Engels has pointed out that the irregular shape of the Forest Lodge branch area owes itself to manipulation of the boundaries in the interests of those controlling the branch. See map in appendix A. Underpinning these connections through the branches was a dominant Catholicism, particularly on the Estate. According to Vince Nash, in a recorded interview, 23/11/99, a significant figure here was Father Roberts of St James parish, Glebe. Also, according to Nash, an important contact point between the Glebe ALP branches were the board meetings of the Homoeopathic Hospital in Glebe Point Road, which key figures from the three branches served on. After the official business was transacted, these would, he argued, become, effectively, inter-branch meetings. See also recorded interview with Greg Johnston, 12/7/99.

Bill Brady who later moved on to Annandale, and to the position of mayor of Leichhardt in the mid-eighties (see chapters two and six), recalled his joining the ALP in Glebe in the late fifties. Brady, an entertainer, had married fellow entertainer Olive ‘Bobby’ Ward in a ‘show wedding’ while on tour in Rockhampton in 1953. After returning to Sydney they went to live with Bobby’s mother in Glebe. Three generations of Wards had lived there. Brady’s decision to join the ALP came as a result of his activism in Actors Equity, a union affiliated to the ALP, and after frequent queries from others in the union as to which branch he belonged to. When he went along to the Glebe North branch meeting, Doc Foley was in the chair. As the point in the meeting arrived at which new members’ applications were to be accepted, Foley indicated that there were none at which point Brady called out “me”. Foley responded “I’ll see you after” and when the meeting finished he took Brady aside and said “I’m sorry Mr Brady, we’re all full up”. Eventually, the ‘credentials’ of Brady’s marriage into a Glebe family and the intervention of a boilermaker, Alf Douglass, got him into the branch. In fact Douglass got “stuck into” Foley at the branch meeting. As Brady pointed out, “I was introduced to the party with a fight”. Brady, later in the sixties, contested the federal seat of Sydney as a Left candidate in opposition to Jim Cope.⁸

It was the proximity of Glebe to Sydney University, and availability of rental housing in the suburb, that provided one of the major bases for inroads of the middle class Left into the ALP in Glebe. Many of those seeking to join the ALP at the end of the sixties and early seventies were students linked to the social movements of the time. Two of these who were to be active in the branch in these early years were Meredith Burgmann and Les Carr. Burgmann had been living at Women’s College during her second and third years at Sydney University and got to know the “drinking experiences” in Glebe; through pubs like the British Lion and Forest Lodge. At the end of 1968 she moved from Women’s College,

⁷ Solling and Reynolds, *Leichhardt*, p 186; Solling, ‘The Labor Party in Inner Sydney’, pp 7-10; Engels, *The Gentrification of Glebe*, pp 424-426; Miles et al, *Labor Crisis Looms in Leichhardt*, p 4.

⁸ Bill Brady. The Glebe ALP branches generally provide proof that not all working class activists were on the Right, while some of the middle class were. Those aligned with the Right included Foley, Charlie Bradley (teacher) and Brian Vaughan (solicitor) in Glebe North and Peter Thom (pharmacist) and Vince Nash (senior public servant) in Glebe branch.

which she had felt was an uncomfortable living environment for anyone with radical political involvement, into a shared house in Dhargan Street Glebe. She, and the rest of her household, were “badgered” to join the ALP by anti-war activist and future Sydney Left bookseller, Bob Gould. Burgmann’s politics reflected the melting pot of ideas of the social movements:

In those days it was easy. I was a Trot and an anarchist and a Maoist and just everything all at once. No-one worried terribly much so long as you were out there active trying to stop the war and trying to oppose apartheid and support land rights and everything. I was certainly an anti-Stalinist; it was the New Left.⁹

Burgmann, like others, ran into the obstructive tactics employed by Foley and the Glebe North administration to keep out “undesirables”. There were delays in having her membership application dealt with by the credentials committee. Then she was accused of being an “Origlassite” and later a “communist”. When she did make it into the branch around 1971 the obstruction of she and others didn’t stop:

They were hilarious meetings because Foley would just refuse to let anyone speak. I always laugh and say I was in the Labor Party for a year and a half before I discovered you were allowed to speak because he just did it like a total tyrant.¹⁰

As with many who sought entry to the ALP, Burgmann had already experienced conflict with the local ALP machine in 1969-70 over the Glebe Home for Aged Men. This home for about fifty old men had passed to the control of Leichhardt Municipality from the City Council in 1968. When the Liberal appointed City Commissioners refused to keep up an undertaking to fund the former city facility, the ALP, Right-dominated, council moved to offload it to a charity. This provoked a revolt by the residents of the home and they were supported and encouraged by the expelled Balmain ALP aldermen on council (Origlass,

⁹ Recorded interview with *Meredith Burgmann*, 4/8/99; *Les Carr*; Engels *The Gentrification of Glebe*, pp 423-426. Engels’ study includes analysis of occupational status of Glebe branches’ membership as well as tabulation of issues discussed at branch meetings. The records of the Glebe North branch have since gone missing and were not available to this writer, though some copies of minutes for some meetings are in the ALPR (see below).

¹⁰ Meredith Burgmann.

Wyner and Graham), unions, Glebe locals in the newly formed Glebe Society and student activists. The issue became one of ‘self-management’; the right of the men to manage the home themselves. The campaign was significant in drawing student activists into the life of the locality:

“support for the old men” was forthcoming from the growing student population of Glebe and gradually led to a wider opposition to the Council by students. This involvement of students in local issues before and at the time of the [1971] Municipal elections was probably to a degree unprecedented.¹¹

Foley and Les McMahon were on the board of the home as well as on council and came under particular pressure. There were allegations of corruption in the administration of the home and fears of a ‘Catholic Plot’ to transfer the property to a Catholic charity or the nearby Catholic school. The public gallery at Leichhardt Council was packed by protesters during debate and, according to Burgmann, “they were the most enjoyable demos I’ve ever been involved in because there was never a dull moment”. The issue fed into the general dissatisfaction with the ALP Right-dominated Leichhardt Council and contributed to the election of two CBC independents from Glebe in 1971, Eric Sandblom and David Young. Like many in the ALP Left, Burgmann supported Young and Sandblom though was “a bit on the periphery” of their campaign. Burgmann, like many others, became involved in the Glebe battles to stop planned expressways and came into contact with the BLF. The BLF placed a Green ban on the demolition of houses in Glebe in 1972.¹²

Like Burgmann, Les Carr’s entry into Glebe ALP politics was as a student. He came to Sydney from Tasmania as a post-graduate. He had been involved in the anti-war movement in Tasmania and with a general interest in politics had been thinking of joining the ALP before he came to live in Glebe. Carr joined the Glebe North branch and recalled it as a

¹¹ Miles et al, *Labor Crisis Looms in Leichhardt*, p 9; Meredith Burgmann; Greenland, *Red Hot*, pp 265-272.

¹² Meredith Burgmann; Solling and Reynolds, *Leichhardt*, pp 242-243; Greenland, *Red Hot*, pp 265-272. As Greenland points out the issue of the old men’s home also brought its manager, Len Campbell to the fore. He used a bequest to him by one of the residents to set up *The Glebe* newspaper which attacked the Labor Right

“middle aged” branch; “they lost a whole generation out of the fifties”. He had been encouraged to join by Hayden Thompson and came into contact with Meredith Burgmann and her friends, Jim Coombs and Ross Tzannes, and some of the more traditional working class Left like Bill Brady and Waterside Workers Federation official, Ernie Rowley:

It wasn't a stacking match in those days ... you'd get a few people in but, you know, sort of slack off after a couple of weeks. We had a few barneys to try and pull the Doc into line, just so we'd get a say in the place, set him off, give him a heart attack.¹³

The record of one of these “barney’s” in September and October 1972, the eve of the election of the Whitlam government, again reveals the nature of conflict between the middle class Left and the local Labor Right. The September meeting of the branch ended in uproar. Foley, as branch president, had refused to accept a motion, co-moved by Burgmann, that federal member Jim Cope attend the branch to explain his views on homosexuality, laws against rape, and the liberalisation of laws relating to censorship, abortion, prostitution and gambling. At the subsequent, October meeting, the minutes, and Foley’s summary closure, of the September meeting became the centre of a heated debate. The Left was able to carry a resolution for Foley to be replaced as chair of the meeting by Left member, Roy Garner. In the midst of the debate Foley clashed with Bill Brady and Ernie Rowley. As the Right’s minute-taker, assistant secretary Pat Baker made a taciturn record of the incident:

Chairman, Mr Rowley and Mr Brady became involved in a heated discussion on the activism of certain Trade Unions within the Trade Union movement¹⁴

Council and then subsequently turned on the Origlass led 1971-73 council, swinging his support back to the Labor Right. See also Burgmann and Burgmann, *Green Bans, Red Union*, passim.

¹³ Les Carr. Carr worked for a period in the mid 1970’s producing *The Leichhardt Local*, an initiative originating with the Association for International Cooperation and Disarmament which had wanted an inner city paper as part of a three-pronged initiative including a community centre and ‘political section’ (which became the Transnational Cooperative). The people involved in the paper were inner city, middle class Left and its editor was Peter Manning. In large part set up to oppose *The Glebe* it ran into difficulties with advertising and distribution and survived for 18 months from August 1975. As mentioned in chapter three, Carr went on to work for *Challenge*.

¹⁴ Minutes of the Glebe North Branch, September and October 1972 are located in the Head Office Correspondence with Branches, *ALPR*, *MLMSS* 5095/54.

According to a more colourful account of the meeting in *The Glebe*, no doubt fed by Left informants, this was an attack on the two Left-wing union officials by Foley in which Foley had told Rowley he was “not speaking on the waterfront now”. As *The Glebe* described the meeting:

Amid incredible scenes of political turmoil, the Glebe North Labor branch on Tuesday night kicked out the branch president Dr H J Foley and substituted another chair. During the uproar branch member Tom Whitty, a staunch supporter of Dr Foley, threatened to bring in a friend named ‘darky’ to smash up the meeting.¹⁵

During this temporary takeover of the meetings, Burgmann remembered the Left consulting Nick Origlass whose wry advice was to “have a big bloke next to the minute book and a big bloke next to the lights”. However the Left was not able to sustain control of the branch and carry it through into winning positions as branch officials. Disputes continued through the seventies over conduct of the branch and the failure of the branch officers to provide membership lists to members of the Left contesting branch elections. In the 1975 elections, for example, solicitor Brian Vaughan, replacing Doc Foley for the Right, defeated the Left’s Roy Garner for president, 60 votes to 18. Ivor Cawley, a Glebe alderman after 1974, defeated Jim Coombs for the secretary’s position, 59 to 18.¹⁶

As with Annandale and Balmain, there was a complex link between the local residents association, The Glebe Society, and the middle class Left activists involving themselves in the ALP branches. Meredith Burgmann and Les Carr both eschewed involvement in the Society. Burgmann saw her grouping in the branch as “quite distinct from the Glebe Society group even though obviously we were with them because some of the things that were happening in Glebe were just terrible because of the corrupt Right wing control”. As

¹⁵ *The Glebe*, 5/10/72. Whitty lived on the Glebe Estate and was a key figure in the politics surrounding its Residents Advisory Committee (RAC), see below in this chapter. *The Glebe* at this time was generally supportive of the middle class Left. This however changed as mentioned above.

¹⁶ Head Office Correspondence with Branches, ALPR MLMSS 5095/54; Disputes Committee ALPR MLMSS 5095/489. Evidence in the Head Office correspondence file suggests that the Left were from time to time able to get resolutions through the branch dealing with the Vietnam War (in the early seventies), redevelopment at Wentworth Park and Uranium mining as well as resolutions for State Conference.

Carr saw it “the Glebe Society was sort of in its infancy in 1970 ... apart from those who went out and ran the Campaign for Better Council [in] 71, most of them didn’t want to get involved in party politics”. However through the seventies the involvement of those active in the Glebe Society increased. Among those who were to be active in the society and the ALP were Tony Larkum, Neil Macindoe and Jan Macindoe.¹⁷

Tony Larkum was a Labo(u)r supporter who had emigrated from Britain in 1970. He moved into Glebe in 1973 and joined the ALP there. An environmentalist and biologist, Larkum had participated in anti-war demonstrations in the early seventies. He became involved in the environmental issues concerning Botany Bay and in the eighties was active for a time in the attempt to get an environmental network going in the ALP under the name Green Labor. Larkum was also active in the Glebe Society and became its president in 1978. Another person who became the Society’s president, and was active in the ALP, was Neil Macindoe who, with his wife Jan, bought a house in Glebe in 1975.¹⁸

Both Neil and Jan Macindoe had come from Sydney. Jan Macindoe was brought up in a strong Labor family on a Housing Commission estate in Merrylands and, like many young, working class women in the sixties and seventies was the first person in her extended family to go to university. Neil Macindoe came from a more middle class background but one with a diverse political make-up; his Scottish immigrant grandfather had been a Labor supporter and one of his uncles was a communist and one of the first Australians to visit China after the revolution. Both the Macindoes became teachers, ultimately working in TAFE in NSW, and were active members of the Teachers’ Federation. Both were influenced by the radical politics of the late sixties and early seventies, such as the anti-war movement, women’s movement and radical education politics. Neil had taught in Melbourne in the early seventies at the time of the radical politics of the Victorian

¹⁷ Meredith Burgmann, Les Carr. Recorded interviews with Tony Larkum, 18/5/99 and Jan Macindoe and Neil Macindoe, 5/7/99.

¹⁸ Tony Larkum. Green Labor should not be confused with the earlier Labor Greens which formed in the Annandale ALP in 1983, see chapter seven below.

Secondary Teachers Association. On moving back to Sydney they lived temporarily in Leichhardt and then in Balmain before settling in Glebe and joining the ALP at the Glebe North branch. While in Balmain in 1974 they were involved in supporting Nick Origlass and Issy Wyner in their campaign for council in that year. Neil Macindoe was to contest the municipal elections as a Labor candidate in 1987 and was elected to Leichhardt Council in 1991.¹⁹

The Glebe Society, established in 1969, was similar to the other residents' association that had been formed before it in Paddington and Balmain. Its founders were Bernard and Kate Smith and at the outset the Society was preoccupied with historical preservation and development issues. The Society submitted a plan to control development in the area to Leichhardt Council in 1970, which resulted in the State Planning Authority producing a Glebe study in 1971. The Society was also to play a key role in opposition to the western and north-western expressways which would have devastated Glebe. It also supported the acquisition of the Glebe Estate by the federal government (see below). At the outset the Society sought to cooperate with the ALP Right-dominated council and its first president, art historian Bernard Smith, reported at the 1969 AGM that the society's relationship with the council was good and likely to remain the case.²⁰

However, the Society's relationship with council soured when the latter pushed ahead with its support for flat development and approved a multi-storey block of flats in Ferry Road, Glebe. As the 1971 municipal elections approached the society officially eschewed participation, as did other associations. But clearly, 'under the table' support was given by the Society's membership to the successful CBC candidates in Glebe Ward, Eric Sandblom and David Young. The return of the ALP Right to power in the municipality in 1974, and

¹⁹ Neil Macindoe, Jan Macindoe, *Rats in the Ranks*.

²⁰ *Glebe Society Bulletin*, July, August and September, 1969; Solling and Reynolds, *Leichhardt*, pp 240-244; *Glebe Project*, pp 27-29; Engels, *The Gentrification of Glebe*, pp 432-450.

the defeat of the Whitlam government, no doubt provided incentive for some in the Society to join the ALP in much the same way as elsewhere in the municipality.²¹

Even so, there was no effective challenge to Right dominance in the Glebe ALP branches until the early 1980's. The solid middle class Left element in Glebe North had difficulty prevailing while the political power in the suburb, such as in the delivery of preselection votes for local government, lay with the Right, and was entrenched in the other two branches, Glebe and Forest Lodge. In this, the politics of the Glebe Estate was central. As Burgmann explained it in relation to the general Left "push" throughout the municipality in the early seventies:

Our push had credibility in Balmain [with Origlass and Wyner] but it didn't really have credibility in Glebe because there were no locals supporting us and I suspect the Glebe Estate was responsible for that because ... a lot of people in the Glebe Estate, certainly a lot of those involved in the Labor Party, believed that their lovely house was theirs because of Doc Foley and Les McMahon and that machine. And there's still a bit of a view about that. You know, you're in the Labor Party because you're in the Estate and I suspect it would have been impossible to get students who lived on one side of St Johns Road and the Estate people to ever have much in common. We needed a mole in the Estate.²²

Glebe branch and the politics of the Glebe Estate.

At the outset of the seventies, the dominant figures in the Glebe branch, were its secretary and alderman, Greg Johnston, and branch president, former City Council alderman and boilermaker, Colin 'Collie' Colbourne. The Right dominance of the branch was guaranteed

²¹ Solling and Reynolds, *Leichhardt*, pp 240-247; *Glebe Project*, p 28, Engels, The Gentrification of Glebe, pp 432-460. See also *Glebe Society Bulletin*, 1969-1975 passim. Eva Cox, a social welfare activist who moved into Glebe North branch from Paddington in 1979, emphasised, like Burgmann and Carr, some of the differences with the Glebe Society oriented ALP members. Her perception was that they were "not radical" and "not understanding" being preoccupied with "property values, not the community" though her closest friend and political associate in the branch, John Hoddinot, was a member of the society. Cox also expressed concern at the way some of the younger Left members treated the older working class members of the branch. Recorded interview with Eva Cox, 30/8/99.

²² Meredith Burgmann.

by the demographics and politics of the estate itself. The branch was honestly administered by Johnston whose easy going nature was in contrast to the more pugnacious defenders of the status quo elsewhere in the municipality's ALP branches. The membership of the branch was blue and white collar working class, overwhelmingly Estate renters with a rising number of pensioners by the early eighties. The minutes of the branch show meetings that were frequently of short duration and preoccupied with local issues, branch matters and the Estate itself.²³

The Estate comprised over seven hundred houses, and roughly 3,000 residents, divided between St Phillips and Bishopthorpe, an aging population with a high percentage Australian born. The situation in the Estate and the branch was fairly quiet at the beginning of the seventies. While the standard of housing was often poor, with outdoor toilets and many houses with no running water inside the house, rents were low. Friendship and family networks, some third generation, provided a degree of mutual support and a sense of 'community'. As Greg Johnston explained it, rents were collected, door-to-door, by agents who would be asked to undertake repairs. He recalled that the undertaking of repairs was "not all that fast but they would eventually be done". Agents were often asked on their visits to find a vacant house for a son or daughter, niece or nephew who was getting married: "That's how it became families upon families in the old church days."²⁴

By the sixties and seventies the expiry of the ninety-nine years leases left the Church of England as landlord of a large housing estate. Houses were structurally sound but in poor repair. There was also insufficient income generated from low rents with a high proportion of tenancies coming under state rent controls; itself an indicator of the stability of many of the Estate's residents. Some minor redevelopment and private sales took place but according to Johnston this did not immediately induce panic in the residents:

²³ Minutes of the Glebe Branch, held by branch secretary; Engels, *The Gentrification of Glebe*, pp 428-431; Greg Johnston; Recorded interview with Vince Nash, 23/11/99.

²⁴ Greg Johnston. See also Vince Nash; *Glebe Project*, Introduction.

They didn't sell them over anyone's head or anything, it was only when they became vacant ... Everyone thought that we would eventually be offered the places if they were going to sell.²⁵

However by the early seventies, the church's Glebe Administration Board, frustrated by "inconsistent" planning approaches by state and local government to its plans to redevelop the Estate, was keen to off-load it. Its submission to the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Poverty in late 1972 (just prior to the election of the Whitlam government) suggested that federal, state or local government should take over the Estate in order to provide low-cost housing. Following a study of the Estate, the Whitlam federal government acquired it in August 1974. The pressure for this solution had come from a number of different quarters and the debate over the origin of the idea was itself to become an issue in the politics of Glebe and the municipality.²⁶

The Minister for Urban and Regional Development in the Whitlam government, Tom Uren, was the minister responsible for facilitating the acquisition. He indicated that the original proposal to acquire came from Leichhardt Council via its Mayor Nick Origlass. Greenland in *Red Hot* indicates Origlass brought a proposal to Leichhardt Council just before the Whitlam government was elected, floating a number of options for public acquisition, including by council itself, on a low interest loan from the federal government. According to Greenland, Origlass got the agreement of council and the church joined with council to approach the new federal government after the elections. Leichhardt Council minutes confirm this, and the crucial role played by the Left-CBC, Glebe aldermen, Young and Sandblom. In March 1973, Leichhardt Council bought a small number of the houses from the church to renovate for low income housing, as a pilot project, to encourage federal government interest.²⁷

²⁵ Greg Johnston. See also *Glebe Project*, Introduction; Wagner, C., 'Sydney's Glebe Project: An essay in urban rehabilitation', *Royal Australian Planning Institute Journal*, Vol. 15, February 1977, pp 2-24.

²⁶ *Glebe Project*, Ch. 1; Wagner 'Sydney's Glebe Project', pp 6-7.

²⁷ Uren, T., *Straight Left*, (autobiography), Random House, Sydney, 1995, pp 276-277 and interview with Tom Uren, 4/12/01; Greenland, *Red Hot*, p 283; *Glebe Project*, p 28; *LMC Minutes*, 17/10/72, 12/12/72. See

The Glebe Society had also taken an interest in the Estate. Its original preparation of an outline plan in 1970 raised heritage issues concerning St Phillips and Bishopthorpe. The subsequent State Planning Authority study confirmed the importance of heritage issues though also proposed substantial redevelopment for the Estate, partly linked to the impact of proposed freeways. In 1973, The Society issued a pamphlet calling for “substantial preservation of the historic townscapes, the rehabilitation of most buildings and the careful and sympathetic construction of some new buildings”. The proposals were based on the assumptions that the expressways would not go ahead and that the new Leichhardt Council planning proposals would encourage preservation, though the Society’s pamphlet accepted some substantial redevelopment would take place on the south-eastern edges of the Estate. At this point, the pamphlet appeared to assume that the church might still retain ownership:

The complete redevelopment of the areas bordering Broadway, Parramatta Road and Arundel Street for high density commercial and semi-commercial activities, possibly including student hostels, would provide the owners with a high rate of return on their investment and allow them the economic freedom to adopt more socially oriented policies in the rest of the glebes.

Redevelopment in the residential areas could occur where open spaces exist (infill housing) or where there is useless open space at the rear of dwellings.²⁸

The federal Department of Housing and Construction’s 1980 report on the Glebe Project, credited the Society’s original planning study and 1973 pamphlet as an “added influence” on Leichhardt Council’s decision to push for public acquisition.²⁹

also Origlass-Wyner Election Leaflet, 1974, explaining history of acquisition, Origlass Papers, SLNSW, MLMSS, 6614/8.

²⁸ Smith, K., Smith, B., Solling., M, ‘The Glebe Lands of Bishopthorpe and St Phillips: The case for preservation and restoration.’ Appendix E, *Glebe Project*, pp 153-156; *Glebe Project*, pp 28-29. See also *Glebe Society Bulletin*, 1969-1974 passim.

²⁹ *Glebe Project*, p 28. Young and Sandblom’s membership in the Society, and ‘unofficial’ support given by the Society to them in the 1971 municipal elections is evident in the *Glebe Society Bulletin*, 1971 passim.

The middle class Left inside and outside the ALP, by virtue of their support for the Origlass-led 1971-73 council, and enthusiasm for the promise of the Whitlam government, were party to the move for public acquisition. But what was happening in the more traditional political ranks of the ALP Right? According to Greg Johnston, the federal member and House of Representatives Speaker Jim Cope played a role in pressuring for acquisition. Vince Nash, a key figure in the politics of the Estate at the time also recalled going on some of the original delegations to Canberra concerning the Estate. Nash's parents and grandparents had lived in Glebe; his grandmother had lived in the one house on the Estate for seventy years. Nash came from a Labor family and joined the ALP in Surry Hills when he was 15, returning to live on the Estate with his grandmother when he was 21. He then dropped out of the Party in the sixties during a stint in the army but rejoined when he left and returned to live in Glebe. He described the diverse pressures resulting in acquisition:

There were several directional thrusts I understand. One was through the Labor Party but not at the local branch level in fact one of the people that was involved in the original thrust was Les McMahon. [An] area of thrust was [also] coming from a group of people within the inner city, within the housing area. There were some other people involved as well on the peripheral zone and in fact the first manager of the estate was involved in some approaches, David Young. So it was an odd sort of thing of trying to save the Estate. The people within the Estate themselves were not organised. When you look at the Estate it was a peculiar sort of animal at the time. The nature of the people probably explained some of the problems with the ALP in the area too. You had a low literacy rate. In fact one of my great strengths was [filling] out forms for people ... The leadership within the [Estate-based Glebe] branch was peculiar. It wasn't a strong leadership in an outward sense. It was internal power for individuals ...

The people of the Estate were peculiar in that they didn't know what to do. They were quite willing to follow but not willing to lead and they were waiting for the saviour to come. And unfortunately the saviour never came in through the Labor Party in those early days. Of course when Whitlam came to power the situation changed. Tom Uren, [Urban and Regional Development Minister], Riordan [federal Housing and Construction Minister] and one or two others decided on the purchase of the Glebe Estate although it wasn't as clear cut as that.

Tom Uren was on side, Joe Riordan wasn't as happy about it as he could have been, preferring the normal [State] Housing Commission style approach ...³⁰

When the 'saviour' finally arrived, the structures set up to manage what was now called the 'Glebe Project' afforded an opportunity for elements within the ALP Right to develop a power base around the issues which the project itself generated. The original structure put overall management of what was a novel initiative for a federal government, in the hands of a project committee made up of the heads of key federal departments. On the ground the project was to be administered by a Project Manager with the assistance of a Community Development Officer, and design and rehabilitation staff. The four aims of the acquisition as set out by Uren in parliament were to: provide housing in the inner city for low income earners; avoid displacement of the existing population and "disruption to existing community networks"; improve the environmental and social conditions of the residents, preserve or sympathetically rehabilitate the townscape; and to create a pilot project in urban rehabilitation.³¹

The principal means of involvement of the residents was through the creation of a Residents Advisory Committee (RAC). The committee of ten was chosen from ten 'electorates' on the Estate, with anyone over 18 years of age and resident on the Estate for three months able to vote and run as a candidate. The first elections, in early 1975, attracted a 61 per cent turnout of residents, higher than recent, and then non-compulsory, local government elections. The membership of the committee quickly became dominated by members of the Glebe and Glebe North ALP branches. Glebe North member Tom Whitty was elected chair of the RAC with Vince Nash, Glebe branch, as vice-chair and later, secretary. Glebe branch members who would hold positions on the committee included Sadie King, Tom Laming, Bob Day and Ron Simmons with Bill Corbett from Glebe North. Nash, who had come up through the ranks of the NSW Department of Labor and Industry

³⁰ Vince Nash.

as a factory and apprenticeship inspector was by now a senior public servant with links through the Labor Right networks and, after 1976, the state Labor government. He would become the key public spokesperson of the RAC in the years ahead as the Estate came under threat from possible sale and suffered from an underfunded rehabilitation and maintenance program in the post-Whitlam period.³²

By this time some key power relationships in the Glebe branch and the RAC were centering on Glebe Point Road pharmacist Peter Thom. Educated at Waverley College and Sydney University, Thom became president of the Glebe branch by the late seventies, though he lived in the Eastern suburbs. Like Doc Foley, he built up a following among the locals through his business. He also donated funds for after-branch meeting and Christmas party gatherings and assisted older members of the branch with their fees. Although not a member of the RAC, he frequently attended its meetings. Thom and his associates were to constitute an important sub-faction within the local Right. Those in the local branches and on the RAC who were closest to Thom were Whitty, Corbett and Laming. According to Nash, this push had its power base principally in St Phillips and was strongly based on a network of locals who were relatively recent arrivals in the Estate from Pymont. As well as holding the position of chair of the RAC, Whitty was able to win and hold the key position as RAC representative on the Tenants Selection Committee. This was a committee initially made up of the RAC representative, the Project Manager and a representative of the Department of Social Security.³³

³¹ *Glebe Project*, pp 31-41, Chs 6 and 7, pp 151-152. See also Glebe Project Committee records NAA, C886, GP 009.

³² *Glebe Project*, Ch. 7; *Vince Nash*. Nash is quoted frequently throughout the late seventies and early eighties in the local press as the spokesperson for the RAC. See *The Glebe* and *Leichhardt Local*, passim for this period. See also Glebe Project Committee records; Glebe Project Community Development Records, NAA, C886, GP026. Video and sound recordings of RAC meetings are located in NAA, C5062 but at the time of completion of this research were undergoing restoration work.

³³ *Glebe Project Information Bulletins* 1975-76 (copies of these and other material relevant to the Estate are located in the local history files, Glebe Branch of Leichhardt Municipal Library). Minutes of Glebe ALP Branch, passim; Vince Nash; Recorded Interview with Bob Allnut, 14/7/99; 'Thom and Hoy join Sydney

Shortly after the Estate was acquired, the September 1974 municipal elections saw the ALP Right return to power on Leichhardt Council, including the two Glebe aldermen. These were long-time Glebe residents, Ivor Cawley and George Millard. Both were typical of the affiliated union and local government connections of the traditional working class. Cawley was active in the Printing and Kindred Industries Union and Millard was a by-laws inspector with Marrickville Municipal Council. The struggle by the ALP Right to assert its position in relation to the Estate was reflected in the 1974 campaign. *The Glebe* newspaper by now had swung its support to the ALP Right and was to remain close to the incoming council, benefiting from a disproportionate allocation of Council advertising. *The Glebe* asserted that incumbent Left CBC councillors, Young and Sandblom lied about their role, and that of the 1971-73 Origlass-led council, in the acquisition of the Estate. The credit, it argued, lay with the Glebe Labor Party branches, federal member Jim Cope, state member Pat Hills and the Right ALP candidates in Glebe, Cawley and Millard. After the elections a hostile relationship developed between the council and federal Left minister, Tom Uren, with council complaining that Uren was not consulting it. Leichhardt deputy mayor, Dan Casey, called for the project to be halted and *The Glebe* newspaper referred to the “mishandling” of the project as a “scandal”.³⁴

In early 1975, Uren wrote to council criticising them for their uninformed comment on the project’s costs and rents, their lack of appreciation of the historic character of the municipality and their lack of cooperation. He reminded council that it was in receipt of over \$200,000 of federal monies through the Grants Commission. Deputy mayor Casey responded by saying that he was “dismayed, disappointed and bitterly regret[s] that Tom Uren is a member of the Australian Labor Party”. Matters worsened when two key

race’, *The Glebe*, 21/8/75, p 2. From July 1982, Glebe branch meetings were held after mass on a Sunday and followed by a barbecue.

³⁴ Various articles appeared in *The Glebe* during late 1974: ‘Sandblom, Young Lied’, 5/9/74, p 1; ‘Scandal threatens \$ 8 million Glebe Homes Restoration, 11/10/74, p 1; ‘Council takes swift action to Save Glebe Home Scandal’, 17/10/74, p 1; ‘Uren-Council Rift widens’, 24/10/74, p 1. See also ‘Massive Advertising Spree’, *The Leichhardt Local*, 28/10/76, p 31 re council’s favouring of *The Glebe* with advertising expenditure; Engels, *The Gentrification of Glebe*, p 473 for copy of election leaflet containing short biographies of Cawley and Millard; and interview with Tom Uren.

appointments on the project were announced. Recently defeated Left CBC alderman, and qualified Architect and Town Planner, David Young, was appointed Project Manager. Nita McCrae, a working class activist from Sydney's Rocks area associated with the ALP Left, was appointed Community Development Officer, the position responsible for liaising with the RAC.³⁵

The extent of the feeling from the ALP Right, and its broader political context, is conveyed in the following resolution of June 1975 from Glebe North branch to the NSW ALP Administrative Committee. It also dealt with another federal government appointment for former BLF president, and ALP Left member, Bob Pringle:

That the Minister for Urban and Regional Development be summoned before the NSW Administrative Committee to justify his remarkable political behaviour in (1) the appointment of the municipally discredited David Young to the Project Manager of the Glebe Project Board. (2) The appointment of Mr Pringle to represent the Trade Union Movement in an important advisory panel to advise a task force on human settlement problems in Australia which will be submitted to the United Nations ... and that if, as we believe, his [Uren's] conduct does not fit him to be a responsible Minister, then suitable action leading to the withdrawal of his endorsement be taken.³⁶

The first RAC was elected and met shortly after the new appointments but any hope by the project's managers that they might assume a moderate 'consultative' role was soon dispelled. The problem was summarised by Nash:

I don't think the people on the Glebe Estate ever understood what community participation meant and there were ... mistakes made. Firstly they made it political to start with. You cannot run an election unless it is political, particularly in an area like Glebe. Young came in after having served on Leichhardt Council and had been very anti-

³⁵ 'Glebe Lands Blow-up: Uren blasted by ALP members', *The Glebe*, 13/3/75, p 1. *Glebe Project Information Bulletin* No 5, April 1975. Nita McCrae's role as an activist during the period of the Green Bans in The Rocks is featured in Pat Fiske's documentary, *Rocking the Foundations: A History of the NSW Builder's Labourers Federation, 1940-1975*, Bower Bird Films, 1985.

³⁶ Letter from Ivor Cawley, Secretary, Glebe North Branch, Head Office Correspondence with Branches, ALPR, MLMSS 5095/54 See also, Burgmann and Burgmann, *Green Bans, Red Union*, pp 43-44 and passim re Bob Pringle. Tom Uren indicated in his interview that he was not involved at the level of the appointment of Young as Project Manager.

Labor and I don't think he was really anti-Labor he was more anti some of the things that they were up to: "build a block of flats where you like; lets have another one". So he was seen as being anti-Labor.³⁷

Conflict between the Project Office and the RAC began to emerge from the outset over plans for construction of 'infill' housing, largely housing for students. This was seen as a way of increasing the project's income and thereby moderating rents on the Estate generally. The federal Labor government had hoped for a self-financing project with a mix of subsidised rents along with market rents for commercial premises and those residents who could afford it. Confusion and discontent also was generated around the issue of rent rises as well as the plans for rehabilitation, the first project undertaken being re-roofing. There were practical problems in renovation such as rising damp, houses with rooms in which the walls were not square and the need to ensure renovations conformed to heritage requirements. These latter requirements, which would entail the dismantling of in-filled verandahs, coupled with the potential threat to backyard space from infill housing, caused concern among established working class residents. The RAC also sought to assert itself through the Tenant Selection Committee in order to control new applicants and ensure that the Estate was a place for "friends neighbours and the people we love".³⁸

The dismissal and defeat of the Whitlam government reversed the paradox in terms of the ALP Right's battle for hegemony over the politics of the Estate. The original acquisition saved the Right's Estate constituency but threatened their political influence. The middle class Left potentially posed a threat to the political control of the Estate through its federal administration under Uren, the possibility of more students being accommodated, the role up to 1974 of the independent-dominated Leichhardt Council and the heritage 'watchdog'

³⁷ Vince Nash. See also *Glebe Project* pp 126-127. Uren, in his interview, argued that the RAC had been supportive of him. Of the RAC chair, Tom Whitty, he said: "Tom would do anything for me in the end. he was a great bloke but he was a real wheeler and dealer; I'm aware of that".

³⁸ Petersen, Debbie, *Glebe Evaluation*, Report by Urban Intern with Glebe Project, February 1978 (copy in NSW Housing Department Library). See also various items in *The Leichhardt Local*: "Backyards Safe in Glebe" 2/9/75 p 5; 'Glebe rents Row', 16/9/75, p 6; 'Glebe Estates Rents Upset', 14/10/75, p 5; Editorial: 'What's going on in the Australian Government's Glebe Lands', 20/10/75, p 2.

role played by the Glebe Society. The Society was not only concerned with heritage questions but had become an enthusiastic supporter of the social goal of “retention of the existing community”. With the Whitlam government gone and Uren out of the picture, the constituency of the Estate came under threat but these circumstances enabled the Right to come to the fore in their defence through the RAC, local aldermen and most importantly, the new federal member for Sydney, Les McMahon.³⁹

Les McMahon’s wife, Pat had come from the Estate and according to Nash, McMahon had not just a political motive in taking up the issue of the Estate but a deep personal commitment. Nash himself played a crucial role both as the urbane face of the RAC, and in trying to hold together some of the divergent tensions within the ALP Right. Nash argues that he was not factionally aligned as such but was preoccupied with the Estate and his loyalty to McMahon flowed from this. There was tension between Thom and his supporters and McMahon. Thom had his own political ambitions and was an unsuccessful candidate in the ALP federal preselection ballot, in 1975, which McMahon won. There was also the problem of “Whitty and Co”, the patriarchal “Irish Mafia” that dominated the RAC. Nonetheless, the forces mobilising the Estate were able to be effective in its defence during the years of the Fraser federal (Liberal-National) government.⁴⁰

There were two periods of major threat to the Estate from sale by the federal government. The first was immediately after the defeat of the Whitlam government. Later, at the beginning of the eighties, there was the threat from the federal government’s expenditure review group, ‘the razor gang’. In between these times, the fear of potential sale remained

³⁹ *Glebe Society Bulletin* No 10, 1972, No 9, 1974, and 1981 passim. Neil Macindoe and Jan Macindoe; Tony Larkum; Vince Nash. Support for the Estate in 1981 was expressed by Glebe Society members John Buckingham and Tony Larkum through resolutions moved in the Glebe North branch, see Minutes of Glebe North, 9/6/81, copies in Head Office Correspondence with Branches file, *ALPR*, *MLMSS* 5095/62.

⁴⁰ Vince Nash; Reports of the ALP preselection, federal seat of Sydney, appeared in *The Leichhardt Local* 19/8/75, p 3 and 2/9/75, p 2. See also ‘Thom and Hoy Join Sydney Race’, *The Glebe*, 21/8/75, p 2. The term ‘Irish mafia’ was used by Andrew Jakubowicz to describe the Irish Catholic dominated inner-city ALP machines and was quoted in Engels, *The Gentrification of Glebe*, p 420. The term was also used by Bob

in the background but the main focus for defence of the Estate was the lack of funds from the federal government for rehabilitation and attempts to raise rents. These were argued through a succession of project managers and responsible federal departments and ministers. At different times huge public meetings were called in Glebe Town Hall, usually on Sunday mornings after Mass, and attendance ranged from 300 to 600. Nash, Thom, McMahon and Alderman Ivor Cawley were the principal speakers and the meetings achieved good publicity. Meetings were often followed up with deputations to Canberra.⁴¹

Nash was willing to put together wider support for the Estate; taking the opportunity to praise Tom Uren's "original vision" at a mass meeting of tenants in August 1976 and enlisting his support. Others were keen to keep the battle under the clear control of the ALP Right. Glebe Alderman Ivor Cawley, addressing the same meeting after Nash, called on tenants to "close ranks" and work for the re-election of a federal Labor government. He also warned of other action groups that might try to "get in on the act" arguing that there "are people, not necessarily in this hall, who are trying to take over this struggle. They should come here and say their bit rather than be a fifth column for the other side".⁴²

Elsie.

The "right wing laborites obsession to 'own the game'" and the masculinist nature of their politics was manifested in the relationship between key personalities in the male-dominated RAC and the initiatives of the Elsie women's refuge and the Estate's Women's group. Elsie

Allnut, an ABC producer who moved into the Estate and the Glebe branch in the 1970's and who nonetheless supported Les McMahon. At the time of interview Allnut was president of the Glebe branch.

⁴¹ *The Leichhardt Local* during its short life was supportive of the Estate campaigns and its editor, Peter Manning joined with Nash and Ivor Cawley in the publicity campaign to stop the Estate being sold off in 1976. See Manning, Cawley and Nash, 'Why sell off the Glebe lands now?', *SMH*, 10/2/76, p 7. See also Glascott, J., 'Jubilation as Government backs Glebe renewal plan', *SMH* 28/10/76, p 1; *The Leichhardt Local*: 'Six Month Battle Saves Glebe Land', 20/5/76, p 1; 'Glebe Estate War Hots Up', 17/8/76, p 6; 'Minister sees Glebe residents', 31/8/76, p 5. See also '\$64,000 Question: Who'll buy the Glebe Estate', *The Glebe*, 6/4/81, p 7; 'State to get Glebe Houses' *The Glebe*, 9/6/82 p 1. Keats, C., 'Buck passed at Glebe', *The National Times*, 24/5/81; Vince Nash; Bob Allnut.

was one of the vacant houses squatted by women in early 1974 to set up a refuge for women and children escaping domestic violence. After the Estate was acquired by the federal government, the refuge was moved into another, newly renovated house on the Estate. According to Nash the issue of the refuge eventually settled down and became accepted but initially people reacted “fairly badly” and it “frightened” them. This was linked to concern about other “incursions” into the Estate, such as squatters and the prisoner’s half-way house, the fact that Elsie was given one of the earlier renovated houses while others on the Estate couldn’t get maintenance done, and fears of violence and disturbance from violent husbands. Also, according to Nash, it was the culture of the Estate itself:

You were dealing with a suburb where women were mainly ready for bed by seven o’clock. You know. You’d see them outside their doors at six o’clock, talking to each other in their dressing gowns. I mean you were not dealing with a fifties suburb you were dealing with a thirties suburb.⁴³

ABC producer, Bob Allnut and his wife moved into the Estate in the late seventies. Allnut argued that most of the opposition to Elsie was “masculine” and felt that women on the whole were probably fairly glad about it. He also indicated that violence against women on the Estate was frowned on and dealt with within a tradition of male protective violence. He recalled an incident in which he and his wife had taken in a local woman who had been beaten by her husband. When the husband came around and abused them from the street, one of the local SP bookmaker’s collectors, by prior arrangement, caused him to desist.⁴⁴

Meredith Burgmann, who moved from Dhargan Street to one of the small number of private houses in the middle of St Phillips, where she still lives, was not involved directly

⁴² ‘Glebe Estate War Hots Up’.

⁴³ Vince Nash. The quote at the beginning of this paragraph is Debbie Peterson’s. See Peterson, *Glebe Evaluation*. See also Summers, A., *Ducks on the Pond: An Autobiography 1945-1976*, Viking, 1999, Ch 13; The establishment of Elsie and the hostility to it by some of the local ALP Right was matched by scandalous coverage in *The Glebe*, see ‘Project Office Pours Thousands of Dollars into new Elsie’s’ (sic), issue of 15/10/75, p 2 including cartoon.

⁴⁴ Bob Allnut.

in the setting up of Elsie. She argued that while “everyone was shocked because it was not nice”, the people of the Estate were on the whole “live-and-let-live”, particularly if initiatives like Elsie were “not politically operating”. However Carole Renwick, one of the two women on the first RAC, while expressing her support for “a place for women to go who get bashed by their husbands”, expressed her concern at the need for proper “policing” of the refuge. She argued that “there’s lesbians who get in there now and it’s not good for small children who come into contact with that kind of thing”.⁴⁵

According to urban intern working with the Glebe project, Debbie Peterson, this attitude, which she characterised, as “not a local girl in there, all lesbians” was prevalent among RAC members. There was also, she argued, a specific hostility from some of the males of the dominant RAC group hostile to the formation of the Glebe Estate Women’s Group, which was started around activities of ‘housie’ and organising a paper drive and playgroup. According to Peterson this group, in which Nita McCrae played a role, was referred to as “Nita’s clowns”. She described this incident:

Tom Whitty’s attitude to this group in the estate was illustrated during my interview with Rowena Horeau, Secretary of the Group. On sighting Rowena and myself in the office discussing the women’s group he came in and said “don’t interview her, we are the only group recognised by Canberra. We’re going to run the housie and the paper drive from now on”.

Obviously the political tensions caused by a group of women forming in this ‘right wing’ Labor community are extremely difficult to deal with.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Meredith Burgmann. Earlier in the seventies Tom Whitty spat on Burgmann while she was sitting on the road in Glebe in an anti-expressway demonstration. Renwick’s comments were made in an interview by Hall Greenland for *The Leichhardt Local* concerning a shooting incident that occurred near the refuge. A partner of one of the women in the refuge shot and wounded a nearby resident when approaching the wrong house, thinking it was the refuge. The man who sustained the minor wound expressed support for Elsie, only suggesting the placing of a security guard. The same edition of the *The Leichhardt Local* carried a story of a fire that had been deliberately lit at the rear of the refuge, one of a number of harassing incidents. ‘Elsie: Midnight Fire’, and Greenland, H., ‘The Westmoreland Street Shooting’, *The Leichhardt Local*, 19/8/75, p 5.

