

**People Power in Struggling Cities:
Pressure Groups in Liverpool and Baltimore, 1980 – 1991**

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Liverpool and Baltimore in the 1980s were amongst the poorest cities in the United Kingdom and the United States, respectively. Since the 1960s, the ports on which they had built their economies and their reputations had all but collapsed and thousands of manufacturing jobs had been relocated or slashed. Property-led regeneration did more for the investors behind projects and the tourists who enjoyed them than for the cities' working classes. In such cities, battered by forces largely beyond their control, what could people disadvantaged by race and/or economic status do to compete for the resources necessary to improve their living conditions and wield power on a citywide level?

This thesis explores the capacity of poor and middle-income people's pressure groups to successfully accomplish their goals in Liverpool and Baltimore during the 1980s. To do so, it examines three case study groups in Liverpool, the Merseyside Community Relations Council, the Eldonian Community Association, and the Anti-Cuts Campaign; and one in Baltimore, Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development. It follows their trajectories under unusually authoritarian local political regimes, the Militant Tendency-directed Labour city council in Liverpool and the Schaefer mayoral administration in Baltimore, through local elections in 1987, and finally under the more open local political regimes following those elections. Their success depended on three sets of factors. First, strong leadership and an animating cause were necessary conditions for groups to cohere, but were not sufficient to ensure their success. That further depended on a group's goals and the distribution of resources necessary to accomplish those goals, which in turn shaped the strategies each group chose to pursue its agenda. Third and finally, the effectiveness of those strategies depended on the group's ability to *access and influence* the resource-holders identified and, finally, on the scope for action of those resource-holders themselves.

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List of Abbreviations

ASTMS: Association of Scientific, Technical, and Managerial Staffs
BCPS: Baltimore City Public Schools
BTU: Baltimore Teachers Union
BUILD: Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development
CDBG: Community Development Block Grant
CRC: Community Relations Council
CYWU: Community and Youth Workers Union
DLP: District Labour Party
GBC: Greater Baltimore Committee
GMBATU: General, Municipal, Boilermakers, and Allied Trades Union
HARBEL: Harford Road – Belair Road Community Services
HCD: Department of Housing and Community Development
HUD: Department of Housing and Urban Development
IAF: Industrial Areas Foundation
IMA: Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance
LBO: Liverpool Black Organisation
LCVS: Liverpool Charity and Voluntary Services
MARA: Merseyside Anti-Racist Alliance
MCRC: Merseyside Community Relations Council
MDC: Merseyside Development Corporation
MIH: Merseyside Improved Houses
NAACP: National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
NALGO: National and Local Government Officers Association
NECO: Northeast Community Organization
NRA: National Rifle Association
NUPE: National Union of Public Employees
NUT: National Union of Teachers
OED: Baltimore City Office of Employment Development
PSASA: Public School Administrators and Supervisors Association
SECO: Southeast Community Organization
TGWU: Transport, General and Workers Union
UDAG: Urban Development Action Grant
VNC: Vauxhall Neighbourhood Council

INTRODUCTION

The central question of this dissertation is how low- and middle-income pressure groups seeking not just resources, but also power and influence in publicly significant decisions, could succeed in accomplishing their goals in resource-constrained cities under different political opportunity structures. The cities in question are Liverpool and Baltimore, and the period under investigation begins in 1980 and ends with the local elections in each city in 1991. Through the case studies included here, this work will argue that success for pressure groups involved three steps. First, strong leadership and an animating cause were necessary conditions for groups to cohere and be able to carry out the work involved in advancing an agenda. However, while necessary to a group's formation, leadership and a cause were not sufficient to ensure its success. That further depended on a group's goals and its perception of who held the resources to accomplish those goals—the second set of factors in a group's success—which in turn shaped the strategies each group chose to pursue its agenda. Third and finally, the effectiveness of those strategies depended on the group's ability to access and influence the resource-holders identified and, finally, on the scope for action of those resource-holders themselves.

The case study groups examined here include three groups from Liverpool and one from Baltimore. Exploring this topic from a cross-national perspective allows us to assess the significance of structural variations within democratic governments and of participants' different political experiences in the preceding decades; it highlights key elements of group success that would not be as obvious if the study were confined to one country. Because of the stability and longevity of their democratic political institutions, their status as long industrialised and urbanised nations, and their shared history and culture, the United Kingdom and the United States make a natural choice for such a comparison. Liverpool and Baltimore, because of their

shared history as port cities and the similar economic and social challenges they faced in the second half of the twentieth century, make for an apt comparative choice within the two nations.

Of the Liverpool groups, the Eldonian Community Association stands out in that its goals were more limited than those of the other three groups'. The Eldonians sought only to obtain the resources and authorisations necessary to build a housing cooperative in their neighbourhood; the group did not seek to exercise power beyond its ward and did not seek to influence the city council in an ongoing way. It is included here, however, to illustrate the second aspect of the argument, that different goals allowed the Eldonians to experience success under the same political circumstances when other low-income pressure groups did not. The Eldonians also highlight how much more difficult it is to successfully exercise sustained influence at a citywide level as a pressure group than it is to bend resources—even large quantities of resources—toward a specific project.

For the other two Liverpool groups and the Baltimore group, however, success meant effectively accumulating concrete resources for their constituents *and* exercising power in citywide decision-making processes. In Liverpool, the Merseyside Community Relations Council (MCRC) sought to advance the interests of Liverpool's minority groups, and the Anti-Cuts Campaign sought to protect the voluntary sector from budget cuts and institutionalise a place for neighbourhood and voluntary sector input into city council decisions. In Baltimore, Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development (BUILD) sought to create an interracial broad-based organisation that would fight for the interests of low- and middle-income communities at the city level. What did it mean for community groups such as these to exercise power in cities, though, and did they have any realistic hope of doing so? Such questions were at the centre of the community power debate of the second half of the twentieth century, and answering them will clarify what the 'successful' exercise of power meant for these groups.

Community power: an overview

In cities, conflicts tend to focus on neighbourhood issues, since it is on the neighbourhood level that most people experience the competition for land and where, outside the workplace, they are most likely to be directly confronted by issues ranging from the annoying (e.g., noise from a proposed airport) to the potentially lethal (e.g., crime levels).¹ Thus it is not surprising that organising for political action in cities often happens at the neighbourhood level; issues in one's neighbourhood may be sufficiently immediate and tangible to rouse individuals who would not otherwise be interested in civic action. As Dahl wrote in his 1961 study of decision-making structures in New Haven, 'In liberal societies, politics is a sideshow in the great circus of life.'² That is, most people in liberal democratic societies are more interested in their personal or professional pursuits than they are in sustained participation in public life, such that their potential but typically unused political resources leave a great deal of 'slack' in the political system.³ Each of the groups examined here—the MCRC, the Eldonians, and Anti-Cuts Campaign in Liverpool and BUILD in Baltimore—became vehicles for taking slack out of the local political system by working to advance the interests of their members in public forums. Most of the participants in these organisations had direct experience with the problems they sought to address in their neighbourhoods.

The long tradition of examining, praising, and worrying about the place of groups in Western democracies stretches back at least to James Madison's *Federalist Papers* and Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*, and the community power debate occupied numerous American political scientists in the decades following World War II.⁴ Early commentators

¹ M. Keating, *Comparative Urban Politics: Power and the City in the United States, Canada, Britain and France* (London, 1991), 40.

² R.A. Dahl, *Who Governs?* (London, 1961), 305.

³ Ibid. 305.

⁴ R. Alexander, 'Introduction' in Alexander, R. (ed.), *The Classics of Interest Group Behaviour* (Belmont, California, 2005), 2. After World War II, political scientists in the US sought to understand how a totalitarian state had arisen out of

emphasised the helpful contribution of pressure groups to democratic functioning. Lipset argued in *Political Man* (1963) that democracies thrived on both social cleavages and social consensus, and that the success of a democracy would be determined by how well it dealt with cleavages in light of the prevailing consensus—dealings that would be greatly helped by the presence of politically engaged associations.⁵ Truman’s monumental *The Governmental Process* (1951) developed a theory of interest groups in a competitive political environment that served to distribute political power.⁶ Government decisions resulted from a contest between these groups, and competition kept any one group from possessing too much power. Elitists, however, argued that the contest was as well as decided before it began and that resource-strapped groups would be unable to exercise meaningful public influence. The original elitist school that emerged in the 1950s, led by Floyd Hunter, found that elected institutions and political organs were but the means of execution for policies actually formulated by a business-dominated elite.⁷ As Mills concluded, ‘Families and churches and schools adapt to modern life; governments and armies and corporations shape it.’⁸

In response to this rather dismal view of modern democracies, Dahl and his pluralist cohorts argued that, in societies with regular elections, neither the masses nor their leaders entirely controlled political outcomes ‘but both together’ contributed to the final shape of policy.⁹ Dahl did the community power debate a great service by pointing out that citizens in a democracy had access to resources beyond ‘money and credit’ that might be translated into

the supposedly democratic Weimar Republic and think about what would allow liberal democratic societies to flourish more than communist societies in Russia, China, and Eastern Europe. Allowing different interest groups to develop and thrive, they thought, was part of the answer. See D.A. Schultz, ‘The Phenomenology of Democracy: Putnam, Pluralism, and Voluntary Associations’ in S.L. McLean, D.A. Schultz, & M.B. Steger (eds.), *Social Capital* (New York City, 2002); S.M. Lipset, *Political Man* (London, 1963); W. Kornhauser, *The Politics of a Mass Society* (London, 1960).

⁵ Lipset, *Political Man*, 32.

⁶ Truman, cited in Schultz, ‘The Phenomenology of Democracy’, 88.

⁷ Ibid. 39.

⁸ C.W. Mills, ‘The Higher Circles’ (1953) in R. Alexander (ed.), *The Classics of Interest Group Behaviour* (Belmont, 2005), 73.

⁹ Dahl, *Who Governs?*, 7.

political gains and included control over information, social standing, charisma, legality, the right to vote, intelligence and ‘perhaps even one’s energy level’—though these resources, like money, were not distributed evenly throughout a given community.¹⁰ It was this nagging question of *distribution* that bothered the critics of pluralism and that is particularly relevant for considering the potential success of the case study groups included here. As Schattschneider wryly suggested, ‘The flaw in the pluralist heaven is that the heavenly chorus sings with a strong upper-class accent.’¹¹ As the ‘neo-pluralists’ Bachrach and Baratz pointed out, the very fact that an issue has become the site of public contestation may be related to how it impacts powerful interests; because of the bias inherent in the political system, some vitally important issues are not brought to public attention and so remain ‘non-decisions’.¹² By focusing only on decisions made, pluralists missed the ‘second face of power’, or the ability to shape what did and did not make it onto the public agenda.¹³ And, the neo-pluralists cautioned, it was often the well-heeled and well-connected groups that controlled the agenda.