Rowena Horeau was one of a number of women who made a concerted attempt to contest the 1977 RAC elections. They were unsuccessful. The committee remained dominated by “Whitty and Co” with Sadie King supporting this group (Renwick did not contest). The only other woman elected to the RAC, was Bessie Guthrie. Guthrie was that rarity, a feminist and life-long activist who lived on the Estate and participated in the establishment of Elsie. The refuge now bears her name. Guthrie was also a member of both the Glebe branch of the ALP and the Glebe Society. In the latter case, she appeared influential in arranging for the Society’s ‘Monday Group’ to crochet blankets for Elsie. However Guthrie, who died in 1977, appeared to be on the ‘outer’ of the dominant RAC group.⁴⁷

The 1978 RAC elections were held under a new format, which were apparently intended to contain the political influence of its dominant group. The RAC was now to consist of eight elected representatives, five elected at large from St Phillips and three from Bishopthorpe, with a chair elected from the Estate as a whole. Further elections were then delayed till early 1981, and then scheduled for every two years. However this change appeared to make little impact on the dominant group. Whitty was able to continue to dominate the position of chair and had contested the 1978 election against one of the previous year’s women candidates, Mrs A James. He presented himself, as previous RAC candidates had often done, as the “official Labor ticket”, and claimed support from McMahon, aldermen Cawley and Millard, and Dr H.J Foley. The RAC continued to be dominated by the same personalities and the turnout of voters fell.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Peterson, D., *Glebe Evaluation*. See also references to the role of the community development officer and various group activities on the Estate in Community Development records, NAA, C886, GP 026.

⁴⁷ Colston, T., ‘Grand Old Stirrer of Glebe’ *The Leichhardt Local*, 13/4/76, p 10; Summers, *Ducks on the Pond*, p 321-322; Grahame, E., ‘Bessie Guthrie’ in Caine, (Ed), *Australian Feminism*, p 431.

⁴⁸ A copy of Whitty’s leaflet is in Graeme Richardson’s papers, ALPR, MLMSS, 5095/293. It was brought to the General Secretary’s attention by an ALP member working on construction on the Estate. Richardson sent Whitty a telegram demanding that he cease representing himself as an ‘official’ Labor candidate. See also Peterson, *Glebe Evaluation*; and *Glebe Project*, pp 126-127; Glebe Project Committee records, NAA, C 886, GP 009; Community Development records, NAA, C886, GP 026.

The power of the RAC and the Thom group within the Estate began to fade in the aftermath of the Estate being passed to the NSW government in early 1985. This was after protracted negotiations by the Labor state government, first with the Fraser government and then with the Hawke federal Labor government. However the Estate was to play an important role in shoring up the Right in Leichhardt municipality. It was not until the 1990's that a middle class Left, ALP member from Glebe, Neil Macindoe, gained representation on council. McMahon's efforts in defending the Estate almost came off. His defeat by Peter Baldwin in the preselection in 1981 was a narrow one on preferences, seven votes. There had been a considerable building up of the Glebe branch under Thom in the late seventies. However it is arguable that a stronger effort in Glebe and Glebe North, associated with a more competent leadership on the Estate than that offered by 'Whitty and Co' might have seen McMahon survive with profound consequences politically in the inner-city ALP. One might speculate on the extent to which tension between Thom and his support base and McMahon had an influence here. Certainly Nash saw the Estate and the politics of the Glebe branches based on it as 'the key'. As it turned out, it was to be McMahon's 'family' branch that would be the focus of the 'last stack' in Leichhardt and the last attempt by the Right to hold back the middle class Left.⁴⁹

Forest Lodge swallows Glebe North.

On the 15th of September 1981, the NSW ALP General Secretary received a letter from the Industrial Relations Minister in the state Labor government, Pat Hills. Hills detailed complaints about branch-stacking in his seat of Elizabeth which bordered the state seat of Balmain to the East and took in parts of Glebe and Annandale as well as the City of Sydney and South Sydney. In particular Hills complained about attempts to recruit over 100

⁴⁹ Vince Nash; Meredith Burgmann. See also 'Bob loses his home', *The Glebe*, 12/8/87, pp 1-2 re changing social composition of Estate. See 1981 Preselection results reported in Wheelright, 'New South Wales; the dominant Right', p 64 and *Challenge*, 4/12/81, p 1. See 1981 Federal preselection votes, appendix F. According to Glebe Project committee records, the Estate was first offered to the NSW Government in 1979, NAA, C886, GP 009.

members into three branches that month: Pyrmont-Denison, Forest Lodge and Glebe North. As has been mentioned above, Pyrmont-Denison and Forest Lodge were notorious ‘family’ branches. The first was under the control of the Fegan family, Sid and son John having been aldermen on the city council. Forest Lodge was the home branch of Les McMahon. Glebe North had been in stasis during the seventies, with the Right keeping the upper hand. Hills specifically attacked the branch stacking activities of Baldwin and Crawford and questioned the bone-fides of the applicants to the three branches arguing that:

never in my 49 years in the party [have I] seen such a blatant attempt by persons not formerly associated with the ALP attempting a takeover of the Australian Labor Party branches.⁵⁰

Hills went on to repeat the theme of persons not having “any affiliation with the Labor Party” and “no apparent previous connection with Labor”. This was a rather presumptuous contention given that the opportunity to demonstrate interest in the ALP, handing out ‘how to votes’ in the state elections, was yet four days away. Hills’ main inference appeared to be that the new applicants were people not having traditional family or affiliated union connections to inner-city Labor. The letter appears to have been orchestrated to coincide with decisions by the branch officers in Pyrmont-Denison and Forest Lodge to refer the new membership applications to Head Office, a move which the Left was to argue was a clear breach of the ALP rules at the time. In Glebe North, an attempt to refer the applications to Head Office was thwarted. The Left were gaining the upper hand and had succeeded in winning the position of branch secretary in 1981, though its incumbent, academic Jim Hanratty, was isolated as part of a Right-dominated branch executive. The Glebe North branch, after debate, processed the applications and proceeded, in the new year, to conduct the branch’s AGM and annual elections, contrary to a directive by General Secretary, Steven Loosley, to defer them.⁵¹

⁵⁰ A copy of Hills’ letter is in the records of the Credentials Committee, 1982-83, ALPR, MLMSS 5095/484.

⁵¹ Credentials Committee, 1982-83; Minutes of Forest Lodge Branch, 7/9/81 and 6/10/81, ALPR; MLMSS (uncatalogued). Photocopies of the Glebe North Minutes are located in ALPR: June to September 1981 in Head Office Correspondence with Branches, ALPR, MLMSS 5095/62 file and October 1981 to February 1982 in the Disputes Committee, ALPR, MLMSS 5095/492; the latter relating to charges brought against Hanratty by the Right. See also *Abuse of Power*, p 6. Hanratty defeated Ivor Cawley for the Secretary’s

Hills' actions were in the context of heightened tension between Left and Right in the ALP in the inner city and in the state as a whole. The physical assault on Baldwin in 1980 was followed by a political thrashing for the dominant Right in NSW with the attendant bad publicity. Leichhardt Council was already under the control of the middle class Left (see chapter five). There was lingering resentment over the Right's earlier attempt to bring (non-popularly elected) Members of the Legislative Council into state ALP caucus, upsetting the power balance there. The factional tension within the Party increased over what the Left viewed as partisan interpretation of the rules by the Right dominated machine in disputes over recruitment in a number of areas of Sydney. The Left also attacked the decision by the NSW ALP, in October, to wind up the Inner City Task Force which had been set up to enquire into branch malpractice after the Baldwin bashing. There was also the 'rolling', as a result of Right branch-stacking, of Jan Burnswoods from the position of candidate for the federal seat of Lowe, in favour of the Right's Michael Maher. Burnswoods had increased Labor's vote in this Liberal-held seat in the 1980 election and her removal was seen as an affront to affirmative action.⁵²

In the run-up to the September 1981 state elections, the Wran government was under pressure inside and outside the Party. There were problems with electricity supply, with consequent impacts on the inner city from re-opening of Pyrmont and White Bay, coal-fired, power stations. A decision to build a football stadium in Parramatta Park was opposed by the Left, including Tom Uren, and there was failure in areas of social policy, such as homosexual law reform. The move towards the re-amalgamation of Sydney and

position in early 1981 by 42 votes to 38. See Head Office Correspondence with Branches, *ALPR* MLMSS 5095/60.

⁵² Ellercamp, P., 'ALP Left in pre-selection threat to MP's', *SMH*, 2/12/81, p 12; *Abuse of Power*, passim; Sawyer and Simms, *A Woman's Place*, 1993, p 185. See also Wheelright, 'New South Wales: The dominant Right', passim and Hagan and Turner, *A History of the Labor Party*, part 4, passim. The Wran Government reformed the Legislative Council or upper house from one elected internally by members of both houses to direct election by the voters. Legislative Councillors were not part of caucus and a proposal to bring them in to caucus (including those chosen under the old method) inflamed the Left, leading Wran to put forward a compromise for MLC's to enter caucus only when they were directly elected. With the Right-initiated abolition of proportional representation for party selection for the Council, the original proposal would have led to total dominance of caucus by the Right.

South Sydney councils, which would place the new city under the influence of the Right-wing machine of former South Sydney mayor, Bill Hartup, enraged inner city residents and ALP Left members. With the defeat of Les McMahon in the federal pre-selection in October-November, the Right was resolved to draw a line against the inner city Left and exact revenge. This is the context of Keating's spiteful "basket-weavers" speech in December 1981. Earlier in the year he had goaded the Left to "have us on once the state elections are out of the way".⁵³

Hills' letter and the issue of the applicants were referred to the NSW ALP Credentials Committee. In the hiatus before the committee's decision was handed down, middle class Left activists campaigned publicly against the attempt to frustrate new applicants. In October, an advertisement was placed in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, headed "When does the no vacancy sign go up?", giving the times and places of Pyrmont-Denison and Glebe North Meetings and authorised by the "Committee for Fair Dinkum Preselections". In March 1982, a public meeting was organised in Glebe Town Hall to protest the attempt to hold out the new applicants. The meeting dealt with the following resolution, which was circulated prior to the meeting:

This meeting emphatically re-affirms the Constitutional right of local branches to credential and admit new members.

We deplore the interference of Head Office Officials and Committees in this process. The extreme tardiness of Head Office Committees in processing 'challenges' is also deplored.

We re-assert that the ALP must at all times reach out to people from all backgrounds who are committed principles [sic] of the ALP and invite their membership. This process is vital in maintaining the mass base of our party.

⁵³ *Abuse of Power*, p 1 and passim; Ellercamp, 'ALP Left in pre-selection threat to MP's'; Hanscombe, J., 'Left Drives Wedge into conservative Labor politics', *SMH*, 2/12/81, p 7; Stekettee, M., 'Official quizzed in ALP faction row', *SMH*, 5/12/81, p 1; Bowers, P., 'The Labor Party – rorts and all', *SMH*, 5/12/81, p 13. See also editions of *Challenge* during 1980-82 period.

We call on the party to immediately process all applications for membership before it and admit those who meet membership requirements.

All obstruction to new members joining Glebe North Forest Lodge and Pyrmont Denison branches must cease henceforth.⁵⁴

The NSW Administrative Committee of the Party, on the recommendation of the Credentials Committee, made its decision in April 1982. The Party's executive body rejected the new branch applicants and ruled that for a period of two years, all applicants in Hills' seat of Elizabeth were to be automatically referred to Head Office. Further, in an 'out-of-the-blue' decision moved by General Secretary Loosley, the Glebe North branch elections were overturned and the 'charter' of the Glebe North branch was withdrawn and the branch abolished. At the end of 1982, Glebe was divided between the two branches of Glebe and Forest Lodge. Some of the areas of the Glebe Estate that had previously been in Glebe North were shifted into Glebe branch area. The bulk of the Glebe North area was taken over by Forest Lodge. In its adoption of the Credentials Committee's recommendations, the Administrative Committee re-affirmed Hills' concerns:

Few if any of the applicants for membership have had any previous association with our Party, shown no interest in our Party's principles, workings or objectives and have not shown any affinity with the ALP.⁵⁵

The committee claimed that the stacking was aimed at embarrassing Hills and the Wran government. Evidence presented in the Credentials Committee's hearing had included allegations that a public meeting called by the Left dominated Leichhardt Council to protest

⁵⁴ This leaflet was signed by Sandra Nori, Jennifer Seberry, Belinda Weaver, Greg McFarlane, Geoff Sim and Andrew Fitzsimmons. A copy is located in the General Head Office Correspondence, 1982, *ALPR*, MLMSS 5095/26. The advertisement, by the 'Committee for Fair Dinkum Preselections' was placed in the *SMH*, 13/10/81, p 10. These were incorporated into evidence by the Right, along with other allegations, as part of the Credentials Committee enquiry. See Credentials Committee, 1982-83, *ALPR*.

⁵⁵ Credentials Committee, *ALPR*. See also Disputes Committee, *ALPR*, re charges against Glebe North Secretary, Jim Hanratty, heard in August 1982; and Minutes of Forest Lodge Branch 11/10/82 and 6/12/82, *ALPR* SLNSW (uncatalogued) re amalgamation of Glebe North area with Forest Lodge. See also appendix A map and notes.

the re-opening of the inner city coal-fired power stations was for the purpose of embarrassing Pat Hills, who had been Minister for Energy during earlier power shortages. It was also argued that it was used for the purpose of recruiting new ALP members. Similarly, Glebe North's decision to make a donation to the Friends of Parramatta Park was seen as disloyal to the Party's decision to back the Parramatta Stadium. The Administrative Committee sought to cloak its decision in a rather dubious historical precedent, given that its decisions were to protect a predominantly Irish-Catholic Right:

This kind of incident and the same manner of behaviour occurred repeatedly prior to and during the great party split of the 1950's where factions sought to alter the political complexion of the ALP and unseat sitting members with scant regard for the welfare of the Labour Movement. The branch stacking that occurred during this period was to the great detriment of our party and was a phenomenon from which the Party took years to recover.

It is therefore disturbing to note that this same phenomenon is occurring in inner city Branches and in the case of Elizabeth, has reached an unprecedented level of cynicism.⁵⁶

The middle class Left rallied to oppose the decisions. A further mass meeting of members to protest the decision was held and a small group of Glebe North members continued to meet 'socially' throughout 1982. It was in the context of this dispute that the 'ALP Membership Defence Committee' had been formed and its pamphlet, *Abuse of Power* is a detailed summary of the Left's concerns at this time. However the mainstream Steering Committee Left, and the Baldwinites in particular, ultimately decided to 'wear' the changed branch situation in Glebe and concentrate on the long haul of winning the numbers in the expanded Forest Lodge. This campaign would wait on the move into the branch in 1983 of Sandra Nori and her partner, Left Assistant General Secretary John Faulkner and would result ultimately in Nori replacing Hills as the local member. Both Nori and Faulkner argue that there was never any intention of challenging Hills before he retired. In fact the Steering Committee did not put up a candidate in the preselection for the state seat of Elizabeth in

⁵⁶ Credentials Committee, *ALPR*; Disputes Committee *ALPR*,

1983. This was partly to avoid forcing the issue and partly because it was unlikely at this stage that a Left candidate would win. The only person who nominated was a Glebe North member, Belinda Weaver. Weaver was active in the campaign at the end of 1981 and early 1982 to mobilise support for the applicants of the three branches. A librarian who worked at the Stanton Library of North Sydney Municipality, she was linked, through work colleague Janet Burstall, to the Socialist Fight group. This was a small socialist faction that operated in the ALP at this time and which had been part of the Socialist for Sydney Campaign around Tony Harris' candidature for the 1981 federal preselection (see chapter five). After the preselection some of the activists in it had continued to meet for a time at the Toxteth Hotel, Glebe under the mischievous title of the "pushing committee" (*vis a vis* the Steering Committee). The NSW Administrative Committee stepped in and blocked Weaver from contesting the pre-selection, ostensibly for a pre-selection leaflet she distributed among Party members critical of the performance of the Wran government.⁵⁷

There was a sense among some active in the Glebe North branch that their desire to continue to campaign against the Head Office winding up of the branch was being dampened down by the 'Baldwinite' element within the Steering Committee. Certainly there would have been concern for the possible overturning of Baldwin's narrow victory in the federal preselection for Sydney. Al Westwood and Gay Kalnins shared a memory of meetings being stacked by the Steering Committee to ensure this was the case. Westwood had joined the Glebe North branch in the early seventies when he was still a member of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) but didn't go to many meetings at the time. The SWP's priority at the time was activity in the extra-parliamentary "mass movement". Its approach to the ALP was to keep an eye on political developments "in case there was a major disaffection with the two factions". Westwood had left the SWP by the time he became

⁵⁷ *Challenge*, April 1982 and June 1982. See copy of notice for protest meeting of 30/4/82 in Solling and Reynolds, *Leichhardt*, p 246; See also 'Head office thumbs down to chances for new blood', *Challenge*, November 1983, in which this Steering Committee journal criticised the decision to deny Weaver the right to contest the seat even though the Steering Committee itself did not want to contest it. The writer's papers include a contact list for the 'pushing committee'. See also interviews with John Faulkner, 31/1/00 and Sandra Nori.; and Minutes of Forest Lodge Branch, 1/8/83, *ALPR*.

active around the move by Jim Hanratty to recruit members into the Glebe North branch. It was around this time that his partner, Gay Kalnins also joined the branch. Kalnins had come from a background in the Sydney 'Push' and as a typesetter had moved into Glebe in the early seventies, to Tomato Press, to work on the feminist journal *Refractory Girl*. Kalnins lived in a squatted house in Dhargan Street. The Dhargan Street squats, dating from earlier in the seventies, were houses owned by the Department of Main Roads, originally set for demolition to make way for the expressways. Kalnins would later in the eighties be involved in The Greens as well as with the Community Independents group of Larry Hand (see chapter seven below).⁵⁸

In Forest Lodge, the Right prepared itself at the end of 1981 and the beginning of 1982, for the final struggle. Electrical Trades Union official Rob Anderson, who had moved into Glebe, was encouraged to transfer into the Forest Lodge branch (he had held a 'Head Office ticket') by the Right's Assistant General Secretary and future Speaker of the House of Representatives, Leo Macleay. Anderson became branch president. Vince Nash had moved house and also transferred into the branch, becoming part of the branch executive. The degree of tension in the branch can be gauged by this partisan account in the minutes of an incident in the Forest Lodge branch in January 1982. It involved Roy Garner, who had been a member of the Glebe North branch in the seventies, now being obstructed from rejoining, and Geoff Sims, a member of the 'Baldwinite' Left active in Lilyfield:

At this stage of the meeting R Garner and Simms [sic], a member of Balmain or Lilyfield Branch came into the meeting at approximately 25 past 9 and was asked by the Chairman to sign the Attendance Book. Mr Garner on his way back to a seat fell over A Veitch's feet. A Veitch complained to the meeting that R Garner must have been drinking and asked him to conduct himself in an orderly fashion. R Garner screamed out that he was assaulted. The Chairman asked R Garner to take his seat as he was disrupting the meeting. Mr Garner

⁵⁸ Recorded interview with Al Westwood and Gay Kalnins, 13/9/99. See also *Abuse of Power* p 1.

kept on singing out and the Chairman asked him to leave the meeting under Rule H 19.⁵⁹

At the same meeting Vince Nash threatened to charge the ‘Baldwinite’ Secretary of the Camperdown branch, Jenny Seberry (who was present) with “disruptive practice” when she challenged his bone fides to stand in the branch elections. On the motion of McMahon and Veitch, the branch resolved to write to head office to seek a ruling on “disruptive actions taken by members of other branches and visitors” warning that “violence could erupt”.⁶⁰

The absorption of Glebe North membership into Forest Lodge and the referral of applications to Head Office only delayed the inevitable and the branch was to finally swing to the Left in early 1984. However in terms of the overall successes for the middle class Left in Leichhardt Municipality, the combative politics of ‘Brigadoon’ and the ‘patchwork’ nature of political power in the local branches, kept Glebe on the margin of the dominant municipal forces during the early to mid 1980’s. The suburb’s Labor representation on Leichhardt Council would remain dominated by the Right until the 1990’s. However the victories elsewhere in the municipality, together with the strong Left pocket in Glebe, were sufficient to ensure overall middle class Left control of Leichhardt Council by 1980. There would also be success in the pre-selections for the federal seat of Sydney in 1981 and the state seat of Balmain in 1983. The moment of political power had arrived.

⁵⁹ Minutes of Forest lodge Branch, 8/2/82 and generally for 1981-82, *ALPR*. See also Vince Nash and Recorded interview with Rob Anderson, 29/6/99. See above in this chapter for Garner’s earlier involvement in Glebe North branch.

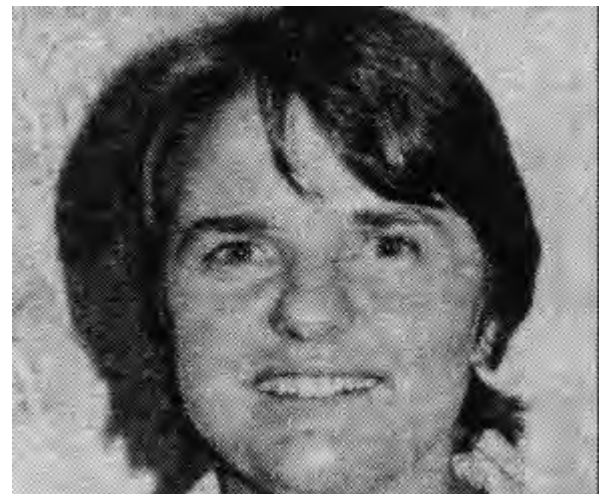
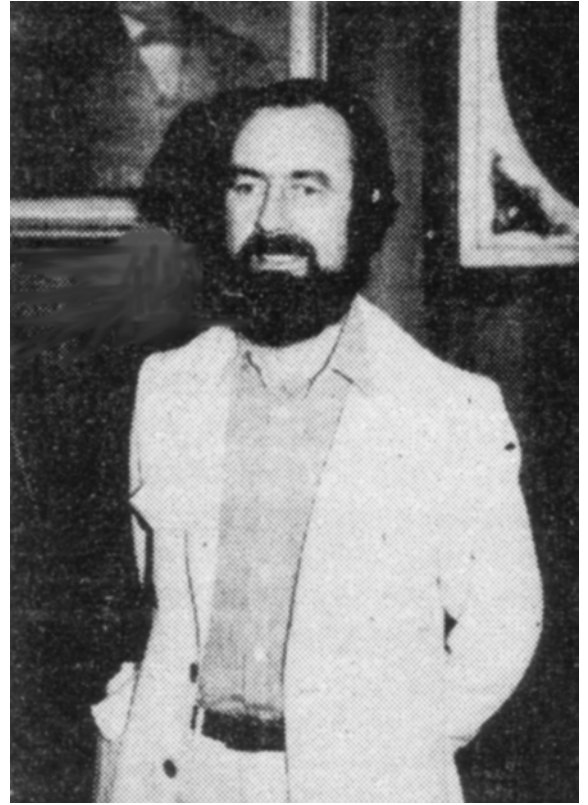
⁶⁰ Minutes of the Forest Lodge Branch, 8/2/82 and 1981-82 generally, *ALPR*.

PART III

POLITICAL POWER AND ITS DISCONTENTS



7. John Faulkner, NSW ALP Assistant General Secretary and future Labor Senate leader carries the ballot box down the steps of Leichhardt Town Hall in November 1981 after the first count of votes in the preselection for Sydney. The box was deposited for safe-keeping at Leichhardt Police Station. It contained enough Left votes to narrowly give this federal seat to Peter Baldwin over Labor Right incumbent, Les McMahon. However the ballot saw the emergence of divisions within the Left, as did the politics of Leichhardt Council, which had been dominated by the Left since the 1980 municipal elections. By the late 1980's, Labor would lose control of Leichhardt Council and the state seat of Balmain. The primary Labor vote would shift to small parties and independents and the middle class Left would drift from the local ALP branches. *Challenge*, 23/12/81, *SLNSW*.



8. Evan Jones (top left) was the 'working class hero' chosen by the Left dominated 1980-84 council as mayor. His deputy (top right), was Nick O'Neill, a lawyer and academic from Balmain who had come to council with a history of activism in campaigns to open up harbour foreshores. Ann Catling (bottom left) was Peter Baldwin's principal Left rival in the federal preselection of 1981. Robyn Floyd, (bottom right) was the only woman elected to the all-ALP Leichhardt Council in 1980. She was also Peter Crawford's principal Left rival in the Balmain state preselections of 1983. *Open Council, LMC Newsletter, 1981, SLNSW and Challenge, June 1982, SLNSW.*



9. Opposition to uranium mining and anti-nuclear issues generally were key issues in the early 1980's as shown in the top photograph of ALP branch contingents in an anti-uranium march. The banner in the left-centre is Rozelle East, the former branch of Leichhardt Right deputy mayor Danny Casey, restructured at the beginning of the 1980's. The bottom photograph is of a typical Leichhardt Council public gallery, probably in the mid to late 1980's. Under 'open council' principles established in the early 1970's, members of the public could speak on issues before council. On major issues, with hundreds in attendance, council would often adjourn from this chamber to the main town hall. *Challenge*, March 1984, SLNSW; gallery photograph given to writer by Bill Brady.



10. 'The Mayors Team' (top) an unendorsed ALP team headed by (from left) Bill Brady, Sharon Page and Brian Thompson. Former NSW Labor Women's Committee president, Kate Butler (bottom left) headed the rival unendorsed ALP 'Members Team'. Butler's mid-1990's defection to Larry Hand's 'Community Independents' was the central drama of *Rats in the Ranks*. Sandra Nori (bottom right at a demonstration) became the state member for McKell in 1988 (later Port Jackson) and eventually a minister in the Carr state Labor government. *The Glebe*, 23/9/87, *SLNSW*; *Challenge* 18/12/81 and May, 1983, *SLNSW*.

11. The two major teams contesting with the ALP at the 1987 municipal elections. The 'Open Council' team (at right) gathered around Nick Origlass and Issy Wyner (front). Others were (left to right) Danny Bessell (expelled, Annandale ALP 1984), Jane Ward, Johanna Trainor, Therese Archibald (expelled Annandale ALP 1987), Tom Dan, Peter Hehir (expelled, Rozelle ALP 1984), Rod Weaver, Hall Greenland (expelled Annandale ALP 1984), Daphne Gollan and Tony Harris (expelled Annandale ALP 1984). Most of those expelled became involved in setting up Sydney Greens and Gollan was its first candidate at the 1984 federal elections. The 'Community Independents' (bottom) formed around alderman Larry Hand (left, expelled Annandale ALP 1987). Others were (from left next to Hand) Sandra Tracey, Sue Stock (former Balmain ALP), Drago Heler, Betty Leone, Gay Kalnins (former Glebe North ALP) and Hazel Freed (former Annandale ALP). *Writer's papers; The Glebe, 23/9/87, SLNSW.*





12. Mort's Dock (top, in 1887, *John Sharkey, Government Printing Office collection, SLNSW*) was the largest employer in Sydney at the end of the nineteenth century and was to play a key role in the foundation of the union movement and the Labor Party. In the 1940's it was the site of a significant struggle over the control of the Ironworker's Union, involving future mayor, Nick Origlass. It became a shipping container terminal in the 1960's, generating truck traffic and galvanising resident action, particularly among the newer middle class residents. As the ALP in Balmain approached its centenary, the site was the focus of a major conflict over public housing and open space, fracturing the middle class Left inside and outside the Party. The photograph below, (2002, *writer's papers*) shows the former dock site from a similar perspective. Housing to the left of the central park area (partly obscured by trees) remains public but a larger section of housing constructed to the right (out of frame) was privatised.

Chapter 5

MAGNIFICENT OBSESSIONS: 1980-1984.

The Leichhardt Municipal Council elections in September 1980 saw a 'clean sweep' of all twelve aldermanic positions for the Labor Party. It was also a victory for the middle class ALP Left who were to dominate this council for the next three and a half years. This victory was the culmination of the unfolding of local political events throughout the seventies and had been brought to a head in Peter Baldwin's bashing earlier in the year. Just over one year after the municipal elections, the preselection for the federal seat of Sydney saw Baldwin replace Les McMahon as Labor's candidate and move into the federal parliament in the Hawke Labor victory of early 1983. Later in 1983, Baldwin's political associate Peter Crawford, now one of the middle class Left aldermen on Leichhardt Council, won the preselection for the state seat of Balmain and entered state parliament just before the end of Leichhardt Council's term. But as victories, these were far from complete. They were to be soured by bitterness and division that saw local political differences link into the wider political and ideological divisions within the ALP in the 1980's. These were divisions around the role of the state and its administration by Labor governments at all levels in a political and economic climate increasingly hostile to the interventionist agendas of the Whitlam and earlier eras in social democracy. These discontents would result in a growing general disillusionment of many of the middle class Left with the Labor Party.

This was set against the wider political context of the time. Federally there was the frustration at the continuance in office, after elections in 1977 and 1980, of the Fraser government and the accompanying winding back of the Whitlam initiatives and public spending. Inside the Party there was intense debate over uranium mining and export and the uncertain leadership of Bill Hayden. This was followed by the ascension of Bob Hawke to

the leadership and the return of the Party to federal government. The new federal Labor government ushered in a cautious fiscal approach and a reliance on the Party's pre-election agreement with the unions, the ACTU-ALP prices and incomes accord. At the state level, the Wran government had been in office since 1976. In the aftermath of the second 'Wranslide' election in 1981, questioning intensified in the Party over the failure of the Wran government to make headway (as mentioned in chapter four) in important areas of social reform; the police, prisons and homosexual law reform. The early eighties would also see the onset of recession. With constraints on revenue during the early eighties, Fraser years, the state government began cutbacks in key areas such as the railways, hospitals, and education. Plans for a resource-based economic development in the Hunter Valley raised environmental concerns. Power shortages in the state's ailing electricity generation system caused difficulty; not least of all (as mentioned above) in the inner city where polluting, coal-fired power stations at White Bay and Pyrmont were brought on-line. The state government's troubles would be further exacerbated by a series of corruption allegations, one of which required the Premier to step down from office temporarily while it was investigated.¹

In the Labor Party itself, the intense factional struggle between the Left (the Steering Committee) and the Right (now known as Centre Unity) continued. It was played out around issues referred to in the chapters above; residual resentment over the Right's attempt to dominate the selection and role of Labor members of a reformed Legislative Council, affirmative action, turmoil in the inner city branches, branch-stacking and partisan interpretations of Party rules. Against this background, this chapter will examine the power struggles that took place on the ground. These were struggles on Leichhardt Council

¹ McMullin, *Light on the Hill*, Ch 15 passim; Hagan and Turner, *A History of the Labor Party*, Part 4, passim. See also issues of *Challenge* for early 80's; for example, editorial concerning disillusionment with Wran Government, January 1981. For a wider analysis of the electoral performance of the Wran government in the early part of the 1980s see Chaples, E., Nelson, N. and Turner, K. (eds), *The Wran Model: Electoral politics in New South Wales*, 1981 and 1984, OUP, Melbourne, 1985.

between 1980 and 1982, the campaign for the federal seat of Sydney in late 1981 and back to Leichhardt Council and the state seat of Balmain 1983-84.²

Leichhardt Council 1980 – 1982.

The 1980 elections for Leichhardt Council were strongly influenced by the events in the aftermath of the Baldwin bashing. The Lilyfield and Rozelle East branches had been 'restructured' and the NSW Administrative Committee resolved that there be no Party endorsements in Rozelle Ward. As mentioned above, local alderman and deputy mayor Danny Casey resigned from the Party. In Lilyfield, former Right mayor, Les Rodwell had been endorsed and was re-elected along with his running mate Ernie Baldwin. In the 'no-endorsement' contest in Rozelle, two members of the middle class Labor Left, Robyn Floyd and Geoff Stevens, defeated the Right's candidates, Bob Heffernan (Casey's old running mate) and butcher, James Doolan. In Glebe, where the Left had as yet been unable to take power, the Right's Ivor Cawley and George Millard were preselected and elected. The remaining six aldermen were from the Left, giving the all-Labor council a Left majority of eight to four. In Annandale, Greenland and Hume were elected and in Leichhardt, Jock Roxborough was finally able to join Evan Jones as ward alderman. In Balmain, the Left victory of 1978 bore fruit. Peter Crawford, and his Left running mate Nick O'Neill, defeated Origlass and Wyner, who had been in a new situation of having to face an ALP Left ticket.³

The political backgrounds of Hume, Greenland, Roxborough, Jones and Crawford have been explained in the chapters above. Robyn Floyd's background in Rozelle East branch

² Wheelright, 'New South Wales: the dominant Right', passim; Hagan and Turner, *A History of the Labor Party*, part 4, passim. See also *Challenge* for this period, for example issues of 13/11/81 and 18/12/81 as well as *Abuse of Power*, passim.

³ Solling and Reynolds, *Leichhardt*, pp 248-249; See various reports and campaign advertisements on local elections in *The Glebe*, August-September 1980; Allan, R and Buckell, J., 'City Voters Stay with Labor' plus additional reports on 1980 Municipal elections, *SMH*, 22/9/80, pp 1,6 and 10.

has also been briefly discussed above. She, along with her partner Al Svirskis, had been involved in the Rozelle East branch. Floyd had come to Sydney University from the country in the late sixties and after three years of an Arts degree, went to Newcastle to complete her Diploma of Education. There she met Al Svirskis, the son of Latvian immigrants who had been brought up in Newcastle. Both Floyd and Svirskis were active against conscription and the Vietnam war and both joined the ALP in Newcastle at the beginning of the seventies. Shortly after they moved to Sydney where Floyd began teaching, they were able to buy a timber cottage in Rozelle. Floyd became involved in a local resident action group in the early seventies and, like many others who moved in at this time, both she and Svirskis revelled in the inner city life. This included jazz at the Unity Hall Hotel, site of the first Labor Electoral League meeting in 1891, and theatre. Both were to become activists in the Teachers' Federation and, as explained in chapter three, were marginalised, along with a handful of other members of the middle class Left, in the Casey controlled Rozelle East branch. The restructuring of that branch, the departure of Casey, and the withholding of Party endorsement, gave the Left the opportunity to win the ward at the council elections. Floyd's running mate for the 'Honest Labor' reform ticket was Geoff Stevens, a scientist working on the Synroc system for disposal of nuclear waste at the Atomic Energy Commission. He would come to council with a concern for the environmental effects of the re-opening of the White Bay and Pyrmont power stations.⁴

The remaining key figure of the Left on Council was the new deputy mayor, Nick O'Neill. Nick and his partner Annette O'Neill, had moved into Balmain in the mid-seventies and re-joined the ALP there just as the Left was gaining the upper hand. Both Nick and Annette had joined the ALP in 1967 in Melbourne, just after they got married. They met while students at Melbourne University. Annette had been brought up in the country. Her mother, as a child in Queensland, had played with the young Fred Paterson, who later in life was elected to the Queensland parliament as a member of the Communist Party. Annette went

⁴ Robyn Floyd; Al Svirskis. See also *Open Council*, LMC newsletter, No. 3 June/July 1981 and *The Glebe*: 'White Bay Power Station at Ready', 7/5/80, p 9; 'Power Station Claim Blasted', 12/11/80, p 5 and 'Hills

to university to study social work. Nick O'Neill had come from a working class family and went to a Catholic school before studying law. After university the O'Neills moved to Papua Niugini where Nick O'Neill had got a job with the public solicitor's office. In the early seventies they both moved on to London to undertake post-graduate work, Nick in law and Annette in town planning.⁵

On returning to Australia and moving into Balmain, Nick O'Neill took up a teaching position with the Institute of Technology (now the University of Technology) and Annette worked part-time and concentrated on bringing up their three children. They both sought out the Balmain branch to renew their membership in 1977. Nick O'Neill became active almost immediately in the issue of opening up the harbour foreshores to public open space; this was through the Four (sic) Shores Committee, a local action group which was organising around this issue from the Harbour Bridge to Iron Cove. This led him to an interest in local town planning and the desire to run for council.⁶

When the new council assembled in Leichhardt Council chambers at the beginning of October 1980 the barrier to the public gallery was brought down in symbolic assertion of the return to 'open council' of the early seventies. The first resident to avail himself of this situation was Origlass who moved forward and sat at the end of the council table where he remained as the 'thirteenth alderman' for the next three and a half years. Evan Jones was elected as Mayor and Nick O'Neill as Deputy. The council set about trying to reform the council structure and set up new ones aimed at carrying out the Left oriented social objectives. By the time the council came to its end in early 1984, Mayor Evan Jones was able to claim that the pro-development and administratively "unsavoury" image, inherited from the old Right-dominated council had been thoroughly cleaned up. Some staff members seen as loyal to the ways of the old council had been replaced and selection processes favouring "those best qualified" as opposed to a "Jobs for the Boys" had been

Blunders in Defence of Power Stations', 26/11/80, p 9.

⁵ Recorded interview with Nick O'Neill and Annette O'Neill, 17/11/99.

instituted. Much of this “restructured and efficient administration” flowed from council’s gradual implementation of the recommendations of a 1979 NSW Local Government Inspectors’ report and the beginnings of the kind of ‘corporate’ approach to administration of the public sector that would develop at all levels of government throughout the 1980’s. There was a new Town Clerk, now styled Town Clerk/General Manager, as well as new town planning staff, a new head of community services and a housing officer.⁷

In the environment and planning area, the council claimed to have increased open space by 15 per cent, as well as effectively controlled development to oppose high-rise, limit population densities and “ensure compatibility with the area”. In the welfare field, the council had initiated a seminar on housing problems, developed a policy to restrict strata titling of existing rental flat accommodation (to protect tenants) and had supported the conversion of a migrant hostel in Annandale for low income housing. Children’s services were expanded, community centres upgraded and migrant services extended. The council also successfully campaigned for the closure of White Bay Power station and against the proposal for a second harbour crossing which had at the time, been proposed to connect at Balmain. The only really sour note in the council’s 1984 claims was: “No more hostile residents. Residents and representatives work together for the benefit of the area”. This was an oblique reference to the fact that for the first two years of the council, its deliberations were characterised by a split within the eight, Left aldermen; with Greenland of Annandale regularly in conflict with the other seven.⁸

⁶ Nick O’Neill.

⁷ See reports in *The Glebe*, 8/10/80; Greenland, *Red Hot* p pp290-291; Solling and Reynolds, Leichhardt, pp 248-249; ‘Why Leichhardt leads in Local Government’, detailed ALP election advertisement setting out council’s achievements, quoting the mayor and authorised by Geoff Stevens, *The Glebe*, 11/4/94, p 26. See also editions of *Open Council*, LMC newsletter to residents, 1981 passim. The writer was present at the first and many subsequent meetings of the new council and was involved in the debates that emerged around the council’s policy approaches, particularly within the Annandale branch.

⁸ ‘Why Leichhardt Leads’; see also various reports in *The Glebe* for 1980-1984; Harris, T., ‘the trouble with open council is you have to listen’, *Hard Labor* No. 3, January 1983 (copy in writer’s papers).

The tension emanating from the politics of the Annandale branch (as discussed in chapter two) was in evidence before the new council assembled. There was lingering resentment from many in the branch and in the wider Baldwin-Crawford camp about the replacement of Rocks and Kelly who, along with Leichhardt's Evan Jones, had been integral to the campaign against the Right-dominated council. The more libertarian Left group around Greenland, Harris and others in Annandale, for its part, was resentful of the marginalisation of Origlass and Wyner from the Labor Left political victory.

With a Left branch in Balmain after 1978 there was a degree of inevitability that the middle class Left would field a team in the 1980 preselections and elections for the Balmain ward. However many of the Origlass and Wyner supporters inside and outside the Party wanted to see them re-elected as a vindication of their long political stand against the Right. In Annandale this was reinforced by the close personal friendships among the libertarian Left group, especially people like Greenland, Eliot and Harris who were close to the Balmain aldermen. Crawford had tried to persuade Origlass and Wyner to contest the neighbouring Rozelle ward but they had refused to do so. This division was also reflected in the push from Annandale that Head Office should be pressured to withhold endorsements across the whole municipality. Allowing a variety of Labor candidates to contest the municipal election was seen as consistent with the participatory democracy tradition of 'open council'. It was also seen as a way to focus on policy issues in the electorate rather than the arcane struggles over Party rules and the discomfiting over-emphasis, from a libertarian socialist perspective, on the 'criminality' of the Right. Implicitly, there was also a belief that 'no endorsements' would create a greater opportunity for Origlass and Wyner to return to council as part of a Left victory and perhaps rejoin the ALP.⁹

⁹ The Annandale branch advocated a 'no-endorsement' policy (where any ALP member can contest an election, provided that they swap preferences) throughout the 1970's though only on a consistent, municipality-wide basis. In the absence of this situation, the branch supported endorsement of pre-selected candidates in 1974, 1977 and 1980. The 'no-endorsement' position was also, on occasion supported elsewhere. See minutes of Balmain Branch 9/8/76, copy in Credentials Committee, 1967-78, *ALPR*, MLMSS 5095/481, and Annandale Branch Minutes, 4/8/80 *ALPR*. See also Harris, T., 'A Tale of Two Suburbs', *Hard Labor* No. 2, September 1980 and Greenland and Harris, *Politics on the Block*, (copies of these in the writers papers) and Peter Crawford.

This debate was characterised by an emerging struggle for the ‘political memory’ of the Left’s battle against the Right. To the Baldwin and Crawford forces, the crumbling of the Right was due to their efforts in recruitment within the branches on the Balmain-Leichhardt ridge. It was also due to the campaign against the ‘roting’ of membership records by the Right, and the role played by Kelly, Rocks and Jones in the dying days of the 1977-80 council. All this was underscored by the assault on Baldwin. The Origlass-Annandale libertarian push sought to assert another memory, that of the extra-parliamentary, resident action movements of the late sixties and seventies and the role of the 1971 to 1973 council when Origlass was mayor. These two political memories were not necessarily mutually exclusive but were becoming so as the new council convened.¹⁰

The new council came to office carrying the high expectations of local residents generated in the town planning debates of the 1970’s. These were the intent of the 1971-1974 Outline Town Plan, the attempts by the Labor Right to re-instate higher density and high rise development in the 1976 and 1979 plans and the immediate threat of Interim Development Order Number 27. The latter had given the 1979 proposals interim legal force. Just prior to the 1980 elections about 16,000 local residents had petitioned against the 1979 plan and the Rodwell-led council had been forced to appoint a commissioner, Jim Coleman, to hear these objections. Coleman reported to the new council in 1981, criticising the high densities and recommending a more environmentally and socially acceptable approach. The new council made it clear from its first meeting that it would oppose the 1979 plan. It announced that it would seek to control development, imposing a height restriction of two floors and taking into account conservation and heritage issues as well as traffic, amenity and general social and environmental concerns. Council also spelt out its approach to re-zoning commercial land, the likely sites for new development:

Council will not recommend the rezoning of any land within the municipality, except rezoning for open space, unless such rezoning

¹⁰ Greenland and Harris, *Politics on the Block* (writer’s papers); Peter Crawford. See also, copy of Crawford and O’Neill campaign leaflet, 1980 Municipal elections in Origlass Papers, SLNSW, MLMSS, 6614/8.

will clearly benefit the residents and ratepayers of the Municipality as a whole.¹¹

It was this issue of the conversion of commercial sites to housing and the approach that council should take, that was at the centre of the town planning problems faced by council and through which division would emerge. With rising land values and the re-location or decline of many traditional inner city industries, companies sought to have their sites redeveloped for housing. This would allow them to reap huge profits, the more intensively the land was developed, the larger the returns. Council and the residents generally, preferred to retain an industrial zoning or see these areas zoned for open space. Open space, and in particular waterfront open space, was a major demand of resident action groups and the middle class Left in the ALP throughout the 1970's. Leichhardt was among those municipalities in Sydney with the least amount of open space per resident. However the zonings and densities of the 1979 plan proposals together with the provisions of the Interim Development Order were generous to developers and allowed them to push ahead with development applications and appeal to the new Land and Environment Court if council refused or imposed unacceptable conditions. Developers could also apply pressure by threatening to upgrade existing operations, with offensive side effects such as traffic. Council had to deal with these applications in the short run, and in the long run work on a new Local Environment Plan. However the state government had to approve any plan changes and was emerging as pro-development generally and committed to the idea of 'urban consolidation'.¹²

¹¹ Minutes of LMC, 7/10/80. See also Solling and Reynolds, Leichhardt, pp 247-249; *The Glebe*: 'Warning to flats developers', 15/10/80, p 24 and 'Leichhardt Scheme "Useless": Expert Says Dump It', 29/4/81, p 5. Interim Development Order No. 27, Municipality of Leichhardt, Local Government Act 1919, NSW *Government Gazette* No 52, 12/4/79. See also references to town planning issues below.