What elitists, pluralists, and neo-pluralists shared was a conception of power as a question of control: who had enough ‘power over’ other groups such that their agenda would emerge triumphant in a given city? Stone, in *Regime Politics* (1989) offered a paradigm-shifting answer: no one. Following Charles Tilly, Stone argued that ‘society’s institutions do not constitute a smoothly functioning machine’ with ‘a single fulcrum of control’.¹⁴ In such a context, governance becomes less ‘a task of comprehensive control’ and more ‘bringing together essential elements in an otherwise fragmented world’.¹⁵ Power, in this paradigm, is less about

¹⁰ Ibid. 226.

¹¹ E.E. Schattschneider, *The Semisovereign People: a realist’s view of democracy in America*, 2nd ed. (Hinsdale, 1975), 35.

¹² D. Judge, ‘Pluralism,’ in D. Judge, G. Stoker, and H. Wolman (eds.), *Theories of Urban Politics* (London, 1995), 19.

¹³ P. Bachrach and M.S. Baratz, *Power and Poverty* (Oxford, 1970).

¹⁴ C. Stone, *Regime Politics* (Lawrence, 1989), 227.

¹⁵ Ibid. 227.

control than about production: power *to*, rather than power *over*; achieving ‘coordination of effort among a select few who are strategically placed’ rather than domination of the masses.¹⁶

Considering power in this way—as the capacity to effect change, rather than control resources—helps us to conceive of what the successful exercise of power would look like for the MCRC, the Eldonians, the Anti-Cuts Campaign, and BUILD. These groups could achieve their goals even without vast financial resources or decision-making authority if they could build the capacity to enact changes, from low-income housing to school reform to skills training programmes, that would not have come to pass in their absence. While scholars have rightly pointed out that Stone’s emphasis on coordinating the efforts of actors in a diffuse system of authority is more applicable to the American context, accomplishing one’s goals in the Liverpool City Council likewise required coordination amongst at least a few actors—the chair and sub-chair of the relevant committee, the chair of the Finance Committee, and council officers, to start.¹⁷

Ideology and political culture

The case study groups’ conception of how to go about exercising influence would, even prior to the articulation of specific goals, be shaped by how they expected politics to work and by the groups’ own ideologies and experiences. Such expectations would also influence what

¹⁶ Ibid. 230.

¹⁷ With regard to the applicability of Stone’s work on urban regimes in the European context, Mossberger writes that ‘higher levels of fiscal support from central governments, more comprehensive planning controls, more public ownership of municipal land and other factors lessen the need for business involvement as a critical factor for the ‘power to’ achieve development and support local services’ (‘Urban Regime Analysis’ in Davies and Imbroscio (eds.), *Theories of Urban Politics* (London, 2009), 46). Nevertheless, by the early 1990s British scholars likewise recognized that governance in British cities was becoming a more complex matter. Specifically, starting in the late 1970s, local authorities began an ‘opening-out process’ that prompted a shift in both attitudes and actions, through which authorities sought to engage more local interest groups and representatives of the voluntary sector in policy decisions and service delivery. At the same time as local authorities ‘opened-out’, local interest groups from ratepayer’s associations to law centres became more assertive and diverse, a phenomenon some scholars position as part of a larger rise in urban protest that took place throughout Europe and the United States in the post-war era. See G. Stoker, *The Politics of Local Government* (London, 1991), 124-8.

groups would perceive to be fair or unfair action on the part of government—the ‘animating cause’ this work argues was necessary for groups to form in the first place.

Observers since Bagehot have commented on the deference of British political culture. In the 1960s, then-cutting edge survey methods just beginning to be used by political scientists seemed to confirm this acceptance that politicians should ‘run political affairs, with respect for the public will, but with a great latitude for independence, on the assumption that the public will customarily defer to their judgment.’¹⁸ However, by 1980, Kavanaugh was presenting evidence that traditional bonds of social class and party were on the wane in Britain, and with them the deference previously ascribed to the British working-class. Acceptance of political protest, furthermore, was on the rise.¹⁹ Shapely has connected this rise in social protest and citizen action, particularly in the area of housing, to the rise of consumer movements in the 1960s; as local governments became increasingly oriented toward the provision of the services created by the welfare state, they also became sites of protest for members of ‘a public interested in their own particular material necessities’ and willing to point out ‘state failures’.²⁰ Some central government actions encouraged this rise in engaged citizenry. The 1968 Town and Country Planning Act, for example, required local government to consider the wishes of residents affected by proposed plans.²¹ The case study groups presented here exhibited a mixture of deferential and protest-oriented postures. Their willingness to stage loud and public demonstrations was coupled with a desire to work through council procedures and an insistence on greater consultation, but not

¹⁸ W. Rosenbaum, *Political Culture* (New York, 1975), 70. Those political scientists who believed that their survey data confirmed the deference of British political culture included G. Almond and S. Verba, *The Civic Culture* (New York, 1963), E. Nordlinger, *The Working Class Tories* (London, 1967), and R. McKenzie and A. Silver, *Angels in the Marble* (London, 1968). Lipset likewise accepted Bagehot’s deference characterisation when applying Parsonian categories to British culture, concluding that it was ascriptive and elitist—in contrast to the United States, which was achievement-oriented and equalitarian (S.M. Lipset, ‘Value Patterns, Class, and the Democratic Polity’ in R. Bendix and S.M. Lipset (eds.), *Class, Status, and Power* (New York, 1966), pp. 162-3).

¹⁹ D. Kavanaugh, ‘Political Culture in Great Britain’ in G. Almond and S. Verba, *The Civic Culture Revisited* (Newbury Park, 1980), pp. 124–76.

²⁰ P. Shapely, ‘Tenants arise! Consumerism, tenants, and the challenge to council authority in Manchester, 1968 – 1992’, *Social History* 31.1 (Feb. 2006), 64.

²¹ *Ibid.* 64.

necessarily more power. For the MCRC and the Anti-Cuts Campaign, their roots in government bodies and government legislation help to explain this disposition. Both emerged from the burgeoning practice of state-supported community work in Britain that had been funded by Urban Aid grants since the 1968 Local Government Act. While the experience of the Community Development Projects in the 1970s and the emergence of an increasingly centralised government authority under Thatcher in the early 1980s had pushed some community work toward a more critical perspective, much neighbourhood-based community work still had as its goal a more equitable distribution of resources rather than a change in the economic system that produced those resources.²² Community work emerged as a tool of the welfare state, one that would make it more responsive to individuals' and groups' particular circumstances and one that would counter, its proponents argued, a growing sense of individual alienation in the face of the modern bureaucratic state.²³

However, Britain's disparate strands of community work did not base themselves in a shared, clearly articulated set of principles in the early 1980s.²⁴ The Anti-Cuts Campaign was largely a federation of voluntary groups (including the MCRC), most of which relied upon Urban Aid funds and focused on improving service delivery in a specific neighbourhood or for a specific set of people. Before the Anti-Cuts Campaign (and for MCRC members, before a leadership transition in 1980), the goal of collective action for many of the Campaign's member organisations had to do with securing specific resources rather than with anything 'so grand as "partnership in government"'.²⁵ Even after they transitioned to aiming for a more permanent

²² D. Thomas, *The Making of Community Work* (London, 1983), 65-6. For an example of the way in which Community Development Project workers came to critique capitalist structures and the welfare state, see *CDP Final Report: Coventry and Hillfields—Prosperity and the Persistence of Inequality* (Coventry, 1975).

²³ P. Willmott, *Community Initiatives: Patterns and Prospects* (London, 1989), 30.

²⁴ Thomas, *The Making of Community Work*, 45.

²⁵ *Ibid.* 64.

place at Liverpool's decision-making table, Anti-Cuts participants often articulated this goal in terms of their rights to 'consultation' and 'participation', and less frequently in terms of power.

BUILD, by contrast, grew out of the experiences of people who had no expectations of such rights: veterans of the Civil Rights Movement, and older African Americans who had learned that that they would have to struggle for even the most basic democratic rights like voting and sharing public facilities.²⁶ However, the Civil Rights Movement—as the rise of groups like the Black Panthers would evidence—had not solved all the problems of black political incorporation and empowerment; in the 1970s, surveys still revealed that less than half of black Americans expected fair and impartial treatment from police officers and government officials, and twice as many black Americans as white Americans reported feeling 'extreme alienation' from the political system.²⁷ BUILD's founders recognised that 'we could have done much more had we taken the energy of the Civil Rights Movement and organised it.'²⁸ As with Civil Rights Movement actions, the clergy leaders infused the organisation with a prophetic spirit and a moral vision, placing it in the context of the ongoing 'process and struggle...to create and buttress those circumstances which maintain the value of human existence in justice and dignity.'²⁹

The clergy's broad vision and desires were refined by BUILD's membership in the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), the community organising body founded in 1940 by Saul Alinsky that, by the 1980s, also included affiliates in Texas, California, and New York. Alinsky, known as the 'father of community organising' in the United States, was the first 'to attempt to mobilize industrial workers and their families into direct action where they lived, as opposed to

²⁶ In particular, two of BUILD's four founding clergymen, Rev. Marion Bascom and Rev. Vernon Dobson, had worked closely with Martin Luther King, Jr. both in Alabama and in Baltimore; they refer to him in interview transcripts as 'Mike'. They, along with BUILD's other founders, had been at the forefront of desegregation efforts in Baltimore in the 1950s and 1960s. See H. McDougall, *Black Baltimore* (Philadelphia, 1995).

²⁷ Aberbach and Walker (1973) and McConahay (1973) cited in Rosenbaum, *Political Culture*, 79.

²⁸ Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African-American History and Culture, Transcript of interview with Vernon Dobson, 25/10/01.

²⁹ BUILD office, 'Reclaiming the Vision Glorious: A Collective Reflection by the Clergy of BUILD' (1984), 2.

where they worked.’³⁰ After Alinsky’s death in 1972, his successor, Ed Chambers, sought to base the organisations more strongly in Protestant and Catholic congregations, thus giving them a more permanent foundation and infusing them with faith-based principles and commitments. IAF organisations were based on a clear ideology that tied all social deficits in modern cities back to deficits of power. Their antidote, then, was to build ‘citizens power organisations’, rather than issue-based groups, that could hold governments accountable and negotiate for resources and influence alongside other organised groups:

Loose groupings of interested individuals didn’t have a prayer of addressing major crises—housing, crime, schools, jobs, and others. Each crisis was, at bottom, a power crisis. The power of the mob, the power of drug lords, the power of corrupt borough machines, and the inertia of the police bureaucracy could only be challenged by another, deeper institutional power.³¹

Thus, the ultimate goal of any IAF affiliate’s campaign or ‘action’ was the accumulation of ‘relational power’—social capital, in scholarly terms—and the development of leaders able to act upon the collective interests of those in their parish, congregation, or neighbourhood, or leaders who understood ‘power to’.³² Reflecting its American context, IAF ideology stressed the inevitability of conflict in political life and the need to take a pragmatic approach in negotiating around issues. The professional organisers employed by the IAF ideally acted as political tutors and leadership talent scouts, while clergy and laity from member congregations took charge of choosing issues on which to act. Crucially, and in a stark difference from the Liverpool groups, IAF affiliates accepted no public funds, relying instead on membership dues paid by participating congregations, foundation grants, and private donations. Such financial independence guarded

³⁰ M. Warren, *Dry Bones Rattling: Community Building to Revitalize American Democracy* (Princeton, 2001), 42.

³¹ M. Gecan, *Going Public: An Organizer’s Guide to Citizen Action* (New York, 2002), 11. Gecan is describing the founding of East Brooklyn Congregations, another IAF affiliate, but his comments are illustrative of the IAF’s general approach.

³² The IAF borrowed the concepts of unilateral power and relational power from a 1976 article by Bernard Loomer in *Criterion*; unilateral power is characterized as dominating, while relational power is characterized as creative and capacity-building. They closely resemble Stone’s discussion of social control and social production, or ‘power over’ and ‘power to’. The organisation incorporated the Loomer concepts of power into its training and vocabulary, in part in order to convince participants that the pursuit of power did not have to carry negative moral connotations.

IAF affiliates from co-optation and allowed them to maintain a certain critical distance the organisation believed to be necessary for holding government accountable. Financial independence from government allowed IAF affiliates to approach government officials as potential partners, furthermore, rather than as dependents or supplicants.

Overview of this work

This dissertation is divided into three parts. Part One will examine external factors and challenges in Liverpool and Baltimore that created the needs both governments and pressure groups sought to address and set the boundaries for pressure group success. In cities, both the authority and the financial resources that enable governing bodies to bring their plans to fruition will be curbed by a range of external and structural factors, including their economies, residential make-up, and the nature of national-local government relations in a given place. Furthermore, governing bodies have their own goals and agendas that shape where and how they are willing to deploy their resources. Part One will also look at the origins of the case study groups, beginning to introduce the leadership and causes that, this work argues, are the first necessities for pressure group success.

Part Two will look at the case study groups when their ability to access and influence local government, the primary resource-holder in terms of both decision-making authority and public financial investment in Liverpool and Baltimore, was extremely limited by local government leaders' hostility toward the groups and their aims. Under such a political opportunity structure, we begin to see how the nature of a group's goals and the distribution of resources in a city, the second set of factors in a pressure group's success, significantly helped to determine outcomes of a group's efforts. In Liverpool, the group that had the greatest success in obtaining resources for its members, the Eldonian Community Association, was also the group that had the least interest in exercising power on a citywide level; that is, it could be more

successful than the other Liverpool groups because the different nature of its goals opened up strategies that would not have suited the other groups. The greater success of the Baltimore case study group during this period points to the significance of the distribution of resources in a city: because decision-making and financial resources were more diffuse in Baltimore, it was possible for the Baltimore group to produce outcomes for its constituents and gain influence in ways that were not possible for its Liverpool counterparts. Part Two will also examine how different goals and differing levels of success under hostile local governments informed the case study groups' strategies for handling major political transitions—elections—in each city. How would the groups examined here, so recently on the outside of the circles of power in each city, respond to unique opportunities to move closer to the decision-making centres of Liverpool and Baltimore in their quests to accumulate the power to implement their own agendas?

Finally, Part Three will look at the success of the case study groups under local political leaders who were much more receptive to their participation in policy-making decisions. Ironically, under such conditions, the case study group that had most explicitly sought to augment the influence of low-income associations and neighbourhood groups in Liverpool completely collapsed, underscoring the extent to which strong leadership and an animating cause were, indeed, necessary factors to a pressure group's success as an independent group. BUILD, by contrast, translated its newfound access and influence into more ambitious campaigns to obtain resources for its constituents. Nevertheless, even its success was limited by external economic shocks, the shifting goals of its governance partners, and the finite scope of those partners' authority. Furthermore, Part Three's consideration of the Anti-Cuts Campaign will not end with their collapse as a pressure group, but will consider its legacy via the accomplishments of its members who themselves became city councillors. While their position within a formal elected body allowed them to act more swiftly and decisively than BUILD, which still employed many of the same strategies and processes that it had used under a more hostile local

government regime, the campaigners-turned-councillors found themselves likewise hemmed in by the limitations of local government authority in Britain. Thus Part Three speaks to both the first step in the argument concerning pressure group success—that it will depend on the presence of strong leadership and an animating cause—and the last step: that even with all the other conditions in place, success in both cities would finally be limited by the capacity of local government and the other resource-holders with whom the case study groups.

Historiography

The most ambitious investigation of Liverpool's local politics in any period remains P.J. Waller's *Democracy and Sectarianism* (1981), which investigated the dynamics of general elections in Liverpool between 1868 and 1939 against a backdrop of social history. Waller's account, as the title suggests, focused on the extent to which religious loyalties (Protestant, Catholic, and, to a lesser extent, Anglican) created unusual political alliances in Liverpool—most notably, the extent to which loud proclamations of Protestant loyalty created the foundation for a 'Conservative working man' party. While the often violent sectarianism of the nineteenth century had disappeared by the 1980s, its lingering presence to the middle of the twentieth century (the Catholic Archbishop had been stoned as recently as 1958) was one of the driving motivations for Anglican Bishop David Sheppard and Catholic Archbishop Derek Worlock's close, visible working partnership in political and community matters during the period concerned. Tony Lane's *City of the Sea* (1997) similarly, though in much shorter form, blended social and political history, though with a focus on how Liverpool's port economy with its ship owners, merchants, seafarers, and dockers shaped the city's political temperament and workplace behaviour even as the docks themselves faded in importance. The documentation of Liverpool's workplaces in the second half of the twentieth century has largely focused on their decline and the extent to which they hosted union militancy and strikes. Hyde (1971) and Milne (2006) have both documented

the port's decline, while Bean and Stoney (1986) and Davies (1998) have joined Lane in seeking both to put Liverpool's reputation for union militancy in perspective and to explain it via discussions of the workforce's roots in casual dock labour.

There have been no book-length treatments of Liverpool's post World War II history, and the work speaking to Liverpool in this period has tended to focus on Liverpool's cultural dominance in the 1960s and the dramatic nature of its decline thereafter (e.g. Aughton (1990) and Murden (2006)). Scholarship on Liverpool in the 1980s specifically has focused on the failure of cultural regeneration policies that, at the time, seemed cutting edge to deliver on their promises of a revived economy and renewed private investment. Investigations like Couch (2003) and Meegan (1990, 2003) have tended to conclude with Meller (1997) that 'the benefits accrued to the rich investors and the new wealthy inhabitants who went to live in these developments. The place was being saved but not the people.'³³

Not surprisingly, the rise of the Militant Tendency in Liverpool and its conflicts with both the Labour party nationally and the Thatcher government have, along with the failure of cultural regeneration policies, been the most revisited topic of Liverpool's 1980s history. Several of these accounts have been written by participants themselves attempting to justify their actions or declare some kind of victory in the Militant-instigated back and forth; Taaffe and Mulhearn (1988), Hatton (1988), and Kilfoyle (2000) all fit this description. Crick's *The March of Militant* (1986) is an outsider's thoroughly reported, if somewhat alarmist, contemporary account of the growth of the entire Militant Tendency organisation. With respect to Militant's operation in Liverpool, the coolest academic accounts have come from Parkinson (1985), Meegan (1990), and Davies (1998), which have addressed Liverpool's profound economic distress and disgust with the Thatcher government as providing the foundation for broad popular support for Militant's tactics early on in its conflict with the government.

³³ H. Meller, *Towns, Plans, and Society in Modern Britain* (Cambridge, 1997), 93.

There is also a small body of literature, coming largely from Liverpool residents or Liverpool-based academics, documenting specific marginalised groups' struggles with the city council both before and during Militant's dominance. Most of this comes from participants in those groups themselves, such as McDonald's (1986) account of the Weller Street housing cooperative and McBane's (2008) account of the Eldonian Village, as well as Carspecken's (1991) account of the conflict over Croxteth Comprehensive School. Bishop Sheppard's own memoir (2002) and the 1988 account of Liverpool's political and economic struggles he coauthored with Archbishop Worlock shed light on the role of Liverpool's Anglican and Catholic establishment in supporting community-based efforts and opening up space for political dissent from the Militant-directed council. Finally, a spate of scholarly works addressing the Liverpool minority community's struggle for recognition throughout the late 1970s and 1980s has documented the particular biases these groups sought to overcome, the pervasiveness of structural racism in Liverpool during this period, and the difficulty minorities had establishing a political foothold when their numbers were relatively small. Ben-Tovim (1986), Nelson (1997), and Frost (2011) all fall into this category. Nelson's work, also structured as a comparison to an American city (Boston), has particular relevance to my own; his work also speaks to the different challenges that minority groups in Liverpool faced because of Britain's unitary government.

Indeed, the constraints placed upon Liverpool and other local authorities under the Thatcher government have dominated the historiography of the Thatcher's government approach to local government and urban policy. Stoker (1988), Meller (1997), Temple (2000), and Tallon (2010) all describe the Thatcher government's attempts to rein in what it perceived to be excessive spending on the part of local authorities and centralise policy control through such tools as quangos, development corporations, rate-capping, the abolition of metropolitan authorities, and ultimately the community charge. Michael Heseltine's own memoir (2000) has further underlined the extent to which the Thatcher government pinned its hopes on public-

private partnerships and national government-controlled initiatives to both rein in and regenerate Liverpool.

In contrast to the historiography of Liverpool, there have been several historical studies of Baltimore that have focused on the shifting political engagement and capacity of marginalised communities over the second half of the twentieth century, most notably Durr (2003) and McDougall (1993). Durr's work examines white working-class politics in Baltimore between 1940 and 1980, focusing on the deterioration of neighbourhood political clubs, the growth of umbrella organisations to push back against highway expansion and school integration, and the development of a reactionary conservatism that found its full flowering in the 'Reagan Democrat' of 1980. McDougall chronicles the rise and fall of 'black Baltimore', the waxing and waning of African-Americans' social institutions and political strength in the city from the early 1800s to the 1990s, with a focus on the second half of the twentieth century. Both Durr and McDougall grapple with the ways in which the attempts to physically reshape Baltimore into a 'modern city', as well as the court rulings and legislative shifts that followed from the Civil Rights Movement, often had unintended political consequences that weakened white and black neighbourhoods and prompted new forms of grassroots organising in response to ongoing decline. With further respect to neighbourhoods, the dramatic nature of housing turnover between racial groups in Baltimore has also attracted the attention of scholars. Orser's study of blockbusting in Edmondson Village (1997), Baum's study of school desegregation and rapid resegregation (2010), and Pietila's meticulous journalistic account of neighbourhood development from 1910 to 2000 (2010) all draw attention to the ways in which government policies contributed to this process, as well as failure of policymakers to recognise and cope with the predatory aspects of racial turnover and the serious long-term consequences it would have for the health of neighbourhoods where it took place.