¹² Bonyhady, T., 'The Battle for Balmain' in Troy, P., *Australian Cities: Issues, Strategies and Politics for Urban Australia in the 1990's*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne 1995 pp 112-141 passim. Bonyhady's article deals with the dispute between Leichhardt Council and the Liberal state government over the development of the 'five sites' in Balmain at the end of the 1980's and early 1990's but provides insight into the general problems of town planning in this area in the lead up to this. See also Solling and Reynolds, Leichhardt, pp 236-238 and pp 247- 249; Greenland, *Red Hot*, Chs. 22 – 26 passim; interview with Hall Greenland; the writer.

The urban consolidation policy developed throughout the eighties and was aimed at trying to halt Sydney's urban sprawl and reverse the population decline in the inner city suburbs, hopefully resulting in a use of urban infrastructure that was more economical and environmentally sustainable. Leichhardt Municipality's population had declined from 71,000 to 57,000 between 1971 and 1981. However this had been related to declining occupancy rates for housing, that is, less people per dwelling. Any attempt to reverse this through new development would mean a scale or intensity of development that would come into conflict with demands by residents for open space. It would also generate traffic problems in the context of rising motor vehicle ownership. This was compounded by the pressure by developers to maximise the return on their residential developments. Further, as urbanist and Balmain ALP member Leonie Sandercock argued, there was no guarantee that urban consolidation would impact on the growing urban inequalities. New inner city residential development would be high cost and only affordable to the middle class.¹³

There was little disagreement among the middle class Left alderman that the pressure from this kind of development should be resisted. The question was how and what degree of compromise should be offered to the developers in the short term, and the state government in the longer term, planning review process. It was here that the division between Greenland and the 'seven' opened up. Greenland, supported from Annandale, and encouraged by Origlass and objectors to developments in the public gallery, sought to return to the campaigning style of the 1971-73 council and the general 'direct action' political climate that had sustained it. As far as the short-term problem was concerned, this approach was one of staunch opposition to these new developments, and support for acquisition of commercial land for open space or other public uses. This should, it was argued, be coupled with the longer term demand on state government to back the Council

¹³ Bonyhady, 'The Battle for Balmain' *passim*; Smythe, R., 'Urban Consolidation Cowboys: Some Notes and Lessons from Balmain', *Inner Voice*, Winter 1992, pp 16-17; Sorensen, A., 'The False promise of Urban Consolidation', *Policy*, Vol. 5, No. 2, Winter 1989, pp 19-21; 'Urban Consolidation: LGPA Policy and Action Statement' and Sandercock, L., 'Urban Development on the Cheap', *Plan*, December January 1983, pp 13-17. Sandercock is mentioned in the Annandale Branch Minutes of 11/10/82 as attending the branch to speak on the 'pitfalls of urban consolidation'. See also Solling and Reynolds, *Leichhardt*, pp 247-249 and p 253.

up in limiting development through density controls in a new plan. On the other hand, the 'seven', in varying degrees, sought to try and exact the maximum concessions they could from the developers in terms of the scale of development and open space contribution as well as concessions from the state government in the longer term planning review. An added incentive for negotiating with developers was council's financial problems and the need to avoid legal costs associated with Court challenges. These financial constraints, it was argued, also limited council's ability to buy land for open space. Alan Robertson, of the Glebe Society, characterised the problem from the council majority's point of view in the Society's bulletin. He was reporting on a council compromise over the development of the A.W. Edwards and Pabco sites on the border of Forest Lodge and Annandale, the first big development conflict between Greenland and the seven. It would have cost council \$3.8 million to buy for open space:

The council's original impulse to oppose all development applications has had to be modified in view of the considerable cost, and the council is now tending to reach a compromise with developers on cases which they could not hope to win before the Tribunal.¹⁴

This approach was also underscored by a closer relationship by the seven aldermen to the traditional political culture of 'Labor in Government', reliance on caucus decisions and negotiation with a state Labor government. This is an approach that in all probability was a consequence of the intra-party nature of the political conflict against the Right, along the Balmain-Leichhardt ridge and the common experience and connections engendered by it. Annandale on the other hand had been more isolated from this and the local political experiences of its members were more located in the optimism of the early to mid seventies, the extra-party politics of this era, and the experience of the 1971-1973 council. In the interests of open council, binding caucus decisions were not being enforced but the

¹⁴ Robertson, A., AGM Planning Report, *Glebe Society Bulletin*, No 7, 1981. See also *The Glebe*: 'Federal MP Attacks Planned Home Units', 15/4/81, p 12; 'Leichhardt Council in the Red by Year's End', 5/8/81, p 17; 'Residents Vote No More Flats', 14/7/82, p 11. See also LMC Minutes, 7/4/81; Hall Greenland; the writer.

eight Left aldermen continued to meet in a 'kitchen caucus' from which Greenland, who consistently opposed its decisions, was ultimately excluded.¹⁵

As the divisions widened, Greenland's opposition was not confined to town planning issues and extended to matters such as opposition to expenditure on consultants and the trend towards corporatisation. He also criticised the pressure placed on council staff, deemed to be associated with the old Right, to resign. This had included the head of the welfare department and son of federal MP Les McMahon. He also attacked disciplinary action taken against council staff for insubordination and 'over-use' of sick leave. As Greenland remembered it:

I got away with murder, I continually broke caucus; not only the general caucus of twelve but I was for a while in the Left wing caucus of eight and they expelled me from that. I was a terror in those times, I was obsessed. I spent an enormous amount of time combing through the files and business papers ... to get information on anything that came before council.

...

I did a lot of homework, made speeches every night; the gallery was against them. I think they were all wrong but some of the fault was on my side ... I should have combined it with an attempt to win some of them over.¹⁶

With little support for Greenland from branches elsewhere in the municipality, the battle on council was mirrored in an intense and increasingly bitter debate inside the Annandale branch with Greenland and Hume giving rival municipal reports and a broader developing factional division between the 'Baldwinites' and the pro-Greenland Annandale Left. The frustration at the domination of branch time by local government matters led some members including Barry Cotter, future mayor of Marrickville, but then an ACOA union official, to complain about the amount of time spent on local government. Hume's memory

¹⁵ Hall Greenland; the writer. The term 'kitchen caucus' was used in the 'Bunyip' column, *The Glebe*, 14/7/82, p 3.

¹⁶ Hall Greenland. See for example LMC Minutes; 1/9/81; 1/12/81; 15/12/81; 2/2/82. See also references to staff changes and resignation of John McMahon and others from council, *The Glebe*, 20/1/82, p 4 and 27/1/82, p 2.

of Greenland's approach to council affairs emphasised the sense of frustration felt by the 'seven':

The division between the rest of the aldermen and Hall was simply that no one could work with him. I think there were 158 resolutions that we discussed at caucus and he opposed 158 of them; it was impossible to work with such a person. He not only objected in caucus, he talked against it in council. We didn't do anything about that, we left him alone, we didn't charge him or anything.¹⁷

O'Neill, deputy mayor, and the dominant figure in formulating Council's town planning approach, also recalled the divisions:

There were a few of us who had an idea of what we wanted to achieve on council and that was Geoff Stevens, Bill Hume, who'd been on the [1971-1974] council, Jock Roxborough to a degree and myself having a fairly clear idea of what we wanted to do. We wanted to get a clean council. We wanted to get open space issues taken up ... we also wanted to get a town plan ... and imported [new town planner] Harry Berchevais and his job was to draw up a town plan so that council would have a much more effective say and better represent the views of people about redevelopment. But it was never going to be possible to go to what Nick Origlass was then espousing, it was just simply not on and some of us didn't actually believe that that was a sensible approach anyway.¹⁸

Origlass and Greenland were basically arguing for a new town plan with blanket density control of 125 persons per hectare and a two-floor limit on development. The density controls would, they argued, have made it uneconomic for developers, but they were well below those desired by the state government under its urban consolidation goals. These were in the order of 200-250 persons per hectare. O'Neill went on to characterise Greenland's "all or nothing approach":

Hall got more and more isolated on council because ... he's got this magnificent gift of being able to speak very effectively and on any

¹⁷ Bill Hume. See also Annandale Branch Minutes, 9/3/81 and passim for period, September 1980 to early 1983 including the 1982 president's, and 1983 secretary's, annual reports (referred to in Ch. 2 above), *ALPR*. See also Barry Cotter; the writer.

¹⁸ Nick O'Neill.

issue but he didn't really do much more than that ... and he was very often in a minority of one.¹⁹

Reflecting on the experience of his time on council, and the later environmental debates in Balmain, O'Neill framed the problem of compromise facing council and local residents as he saw it:

There's always a tension between the pragmatic people who want a good result but who believe that you can't always achieve 100 per cent of what you want and other people on your side who are pushing a bit further. At what point do you make the compromise? Do better? Worse? ... if you hang out a bit longer maybe you get a slightly better deal. If you hang out too long, you lose the whole bloody lot.²⁰

Leichhardt alderman, Jock Roxborough also expressed his frustration with the general approach by Origlass, Greenland and the Annandale libertarians:

I could never work out why Hall and your team [to the interviewer] and Nick bothered about the Labor Party, I mean that used to really get under my skin because even though I was probably belting the Right around I was still loyal to the Labor Party; but Issy and Nick and Hall and yourself were at times openly hostile to the Labor Party but I couldn't understand why you bothered.²¹

The relationship between Greenland and his supporters in Annandale and the Left dominated Council reached its low point in early 1982 when members of the branch invaded an early morning adjourned meeting of the council. In one of the most bizarre episodes of the period, they disrupted the council meeting by using portable radios and by trying to turn off the council's loud speaker system. This incident included an undignified altercation in which the council's new head of town planning put one of the Annandale members in a headlock! The previous night the council had refused to back Annandale

¹⁹ Nick O'Neill. See also: Hall Greenland; Annandale Branch Minutes, of 9/3/81 where the branch carried a resolution calling for council to immediately seek an amendment of the Local Environment Plan to limit densities to 125 persons per hectare. Carried by 27 votes to 8. *ALPR*. See also April 1984 Origlass and Wyner campaign leaflet critical of performance of 1980-84 council, Origlass Papers, SLNSW MLMSS, 6614/8; the writer and writer's papers.

²⁰ Nick O'Neill.

²¹ Jock Roxborough.

locals' demand to seek to acquire the old Beale's piano factory, a stately, late nineteenth century industrial building in Annandale for a community centre, library, open space and some public housing. The current commercial occupants, James North, wanted to re-develop it as storage units. The locals wanted council to put up some money for purchase, but also pressure the state government to assist. When council refused the residents' demand, the one-hundred and fifty or so present that night had brought the council meeting to a halt by slow hand-clapping. After this incident council did try and push ahead and pressure the state government, unsuccessfully. In the aftermath of the incident, mayor Evan Jones, publicly attacked Greenland and accused him of seeking to embarrass the council with the intent of bringing about its dismissal by the state government. He questioned whether Greenland should be in the Labor Party.²²

The four Right aldermen used the developing situation on council and threatened to resign in the apparent hope that the state government would step in and appoint an administrator. This was potentially a prelude to amalgamation with another council area, something that was being examined at the time. It was also around the time that state minister, Pat Hills, was attacking the Left and Leichhardt Council over the 'branch stacking' situation in Glebe (mentioned in chapter four). In the Annandale branch, Harris attempted to locate the town planning and development issue in the broader socialist framework of the "defence of a Labor community" by proposing an "Anti-Development Strike". This was a proposal for a general blocking of all development applications as a catalyst for a public campaign. The aim was to link an anti-development stance to the wider issues of urban inequality and (Labor) state and (Liberal) federal government expenditure cuts impacting on health, public housing and transport. The defeat of this somewhat omnibus and cathartic resolution in

²² Hall Greenland, Nick O'Neill, the writer. Greenland, H., 'a letter to ALP members in Leichhardt Municipality', in Harris, T., *Hard Labor Productions* circular (undated, c April 1982, copy in writers papers); 'Council Uproar Orchestrated', *The Glebe* 24/3/82, pp 1,5; 'Council Caves in to pressure on James North site', *The Glebe*, 14/4/82, p 5; 'Mayor, Greenland Feud Flares Again', *The Glebe*, 28/4/82, p 17. Minutes of LMC, 16-17/3/82; Solling and Reynolds, *Leichhardt*, pp 127-128.

Annandale branch emphasised the declining branch support for the libertarian socialist grouping that had dominated the branch since the mid seventies.²³

In October 1982, Greenland was given permission by the NSW ALP to resign from council. In his letter of resignation to mayor, Evan Jones, he referred to the workload of an alderman, “the unavoidable and intense pre-occupation with the issues involved” and the impact that this situation of being “one out” on council had on his personal life. He also referred to the “honour and satisfaction” of operating in the “tradition established by Nick Origlass and Issy Wyner” and went on:

I am as convinced as ever that residents want a Council which is open and guided by majority opinion, and which does not seek to impose its views on residents ...

That the present Council is not such a Council was confirmed at our last meeting when it was decided, behind closed doors to increase the powers and status of the Town Clerk and of Council’s only closed committee. This backward step, as far as public participation was concerned, was further compounded when you gagged any discussion of these decisions in open council.

While there is still much to be done, I cannot continue my lone hand on Council at the expense of those closest to me.²⁴

Floyd recalled her reaction to Greenland’s resignation:

I was stunned when Hall resigned, absolutely stunned. He used to irritate me but a lot of what he was doing was right. I think a lot of what he was doing was wrong too. I used to consider him a sort of “socialist in your own back yard” kind of person and I was critical

²³ Harris, T., ‘the case for an anti-development strike’ and Greenland, H., ‘a letter to ALP members in Leichhardt Municipality’, in Harris, T., *Hard Labor Productions* circular (undated, c April 1982, copy in writer’s papers); Minutes of Annandale Branch, 10/5/82, *ALPR*. A statement by the four Right Aldermen, Les Rodwell, Ernie Baldwin, Ivor Cawley and George Millard, seeking Head Office approval to resign is located in Head Office Correspondence with Leichhardt Municipal Committee, *ALPR*, MLMSS 5095/82. See chapter four above for the context of the criticism of Leichhardt Council by Pat Hills.

²⁴ A copy of Greenland’s resignation letter, 19/9/82, is in Head Office Correspondence with Leichhardt Municipal Committee, *ALPR*, MLMSS 5095/82.

about his constant “well lets put it back to the residents, let’s see what the residents say”. That irritated me.²⁵

Some years later, Greenland met Nick O’Neill and asked him why he (O’Neill) had not sought a further term on council at the 1984 municipal elections. O’Neill’s response probably typified the more general political exhaustion being felt by the Left aldermen. As Greenland remembered it, O’Neill replied with words to the effect that: “you just wore me out, you wore that whole council out”. By then, Greenland, Harris and many of the libertarian Left in Annandale had left the Labor Party and were involved in The Greens. However, the divisions which had opened during this early period on Leichhardt Council were only part of wider divisions that emerged around the preselection for the federal seat of Sydney in late 1981 and that for the state seat of Balmain in 1983.²⁶

The Pre-selection of the Two Peters I: Peter Baldwin.

In late 1981, the NSW Administrative Committee of the ALP called preselections for a number of federal seats including the seat of Sydney. These were called early in part to try and forestall a victory for the Left in Sydney. Voting in a preselection is among those branch members with 12 months membership and attendance at a minimum of three branch meetings in the last year. Many of the most recent ‘Baldwinite’ recruits would be ruled out. But so too would some of the more outrageous ‘rorted’ memberships that had been brought to book in the aftermath of Baldwin’s bashing, particularly those in Danny Casey’s home branch of Rozelle East. In these circumstances the voting list was probably a balanced representation of the inner city membership. Over 650 members in 26 branches throughout the federal seat of Sydney would cast their votes, approximately half of these in the nine branches of Leichhardt Municipality. Four candidates would contest the pre-selection: the Right-wing incumbent Les McMahon; two candidates representing rival tendencies within

²⁵ Robyn Floyd.

²⁶ Hall Greenland; the writer; see also chapter seven below for references to The Greens.

the main Left faction, the Steering Committee, Peter Baldwin and Ann Catling, and one libertarian Left candidate from Annandale, Tony Harris.²⁷

The preselection campaign through the branches ran for about a month before the ballot on November 28. Looking back at the policy positions of the Left candidates through the prism of neo-liberal, Labor governments in office in the eighties and nineties, the stated differences between the candidates can appear small. However it was the nuances in these attempts to more clearly formulate a Left political 'vision' that provided portents of the deeper divisions within the Left as the eighties progressed. In his campaign letter to branch members Baldwin was keen to address the perception that his pre-occupation was with numbers crunching and cleaning up the ALP branches rather than policy. While explaining the history behind his activity during the seventies, leading up to the climax of the assault, he sought also to emphasise the importance of this struggle in creating an environment for the development of socialist policies. It was these policy preoccupations that had originally drawn him into the Labor Party:

The conditions for rational, civilised policy debate [in the branches] simply did not exist; and the same could be said of meetings of the Sydney Federal Electorate Council, where the thug elements from the various branches would converge. To talk of having serious policy discussions under these conditions was rather like talking of 'policy discussions' in the beer halls of Munich during the 1930's.²⁸

He also sought to justify the intensification of recruitment that developed in the aftermath of the assault upon him in mid 1980:

The assault created a climate where Head Office was forced to shut down the worst of the corrupt branches. But this would have been of no consequence had the old 'machine' been able to regain control when they were reformed. I was an active participant in a massive organisational exercise, involving the recruitment of 350 new members to the party, to ensure this did not occur. These are the

²⁷ Reports in *Challenge*, 16/10/81, pp 1-3; 13/11/81, pp 1-3; 4/12/81, p 1; 'Labor Swiftie Saves McMahon', *The Glebe*, 14/10/81, p 5. See appendix A notes on electoral boundaries.

²⁸ Baldwin., P, Peter Baldwin for Sydney, Letter to ALP branch members, copy in writer's papers. See also interview with Peter Baldwin.

events that have made it conceivable for a person holding a left position in the ALP to win the Sydney preselection.²⁹

Baldwin then went on to elaborate on the political and ideological principles, which, he hoped, would revive the “dead letter” of the party’s Socialist Objective:

In the aftermath of the 1977 federal election debacle, a significant section of the Party advocated ditching even a nominal commitment to socialisation, and modelling the party on some of the more successful West European Social-Democratic parties.

The key distinction here is between those who say that full, employment, equalisation of income and wealth, industrial democracy, environmental protection, full equality for women and other desirable goals are compatible with private ownership of the major means of production, distribution and exchange, and those who deny this. I am firmly in the latter camp.³⁰

Baldwin went on to link the traditional socialist demand for nationalisation to industrial democracy. He also sought to link this to the need to deal with the structural shifts in the Australian economy, such as from manufacturing to more capital-intensive mining, which were likely to create unemployment. He cited the “Meidner Plan” in Sweden, providing for transfer of ownership of firms to workers employed in them, and the attempt by the Lucas Aerospace workers in Britain to develop an “Alternate Corporate Plan” to deal with rationalisation, as examples of the kind of “concrete” policies that Labor would have to develop.³¹

Baldwin went on to support federal government legislation to “improve the status of women, blacks, migrants and other groups in the community subject to some form of discrimination or disadvantage” and came out in support of women’s right to abortion (which was disputed by many from the Party’s Catholic Right). He also emphasised the importance of “resisting the current federal government’s erosion” of the “social wage”, a

²⁹ Baldwin, Peter Baldwin for Sydney.

³⁰ Baldwin, Peter Baldwin for Sydney.

concept then central to the emerging negotiations between the ALP and the union movement over what would become The Accord. In the context of the federal seat of Sydney, he emphasised that the “only way, in the long term, that significant numbers of working class people will be able to enjoy inner-city life is by a comprehensive program of public housing, in which the federal government should be a major participant”.³²

On the foreign policy front, Baldwin gave expression to the general Left opposition to Australian links to American foreign policy. This, in particular, focussed on the US military communications facilities at Pine Gap and North West Cape. He supported non-alignment as regards the super-powers, and support of the aspirations of the people of the Third World.³³

Thus Baldwin was able to link his ‘branch-stacking’ activity to his underlying policy concerns. It also should not be forgotten that by being a key figure in the setting up of *Challenge* newspaper, and contributing to ideological and policy discussion within its pages, Baldwin could justifiably refute any claims that he was just a ‘numbers cruncher’. In a mirror image of the problem confronting Baldwin, Catling set out to establish her credentials for the seat in the context of a view from the ‘Baldwinites’ that she was an interloper, trying to ride to office on the backs of the hard working recruiters.

Catling emphasised her formal qualifications as an economist in charge of the overseas economic conditions section of the Reserve Bank, but also focussed on her policy work in the ALP. She was president of the Balmain branch at the time of the preselections and had been an active member of the branch, and the ALP, since 1975. Catling had also, for the past five years, been a member of the Executive of the Reserve Bank Division of the Commonwealth Bank Officers Association. She sought to further combat the view of her lack of political credentials by pointing out that her involvement was in a different sphere.

³¹ Baldwin, Peter Baldwin for Sydney.

³² Baldwin, Peter Baldwin for Sydney.

She had, for example, been involved in the development of the ALP's uranium policy and had been active in forming Labor Against Uranium. Catling emphasised that on the policy front, the "ALP's stand on the economy is central" and argued for policies "which set out specifically to protect and defend the interests of working people, and aim for an independent economy with an equitable distribution of wealth and power". She went on:

To carry out the socialist objective of the Party, as adopted at the 1981 National Conference, the role of the public sector must be expanded so that under the direction of Labor, with the cooperation of the trade union movement, the Australian people have effective control over the economic system and their society.

In controlling the pace and pattern of natural resource development Labor must give priority to protecting the quality of our environment and preserving Australia's unique natural heritage.³⁴

She argued for the defence of Australia's manufacturing industries and a resistance to foreign ownership and control over the pace and form of mineral development. On the industrial front Catling supported full wage indexation and productivity gains for workers and a dismantling of the Fraser federal government's "repressive industrial legislation". Much of this was similar to the approach taken by Baldwin but a difference was emerging over the relationship of the ALP to the unions:

I see it as important to forge more effective, close links with the trade union movement, and do not support suggestions that the party distance itself from the union movement. To meet the challenge that Australia now faces requires a working coalition of Parliamentary and industrial labour.³⁵

Catling was drawing much support from the established leadership of the Steering Committee, particularly through her close association with former Whitlam Urban Affairs Minister, Tom Uren. This was a leadership with close links to the Left unions affiliated to the ALP such as the metal workers', waterfront and building unions. Catling, as an

³³ Baldwin, Peter Baldwin for Sydney.

³⁴ Catling, A., Federal Preselection- 28 November 1981, letter to ALP branch members, copy in writer's papers. See also interview with Ann Catling.

economist, had contributed to the preparation of the Metal Workers Union pamphlet on the economy; *Australia Up-rooted*. Many of the Left branch recruiters like Baldwin, Crawford and state MP Rodney Cavalier were mooted proposals aimed at reducing the role of unions in the Party; though admittedly, this was in the context of a domination of the ALP union delegations, and the NSW Labor Council, by Right-wing unions. Baldwin for example was reputed to favour allowing only ALP members in unions elect union delegates to the NSW ALP Conference. Others supported a reduction in the proportion of union delegates at state conference from 60 to 50 percent and some 'Baldwinite' dominated ALP branches carried resolutions to that effect.³⁶

Catling went on to raise local issues relevant to the federal sphere such as the proposals to expand Sydney airport, health services and the use of government lands. She also argued "that branches can play an active role in their local community around progressive issues and in mobilising support for Labor's policies between elections" and that she saw a federal member as having a special role in stimulating this activity. Catling concluded by emphasising the Party's need to take account of areas of concern to women:

As a woman in Federal Parliament, I would feel a particular responsibility to ensure that the views and priorities of rank-and-file women members of the Party are properly carried through to the federal level. I would use my position actively to foster the greater involvement of women and to achieve equitable representation of them at all levels within the Party, as well as to encourage women to join the ALP.³⁷

The third Left candidate, Tony Harris from Annandale, put together a campaign based on a sometimes uneasy relationship between the Annandale based libertarian socialists and other

³⁵ Catling, Federal Preselection.

³⁶ Ann Catling; Harris, T., *Social Chauvinism: An analysis of the 'new order' in the ALP branches of the inner city of Sydney*, September, 1983, pp 34 (monograph circulated inside the ALP, copy in writer's papers). See also Minutes of Lilyfield ALP Branch, 23/11/81 re that branch's carriage of a resolution calling for a reduction in the proportion of union delegates to state conference to 50 per cent. See also, Leigh, 'Factions and Fractions', pp 437-438. See also *Australia Up-rooted*, Combined Research Centre, Amalgamated Metal Workers and Shipwrights Union (Australia), Sydney 1977.

³⁷ Catling, Federal Preselection.

supporters, and the more traditional Trotskyist connections. These included the Socialist Leadership group of Bob Gould and state MP George Petersen, the Labour Militant Group and Socialist Fight. The latter was associated with two members of the Rozelle East branch, Janet Burstall and Tony Brown. The Harris campaign was based on the slogan “A Socialist for Sydney” and sought to present a more overtly extra-parliamentary approach, distancing itself from what was argued to be the “top-heavy” vision of Baldwin and Catling. Both of these were seen as emphasising a subordinate role for the labour movement rank-and-file, within a parliamentarist approach and a vision of state-centred socialism. While covering much of the same ground in terms of traditional Left Labor policies, Harris sought to push an approach of “self-managed socialism” that promoted “an extension of democracy to every sphere of life, not just the limited democracy of parliamentary elections”. The Harris campaign emphasised the subordination of parliamentary reforms, and the role of the parliamentarian, to the extra-parliamentary movement. It was expressed in the apocalyptic language of revolutionary socialism:

Socialism cannot be legislated. Labor Governments can, however undertake socialist-oriented policies – transitional ‘anti-capitalist’ reforms. Reforms that will win real ground for Labor and at the same time confront and place strain on the bosses.

These reforms *will* invite political retaliation by the enemy – particularly given the crisis capital is in. Even the modest reforms of the Whitlam period produced enormous response from the ruling class.

Such a conflict will be inevitable and in fact is essential. When it occurs there will be no ‘constitutional’ solutions.

It will be necessary for a Labor Party and Government to mobilise the movement and gain ground by direct means – strikes, occupations and demonstrations’,³⁸

³⁸ See copies of Harris’ two campaign broadsheets distributed to party members in writers papers: ‘A Socialist for Sydney’ and ‘What Kind of Victory’

The “Socialist for Sydney” Campaign drew on the contemporary images and experience of industrial and political revolt then taking place in Poland and argued that “we must work towards an Australian *Solidarity*”. This was linked to a defence of the relationship with the unions in the ALP and support for a widening Party democracy. It was proposed that all affiliated union members be able to vote in preselections, that Party rules be democratised and simplified, and that the election of Party leaders should be by state and federal conferences, similar to the situation then developing in the British Labour Party. The campaign also sought to link wider urban environmental and social concerns, and federal spending priorities, to the resident participation approach to local government which was being pushed through the Annandale branch and Greenland’s approach on Leichhardt Council.³⁹

The nature of the Harris campaign was a ‘let’s see who’s out there’ approach to the new branch memberships. The most that practically could be hoped for was to ‘stir the pot’ and try and have some influence, through preferences, on the outcome in terms of whether Baldwin or Catling would win the seat. Baldwin and Catling exchanged preferences on the basis of their common Steering Committee membership. The Harris campaign ranked Catling ahead of Baldwin in the preferences chiefly on the issue of the relationship to the unions in the Party, and the perception that Catling was more tolerant of a diverse Left. Les McMahon defended the seat on his record as sitting member, a life-time local resident, ALP member for 35 years, and 13-year record as a union official. He indicated to members in a brief letter that he would press state and federal governments to block expansion of Sydney airport, increase funding for the Glebe Estate, provide more low rent housing, improve women’s rights and equal opportunities and provide a better deal for pensioners and ethnic communities.⁴⁰

³⁹ Harris, A Socialist for Sydney and What kind of Victory.

⁴⁰ McMahon, L., ‘Letter to ALP members’, 17/11/81, copy in writer’s papers.

The first count of the ballot on the night of November 28 is another of those often recounted incidents of the time. After the first count, the Left insisted that the ballot box be taken to Leichhardt Police Station, to be secured until a properly supervised count and preference distribution could take place. As it turned out, Les McMahon almost made it. He won 283 primary votes to 199 for Baldwin, 104 for Catling and 32 for Harris with 41 votes challenged. By the time the Harris and Catling preferences were allocated and the challenges dealt with, McMahon lost the seat to Baldwin by just seven votes. The breakdown of these votes on a branch basis is instructive. Balmain, where Baldwin began his inner city odyssey, gave Baldwin 29 votes to 30 for Catling with few votes for Harris or McMahon. Baldwin's vote was strongest in Leichhardt, 32 votes compared to only 4 for Catling and 12 for McMahon. The vote in Glebe North was 12 each for Baldwin and Catling and 18 for McMahon while Glebe and Forest Lodge were overwhelmingly for McMahon. Lilyfield recorded 15 votes for Baldwin and ten for McMahon with no other candidates recording votes. The restructuring of Rozelle East and the small Rozelle branch contributed little; Baldwin picking up the most votes in Rozelle east (6) and McMahon in Rozelle (9). The Annandale branch was unusual in that half of the Harris vote was based there with Catling and McMahon winning nine votes each and Baldwin winning 12. Outside the municipality, it was mainly a contest between McMahon and Baldwin with Baldwin's vote strong in Camperdown, Darlington and his home branch of Marrickville East.⁴¹

Baldwin's vote swamped the other Left votes in those branches which had been recently 'stacked' as a result of his and Peter Crawford's efforts. Principally these were Leichhardt, Lilyfield and Marrickville East. Those branches which had a strong Left presence dating back to the early or mid seventies, were more likely to vote for other Left candidates. In particular, Catling scored strong votes in Glebe North and Balmain. Annandale was the only overwhelmingly anti-Baldwin, Left branch. These results and the political positions of

⁴¹ See branch by branch count in appendix F; See also *Challenge*, 4/12/81, p 1 and Wheelright, 'New South Wales, the dominant Right', p 64.

the candidates expressed during the preselection campaign were the surface evidence of deeper divisions that had emerged. In Harris' case the result confirmed the increasing marginalisation of the Annandale libertarian socialists that was playing itself out in the Annandale branch, and with Greenland on Leichhardt Council. However for the Steering Committee, the campaign opened up bitter divisions with long-term consequences.

Shortly after the preselection had been called, the Steering Committee rank-and-file met in Leichhardt Town Hall to select a Left candidate for the preselection. The meeting was dominated by the supporters of Peter Baldwin and voted to select him as the candidate but it was here that the division between Baldwin and Ann Catling opened up. To the Catling supporters this would be characterised as a conflict between a 'policy first' candidate and branch-stacking 'numbers crunchers' who had also stacked this Left faction meeting. To the Baldwin supporters, Catling was seen as an interloper, an associate of the traditional Steering Committee 'meritocracy'. She was seen as seeking to exploit the hard work on the ground by the recruiters like Baldwin and Crawford, and unwilling to accept the majority decision at the Leichhardt meeting. Then there was the assault on Baldwin itself; to many this had earned him the right to the seat. To Les Carr, who worked on *Challenge* with Baldwin and Peter Crawford, the preselection revealed the "first crack" of division that would fully develop later. To Carr, Baldwin deserved the seat:

Baldwin does all the work to get the fucking seat secured and Catling wants to be the candidate. The people in the Steering Committee have always been like that, let somebody else do the work then give the seat to somebody else.⁴²

Others who supported Baldwin included Barry Cotter and John Cahill, both of whom were able to mobilise members of their unions (the ACOA and PSA respectively) in the branches. To Cahill, Catling "never had a show". It was always assumed, he recalled, that the federal seat was Baldwin's. Further, Catling, having participated in the selection process of the faction meeting, refused to acknowledge the vote and withdraw. To Cotter,

⁴² Les Carr.

Baldwin was “strong intellectually” and “had taken extreme risks to democratise the party and on that basis deserved to be rewarded”.⁴³

Support for one or other of the Left candidates crossed gender lines. Kate Butler, who was president of Labor Women’s Committee also threw her support behind Baldwin and doorknocked ALP members to generate support for him. Butler argued that she had no knowledge of Catling’s candidature until she had already pledged support for Baldwin:

It seemed a lay-down misere ... maybe if I’d known about [Catling’s intentions] or people had talked to me about it but by that time Peter had done what any good politician should do. He had made sure that you were going to vote for him in the pre-selection. From Peter you heard a very valuable lesson ... [he] is one of those people who sort of lead you into what he wanted you to do rather than telling you what to do. So we were making sure as far as we could that these people would commit to Baldwin.⁴⁴

However there were others who were concerned about the process of selection at the Leichhardt Town Hall meeting that endorsed Baldwin. Meredith Burgmann and her partner, Plumbers’ Union official Glen Batchelor, went to the meeting ready to support Baldwin but she walked out and switched her support to Catling. She recalled being “shocked” at the way Catling was treated, claiming that Catling had been obstructed when trying to speak. She went on to elaborate on this division:

There was bound to be a split in the Left because there were those of us who came from an ideological position and there were those who were in the Left because they were fighting the Right and the Right was corrupt and awful. So there were a lot of people pulled into it who would be in the Centre or perhaps a decent Right but who were pulled into a very eclectic Left ... so when it came to ‘well now we’ve all won’ those splits were bound to occur. And I think that’s always been the problem with the Left and it still is the problem with the Left in NSW.⁴⁵

⁴³ John Cahill; Barry Cotter.

⁴⁴ Kate Butler.

⁴⁵ Meredith Burgmann.

Burgmann and Batchelor split their vote. Burgmann voted for Catling and Batchelor for Baldwin. Robyn Floyd and Al Svirskis also voted for Catling and Baldwin respectively. Baldwin himself characterised the divide in the Left over the pre-selection as “an early bell-wether of what later developed into a major schism within the NSW Left which still exists in some form”.⁴⁶

The overwhelming victory for Baldwin, within the Left vote, was to fuel the political hubris developing within the Baldwin-Crawford camp. It would become reflected in a desire among some in that group to ‘deal with’ the ‘unreliable’ element within the branches; particularly in Annandale. These divisions emerging within the Left were to develop more in the branches and on Leichhardt Council around the preselection in 1983 for the state seat of Balmain.

The Preselection of the Two Peters II: Peter Crawford.

The conflict between Hall Greenland and the other seven Left aldermen on Leichhardt Council from September 1980 to October 1982 had masked some of the other divisions that were present among these aldermen. These were brought to the surface in the lead-up to the preselection for the state seat of Balmain in 1983. Some of the seven had brought to council their own, well-formed, policy pre-occupations and to a degree, they were able to complement each other. Hume returned to council with his past expertise and interest in town planning and tree planting. O’Neill had expertise in the harbour foreshores issues and town planning and Stevens in the air pollution issues of the coal fired power stations. Robyn Floyd became head of the council’s community services committee overseeing council’s welfare and child-care activities. O’Neill, as deputy mayor and caucus chair, provided a coordinating focus and Stevens and O’Neill in particular applied themselves to the issue of council finances. Stevens, it seems, also played a peacemaking role between the

⁴⁶ Meredith Burgmann; Robyn Floyd; Al Svirskis; Peter Baldwin. See Leigh, ‘Factions and Fractions’ *passim*

others and was later to become occupied with the role of council's State Emergency Services Coordinator. Robyn Floyd expressed the mixed feelings of inexperience and elation when first elected:

When I was first there, it was all very exciting of course and there was a defined enemy. It was Rodwell and his crew. I think I very quickly became overwhelmed by it because I had no experience. I didn't know what I was letting myself in for and it was basically to run against Casey, Casey's blokes. So it was a bit overwhelming [though] it was pretty exciting.⁴⁷

However tensions emerged. The particular policy preoccupations of the seven while sometimes complementary, were also manifestations of passionate pre-occupations and singular personalities. Hume, it seems, very much 'ran his own race', trying to steer a course between the pressures from his own branch in Annandale and the others on council, while pursuing his own agenda in the town planning field. There was tension from the start between Hume and Evan Jones and they both clashed. According to Greenland, Jones had been chosen as mayor chiefly through the influence of Crawford because he was perceived as a "working class hero" and desirable front for a middle class dominated council. O'Neill, Greenland argued, would have been the more logical choice for mayor as he had been "the smartest and best informed" and "just wasn't there to kind of run a regular Labor dictatorship". It is also conceivable that Crawford did not want a mayor who might threaten his ambitions for the state seat. Roxborough, for his part, was also passionate and strong-willed and, according to Crawford, "was the dominant person morally in the caucus". Roxborough was also a person of strong loyalties, particularly to his running mate Jones and to Crawford who had been instrumental in defeating the Right in Leichhardt branch. While not without its own tensions, it appears that this relationship between Crawford, Roxborough and Jones emerged as an important one and at the core of this was Crawford's developing ambition to contest the state seat of Balmain. This relationship was shored up when another "working class hero" came on the scene. Bill Brady won a preselection in

for the later development of these divisions within the NSW ALP Left.

⁴⁷ Robyn Floyd. See also; Peter Crawford; Hall Greenland; Bill Hume; Nick O'Neill; Jock Roxborough;.

Annandale, with the support of the Baldwin-Crawford element, to replace Greenland in early 1983 and was elected unopposed to fill the vacancy on council.⁴⁸

The state seat of Balmain in the early eighties encompassed the western four wards of the municipality and reached south into Stanmore and Petersham. Most of Annandale and Glebe was covered by the seat of Elizabeth, to the east, held by state minister Pat Hills. The sitting member for Balmain was Roger Degen who lived in Rozelle and whose family connections were very much part of the hard core Rozelle-Lilyfield element in the Right. His father, Jack Degen had campaigned for Roger to win the preselection in 1968, when sitting member Jack McMahon retired. Jack Degen (as mentioned in chapter three above) was secretary of the Lilyfield branch and had fought a rear-guard action there to keep out the middle class Left. However Roger Degen was unusual. While aligning himself with the Right in the local branch struggles, he voted with the Left in state caucus. This was a product of his background as a tradesman and member the Left-wing Building Workers Industrial Union, and his closeness to Left deputy premier, Jack Ferguson. However these Left credentials at the state level would not protect him from the ambitions of the new middle class Left members, to see one of their own replace him coupled with concerns over the local company he had kept.⁴⁹

Just over 400 members would vote for the preselection in the state seat, held in November 1983. Crawford has argued that his decision to run was the third stage of his political development. Originally drawn to the ALP by ideology, his focus then shifted to working as part of a team of friends through Young Labor and branch recruiting. After being elected to local council he had “given away the idea of just being a team player” and “thought after all the years of strain and stress [he] may as well run for the seat”. His strongest asset in this campaign would be his partner, Sheree Waks. As mentioned in chapter three above, Waks

⁴⁸ Peter Crawford; Robyn Floyd; Hall Greenland; Bill Hume; Nick O'Neill; Jock Roxborough. John Cahill when interviewed recalled that it had always been assumed among the Baldwin-Crawford group that the seat of Balmain was Crawford's.

⁴⁹ Tony Geoghan; Sheree Waks.

began life in the ALP recruiting in the Ultimo-Pyrmont area. Though a member of Balmain branch, she had been frustrated at her inability to get City Council approval for a cartoon gallery in Ultimo and which brought her up against city alderman John Fegan. She then shifted her focus to Balmain and Leichhardt.⁵⁰

Central to the campaign to win the preselection was a series of focus dinners of about ten people which Crawford and Waks organised in the lead up to the pre-selection poll. Only “supporters” or “swingers” were invited, not hard-line opponents, and an effort would be made to put people together with common interests. According to Waks, it was the same menu at every dinner; Crawford made a lamb curry and the vegetarian Waks a vegetable one, with fruit salad and cream for dessert. According to Crawford the dinners brought him into direct contact with a “couple of hundred” people. He argued that the original idea came from his Balmain co-alderman, and by now, political opponent:

I got the idea from Nick O'Neill because [he] seemed to be having dinner parties down there [in Balmain East] with people who had been supportive of me but then I found they weren't supportive of me after these dinner parties. And I thought, I used the phrase to Peter Baldwin, I said, “Nick O'Neill is on the dinner party trail”. I said “all these people, they're really supportive of me down in Balmain East then they get friendly with Nick and suddenly they're cold towards me ... what's bloody going on”. I said “well don't complain about it, let's adopt the same tactic ourselves”. So Sheree and I, for every dinner party that Nick O'Neill organised we organised ten or twenty.⁵¹

Both Crawford and Waks commented on the fact that occasionally things didn't go according to plan. As Crawford explained:

I would invite people along who I thought were very similar because they're school teachers but one taught at a private school and another taught at a state school and I ended up with a raging argument over state aid [to private schools]. And [I had] to settle the argument down and get them talking about things they were in agreement with. And then another time Adrian [Heber] came to one of them and stirred

⁵⁰ Peter Crawford; Sheree Waks. See appendix A notes on electoral boundaries.

⁵¹ Peter Crawford. See also Sheree Waks.

them up over Aborigines; these people had been very pro Aboriginal land rights and he said he was totally opposed to land rights and it ended in turmoil ... So a lot of them were real diplomatic exercises; how to keep people on side and win people around.⁵²

Waks was crucial to the campaign and to helping Crawford organise his duties as an alderman on Leichhardt Council. She kept a diary recording the names of people who she and Crawford met and their interests and concerns. If someone mentioned a local issue, she would write it down and then go through the council business papers identifying anything, such as a Development Application, that was near where a branch member lived, organising for Crawford to phone them. She also monitored public meetings and she and Crawford would go out on weekends to the Balmain markets or to the main shopping artery in Balmain, Darling Street, where they might meet members. It was in the lead-up to this time that Waks had been involved in branch recruiting in Stanmore, mentioned in chapter three above. Stanmore was in the seat of Balmain and the recruiting not only pulled people into the Party but her personal connection increased the likelihood they would support Crawford. “It was my whole life” she recalled; “I gave up work for two years just to do his campaign”.⁵³

The opposition to Crawford that was typified by Nick O'Neill was in some ways a continuation of the division that opened up between Ann Catling and Peter Baldwin in the federal preselection. Both Nick and Annette O'Neill, like Robyn Floyd, had supported Catling. But there was also growing tension about the effect that Crawford's ambition was having on council itself. He was perceived to be manipulating the situation and not pulling his weight in terms of the council business. The developing contest for the seat caused Evan Jones to complain in May 1983 that “un-named aldermen's' political ambitions were disrupting the council's operations”.⁵⁴

⁵² Peter Crawford.

⁵³ Sheree Waks.

⁵⁴ Nick O'Neill; Bill Hume; Robyn Floyd; See also 'Bunyip' column, *The Glebe*, 11/5/83, p 3.

The contest for the executive of the Balmain SEC in 1982 had reflected the growing division with Crawford and Leichhardt branch member Gary Bennell, defeating Ann Catling, and Journalists' Association official Chris Warren, for the positions of president and secretary respectively. Warren, along with Al Svirskis, Anna Katzmann and Kate Butler were people who were mooted early in 1983 as possible opponents of Crawford for the pre-selection. Butler was apparently vetoed by Catling, possibly an aftermath of Butler's support for Baldwin in the federal pre-selection and tensions within the Left on Labor Women's Committee. Some people who had supported Baldwin for the federal seat, were looking for an alternative to Crawford in Balmain. ACOA state secretary, Barry Cotter who had transferred to Balmain from Annandale, was one of these. It was Robyn Floyd who emerged as the principal opponent in the state preselection. The tension between the Floyd and Crawford camps was played out on Leichhardt Council with Floyd replaced as head of the community services committee in a council restructuring in June 1983. The position of the Crawford forces on council had improved when Annandale's Bill Brady replaced Greenland on council in early 1983. Floyd explained that Brady's election transformed the caucus:

It was bearable before that; Evan was a pain in the bum but ... when Brady got on council that was just the end. It was just awful, really awful. All the sorts of things I had been working towards ... were sort of pulled from underneath me. I got knocked off the community care committee. Brady took over that. I'd been working for years on a child care centre that suddenly became Brady's achievement. It was all pretty nasty from then on.⁵⁵

While Floyd drew support from some who had voted for Baldwin in the federal preselection, Crawford's campaign, which also drew votes from some of the old Right, was a success. Crawford won an absolute majority with 251 votes. Floyd collected 93 votes,

⁵⁵ Robyn Floyd. See also Al Svirskis. See also references to pre-selection in 'Bunyip' column, *The Glebe*, 28/7/82, p 3 and 11/5/83, p 3. See also, Leigh, 'Factions and Fractions', pp 43-434 re splits in Labor Woman's Committee.