Baltimore's local political scene in the 1980s has not prompted the sort of self-justification and proclamations of 'victory' that Liverpool's did, in part because it was so thoroughly dominated by the figure of William Donald Schaefer. Baltimore political journalist C. Fraser Smith has written the most definitive account of Schaefer's political career to date, and argues that he was the consummate 'Messiah mayor', a sort of super development chief trying desperately to resist forces of decline that were largely beyond his or any other local government actor's control; doomed from the start, but a genius leader who knew how to get the most out of the people and institutions around him. There has also been no corresponding attempt to look at Baltimore's relationship to the Reagan administration as there has been some attempt to examine the Liverpool City Council's relationship to the Thatcher government. This makes sense given the very different nature of national – local government relations in the United States as opposed to Britain, where local governments relate much more directly to Whitehall and Westminster. However, there has been some treatment of Baltimore's relationship to the Maryland statehouse in the 1980s, primarily through the work of Callcott (1990) and Rusk (1996). Both document a city that slipped from its place as the state's political powerhouse, became increasingly financially dependent on the state's largesse, and in some ways became a victim of its own success in securing state funds as suburban state legislators began to resent its ongoing lobbying efforts. As with Liverpool, the extent of the Baltimore renaissance's success has been questioned by subsequent scholarship. Levine (1987) provided the first scholarly (and most searing) indictment of the strategy to focus on downtown economic development to the neglect of social services and infrastructure, while Harvey (1991) followed suit in his study of gentrification in Baltimore's Federal Hill neighbourhood.

The present work will not be the first scholarly treatment of either BUILD or the IAF. In addition to two chapters in McDougall, BUILD received extensive attention in Orr's work on black social capital and school reform in Baltimore (1999) and in Boyte's work on grassroots

politics (1988). Orr and Boyte focused on BUILD's education work and the Baltimore Commonwealth project, while McDougall focused more on the African-American ministers who founded BUILD, the legacy of black church social and political leadership in Baltimore of which BUILD was a part, and the Nehemiah housing campaign. Boyte is the most optimistic about BUILD's potential to represent a turning point for low and middle-income people's engagement in politics, while Orr (perhaps because he is writing at a later date) grapples more with the limitations of BUILD's organising model for accomplishing a task as complex and difficult as school reform. McDougall sees BUILD's ascendance as the most important vehicle for African-American grassroots political participation in Baltimore as evidence that the black church is the last remaining institution of the African-American 'vernacular community' with any strength to influence citywide decisions. The IAF in its present form, meanwhile, has been explored from a political science perspective; both Skerry (1993) and Warren (2001) have looked at the organisation's work with Mexican-Americans in Los Angeles and Texas, respectively, in order to understand its internal authority structures and its potential contribution to democratic politics by nurturing bridging social capital and teaching low- and middle-income people the skills necessary to participate in civic life.

Historical scholarship on Liverpool and Baltimore in the 1980s, then, has been fairly limited. This work addresses several inadequacies in the existing literature. First, in Liverpool, while the national government was rebuilding the Albert Dock and the Militant Tendency was trying to recruit members by bankrupting the city, local residents—including those at the low end of the socioeconomic spectrum—were working to address their own more immediate problems as well as build up their own political strength and influence. This thesis will be the first attempt to treat several of these efforts comparatively and to focus on a unique moment when groups typically separated by geography and race coalesced into a single organisation that, though it did not last long as an organisation, had a political impact that outlasted its own

existence. In Baltimore, while other scholars have looked at particular BUILD campaigns in this period, my work will pay greater attention to how one campaign followed on from another, how they fit into a longer-term strategy of building power, and how BUILD's strategies changed over time and in response to shifting economic and political conditions. Finally, in both Liverpool and Baltimore, this work sheds light on what happened after some of the cities' most colourful and conflict-oriented political characters had left the scene; it attempts to understand how the case study groups navigated not only hostility, but also a more conciliatory environment. Extending an historical investigation into the period after the 'dust has settled' is a bit like extending a romance novel past the wedding day; it makes the narrative less triumphant and potentially more dull as it grapples less with the fireworks of political conflict and transition and more with the challenges and frustrations of governing. However, it is also necessary for understanding the conditions that allow pressure groups with limited means to do more than dig foxholes, and how cities and neighbourhoods are shaped and governed even in undramatic times.

Methodology

The research for this dissertation was conducted over a three-year period and involved months of archival work in Liverpool, London, and Baltimore, as well as interviews with the 42 individuals listed in Appendix A. This work grew out of my MPhil thesis, which focused on the role of churches and clergy, particularly within the Church of England, in helping community-level interest groups to access public resources in Liverpool in the 1980s. For my MPhil, I spent significant time working in the late Bishop David Sheppard's archives at the Liverpool Public Record Office. The Sheppard archive is a treasure trove of insight into Liverpool politics from the mid-1970s to the late 1990s; because Sheppard was a prominent public leader during that period, the fifty-four boxes of correspondence, lectures, notes, press releases, meeting minutes, newspaper clippings, and other materials provide a rich perspective on the city and the Church

of England during his time as Bishop of Liverpool. It was in this archive that I discovered the causes and interest groups that would eventually lead me to the case study groups examined here.

Establishing the historical narrative of a grassroots pressure group can be particularly challenging because such groups do not necessarily keep formal written records (or discard their records upon being shut down or finishing their work), and because much of their work flies ‘underneath the radar’ of newspapers of record. With the Liverpool groups presented here, for example, the MCRC’s records were long lost, and the Eldonian Community Association had not kept its written records from the 1980s. Furthermore, though these groups were registered with the Charity Commission, the Commission does not keep records dating back more than ten years, making items like budgets and annual reports impossible to locate.

Because a good portion of the MCRC’s conflict with the council took place in the Race Relations Liaison Committee of the city council, I was able to refer to the city council archives in the Liverpool Public Record Office to document its progression. The MCRC’s ongoing boycott of the Race Relations Liaison Committee and the subsequent Race Relations Unit was also documented in the *Liverpool Echo*, and the MCRC published its own detailed account of its conflict with the city council, *The Racial Politics of Militant*, in 1986. A former secretary of the MCRC, Ray Quarless, provided me a copy of this report. To establish the narrative of the Eldonian Community Association, I relied on the account of the group’s struggle published by the secondary cooperative worker that helped them to get off the ground, as well as newspaper articles from the *Liverpool Echo* and meeting records from the Sheppard archive.

The narrative of the Anti-Cuts Campaign was the most difficult to establish, because none of its participants had attempted to document it in a systematic form and many of its actions were not the sort to attract the attention of local papers like the *Echo*. I first learned about the Anti-Cuts Campaign through a group interview conducted with two members of the city’s own Community Liaison Unit and a former Liverpool Charity and Voluntary Services (LCVS)

staff member, all of whom had been involved in the effort. My best source of ‘archival’ material for the Anti-Cuts Campaign came not from an archive at all, but rather consisted of two boxes of agendas, meeting minutes, flyers, speeches, and newspaper clippings kept by a leading participant in the Anti-Cuts Campaign—the ‘O’Gorman Collection’—who generously shared these materials with me. Community newspapers and organisational newsletters also provided another important source of written material. The *Scottie Press* collection held at the Vauxhall Neighbourhood Council offices and the *Everton Telegraph* copies retained by Rev. Henry Corbett at St. Peter’s Church in West Everton were both invaluable in establishing the sequence of events. The *Liverpool Link* newsletter published by LCVS, old copies of which I accessed at the LCVS office, was also extremely helpful, both for the Anti-Cuts Campaign and for the MCRC.

For the period after the 1987 local elections in Liverpool, when a number of the Anti-Cuts Campaign participants went on to the council, the records of the Liverpool City Council held at the Liverpool Public Record Office became my most significant written source, because most of the work being done to accomplish the former campaigners’ agendas was then being done by them through their committee positions on the council. What very little written material I could find on Community Rights, the organisational successor to the Anti-Cuts Campaign, in this period came from the O’Gorman collection and brief mentions in the *Scottie Press* and *Liverpool Link*.

The *Liverpool Echo* microfilm collection at the Liverpool Public Library was extremely helpful for documenting the Militant Tendency-directed council’s conflict with the national government and local white-collar public sector unions, and the eventual conflict within the council itself. It also provided important documentation for the broader context and unfolding of the annual city council elections. My interviews for Liverpool included participants in each of the case study groups, local and national government figures they interacted with, and various clergy who had worked alongside Bishop Sheppard in his advocacy and political efforts. The

interviewees provided an invaluable insiders' perspective to the thought processes, values, and calculations that motivated the groups and shaped their decisions. However, because people's memories are understandably hazy on details of events that happened almost thirty years ago (or, in some cases, more), I relied on interviews more for perspective and insight rather than for historical sequencing and exact details.

In Baltimore, BUILD's conscientious efforts to engage and cultivate relationships with the local press, as well as the multiplicity of newspapers still supported in the city in the 1980s, made newspaper collections a significant source for documenting the unfolding of BUILD's campaigns. The *Baltimore Sun*, *Baltimore Evening Sun*, *News American*, and *Afro American* microfilm collections at the Enoch Pratt Free Library were all helpful in this regard. Though the BUILD organisation itself allowed me to dig through its office for whatever written information I could find, because the IAF is (by its own admission) a heavily oral culture that intentionally eschews written records, my findings in this effort were limited to some newspaper clippings and internal organisational historical overviews. Fortunately, some of the actors that BUILD engaged kept more thorough records. The mayoral papers of William Donald Schaefer, held at the Baltimore City Archives, are a fascinating insight into a mayor who liked to hold all the levers of control in his city. With reference to BUILD, the papers include not just copies of meeting minutes with BUILD representatives, but three different copies of minutes taken by three different staffers; even when the mayor was no longer speaking to BUILD, he kept a file of newspaper clippings on the organisation and memos from a staffer on its activities. The archives of the Greater Baltimore Committee likewise proved helpful, in particular the minutes from its Board of Directors meetings, where regular updates were given on joint efforts with BUILD from the time those efforts began in 1985 through the end of the period investigated here, in 1991. Those meeting minutes also shed light on how the business community regarded both Mayor Schaefer and Mayor Schmoke.