Ken Brennan, a Right alderman from Marrickville Council, won 49 and Jim Coombs, associated with the Left in Glebe, won 13.⁵⁶

The preselection took place at a time when normally a new council would have been in office. With three-year terms, the council elections had been due in September 1983 but were deferred because of state government consideration of possible council amalgamations. They were to be ultimately delayed until April 1984, after the March 1984 state elections. But before September 1983 it was clear that the only sitting Left aldermen who would re-contest would be the ‘working class heroes’, Jones from Leichhardt and Brady from Annandale. The sense of emotional and political exhaustion among the middle class Left aldermen was palpable.⁵⁷

Floyd found the whole experience of the pre-selection and her final period on council a disillusioning experience and she and her partner, Al Svirskis, moved out of this “unpleasant environment, socially and politically” and moved west to Mount Druitt. As Svirskis explained it:

I mean Robyn had put an incredible amount of her life and nervous energy into both the council and subsequently the preselection.⁵⁸

Floyd concurred:

I was really exhausted after that, I was really wrung out and needed to get away and I’m not sorry I did.⁵⁹

Roxborough indicated that he felt that he had achieved what he set out to do on council, particularly the town planning improvements, the removal of the old “politicised” council staff, and the appointment of new people like town planner Harry Berchevais. Roxborough

⁵⁶ *Challenge*, November 1983, p 1-2; ‘Crawford gets the Nod’, *Guardian*, (Newtown), 2/11/83, p 3.

⁵⁷ *Guardian*: ‘Councils Face New Delays’, 26/10/83, p 1 and ‘Councils In Chaos – Election Delayed’, 2/11/83, p 1; *The Glebe*: ‘Leichhardt Mayor Blasts Government Over Poll delay’, 9/11/83, p 7 and ‘State Poll Over: Now It’s Council Elections’, 28/3/84, p 20.

⁵⁸ Al Svirskis.

⁵⁹ Robyn Floyd.

reflected on the feelings of elation at an election fund-raiser at the Mori Gallery in Leichhardt at the beginning of the council's term:

It was fantastic, it was something very special, it was one of those nights. I didn't expect to do it. Then I think that was a very steep drop away because after that it was disappointment constantly; because I felt most people are only interested in real estate values, the values of their properties, that sort of thing.⁶⁰

While critical of Greenland's role on council and his decision to resign Roxborough added that "one of the reasons I was so narky towards him was that he had pulled out and we had to carry on". Roxborough felt that by the nominal end of Council's term in September 1983 he had fulfilled his obligations. With he and his family moving to the NSW North Coast, he resigned rather than continue with the extended council term. He expressed ambivalent feelings that are probably typical of many of the middle class Left aldermen who did not seek re-election:

I probably pulled out because I thought that I had achieved sufficient and really local government is not a change agent anyway.⁶¹

With the death of Right wing alderman George Millard from Glebe, and the extension of the council term, by-elections were held in late 1983 for Leichhardt and Glebe wards. In Leichhardt, Alan Katzmann was chosen as the candidate by the branch. He was secretary of the branch and brother of former branch secretary, lawyer, Anna Katzmann. He had worked on *Challenge* newspaper, was electoral assistant to (the now federal MP) Peter Baldwin and a close confidant of Crawford. However, in a sign of a developing public disaffection with the council in Leichhardt, Katzmann was defeated by an independent, and a future mayor, Doug Spedding. In Glebe, Brian Thompson, a member of the staff of state minister, Pat Hills, and son of Vehicle Builders' Union official, Joe Thompson, was elected.⁶²

⁶⁰ Jock Roxborough. It is conceivable that this fund-raiser at the Mori Gallery recalled by Roxborough was actually the pre-election one mentioned by the writer at the beginning of the Introduction or possibly another, Leichhardt one, held after the election.

⁶¹ Jock Roxborough. See also 'Leichhardt By-election – Labor Chooses Candidate', *Guardian*, 30/11/83.

⁶² *The Glebe*: 'Leichhardt Mayor Blasts Government Over Poll Delay, 9/11/83, p 7; 'Bunyip' column, 30/11/83, p 3; 'ALP Thrashed in Leichhardt', 25/1/84, p 10. *Guardian*: 'Leichhardt By-election – Labor

The extension of the term of council also created problems for Nick O'Neill who was due to go on study leave from Sydney Institute of Technology. He took leave from council and his place as deputy mayor, for the remaining few months, was filled by Bill Brady. O'Neill could claim, along with others on the council, that he had successfully negotiated a new town plan which set density levels roughly mid way between the state government's original proposals and those advocated by Origlass and Greenland. Nonetheless he was relieved to be departing:

I had a clean cut with council. I left council, went overseas on study leave, came back an ex-alderman with no intention of going back on council and a desire not to attend very many more meetings.⁶³

The only Left survivor of the outgoing council at the 1984 elections was Brady who became Mayor. Evan Jones, like Katzmann just before him, was defeated. A major part of the disaffection in Leichhardt emanated from the local Returned Servicemen's Club, angered at council refusal to approve demolition of houses it owned, for a car park. The only members of the middle class Left who emerged from this four-year period of political change, still holding office, were the 'two Peters'. Baldwin would enjoy the longest parliamentary career of the two. Becoming an MP at the time of the election of the Hawke Labor government he pursued the concerns of the Left through the intra-party structures of caucus and later, in the 1990's, the ministry and cabinet. If Baldwin could find purpose as part of a successful Labor government, Crawford could not. He was to enter parliament in March 1984, the dying term of a conservative and increasingly unpopular state Labor government. There is a much more intimate link between the politics of local and state government and this would find expression in the controversial politics and combative approaches of both Brady and Crawford. Brady would dominate Leichhardt Council in the mid eighties, leading a curious local 'counter-revolution' against the resident participation

Chooses', 30/11/83 and 'Election in Leichhardt Saturday', 18/1/83, p 1. The *Guardian* local newspaper, originally published by Geoffrey Chandler was revived in 1982 under the editorship of journalist and ALP Left City Council Alderman, Tony Reeves. It had campaigned heavily for Katzmann in Leichhardt.

⁶³ Nick O'Neill. 'Leichhardt On Threshold of New planning Scheme', *The Glebe*, 10/8/83, p 19. See also references in *Glebe Society Bulletin*, no 5 and no 7, 1982 and no 4, 1983. Local Environment Plan No 20 was gazetted, NSW Government Gazette, No 93, 15/6/84.

Leftism that had characterised the municipality's development. Peter Crawford would serve just one term in state parliament before losing the seat of Balmain to iconic independent, Dawn Fraser, in 1988. The political careers of both Brady and Crawford would in part be determined by an issue that typified the social and political changes taking place in the municipality in the 1980's and which would bring out all the contradictions and confusions of the inner-city, middle class Left: Mort Bay.

Chapter 6

THE CRASH: 1985-1988.

The decision by the New South Wales Housing Department to place public housing on the former waterfront industrial site of Mort's Dock in the mid 1980's set off a bitter battle around the issues of housing and open space. This was to be a struggle infused with political symbolism; bringing to the surface emerging tensions between issues of the environment, participatory democracy and socio-economic equality; generating political schisms within the middle class Left, and the Labor Party. The Mort Bay project was nothing less than a battle for control of the political heritage of the Labor Party in the area; a heritage that was intimately connected with the site and the industrial and political history of Balmain.¹

A dry dock for the servicing of ships in the busy port of Sydney was first constructed on Waterview Bay (now Mort Bay), at the Northern end of the Balmain peninsula, in the mid 1850's. It was the beginning of the industrialisation of Balmain, and Sydney generally. The facility that would become known as Mort's Dock and Engineering Company expanded to become Sydney's biggest employer by the end of the nineteenth century. The dockyard and engineering works developed on into the twentieth century, expanding from ship repair to ship construction and general metal manufacturing and engineering; including the

¹ Note: The Department of Housing had, prior to 1986, been known as the Housing Commission of New South Wales. References to the Department of Housing in this chapter, apply also to its predecessor organisation.

manufacture of pumping engines for reservoirs and the iron work for Sydney's General Post Office.²

The industrial development of the company was linked to the emergence of the labour movement on the Balmain peninsula, the industrial disputation of the last decades of the nineteenth century, the 1890's great maritime strike and the formation, in Balmain in 1891, of the first Labor Electoral League. One of the four Labor members of NSW parliament elected from Balmain in 1891, was a boilermaker from Mort's Dock as was a later state member for Balmain and Labor Premier of NSW (1920-1921), John Storey. In the mid to late 1940's, the dock was to be one of the important sites for the struggle for control of the Ironworkers union. This was a struggle that saw the demise of the union's Communist leadership and the rise of a key anti-communist figure in the NSW labour movement and the Labor Party, Ironworkers' union secretary, Laurie Short. It was also an important political milestone in the life of local Trotskyist, Mort's Dock boilermaker's assistant and future Leichhardt mayor, Nick Origlass. Origlass's political associate and co-alderman from Balmain, Issy Wyner, was Secretary of the Ships Painters and Dockers Union. This was the descendant organisation of the original Balmain Labourers Union, which maintained its offices in Mort Street Balmain until it was absorbed in the wave of union amalgamations at the end of the 1980's.³

The dock and engineering works closed in 1957 and the site was to be the focus of the emerging resident action groups in Balmain in the late 1960's when it became a shipping container terminal, generating truck traffic through Balmain's narrow streets. This was a major issue at the time of the Origlass-led council of 1971-73, with the council putting up

² Reynolds, P., *Mort's Dock: Origins and Changes*, Balmain Places No 1, May 1985, Architectural History and Research Unit, Graduate School of the Built Environment, UNSW; Solling and Reynolds *Leichhardt*, Chs 9 and 10; Wyner, *With Banner Unfurled*, pp 9-17 and passim.

³ Reynolds, *Mort's Dock* passim; Solling and Reynolds, *Leichhardt*, Chs 9 and 10 and pp 219-21; Wyner, *With Banner Unfurled*, passim; Greenland, *Red Hot* Chs 15-18; Short, S., *Laurie Short: A Political Life*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1992 passim; Gollan, D., 'The Balmain Ironworkers' Strike of 1945', *Labour History*, Part I in No. 22, May 1972, pp 23-41, Part II in No. 23, November 1972, pp 62-73; Recorded Interview with Issy Wyner, 2/6/99.

gates to control truck movements. With the termination of the container operations at the end of the 1970's the site was eventually acquired by the state government, which proposed a large public housing development. A 'public housing versus open space' battle ensued. This was by no means the only political issue in the municipality but was a significant and symbolic one that had as much to do with political power and the future of the Labor Party in the area as it did with either public housing or open space.⁴

Labor's changing fortunes.

For the middle class ALP Left in the municipality by the mid 1980's, the strategy of working through the structures of the Party at a time when Labor was in government at all three levels, was coming under pressure. The federal Labor government, elected in early 1983, had begun to lose support over a range of policies. These included the decision to expand the mining and export of uranium, failure to over-ride state governments in the defence of Aboriginal land rights, the deregulation of the banking system and foreign exchange markets; and the general acceptance of neo-liberal economic policies. These resulted in cuts to federal expenditure, particularly after 1986. There was also the concern at the failure of Labor to follow the New Zealand Labour Party's policy banning US nuclear-armed ship visits and the fiasco of the MX missile crisis. In the latter, the Hawke government was forced to back down on an offer to assist the US Reagan administration's testing of the new inter-continental ballistic missile in the South Pacific. The federal elections of December 1984 saw Labor supporters vote informal or for the Nuclear Disarmament Party (NDP). Many on the Left in the Party were angered at the decision, by Party officials in New South Wales, to give preferences to the Liberals ahead of the NDP in

⁴ Reynolds, *Mort's Dock* p 8; Solling and Reynolds, *Leichhardt*, pp 219-220, 236; Greenland, *Red Hot*, Chs 22-25; Alicia Lee, Geoff Cooke, Issy Wyner.

the Senate ballot. In the 1987 elections, the NDP's Robert Woods was elected as a Senator for New South Wales.⁵

In the federal seat of Sydney, the primary vote in what was regarded as one of the safest seats in the country began to slide. This mirrored the fortunes of a federal Party that was successful, electorally, overall but increasingly dependent on the preferences of environmental candidates to survive. Between 1983 and 1990, the ALP's primary vote declined steadily from 49.5 per cent to 39.4 per cent. In the federal seat of Sydney, in the elections of December 1984, the primary vote for Peter Baldwin fell to 57 per cent from 67 per cent in 1983 and in 1987, to just over 50 per cent. However, the two-party preferred vote for Labor held up. Most of the drift from Labor in these elections went to environmental or Left candidates. Communist Party member and former BLF activist, Jack Munday, received 13 per cent of the primary vote in the seat in 1987.⁶

At the NSW state level, Labor was heading for defeat. After ten years as premier and Party leader, Neville Wran resigned in 1986 and his place was taken by former NSW Labor Council secretary, Barry Unsworth. At the subsequent by-elections, Wran's former seat of Bass Hill went to the Liberal opposition and Unsworth, transferring by convention from the Legislative Council to the Assembly, only narrowly won the seat of Rockdale. Unsworth had inherited a legacy of perceived corruption and mismanagement that had attended the latter phases of Wran's administration. However there were wider problems. The cuts in federal government expenditure were reflected in cuts in grants to the states, severely impacting on areas like health, education and public transport. This was at a time when unemployment was high and impacting in traditional Labor areas like Newcastle,

⁵ McMullin, *The Light on the Hill*, Ch 16; Bolton, *The Middle Way*, Ch 11; Steketee, M., 'Labor in Power: 1983-96' in Faulkner, J and Macintyre, S, (eds), *True Believers: The Story Of The Federal Parliamentary Labor Party*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 2001, pp 139-154; Uren, *Straight Left*, Ch. 17. See also criticisms of Federal government policy in various issues of *Challenge*, 1983-1985 and in Minutes for the period of the Forest Lodge and Annandale Branches, *ALPR* and the Lilyfield ALP Branch (held by branch secretary).

⁶ Australian Electoral Office, *Result of Count of first preference Votes and Distribution of Preferences*, AGPS Canberra, 1983, p 10; Australian Electoral Commission, *Election Statistics, Full Distribution of Preferences*; 1984, AGPS Canberra, 1985 p 18 and 1987, AGPS, Canberra 1988, p 19.

Wollongong and the south-western suburbs of Sydney. At the same time there was a revolt among Labor voters, particularly in the inner city, over projects like the mono-rail, development of Darling Harbour and the Harbour Tunnel, all seen as examples of environmental insensitivity and misallocation of government resources and attention. Further, Minister for Education, Rodney Cavalier, had antagonised the Teachers' Federation over education funding and industrial issues. The state government had also pursued a traditional manipulative approach to local government in the City of Sydney. In the wake of its earlier amalgamation of South Sydney and the City councils and the 1984 municipal elections, there was the emergence of a strong body of Left-wing and environmental independents on the city council. This included Jack Munday, Clover Moore, Michael Mobbs and Frank Sartor. After the formation of a Liberal-Labor alliance on the council, the threat of an independent takeover of the council at the next elections caused the government to dismiss it in March 1987 and replace it with appointed commissioners.⁷

In this context of what were seen as neo-liberal, authoritarian, and insensitive, federal and state Labor governments, the ALP Left was struggling for identity and purpose. This was aggravated by the developing split within the official Left Steering Committee which had emerged around the time of the Catling-Baldwin conflict in the 1980 Federal preselection for Sydney. This was now expressed through a conflict between two state Labor ministers; Minister for Education, Rodney Cavalier and former Attorney General and Minister for Housing, Frank Walker. Much of this was linked to personalities and dispute over the succession, in state Labor caucus, to retiring Left Deputy Premier, Jack Ferguson. However, Cavalier was questioning the role of the unions in the Party and was

⁷ Hagan, J and Clothier, C., '1988' in Hogan, M and Clune, D (eds), *The People's Choice: Electoral Politics in 20th Century New South Wales*, Vol. 3, 1968 – 1999, pp 251-281; Hagan and Turner, *A History of the Labor Party in NSW*, Part 4 passim and p 220; Leigh, 'Factions and Fractions', p 433-439; 'The issues that tipped the balance against Labor', *SMH*, 21/3/88, p 32; Spearitt, P., *Sydney's Century: A History*, UNSW Press, 2000, pp 164; Fitzgerald, S., *Sydney 1842-1992*, Hale and Iremonger, Sydney, 1992, pp 132-135; Perdon, R (Ed), *Sydney's Aldermen: A Biographical Register of Sydney City Aldermen, 1842-1992*, Sydney City Council, 1997, pp 70, 71, 74 and 91.

representative of, and linked to, the Baldwin-Crawford style branch activists. Walker on the other hand was seen as having closer links to the traditional Left and the Left unions.⁸

Thus, there was a general climate of disaffection with Labor at all levels and the politics of Leichhardt municipality fed into this, and was fed by it. In this context, Labor would be led to electoral disaster in the municipality and in the state seat of Balmain. At the centre of these two inter-related fields of political activity were the two colourful personalities, Leichhardt mayor Bill Brady and state member for Balmain Peter Crawford.

Counter-revolution on Council.

The new council that took office in Leichhardt, after the delayed elections of April 1984, was dominated by Labor. There were eight Labor aldermen to four independents. However it was to be a very different council to that which had preceded it. Former mayor, Evan Jones, and his running mate from Leichhardt branch and teacher, Gary Bennell, were defeated by independents Doug Spedding and Carol Mc Veigh. Bill Brady, who had been deputy mayor in the last months of the previous council became mayor and had been elected from the Annandale Ward with Annandale branch member Larry Hand. The Labor Party won the wards of Rozelle, Lilyfield and Glebe. Glebe saw the return unopposed of the Right's Ivor Cawley and Brian Thompson. Lilyfield saw two new Labor aldermen, union official Harry Mitchell and Sharon Page, an audiologist who had become active in local town planning issues. In Rozelle, there was the unlikely duo of Danny Casey's old Right running mate Bob Heffernan and Left newcomer, Marg Lyons, a masseuse and acupuncturist who had been active in gay and lesbian politics. In Balmain, Origlass and Wyner returned to council, defeating Balmain branch Left candidates; youth worker

⁸ Leigh, *Factions and Fractions*, p 433-439; Dennis Shanahan, 'It's pragmatism v idealism', *SMH*, 8/4/86, p 19.

Damian Copley-Finch and Sandy Halley, a town planner whose great-great grandfather had started Balmain's first ferry service.⁹

The numbers among the Labor eight soon fell around a curious alliance. Brady and Mitchell were both associated with the old 'Stalinist' Left of the Socialist Objective Committee which had split away from the Steering Committee in the late sixties. This had paralleled the split between the pro-Moscow Socialist Party of Australia and the post 1968, Moscow-critical, Communist Party of Australia. Brady had been an office-holder and activist in Actor's Equity and Mitchell was an official with the Miscellaneous Workers Union. Together with Page they were the core of the council, dominating the caucus both by dominating the Left majority, which included Hand and Lyons, but mainly by linking up with the Right when required. In particular, they linked up with Brian Thompson from Glebe. They would lead a political swing back to a more traditional, economic, development-friendly Laborism, critical of the preoccupations of the 'trendy' middle class Left and resident action politics. Hand and Lyons were to find themselves on the outer of this situation. Over time, Lyons made her peace with the ruling core and it fell to Hand to be the main protagonist of the Brady-led council from within the ALP, egged on by Origlass and Wyner.¹⁰

Bill Brady's passage through the politics of the Glebe and Annandale branches has been touched on in chapters two and four above. Brady was a person whose visceral politics and loyalties had been deeply embedded in his early upbringing and experiences of working life. Born in Western Australia in 1926, his father was a descendant of an Irish immigrant who was at Eureka at the time of the uprising. Though not directly involved in the rebellion, he had narrowly escaped death when a bullet went through his tent. Brady's mother came from a line of Western Australia pioneers. Bill Brady left school at 14 and got

⁹ Solling and Reynolds, Leichhardt, pp 249, 257 and 262. See issues of *The Glebe* for 11/4/84, 17/4/84, 2/5/84 and 9/5/84.

¹⁰ Bill Brady, Sharon Page, Larry Hand, Marg Lyons. See also Leigh, 'Factions and Fractions', pp 431-432 and Minutes, LMC 1984-1987 passim.

a job as a messenger boy. He joined the army when he was just over 15 but was thrown out when his age was discovered. When he turned 18 he spent some time in the air force as a fitter but after the Second World War he couldn't settle down. A friend got him a job as a steward on a "tea and sugar ship" running up the Western Australia coast to Darwin. It was his work on ships that brought him into contact with the Seamen's Union and took his politics to the Left.¹¹

Brady could always sing a song or tell a joke and interspersed with other employment, including bouts of returning to sea, made his way into vaudeville. He also worked his way into radio and TV commercials and into some dramas. For example, he appeared in the pioneering TV drama 'You Can't see Round Corners'. Brady eventually settled in Sydney and, as mentioned in chapter four, married Bobby Ward, lived in Glebe, then Annandale. With a "good start" to his political education gained by reading and discussion and his Seamen's Union contacts he became more involved in Actor's Equity, particularly after meeting its secretary, Hal Alexander. He became a senior vice president and was active on Equity committees, around the same time he was active in the emerging anti-war movement. Influenced by the experience of the seamen's and waterside workers unions in organising labour, Brady initiated an Equity-run agency to find work for entertainers as an alternative to the private agents, who sometimes took up to 30 per cent of fees. He ran the agency for nine years. He also served on the NSW ALP, arts and media policy committee, was active in the campaign for Australian content on television and for 14 years 'called' the May Day march from the back of a sound truck as it passed Sydney Town Hall. The agency began to fold at the end of the 1970's and it was at this time, Brady took a closer interest in the Annandale ALP branch and local council affairs. When Hall Greenland resigned from council in late 1982, Annandale branch member Hugh Mason encouraged him to run as local alderman and he joined the council in early 1983.¹²

¹¹ Bill Brady. See also chapters two and four.

¹² Bill Brady, Hugh Mason.

A key to Brady's deep-felt approach to political affairs was revealed when he was interviewed. After being involved in efforts to get visas for the Bach Orchestra from East Germany, he became active in the formation of an Australia-German Democratic Republic, friendship society. He was eventually invited to a world peace conference in East Germany. He burst into tears while recalling a visit to a World War Two concentration camp site:

It was just bloody horrible. It taught me how low politics could go. Awful, bloody people were being murdered for no reason at all and the factory they were working in was Siemens Electric ...

I'll always remember, there was a workshop. They'd walk them across the courtyard and they'd call out seven or ten names, to remain behind and the others would go to work. And they would be shot there and then against the firing wall. They were shot by the people, the guards who were accommodated on the site as it were. And I could never understand how any human being could ... I'm sorry about this ... how any human being could go out, leave his wife and family, at five to seven in the morning, murder ten children or women ...¹³

It was these emotions, and this politics, that Brady brought to council and there was another side to this passion. In a similar way to Peter Crawford, Brady was energised by political hatred expressed through rough-and-tumble, union hall, meeting skills and a provocative, dissembling banter that owed much to his vaudevillian trade. He was, according to one of his initial Annandale supporters, John Cahill, a "hail fellow, well met sort of guy" who found it difficult to handle criticism.¹⁴

Harry Mitchell, the Miscellaneous Workers' Union official from the same 'old Left' milieu as Brady, was also one of the Left core three on council. However he was there very much to make up the numbers, especially after he moved to Melbourne during his council term and commuted to make council meetings (see below). The other member of this trio was Mitchell's co-alderman from Lilyfield, Sharon Page. Page had gone to university in the late

¹³ Bill Brady.

¹⁴ See comments by Peter Crawford on political hatred in chapter three above. See also Barry Cotter, John Cahill.

sixties and early seventies, completing an honours degree in psychology. The Whitlam government shaped her political leanings to the Left and she started work at the National Acoustic Laboratories during that time. Page moved into Leichhardt municipality in 1973 but spent much of the seventies in the Northern Territory working on setting up hearing services for indigenous people. On returning to live in Lilyfield at the end of the 1970's she became involved in local town planning issues at the time of the threat of over-development posed by IDO 27 (see chapter five). Through this local activity she got to know people in the ALP and joined the restructured Lilyfield branch in 1981. It was her interest in town planning issues that encouraged her to stand for Leichhardt Council in 1984. Local Right alderman, Les Rodwell, was a hang-over from the branch's previous domination by the Right and no longer had a support base. Page was interested in the "nuts and bolts" of town planning and threw herself into this on council, contrary to the preconceived ideas of council staff who expected that "women were supposed to do things like child care and library". When going to local government conferences for example, she would attend the officers' conference to deepen her understanding of town planning issues. Page's approach to town planning, she argued, was coloured by her perceptions of social justice:

I've always had that sort of approach of fairness; that things should be fair for people, especially people who come from a disadvantaged background.¹⁵

This, coupled with a close political relationship with Mitchell and Brady and a strong belief in caucus solidarity, predisposed her to achieving what she could from the development pressures on the municipality. She supported, for example, agreeing to medium density development in exchange for open space contributions. This is an approach in particular that she would endorse during the battle for the 'five sites' in Balmain at the end of the eighties. It also underpinned her support for the public housing project at Mort Bay:

I saw it as really an amenity and a public housing issue for the people who live here and were born here; for them to be able to stay here versus all of these prime development sites being taken over for trendy

¹⁵ Sharon Page.

new residents. Those were the background philosophical issues and tied into that was all the open space issues as well.¹⁶

Linked to the influence of these three on council was the role of the Town Clerk/General Manager, Ron Eggins. Eggins had been appointed by the previous council and, as explained in the previous chapter, had begun a move to 'streamlining' and corporatising council administration. Prior to this time, senior council department heads, of which the Town Clerk was only one, reported directly to the elected aldermen. According to new alderman, Margaret Lyons, who would later go on from poacher to gamekeeper as a NSW Local Government Inspector, Eggins was "ahead of his time" in seeing his position as a corporate chief executive. This is a role that would be reflected in later local government legislation. Lyons and other observers also agreed he was a difficult and domineering character. Peter Crawford, who had been on the previous council that appointed him, argued that Eggins' problem was that "he had not a political bone in his body, not a straw of politics" and was thus lacking in flexibility and an ability to compromise. Brady it seems became very much the political and public face of Eggins' administration and this relationship, coupled with the support of the two Right aldermen from Glebe, was the basis of the domination of the council by the Brady trio.¹⁷

At the other end of the caucus spectrum were Margaret Lyons and Larry Hand. Margaret Lyons was born in Sydney. She spent the first thirteen years of her life living in Kings Cross, then moved to Potts Point. Her father worked shift work at the ABC and her mother, in between having children, completed a leaving certificate and studied law. In 1969, Lyons started university and moved into 180 Annandale Street, Annandale, the house that a few years later would be rented by Hall Greenland and Margaret Eliot (see chapter two). At

¹⁶ Sharon Page.

¹⁷ Margaret Lyons; Larry Hand; Peter Crawford. See below in this chapter. See also press coverage of Eggins in *The Glebe*, concerning his dispute with the Glebe Society and later, his dismissal by the new, post-Brady Council in 1988: 'Town Clerk blasts destructive style of Glebe Society', 22/7/87, p 7; 'Town Clerk embarrassed council says Society spokesman Macindoe', 29/7/87, p7; 'Alderman and Town Clerk at odds: Power Struggle rages in council', 17/2/88, p3; 'Town Clerk told to behave or lose job', 2/3/88, p 9; Eginton, L., 'Ron Eggins hits out at "Open Council": Final Blast from Town Clerk', 28/9/88, pp 1-2.

university, Lyons was active in the student evangelical movement and attended St Barnabas Anglican Church in Broadway, where the future Archbishop of Sydney, Peter Jensen was curate. She had also become involved in the campus social movements and had begun challenging “the Anglican version of the truth and God” as well as church homophobia and misogyny:

We were all heavily politicised by the events of the Vietnam war and conscription; the green movement was just on its rise ... it was just a time of extraordinary Left revolutionary politics I guess which I was caught up with as much as everybody else was.¹⁸

During the seventies, she spent some time in Melbourne. Returning to Sydney in the late seventies, she became active in gay and lesbian politics, describing herself as a “fellow traveller”, close to the “liberation politics” of the Communist Party. Lyons bought a house in Rozelle in 1979 and earned a living as an acupuncturist and masseuse. She joined the reformed Rozelle East branch at the beginning of the eighties and was drawn to local politics initially through traffic issues. In 1984, when Robyn Floyd decided not to recontest the Rozelle ward, she encouraged Lyons to nominate and she was preselected along with Danny Casey’s old Right wing co-alderman and ship’s painter and docker, Bob Heffernan. Lyons fondly recalled her relationship with Heffernan, and with Origlass and Wyner who covered the neighbouring Balmain ward:

[Bob] knew who I was, he knew where I’d come from, he didn’t blink. We got on. We knew how to work straight away together, to work Rozelle. And to a large extent that was true of Nick and Issy. The four of us on the peninsula. Issy is probably a different animal but the three of us; between us we knew what was best and how to go about doing it ... outside the political arena where everybody had a particular; wanted to show off; Bob, Nick and I used to do all the works inspections, do most of the decision-making. We were pretty much in agreement the whole time. Issy is always Issy. So it was good.

Lyons’ comments point to the practical way much council business, particularly dealing with routine building and development applications and local service provision is

¹⁸ Margaret Lyons.

transacted. But it was to be the big issues impacting on the municipality at large that sharpened the dividing lines and in this, it was to be Hand who was to find himself most at odds with the Labor majority.

The Apprenticeship of Larry Hand¹⁹

As mentioned in chapter two, Hand, a high school teacher, moved into the Annandale branch at the beginning of the eighties. Born in Goulburn, in 1955, he had been brought up in Hurstville and then Heathcote. He had been interested in politics at school and inspired by Whitlam. Hand went on to Sydney University, in the mid seventies, to study history, English and educational psychology, and there he joined the Labour Club. After university, he went teaching, became active in the Teachers' Federation and joined the ALP in Haberfield in 1979. He gave this impression of his first experiences in the Annandale branch at a time when divisions were opening up in the Left:

I was never very factional at the beginning I think and I was probably disadvantaged. Because I remember coming into the Annandale branch and as soon as I walked in it was incredibly factionalised between different groups and I found the level of hatred between each group never sat with me very comfortably. I mean I didn't mind people screaming about ideas and strategies but the level of hatred people had was quite foreign to me really. I'd never struck it anywhere. I mean I'd been active in the union and there were differences in the union but the level of hatred didn't seem to be as high.²⁰

Hand gravitated towards "non-aligned" Left and the friendship networks around the libertarian socialist/resident activist focus. In 1984, many in this group would leave the ALP and become involved in The Greens (see chapter seven below). Just prior to this, it was Hall Greenland who suggested to Hand that he might run for council. The NSW

¹⁹ This reference to 'apprenticeship' relates to a comment made by Origlass in the context of the 1987 municipal elections. See chapter seven below.

²⁰ Larry Hand.

Administrative Committee had decided that because of the delay in the elections from September 1983 to April 1984 that all sitting ALP candidates would be automatically re-endorsed without preselection. Both Bill Brady and Leichhardt's Evan Jones were endorsed accordingly. The remaining candidates from each ward were not to be selected by rank and file ballot but by the Municipal Committee, which consisted of one delegate from each of the eight branches in the municipality.

In Annandale, Charles Rocks, defeated by Greenland and Hume in the preselection for the previous council, nominated. He had the support of Brady and the Baldwinites. According to Hand, Brady, John Cahill and the "Steering Committee mob" tried to talk him out of contesting the preselection, promising to support him next time if Rocks was allowed to return to council for another term. Hand however decided to persist. He was the Annandale delegate on the Committee and so could vote for himself. Greenland contacted Vince Nash, the former Glebe Estate RAC secretary active in Forest Lodge branch. Greenland had supported the locals there on a development issue when he was on council and was able to secure the Right vote for Hand but the key vote was the Rozelle delegate who the 'Steering Committee mob' had apparently taken for granted, but who Hand had lobbied. The result was not just Hand's surprise preselection but hostility to him from his Annandale co-alderman, Brady, that would carry into the new council. Hand described the situation as he found it in caucus:

I think Page and Brady and Mitchell worked out very quickly that they weren't going to work with us because we were too Left for them. That's Margaret Lyons and I. And so they went to Cawley, Ivor Cawley, and [Brian] Thompson and that was the ruling clique and they left Heffernan out because Brady didn't like Heffernan ... it became unpleasant after a while. You'd start to say something and Brady would tell you just to shut up.²¹

Hand began to cooperate with Origlass and Wyner who he thought were "right most of the time on nearly every issue" while Brady "was wrong on nearly every issue". By early 1985

²¹ Larry Hand. See also Hall Greenland, Vince Nash, John Cahill.

Hand had earned enough of the ruling group's ire to face nine charges under ALP rules brought against him by caucus secretary Harry Mitchell. Mitchell accused him of "delinquency" for raising matters on council that had not been brought first to caucus. Principally, this was a message of support for anti-nuclear position of New Zealand Prime Minister, David Lange which the caucus was "embarrassed" into voting for on council because it was in line with ALP policy. Mitchell argued that this approach could "do harm to the unity and integrity of Caucus and the party as a whole in the area". Hand was also charged for absenting himself from council when the rezoning of the site for the development of Mort Bay was being considered by council. He also voted with Origlass and Wyner to let the independents on council debate a proposal to pull down the council's traffic control gates at Mort Bay. Hand was also accused of briefing his branch about the background to caucus decisions, briefings that Mitchell claimed were full of "half truths and innuendos" as well as "deliberately [seeking] to be provocative and endlessly prolong or disrupt meetings of caucus".²²

Some of the charges were upheld by the ALP's Local Government Administrative Committee and Hand was suspended for three months. In the third month of his suspension he and Margaret Lyons were both reported for voting for an amendment to a caucus resolution changing the ward system for Leichhardt. The Leichhardt (ALP) Municipal Committee and caucus had proposed new ward boundaries, reducing the number of wards from six to four, with three aldermen to be elected by proportional representation from each. While the proportional representation system nominally favoured independents, the break up of traditional representation by suburb and larger numbers of voters in the wards might favour Labor gaining a majority. There was considerable opposition in the municipality, and in the ALP, and Hand and Lyons had proposed that the local residents be further consulted. When the amendment was defeated they voted for the caucus proposition. Hand and Lyons also rebelled over the Brady group's proposal to agree to a

²² *Larry Hand*; 'Leichhardt Alderman facing certain expulsion', *The Glebe*, 1/5/85, p 9. See also LMC Minutes, 26/3/85 and 9/4/85.

land swap with the Maritime Services Board on the waterfront at Annandale as part of a deal for parkland on the Glebe side of the waterfront. Local resident groups like the Glebe Society and the Save Rozelle Bay Committee wanted the whole area for a Bicentennial Park. They gained some support in the ALP for their stand as this resolution of the Forest Lodge branch, moved by future state ALP parliamentarian Sandra Nori illustrates:

On the grounds of ALP unity in the area, Ald Lyons and Hand's hard work in the municipality and Ald Lyons subsequent statements of regret to caucus and council, the Forest Lodge branch calls on Ald Mitchell to withdraw the charges against the two aldermen with the agreement of the Administrative Committee or alternatively ... that the Administrative Committee dismiss the charges.²³

It was from this point that Lyons apparently decided to focus on "achievable outcomes" with the current caucus and tried to function within it. Hand was suspended from the Party for a further 12 months. As will be seen below, this situation was part of a growing rift within the Left branches over the Brady group's control of council. In contrast to the Forest Lodge branch resolution, the Leichhardt branch, in late 1985, had called for 'severe disciplinary action' to be taken against Hand and Lyons. Further, Leichhardt Municipal Committee president, Brian Daley, had written to *The Glebe*, arguing that by opposing the ward boundary changes, Lyons and Hand had "undermined the basic principles of democracy within the ALP". In the Annandale branch, in a repeat of the earlier conflict between Greenland and Hume, the branch see-sawed in its support for Hand and Brady, with the Brady forces gradually winning dominance. On one extraordinary occasion, Hand's supporters tried to wrong-foot the Brady camp by calling a special meeting of support for Hand, at 9 am, New Years Day, 1986.²⁴

²³ Minutes of Forest Lodge Branch, 3/2/86, ALPR, (uncatalogued). See also Larry Hand; 'Mayor Brady says park deal was non-negotiable', *The Glebe*, 16/10/85. P 5 and 13; Hand L., 'Letter to the Editor', *The Glebe*, 30/10/85, pp 4 and 22. See also LMC Minutes, 27/8/85, 10/9/85, 8/10/85, 11/10/85, 22/10/85 and 1985-87 passim.

²⁴ Larry Hand; Margaret Lyons. See correspondence re ward boundaries from Leichhardt and Annandale Branches, Head Office Correspondence with Branches file 1983/85, ALPR, MSS 5095/63; Daley, B., Letter to Editor, *The Glebe*, 23/10/85, p 4. See also Minutes of the Annandale Branch, ALPR, 1985 to 1986, passim and 1/1/86. A special meeting of an ALP branch could be called by a branch secretary within seven days of receipt of a 'requisition' by 12 branch members. See NSW ALP Rules.

Hand however continued to walk on the edge and his final expulsion from the Party came in January 1987. He had publicly criticised two caucus and council decisions. Harry Mitchell had moved to his union's office in Melbourne and caucus agreed to his continuing to represent Lilyfield Ward, where he was still a property owner. Hand accused Mitchell of treating the voters with contempt and also criticised a restructuring on council which, it seems, had partly been undertaken to accommodate Mitchell. Council would only meet once a month. Mitchell would only need to fly from Melbourne to attend half the meetings to keep his position. Most matters on council were now to be delegated to a building and development committee of six of the 12 aldermen. Apart from accommodating Mitchell's absence, this small number meant that only one each of the two groups of independents (Spedding/McVeigh and Origlass/Wyner) would be represented, restricting their ability to gain seconders for resolutions, amendments and procedural motions. After his expulsion, Hand continued on council, like Origlass and Wyner, as an independent.²⁵

Dissenting from 'the Brady bunch'.

As mentioned above, the dispute between Hand and the Brady group was only one aspect of the growing disquiet and division within the Left branches about Labor's performance on council. In October 1985, ALP members, Ralph Catts, former alderman Bill Hume and Barry Butler, husband of Labor Women's president Kate Butler and a former council staffer, circulated a document throughout the Labor Party in the area. It criticised the Brady group and its council decisions. These included the shelving of a community needs study and not taking up opportunities for funding. The latter included state monies available for a Leichhardt Area Transport Group, and federal monies for a children's services coordinator and a psychiatric day care centre. The report also criticised the abandonment of open

²⁵ Larry Hand. 'Mayor's cut-the-waffle move called "arrogance"', *The Glebe*, 25/6/86, p 13; 'Labor Man Charged', *The Glebe*, 14/1/87, p 9; 'Bunyip column', *The Glebe*, 4/2/87, p 4; 'Labor man Slams Former Comrades', *The Glebe*, 18/2/87, p 5; 'Hand feels Cheated By Labor Party Machine', *The Glebe*, 13/5/7, p 12. See also LMC Minutes passim for 1986-87.

council approaches to decision making and the deterioration in relations with some council staff.²⁶

These criticisms in part represented widening fissures around approaches to class and gender politics. The criticism of failure to accept funding for a children's services coordinator was linked to a dispute over long day care that alienated Labor feminists in particular. This related to council's delay in opening the long day care centre in Leichhardt Street and its preference for expanding family day care instead. This issue was backgrounded by the debate over child-care funding at the federal level, particularly the criticisms of Finance Minister, Peter Walsh of the subsidising of middle and high, income earners. This kind of criticism was similar to that of 'trendy' middle class preoccupations at the local level by the Brady group and long day care was apparently seen as privileging the middle class. As Brady put it in his regular column in *The Glebe*, "desires must be tempered with financial reality". Family day care, he argued, would favour non-working parents, was cheaper, and could cater for more. The delay in getting the centre functioning, and dissembling over the financial cost to council, over and above federal funding, provoked critical resolutions from branches and earned the ire of the federal member for Sydney, Peter Baldwin. The Federal Office of Child care had written to council asking it to take up the long day care centre grant or forfeit. When the details were leaked, Brady blamed the "petticoat mafia". In May 1986, after council had rejected federal child care office, and Brady had criticised federal bureaucrats in his mayoral newspaper column, Baldwin responded. In a letter to Brady, circulated to ALP Aldermen, he attacked the mayor and his administration:

If you genuinely want to sustain a viable working relationship with the Commonwealth, its officers, and for that matter me, I will need your assurance that there won't be any more of the sort of thoroughly dishonest public campaigning that we saw in your column last week.

²⁶ 'Disgruntled Party Men Attack Labor Council', *The Glebe*, 9/10/85, p 7.

I regard as scurrilous your attempt to sheet home the blame for council's own ineptitude on the Commonwealth Government and its officers who have acted properly at all times.²⁷

The Butler, Catts and Hume document circulated in October 1985 also expressed its concern at “the grievous harm and disruption [that] has been done to the personal lives and professions of some idealistic and competent women”. This was a reference to conflict between two women employees of Leichhardt Council and the Brady group/Eggins administration. Helen Hanify, council's Youth Officer, was forced out of her position after a dispute with Eggins over her duties and leave issues. Ros Riordan, Director of Community Services, was passed over when her position disappeared in a staff restructure, while she was on maternity leave. The treatment of these women contrasted with the treatment of a male paymaster who was allowed to resign quietly over an embezzlement case. Hanify and Riordan were members of the Party and as Crawford described it, there ensued a “great axe fight” over the issue through the branches. Brady was also taken to task by the Forest Lodge branch (on the motion of future ALP Senate leader, John Faulkner) for his “boofheaded” comments to the press to the effect that parks only attracted dog “poop”. The council also had to endure the embarrassment of a prolonged strike by garbage collectors over a 35 hour week campaign. By October 1985, Baldwin and others in the branches were worried enough about the damage being done to the image of the local Labor Party by the situation on council, and in the party generally, to organise a seminar for members on the future of the Party in the inner city.²⁸

²⁷ Baldwin's letter of 26/5/86 is quoted in ‘Labor MP blasts ALP Mayor: “Inept”’, *The Glebe*, 4/6/86, p 5. Brady's reference to the “petticoat mafia” is quoted in the ‘Bunyip’ column, *The Glebe*, 14/5/86, p 3. See also ‘Council Shying Away From Child Care’, *The Glebe*, 30/10/85, p 7 and resolutions from Annandale and Forest Lodge branches, Minutes of Annandale Branch, 14/10/85 and 11/11/85; Minutes of Forest Lodge Branch 14/10/85, *ALPR*. The Lilyfield branch, the home branch of Mitchell and Page, supported the Brady council, see Minutes of Lilyfield ALP Branch, 5/8/85 and 7/10/85 (held by branch secretary). See also Sandra Nori and Peter Crawford. On the general background to child-care policy at the national level, see Brennan, D., ‘Childcare’ in Caine, (Ed) *Australian Feminism*, pp 19-25. See also LMC Minutes passim for 1985-86.

²⁸ ‘Disgruntled party men Attack Labor Council’, *The Glebe*, 9/10/85, p 7; ‘Sick Leave, Time Sheets Falsified: Council Staffer Caught Cheating’, *The Glebe*, 6/3/85; ‘Bunyip’ column, *The Glebe*, 2/4/85, p 3; ‘Leichhardt Garboes: Council Talks Deadlocked’, *The Glebe*, 5/6/85, p 19; ‘“Council Holiday Girl's” Job Now Up For Grabs’, *The Glebe*, 18/9/85, p 13; ‘Municipality in Midst of Political upheaval’, *The Glebe*, 16/10/85. P 13; ‘Bunyip’ reference to Baldwin convening a forum on ‘The Future of Labor in the inner city’,

As the September 1987 municipal elections approached, the Brady group on council switched tack on the question of ward boundaries and successfully achieved their abolition. The elections would be fought out in a Senate-style proportional representation ballot with the twelve aldermen elected from the municipality as a whole. Even more-so than the earlier proposal to reduce the number of wards, this was seen as favouring the Labor Party, which would be better equipped than independents to campaign across the six suburbs. Further, while the municipal ballot itself was proportional representation, the Party pre-selection rules meant that the pre-selection ballot would be conducted on a 'winner take all', exhaustive preferential, system in which a solid majority might dominate the result. No doubt Brady and his supporters felt that they might be in a good position to do this, especially if, as they had unsuccessfully sought, the NSW Local Government Minister agreed to a separate, direct election for Mayor. However, there was significant enough concern, across the Party, about the damaging effect of a returned Brady council, for Head Office to intervene.²⁹

The NSW ALP decided not to endorse candidates in Leichhardt Municipality. Any ALP member could contest the election provided they exchanged preferences and did not present themselves as 'official' or 'endorsed' ALP candidates. Two main ALP teams contested. Brady, Page and Thompson headed a "Mayors Team" ticket and an ALP "Members Team" of the anti Brady forces, was lead by Kate Butler. Butler was former president of the disbanded Labor Women's Committee. Glebe Society activist, Neil Macindoe, was in the second position. The members' ticket also recruited Bob Heffernan, who while of the Right, had been on the outer of the Brady Group and might be useful in mobilising some of

The Glebe, 12/2/86, p 3; 'Council in Quandary Over Hand Case' (concerning Larry Hand's publicising of details of a report on the male staffer who was allowed to resign), *The Glebe*, 19/3/86, p 13; 'Commission to rule on Maternity Leave Issue' (the Riordan case), *The Glebe*, 19/3/86, p 15. See also Forest Lodge Branch resolution on Brady's "dog poop" comments, Minutes of Forest Lodge Branch, 7/4/86, *ALPR*. See also Peter Crawford, Sandra Nori and Minutes of LMC, 1985-86 passim.