Unfortunately, the mayoral papers of Kurt Schmoke have been lost; my efforts to track them down ended with the Baltimore City Archives and the Howard University Library pointing fingers at one another. The best source I found in terms of official records of BUILD's relationship with City Hall during the first term of Schmoke's administration came, interestingly, from the records of the Baltimore Board of Estimates, held in the Maryland Room at the Enoch Pratt Free Library—a body that would have had no information on BUILD during the Schaefer administration, because a Schaefer-controlled Board of Estimates would not have spent money on BUILD-supported efforts. However, I was able to interview Schmoke himself, some compensation for the fact that his mayoral papers have been lost.

My interviewing in Baltimore had less breadth, but more depth—a reflection largely of the structure of the dissertation, which looks at three case study groups in Liverpool but only one in Baltimore. BUILD had more consistent, long-term leadership from both organisers and senior clergy than did any of the Liverpool groups; it also had some long-term partners, like the policy liaison at the Greater Baltimore Committee. I conducted multiple interviews with all of these figures, who were able to give in-depth narrations of the campaigns recorded here. Interview transcripts with two of BUILD's four founding clergymen found at the Reginald F. Lewis Museum for Maryland African-American History and Culture provided additional insight into the events and motivations that led to BUILD's founding. Still, as in Liverpool, because they were often recalling events that happened several decades ago, I corroborated the details of their narration with written accounts whenever possible. These interviews were invaluable, though, for understanding the thought process behind BUILD's campaigns and the ways in which IAF teachings informed their strategy. Interviews with their partners and adversaries likewise helped me to understand the way in which other actors in Baltimore perceived the group.

In the course of my research on BUILD's historical work, I began to shadow current BUILD organisers and attend BUILD events in the hopes of better understanding how the IAF

operationalizes its teachings, chooses campaigns, and forms strategies—though its leadership has shifted in the last decades, its methods have been remarkably stable since the 1980s. In the course of these observations, I became sufficiently intrigued that I decided to apply for a job with the IAF myself, and I will begin to work for BUILD at the end of October 2014. I include this information here for the sake of full disclosure, though I do not believe that this decision inhibited my ability to objectively evaluate BUILD's strengths and limitations in the 1980s. The organisation's portfolio, leaders, and organisers have all turned over in the intervening period. I suspect that the greatest scholarly risk I would run would be allowing the things that drew me to the present organisation to lead me to romanticize its past. In fact, I have found the combination of learning about BUILD's history and preparing to work on its present to be sobering, both with respect to how I view the group as a scholar and anticipate my work as an organiser. Sobering, because many of the issues that BUILD worked on in the 1980s are still the issues that preoccupy it today, and because the scale of deprivation and violence in Baltimore continues to be almost overwhelming. It leaves little room for boasting, and tempers one's expectations of what this particular model of broad-based organising might accomplish.

The most notable methodological feature of my inquiry is its comparative structure. Comparative history raises questions that might not otherwise be asked, clarifies the profile of selected cases, is of great help in answering causal questions, and serves to remind historians that developments in their particular country or region were not givens, and might have turned out otherwise given different conditions.³⁴ The comparison here between Liverpool and Baltimore indeed raises questions that might not otherwise have been asked, namely, why—despite so many similarities between the two cities' macroeconomic and social plights—was a poor people's association in Baltimore able to accumulate so much more 'power to' in the period concerned than were marginalised groups' associations in Liverpool? The comparative structure illuminates

³⁴ J. Kocka, 'Comparison and Beyond', *History and Theory* 42.1 (Feb. 2003), 40.

the range of factors at play and acknowledges the importance of both structural aspects of local government in the United Kingdom and the United States as well as the agency, values, and expectations of the actors involved. Neither entirely structural nor entirely personality-based, the answer highlights the surprising ways in which forms of government intended to empower might suppress, and resources in the hands of elites might yet become tools in the hands of the downtrodden.

PART ONE

External and structural factors helped to determine both how the pressure groups examined here would attempt to act and the extent to which they would be successful in doing so. Challenges arising from deteriorating economies and increasingly concentrated geographies of need provided the thrust not only for the pressure group action, but also for government agendas. While helping create the impetus for the groups' formation, these challenges and the structure of national-local government relations also limited the scope of action for any possible policy actors in the two cities.

Chapter 1, External Factors and Government Structure

This chapter will lay out the similar economic, social, and, to a lesser extent, political trajectories of Liverpool and Baltimore after World War II and leading up to the 1980s, the period of focus in this work. Despite significant differences—namely the presence of a much larger black population in Baltimore—the differences that arise between primarily public and primarily private housing markets; and Liverpool's council-dominated unilateral government versus Baltimore's mayor-dominated federal government—the basic similarities between the two cities' struggles to cope with global economic shifts and technological advances make them both reasonable and insightful sites of comparison. This chapter will look at the two cities' economies, geographies, and political structures as well as their respective responses to the problems of decline. This thesis argues that the success of the case study groups depended on their having strong leadership and an animating cause; the nature of their goals and the distribution of resources that could address those goals; and their ability to influence decision makers along with the scope of those decision makers' authority. The economic, geographic, and political contexts in which the pressure groups acted address all of these factors. These contexts contributed to the

causes animating these groups and partially dictated the nature of their goals. Understanding context is crucial for understanding where the financial and decision-making resources the groups would have to identify could be found. Finally, it reveals factors that hemmed in all local actors' scope for taking steps to accomplish their respective agendas.

ECONOMY

In the postwar period through the 1980s, the broad economic patterns of Liverpool and Baltimore—and the way in which they affected blue-collarites and low-income workers—were largely similar. Workers in both cities enjoyed unprecedented levels of economic resources, which they translated into creature comforts and lifestyle improvement, as wages outpaced inflation and jobs were sufficiently plentiful to prevent serious levels of want. The ports in both cities remained active and optimistic about their performance throughout the 1950s and into the 1960s. In Liverpool, the arrival of the car industry seemed for a brief moment to permanently solve all the city's employment woes; in Baltimore, the growth of government defence industries during and after the Korean War similarly seemed to point toward permanent prosperity.

However, the tune changed dramatically for both cities around and shortly after 1967. Part of the change came from the container revolution in shipping that rocked both ports. Even though Baltimore was slightly more nimble in adapting to the new techniques, its port workforce, like Liverpool's, was decimated. Both cities also found that their physical location, which had once been to their advantage, had become a drawback in a changing world: Liverpool was poorly placed to deal with increased trade with Europe once Britain joined the European Economic Community in 1973, and Baltimore's location at the top of the Chesapeake put it at a serious disadvantage to those ports more immediately accessible from the Atlantic. Furthermore, both cities saw their manufacturing sectors ravaged as global capital and production shifted

toward developing countries, and Liverpool and Baltimore's out-dated branch factories were amongst the first to be closed by the multinationals operating them. Baltimore also found itself losing out to its rapidly growing suburbs, which sucked in many of the city's departing factories and retailers. In the face of such forces, which accelerated over the course of the 1970s, industrial action proved helpless.

Both cities also experimented with property-led regeneration as their manufacturing sectors declined, but new office buildings and waterfront shopping centres were of little help to the port and manufacturing workers who lost their jobs: office buildings catered to an increasingly suburban, professional population, while the jobs that shopping centres, restaurants, and other tourist and convention venues did create came with paltry wages and benefits compared to the lost manufacturing jobs. By the 1980s then, tens of thousands of workers in the two cities faced the economically fragile situation of unemployment, and thousands more found themselves severely strained by contracted wages. While their union experience might prove valuable in other contexts, many workers' lives were all but defined by the lack of economic, social, and psychological resources they faced in a state of unemployment or diminished employment.

For two of the case study groups examined here, the MCRC in Liverpool and BUILD in Baltimore, employment issues, which were particularly acute in the black communities in both cities, were a driver into action, but the scarce resources left by economic difficulties lay behind nearly all the problems each of the case study groups worked to address. Weak economies also put both Liverpool and Baltimore in dire fiscal situations as cities, creating challenges that would direct much of local and national government policy-making in the cities in the 1980s and limit the potential scope of local government action. The collapse of Liverpool's port and the industries that fed off of it, as well as its manufacturing sector, also meant that Liverpool had very few financial resource holders outside of government for pressure groups to draw upon.

Though Baltimore suffered a similarly drastic reduction in its port and manufacturing workforce, the relative success of Baltimore's downtown service sector compared to Liverpool's kept a group of easily identifiable CEOs in the city, a group that would prove to be crucial to BUILD's successes. As will also become clear though, the weaknesses in each city's economy were apparent to observers (if not the average resident) even before the ports went into steep decline and the factories started leaving in droves. The on-going failure to adequately address those weaknesses contributed to the severity of the economic situation in the 1980s.

Liverpool

Liverpool's economy had long been defined by its large port, which, with its extensive trade throughout the colonies at the height of the British Empire, had made Liverpool the empire's 'second city.' Like London, Liverpool was a general cargo port throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, enjoying much greater influence than specialty ports like Hull or Dover.³⁵ Fortune and acumen belonged to the Liverpool merchants and ship owners of the latter nineteenth century, and Liverpool became the world's premier liner port as steamships came to dominate sea trade from the 1860s forward. Not until the early 1900s, when several transatlantic steam lines relocated to Southampton, did any cracks in the Liverpool port's invincibility appear.³⁶

Though the port's activity had dropped off considerably during the global drop in trade that accompanied the Great Depression, and the air raids of 1940/41 had put almost one-third of the dock's berths out of commission, by the mid-1950s the port had recovered much of the trade it lost during the interwar years and remained the city's largest employer throughout the

³⁵ G. Milne, 'Maritime Liverpool' in Belchem (ed.), *Liverpool 800* (Liverpool, 2006), p. 258.

³⁶ Ibid. 262.

1950s and 1960s.³⁷ ‘Despite increasing competition from foreign companies in nearly all the major trades, despite strikes and despite rising costs,’ the 1950s were, on the whole prosperous years for the port.³⁸ The Korean War increased shipping demands, and large shipping companies enlarged their markets, enabling them to maintain earnings at remunerative levels until the mid-1960s.³⁹ As the long-standing vehicle of Liverpool’s growth and prominence, and as the feature that gave the city its outward-looking, worldly character, the port’s importance went beyond pure economics: it was a symbol of the city’s relevance and success. Tonnage passing through the port continued to increase well into the 1960s even though technological advancement and attempts by the National Dock Labour Board to restrict the number of dockworkers meant a steady shedding of port jobs. In July 1965, the Merseyside Dock and Harbour Board announced that 28.25 million tonnes had passed through the port in the previous year—an all time high. Such figures inspired confidence in the port’s continued health, and in the same month the Board revealed plans for an expensive modernization of the Toxteth, Harrington, and King’s docks.⁴⁰

As it turned out, 1965 would be a high point for Liverpool’s docks, and the port would not recover from the descent it began in 1966 until the early 1990s. However, the city’s leaders had long understood the vulnerability over-reliance on the port created for the city’s employment structure, and they moved aggressively to correct this imbalance at the end of World War II. In 1945 only 32% of Merseyside’s employment was in manufacturing (compared to 52% nationally), while 44% of employment was related to transportation and distribution (compared to 23% nationally).⁴¹ Meanwhile, the national government had built a disproportionate number of

³⁷ J. Murden, ‘City of Change and Challenge: Liverpool since 1945’ in Belchem (ed.), *Liverpool 800* (Liverpool, 2006), p. 402; A. Lynch, *Weathering the Storm* (Liverpool, 1996), p. 8.

³⁸ F.E. Hyde, *Liverpool and the Mersey* (Newton Abbot, 1971), 192.

³⁹ Hyde, *Liverpool and the Mersey*, 197.

⁴⁰ Murden, ‘City of Change...’, 403.

⁴¹ Murden, ‘City of Change...’, 404.

factories in Liverpool and its surrounding areas before and during the war, and it abandoned them soon after the conflict ended.⁴² The city council acted quickly to attract industry to the now abandoned sites. Helped by the Distribution of Industry Act that attempted to direct manufacturing to the North with generous subsidies, by 1952 the city leased 46 sites in Speke, creating 12,500 jobs; 24 factories had been leased in Aintree, creating 12,800 jobs; and the massive ROF site in Fazakerley had been leased to Joseph Lucas for the manufacture of electrical goods.⁴³ This expansion of manufacturing reinforced some aspects of the local employment structure, most notably its largely semi-skilled nature, while changing others. For example, manufacturing opened up large numbers of work opportunities for women, who thus found themselves increasingly able to take part in the consumer boom of the 1950s. In total, 40,000 jobs were created on Merseyside over the course of the decade, and between 1949 and 1959 over 20 major firms, including Birds Eye, AC Spark Plug, Fisher-Bendix, Kraft Foods, Otis Elevator and Yorkshire Imperial Metals, were persuaded to relocate to the region.⁴⁴

Despite these successes, the manufacturing jobs attracted to the city during the 1950s were not sufficient to offset the loss of employment caused by workforce contraction at the port, and by advancing technologies that made some of the industries and ship repair services surrounding the port obsolete. As early as 1959, John Rodgers, MP, Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade, said of Merseyside that ‘no area of similar size anywhere in the UK had employment problems remotely comparable’; in 1964, the North West Regional Board for Trade would make comments to the same effect.⁴⁵

The city’s leaders, including local Labour boss Jack Braddock, believed they might have found a final solution to their employment woes, however, in the shape of the car industry.

⁴² Hyde, *Liverpool and the Mersey*, 184.

⁴³ Murden, ‘City of Change...’, 405. Significant as these numbers are, they must be kept in perspective—during the war, the ROF had employed over 20,000 people in Kirkby alone, for example.

⁴⁴ Ibid. 408.

⁴⁵ T. Lane, *Liverpool: City of the Sea* (Liverpool, 1997), 22.

Standard Triumph had just been lured to Speke in 1959 through the promise of government subsidies, and the 1960 Local Employment Act continued to encourage the expansion of the automobile industry in Liverpool. Not only did British Motor Corporation embark upon an expansion of its Kirkby factory in 1961, but Ford also began the construction of a major plant at Halewood; there was talk of Liverpool becoming the 'British Detroit.'⁴⁶ Unemployment dipped below 5%, and Labour leader Jack Braddock suggested that, thanks to the auto industry, Liverpool's long struggles with terminally high unemployment were coming to an end.⁴⁷

In addition to the new manufacturing jobs and the car industry, the early 1960s also saw the arrival of the 'Merseybeat' sound on the national and international pop music scene. By the time the Beatles released 'Love Me Do' in 1962, they had already been playing the Liverpool circuit for two years; because Liverpool's port had long been an entry point for varieties of music not available in other parts of Britain (e.g., soul, jazz, Motown, country), the city had long been an incubator for artists with an unusual sound.⁴⁸ Liverpool's musical dominance was epitomised by the period from May 1963 to April 1964 when a Liverpool artist was number one on the pop charts for fifty-one weeks straight, but its self-confidence had other sources, too: the Royal Philharmonic was flourishing; the Everton and Liverpool football clubs were winning; Allen Ginsburg had called it 'the centre of consciousness of the human universe'; even the architecture of the new Metropolitan Cathedral, though not to everyone's taste, was daring and bold.⁴⁹ Liverpudlians could hardly be faulted for agreeing when, in his 1964 documentary, Daniel Farston called their city 'the apple of England's eye.'⁵⁰

Such sentiments and impressions meant Liverpool's subsequent spiral downwards left its residents with a greater sense of whiplash. The whole of Britain battled economic recession in

⁴⁶ Murden, 'City of Change...', 409.

⁴⁷ Ibid. 409.

⁴⁸ P. Aughton, *Liverpool: A People's History* (Lancaster, 1990), p. 275.

⁴⁹ Murden, 'City of Change...', 417 - 421; Aughton, *Liverpool*, 269.

⁵⁰ Murden, 'City of Change...', 420.

the 1970s, and pain felt on the national scale was even more acute in Merseyside. The country's entrance into the European Economic Community in 1973 continued to pull trade toward Europe and away from Liverpool.⁵¹ The fact that it was the manufacturing sector that took the hardest hits in the 1970s recessions posed particular challenges for Liverpool, where manufacturing had overtaken transport as the largest sector following the combination of the Wilson government's regional policy and the port workforce's decline, and the office boom enjoyed by Manchester, Birmingham, and other cities had never taken off. Combined with the winding down of the national government's regional policy and the subsidies it provided to factories in Liverpool and its surrounding estates, the recession and the shift toward the South East spelled doom for Liverpool manufacturing. Between 1966 and 1977, 350 plants in the region closed; between 1971 and 1985, Liverpool's manufacturing sector more than halved as it shed 95,000 jobs.⁵² Male manufacturing employment in Merseyside fell by 53 percent compared to 32 percent nationally, and female manufacturing employment fell by 62 percent, compared to 33 percent nationally.⁵³ A whole clutch of major factory closures toward the end of the 1970s, including BICC, British Leyland, Dunlop, Lucas Victor, and Plessey, all confirmed the impotence of unions to prevent closures in the face of recession and regional shifts in capital.⁵⁴ Parkinson described the period from the late 1960s through the early 1980s as one in which Liverpool 'lost control of its economic destiny,' as the dangers of over-reliance on branch factories of large firms with no particular loyalty to the city or concern for its workforce became manifest. If it made economic sense to close a factory in Vauxhall, a multinational firm was not likely to be moved to do otherwise simply because the unemployment rate in Vauxhall was near 50 percent, especially in times of economic difficulty. Still, the city could not find a way to remedy this

⁵¹ Ibid. 430.

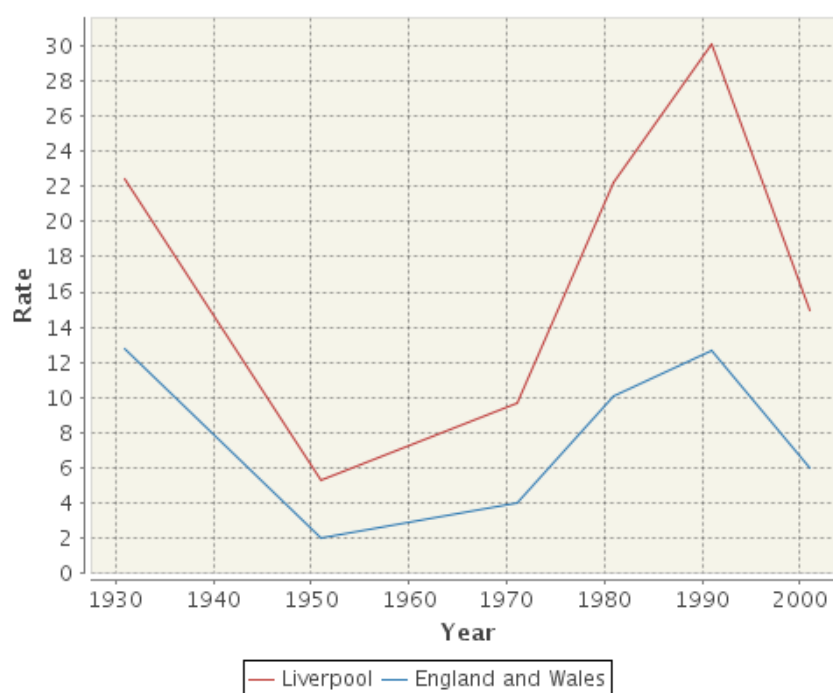
⁵² M. Parkinson, *Liverpool on the Brink* (Hermitage, 1985), 11.

⁵³ Murden, 'City of Change...', 432.

⁵⁴ S. Davies, 'Times of Change: Liverpool Trades Council, 1948 – 1998' in J. Dye (ed.), *150 Years in Struggle: the Liverpool labour movement, 1848 – 1998* (Liverpool, 1998), p. 64.

overreliance on large multinationals: by 1979, less than 1% of the city's firms still provided nearly 40% of its total employment.⁵⁵ This severe lack of locally based financial resource holders outside the city council would be significant for the strategies the Liverpool case study group chose, as well as for the success of those strategies.

Graph 1: Male unemployment in Liverpool (top line) and England and Wales (bottom line), 1930 - 2000. (Source: Vision of Britain, www.visionofbritain.org.uk)



On top of the city's manufacturing struggles, the port's tonnage and revenues also tipped into a sudden and steep decline. Shifts in trade away from Commonwealth countries of Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and Canada and toward Europe meant that Liverpool's port—significantly further from Europe than the southern ports of London and Dover—effectively found itself on the wrong side of the country. This change was gradual, however, compared to the impact of containerisation. Pioneered on the West Coast of the United States in the 1950s,

⁵⁵ Murden, 'City of Change...', 435.

by the late 1960s containers had transformed the shipping industry—and the physical shape of ports. The Liverpool docks were not well suited to the shift, a reality acknowledged by the Chief Executive of the Merseyside Dock and Harbour Company:

The Liverpool docks were built mainly in the nineteenth century for the general cargo ships of that time and though they had undergone a continuous process of adaptation and modernization the systems still consisted essentially of a line of finger docks with narrow quays backed by transit sheds designed for the temporary storage of relatively small consignments of general cargo. They were quite unsuitable for containers.⁵⁶

Not only did their use require expensive renovations of existing port facilities, but also the workforce necessary to load and unload ships was suddenly a fraction of what it had been in years previous. Previously, a typical conventional berth operating with three gangs could handle about 250 tonnes over the course of a shift. Now, the same number of workers working on two container gangs could handle 2,500 tonnes in the same amount of time.⁵⁷ Realising that ongoing containerisation was going to continue and would lead to substantial workforce reductions in the medium term, the National Dock Labour Board (since 1967 controlled in part by the dockers themselves) refused to expand its labour force—leading, ironically, to labour *shortages* in the short term. From 1966 onwards, the Chairman of the MDHB's reports annually pointed out that such shortages were causing the port to lose substantial revenue, since in the short term there remained considerable demand for conventional break-bulk cargo-handling facilities. These losses compounded the financial difficulties the MDHB faced in the early 1970s, eventually culminating in the reorganisation of the MDHB into the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company and the closure of the entire south docklands system.⁵⁸

The effects of containerisation were not limited to the dockers themselves. With the possibility of such rapid unloading, ships docked in port for shorter periods of time; their crews

⁵⁶ Trevor Furlong (Managing Director and Chief Executive of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company) in Lynch, *Weathering the Storm*, vii.