²⁹ 'Bunyip' column, *The Glebe*, 29/4/87, p 4; 'ALP push sees council ward system abolished', *The Glebe*, 15/7/87, p 4. If the mayor were to be elected by direct popular ballot, that person would serve for the full four-year term of council as opposed to the normal system of election of the mayor annually by aldermen. See also Rules of the NSW Branch ALP and Sharon Page.

the traditional residents. There were also two phoney independent teams run, one by each of the main groups, to try and attract preferences. The outcome of the 1987 Municipal election was a disaster for the non-Brady Left. The three top people were returned on Brady's team. On the members' team, Kate Butler and Bob Heffernan were elected. Heffernan had been put in a lower, unwinnable, position on the ticket but had campaigned 'on the side' attracting a sizeable enough number of primary votes to leapfrog into second. This Left Butler as the only non-Brady, Left representative on council, disenfranchising a sizeable proportion, if not the majority of the Left in the branches.³⁰

The campaign itself had been characterised by enormous hostility between the two Labor teams, which impacted on the Party for some years to come. Origlass and Wyner returned to council having run at the head of an 'Open Council' ticket. Larry Hand, together with Betty Leone were elected from a new 'Community Independents' group (see below). Independent Doug Spedding, and his running mate Steven Smith, were also returned. Also elected was the first Liberal Party alderman, firefighter, Geoff Courtney. The new numbers on council ensured the return of the dominance of independents, albeit fairly fractured. Brady would be able to return as Mayor in 1990, but Labor would not control the position of Mayor again until 1996.³¹

The peninsula crusades.

The unpopularity of the Brady group on council created problems for state member for Balmain, Peter Crawford. Both appealed to the same constituency in the branches. Some of

³⁰ Solling and Reynolds, Leichhardt, pp 249-251, 257 and 262; Sue Stock, Sharon Page, Larry Hand. See also 'Bunyip' column, *The Glebe*, 12/8/87, p 4; 'The ALP refuses to back Leichhardt candidates', *The Glebe*, 12/8/87, p 5; 'Liberal team steps into bizarre ALP bunfight', *The Glebe*, 2/9/87, p 5, Leichhardt Municipal Council, list of candidates, *The Glebe*, 2/9/87, p 12; Various election advertisements by candidate teams, *The Glebe*, 23/9/87.

³¹ Solling and Reynolds, Leichhardt, pp 249-251, 257 and 262; Sharon Page. The writer was also a candidate on the Origlass/Wyner, *Open Council* team, see chapter seven below and *Open Council* election news sheet in

the support bases Crawford depended on for example were the Annandale and Lilyfield branches, which were strongly supportive of Brady. Crawford admits that he should have come out more firmly against Brady and in support of Peter Baldwin:

It was a terrible situation. You had the federal member and all my friends in Balmain and Rozelle and everyone against Brady and here I was still a friend of Brady's and supporting him. It was awful. I had enough problems with Mort Bay and Origlass to be worried about [without] all this other ancillary crap that was developing.

...

What I should have done in retrospect was come out relentlessly against Bill even though I don't think he was a bad person but I should have at that stage supported Baldwin. This is politically. I'm not talking morally or ethically or anything, but strictly politically. I should have come out strongly against Brady and gone and spoken to everyone against him, not on the grounds that he was a bad person, but on the grounds that he had appalling political judgement over trivia all through the area. And also his support of the GDR and the Soviet Union and so on show he was naïve politically.³²

Crawford, as much as the rest of the ALP Left, was struggling for political identity and purpose in the midst of this maelstrom. What better form of relevance and purpose than that provided in the bricks and mortar of public housing, and in particular that proposed for the Mort Bay site.

With the departure of the Australian National Line, and its containers and associated truck traffic, from the Mort Bay site by the end of the 1970's, various possible uses were raised. In 1979, a Mort bay residents committee, associated with ALP members, surveyed local opinion and proposed a future use for the site involving 58 per cent open space (of regional as opposed to just local significance), 22 per cent residential, 12 per cent community facilities and 2 per cent commercial. Origlass and Wyner, with the support of local residents, successfully pushed in 1980 for Leichhardt Council to agree that the area should

the writer's papers. Ironically, Liberal alderman Courtney, as a firefighter, was, unlike many of the middle class Left, eligible to be a member of a union affiliated to the ALP.

³² Peter Crawford.

be *all* open space. In 1981, commissioner Coleman, who had been appointed to look into Leichhardt's town planning issues (see chapter five above) proposed a moratorium on any new development until there was a full investigation. The new Left dominated council after September 1980 began to lean towards a mix of housing and open space and the Labor state government proposed a mix of public and private residential development and maritime development, such as a marina.³³

The state government acquired the site and began firming up its approach, appointing a working party in early 1984. The beginning of the project and the intense political battle that was to attend it came with Leichhardt Council's rezoning of the site, at state government request, for a mixture of public and private housing, open space and maritime use, based on the working committee's recommendations. During the next year, as a result of public pressure, maritime uses were abandoned, the size of the residential development moderated and the amount of open space on the site was increased from about 1/3 to just over half the area. The residential area was to consist of two sections of public housing, a total of 210 housing units plus community facilities and two small shops. The area of the original Mort's dock had been filled in and asphalted over in the 1960's but in 1984 was recognised by the Heritage Council as an area of historical significance. The marked out area of the original dock was to form part of the open space.³⁴

The project itself commenced at the beginning of 1987 and was due for completion at the end of that year. However it was not to be completed until the beginning of the 1990's. The most intense political campaigning around the issue was during the period 1985 to 1986,

³³ Cocks, N., *Mort Bay: A History of urban struggle and class conflict*, Thesis, Bachelor of Town Planning, School of Architecture, UNSW, 1986, pp 84-86; Report on Development Applications DA 518/86 and DA 519/86, LMC 10/2/87, pp 2-3 together with Minutes of LMC, 26/11/85, 22/4/86, 10/6/86, 22/7/86 and passim for period late 1985 to early 1987. See also Solling and Reynolds, *Leichhardt*, p 236. An extensive collection of documents regarding Mort Bay and the related Clontarf issue are in the Papers of Jean Lennane SLNSW (uncatalogued) and Further Papers of Nick Origlass, SLNSW, MLMSS 7093 folios 13/1; 13/2; 15/1.

³⁴ Cocks, *Mort Bay*, Ch. 5; Report on Development Applications, 10/2/87, pp 2-7 and passim. See location of Mort's Dock site, map, appendix A. The Brady dominated council endorsed the state government's approach.

before the project was set in concrete. From the beginning of this period, Crawford took up the issue of public housing with a passion. As he explained it:

The greatest misjudgement of my life ... [that] destroyed me politically was obsessions that I would get about certain issues you know? ... I got a fixation about public housing and I believed the most extreme propaganda pushed by the housing lobby that there was a housing crisis in Sydney ... What we had in Sydney were difficulties, not a housing crisis. We had stresses for certain people but I became utterly fixated that Balmain needed housing. And it did in a sort of sense. We're a rich society that should have provided public housing for people who were being uprooted out of Balmain and stumbling into my office and seeking public housing right where they lived. But I became inflexibly and intransigently, to use an Origlass phrase, "wedded to the perspective" of public housing ... I thought it would help keep some of the public mix in Balmain that I'd been used to, not see the area become entirely rich and trendy.³⁵

The principal organisation that would find itself in opposition to Crawford, demanding all open space for the Mort Bay site, was the Mort Bay Action Group (MBAG), and its principal spokesperson, psychiatrist Jean Lennane. Lennane was originally a New Zealander who took up a job at Rozelle Psychiatric Centre in 1976 and then settled in Balmain. She came from a family of activists. Her father was a "civil libertarian stirrer" and one brother was active in education politics and the other, like her, in health politics. Lennane was active in her union, the Professional Medical Officers Association and was its president in 1984-85. At the end of the 1980's she was to be dismissed from the NSW Health Department. She had publicly criticised changes in psychiatric hospitals that were seeing more and more patients pushed out into an under-funded and inadequate 'community' based care. Her subsequent role as a founder and president of an organisation for 'whistleblowers' points to a singular approach to political issues. She explained her general political approach in these terms:

However, in state government developments of this nature, the council's agreement was a formality. Its powers could have been over-ridden if it objected.

³⁵ Peter Crawford. See also 'Department of Housing, Mort Bay Project' Supplementary Report, Appendix PR 17, Royal Commission into Productivity in the Building Industry in New South Wales, May 1992, pp 235-239. See also other references in notes above to the issue.

I'd say on my beliefs I'm certainly not on the Right ... but I don't find the Left as it is in this country as my scene or my kind of people. I mean I'm a socialist, I believe in from each according to their ability to each according to their needs ... and it seems to me that a society can't hope to exist comfortably while there are gross inequalities³⁶

According to Lennane, of the ten people at the core of the MBAG, about seven were Labor supporters and three liberals. Indeed, the issue attracted the attention of the Liberal Party, keen to make any political advantage in the deteriorating political situation for Labor. The MBAG encouraged members to enter political parties in order to influence the situation. A Balmain branch of the Liberal Party was set up, while Lennane and others joined the Labor Party. The core activists in the MBAG were, as with other action groups, mainly women, Lennane, June Lunsman and Bonnie Davidson. During its campaign against the development, the MBAG emphasised the need for open space, especially as play areas for children and criticised the urban consolidation plans of the state government, of which the Mort Bay project was part. The development, they argued, would cause overcrowding of the Balmain peninsula and generate parking and traffic problems.³⁷

The MBAG was joined in its campaign for all open space by local aldermen Origlass and Wyner and their consequent opposition to public housing at Mort Bay became disquieting to many of their traditional Left supporters. Origlass and Wyner could, of course, claim considerable credit for initiating the federal government's purchase and rehabilitation of the Glebe Estate, when Origlass was Mayor in 1971-73 (see chapter four above). Origlass himself lived in a Department of Housing flat in Nicholson Street Balmain. Originally, when Mort's Dock closed in the late fifties, and before it became a container terminal, the Balmain aldermen had considered the possibility of its use for housing. Both of them had been involved on council in the development of a waterfront site for this purpose in East Balmain in 1960. But as Greenland has pointed out in *Red Hot*, Origlass and Wyner started

³⁶ Recorded Interview with Jean Lennane, 5/5/99. See also Cocks, *Mort Bay*, pp 89-90, 96, Chs 6 and 7; Best, J., *Portraits in Australian Health*, McLennant and Petty, Sydney, 1988, Ch. 2 (on Jean Lennane).

to undergo a change in political attitude related to their increasing political awareness of the environment and the importance of the “amenity of neighbourhoods”. This was linked to the changing nature of waterfront industrial use away from relatively “benign” traditional ship-building and repair to more environmentally threatening container wharves and chemical and oil storage. Wyner described this change, in relation to the Mort bay site, in these words:

[In the 1950's] we were no different. We were thinking that there's a huge piece of land that could be developed for housing for the underprivileged ... for the underdog ...

After a few years we began listening to what people were saying; picking up sounds from different groups around the community which were talking about open space and how little of it there was. I think we had to learn our lesson same as anybody else in that regard. We threw away the whole idea of housing development there and we turned it into a demand for that to be made one big open park; a park that could have national benefits, national attractions ...

In those days there were no yuppies or people like that to say “oh blame them, they don't want it”; this NIMBY business and all the rubbish. There was none of that. But there was this viewpoint that why waste all this wonderful land on housing when it can be turned to a use that would benefit the whole of the existing community in this area.³⁸

By the 1980's Origlass and Wyner's attitude to waterfront industrial land had evolved towards a firm belief that all waterfront land that was not needed for benign industrial purposes, genuinely needing a water frontage, should be used for open space. This was seen as the principal means of democratising access to Sydney Harbour. That meant opposition to *all* waterfront residential development, public or private. However their relationship to the conflict over Mort Bay in the mid 1980's was dominated by a problem of electoral politics. This can be illustrated in the campaign which was the forerunner to Mort Bay. This was the conflict over public housing versus open space on a small site at the corner of

³⁷ Cocks, Mort Bay, Chs 5-7. See also various documents relating to the Mort Bay issue in Lennane and Origlass papers SLNSW.

Wallace and Adolphus Streets, Balmain, which incorporated the run-down, heritage cottage of Clontarf.³⁹

Clontarf was a small stone cottage built in 1844 by Robert Blake; a former soldier and spec builder. It eventually became an industrial site, from 1947 owned by Ward's Stoves. It was rezoned for open space in 1968 and purchased by Leichhardt Council for that purpose in 1974. This was a time when any such small site would be a valued addition to open space. Leichhardt Municipality was 38th out of the 40 municipalities of the Sydney area in terms of open space in the mid 1980's, with 1.41 hectares per 1000 residents compared to an average of 45.22 hectares.

When the Left took power in Balmain branch in 1978, a tension emerged, as explained in chapter five. This was between the branch Left, in particular the Crawford element, keen to win public office, and Origlass and Wyner, appealing to the same constituency, and keen to seek vindication for their role in the 'wilderness' of independent politics. Just prior to the 1980 municipal elections, Ports Minister Jack Ferguson, handed Leichhardt Council a much larger piece of land for open space, close to Adolphus Street and overlooking White Bay. This was largely through the efforts of Peter Crawford, who had worked on his staff, Nick O'Neill, active on the Fourshores Committee, and others in the Balmain ALP branch. During the ALP Left dominated 1980-84 council, Leichhardt Municipality entered into an arrangement with the then Housing Commission to hand over the Adolphus Street site for the construction of twenty two pensioner units. In exchange, the Commission would restore Clontarf and maintain access for community use.⁴⁰

³⁸ Issy Wyner. See also Greenland, *Red Hot*, Ch 22,

³⁹ The 1984 election policy re Mort bay is in a leaflet headed 'Balmain Residents on Guard: Mort Bay-What's in Store', dated 11/4/84, quoted in Miu-Sin, L., 'A Case Study of Mort bay Development' Dissertation, Master of Urban and regional Planning, Department of Urban and regional Planning, University of Sydney, November 1993, p 38.

⁴⁰ The median for open space among metropolitan municipalities was 4.25 hectares per 1000 people and the recommended minimum amount by the Department of Environment and Planning was 2.83. Table 3, '1982 Open Space Survey: Open Space in the Sydney Region', Research Study No 5, Department of Environment and Planning, Sydney 1985 (copy in Lennane Papers); Lumby, C., 'Parks or People: It's open Space vs Living

Given the large area of public open space now available at White Bay, the placing of pensioner units on part of the Adolphus Street site, in exchange for the Clontarf refurbishment, appeared reasonable. Not however for Origlass and Wyner. And not for vocal residents nearby whose children had been using the vacant block as a play area. All had their hearts set on the original open space proposal. It became a conflict between two rival sets of political achievements; between the assertion of two rival political memories. For Origlass and Wyner it was a memory of a long struggle for open space going back to the 1960's and of their long campaign against the Right waged outside the ALP. For the Left Balmain branch, the memory of political achievement lay in the branch stacking campaign against the right, the acquisition of the White Bay park and the successful defeat of Origlass and Wyner electorally in 1980 as part of the ALP Left's broader coming to power in the municipality. To add insult to injury, the White Bay park was to be on the site of the chemical tank farm, opposition to which had been the cause of Origlass and Wyner's 1968 expulsion from the ALP. Origlass, Wyner and their supporters at the time had received little or no support from the official Left Steering Committee, which was now poised to reap the benefits of their campaigning. Ultimately the pensioner units were built, though not without direct action and civil disobedience on behalf of local residents wanting a park. Origlass himself was arrested and the photograph of this makes up the front cover of Greenland's *Red Hot*. In taking this stand, Origlass and Wyner drew on the open council tradition of 'residents come first' arguing that, through public meetings, they were acting in the interests of their constituents.⁴¹

The Adolphus Street/Clontarf issue shaded into the more significant battle over Mort Bay entrenching a polarised debate over 'open space versus public housing'. There were, after

Space', *Eastern Herald*, 15/9/88, p 9; copy of 1980 Municipal Campaign Leaflet for Peter Crawford and Nick O'Neill in Origlass Papers; 'Bunyip' column, *The Glebe*, for issues 6/4/83, 4/5/83, 18/5/83 and 22/6/83; 'Clontarf Protesters Not About To Throw The Towel In', *The Glebe*, 14/12/83, p 8.

⁴¹ Balmain Association, *News Sheet*, December 1986 pp 4-5; Parks and People Letter No 1 and leaflet by D and A Grafton re the Adolphus Street/Clontarf issue, copies in Lennane Papers; 'Pensioners to get Low Income Housing', *The Tiger*, June 1986, p 4; 1984 campaign leaflet, Crawford and O'Neill, and 1984 municipal elections, letter to residents from Origlass and Wyner, both in Origlass Papers. See also Origlass papers on Clontarf, SLNSW, MLMSS 7093/13/3. See also Greenland, *Red Hot*, front cover.

all, strong arguments on both sides. On the one, there was the desire to expand open space in a suburb of small houses and narrow streets, still populated by a strong working class element as well as middle class. There was the aim to liberate as much of the waterfront as possible, as part of Sydney Harbour National Park, and perhaps memorialise an important site of Australian industrial and labour history. On the other there was the desire to contain the forces of economic gentrification, maintain the social mix of Balmain and address social inequities, through the provision of public housing. In terms of the physical outcome, a fifty-fifty split of housing and open space at Mort bay or alternatively, all open space and another solution to the housing question, such as acquiring existing housing stock, might all have been a reasonable weighing up of alternatives. This might have been set against a wider debate about urban consolidation and a deeper attempt to understand the social economic and environmental factors at work. However in the generally fraught political context of the mid-1980's, the contest for allegiance of the political constituency in Balmain, especially that of the middle class Left, allowed little room for a reasoned outcome and the debate became intense, abusive and politically corrosive.⁴²

Those protesting the Mort Bay project were characterised as yuppies who did not have any compassion, and trendies preoccupied with mortgages. Balmain ALP branch secretary Toby Prentice, for example, referred to the opponents of the public housing project as a “doctor-Trotskyite-Liberal Party coalition” and “a comfortable coalition of self-interested radicalism” and a core of Crawford’s supporters attended public meetings and heckled and

⁴² The other side of the gentrification statistics presented in chapter one is that there was still a strong percentage of the population who could, in the terms employed in this study, be described as working class. For example Balmain in 1991 over 50 per cent of the workforce were in managerial, professional or para-professional occupations. However over 25 per cent were ‘white collar’ working class and over 14 per cent ‘blue collar’. Over 40 per cent of the working age population claimed no formal qualifications; Leichhardt Municipality Community Profile, 1991 Census, Community Services Department, Leichhardt Municipal Council, 1996, pp 52-53. The Mort Bay debate was extensively covered in *The Glebe* during this period but also in the major press. See for example: Glascott, J., Balmain: a suburb in revolt’, *SMH*, 6/5/86; Chater, J., ‘Of course we need public housing, but not here’, *SMH*, 14/6/86, p 45; Walker, F., ‘Politics is facing a new era’, *Sun Herald*, 10/8/86; Letter to the Editor, *SMH*, from Frank Walker, Minister for Housing, 11/8/86, p 16 and various responses from Jean Lennane, Jane Ward and Tony Harris, Letters page, *SMH*, 15/8/86, p 14; Glascott, J., ‘Put on the shin guards, it’s war in Balmain’, *SMH*, 16/10/86; Leser, D., ‘Balmain boys are crying

abused the open space advocates. Posters were placed on telegraph poles. One was a photograph of Adolf Hitler with the caption “‘Local’ real estate agent addresses Balmain area hysteria workshop”. Another was of a Nazi officer with an Alsatian, captioned “Balmain residents utilising existing open space”. Supporters of open space argued that the ALP was only interested in using public housing as a means to stack voters into the electorate. Lennane was quoted in *The Glebe* as arguing that Crawford “doesn’t seem to represent his constituents unless they’re on the pension” and, at a protest on the site, Crawford was burned in effigy. Pro-open space advocates responded that they were not opposed to public housing per se, just that on the Mort Bay site, and accused Crawford and the Labor state government of arrogance, fanaticism, and trying to punish the citizens of Balmain for deviating electorally from Labor. They cited the case of the Labor Mayor of Drummoyne, a staffer of Planning Minister Bob Carr, who had succeeded in deferring a public housing project much smaller than that proposed for Mort Bay. Crawford’s supporters lashed the Mort Bay critics for their “unscrupulous, mischievous and dishonest campaign” and defended the amount of open space being created in Balmain as well as Crawford’s own environmental record. He had spoken in state parliament on National Parks.⁴³

In 1985, Lennane joined the ALP through the new system of applying through Head Office but when she tried to register at the Balmain branch she was blocked. In spite of representations on her behalf by the state secretaries of the Health and Research Employees Association, an ALP affiliated union, and the Nurses Association as well as Leichhardt

foul’, *The Australian*, 22-23/11/86, p 20 and Lumby, C., Parks or people: It’s Open Space vs Living Space’, *Eastern Herald*, 15/9/88, pp 1 and 9.

⁴³ See Lennane papers, SLNSW including copy of leaflet from the Liaison Union for Public Housing (pro public housing group) and a copy of the Balmain ALP meeting notice, August 1986 (reference to ‘doctor-trotskyite-Liberal coalition’). See also Origlass papers, SLNSW, MLMSS, 7093, folios 13/1, 13/3 and 15/1; issues of *The Tiger* (produced by Balmain ALP Branch), 1885-1986, SLNSW. See also *The Glebe* during the 1985-86 period including: Lennane comment on Crawford and pensioners, quoted in ‘Bunyip’ column, 27/3/85, p 4; Letter to Editor from Balmain Association President (concerning ALP members disrupting Mort Bay public meeting), 26/2/86, pp 6 and 8; ‘Mayor slammed as “trendies” fight housing’, 6/8/86, p 3; “‘Trendies” mocked by bill’, 27/8/86, p 7. See also coverage of the debate in the major press referred to above.

Alderman, Larry Hand, ALP Head Office cancelled her membership. An attempt through the branches to proscribe the MBAG failed though Head Office put the group on notice. This was a curious echo of attempts in the early seventies, by the Leichhardt ALP Right, to proscribe resident associations. In opposing Lennane's ALP membership, Crawford argued in terms that effectively negated his and Baldwin's own recruitment methods in the 1970's, based as they were on 'single issues', especially town planning:

It is inappropriate that a person actively ridiculing Labor Ministers and Labor legislation, Labor councils and the local State member of parliament should join on one issue, with a view not to promoting the Labor Party but promoting the issue.⁴⁴

In spite of assertions by the MBAG that it was not opposed to public housing, its arguments were limited and defensive. In the principal leaflet circulated the group emphasised the "sleaze factor" of "who gets into Housing Department properties" and the political motivation behind the project:

The NSW Housing Department: Helping Poor People ??? Or a strong arm political machine to create jobs for the boys and houses for their mates? Keep the government in power and costing you – the taxpayer – a fortune!

...

Do they keep building ghettos because the Labor Party wants to be able to import large numbers of "safe" voters where they are needed? Small developments in Liberal seats go Liberal very quickly. Big blocks keep them isolated and keep them Labor.⁴⁵

The "solution" to housing shortages for the MBAG lay in clearing up the waiting list by moving out those in public housing who did not really need it, claimed by MBAG to be 40

⁴⁴ Letter from Peter Crawford, MP, to Kevin Moss, Secretary of Committees, Credentials Committee 1984-85, ALPR, ML MSS 5095/485. See also Head Office Correspondence with Balmain Branch, 1983-84, ALPR, MSS 5095/63. For earlier attempts to proscribe resident's associations see Presidents Report, *Glebe Society Bulletin*, 1975, No. 6; 'Society, Associations "political": ALP outlaws four groups' *The Glebe*, 26/3/75, p 1.

⁴⁵ A copy of the MBAG leaflet, undated (probably mid to late 1986) is located in the papers of Jean Lennane, SLNSW. The Lennane papers also have an extensive collection of MBAG correspondence and other documents relevant to the Clontarf and Mort Bay issues.

per cent, ensuring that tenants did not occupy bigger properties than they needed and supplementing with spot buying “as necessary”.⁴⁶

Throughout this, local aldermen Origlass and Wyner refused to compromise on their demand for all open space for Mort Bay, drawing on a strong labour movement tradition in struggling for harbour foreshore. Origlass cited the example of N.R.W. Neilson, an Australian Workers Union official, active in the ‘Harbour Vigilance Committee’ in the early 1900’s and who, as the first Minister for Lands, created what is now Neilson Park. While, according to Greenland, they were concerned at elitist aspects of the MBAG, Origlass attacked the “guilt complex of leading lights of the Balmain Branch” and countered the stereotyping of open space supporters as selfish “trendies” with his own, romanticised vision:

Most of the newer residents of Balmain are wrongly designated “middle-class” on the criteria of education, comportment, lifestyle, speech, lucidity. Does the tendency of Air pilots, journalists, doctors, teachers, social workers, public servants, nurses etc etc. towards organised action bear any relationship to that of the classical middle class?

No! What is developing apace is the new proletariat, whose most basic urge is to freedom and self-determination, complementing that of the traditional one. And as they inevitably move towards the recognition that only a benign technology to serve human needs and conserve finite resources can save the planet earth and humankind from disaster, their role of “Voter in the terrace houses” will expand to that of activist in the public arena.

The current State ALP member Mr Crawford may well have grounds for present fears. He condemns the presence here of residents he attacks as “trendies” and “the gentry” and misrepresents their laudable environmental objectives, seemingly unaware that the logic of his position would condemn him to a return to Wahroonga.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Leaflet, MBAG, Lennane papers.

⁴⁷ Letter to the editor of the SMH (unpublished), 24/7/85, Origlass papers, MLMSS 7093/13/1; See also Origlass, N and Wyner, I., letters to residents, Origlass papers, MLMSS 7093: 12/6/80, folio 14/2; 6/3/85, folio 15/1. The writer at the time was not directly involved in the Mort Bay issue but commented on it as part

There were differences within the Balmain ALP branch but these mainly appear to have been over the nature of the mix of housing and open space and questions of design. Also many in the ALP were concerned at the way in which the project was being handled. There was the earlier lack of consultation by the Housing and Environment departments and the Brady-led Leichhardt Council, and what was seen as an insensitive, combative and abusive approach by Crawford and some of his pro-public housing supporters. Ann Catling, who lived on Mort Bay was involved in the debate from early on. Catling supported a mix of housing and open space and was critical mainly of the design of the project and the juxtaposition of the housing on the site. According to Catling, the debate came up among residents around the project, before it came up in the branch, and among the people she had affinity with it was a reasonable debate around the mix of housing and open space. "The branch came into it later" she recalled, "my recollection is Crawford using it".⁴⁸

Catling's political associate, former Whitlam urban affairs minister Tom Uren, also became involved when he was invited to address one of the public meetings. Uren, who has been a major campaigner for reclaiming and defending Sydney harbour foreshores for public use, also supported a mix of open space and housing. Like Catling, he favoured a repositioning of the northern, Yeend Street, section away from the waterfront to maximise the amount of open space adjacent to it. He rounded on Crawford at a meeting with senior officers of the Environment and Planning Department when Crawford accused him of a conflict of interest. Uren had been born in Balmain and was approaching his parliamentary retirement.

of involvement in The Greens and as a candidate in the Origlass-Wyner led 'Open Council' ticket for the 1987 municipal elections. The writer supported the Origlass-Wyner all-open space position at Mort Bay but was concerned that the need for a solution to the housing issue (such as by calling for diversion of State funds away from areas such as expressway construction to acquisition of housing stock in the inner city) was not being put forcefully enough. The writer viewed the State Government's approach to the Mort Bay housing project at the time as aimed at creating a false dichotomy of housing versus open space for political purposes. See Letter to Editor by the writer, SMH, 15/8/86, p 14 and various documents relating to urban environmental issues and The Greens in the writer's papers.

⁴⁸ Ann Catling. See also Interview with John Faulkner, 31/1/00; Kate Butler; Mary Jerram; Sue Stock; Alan Rogers; Rod Madgwick. See also Cocks, Mort Bay, pp 89-90

He owned a block of land in East Balmain on which he would build a house which looked towards Mort Bay.⁴⁹

Crawford had also begun to antagonise many in the ALP Left with his ‘flip-flopping’ on the issue, swinging from aggressive advocate of public housing to an eleventh hour attempt to modify the project to meet objections from local residents. This tension within the Left was also evident in the relationship between Crawford and the state Housing Minister Frank Walker, who along with Environment and Planning Minister Bob Carr, had joint responsibility for the project. Crawford had wanted the project completed long before the state elections and there was a feeling among his supporters that Walker, who was on the other side of the growing rift within the Steering Committee, was happy to let him “stew” over the delay. Ironically, Bob Carr, on the Labor Right, had become a close friend and bushwalking companion of Crawford. However Crawford was to be no more successful in his attempts to modify the project than Uren. Carr had also refused to negotiate with local representatives who were political opponents of the ALP. This effectively ruled out anybody of significance in the debate. Origlass and Wyner were ALP opponents as was Jean Lennane who, unsuccessful at her attempt to enter the ALP, had announced her independent candidature for the state seat of Balmain. The Balmain Association gave voice to a general dismay at the breakdown of communication between the local groups and the state government over Clontarf and Mort Bay and sought to act as an “honest broker” in the debate and encourage the state government to negotiate. In an affront to these concerns, the state government rebuffed the association and construction at Mort Bay proceeded.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Recorded interview with Tom Uren, 4/12/01; Uren, *Straight Left*, pp 3-5, 403, 413-415.

⁵⁰ Peter Crawford; Sheree Waks, Rod Madgwick; ‘Walker threatens to shelve Mort Bay Project’, *The Glebe*, 19/2/86, p 9; ‘Balmain Medico Declares War on Nifty’s Mob’, *The Glebe*, 12/3/86, p 1. See also documents in the Lennane papers: Letter to Premier Barry Unsworth from Norman Bull, President, Balmain Association, 8/7/86; Submission, to Planning and Environment Minister Bob Carr, Balmain Association, 2/9/86; Report of meeting between Balmain Association officers and Bob Carr, Balmain Association *News Sheet*, October 1986.

Outcomes

In retrospect, the relatively benign physical outcome at Mort Bay, with the original dock marked out and what Wyner conceded was a “good, big park”, stands in contrast to the bitterness of the debate. However the fall-out was largely political. The Housing Department was to be roundly condemned for gross mismanagement of a project that ballooned from \$18.6 million to over \$60 million, an above market value, average cost of \$283,000, without land costs, for each of the 213 units. The major part of the housing, located on Yeend Street, was to never become public housing per se. It was leased by the Liberal state government, elected in 1988, at commercial rentals, and sold later by the Carr-led Labor government. This has given credence to the view that, in retrospect, the project was less about public housing and rather more a Trojan horse for urban consolidation in the form of private residential construction.⁵¹

In the state elections of March 1988, Peter Crawford was defeated by local Balmain hero, and former Olympic swimmer, Dawn Fraser. Fraser capitalised on discontent over Mort Bay but was also successful due to her profile among traditional residents and the general bad odour about Labor at all levels of government. As Crawford ruefully put it, “it was like trying to stand against the Statue of Liberty”. Lennane had withdrawn from the contest and Fraser was helped over the line by preferences from Larry Hand, now sitting on Leichhardt Council as one of two Community Independents, and Jane Ward, Balmain Association president and a supporter of all open space at Mort Bay. Crawford was not alone in his defeat. State Housing Minister Frank Walker and his protagonist in the internal conflict

⁵¹ Issy Wyner; Mort Bay Supplementary Report, Royal Commission Into Productivity in the Building Industry, pp 236-239; Final Report, Royal Commission into Productivity in the Building Industry in New South Wales, Parliament of NSW, Vol. 7, pp 86-87. See also chapter five above for discussion of urban consolidation. It should be noted that the premise on which urban consolidation was based was subject to debate. Falling population in the inner city was due largely to falling household occupancy rates. This was linked to gentrification but was also probably the result of generalised increases in affluence and changing family size and structure across Australian society. Steady population declines in the inner city are evident from World War Two. Population decline could not be substantially reversed without more intense residential

within the Left, Education Minister Rodney Cavalier, also lost their seats as Labor was swept from office. Carr survived to become the new state Labor leader and then Premier when Labor returned to office in 1995. In reflecting on his defeat, Crawford was critical of the incompetence of the housing department and the financial “scandal” of the cost of the project; conceding that it might have been better, both financially and politically, to “spot buy” houses. He lamented the role that the Mort Bay issue played:

I always remember Nick Origlass, he spoke to me and said, after I won the seat, he said “look Peter, you’re in the strongest position I’ve ever seen anyone in this area. He said, just support me on this question of Clontarf Housing and Mort Bay and you will go the closest ever to being elected unanimously as the state member for this area. But if you oppose the residents on Mort bay” he said “ you’ll have all sorts of problems and” he said “even I’ll run against you in the state. So there’s your choice” So instead of following what he said, which was the royal road to a wonderful career in that area, I ran in the very reverse direction.⁵²

Crawford also reflected on what he saw as his own limitations as a member. He felt that he didn’t “present” as a state member should; “didn’t dress well enough” or “attend as many meetings as I should have outside the Labor Party”. He also regretted his association with a hard core of friends who were pushing him to be tough in support of public housing and who provoked and antagonised the supporters of open space at public meetings:

you can’t blame them, it was my lack of professionalism. I was the one being paid the big salary to be in parliament, not them. I was the one that had to make these judgements and they were judgements that I made wrongly ...

While I was crusading, everything seemed to go my way. It was wonderful. But a crusader, like you know, is not a rational person.⁵³

development. See Bonyhady, the Battle for Balmain, p 113; Ward, J., ‘More About Myths’, *Balmain Association News Sheet*, August 1988; Solling and Reynolds, *Leichhardt*, pp 252-253.

⁵² Peter Crawford. See also, Aubin, T., ‘Why Dawn has a Sporting chance’, *SMH*, 19/3/88, p 8; various reports, *SMH*, 21/3/88: ‘Labor in shock as Independents take strongholds’, p 2; ‘Ministers who were casualties’, p 32; ‘The issues that tipped the balance against Labor’, p 32. See also Lumby, C., ‘Mort Bay groups condemn plan to sell public housing’, *Eastern Herald*, 18/8/88, p 1; ‘Dawn wins in Balmain: Crawford Concedes’, *The Glebe*, 30/3/88, p 5.

⁵³ Peter Crawford.

With the defeat of the Brady council and Crawford, the struggle for control of the Labor heritage in Balmain appeared to have been resolved in favour of its two long-term ‘crusaders’, Origlass and Wyner. Under the agreed arrangement among the independents elected to council in late 1987, Origlass was Mayor for 1987-88; Spedding 1988-89 and Wyner, 1989-90. Larry Hand, who was supposed to serve for the final year, was edged out when the Spedding independents switched support to Bill Brady. A ‘draw from the hat’ ensured the vaudevillian mayor a brief, but significant, encore. With the Brady element dominating the ALP presence on council, the Party’s stocks were so low that an attempt was made to encourage Origlass and Wyner to rejoin the ALP though this foundered on their insistence that they not merely be re-admitted but effectively have their 1968 expulsion overturned.⁵⁴

Wyner was a superior public speaker to Origlass and came into his own as Mayor, especially in the conflicts emerging over the proposed development of the ‘five sites’ in Balmain. This prompted the ALP’s Kate Butler, isolated from the Labor caucus, to refer to him as one of the best mayors Leichhardt had seen. However the move for a generational change was catching up with the Balmain duo and the Mort Bay dispute had been a turning point. Their ‘residents come first’ advocacy for open space, and on behalf of the ‘new proletariat’, seemed to gloss over the changes to the social mix and the difficulties faced by low income earners trying to keep a toe-hold in the inner city. This left the perception that they had ‘dropped the ball’ on questions of social equity and had succumbed to a reductionist populism. In the future, the group that would be seen to ‘take up the ball’, and appeal to the middle class Left constituency as far as Leichhardt Council was concerned, would be the Community Independents. Their leader, Larry Hand, would be the dominant personality on council in the first half of the 1990’s.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Cowley, T., ‘Bid to stop election of Brady fails’, *The Glebe*, 3/10/90, p 2; Solling and Reynolds, *Leichhardt*, pp 249; Greenland, *Red Hot*, pp 296-297.

⁵⁵ ‘Breaking caucus for Leichhardt. But Kate still loves Party’, *The Glebe*, 12/9/90, p 5; Solling and Reynolds, *Leichhardt*, pp 237-238, 249-251; Greenland, *Red Hot*, pp 296-297. See also the general coverage of the ‘five sites’ and other municipal issues in *The Glebe*, 1987-91 and Bonyhady, ‘The Battle for Balmain’, *passim*. See also Sandercock, L., ‘The Two Faces of Our City’, *SMH*, 26/3/86, p 15. Sandercock’s argument was an

example of the concerns being raised about the growing divide between the eastern and western halves of the Sydney metropolitan area. Sandercock was a member of the Balmain ALP branch and, as mentioned in chapter five, was a critic from an equity point of view, of urban consolidation. However she was suspicious of resident action/participatory democracy approaches. See Sandercock, 'Citizen Participation: the new conservatism', *passim*, and references in chapter three concerning urban consolidation. See also the respective mayoral reports by Origlass and Wyner in Leichhardt Council's *Report to Residents*, for 1987-88 and 1989-90.

Chapter 7

DIASPORA

The declining political fortunes of Labor in the Leichhardt Municipality, and at the state and federal levels in the mid to late 1980's, were in part ameliorated by the political success story in Glebe. While Peter Crawford and the state Labor government were defeated in the elections of March 1988, Sandra Nori beat off a determined challenge by independent and future Lord Mayor of Sydney, Frank Sartor, to win the seat of McKell. This was Pat Hills' old seat, formerly Elizabeth, which encompassed Glebe and most of Annandale.

Sandra Nori was the only child of Italian working class parents and was born in Newcastle in June 1953. Her father had emigrated three years before her mother joined him. After Newcastle, Nori lived in Petersham, the suburb adjacent to Leichhardt, Panania and then moved back to Petersham. It was here that Nori's parents split up when Nori was 14. Nori didn't do particularly well at her Higher School Certificate. She had been preoccupied working part time and at night as a nurse's aid to help her mother out. She returned to technical college at 23 and completed her matriculation:

I can honestly say to this day, that the morning that piece of paper arrived and gave me my matriculation ... saying that I could go to university was probably more thrilling to me than my first election win because it changed my life. Not university, but the thought that I could go.¹

Nori had joined the ALP before she had gone to university. When she was 15 or 16 she had become involved with the Wayside Chapel in Kings Cross where her voluntary work, such as visiting alcoholics, was combined with an association with the "bohemian types". It also

¹ Sandra Nori.

involved association with the political activity that focussed on the chapel at the time of the Vietnam anti-war movement. As with other activists at the time, these experiences helped her develop a wider understanding of social divisions. She recalled that she had “pieced it together”; and developed a sense that “there was us and them”. It was the Liberals’ forcing a double dissolution on the Whitlam government in 1974 that energised her to join the Petersham branch of the ALP. She moved to Chippendale and became associated with a network of Young Labor activists. It was her involvement with this that “pushed her over the edge”. She resolved to go to university and when she got there she was in the company of other Young Labor activists like Andrew, Laurie and Martin Ferguson, all sons of state Left parliamentary figure, Jack Ferguson, as well as Rodney Cavalier, Peter Baldwin and Peter Crawford. Nori also became active in Labor Women’s Committee, joined the Steering Committee, was a branch secretary and increasingly became caught up in the branch activism of Baldwin and Crawford. When Nori’s first marriage ended, it was in the network of Young Labor and branch activists that she met her second husband, John Faulkner. They both moved into Glebe to live in 1983 and it was there that their first child, Bonnie, was born.²

Faulkner had been a member of the ALP since his teenage years and as a young activist the Labor Party was an obsession; “it consumed me”. Born in Leeton, NSW in 1954, he had come from a Labor family. His mother had been a member of the Party and so party activity was “quite a natural thing to do”. The Vietnam War was over by the time he went to university, to train as a teacher of intellectually handicapped children. Politicised during Whitlam’s early ALP leadership, his main political involvement at Macquarie University was to be instrumental in the forming of the ALP club. While initially involved in the ALP in Sydney at West Ryde, he began supporting Baldwin and Crawford in the inner city recruiting and moved through the structures of the Party. He became president of Young Labor at one point and was elected to the Party’s state Administrative Committee. In 1980, aged 26, he was elected as one of the two Assistant General Secretaries of the NSW branch,

² Sandra Nori,

succeeding Bruce Childs who had held the position since the federal intervention in the branch in 1971. As with other activists in the YLA/branch recruitment network, Faulkner acknowledged the importance of friendship networks:

I've always believed that I think that friendships, informal connections, in modern Labor particularly, have been very significant in determining people's factional affiliation and support; the branches you join and how you react to the people who are in these.³

Nori and Faulkner moved into Glebe just after the Glebe North branch was disbanded and most of it incorporated into the Right-controlled Forest Lodge branch (as mentioned in chapter four). Their decision to move into Glebe was a deliberate political choice. As Nori explained it:

We moved in there because it was a nice area but also I must admit it was a strategic decision. It was the one branch; it was that part of the inner city that ... had not made the conversion from old style to new style.⁴

While the abolition of Glebe North in late 1982 had temporarily staid a Left wing takeover in Glebe, it was certain that the branch would fall to the Left eventually. Nori had her eyes on the prize of the state seat of Elizabeth, later McKell, the electorate of veteran Right Labor politician and state minister, Pat Hills. According to Nori, there was never any question of challenging Hills while he was incumbent but with his retirement imminent, Nori was positioning herself for the succession. The first step was to win control of the Forest Lodge branch but it was also necessary to win wider support across the electorate's branches, most of which lay in South Sydney, to the east of Leichhardt Municipality. This was complicated by the fact that an electoral redistribution created uncertainty as to which areas would constitute the new seat.⁵

³ John Faulkner.

⁴ Sandra Nori.

⁵ Sandra Nori; See map and notes on state electoral boundaries, appendix A.

Nori and Faulkner were a formidable political team. At the 1984 Forest Lodge branch elections, the Left won, with Nori as branch secretary. In the next three years Nori extended her support base across the other branches, winning control of Elizabeth SEC. The boundaries of the new electorate of McKell were determined by the end of 1986 and in May 1987, Nori defeated the former mayor of South Sydney, Bill Hartup and Aboriginal Australian, Joyce Clague, in the preselection. The period of campaigning in Glebe and the electorate coincided with two pregnancies and bringing up two small children. On one occasion, while pregnant, she was door-knocking a large block of flats in Glebe to recruit new members. She fainted, waited for the faint to pass, then continued on door-knocking. Nori put her victory down to the fact that she had been able to appeal across the different areas and across the spectrum of old working class membership and the new middle class Left. She had lived in Chippendale, and Petersham as well as Glebe; had worked around many parts of the inner city and had been involved in the setting up, in the mid 1970's, of the South Sydney Women's Centre. She felt that she had been able to have a "foot in both camps" as far as the membership of the ALP was concerned:

I also feel that embodied within me are the two demographic streams of the inner city; old, traditional working class, and in my case immigrant as well as Italian, but also tertiary educated, a product of the fifties and sixties and seventies who understands the more urban environment issues.⁶

Nori was able to carry this approach from the preselection into the 1988 election itself where, against trend and expectation, she was able to hold out against the tide that swept Labor from office. By the 1991 state elections, the seats of Balmain and McKell had been abolished and Nori went on to defeat the 'Statue of Liberty', Dawn Fraser, for the new seat of Port Jackson, which encompassed all of Leichhardt Municipality. Nori had become an effective public campaigner, taking up issues such as the construction of a new runway at

⁶ *Sandra Nori*. See also *John Faulkner*; 'Bunyip' column, *The Glebe*, 20/5/87, P 4; Minutes of the Forest Lodge Branch, 6/4/87, 4/5/87, 1/6/87, *ALPR*. The setting up of the South Sydney Women's Centre had brought Nori into conflict with Bill Hartup's South Sydney municipal administration which had tried to frustrate the centre's operations; Disputes Committee 1977, *ALPR*, MLMSS, 5095/489 and reports on South Sydney Women's Centre, *Challenge*, March and May 1977.