⁵⁷ C. Couch, *City of Change and Challenge* (Aldershot, 2003), 12.

⁵⁸ Lynch, *Weathering the Storm*, 28–30.

stayed on board and handled ship repairs themselves, thus depriving Liverpool's ancillary industries of ship cleaning and repairs—not to mention its many watering holes and entertainment facilities catering to sailors—of further business. Though continued shifts in trade routes and the decline of British manufacturing in the North may have made the decline of Liverpool's port inevitable, containerisation sped up the process dramatically. The neighbourhoods around the port suffered particularly during its decline. By 1977, the Liverpool Planning Office found that the neighbourhoods around the north docks, including Vauxhall, suffered from 50 percent unemployment, and the neighbourhoods around the south docks and outer estates suffered almost as much at 40 percent unemployment.⁵⁹ These were the neighbourhoods in which each of the Liverpool case studies had bases, and the experience of severe unemployment influenced each of them. For the MCRC, it shaped their agenda around the need for targeted skills training and a positive action initiative in council hiring; for the Eldonians, job loss made them all the more determined to hold on to their homes and neighbours; for the members of the Anti-Cuts Campaign, it strengthened their conviction that the services they provided and even the few jobs they created were desperately needed and worth preserving.

By the 1980s, most of Liverpool's economic drama was drawing to a close, and the city continued its steady economic decline. Between 1981 and 1991, employment again fell by 23 percent.⁶⁰ The closure of the Tate & Lyle factory in Vauxhall in early 1981 came as an especially painful psychological blow even in a city where factory closures no longer seemed like news. Many families in Vauxhall, where two of the case study groups had bases, had worked in the Tate & Lyle factory for multiple generations, and unlike some other factories in Liverpool, the plant had an unusually productive and loyal workforce. In short, the factory's long presence in

⁵⁹ Murden, 'City of Change...', 439.

⁶⁰ R. Meegan, 'Urban Regeneration, Politics, and Social Cohesion: The Liverpool Case' in Munck (ed.), *Reinventing the City? Liverpool in comparative perspective* (Liverpool, 2003), p. 61.

Vauxhall made it more than a place of employment—it was a local institution, and its closure felt like Liverpool’s death knell in many quarters of the city. Overall, those factories still remaining in Liverpool that had been attracted by 1960s regional policy shed 30 percent of their jobs between 1981 and 1985.⁶¹ The city’s economic challenges were increased by the lopsided nature of its workforce. The 1981 census revealed that Liverpool had the lowest proportion of employers, managers, and professionals in its economically active population of all cities in Britain, and unskilled, semi-skilled and ‘unclassified’ (typically unemployed, or those who had never worked) respondents made up 41.3 percent of the city’s economically active population, compared with a 30.3% average for cities nationally.⁶²

By the close of the 1980s, there were signs that some of Liverpool’s economic fortunes were taking a turn for the better. The Mersey Docks and Harbour Company was once again returning a profit as business increasingly centred on the Seaforth container dock (*see Table 1*). Yet, revived profits did not—indeed, could not—lead to a revived workforce at the docks: from nearly 13,000 registered dock workers in 1966, dock employment fell to 9,626 in 1974 to 2,281 in 1988, an 82.5 percent contraction in a little over two decades.⁶³

⁶¹ Parkinson, *Liverpool on the Brink*, 11.

⁶² R. Meegan, ‘Merseyside in Crisis and Conflict’ in Harloe, Pickvance, and Urry (eds.), *Place, Policy, and Politics* (London, 1990), p. 93.

⁶³ Lynch, *Weathering the Storm*, 119.

Table 1: Main operating statistics of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company, 1973 – 1988. Liverpool's port was in dire straits from 1973 to 1984, operating at a loss most years. Toward the late 1980s, however, the port had begun to turn a profit once again. Nevertheless, the number of employees declined every year between 1973 and 1988 (Source: Lynch, Weathering the Storm, 118).

Table 2 *Main operating statistics of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company, 1973–1988*

Year	Cargo tonnage (thousand tons)	Number of vessels using Company facilities	N.R.T. of vessels (1,000t)	Number of employees (year average)	Turnover (£ thousand)	Operating profit (loss) (£ thousand)	Interest paid (£ thousand)	Overall profit (loss) (£ thousand)
1973	25,895	6,397	20,081	9,485	37,233	4,561	5,350	(2,506)
1974	26,384	5,618	20,250	9,626	39,758	2,958	4,011	(965)
1975	22,450	5,526	19,082	9,410	52,171	7,185	3,876	(8,089)
1976	21,269	5,438	G.R.T. (1,000T) 32,576	8,529	60,767	12,506	4,249	4,045
1977	18,471	5,369	31,883	8,275	62,661	12,213	4,165	4,106
1978	15,919	5,439	29,341	8,094	64,715	9,332	4,420	(11,470)
1979	15,375	5,366	29,414	7,397	66,943	6,385	4,793	(7,462)
1980	12,477	4,540	26,372	6,481	65,644	5,025	5,499	(6,250)
1981	11,042	3,831	23,432	5,647	61,635	1,250	5,417	5,062
1982	9,300	3,484	20,368	4,281	55,544	(2,337)	4,131	6,586
1983	10,671	3,504	21,457	3,297	56,990	6,790	880	6,554
1984	9,181	3,419	19,052	3,001	50,234	1,921	1,114	(343)
1985				2,870	52,961	3,241	837	2,004
1986				2,571	51,393	3,172	1,094	1,328
1987	(10,200)			2,440	53,935	5,034	1,279	3,755
1988	(19,500)			2,281	55,159	6,700	895	5,865

Notes: N.R.T. = net registered tonnage; G.R.T. = gross registered tonnage. No statistics of cargo tonnage and volume of shipping were given in the Company's 1985–1988 Reports. The 1987 and 1988 cargo tonnages are taken from the Chairman's 1988 statement.

Baltimore

As with the U.S. as a whole, World War II lifted Baltimore out of the depths of the Depression to dizzying new heights of employment. Even in the months leading up to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Baltimore had been gearing up for war; after the United States officially entered the conflict, the city became a round-the-clock production facility: 'After Pearl Harbor, Baltimore became a twenty-four-hour city, living according to the peculiar rhythms of shift work.'⁶⁴ Baltimore's specialties were aircraft and shipbuilding. As such, at their peak, Bethlehem Steel alone employed 58,000 men and women, and Glenn L. Martin another 53,000.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ A. Pietila, *Not in My Neighborhood* (Chicago, 2010), p. 75.

⁶⁵ Pietila, *Not in My Neighborhood*, 76.

Rural workers from the Appalachians and the South flooded the city, and many migrants and residents alike enjoyed their first full-time work—often at higher wages than they had ever earned before—since the onset of the Depression. Baltimore, then, greeted the end of the war with mixed emotions. By October 1945, 45,000 war workers had been laid off, and 35,000 veterans had returned. A massive reshuffling of employment was in order, which took place through the conversion of land, industrial plants, and machinery.⁶⁶

Like Liverpool, then, Baltimore continued to enjoy economic prosperity in the 1950s. Never as wholly tied to its port as Liverpool, in Baltimore manufacturing remained the largest employer until 1960.⁶⁷ Factories turned to the production of peacetime goods that fit well with the emerging consumer economy:

Backlog orders and expectations of homebuilding stimulated massive investments in telephone equipment, gypsum, titanium oxide paints, chain link fencing, home power tools, and bathtubs.⁶⁸

Bethlehem Steel transformed some of its shipbuilding sites into ‘ship-breaking’ sites designed to facilitate metal recycling. Meanwhile, ongoing government investment in weapons systems and aerospace, especially with the outbreak of the Korean War, meant that defense production and the lucrative government contracts that accompanied them did not entirely disappear from the city.

The port, still an important employer even if not the primary one, continued high levels of activity and enjoyed booms in tandem with expansions in world trade. Between the mid-1950s and the mid-1970s, the Maryland Port Authority spent \$198 million revitalizing the port’s piers and loading facilities, and its ‘Decade for Progress’ campaign begun in 1967 focused primarily on making the port suitable for containers. Though total tonnage passing through the port declined

⁶⁶ K. Olson, ‘Old West Baltimore: Segregation, African-American Culture, and the Struggle for Equality’ in Fee, Shopes, and Zeidman (eds.), *The Baltimore Book* (Philadelphia, 1991), p. 349.

⁶⁷ K. Durr, *Behind the Backlash* (Chapel Hill, 2003), p. 58.

⁶⁸ Olson, ‘Old West Baltimore...’, 350.

in this period, from 52 million tons in 1956 to 45 million tons in 1979, Baltimore nevertheless managed to retain its position as one of the nation's half-dozen most important ports and did not undergo the dramatic collapse that Liverpool did.⁶⁹ However, even if Baltimore was able to adapt to containerisation more quickly than Liverpool, containers posed the same problem for Baltimore's port workers that they did for Liverpool's: it made many of them obsolete. Thus, while tonnage numbers may have been relatively strong throughout this period, the number of people employed at the port continued to drop.

While it is clear in retrospect that the late 1950s marked the beginning of Baltimore's industrial decline, on the whole the 1950s and most of the 1960s were good decades, economically, for the city's working class, especially its white working class. Workers enjoyed record levels of take-home pay, and members of powerful industrial unions began to receive supplemental unemployment benefits and cost-of-living adjustments, as well as improvements in workplace conditions.⁷⁰ Though average wages for American workers did not continue to increase at the rates of the 1950s, they nevertheless grew by an average 1.9 percent between 1963 and 1972.⁷¹ However, good wages and military contracts could not mask the overall decline in industrial employment forever. From 1947 to 1963 the city lost 123 industries and 17,000 jobs. Many of these departed not for some far flung corner of the globe, but instead followed one of the region's gleaming new highways out of town to Baltimore County. This was the case with no less than 65 of the 82 industries the city lost between 1955 and 1965.⁷² Retail establishments likewise followed their more affluent customers to the suburbs; while in 1950 80 percent of retail sales in the region were located in Baltimore city, by 1992 this figure dropped to 18 percent.⁷³ The flight of industry and retailers, as well as the emergence of domestic technology that

⁶⁹ G.H. Callcott, *Maryland and America, 1940 – 1980* (Baltimore, 1993), p. 87.