Sydney Airport and the construction of a heliport at Pyrmont, both noise pollution issues. She also aligned herself with the independent elements on Leichhardt Council to fight the Liberal government's urban consolidation objectives, especially as they applied to the 'five sites' in Balmain. Nori had an advantage which Crawford lacked earlier. She was criticising a Liberal government at the state level but, as the airport issue showed, she was also willing to criticise the federal Labor government. At the beginning of the 1990's it was looking as if Labor had finally found a representative willing to step beyond the caucus closet and branch politics to engage in the wider, extra-parliamentary/party arena.⁷

Beneath the surface.

While Nori's political success provided some hope for inner city Labor, the branches were starting to bleed. This is evident in the late eighties in Nori's own branch, Forest Lodge. It had absorbed Pyrmont-Denison, the old Fegan family branch in the City of Sydney on the eastern side of Blackwattle Bay, and became Blackwattle branch. During the mid eighties the branch had thrived under Nori's and Faulkner's leadership. Its 'takeover' was quite recent and it had not yet developed some of the bitter divisions and *ennui* of the more established Left in Balmain and Annandale. The minutes of the Forest Lodge/Blackwattle branch between 1984 and 1987 reveal lively debate and regular guest speakers with strong attendances.⁸

However it is in the attendances that we can see the decline in activity by branch membership. In 1984, the year the Left took control, the numbers attending the crucial Annual General Meeting (AGM) at which the elections were held was 136. AGM figures

⁷ *The Glebe*, 23/3/88: 'Nori beats swing against the ALP', pp 1&7 and 'It was dirty- Sartor', p 8; 'Williams, D., 'New Faces', *SMH*, 21/3/88, p 32; Larriera, A., 'Nori passes test as new era dawns', *SMH*, 27/5/91, p 7; Bonyhady, 'The Battle for Balmain', *passim*; See also, Hagan, J and Clothier, C., '1988' and Green, A., '1991' in Hogan, M and Clune, D (eds), *The people's Choice: Electoral politics in 20th Century New South Wales*, Parliament of NSW and University of Sydney, Sydney, 2001, pp 251-282 and 283-322.

⁸ Minutes of the Forest Lodge/Blackwattle Branch, 1981-1987, *ALPR*.

remained strong for the next two years; 112 in 1985 and 84 in 1986. Average attendance at the non-AGM meetings was 55 in 1984, 42 in 1985 and 41 in 1986. However here attendance began to slide more dramatically. In 1987 only 45 attended the AGM and the average non-AGM attendance was 34. By 1988 the branch attendance had fallen dramatically averaging just 16 for all meetings during the year. The AGM attendance appears to have been 19. This included two meetings which were abandoned due to a lack of a quorum (seven members).⁹

Some of this decline can be attributed to that following the ‘takeover climax’ that was common in branches subject to stacking campaigns. Both factions in the branches built up their numbers during the intense struggle for control of branches but once the Left won, the Right’s supporters would fade away. In Forest Lodge/Blackwattle, the lead up to Sandra Nori’s preselection in early 1987 also provided impetus to keep the numbers up. These figures are linked to the changing composition of branch membership from working class to middle class as shown in appendix D. But the general fall in attendance in this Glebe branch accords with that occurring elsewhere. Attendance figures for Balmain branch obtained for the period July 1987 to July 1991 show stagnation at similar levels to those in Forest Lodge/Blackwattle for late 1987 and 1988. Figures for Balmain for the last half of 1987, for 1988, 1989, 1990 and the first half of 1991 showed average attendances for those periods of 19, 25, 22, 23 and 20. This was the branch which ten years earlier had hundreds of prospective members crowding the Balmain Town Hall.¹⁰

The declining membership participation in the branches revealed by the attendance figures for these two branches accords with the general decline in membership of branches across the municipality as revealed in the annual branch returns (appendix D). The Annandale branch had not gone through the intense branch-stacking that had occurred elsewhere and the branch membership was fairly stable in the 80 to 120 members range up until 1988. The

⁹ Attendance Books, Forest Lodge/Blackwattle Branch 1983-1988, *ALPR*.

¹⁰ Attendance Book, Balmain Branch of the ALP, July 1987-July 1991, held by branch secretary.

membership then fell off to just over 40 in 1990 and to roughly 30 in 1993. After the climax of the 1977 to 1978 period, the Balmain branch membership also stabilised to around 150-180 between 1980 and 1986. Its membership then appeared to fall to just above 50 by the beginning of the 1990's. The figures for Forest Lodge/ Blackwattle accorded with that branch's attendance. The membership dropped below 100 by 1989 and to below 50 by the early 1990's. This was in spite of the fact that the Blackwattle branch incorporated the, albeit small, Pyrmont Denison branch. The figures for Leichhardt and Lilyfield also confirm this downward trend in membership.¹¹

A final measure of the decline in effective or active branch membership is gauged by looking at some of the available figures for preselection ballots. In January 1990, *The Glebe* reported that there were 160 members of the ALP in Leichhardt eligible to vote in the municipality-wide preselection for a vacancy on Leichhardt Council (liberal alderman Courtney had resigned). Well over three hundred ALP members in Leichhardt Municipality had voted in the federal preselection of 1981 and over 400 people voted in Balmain electorate preselections in late 1983 (Balmain was mostly made up of Leichhardt municipality branches). Much later, there was a preselection in late 1997 to determine the successor to Peter Baldwin, who retired at the 1998 federal elections. The *SMH* reported that his successor, Tanya Plibersek, won a preselection in which 340 members voted, compared to around 650 in the 1981 preselection. These figures point to an *active* Party membership hovering just above 50 percent of that of the early to mid 1980's.¹²

Of course these figures could be interpreted as the branches finding some sort of 'natural' level in the aftermath of the branch-stacking upheavals. However it is well to remember

¹¹ Appendix D. See also Minutes of Forest Lodge/Blackwattle branch, 6/7/87, ALPR.

¹² See chapter four above re Sydney federal, and Balmain state, preselections. As mentioned in appendix A, the boundaries of the federal seat of Sydney in 1997 had moved east, shedding parts of Leichhardt Municipality to Grayndler and incorporating areas to the east of the City of Sydney. However demographically and in terms of Labor support, the seat and its 1997 preselection provides a reasonable base for comparison with the earlier Sydney preselection (see further discussion in this chapter). See also 'Labor's new woman, ready to help another', *SMH*, 15/12/97, p 6 and report on the 1990 Leichhardt Municipal preselection in *The Glebe*, 24/1/90.

that at the outset of the 1970's, ALP branches were regarded by the middle class Left as small and closed off to wider participation. Branch numbers reverting to that level must therefore be seen as unsatisfactory. Moreover there is an interesting point to be made about the declining branch membership as shown in membership returns. Under the new ticketing system introduced in the early 1980's, members of the ALP join and automatically renew their membership directly through Head Office by deductions of fees from a bank account. Prior to this arrangement, members who did not attend their branch to renew their 'ticket' eventually lost membership. Under the new system, members could retain membership more easily without registering with local branches, which was necessary to participate in Party elections and preselections. The branch returns available for the beginning of the 1990's show a gap between those members financial and those registered with the branches (the latter figures were used in appendix D to tabulate branch membership). In Annandale, in early 1992, 31 members had registered out of a potential 48 financial members. In 1993, 29 registered out of a possible 60 and in 1994, 31 out of 71. In Balmain in early 1992, 60 registered out of a possible 143 and in Blackwattle, 47 out of a potential 145. Allowing for the inertia of members not getting around to terminating their membership, or late registration, these figures point to residual loyalty to the ALP not matched by active involvement in the branches.¹³

This residual loyalty is paralleled with the electoral situation. By the end of the eighties there was a significant slide of primary votes away from Labor in federal, state and local elections to The Greens and Democrats and other environmental independents. Yet the 'two-party preferred' vote, revealed in federal and state elections, stayed high. In 1990 for example, in the federal seat of Sydney, the Green and Democrat votes were 11.2 per cent and 12.5 per cent respectively, compared to Labor's 51.4. However the two-party preferred vote favoured Labor (over 70 percent) ahead of the Liberals. Similarly, in 1991, in the state

¹³ Branch returns (uncatalogued), *ALPR*; Rules NSW ALP Branch. Inertia in this situation would be helped by the process of automatic annual deduction of party fees from bank accounts. This gap between ticketed members and active branch membership is based on limited returns available in the *ALPR*. The need for a further, more comprehensive and contemporary analysis of this gap suggests itself here, the writer.

seat of Port Jackson, Dawn Fraser polled 18.9 percent, with the Greens 7.0 percent and Democrats 2.7, while Sandra Nori for Labor polled 50.7 per cent. Again on a two-party preferred basis the Labor vote was over 70 per cent. Both these electorates were, in these terms, among the safest of Labor seats, notwithstanding at least two decades of gentrification.¹⁴

It could be said then that by the beginning of the 1990's the ALP branches of Leichhardt Municipality had become dominated by elements of the middle class Left. However large sections of the middle class Left disengaged from active involvement in the Labor Party and showed a propensity to vote for independents, Greens or Democrats in elections while maintaining support for Labor through the preference system.

Defections: The Greens and Community Independents.

The formation of a Green Party in the Leichhardt Municipal area in the 1980's flowed initially from the politics of the Annandale branch. This shift to Green politics took shape in the aftermath of the resignation of Greenland from Leichhardt Council and the general decline in the influence in the branch of the libertarian socialist grouping. It firmed up in mid 1983, when Tony Harris proposed the formation of a 'Labor Greens' group in the municipality, involving Origlass and Wyner, with a view to contesting the municipal elections across all wards in September. There was no support among Harris's political friendship network, at this stage, for such an overt departure from the ALP so the group

¹⁴ Mackerras, M., 'Appendix A: Election Results' in Bean, C., McAllister, I and Warhurst, J., (eds) *The Greening of Australian Politics: The 1990 Federal Election*, Longman Cheshire, Melbourne, 1990, pp 181-206; 'Election 90, The Results', *SMH*, 26/3/90, p 13; 'Election '91: The final tally', *SMH*, 21/6/91, p 6. This situation appears to have continued. In the 2001 federal election for the seats of Grayndler and Sydney which covered Leichhardt Municipality and neighbouring areas of a similar social character, votes for the Green candidates soared (in the wake of the Tampa refugee crisis and Labor's support for tough approach to refugees) yet the two party preferred vote for Labor remained high. 'The verdict: Election 2001', *SMH*, 12/11/01, p 9E. In March 2002, the state seat of Port Jackson, encompassing the municipality, was assessed as the 10th safest state Labor seat with a two-party swing for the Liberals to win at 25.1% (the safest Labor seat requiring 30.2%); Green, A., 'NSW Liberals need to plot a Greiner-style comeback', *SMH*, 25/3/02, p 4.

was established within the Party as a reading and discussion group. It met in these terms for the remainder of the year, focussing on the literature generated around the politics of ecology and the emergence of the Green and Alternative parties in Europe. This included such writers as Andre Gorz, Rudolph Bahro and Murray Bookchin. The group finished up the year with a fund-raising party for a women's peace camp which was picketing the joint US-Australia satellite intelligence station at Pine Gap in Central Australia.¹⁵

The municipal elections were deferred (as mentioned in chapter five above) until April 1984 and at those elections, six people who had participated in the Labor Greens group were expelled from the Labor Party for giving varying degrees of support for independents, including Origlass and Wyner. The expulsions took place in mid 1984 and in their aftermath, Harris and another of the Annandale expellees, Jack Carnegie, convened the first meeting of what would become The Greens (or Sydney Greens) at Glebe Town Hall. Carnegie was working as a printer. Born in the municipality to working class parents, he had become involved in the Annandale branch at the beginning of the 1980's and became part of the friendship network around Greenland, Harris and Eliot.¹⁶

¹⁵ Gorz, A., *Ecology as Politics*, (Trans., Vigdeman, P and Cloud, J) South End Press, Boston, 1980 and Bahro, R., *Socialism and Survival*, Heretic Books, London, 1982; Bookchin, M., *Towards an Ecological Society*, Black Rose Books, Montreal, 1980; Bookchin, M., *The Ecology of Freedom: The Emergence and Dissolution of Hierarchy*, Cheshire, California, 1982. This section of this chapter dealing with The Greens draws heavily on the writer's memory and collection of documents; the latter to be placed in the SLNSW at the conclusion of this thesis.

¹⁶ See Disputes Committee, 1984-85, *ALPR*, MLMSS 5095/493 re the expulsions. See also documents in the writer's papers; Totaro, P., 'Left leadership moves to expel nine rebel 'Greens'', *SMH* 7/7/84; Totaro, P., 'ALP vote to expel seven "Greens"', *SMH* 9/7/84. The actions that resulted in the expulsions were more haphazard than presented in the media. The writer, for example, did not participate in organising the independents campaign (which was not a Labor Greens group initiative) but was expelled for distributing 'how to votes' for Origlass and Wyner in Balmain, on polling day. Other Labor Greens expelled were Hall Greenland, Jack Carnegie, Jim Archibald and Gretchen Gamble, all from Annandale ALP, and Rozelle ALP member, Peter Hehir. Annandale ALP member Ross MacLeod was also expelled. MacLeod's wife Jenny had already left the ALP and along with Jim Archibald, was one of the 1984 independent candidates in Annandale. She later became national president of The Democrats. Others expelled or leaving the Annandale branch in that year included Dan Bessell, Sue Hilder, Margaret Eliot, Roger Allen, Peter Greenland, Susan Kennett, Brian Jensen and Dee Walker.

One hundred and fifty people were to pass through the first two meetings of what was initially called The Greens. The coming together of the more 'hard boiled' ALP activists from the politics of Leichhardt municipality with those whose experience lay in extra-parliamentary (and often non-urban focussed) ecology and peace groups created its tension, as well as a creative ferment. The group nominated labour historian and feminist Daphne Gollan as its candidate for the federal seat of Sydney, at the 1984 federal elections, while at the same time supporting the recently formed Nuclear Disarmament Party in the Senate. A further batch of Annandale ALP members who participated in the campaign either left the ALP or were expelled early in 1985. One of these, teacher Brian Jensen, had been a member of the Annandale branch since the beginning of the 1970's. Seen handing out 'how to votes' for Gollan, he was declared to have placed himself outside the Party by the NSW ALP Disputes Committee. Bill Brady had reported Jensen and his Statutory Declaration to the committee conveyed a sense of the intense polarisation that was occurring as well as summoning up a visceral Labor loyalty:

I later drew his actions to the attention of Alan Katzmann, Peter Baldwin's Campaign Manager who also observed his traitorous actions.¹⁷

A brief history of the Sydney Greens (as the group became known) has been published elsewhere.¹⁸ The group went on to organise a campaign for the NSW Senate 1987 with future Green member of the NSW Legislative Council, Ian Cohen, as candidate. The late eighties saw upsurge leading up to the 'Green federal election' of 1990 and it was in this climate that the Sydney Greens was instrumental in convening a state-wide Green Alliance and encouraging national Green electoral links. Apart from this wider involvement, the group conducted a campaign in the federal seat of Sydney at the 1990 federal election and later, in 1991, the state seat of Port Jackson. But there was to be no one, simple lineage to the emergence of a national Green political formation. By the time a fully fledged Australian Greens came into being later in the 1990's, most of the originating ex-ALP

¹⁷ Disputes Committee, 1984-85; the writer's papers. See also Dan Bessell, written account, writer's papers.

¹⁸ Harris, T., 'Autumn Now for the Greens', *Arena*, No. 98, Autumn 1992, pp 28-33.

Annandale group had gone from Green politics and from electoral politics generally. Notwithstanding some good electoral performances, over 11 per cent in the Sydney federal seat in 1990, and the participation of large numbers of people in enthusiastic and creative campaigns and policy forums, political exhaustion among the ex-ALP Annandale group had taken its toll. Attempts to get a national Green structure together through the eighties and at the beginning of the nineties were mired in factional differences between elements of the green movement that at times were as intense as those within the ALP. The Annandale ex-ALP libertarians had carried into The Greens the belief in a highly decentralised political organisation, but by the beginning of the 1990's this had run its course. The desire for the more structured kind of national Green Party that ultimately emerged was becoming more dominant.¹⁹

Given a 'grassroots' approach, the local council politics of Leichhardt should have been a principal focus for Sydney Greens but the problem here was the personal and political relationship of the Annandale-originating core to Origlass and Wyner; particularly Origlass. Origlass was ideologically enthusiastic about the emerging Greens in Australia and elsewhere but was, for reasons of his temperament, unable to function within it. He had stormed out of a meeting during the 1984 campaign. He became an absent presence in the group, largely through his closest political associates, Greenland and Gollan and others linked to them in friendship and politics. This created a tension between the outward pressure to build a new organisation and explore wider ideological and political possibilities and an inward-looking personal loyalty to Origlass and his particular approach to local politics. As a result there was a paradoxical 'hands off' situation for Sydney Greens as far as involvement in the electoral politics of Leichhardt municipality was concerned. It had become impossible to promote a local alternative *with* Origlass and impossible to organise one *without* him while he remained a central figure in the Leichhardt scene. Into

¹⁹ Harris, 'Autumn Now for the Greens'; the writers papers; Hall Greenland. The writer was the Green candidate for the federal seat of Sydney in 1990. The attempts by Sydney Greens and other groups to start Green political network during the 1980's; and indeed the significant environmental history of Leichhardt

this vacuum, stepped Larry Hand, newly expelled from the ALP, and a new force of 'Community Independents'.²⁰

The 1987 municipal elections, with the abolition of the wards, created problems for the various ex-ALP independents similar to those that confronted the ALP. The problem was how to construct a single, municipality-wide ticket with its inevitable hierarchy, and with sitting aldermen at the top, all men. Before the wards were abolished, Harris, who was now living in Glebe, had begun to campaign as a Green candidate for Glebe ward. Hand, recently ousted from the ALP, was also looking for a new electoral identity. He had been cooperating with Origlass and Wyner on council but was exploring support from sections of the electorate who for a variety of reasons were not enthusiastic about supporting them. Many had become disenchanted with the two Balmain aldermen over the Clontarf and Mort Bay public housing issues. There were also members of the Communist Party, such as Pat Healey and former Pabloite, Dennis Freney. The Communist Party, on the eve of its attempt to float a New Left Party, and then its ultimate demise, was looking for local political relevance and was not particularly keen to rally to the two Balmain post-Trotskyists. There were also generational and gender factors. Any ticket would be dominated by what Greenland has called these "Victorian blokes" and the electorate was looking for younger candidates, and more women, in winnable positions. Hand also maintained good relations with sections of the ALP including Assistant General Secretary, and future federal member for Grayndler, Anthony Albanese, and neighbouring Marrickville ALP mayor, Barry Cotter. The Community Independents therefore were to

municipality, have been largely ignored in some environmental histories. See for example, Hutton, D., and Connors, L., *A History of the Australian Environment Movement*, Cambridge University Press, 1999.

²⁰ Harris, 'Autumn Now for the Greens', passim. Greenland's and Gollan's close emotional and political relationship to Origlass is documented in Greenland, *Red Hot*, passim. There was some overlap between the Green and Community Independents. Gay Kalnins, a key activist active in the Community Independents was active in the Greens and Sue Stock ran as a Green candidate in the 1996 Federal elections. Stock and Hand, supported the writer's campaign for Sydney in 1990.

prove a more acceptable 'half-way house' for those now looking outside the ALP but not quite ready to make a 'paradigm shift' to political formations like the Greens.²¹

As a consequence, the 1987 election saw two Left Independent teams run. There was the 'Open Council' ticket headed by Origlass and Wyner (which Harris joined) and a Community Independents ticket headed by Hand. The first two from each team were elected, with Hand joined on council by Betty Leone. In early 1990, a municipality-wide by-election to fill a council vacancy saw the Community Independents improve their position with the election of Sue Stock, a former member of the Balmain ALP branch who had been one of the original founders of *Gleebooks*.²²

As was mentioned in chapter six, Hand was denied a term as mayor at the end of 1987-91 council due to a shift in allegiance among independents to Bill Brady. However the Community Independents had three people again elected in 1991 and Hand was Mayor for the next four years. He was joined in 1994 by Kate Butler and former Balmain ALP secretary, Trevor Snape, whose defection from the ALP was to be the central drama in Robyn Anderson and Bob Connelly's film documentary, *Rats in the Ranks*. Butler had previously joined the Leichhardt tradition of breaking ALP caucus in the latter part of the 1987-91 council, voting for Hand's 1990 bid to be Mayor. With the unpopularity inside the ALP of the electorally damaging Brady, federal member Peter Baldwin and Assistant General Secretary, John Faulkner preferred Hand as Mayor and promised 'protection' to Butler if she broke caucus. Butler was only given a nominal suspension, and was able to run again as a Labor candidate in 1991. Meanwhile, many of Origlass's Annandale supporters, already drifting out of The Greens and losing enthusiasm for electoral politics,

²¹ The writer, Larry Hand, Recorded Interview with Sue Stock, 29/11/01. Stock recalled first meeting Hand as part of a group of his supporters who were meeting inside the ALP around 1985 or 1986. See also *Rats in the Ranks*; Solling and Reynolds, *Leichhardt* pp 249-250.

²² Sue Stock; Larry Hand; the writer. A meeting to try and develop a unified Left Independents ticket for the election failed. At one point, Hand flippantly suggested that he be number two on such a ticket, ahead of Wyner. Origlass turned on him. "You're the apprentice" he snarled. The writer participated in this meeting. The two teams nonetheless remained reasonably close and swapped preferences.

reluctantly withheld support for the Open Council team in 1991. This resulted from Origlass's refusal to yield the number one spot on the ticket to Hall Greenland. Origlass was elected for a final term, though Wyner missed out.²³

Should I Go?

While the Greens or Community Independents defections were major mustering points for those departing the ALP, for many, the choice was an individual one. This was occasionally expressed in formal resignation at the branch level but more often, by not re-registering with a branch or terminating membership through NSW ALP Head Office.

Of the 73 informants who contributed to this thesis about 60 could be classed as middle class Left and half of these had indicated that they had left the ALP. Because of the conversational nature of these oral history interviews, and the freedom given to informants to shape their own memories, it is not possible to formally tabulate reasons for leaving. These were often implicit as much as explicit and reasons were interrelated. However as a rough guide, the reasons can be summarised in three categories. There was party alienation, (such as powerlessness of branches, lack of effective party democracy or aspects of the political culture), local issues, or wider, predominantly national, issues. The latter were principally relating to the policy directions of the Hawke federal Labor government or occasionally, prior to 1988, the state Labor government. Almost all of those who left indicated one degree or other of alienation from the structure, practices and political culture of the Labor Party. About two thirds gave prominence to wider issues and half of these linked them to local issues. There were a small number each who focused principally on one of the three reasons. These reasons are given flesh and blood in the particularities that

²³ Kate Butler, Larry Hand; 'Breaking caucus – for Leichhardt. But Kate still loves Party'; Rumney, J., 'ALP clips aldermen for squabbling in caucus', *The Glebe*, 20/12/89, p 10; Cowley, T., 'Bid to stop election of Brady fails', *The Glebe*, 3/10/90, p 2; *Rats in the Ranks*; Solling and Reynolds, *Leichhardt*, pp 249-250; Greenland, *Red Hot*, pp 296-299. The writer was one of those who withheld support for the Origlass-led ticket in 1991. Greenland remained loyal and coordinated Origlass's campaign.

emerge from interviews and the selection following indicates the range of disappointment and disengagement from the Party.²⁴

Former alderman, Margaret Lyons, was not included in the above general assessment because she resigned for reasons of her employment. She nonetheless gave a critical assessment of the role of the Labor Party in the municipality. After leaving Leichhardt Council in 1987 she went to work for the NSW Local Government Department as an investigator and eventually returned to Leichhardt Council as its principal legal officer. A believer in the two-party system and the necessity of compromise she was still generally supportive of the ALP but was nonetheless critical of the Party. In Leichhardt, she argued, Labor had acted to marginalise its critics, prompting the growth of “inward looking resident action groups” and independents:

I don't think the Labor Party's friendly to people at all. I think it's a machine that crunches people, uses them; and I think what happened to Robyn Floyd is evidence of that ... It does crunch women far more often. It uses women far more as cannon fodder. Blokes are often more insulated and protected irrespective of how competent they are and I think it's a very hard animal and it destroys idealism in people, the machine. Maybe they're not entitled to be idealistic but you know I don't think the ALP here has done itself any favours by the way it has protected various people like it protected Crawford and then Brady ... I think the ALP and its support for Brady is the reason why we have a divided council now and the growth of independents.²⁵

One of the formal resignations from the Party was Jennifer Leigh who resigned in a letter to the Annandale branch in 1983 over the federal Labor government's extension of approval for uranium mining. Aspiring state member of parliament, Sandra Nori, phoned her to try and convince her to “work from within”, no doubt concerned at the impact on her preselection hopes of defections from the Party. Leigh persisted. “You can be loyal to

²⁴ As mentioned, this is a rough guide based on the writer's assessment of the interviews and needs to be weighed against other evidence presented in this chapter. Those excluded from this estimation of middle class Left defections include those associated with the Right or a post-Left, neo-liberal perspective (one person left the party from this perspective) and a couple of people who left for reasons of employment.

²⁵ Margaret Lyons.

institutions for too long”, she argued. Others who left the ALP shortly after from Annandale were Brenda Seymour and Sue Templeman. Seymour was an officer of the Teachers’ Federation and her union activity always took priority over ALP activity which at times, she felt, became bogged down in local issues. After leaving the ALP she attended some of the early meetings of the Greens. She has gone on to become an Assistant General Secretary of the Federation. Sue Templeman left the ALP in 1984, about the same time as she left the Socialist Workers Party (see chapter two); “I think I totally out-meetinged myself.” However she was also active in the Teachers’ Federation and continued involvement in it along with her friend Monika Law, who, as mentioned in chapter two, had earlier become exhausted by the male dominated, confrontational politics in the Annandale ALP branch in the seventies. For all these women, union and workplace activity, in the long run, was to be more fruitful.²⁶

Former Teachers’ Federation journal editor, Mike Hourihan, had been an office bearer in the Balmain branch after the Left came to power but had had enough of the Party by the early eighties when there was a change in the federal Party leadership:

What really turned me off them was when they gave [Bill] Hayden the flick and put Hawke in as the leader. I didn’t actually resign I just didn’t renew my membership ... what vestiges of the sort of Labor Party I thought the Labor Party was went with Hayden pretty well. And of course poor old Bill went very bad after that himself.²⁷

Hourihan joined the Democrats in the mid 1990’s, supporting their policies on retaining government ownership and fair taxes, though he was opposed to the Democrats’ leadership decision, at the time of interview, to endorse a Goods and Services Tax. Another Balmain ALP member who left the Party in the early eighties was Peter Newton, a friend, workmate and union colleague of Rozelle Alderman Geoff Stevens. He had been inspired to join the ALP during the latter phases of the Whitlam government but by 1981-82 “dwindled away”;

²⁶ Recorded interview with Jennifer Leigh 23/11/99. See also reference to Leigh’s resignation in Minutes of the Annandale ALP Branch, 14/11/83, *ALPR*, ML MSS 5095/653. Brenda Seymour, Sue Templeman.

²⁷ Michael Hourihan.

concerned at the way the real issues of education, health and worker's rights were being usurped by "single issue concerns" as well as the factionalism within the Left. Newton moved into Balmain in 1968 because of the nature of the suburb. He had liked the social mix of a suburb adjacent to a working port, and one close to schools and public transport, and with its pubs and bohemian atmosphere. Like many interviewed, he has since become concerned at the changing social mix, finding it "quite objectionable after the eighties ... that people who moved into Balmain were moving in for quite different reasons than me". He cited the example of people buying houses close to the Riverview Hotel and then complaining about the live music.²⁸

Feminist and welfare activist Eva Cox was a member of Glebe North and then later Forest Lodge/Blackwattle ALP branch and was one of those who focussed on party alienation and national issues; "I didn't really engage all that much in the local area stuff". In 1981 she worked in Canberra for federal ALP opposition front-bencher, Don Grimes, and there she became aware of just how "unimportant" branches were in the ALP structure. Through the eighties she also became concerned at the relationship between Labor feminists and the faction system. While Labor Women's Committee offered a space to advance women's issues, until it was abolished in 1986, the ALP's main problem in this regard was that "you had to be loyal to your faction first and interested in women's issues second". The director of a major welfare lobby group, the New South Wales Council of Social Services, she was willing to serve on Party committees. However she felt that she had been overlooked because she did not play the factional game in a party where "the Left was Stalinist and the Right was mafioso". The "last straw" for her was when ALP federal Social Security Minister, Brian Howe, began to pursue policies of "targeting" welfare provision, such as

²⁸ Michael Hourihan. Peter Newton. Newton, like Stevens, worked at the Atomic Energy Commission's reactor at Lucas Heights. He saw *Rats in the Ranks* given a standing ovation in an off-Broadway cinema in New York in 1997. Other informants commented on the different motivation of people moving into the municipality from the 1980's on, for example, Mary Jerram, Hall Greenland.

that available to sole parents. She saw this as pandering to the prejudice of middle Australia. She left the Party at the end of the 1980's.²⁹

Equally disillusioned with the ALP federal government's approach to social policies was Mary Jerram, active in the Balmain branch, and an organiser for the Independent Teachers Association. She left the ALP around 1987. She disliked the way the Hawke government had become opportunistic and developed a "total obsession with economics instead of with any of the human issues". She blamed Treasurer Paul Keating for this though, like many among the middle class Left, felt that Keating later redeemed himself as Prime Minister. Jerram (as mentioned in chapter three) had come from a middle class background but was glad she had "sloughed that off" and become a committed socialist. However she also felt, reflecting on the divisive climate in the Balmain branch of the 1980's, that politics had "lost its fun ... there was always a sense of fun in it ... it was a damned miserable evening to go up there and hear them arguing with each other". The bitterness that had developed in the Balmain branch in the 1980's was also the principal reason Jerram's friend, Alan Rogers, gave for drifting away the ALP. Rogers had labelled the Crawford group, dominant in the branch, as "the caucus of misery".³⁰

For others, the Party's failures lay in its insensitivity and inflexibility when it came to dealing with local issues. Jim Archibald was one of the six 1984 expellees who had been involved in the Labor Greens. He had been expelled from the ALP for standing as an independent candidate for Annandale Ward in 1984. Archibald had gone to Sydney University and ended up as a Trade Commissioner in Washington. An avid supporter of the Whitlam government, he and other civilian staff wore black armbands to work at the Washington embassy to mark the 1975 dismissal. There was a near brawl in the embassy foyer when defence personnel tried to rip them off. Archibald ultimately left the Trade Commissioner Service, his career faltering when he refused to cooperate with the activities

²⁹ Eva Cox.

³⁰ Mary Jerram; Alan Rogers.

of the Australian Security Intelligence Service and he and his wife Therese and family settled in Annandale. There they joined the ALP and became active in local issues such as the campaign over the James North site, expansion of Sydney Airport, traffic and waterfront open space at Rozelle Bay.³¹

For Jim Archibald, the political experience in the ALP in the early eighties in Annandale was searing and he “came to develop, because of Annandale, a deep contempt, loathing, aversion, allergy to all politicians of whatever ilk”. The ALP, he argued, had become a “job agency for people who want to proceed through the parliamentary ranks”. He could never vote Liberal and he thought the Democrats were “wankers” but “would rather vote for a trans-sexual, arctic, rhino group than vote Labor”. He reflected on the approach of Crawford/ Brady supporters within the local ALP:

Their idealism was this notional worker in a blue singlet who, by definition, was always anyone other than the people they were dealing with at the time ... If you, the people they were dealing with at the time won, by definition this chimera, this blue singleted hero lost and so you had to be prepared, ergo, to lose ...

Really it was about, you know, “keep out of our fucking way while we do what we want to do and pick up our little jobs” either in the public sector or the real plum, getting into parliament.³²

Therese Archibald had come from a big, working class, Catholic family and trained as a teacher. She met Jim in the sixties when visiting her sister in Papua Nuigini. He was working for the Australian public service there. She persisted with the ALP after Jim was expelled but was expelled herself in 1987 for publicly opposing the decision to abolish wards in Leichhardt Municipality. She was active in Residents Opposing Runway Three, which for a time at the end of the 1980’s received support from federal MP Peter Baldwin, who like other local Labor politicians, also opposed expansion of the airport. In the mid 1990’s Therese would be instrumental in helping start the No Aircraft Noise Party which

³¹ Jim Archibald.

³² Jim Archibald.

contested the 1996 federal elections and gained representation on Leichhardt Council. Therese Archibald was active in the Save Rozelle Bay Committee, campaigning for a Bicentennial Park on the shores of Annandale and Glebe and she felt that she and Jim and others like them had been painted the “bad guys” over issues like open space:

I hated being portrayed in that manner because never, ever, was there any discussion of how everybody could equitably share the things the inner city offered.³³

Finally, one of those to leave the Labor Party in the 1990’s was one who had been there at the beginning of middle-classing in Balmain, Geoff Cooke. He had seen many people become disenchanted during the 1980’s; with the sitting politicians and the gulf between them and the Party machine on the one hand and the branch membership on the other. Cooke had been a supporter of both Baldwin and Crawford but became increasingly aware of just how little the branches mattered. He reflected on visits to the Balmain branch by the federal member (and after 1990, minister) Peter Baldwin:

So here is the bloke who for the last twenty years we’ve been helping to build up the local branch and now here he is in Canberra and he’s coming to the branch and he’s explaining some policy or practical problem that they’re having in Canberra and what is one of the major problems? ... Oh the problem is the branches you see. The branches have their ideas about things and, you know, its spoiling things for us down here.³⁴

This disenchantment, he argued, was associated with a shift in focus on the ground:

The new people are pursuing their own concerns as residents really, more than they are pursuing their concerns as ALP members. And the local issues are becoming more important to many of them and it doesn’t require much impatience over some local issue for somebody to drop out of the ALP.³⁵

Cooke pulled out of the ALP in the early 1990’s over a local council matter, unhappy with ALP municipal representation. He was also disenchanted, as an educator, by the running

³³ Therese Archibald.

³⁴ Geoff Cooke.

down of the public school sector and the channelling of federal funds to private schools. He recalled his last night at an ALP branch meeting in a way that echoed his own sense of alienation when he first attended the Balmain branch, then dominated by Origlass and Wyner and their supporters, in the 1960's:

You know on the last night I was in the ALP a young woman came bowling in. She had walked in off the street and she had decided that things were getting so bad that she would have to do something about it and she would join the ALP. And she joined up and you know I just felt; first of all I knew how she felt; that you get in there, you become active, you do something and it will have an effect, it's a positive thing to do. And I just felt that, look, "I could really tell you my experience and I'm leaving tomorrow because you know, for a long time I have felt like you. I felt that being in the ALP here will be effective. I will do something and it's a positive thing to do but in the end it catches up to you and I don't want to say this to a young person but you'll probably be disillusioned the way I am too."³⁶

Or should I stay?

Just before he left the Balmain branch, Geoff Cooke joined others in the branch organised a celebration, in April, 1991, marking the centenary of the founding in Balmain of the first Labor Electoral League. It was effectively a 100th birthday party for the ALP. The branch organised a range of activities including the unveiling of a plaque, by Gough Whitlam and state Labor leader Bob Carr, at the site of the first meeting, now the Unity Hall Hotel. There was a procession through Balmain and a dinner at the Balmain Returned Servicemen's League club. Many of those present would have been critical of the paths the ALP was taking in terms of economic, social and foreign policy. Indeed the celebrations were held just after conduct of the Gulf war which the federal Labor government, with a few parliamentary dissenters, had endorsed, committing Australian military forces in support of

³⁵ Geoff Cooke.

³⁶ Geoff Cooke.

the United States-led coalition. For many in the ALP, however, leaving the Party was not a desirable option.³⁷

Annette and Nick O'Neill have remained members of the Balmain branch though as Annette explained "at different times of your life you acquire ways of achieving what you want to achieve". In the 1980's she became more interested in working professionally on public housing. She joined the Housing Department at a time when Frank Walker was Minister though she also was active at the level of the FEC and SEC in the Party and was involved in 1991 in organising the Balmain, ALP centenary. While she felt that the situation for women in the Party was different now it had been much harder earlier on. She had found the Party "inappropriately formal and legalistic" with little capacity to learn the rules and procedures; unless these had been acquired through some other process like Young Labor. The pressure to be articulate, organised and strong favoured men:

it was a man's show, it wasn't a place where women came to participate very much ... the Labor Party was essentially a party of men who had plenty of time to be involved in debate and argument and I didn't know very many women who delighted in coming.³⁸

After leaving Leichhardt Council at the end of 1983, Nick O'Neill returned to be active in local issues and was, during 1988, president of the ALP Leichhardt Municipal Committee. On broader policy issues he was unhappy with the downgrading of the public sector under federal Labor but like others felt perplexed as to what to do, especially with a declining active membership. With the major alternative of a Liberal government, worse, especially in areas like industrial relations, he felt it was important that people continued to "slug away" in the local branch.³⁹

³⁷ Copy of Balmain ALP Branch leaflet concerning the celebration is in the Balmain Politics folder, Local History Vertical File, Balmain Branch, Leichhardt Municipal Library. See also Tremain, J., 'Sacred site sets scene for ALP celebration', *The Glebe*, 10/4/91, pp 6&7.

³⁸ Annette O'Neill. Annette O'Neill's involvement in the 1991 Balmain ALP centenary is indicated on the branch leaflet referred to above, Balmain Politics folder, Local History Vertical File, Balmain Branch, Leichhardt Municipal Library.

Ann Catling continued her activity inside the ALP after her unsuccessful federal preselection bid in 1981, and has remained a member of the Balmain branch though she lamented the way in which “a lot of lovely, gentle, working class people” had been “driven away” from the Party. In this regard she was critical of what she felt had been an underlying anti-working class and anti-union agenda among the Baldwin/Crawford element; with their politically aggressive “culture of opposition” masking a middle class defensiveness. Catling also felt that the newer residents moving into the area in more recent times were different. They appeared to be non-family, well off, and “working hard and playing hard”. However she also commented on the voting patterns which still did not quite reflect this latter, continuing process of gentrification but commented that “the Labor Party that they’re voting for is different as well”. She reflected on this change in the nature of the Party:

Less and less of the people in positions of power now are as dedicated to the big cause. It’s harder to define now what the big cause is whereas in those times it was easier and the nature of the leaders are different ... most of the leadership now has not come up through struggle. They’re probably of working class background (some of them), some of middle class background, some through academia; worked through the union or the party and got a position. That’s an observation rather than a criticism ...

I find an enormous amount of hope in someone like Tanya [Plibersek]. I just can’t believe my luck that [the federal seat of] Sydney now has a member like her; young but incredibly committed to the broader ideal. But there are a lot of power-brokers who are just ruthless tribal leaders and I think Young Labor trains them that way. Certainly the inner-city Left machine had those hallmarks. I suppose that struggle and that battle led to that outcome.⁴⁰

Sheree Waks, who had been Peter Crawford’s companion and organiser in the lead-up to his preselection and election for Balmain, returned to live in Balmain, and to the Balmain branch, in the 1990’s after an interesting political detour to the western suburbs. She moved

³⁹ Nick O’Neill; Eginton, L., ‘Court is Leichhardt Council’s “de facto planner”’, *The Glebe*, 14/9/88, p 17.

⁴⁰ Ann Catling.

to Cabramatta, living in the house formerly owned by Gough Whitlam (it had been located in his federal electorate of Werriwa). As mentioned in chapter three, Waks had worked for a time on the staff of federal member Peter Baldwin, effectively as a paid branch-stacker. She moved west to try and recruit in the state seat held by Labor member Eric Bedford in the hope that she could succeed him. She was to be dismissed from Baldwin's staff partly because federal Labor parliamentarian Dick Klugman complained about her using Baldwin's office to stack in the western suburbs. Waks had considered this unfair given the widespread use by politicians and ministers of paid staff positions for 'branch-stacking' or party and factional organisation. However Bedford's early retirement prevented her taking the seat based on Cabramatta, and it was filled by the ill-fated John Newman, later murdered by a political rival. Waks spent a four-year term on Fairfield Council between 1987 and 1991, coinciding with the birth of her two children. She offered this interested retrospective about the preoccupation of the Baldwin/Crawford forces with the 'criminality' of some of the Right who had previously dominated the inner city branches:

For all that stuff people focussed on the drug pushers and all that; but that was really just a handful. The stuff with Danny Casey ... I mean he used to look after people ... he provided the same sort of services a good member would. I mean they gave people jobs on the council and in those days they were working class people and that was sort of their only source of opportunity for a lot of them and ... if someone was sick they looked after them and it was just community services before you had organised community services. And people who moved into this area didn't understand this and we were guilty of it ourselves. I mean we didn't understand how their networks worked and we just lumped them all together and called it a criminal group but I don't think that was fair at all in hindsight.⁴¹

Two people who moved to the western suburbs of Sydney and stayed were Robyn Floyd and Al Svirskis. As mentioned in chapter five, they moved to Mount Druitt in the aftermath of the 1980-84 council and the bitter conflict with Crawford there and in the state preselection for Balmain. Both have remained active in the ALP in that area and both are active in the Teachers' Federation. Floyd has continued high school teaching and served on

the Council of the Federation while Svirskis has been one of the union's TAFE organisers. Floyd felt that she had a lot less energy and smaller areas of action than she used to but remained committed to social justice. She felt she had gone from a "naïve idealist who made heaps of mistakes" to someone who is "fairly critical and a lot less emotional about the ALP". She was also happy that she and Svirskis had moved to Mount Druitt where they were "quite happy to be with those who could certainly not be described as trendy, yuppie etc etc". Floyd considered herself to be "educated working class".⁴²

While Floyd and Svirskis left Rozelle, Jeremy Gilling settled there and remains active in the Balmain ALP branch, though from a different political perspective. Gilling, a former draft resister, had spent some time in the Annandale branch in the 1970's and in the 1987 municipal elections was a candidate on Bill Brady's 'Mayor's Team'. Between 1983 and 1987 he worked in Canberra as a speechwriter on the staff of a federal Labor minister, the Left's Arthur Gietzelt. This was the time of what Gilling called the "courageous retreat" of the Labor government from its traditional interventionist policies, in the face of the external economic crisis. This led him towards a belief that the market was more capable of "delivering better outcomes for the community at large". He came to feel that "public spending is not self-evidently convertible into social justice" and that the onus is on the advocates of government intervention to prove that it will truly benefit the disadvantaged, not just pressure groups. He met and developed a friendship with Finance Minister, Senator Peter Walsh during his time in Canberra and is a close friend of Michael Thompson, author of *Labor without Class*. He and Thompson have taken up positions as iconoclastic 'Walsheviks' within the Balmain ALP branch.⁴³

In Glebe, Neil and Jan Macindoe remained active in the Labor Party as did fellow Glebe Society activist Tony Larkum. Neil Macindoe, identified with the 'soft' or 'moderate' Left

⁴¹ Sheree Waks.

⁴² Robyn Floyd; Al Svirskis.

⁴³ Jeremy Gilling. The term 'Walshevik' was coined by Rolf Gerritsen in his Foreword to Walsh, *Confessions of a Failed Finance Minister*.

and was denied the opportunity to be Mayor of Leichhardt by the *Rats in the Ranks* defection of Butler and Snape. He remained on Leichhardt Council throughout the 1990's but lost preselection and stood down from council in 1999. Neil Macindoe felt that the ALP, "especially in NSW" is "too conservative" but that it would be "counterproductive" to leave. This is a sentiment shared by Tony Larkum, who like Neil Macindoe, was a former president of the Glebe Society. Larkum, a university biology lecturer, identified himself as an "intellectual socialist". For a time in the late 1980's, he was involved in Green Labor, an attempt by environmentalists to push a Green agenda inside the Labor Party. He was not tempted to leave to join a Green Party:

I couldn't see any viable alternative. I'm still a great believer in consensus politics and not a believer in small parties. I believe that the Labor Party has the best offering on a wide scale although it doesn't have green policies. I hope to change that from within rather than from without. Also to be really serious and philosophical about this, I don't see any underlying philosophy to any green party and I think there has to be one... It's got to have all the rest of the social policies in there.⁴⁴

Les Carr, who was involved in the Glebe branches in the 1970's and became editor of *Challenge*, continues to hold a 'head office ticket' but isn't involved in a branch. "Bugger branch meetings" he said, though he added that "I suppose you should try and keep them healthy or interesting but you know making them interesting is just very hard. It just becomes this monthly boring ritual". He has focussed his attention on his work as the publications officer for the NSW Public Service Association. Another NSW PSA official who continues his Party membership but has not registered at a branch is the union's Assistant General Secretary, John Cahill. He dropped out of branch life in 1987 when he became Assistant Secretary and the branch meeting nights clashed with union meetings. "I go to meetings for a living", he pointed out. "The last thing you feel like doing is going to an ALP meeting when you get home". Cahill also reflected in general on the declining

⁴⁴ Tony Larkum. This Green Labor initiative within the ALP in the late 80's should not be confused with the Annandale-originating Labor Greens of 1983/84.

numbers going to branch meetings, but felt that this was a more general phenomenon. “People don’t join things like they used to” he argued.⁴⁵

Cahill’s former factional ally in the Annandale branch in the 1980’s, Barry Cotter, remains Mayor of Marrickville but was not tempted to follow his friend and associate, Larry Hand, out of the Party. To Cotter, there are major political, cultural and historical differences between his municipality and the neighbouring Leichhardt one. In Marrickville, he argued, the Left was much more cohesive and less personality driven while in Leichhardt the politics was more aggressive with the outcome that people tended to be “turfed out of the party”. The Leichhardt ‘open council’ practice for example had never really taken on in Marrickville. Cotter believed it to be an unworkable “ultra democracy” which had created trouble for Leichhardt and caused people there to be preoccupied with process at the expense of a realistic outcome:

One of the things I often reflect on is the magical divide of Parramatta Road and how the behaviour of people on one side of the road in a political manner is quite different from the people on the other side of the road. It really is quite extraordinary because if you think about the turmoil in the party, there’s been equal shares of turmoil in the party on this side of Parramatta Road. There’s been Baldwin’s bashing, Enmore branch stuff; all the corruption that went on. You know it’s not something that Leichhardt has a monopoly on. And yet the party operates structurally in two very different manners. And you know it’s been an accident of history probably. I’ve no doubt that individual personalities have played a major role in that ...but it is a very different cultural approach...

I suppose the key issue of that is being the influence of non-English speakers on our side of Parramatta Road and how they’ve got a different approach to politics which I think has actually been absorbed by the party on this side. Whereas the politics of the other side of Parramatta Road are very much white, Anglo-Saxon with a fair degree of intellectualism thrown in.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Les Carr, John Cahill.

⁴⁶ Barry Cotter.

The Annandale branch, by the mid to late eighties, was very much dominated it seems by the pro-Bill Brady supporters. Former Annandale Association secretary, Betty Mason faded out of the Annandale branch in the mid 1980's while Hugh Mason, disenchanted with Brady's pro-development stance, moved to Leichhardt branch (ALP rules by now allowing people to join any branch within a state electorate's boundaries). There he joined Bob Howard who had earlier moved to live in Leichhardt, though they were to find themselves on different sides of the fence over the federal Labor government's participation in the Gulf War. Howard, like federal minister Peter Baldwin, supported Australian and United Nations military intervention while Mason and a great many other local Party members opposed it. However Howard has remained a supporter of the Labor tradition of government intervention and is concerned at the attempts of his brother's Liberal government to weaken the public sector and the unions:

I think I became more committed to a Left position on some domestic issues. I think that just mirrors the increasing inroads that were being made by the economic rationalists' position. And you know, I can't help but be affected by my brother's positions on these things. It's a measure; I can see how much I disagree with him. Principally on industrial relations ... and the role of the government sector ...

I could never share the view that he has and lots of people like him, and even lots of people in the party that there was something of a lower life form as it were about the public sector; you know I just think that is total and utter nonsense.⁴⁷

One person who joined the ALP in Annandale relatively late in the piece, in the 1980's, was Dee Clancy. Clancy came from an upwardly mobile middle class family which sent her and her sister to private school then university. She became drawn into the political world of the sixties and seventies by her older sister, Margaret, a "bohemian type" who was involved later in the women's movement. Clancy dropped out of university, went to teachers college and was on the fringes of the social movements of the time. Later after marriage and children, she returned to study politics at Macquarie University. She was

⁴⁷ Bob Howard.

drawn into Labor politics in 1984 by the public housing debate at Mort Bay. She felt strongly about the need for public housing and wrote to mayor Bill Brady. He passed the letter on to Peter Crawford and he and Sandra Ridgewell, from Annandale branch, knocked on her door. She joined the Party, for a time was electorate secretary to Peter Crawford, then went to work for Peter Baldwin as federal member and later, minister. The experience with the two Peters was very different. With Crawford she bore the burden of effectively running the electoral office. With Baldwin, she was also on the electoral staff (not his ministerial staff), felt part of a team and became close to him. She was also active as a delegate to the FEC. Baldwin, while shy and not adept at dealing with people on a wider level, involved his staff in discussion of policy issues and she had found it a “very rewarding and exciting time to be a member of the Labor Party”. However she admitted that “sometimes we [his staff] had big problems with him in terms of him going along with Hawke and Keating”.⁴⁸

Reflecting on the Annandale branch in the mid-1980’s, Clancy felt that the conflict between Brady and Hand and their supporters over issues like housing and open space had excessively polarised the membership. When Hand left the branch, the numbers at meetings began to drop; “they would have gone from 60 in a meeting over the course of a year to 30 and now it’s about ten”. She is no longer very active in the branch but has kept up her ‘three meetings’; to qualify to vote in preselections.⁴⁹

In Lilyfield, Sharon Page, who left Leichhardt Council in 1991, has remained active in the branch, as has Alicia Lee. As mentioned in chapter three, Lee was one of the early middle class Left activists in the Balmain branch and one of those who, like Geoff Cooke, left the Party at the time of Origlass and Wyner’s expulsion. Like Cooke she rejoined the Party and became a critic of Origlass and Wyner’s later politics. Unlike Cooke, she has remained in

⁴⁸ Dee Clancy.

⁴⁹ Dee Clancy.

the Party and has found the Lilyfield branch fairly Left-wing, but indicated that the branch had difficulty keeping up attendances.⁵⁰

Parliamentarians

Of those members of the ALP, middle class Left elected to Leichhardt Council during the 1980's, the only ones currently involved are Hall Greenland and Kate Butler. Greenland completed his biography of Origlass in 1998 and the following year, under a reconstituted three-ward system, was elected as an independent from Leichhardt-Lilyfield Ward. Butler has continued on Leichhardt Council as a community independent since 1995; now also from Leichhardt-Lilyfield Ward. They were joined on the 1999 council by former Balmain ALP member P.P. McGuiness, now representing a local, neo-liberal, Balmain secessionist movement. Larry Hand lost the mayoralty after the 1995 elections and later left council

The long-term local successes in state and federal politics from the 1980's were Peter Baldwin and John Faulkner in federal parliament and Meredith Burgmann and Sandra Nori in state parliament. Peter Baldwin was appointed a (non-cabinet) minister in the Hawke government after the 1990 federal election and then entered the cabinet as Minister for Social Security after the 1993 election. After federal Labor's defeat in 1996 he decided to retire from politics at the next election. During his time as a minister, Baldwin was locked into the Wran model of Cabinet solidarity, which federal Labor had adopted after 1983. This meant that he became distant from the branches. In circumstances where the safe seat of Sydney could, with a boost from Liberal preferences, fall to an independent or small party candidate, he would have had to give considerable attention to re-building support in the branches if he wanted to continue in parliament, and accordingly, he chose not to. In fact the changing situation in the branches in the 1990's, with younger members moving in had shifted focus overall from the 'soft' left with which Baldwin was associated to the

⁵⁰ Alicia Lee.

‘hard Left’. The boundaries of the federal seat of Sydney moved east again in the 1990’s and Leichhardt municipality was once again split between the federal seats of Sydney and Grayndler. The two younger members who would claim these seats, Tanya Plibersek and Anthony Albanese, were both aligned with the ‘hard’ Left.⁵¹

Peter Baldwin had been described by political journalist Paul Kelly as one of the “new generation” of “more pragmatic” Left Ministers in the Hawke and Keating governments. John Faulkner, like Peter Baldwin, was also identified with the ‘soft’ Left. He ended his ten-year stint as Assistant General Secretary of the NSW ALP in 1989 and was chosen by the NSW Parliament to fill a casual Senate vacancy on the resignation of the Left’s Arthur Gietzelt. He was re-elected for six-year terms in 1993 and 1998 and held a number of sub-cabinet ministerial positions in the federal Labor government from 1993 to 1996. After Labor’s federal defeat in 1996 he became Leader of the Labor Party in the Senate. He has become one of the key figures in the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party (FPLP), organising the FPLP’s centenary celebrations in May 2001, and co-editing, *True Believers: The Story of the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party* with historian Stuart Macintyre. He was one of the central organisers of Labor’s 2001 federal election campaign.⁵²

Like Faulkner in the Senate, Meredith Burgmann’s election to the upper house in the NSW parliament emerged from the NSW ALP factional arrangements for the sharing of Senate and Legislative Council seats. These are not preselected directly by the rank-and-file but by the state party apparatus, formerly council but later, conference. Burgmann was elected for an eight-year term in the Legislative Council at the state elections of 1991 and re-elected in 1999. With the exception of the conflicts in the Glebe North branch in the early seventies,

⁵¹ Peter Baldwin. This study does not examine the changes in the branches for the 1990’s but there is considerable evidence for this sub-factional re-alignment, and it is implicit in the politics of the two new federal members. See also Leigh, ‘Factions and Fractions’, pp 433-446 on the growing strength of the hard Left in the inner city, from the mid-1980’s on, around personalities like Anthony Albanese.

⁵² Kelly, P., *The End of Certainty: Power Politics and Business in Australia*, Revised edition, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1994, pp 273; Faulkner and Macintyre, *True Believers*; Leigh, ‘Factions and Fractions’, pp 442-445; John Faulkner. See Faulkner’s federal parliamentary biography at: <http://www.afp.gov.au>

she had marginal involvement in the 1980's in branch or municipal conflicts in Glebe (where she continued to live) or Leichhardt Municipality. Burgmann concentrated her activities on her work as a university politics lecturer, her union involvement and connections and the broader factional politics and policy debates. Strongly identified with Anthony Albanese, as a leader of the 'hard' Left of the Socialist Left faction, she was elected as president of the NSW Legislative Council in 1999.⁵³

Identified with the 'soft Left', Sandra Nori was, as mentioned in the previous chapter, a political success for Labor in the inner city at the beginning of the 1990's. After 1991, her seat of Port Jackson encompassed the Leichhardt municipality. However she began to have difficulties with the electorate from the mid-1990's. She fell out with Burgmann and others in the ALP and the locality in 1995 when she supported those local residents who were opposed to the conversion of a former hospital in Glebe into a small transitional prison for women with children. She became a junior Minister (or parliamentary secretary) in the state government in 1996, Minister for Small Business and Tourism in 1999 and most recently, Minister for Women. During 2001-2002, she began to alienate branch members, and many in her electorate, over the government's decisions to part-privatise land at the Rozelle psychiatric hospital site. She has also been criticised for her support for the forced separation of Glebe from Leichhardt Municipality and its re-incorporation into the City of Sydney, on the urging of her old 1988 electoral rival and later, Olympian Lord Mayor of Sydney, Frank Sartor.⁵⁴

When being interviewed in January 2000, Nori provided a brief insight into the emotional and personal cost that, as revealed elsewhere in this thesis, can come with elected office.

⁵³ Meredith Burgmann; Leigh, 'Factions and Fractions', pp 441-442. See also Burgmann's state parliamentary biography at: <http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au>

⁵⁴ Sandra Nori; Meredith Burgmann. The writer was a resident of Glebe at the time of the debate over the women's prison and attended the public meeting at which Nori, and Burgmann, among others debated the issue. The writer was one of a minority at the meeting who voted in favour of the prison. See also issues of *The Glebe* for late 2001 and early 2002 concerning the Callan Park, Glebe/City amalgamation and other issues. Nori's state parliamentary biography is at: <http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au>

When concluding the interview by reading from the questionnaire sent to her she laughed as she responded to a question about the impact on personal life of ALP involvement. “Killed it” she said of her own personal life as a parliamentarian, “shattered it; don’t have one”.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Sandra Nori.

PART IV

FROM BASKET WEAVERS TO TRUE BELIEVERS?

A CONCLUSION

From Basket Weavers to True Believers?

Robyn Anderson's and Bob Connolly's remarkable documentary *Rats in the Ranks* gathered in more than two and a half decades of political evolution in Leichhardt Municipality, adding to a Pantheon of images of dominant popular memory and public history. There is the mercurial and triumphant Larry Hand, at the centre of a web of political ambitions and deal-making. There are Kate Butler and Trevor Snape, Evan Jones and Neal Macindoe playing out the central drama around the 'official' memory of a Labor caucus tradition. These images join those already memorialised. There is the photographic image of Peter Baldwin's swollen and battered face, the remembered and imagined images of a packed Balmain Town Hall plunged into darkness, with breaking glass and an exploding fire extinguisher. There are scenes at tense ALP branch meetings dominated by rhetorical, and sometimes physical, clashes between old working class war horses and young and idealistic pretenders; all predominantly male. These images are reproduced, amended and reinforced as handed-down 'war stories' of political chicanery and branch stacking bravado and by stereotyped and competing assumptions of criminality in conflict with honesty; of working class heroes battling gentrifying 'trendies'.

This study has sought to delve deep beneath the surface of this popular memory; of a mythology-in-the-making, to recover a more complex set of memories and histories. It has set out to explore the ambiguities and contradictions of the middle class Left in the ALP in Leichhardt Municipality in the 1970's and 1980's; ambiguities and contradictions set against a historical context of political upsurge and downturn; of 'innocence' and 'fall'. These ambiguities and contradictions were the product both of the complexity of engagement with the parliamentary and party system in these different stages of political development together with the diverse and contradictory nature of the middle class itself. Notwithstanding the role played by editorial memory in shaping this history, the portrayal of the political history of the municipality as arcing through upsurge and downturn is, it is argued, a valid one.

Basket Weavers?

As shown in Part II, the middle class Left as a whole entered the ALP with idealism, enthusiasm and more than a little irreverence towards the established political machines. They carried with them the baggage from their own pasts. There were family histories that in some cases ran back though the great political and social changes of the twentieth century: the Russian Revolution, economic depression, European anti-semitism, war, immigration, post-war prosperity and suburbanisation. Some had family links to the Labor political tradition or to the Communist Party; many did not. There were child-hoods in comfortable middle class suburbs, inner city working class neighbourhoods or housing commission estates. Nearly all found their way, in the late sixties or early seventies, to universities on the tail-end of the Menzies/Liberal era in national politics and a post war economic boom that had opened up social opportunities like never before. All were involved in, or at least affected by, the political upsurge that characterised the decade between 1965 and 1975. There were the campaigns against the White Australia policy, the subjugation of Aboriginal Australians and the war in Vietnam. There were the student, women's and gay rights movements and attempts at alternative lifestyles. There were environmental actions and involvements in locality politics, together with the politics around the Green Bans of the Builders Labourers Federation. And there was the elation, achievement and despair of the Whitlam years. The middle class Left carried with them into the branches the recent memories and experiences of these events and movements and the deeper historical memories of injustice and oppression, resistance and organisation, that their politics and education had recovered.

True Believers?

However, when they walked through the doors of local Labor Party branches, armed with ideas and idealism, the middle class Left ran up against a different set of histories, and memories. In most cases the incumbents of the branches were of an older generation, that of the parents against whom the newcomers were conspicuously in rebellion. Mostly, the

branches were dominated by deeply conservative patriarchs who were the product of hardship in depression and war, of the rough and tumble of union politics and hard labour in inner-Sydney factories and on the waterfront, and of the great split in the ALP of the 1950's. They were predominantly Catholic and anti-Communist, working class, or working class made good, a few in small business or the professions. Behind them, ready to protect the branches and the parliamentary seats, power and patronage that attended them was the most formidable, conservative and influential of the Labor Party's state machines, the NSW branch.

The war of resistance waged at the branch level by the incumbents is understandable, though in some cases, as with the bouts of physical assaults and verbal abuse, shocking. But what is remarkable, more-so in retrospect, was the approach taken by the Party machine. Apart from the worst excesses of partisan interpretation of Party rules and encouragement of, or at least 'turning the blind eye' to, rule abuses and 'stand-over' tactics there is a simple, stark memory. This is the memory of a Labor Right, Party machine, which, during the years of attempts by the Labor Party to break the hold of post-war Liberal dominance in national government, defend the initiatives of the Whitlam government and then recover from the effects of its dismissal, devoted a considerable proportion of its time and energy to *stopping people from joining the ALP*. It was this bloody minded, hubristic and self-serving machine that has become the most dominant element in the recent history of the Labor Party; a force behind the universal implementation of the 'Wran model' of cabinet solidarity, the subsuming of Party life and caucus practice to the negotiated interests of factional 'heavies' and the swing, in the 1980's to neo-liberalism. It became typified by personalities like former General Secretary, 'king-maker' and federal minister Graham Richardson and eventual Prime Minister, Paul Keating. Indeed there is a dark side to the 1993 federal election victory 'True Believers' speech by Keating and the generous and inclusive mythology that has been built around it. It is the side of an exclusivist assertion of the proprietorial rights of those who control the machinery of the Labor Party, especially in

the mould of the NSW branch, and a back-handed slap to all those who ever doubted its political legitimacy.

Consequences.

The major achievement of the personalities, practices and political culture of the NSW Right, may be in its influence in shaping the ALP Left; and in ways that have had national consequences. The dominant group that emerged in control in Leichhardt municipality during the 1980's was the group that became known as the Baldwinites; the sub-faction within the Steering Committee that had originated among the Young Labor *enrages* like Peter Baldwin, Peter Crawford, Laurie Ferguson, John Faulkner, Rodney Cavalier and Sandra Nori. These activists made the positive choice that they would fight the Right on their own terms, recruiting, or branch-stacking and tirelessly arguing the Party's rules through conferences, head office committees and the membership. It is true, as many of them assert, and as their journal *Challenge* illustrates, that they were not just 'rulemongers' preoccupied with enforcing and exploiting the chapter and verse of what is a highly bureaucratised party structure. They asserted policy opinions across a spectrum of the Left. Nonetheless there can be no doubt that their preoccupation with rules and structures, the insistence on working through the established system, was a fundamentally conservatising process. On the whole, the Young Labor/Baldwinite branch-stackers became the creators and inheritors of what has become known as the 'soft' Left within the wider Steering Committee, later Socialist Left, faction. This subfaction was to be identified with a willingness to accommodate to the neo-liberal political agenda of the Hawke/Keating federal Labor government and a distancing from the traditional Left union base. Of course one should not underestimate the capacity of individuals, on particular policy issues, to break this subfactional mould. Further, recent developments within the ALP may be placing the whole factional system into a state of flux. However there is no doubt that the Baldwinite grouping, forged in the politics of recruitment in inner city areas like Leichhardt Municipality, had an overall moderating influence on the Left. This would be particularly

evident through key parliamentarians such as Peter Baldwin, John Faulkner and, later at the state level, Sandra Nori. In this regard perhaps, the dominance of the NSW Right became felt, not just through its own machinations, but indirectly through this ‘coopting’ of a large part of the Left into conservative political practice.

Making Waves.

Of course the ‘Baldwinites’ were not the only political choice on offer in the branches of Leichhardt Municipality. In many respects their support base belonged to the ‘second wave’ of branch newcomers; those that joined during or after the Whitlam years and/or those recruited as part of the branch-stacking campaigns of the late 1970’s and early 1980’s. The first wave was probably those who entered the Party in the late 1960’s and early 1970’s, more closely influenced by the extra-parliamentary nature of the social movements of the time, and more sceptical of the procedures and practices of the Party. They included those more inclined to be ‘bohemian types’ as well as those aligned with the traditional, union-based Left within the Party. This element was strongest in those areas that had witnessed the earliest incursions of the Left into the branches, in Glebe North, Balmain and Annandale. This was revealed in the voting in the 1981 federal preselection which Baldwin won (chapter five). The non-Baldwin, Left votes were strongest in those branches which had had an earlier Left presence, Annandale, Balmain and Glebe North. This influence of what in Annandale was called the ‘variegated Left’ was contained for a time in Balmain, probably because of the impact of the expulsion of Origlass, Wyner and their supporters in 1968. It was also able to be held at bay for a time, in Glebe, largely through the role of the Glebe Estate in providing a political organising redoubt, from behind which the traditional working class Right was able to mount a ‘last stand’. Only in Annandale was the variegated Left able to break-through early in circumstances where the more libertarian politics of the social movements was to take its strongest hold. In the more recently ‘stacked’ branches like Leichhardt and Lilyfield, the Baldwin/Crawford forces had

overwhelming dominance. These Left branches were almost entirely created in the post-Whitlam, context of stacking contestation.

Yet the dilemma here was that there was a need to get rid of the Right machines and this underscored the logic of the branch recruitment campaigns, even among those concerned at the Baldwinite approach. There was, accordingly, a degree of consensus at the end of the 1970's among what was still a diverse Left; with considerable practical overlap in the different approaches of the Baldwin/Crawford recruiters, traditional Steering Committee adherents and others of the variegated and libertarian Left. The early political divisions that emerged within the Annandale branch in the late 1970's were dark clouds on the horizon. Even so, there was, in the lead-up to, and immediate aftermath of, the transformative event of Baldwin's bashing a common hope that the newcomers crowding into the branches might succeed and usher in a new era in Party political life.

The Tragedy of Power.

These hopes were to founder on the hubris and outrage among the supporters and associates of Peter Baldwin in the aftermath of his bashing. This had its consequence in rising suspicions among the non-Baldwinite Steering Committee establishment and the more libertarian and independent Left that a new dictatorship might be in the offing. This was based on a growing fear that the political memory of a long and varied struggle against the Right, predating or at least paralleling, the branch-stacking campaigns, might be swept into obscurity. These suspicions and tensions were brought to the moment of power in Leichhardt in the early 1980's, in the control of Leichhardt Council and the federal and state parliamentary seats. The new Left majority on Leichhardt Council, as mentioned in chapter five, came to power with high expectations that were the accumulation of local frustrations (over issues like town planning) and national ones (the delayed Whitlamite agenda of government intervention). However the political ground was shifting and they soon ran into difficulty. A state Labor government was already well established in a post-

Whitlam, cautious reformism and commitment to inner urban development in the name of urban consolidation. The federal Fraser government imposed fiscal constraints, limiting the possibility of calling in state government support for social issues, and later, this became a feature of the neo-liberalism of federal Labor. What underlay this was a struggle born of the paradox of victory. The impetus for, and the ability of, the middle class Left to take power in the branches had originated in one way or another in the extra-parliamentary social movements of the decade before. It was the political consciousness generated in these movements, and its indirect impact through the reform agenda of the Whitlam government, that provided the impetus to seek social change through the Labor Party. But once the Party came to power locally its task was, in the new, parsimonious, political context, to moderate and contain these sentiments in the interest of 'achievable outcomes'. This was underscored (also as mentioned in chapter five) by the political culture that had emanated from branch-stacking. Work to the rules, work through the Party, obey the caucus majority, whether the formal caucus of Leichhardt Council or a Left factional caucus among the membership. With the Party in power at the state level, and from 1983 at the federal level this logic was overwhelming.

However there were those who would not play the game; those trying to keep alive the extra-parliamentary, libertarian politics of the early to mid 1970's. The principal rallying points for this tradition was to be around the Annandale libertarians and Hall Greenland's term on council at the beginning of the 1980's, around Nick Origlass and Issy Wyner and their 'open council' approach throughout the period and around Larry Hand and the Community Independents, from the late eighties and into the nineties. These approaches drew on the traditions of extra-parliamentary action, public meetings, petitions, and flooding the public gallery of council to assert the right of residents to a say in the decisions that affected their local area. The cumulative effects of these efforts, coupled with a widening disaffection with state and federal Labor among the electorate, and particularly among the middle class Left inside and outside the Party, was the shift of support from the ALP to independents at the municipal level. This process was aided from within by the

Brady led counter-revolution on council and the tempestuous tenure of state MP Peter Crawford and was accompanied by a progressive break-down of the Steering Committee, pro-Baldwin consensus that was present at the outset of the eighties. There were the preselection splits in Sydney and Balmain, then the splitting of support between Baldwin and the Brady group, with Peter Crawford's support base seemingly torn between the two. Popular memory might record the split in the ALP in the 1970's and 1980's as a split between Left and Right, but as this thesis has shown, the situation was more complex with the opening up of significant divisions within the Left.

Personalities.

Personalities and personal friendship networks were crucial throughout the 1970's and 1980's. This was the flesh and blood of a middle class Left human agency that sought to engage with the political and organisational context of the ALP. Baldwin and Crawford in particular built up huge personal loyalty through the recruitment process itself and this underlined the particular characteristics of their support in the branches, as mentioned above. In Annandale, the libertarian Left dominance, from the mid 1970's to the early 1980's, was built around a web of personal links and close friendships. In Balmain, Origlass and Wyner were able to command enormous personal support which developed after 1968 outside, and also inside, the Party, while what resistance there was to the dominance of the Crawford group in the Balmain branch in the 1980's appears to have swung around close friendships. In Leichhardt, the friendship networks and loyalties that built around the Roxboroughs and Evan Jones, were central. At times these personal loyalties may have been strong enough to overcome doubts by individuals about policy or political strategy. When the splits came in the Left, in Annandale at different points from the late seventies and elsewhere in the municipality in the 1980's, they were characterised by personal loyalty issues, often linked to, usually male, personal ambitions and egotism. The bitterness and hatred that emerged within the Left reflected personal betrayal that fed back into the intensity of political division.

Hatred.

It is interesting to consider in this context the role of political hatred. Peter Crawford explained in chapter three the energising effects of hatred directed at his political enemies and certainly, in the context of his term in parliament, it appeared to consume him and his political career. Yet he was not alone. The divisions within the Left in the 1980's were characterised by sometimes extraordinarily vituperative conflicts and verbal abuse, and on a couple of occasions the return of physical violence. It is easy to shrug these off, as is often done, as the 'rough and tumble' of debate. However political hatred turned out to be extraordinarily destructive and this raises the question for a Left that has been unable to fully develop an inclusive and cooperative, and non-violent in the general sense, political culture in its approach to the questions of political power. Of course singular and stubborn personal behaviour can contribute here. There is no doubt that the destructive nature, for example, of the Mort Bay debate in the mid-1980's could in part be attributed to the singular personalities and obsessions of its key protagonists. There is also no doubt that the intensity of bitterness and hatred had a large part to play in the political exhaustion of some of those who left public office, like Greenland, Floyd and Crawford. It also enlarged the general disaffection that saw branch membership decline in the late 1980's. In some senses, the political hatred of the old Right machines proved corrosive, seeping from one political generation to another.

Exhaustion.

The corrosive effect of hatred compounded the exhaustion associated with maintaining political campaigns over a long period of time, particularly the unpaid labour involved in Party activities and public representation at the municipal level. This sense of exhaustion is evident in the experience of the 1980-84 Leichhardt aldermen, in the defeat of Peter Crawford in the state seat of Balmain in 1988, and in the Annandale Greens political break-up at the beginning of the 1990's. It is also evident in the later decision by Peter Baldwin to

retire from parliament, at a relatively young age, and in Sandra Nori's lament for the loss of a personal life. There is no doubt here that the life cycle of this particular demographic cohort has played its part. Those who moved into the branches in the seventies were, as Rod Madgwick remarked, "of an age". However as the decades advanced and people grew older and became more entrenched in careers and families, there is no doubt that the, at times unproductive, wrangling within the ALP, seemed less appealing. There were demographic, class and political particularities about the middle class Left in Leichhardt municipality. However this should not be taken to reinforce more facile assumptions about 'babyboomers' representing some kind of uniform generational group, with a common interest.

Boy's Games?

Reviewing these two decades of political activity, the political results for women are mixed. Women were active in the processes of confrontation with the Right from the beginning, and as shown in chapter one, the middle-classing of the branches was associated with an increase in involvement of women in the ALP. Women took an active part in branch life and by the 1980's were breaking through into elected positions. Ann Catling won strong support in her bid for the federal seat in 1981 and Robyn Floyd, Sharon Page, Margaret Lyons, Kate Butler, Sandra Nori, and Meredith Burgmann all broke through to elected public office. Yet the Left in its various forms throughout the seventies and 80's appears to have remained largely masculinist; linked with the confrontational nature of branch-stacking and the often verbally abusive and occasionally violent conflict with the Right. It is evident, from some of the comments above, that for this generation of politically conscious, feminist women who sought out the ALP, Party branch life was often unrewarding. This appears so in the 1970's in branches like Annandale and Balmain where the Left was in control earlier. It may be that, set against this unrewarding and male-dominated political landscape, particularly in the 1970's and early 1980's, other areas of activity were seen as more productive. This was, after all, a generation of women who were

re-writing the definition of politics as something deeper than the public sphere of party political involvement.

The diverse activity centres of the women's movement may have provided more outlets for political expression as might local action committees or associations, or groups like Labor Against Uranium. Labor Women's Committee was an important focus, which many women privileged above involvement at the branch level. Kate Butler, for example, indicated that her interest in entering municipal politics didn't really come until after the abolition of the Labor Women's Committee in 1986, and her loss as a result of its presidency. Other fields of activity, such as working through unions or careers, predominantly in the education and welfare state institutions, may also have provided much more ground breaking potential for women. And for many women, bringing up children was a high priority in the 1970's and early 1980's. The family, or developing alternatives to it, remained a 'front-line' of struggle as women sought to juggle childcare, work and politics.

Working Class Heroes?

It is interesting here to follow up Greenland's notion (in chapter five) that many of the middle class Left, suffered from a crisis of legitimacy that predisposed them, with mixed results, towards support of 'working class heroes'. This notion of the 'working class hero' perhaps had a more complex explanation. Nick Origlass, Issy Wyner, Evan Jones, Charlie Rocks, Bill Brady, and even Dan Casey's old 'running mate', Bob Heffernan were all accorded this status by different sections of the middle class Left at different times. In some ways this was genuine. It represented a way of giving flesh and blood to a deep felt allegiance to the working class. The role was also accorded in some ways to groups: the working class 'community' of the Glebe Estate and the public housing tenants-to-be at Mort Bay. However it also appears to have been an intensely masculinist notion on the whole and was linked to real personal loyalty networks. There were fewer female heroes. Edna Ryan was celebrated by the Forest Lodge branch, and Bessie Guthrie, who was

associated with Elsie and lived on the Glebe Estate, was fondly remembered by Meredith Burgmann.

This way of expressing some kind of ‘working class’ allegiance, and genuine concern for the forces impacting on the working class in the urban environment, also became entangled in the dissembling use of this image to mask the political compromises that were well under way in the 1980’s. This was played out in debates over urban consolidation, gentrification and the fiscal retreat of state and federal Labor. This was also, no doubt, fuelled by middle class guilt and confusion of class identity. Jim Archibald’s comment on the ‘chimera’ of the ‘blue-singletted hero’ in chapter seven is apt. The Mort Bay debate provides an example of the use of this dissembling image and the standard continues to be raised in battle by middle class ALP and ex-ALP apostles of neo-liberalism like Michael Thompson and PP McGuinness, in their critiques of the middle class Left.

Human agency and historical context.

The struggle by the middle class Left to assert agency was constrained by the historical context they faced. One part of this context was the changing one, the shift in the political landscape from the pre-Whitlam and Whitlam period to the post-Whitlam, and more cautious, eighties. The way that human agency was constrained by, yet sought to interact with, this shifting historical context is nowhere more clearly seen than in the approaches to the public housing projects of the Glebe Estate and Mort Bay.

The acquisition of the Glebe Estate represented the best of all worlds in terms of the progressive social agenda that characterised the middle class Left. It combined issues of architectural heritage and opposition to expressways with the preservation of a working class ‘community’ and the enhancing of the public housing estate. The middle class Left’s support for the project through the ALP, through the 1971-73 council, and through the associations, principally the Glebe Society, was secure on the foundations of the

progressive politics of the social movements and the aspirations for, and possibilities of, state intervention represented by the Whitlam government. This was an intersection of opportunities presented by the objective conditions that made the project possible but also the subjective input by those who saw the opportunity to defend the inner city as a place for the working class or the less well-off to live. After all, support for a large public housing project like this in many ways ran counter to the economic interests of the middle class Left, and the middle class generally, in terms of enhancing property values. It belies the glib assertions of gentrification analyses which all too readily ascribes a structurally determined set of values to a middle class defined implicitly as a 'gentry'.

A decade later, the middle class Left were confronted by different objective conditions. These were the economic pressures for inner urban development and urban consolidation, a state and federal government limited in terms of any potential commitment to equity in urban development and the seemingly, yet falsely, irreconcilable goals of public housing and waterfront open space. Yet there were also choices that key players in the Mort Bay debate made. These were choices that took the debate down destructive paths. They were choices made by state and local political figures that privileged political survival, and the struggle for the Labor political inheritance, over the need to form a united front in the face of the economic and political forces creating urban inequities. If the Glebe Estate stands as a monument to the best sentiments and achievements of the middle class Left, what is left of the Mort Bay public housing project stands as a monument to its worst.

In the Glebe Estate and Mort Bay cases, both context and human agency mattered.

Machine politics and 'substitutism'.

The interaction between human agency and historical context can also be seen in the overall impact of the middle class Left on the Labor Party. The Party itself was a historically received and entrenched institutional and cultural context that has appeared impervious to

any real fundamental change. This was particularly so as the radical political impulses of the late sixties and early seventies faded. This institutional environment saw the long-term coopting of the Left, particularly the soft Left, into a traditional, manipulative culture, linked to and reinforced by, the shifting of the general political context in the 1980's to more conservative ground. At the branch level this was revealed in the control by the 'new' substitutists.

The old working class, and some middle class, patriarchs who controlled the inner city ALP branches at the outset of the 1970's were the product of particular social forces at work in the decades prior to the 1960's and 1970's. But they were also individuals who exercised their power in particular ways and came to lay hold of the local machinery of the ALP. They were a substitutist core that did not necessarily represent the full range of social and political division within the traditional inner city working class. As Jakubowicz pointed out, in some other areas it was the working class Left that took control and this was the case in Balmain prior to Origlass and Wyner's expulsion in 1968. And so it was with the middle class Left. Their entry into the Party was shaped by the general social movements of the time but it was also shaped by the role of particular individuals who, like the conservative, working class patriarchs before them, took control of the Party machinery. They were substitutists who themselves were not necessarily typical of the middle class Left at large; even less of a more widely defined, modern working class that might include both middle class elements and the traditional working class. Strongest among these new substitutists were those who gathered around people like Baldwin and Crawford, Nori and Faulkner and they set the mould from which the dominant politics in the area was cast. In this situation, the exercise of human agency in relation to the Party was, for many, to take the form of leaving it and perhaps shifting political allegiance to other parties, to independents or away from involvement in electoral politics altogether. For those of the middle class Left who have stayed in, or more recently joined, the Party, it has been a process of trying to make peace with, and function within, a severely limited political environment in terms of the size, participation and composition of the Party membership.

Writers like Andrew Scott and Michael Thompson have, from very different political perspectives, drawn attention to the wider problem of the increasing domination of the Labor Party by the middle class and the professionalisation of politics. They and others like them have focussed on a middle class substitutism that must be of concern for the labour movement, and the adherents of Left politics as a whole. However this thesis points to an understanding of this phenomenon as one that takes into account the ambiguities and contradictions of the middle class and sees it as the product of the interaction of historical-contextual factors and human agency. It was made clear at the outset that this thesis was not a work of class theory. However it would seem that the conclusions drawn here point to the usefulness of this contextual/agency approach, rather than trying to impose on a 'new' middle class, or urban 'gentry', some form of uniform set of class interests, values and political motivations.

During the 1970's and 1980's hundreds of members of the middle class Left passed through the branches of the Labor Party in Leichhardt Municipality. In reflecting on their attempts to come to terms with the political world they found, a rich complexity is revealed. This complexity is found in life histories, experiences and political motivations; in the intensity and diversity that characterised (sometimes bitter) political debate, and in the different paths taken when hopes for political change within or through the ALP were not fulfilled. Historians of popular memory can look to these stories for a rich source of understanding of the workings of human agency. It is only by drawing out these complexities of human agency and setting them against the political and historical context, that the politics of the 1970's and 1980's, in Leichhardt as elsewhere, can be truly understood.

Appendices

Appendix A.**Map of Leichhardt Municipality with notes on ALP branch structure and electoral boundaries.**

Notes:

Suburbs and Municipality. The boundaries of the Municipality of Leichhardt as existing at the time of this study, were the product of a merger of the smaller municipal councils of Leichhardt, Balmain and Annandale in 1948. The former municipal area of Glebe (which had become part of the City of Sydney in 1948) was added in 1968. The six suburbs of the municipality (indicated on the map above) are essentially defined by their 'postcode' area with the exception of the dormitory suburb of Lilyfield which shares a postcode with Leichhardt suburb and has no identifiable commercial or suburban centre. The population of the municipality was 71,338 in 1971 and fell steadily to 56,303 in 1986; rising again to 58,472 in 1991. The municipality is one of almost 40 municipalities making up the Sydney metropolitan area and lies immediately to the west of the central municipality, the City of Sydney. Like the city, it lies on the southern side of Port Jackson (Sydney Harbour), with its principal southern boundary being the main arterial, Parramatta Road. At the time of publication, the NSW State Government was planning to separate Glebe and re-locate it as part of the City of Sydney and there was a possibility of amalgamation of the rest of the municipality with neighbouring municipalities of Marrickville and/or South Sydney.

ALP Branches. The identity of ALP branches was closely linked to these six suburbs, though branch boundaries varied (often to suit the interests of local controlling elements). Balmain, Lilyfield and Leichhardt had one branch each. Rozelle had two branches (Rozelle and Rozelle East) divided principally by the arterial Victoria Road, which bisects the suburb from east to west. Annandale also had two branches at the outset of the 1970's (Annandale and Annandale South) but these were merged in 1974. In Glebe at the beginning of the 1970's there were three branches; Glebe (to the south-east, largely based on the Glebe Estate); Forest Lodge (to the south) and Glebe North. Glebe North was abolished in 1982 (see chapter four) with most of its membership and area taken over by Forest Lodge. Later in the 1980's, Forest Lodge absorbed the Pymont-Denison branch, which was located in the City of Sydney, on the eastern side of Blackwattle Bay, and was renamed Blackwattle branch.

The ALP and Municipal Ward Boundaries. Until 1987 there were six wards taking the names of the six suburbs though there were some variations in boundaries due in part to population differences (Annandale ward for example absorbed an eastern section of the much larger Leichhardt suburb). Each ward elected two aldermen to council. From the 1987 municipal elections, wards were abolished and the 12 aldermen were elected from the municipality as a whole. ALP municipal campaigns were coordinated by a *Municipal Committee*, which consisted of one delegate from each ALP branch.

The ALP and State Electoral Boundaries. For the period 1971-1991, most of the western section of the municipality (Balmain, Rozelle, Lilyfield and Leichhardt) made up the core of the seat (or electorate) of Balmain in the NSW Legislative Assembly (the lower house of state parliament). With some variation, Glebe and most of Annandale were usually located in the electorate to the east. With electoral boundary changes, this seat and its name changed over time; from King, to Phillip, Elizabeth and then McKell. At the end of the 1980's, the state seats of Balmain and McKell were abolished and a new electorate of Port Jackson encompassed the municipality. ALP branches in a particular electorate were represented at the campaign coordinating body, the State Electorate Council (SEC), with delegations based on the size of branch membership.

The ALP and Federal Electoral Boundaries. For the first part of the 1970's, the municipality was divided between the federal seats (electorates) of Sydney and Grayndler in the lower house of the Australian Parliament, the House of Representatives. However for most of the period of this study (from 1977 through to the early 1990's) the municipality fell entirely within the federal electorate of Sydney. Federal electorates, with between 70,000 to 80,000 voters, were roughly twice the size of state electorates. As with the state electorates, each local ALP branch was represented at a Federal Electorate Council (FEC) by a delegation based on the size of its membership.

Relationship to State and National ALP structure. SEC's and FEC's were the means by which ALP members were represented at the NSW ALP, Annual Conference (and at a smaller but similarly structured NSW Council which no longer exists). Each SEC and FEC elected two delegates to Annual Conference (and one to Council). Sixty percent of Annual Conference delegates were from affiliated unions (see Appendix C below) with the bulk of the remainder elected by SEC's and FEC's. Annual Conference in turn elected the NSW ALP Administrative Committee, The General Secretary and two Assistants, delegates to the ALP National Conference and National Executive. Annual Conference (or alternatively, the former Council) also elected upper house parliamentary candidates for the state-wide elections for the state Legislative Council and the federal Senate. There was also a Young Labor Council with local associations (YLA's) and a state conference and state executive structure. A NSW Labor Women's Committee with its own conference of delegates from unions and branches (Women's Conference) existed until its controversial abolition by the NSW Branch of the ALP in 1986.

Sources: Leichhardt Council: Out and About in Leichhardt, (map), Sydway Publishing 2000; 'Municipality of Leichhardt - Suburbs' in Joy, V., Nathanielsz, M and Berwick, P. (eds) *Leichhardt Municipality Population Profile*, Community Services Department, Leichhardt Council, 1996, p 17; *Information Bulletin Number 12*, Australian Government Glebe Project, 1976, p 1; *Report on Development Applications, DA 517/86 and DA*

518/86, (Mort Bay development), Leichhardt Municipal Council, 10/2/87, p 4. See also Solling and Reynolds, *Leichhardt*, p 253 and passim; Hogan, M and Clune, D. (eds) *The Peoples Choice: Electoral Politics in 20th Century New South Wales; Volume Three, 1968-1999*, Parliament of New South Wales and Sydney University, Sydney 2001, passim; *Reports of Distribution Commissioners for New South Wales under Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*, Commonwealth of Australia, 1977 and 1984; various editions of the *Rules of the Australian Labor Party, NSW Branch*, 1971-1991.

Appendix B.

‘Bump Me Into Parliament’; words to the tune of ‘Yankee Doodle’.

Come listen, all kind friends of mine,
I want to move a motion,
To build an El Dorado here,
I’ve got a bonzer notion.

Chorus:

Bump me into Parliament,
Bounce me any way,
Bang me into Parliament,
On next election day.

Some very wealthy friends I know
Declare I am most clever,
While some may talk for an hour or so
Why I can talk for ever.

I know the Arbitration Act
As a sailor knows his ‘riggins’,
So if you want a small advance,
I’ll talk to Justice Higgins.

Oh yes I am a Labor man,
And believe in revolution;
The quickest way to bring it on
Is talking constitution.

I’ve read my Bible, ten times through,
And Jesus justifies me,
The man who does not vote for me,
By Christ he crucifies me.

So bump them into Parliament,
Bounce them any way,
Bung them into Parliament,
Don’t let the Court decay.

Source: IWW, Rebel Songs, Melbourne, 1966, p. 15; reproduced in Burgmann, V, Revolutionary Industrial Unionism: The Industrial Workers of the World in Australia, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 1995, pp 144-145.

Appendix C.

List of Unions Affiliated to the NSW Branch, Australian Labor Party, 1981-1982.

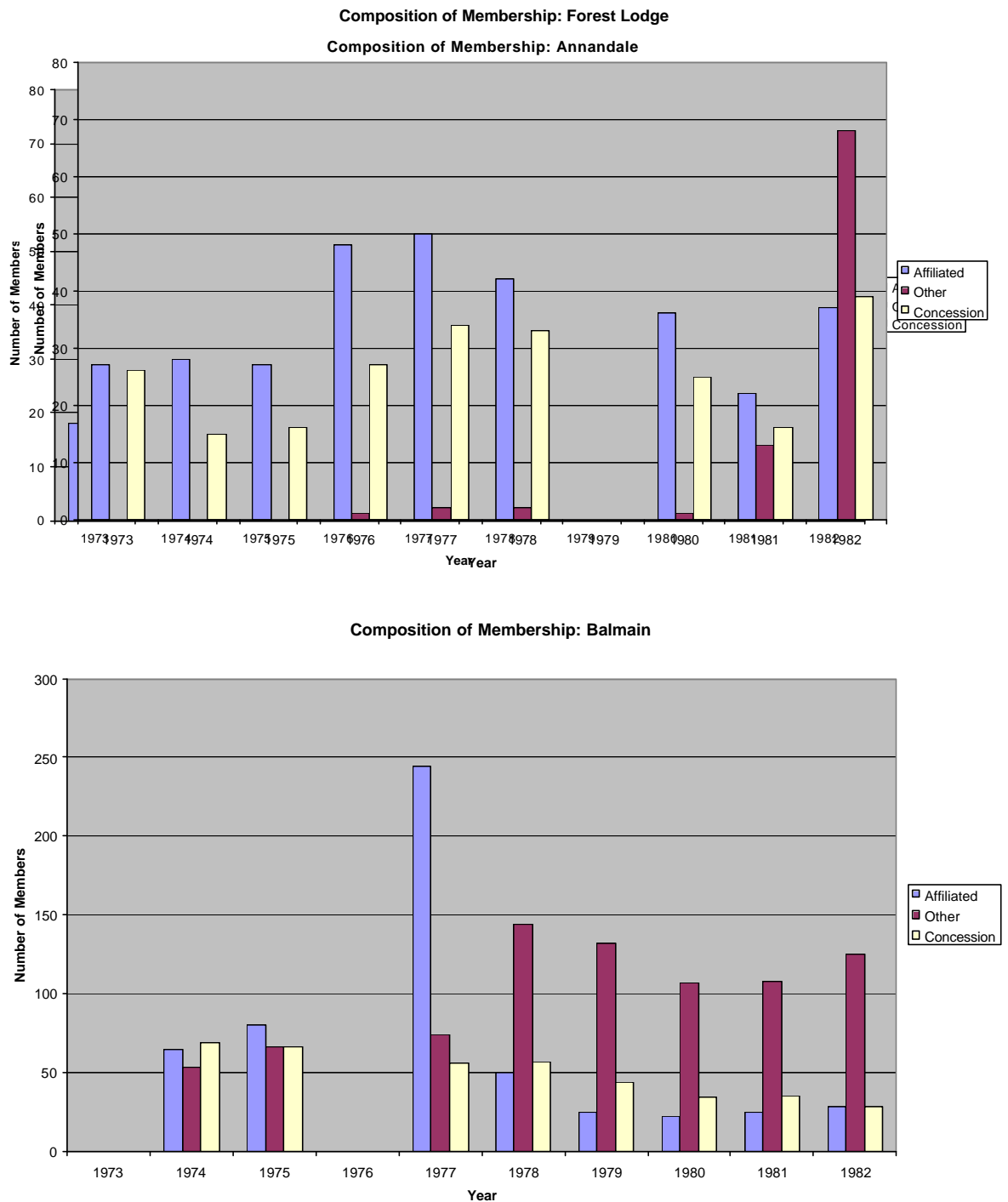
Actors and Announcers Equity
 Amalgamated Metal Workers' and Shipwrights' Union
 Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners.
 Australasian Society of Engineers
 Australian Federated Union of Locomotive Enginemmen
 Australian Postal and Telecommunications Union
 Australian Railways Union
 Australian Telecommunications Employees Association
 Australian Transport Motor Omnibus Employees Association
 Australian Workers Union
 Boot Trade Employees Federation
 Building Workers Industrial Union
 Clothing and Allied Trades Union
 Coal and Shale Employees Federation (Northern)
 Coal and Shale Employees Federation (Southern)
 Confectioners Association of Australia
 Dental Technicians Association
 Electrical Trades Union of Australia
 Engine Drivers and Firemens Association
 Federated Clerks Union of Australia
 Federated Ironworkers Association of Australia
 Federated Ship Painters and Dockers Union
 Fire Brigade Employees Union
 Food Preservers Union
 Furnishing Trades Society
 Glass Workers Union
 Hairdressers and Wigmakers Employees Union
 Health and Research Employees Association
 Industrial Staff Union
 Liquor and Allied Industries Employees Union
 Marine Stewards
 Meat Industry Employees Union
 Mining Mechanics Association
 Miscellaneous Workers' Union
 Municipal and Shire Council Employees Union
 Musicians Union
 Operative Painters and Decorators Union
 Operative Plasterers Federation

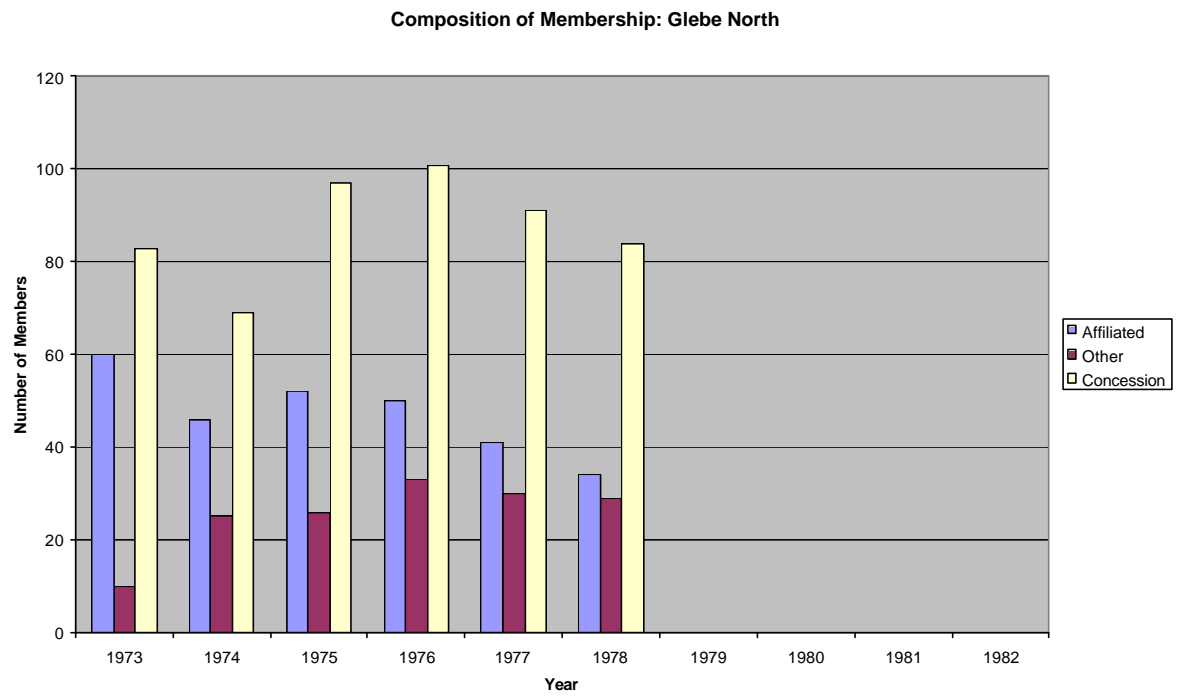
Pastrycooks and Biscuitmakers Union
 Plate Sheet and Ornamental Glass Workers
 Plumbers and Gas Fitters Employees Union
 Postal Clerks and Telegraphists
 Printing and Kindred Industries Union
 Rubber and Allied Workers Union
 Seamen's Union
 Shop Distributive and Allied Employees Association
 Storemen and Packers
 Textile Workers Union
 Timber Workers Union
 Transport Officers
 Transport Workers Union
 Vehicle Builders Employees Federation
 Water and Sewerage Employees Association
 Waterside Workers Federation.

Source: Wheelright, T, 'New South Wales: the dominant Right', in Parkin, A and Warhurst, J (eds) *Machine Politics in the Australian Labor Party*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1983, pp 67 – 68. Many of these unions were the subject of later amalgamation. In order to trace their later organisational form see Jadeja, R, *Parties To The award: A Guide To The Pedigrees And Archival Resources Of Federally Registered Trade Unions, Employer Associations And Their Peak Councils In Australia 1904-1994*, Noel Butlin Archive Centre, ANU Canberra, 1994.

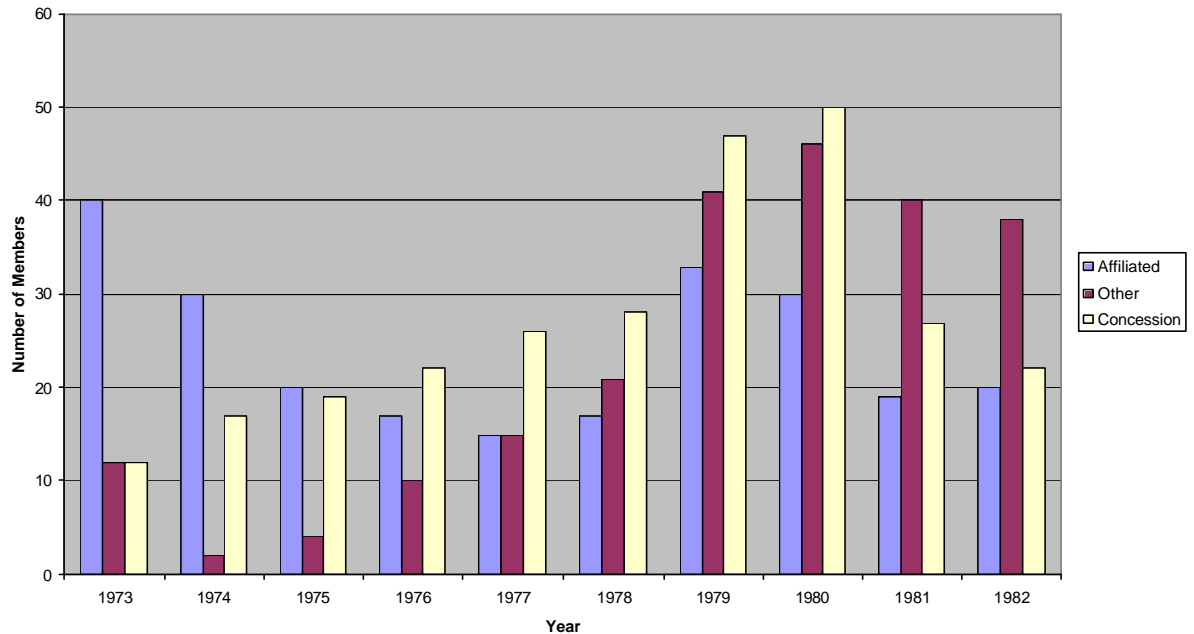
Appendix D.

Composition of Branch Membership Selected Branches (Annandale, Balmain, Forest Lodge, Glebe North, Leichhardt), 1973 – 1982





Composition of Membership: Leichhardt

**Notes:**

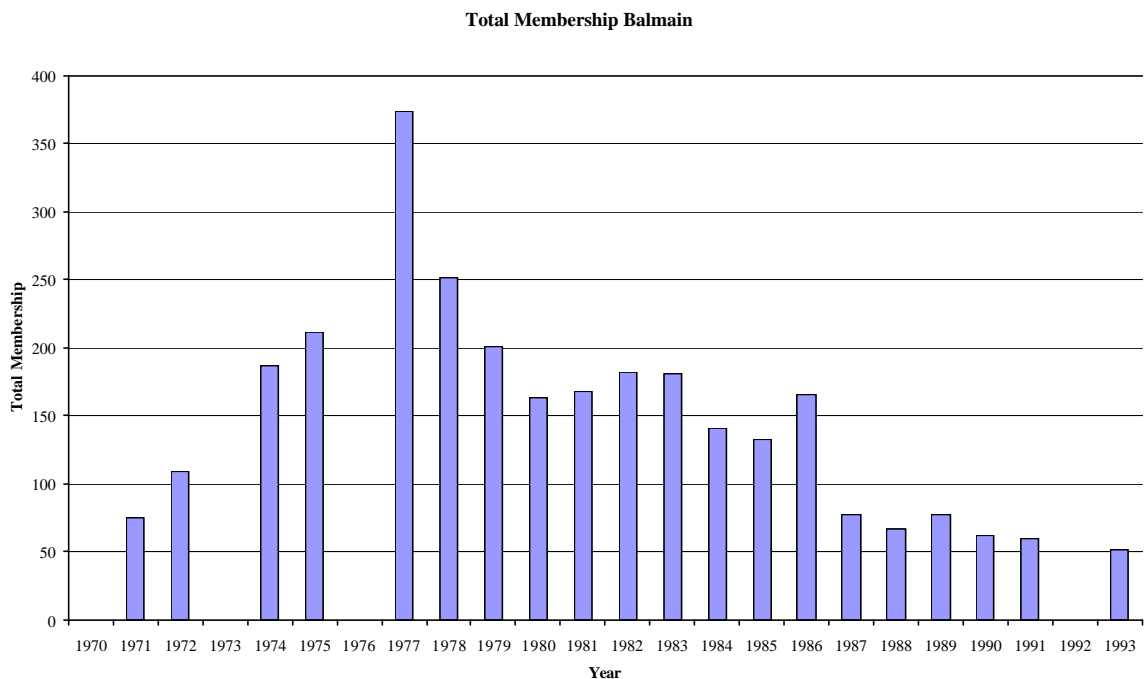
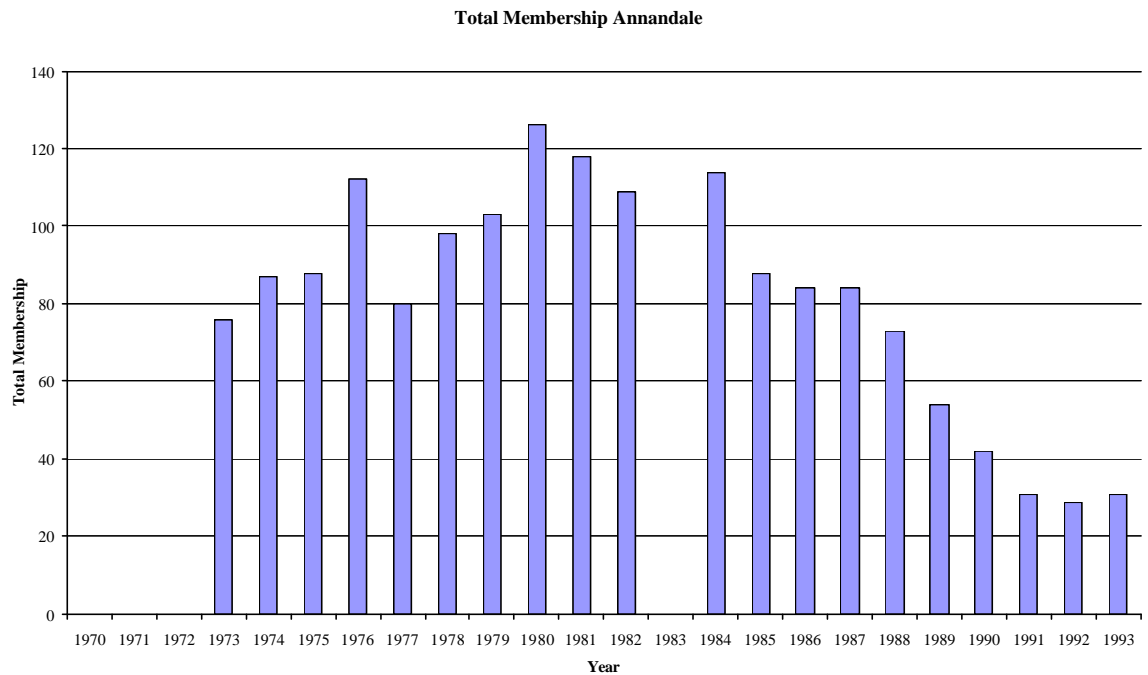
1. The three categories of membership shown on each graph for each year are: 'affiliated' (members of unions affiliated to the ALP); 'other' (other employed members, approximately three quarters of whom are members of unions not affiliated to the ALP); 'concession' (members under 18 years of age, unemployed, and pensioners, including the special Rule H.14/H.13 pensioner category). Most women declaring their occupation as 'domestic duties', were probably encompassed by the unemployed sub-category as were students over 18. Branch returns did not list union status before 1973 and a different system applied from 1983 on.

2. The Glebe North branch figures cease due to that branch being incorporated into the Forest Lodge branch in 1982. The 1982 figures for Forest Lodge include the bulk of the former Glebe North members (a small part of Glebe North was incorporated into the Glebe branch based on the Glebe Estate).

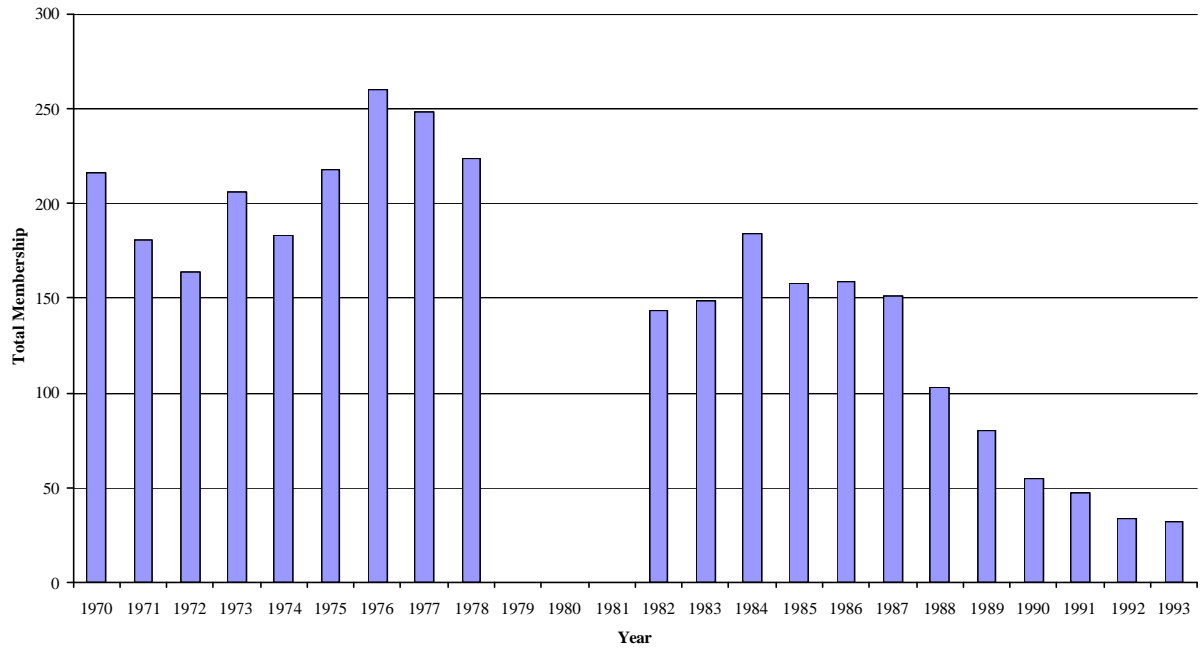
Source: Branch Returns, ALPR, MLMSS, 5095/ 610 (Annandale), 5095/611(Balmain),5095/620 (Forest Lodge), 5095/621(Glebe North), 5095/625 (Leichhardt).

Appendix E.

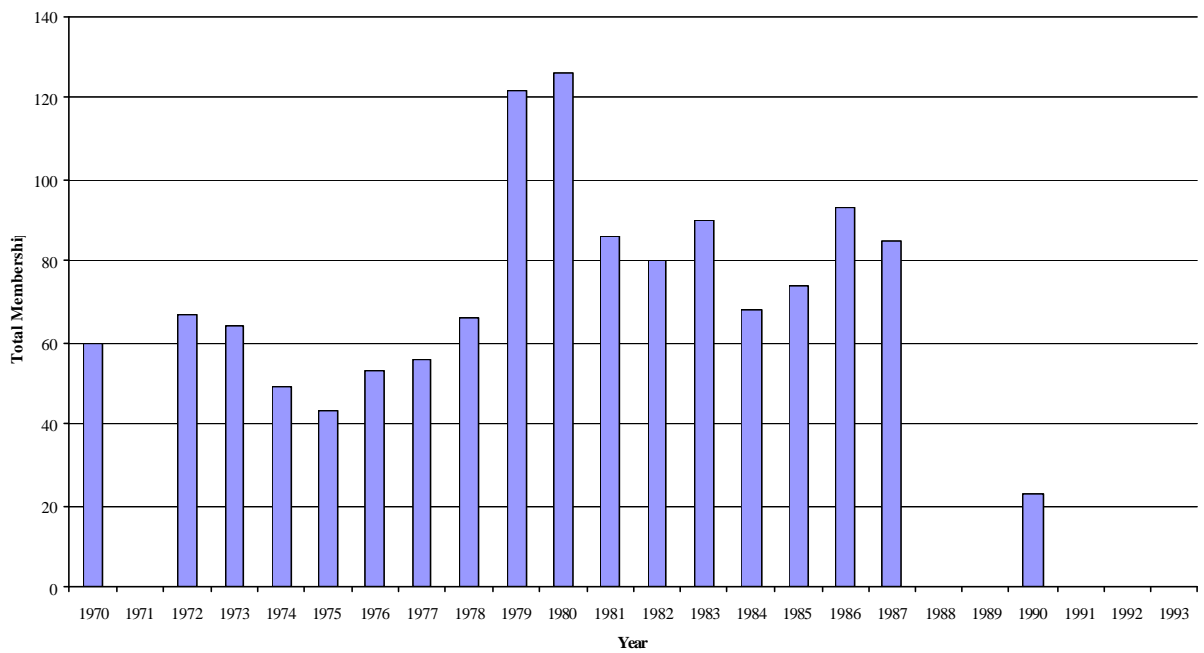
Total Branch Membership, Selected Branches. (Annandale, Balmain, Forest Lodge/Glebe North/Blackwattle, Leichhardt, Lilyfield), 1970 – 1993.

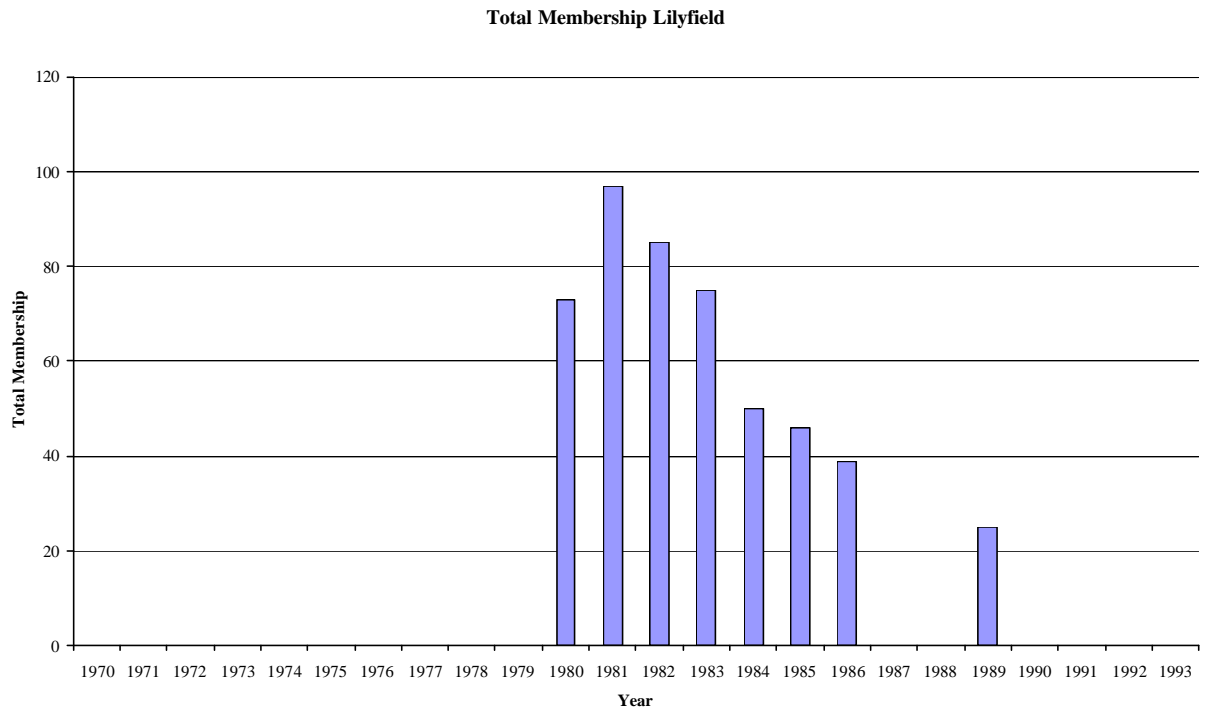


Total Membership Forest Lodge/Glebe North/Blackwattle



Total Membership Leichhardt





Notes:

1. Figures for Forest Lodge, Glebe North and Blackwattle have been combined. Forest Lodge incorporated the bulk of the Glebe North Branch in 1982 and then changed its name to Blackwattle (incorporating Pyrmont-Denison) in the late 1980's.
2. Missing years indicate absence of figures for those years (Lilyfield Branch was restructured in 1980 and figures used are those after 1980 only).
3. After 1983 a new membership system was introduced with membership tickets issued through NSW ALP Head Office and members registering separately with branches. Records indicate that declines in membership of branches after about 1987 were declines in registration, not necessarily party membership (see chapter seven).

Source: Branch Returns, ALPR, MLMSS, 5095/610(Annandale), 5095/611(Balmain), 5095/620 (Forest Lodge/Blackwattle), 5095/621(Glebe North), 5095/625(Leichhardt), 5095/626(Lilyfield).

Appendix F.

1981 ALP Preselection; federal seat of Sydney: Tally, first count, by branch and candidate. (Branches in bold are those of Leichhardt Municipality)

BRANCH	Baldwin	Catling	Harris	McMahon	Challenged
Annandale	12	9	16	9	2
Balmain	29	30	2	4	5
Camdenville	5	3	0	6	10
Camperd.	12	1	2	3	0
Darlington	9	0	1	0	
D. Harbour	1	4	0	6	5
Dulwich Hill	2	0	0	1	
Enmore	5	1	0	14	1
Erskineville	0	3	1	4	
For. Lodge	3	0	0	29	
Glebe	1	4	2	29	1
Glebe N	12	12	2	18	1
Gold.Grove	3	3	0	12	
King	1	6	1	6	
Leichhardt	32	4	0	12	1
Lilyfield	15	0	0	10	1
Livingstone	4	5	0	6	1
Marrick. E	19	1	0	10	
Newtown E	0	1	0	13	1
P'sham	4	6	2	18	
Phillip	5	1	0	2	1
Pyrm-Den.	0	0	0	36	
Redfern W	4	0	1	10	
Rozelle E	6	3	1	2	9
Rozelle	2	1	0	9	
Stanmore	6	3	1	9	2

**Comparison of union status (ALP affiliated or non- affiliated) with voting, branches in
Leichhardt Municipality; 1981 Sydney federal preselection.**

Branch	Union Status (% of Branch)		Votes (% of Branch)	
	Affiliated Union	Non- Affiliated	For Right (McMahon)	For Left (Baldwin, Catling, Harris)
Annandale	20	56.4	19.6	80.4
Balmain	10.5	60.5	6.2	93.8
Forest Lodge	59.4	9.4	90.6	9.4
Glebe	29.7	16.2	80.6	19.4
Glebe North	26.5	51	40.9	59.1
Leichhardt	17.5	47.5	25	75
Lilyfield	24	36	40	60
Rozelle	50	21.4	75	25
Rozelle East	35.7	42.9	16.7	83.3

Sources:

The ALP voting lists for the 1981 preselection for the federal seat of Sydney were in the possession of the writer as one of the Left candidates and copies have been placed in the writer's papers in the State Library of NSW. Union affiliation has been obtained from these lists and table 8.2 shows the ratio of affiliated to non-affiliated union membership compared with voting for Left and Right candidates. The first count primary votes in the preselection, on a branch by branch basis, (Table 8.1) were recorded by the writer's scrutineer, Dan Bessell, and this record is located in the writers papers. There were minor discrepancies in the numbers on the voting lists and recorded votes on the list (in Table 8.1) due possibly to challenge votes and late changes to the lists. As well there was also a discrepancy of 15 in the total valid votes cast (as indicated in Table 8.1) and the final vote published in *Challenge* 4/12/81 (presented in chapter five). These discrepancies however would not greatly affect the pattern of branch-by-branch voting and comparison with union status presented here.

Appendix G.

List of Informants.

These are recorded interviews with the exception of a small number of written responses marked by an asterisk. Two informants grouped together indicates a joint interview. Where permission has been given, interview tapes are being copied and placed in the State Library of New South Wales, along with the writer's papers. Where permission has not been given for copying of tapes, they will remain in the possession of the writer under the supervision of the History School, UNSW.

Don and Valda Allen still live in Balmain and remain active in the Balmain branch. Don was active in the branch during the 1970's, as part of the Right. However he was 'on the outer' of the more hardline Rodwell-Casey group. He was a former Teachers Federation organiser who subsequently became a personnel officer for a waterfront company. Valda is an office-holder with the NSW Nurses Association.

Bob Allnut, retired ABC producer. Lives on Glebe Estate and was, at the time of interview, president of the Glebe ALP branch. He was unusual in that he was nominally a member of the middle class Left, but one who aligned himself with Right federal member for Sydney, Les McMahon

Rob Anderson joined the ALP in 1963, in Turrumurra and was a full-time official with the Electrical Trades Union. He moved to Glebe at the beginning of the 1980's and transferred into the Forest Lodge branch. He became its president and worked as part of the Right resistance to the incursions of the middle class Left.

Therese Archibald is a project officer with TAFE. She joined the ALP in Annandale in the late 1970's and was expelled in the late 1980's. Her partner, **Jim Archibald**, runs a recruitment agency for a professional organisation. He also joined the ALP in the late seventies and was one of the earlier 1984, Annandale expellees. Both were active in local resident action campaigns.

Peter Baldwin, elected member for the federal seat of Sydney in 1983, left federal parliament in 1998 after serving as a Minister in the Hawke and Keating governments. He lives in the Blue Mountains of NSW.

Dan Bessell* joined the ALP in Narrabeena in 1968 and moved to Annandale in 1973 where he served for a time as secretary of the Annandale ALP branch. He left the ALP in 1983/84 and was one of the ex-Annandale members active in Green politics. He later moved to Western Australia and then the NSW North Coast.

Bill Brady was an officer of Actors Equity and active in the Glebe and Annandale ALP branches. He was elected to Leichhardt Council in early 1983 and was mayor of the municipality from 1984 to 1987 and again in 1990. He has retired and lives in Bankstown.

Meredith Burgmann, still lives in Glebe, is a member of the Glebe branch and President of the NSW Legislative Council.

Janet Burstall* a librarian, was inspired, along with comrades in a Marxist discussion group, to join the ALP to try and build a 'fighting Left' inside the party. She joined Rozelle East branch and was associated with the 'Socialist Fight' group within the ALP in the early 1980's.

Kate Butler is a retired teacher and a councillor on Leichhardt Council. She was a member of Leichhardt branch and President of the NSW Labor Women's Committee from 1979 to 1986. She left the ALP in the 1990's in the circumstances portrayed in *Rats in the Ranks*.

John Cahill joined the ALP in Mosman in 1969 and moved to Annandale at the beginning of the 1980's. He has been an official of the NSW PSA since that time and is a non-branch registered member of the ALP.

Jack Carnegie was born in Sydney and brought up in Rozelle. He joined the Annandale branch around 1980 and was expelled in 1984. Active in the foundation of Sydney Greens, he is now a community worker.

Les Carr was brought up in Tasmania. He came to Sydney in 1970 and joined the Glebe North ALP branch. He worked on *The Leichhardt Local* and *Challenge* and now works for the NSW PSA. He remains a non-branch registered ALP member.

Ann Catling joined the ALP in Balmain in 1975 and remains active in the branch there. She stood against Peter Baldwin in the preselection for the federal seat of Sydney in 1981. She was active in Labor Against Uranium in the late 1970's, and early 1980's.

Dee Clancy joined the ALP relatively late, 1984, in Annandale and remains a member of that branch. She worked on the electorate staff of both Peter Crawford and Peter Baldwin.

Jeff Cooke is a retired academic who joined the Balmain ALP in 1965 and left, with Origlass and Wyner, in 1968. He rejoined in 1976 and left the party in the 1990's.

Barry Cotter was state secretary of the ACOA and active in the ALP in Leichhardt Municipality at the beginning of the 1980's. He is now ALP mayor of the neighbouring municipality of Marrickville. Along with Larry Hand from Leichhardt and other Sydney

mayors, he was active in leading opposition to the opening of the third runway in the mid 1990's

Eva Cox joined the ALP in Paddington at the beginning of the 1970's and moved to Glebe in 1979. An academic and welfare activist, she left the ALP at the end of the 1980's.

Peter Crawford now works as a high school teacher and has left the ALP. He was member for the state seat of Balmain, 1984 to 1988.

Evelyn Evans is a psychologist who joined the ALP in Balmain around 1977. She left the party in the early 1980's, feeling alienated from branch and ALP life.

John Faulkner still lives in Glebe and is a member of the Blackwattle branch. He is Labor's leader in the Senate.

Robyn Floyd joined the Rozelle East branch in 1973 and was an alderman on Leichhardt Council from 1980 to 1984. A teacher, she now lives at Mount Druitt with her partner ***Al Svirskis***. Al had joined the ALP in his home town of Newcastle and was also active, with Robyn, in the Rozelle East branch. He is a TAFE organiser with the NSW Teachers Federation.

Gretchen Gamble is a primary school teacher who still lives in Annandale. She joined the ALP there in 1971 and was one of the 1984 expellees. Like Jim and Therese Archibald, she has been a resident activist.

Jeremy Gilling is an industry training administrator. A former draft resister, he joined the ALP in 1975 and remains active in Balmain. He is a friend and political associate of Michael Thompson (*Labor without class*).

Hall Greenland was active in Annandale ALP and served on Leichhardt Council from 1980 to 1982. One of the 1984 expellees, he was active in Sydney Greens. He completed his biography of Nick Origlass (*Red Hot*) in the late 1990's and was elected to Leichhardt Council as an 'open council' independent from Leichhardt-Lilyfield Ward in 1999.

Tony Geoghan has retired from Leichhardt Council staff and now lives in Hunters Hill. He was the controversial Right-wing secretary of the Balmain branch at the time of the 'fire-extinguisher incident'. He now finds much in common with Tom Uren's campaign to save Sydney harbour foreshores.

Larry Hand, as Mayor of Leichhardt, became the central character of *Rats in the Ranks*. Since leaving council in 1999 he has worked as a consultant to clients of local government.

Marie Heaney* came from a Labor family and joined the ALP in Ashfield in 1970. A nurse, she moved to Leichhardt in 1972 and has been a member there ever since.

Marie Henderson and **Rodney Henderson** run a small timber business. Rodney joined the ALP originally in Glebe and was active in the Annandale branch from the early 1970's. Marie joined the ALP in 1976 but has since let her membership lapse. Both were supporters of Bill Brady during his time as mayor of Leichhardt and share a similar political perspective to their friends Jeremy Gilling and Michael Thompson.

Michael Hourihan was the editor of the Teachers' Federation journal and active in Balmain branch. He faded from the ALP in the early 80's and went on to join the Australian Democrats.

Bob Howard joined the ALP in Armidale in 1972 and was active in the Annandale branch through the late seventies and early eighties. He was broadly associated with the Baldwin group in the inner city ALP Left, serving as president of Sydney FEC, while Baldwin was

federal member, and also serving, for a time, on the party's national defence and foreign affairs committee. He has retired from Sydney University Government Department and remains a member of Leichhardt branch.

Bill Hume was a primary school principal and later, senior public servant, who remained active in the ALP throughout the 1970's and 1980's. He served two terms on Leichhardt Council from 1971 to 1974 and from 1980 to 1984. He now runs a small business, selling flowers, at the Sydney Fish Markets.

Mary Jerram joined the Balmain branch in the mid 1970's and left around 1987. A former teacher, official with the Independent Teachers Association, and later a public defender, she is now Deputy Chief Magistrate of NSW.

Greg Johnston worked for the City Council and was a long-term resident on the Glebe Estate. A former Leichhardt alderman, he was secretary of the Glebe ALP branch for almost all of the last 50 years, achieving life membership of the Party. Greg passed away in August 2002.

Anna Katzmann was a child of Communist Party parents and she joined the ALP in 1974. She was active in Young Labor and became secretary of the Leichhardt branch when it was taken over by the middle class Left at the beginning of the 1980's. Her brother, Alan, was also active there. Anna Katzmann is now a Senior Counsel and has served as president of the Society of Labor Lawyers.

Gay Kalnins joined the ALP in Glebe around 1987 and left in the early-mid 1980's. A desk top publisher with an office on Glebe Point Road, she possessed through her work, extensive local political connections and was active, after leaving the ALP, in the Community Independents and in The Greens. Kalnins' partner, **Al Westwood** was originally

a member of both the Socialist Workers Party and the ALP and was active with Kalnins and others in the Glebe North branch, around the time of its 1982 abolition.

Tim (Anthony) Kelly was a former national serviceman and artist who joined the Annandale ALP branch in 1974. He was a Left alderman from Annandale in the late 1970's and along with Evan Jones and Charles Rocks, was isolated within the Right-dominated Leichhardt municipal caucus. Defeated in a preselection in Annandale in 1980, he later moved to the country where he edited a newspaper at Millthorpe, near Orange. He left the ALP but continued to organise the local polling booth for the party on polling days.

Tony Larkum joined the ALP in Glebe in 1973 and remains a member of Blackwattle branch. A biologist, he has been active in environmental issues inside the party and has been president of the Glebe Society.

Monika Law is a retired school counsellor. She joined the ALP for a short while in the 1970's but found the male-dominated politics unrewarding, preferring to be active in the student counsellors' group within the Teachers' Federation, and other small group activities.

Alicia Lee remains a member of the Lilyfield branch. Along with Geoff Cooke, she was one of the early activists in Balmain and was expelled from the ALP in 1968 along with Origlass and Wyner.

Jennifer Leigh is a librarian. She joined the Annandale ALP, along with her then partner Tim Kelly, in the mid 1970's. She resigned formally from the party in around 1983/1984 over the federal Labor government's reneging on its uranium mining policy.

Jean Lennane was refused membership of the Balmain ALP branch during the Mort Bay debate in the mid 1980's. A psychiatrist, sacked for criticising health department

management, she has continued her activism in the municipality. She has been able to combine her passions for proper psychiatric services and open space in the recent campaign to stop part privatisation of the Rozelle Hospital site (Callan Park) by the state Labor government.

Marg Lyons was active politically in gay and lesbian rights. She joined the Rozelle East branch at the time of its restructuring, at the beginning of 1980's. She served as an ALP Left alderman on Leichhardt Council between 1984 and 1987. She has since left the party and now works for Leichhardt council as its legal adviser.

Jan Macindoe joined the ALP in Glebe in 1977, along with her partner, **Neil Macindoe**, and both have continued as members of the Blackwattle branch. Both have also been active in the Glebe Society. Neil Macindoe served on council during the 1990's and was one of the principal characters in *Rats in the Ranks*. He lost preselection and stood down from council in 1999.

Rod Madgwick was a lawyer, active in the ALP in Balmain through the 1970's and into the 1980's. He was also the ALP's candidate for the federal seat of Barton in the 1980 federal elections. He left the party in the 1980's when appointed to the bench. He is now a judge of the Federal Court.

Betty Mason joined the ALP around 1980, after the bashing of Peter Baldwin, but drifted out again after 1985. Her main field of activity had been as secretary of the Annandale Association. Her partner, **Hugh Mason**, was an ex-communist who joined the Party in the mid 1970's. He later moved his membership to the Leichhardt branch.

Vince Nash lived on the Glebe Estate and had worked his way up through the public service a senior position. He was a strong supporter of Les McMahon and was active as

secretary of the Glebe Estate Residents Advisory Committee through the late seventies and into the early eighties.

Peter Newton is a freelance writer and editor. He joined the ALP in Balmain in the early 1970's but faded from the party around 1981 to 1982. He was a work and union colleague of Leichhardt alderman Geoff Stevens. They had both worked at the Atomic Energy Commission, Lucas Heights.

Sandra Nori is now a minister in the NSW Labor government of Bob Carr. Originally a popular local member for Port Jackson, she has more recently been off-side with local activists over the privatisation of Rozelle Hospital land and the plans to force a re-amalgamation of Glebe with the City of Sydney.

Annette O'Neill and **Nick O'Neill** have remained members of the Balmain ALP branch. Annette O'Neill is a former Housing Department officer and now, consultant. She was active on the Balmain ALP committee which organised the ALP centenary celebrations in Balmain in 1991. Nick O'Neill is a lawyer who was deputy mayor of Leichhardt from 1980 to 1983 and is now President of the NSW Guardianship Tribunal.

Lesley Osbourne joined the Balmain ALP in 1976. She had been active in WEL and an office-holder in the federal public service union, the ACOA. She was a supporter of Peter Baldwin and was, for a time, secretary of the Rozelle East branch. She is a senior public servant who has remained active in the Balmain branch.

Sharon Page is still active in the Lilyfield branch. She was an alderman on Leichhardt Council from 1984 to 1991 and was closely allied with mayor, Bill Brady. An audiologist, she heads up the indigenous programs for the federal government agency, Australian Hearing.

Les Rodwell was encouraged to join the ALP in the 1950's, by federal ALP member and Lilyfield neighbour Bill O'Connor. This was at a time of the divisions in the party as a result of the 'Split'. Rodwell went on to become a controversial mayor of Leichhardt, along with deputy mayor, Danny Casey. He left the party in the 1980's and has retired. He lives with his wife Eileen in Lilyfield.

Alan Rogers joined the Balmain branch in the mid 1970's and was at the centre of one of the violent incidents there in 1976. He remained active as one of the non-Baldwinite left in the branch but drifted from the party in the 1980's. He still lives in Balmain.

Ann Roxborough and Jock Roxborough now live in Bathurst. Anne is a pathology worker and Jock is principal of a school for intellectually impaired children. Both faded from the ALP in the 1990's though they remain generally politically involved. Both had been active in the Leichhardt branch in the late 1970's and early 1980's and Jock served on Leichhardt council from 1980 to 1983.

Danny Sampson joined the ALP in Kogarah in the 1960's later moving to Glebe and the Annandale. She was one of the early activists in Women's Liberation in Sydney. She was active in the Annandale branch, at times holding executive positions. Danny left the party in the mid 1980's.

Brenda Seymour is an Assistant General Secretary with the NSW Teachers Federation. She joined the party in Annandale in 1980 but left in 1984 around the time of the major defections from the Annandale branch.

Sue Stock is a school librarian who originally joined the ALP in Balmain in the 1980's. She subsequently resigned and joined the Community Independents ticket at the 1987 municipal elections. Finally elected to council at a by-election in 1990, Stock served on council until 1995, and was one of the characters on the edge of the drama of *Rats in the Ranks*.

Sue Templeman joined the ALP in Annandale in 1973. Later in the decade she was drawn to the Socialists Workers Party but also stayed active in the ALP. She withdrew from activity in both parties in the mid 1980's but remained active in the Teachers' Federation and workplace politics.

Susan Tweedy moved into Balmain with her then partner, Peter Crawford, in the mid 1970's. She was active in the party there but faded from membership after moving to the Northern Territory in the 1980's.

Tom Uren was instrumental in the federal government purchase of the Glebe Estate and was later drawn into the debate over housing and open space at Mort Bay. He retired from the federal parliament in 1996 and returned to live in Balmain where he was born. He has remained active in defence of public access to Sydney Harbour foreshores.

Sheree Waks became one of a core of 'branch-stackers' in the early 1980's, working for a time on the staff of federal MP Peter Baldwin. She lived in the Western suburbs and served a term on Fairfield Council. She returned to live in Balmain and remains active in Balmain branch.

Julianna Walton was brought up in Glebe and in a Housing Commission flat in Hunters Hill. A town planning graduate, she returned to live in Glebe and joined the ALP. However she moved to live in the City and became active there in environmental and locality issues. She resigned from the ALP to join the Sartor independents team, serving a term on the city council between 1991 and 1995. She rejoined the ALP a year before the end of her city council term. She is currently a member of Balmain branch.

Issy Wyner saw out his last term on Leichhardt council from 1987 to 1991, and was mayor for the 1989-90 term. He still lives in Balmain. He retired as secretary of the Ships Painters

and Dockers Union in the early 1980's and most recently has been working on a sequel to his earlier history of the foundation of unions and the Labor party in Balmain, *With Banner Unfurled*. In August 2002, Leichhardt Council conferred on him its inaugural Leichhardt Living Legend award.

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