⁷⁰ Durr, *Behind the Backlash*, 58.

⁷¹ Ibid. 192.

⁷² Pietila, *Not in My Neighborhood*, 221.

⁷³ M. Orr, *Black Social Capital* (Lawrence, 1999), p. 69.

diminished the need for domestic help, meant a steady contraction of the opportunities for menial labour in the city limits.⁷⁴ Within the factories that remained in the city, a similar growth in the prominence of power machinery diminished the need for human workers:

As power machinery raised productivity in factories and on construction sites, there were no new 'blue-collar' jobs. The number of craft workers doubled, proportionate to the whole labor force, but operatives increased less, and there was zero growth of laborers.⁷⁵

The downward economic dip that began in 1967 was unlike previous one-year recessions to which the city and its workers had become somewhat accustomed since the 1940s; indeed, it was the beginning of what scholars have alternatively called 'Baltimore's nadir' and the period in which 'the bottom dropped out of Baltimore's economy.'⁷⁶ Between 1967 and 1972, Baltimore lost over 16,000 manufacturing jobs—an unprecedented 15 percent decline in five years. During the same period plant closings, relatively rare in the city in the '50s and '60s, became a well-known occurrence, as 159 Baltimore plants fell silent (*see table*).⁷⁷ The state of Maryland took over the management of the Port of Baltimore as one of a number of aid measures extended to the city.⁷⁸ The two recessions between 1970 and 1974 hit Baltimore particularly hard, and the city lost 13 percent of *all* its jobs—a percentage 'bested' in the United States only by St. Louis and Detroit in the same period.⁷⁹ Economic security was further eroded by inflation that persisted through the early 1970s, hitting 12 percent in 1974, and by soaring oil prices.⁸⁰ By the mid-70s, a second income was increasingly becoming a necessity for white working-class families who had previously been able to live comfortably on the salary of one industrial wage earner, and East and Southeast Baltimore housewives began to look for jobs. The losses would continue throughout

⁷⁴ Pietila, *Not in My Neighborhood*, 221.

⁷⁵ Olson, 'Old West Baltimore...', 363.

⁷⁶ Callcott, *Maryland and America*, 10; M. Levine, 'Downtown Redevelopment as an Urban Growth Strategy', *Journal of Urban Affairs* 9.2 (1987), p. 107.

⁷⁷ Durr, *Behind the Backlash*, 192.

⁷⁸ R. Brambilla & G. Longo, *Learning from Baltimore: What makes cities livable?* (Washington, DC, 1979), p. 131.

⁷⁹ M.C.D. MacDonald, *American Cities: A Report on the Myth of Urban Renaissance* (New York, 1984), p. 291.

⁸⁰ Durr, *Behind the Backlash*, 193.

the course of the decade and into the next: between 1970 and 1985, Baltimore would lose 40,000 manufacturing jobs, a 45 percent decline.⁸¹ Since African-American workers were often the first to lose their jobs, this increasing economic insecurity—and sense of powerlessness to address it—formed part of the mounting frustration and concern that would eventually push local clergy to invite the IAF to Baltimore to create a new vehicle for African-Americans to gain and exercise power in the first place. However, as dramatic as these figures are, they also shed light on just how dire the situation in Liverpool was—during the same period, Liverpool (a slightly smaller city) lost 95,000 jobs in its manufacturing sector.

*Table 2: Manufacturing Firms and Employment in Baltimore, 1947 – 1977. This table demonstrates the dramatic acceleration of Baltimore’s manufacturing decline in the 1960s, and again in the 1970s. (Source: Durr, Behind the Backlash, 199) *Manufacturing firms with 20 or more employees.*

Year	Total firms	% Change	No. Large Firms*	% Change	Total Employed	% Change
1947	1,638	-	-	-	120,929	-
1954	1,629	-0.5	-	-	117,583	-2.8
1958	1,623	-0.4	694	-	111,757	-5
1963	1,515	-6.7	635	-8.5	103,852	-7.1
1967	1,396	-7.9	625	-1.6	106,700	-7.1
1972	1,237	-11.4	543	-13.1	90,600	-15.1
1977	1,101	-11	429	-21	72,900	-19.5
1982	971	-11.8	-	-	59,300	-18.7

Though the city centre redevelopment schemes of the 1970s and ’80s won Baltimore accolades on a national level and prompted *Time* magazine to proclaim it the ‘Cinderella story’ of Frostbelt cities, the wider economic picture throughout the city was not nearly as bright. The 1980 census revealed that the city’s population had plummeted further in the proceeding decade, and HUD rated Baltimore the sixth neediest city in the United States.⁸² By 1981, 21% of the city was living in poverty and the city had the second highest unemployment rate in the nation (behind Detroit).⁸³ Even compared to other Frostbelt cities of similar size, Baltimore’s economic

⁸¹ Levine, ‘Downtown Redevelopment...’, 107.

⁸² MacDonald, *American Cities*, 295.

⁸³ Ibid. 293.

performance in this period is not indicative of a ‘breakout’ moment: out of twelve such cities, between 1972 and 1982 Baltimore ranked eleventh in manufacturing payroll growth and tenth in per capita income growth. Of the 277 ‘official’ neighbourhoods in the city, 210 experienced a growth in the number of residents living below the poverty line between 1970 and 1980.⁸⁴ Most of the jobs that Inner Harbor developments did provide for city residents were ‘pink collar’ jobs such as cleaning hotel rooms and convention centers, waiting on tables, and working behind the till in retail establishments—not jobs that came with substantial wages or benefits. In the same period, Baltimore also earned the dubious distinction of becoming the heroin capital of the country, and public housing residents repeatedly pointed to drugs as the main culprits behind the devastation in their neighbourhoods.⁸⁵ In short, the benefits that downtown investment secured for developers and tourists did not extend to the vast majority of the city’s residents, and the disparities between the ‘two Baltimores’ provided much of the animating energy that drove and sustained BUILD and its campaigns.

Economic difficulties continued to plague the city’s industrial sector and port throughout the 1980s. The nation-wide steel collapse of 1982 virtually wiped out the Bethlehem Steel plant—only decades before the city’s largest employer—and took a number of shipbuilding and repair industries down with it. Like the closure of Tate & Lyle in Liverpool at about the same time, the loss of such a firm so strongly identified with the city’s heyday was also a psychological blow. Having held its tonnage levels somewhat steady through the 1970s, the port also dipped severely in 1983. As the cost of rail and truck transit became less expensive, and the cost of ship transit became more expensive, Baltimore—like Liverpool—found itself with an unenviable location, 180 miles up the Chesapeake Bay. These 180 miles represented the better part of a day’s travel for a container ship, and the proximity (by land) to distribution centers in the American

⁸⁴ Levine, ‘Downtown Redevelopment...’, 112.

⁸⁵ E.M. Nix and D.R. Weiner, ‘Pivot in Perception: The impact of the 1968 riots on three Baltimore business districts’ in *Baltimore ’68* (Philadelphia, 2011), p. 187.

heartland that had once been one of the Baltimore port's strengths became a weakness in a time of deregulated trains and cheaper diesel for trucks.⁸⁶ Also like Liverpool, Baltimore found its port losing out to other ports better equipped to handle container cargo, like Newport News and Norfolk, Virginia. Environmental concerns delayed the deepening of the canal, and industrial disputes between the Maryland Port Commission and the International Longshoremen's Association prompted several shipping companies to reroute their service through other ports.⁸⁷

Table 3: Composition of Labour Force by Sector, 1950 – 1980. Note the dramatic decline in manufacturing alongside the rise in services and government. (Source: Durr, Behind the Backlash, 200)

Sector	1950	1960	1970	1980
Manufacturing	34.10%	27.80%	25.60%	15%
Wholesale & retail trade	26	23.3	20.6	21.1
Finance, insurance, real estate	6	6.8	7.4	8.5
Services	7.7	8.2	11.6	22.3
Government	12.3	15.1	18.7	20.8

In a painful irony, the larger region did not share Baltimore city's woes. Indeed, the Baltimore metro area had a strong economic performance between 1950 and 1990: the growth rate in real family income over the period was 145 percent, and the real standard of living for the average metro area family doubled.⁸⁸ However, this was decidedly not the story of the Baltimore city's residents, whose median income continued to decline relative to that of Baltimore County. Despite the glitz of downtown redevelopment and the Baltimore renaissance, Baltimore did not find a path toward economic prosperity that most of its residents could walk, and the 'white noose' of the suburbs grew ever tighter. The relative strength of downtown compared to the rest of the city, though—and compared to Liverpool's downtown—sustained a business community that was a concentrated group of resource holders for BUILD to target outside of City Hall.

⁸⁶ J.T. Starr, 'The Port of Baltimore: Off the beaten track?', *Maritime Policy & Management* 18.3 (1991), p. 174.

⁸⁷ Starr, 'The Port of Baltimore', 178.

⁸⁸ D. Rusk, *Baltimore Unbound: A Strategy for Regional Renewal* (Baltimore, 1996), p. 24.

RESIDENTIAL SHIFTS

Having examined the economic shape of Liverpool and Baltimore, we now turn to the residents living in these cities and their movement patterns in response not only to the economy, but also to changing residential conditions. Population decline and housing deterioration pulled resources away from inner city residents and created new service delivery challenges for local governments. Importantly for the sake of the argument presented here, falling populations also contributed to constraints on local government action because of the diminished tax bases they left behind. The problems created by the combination of population decline and housing deterioration preoccupied Liverpool and Baltimore's local governments leading up to and during the 1980s. Housing issues would be the basis of conflicts between the Eldonians and some Anti-Cuts Campaign members and the Liverpool city council, as well as between BUILD and local banks and the Schaefer mayoral administration in Baltimore. Poor housing, then, provided an animating cause for multiple case study groups and shaped the nature of the resources they sought.

Population Migration

Population shifts in the post-war decades not only determined who would make up the case study groups, but also contributed to the problems they would seek to rectify. Both Liverpool and Baltimore witnessed dramatic drops in their population between 1950 and 1990. Part of this was the result of intentional policy decisions that re-housed people from cleared city centre slums to newly built outer estates (Liverpool), or federal policies that made home-buying in and travel to the suburbs increasingly easy (Baltimore); these policies will be further unpacked in the Housing section of this chapter. Baltimore also saw a huge influx of African Americans in the 1950s during the last wave of the 'Great Migration' of rural black southerners to northern and Midwestern manufacturing towns in search of work and relief from Jim Crow laws. However, population decline accelerated for both cities in the 1970s, as jobs became increasingly

scarce. Falling population densities posed administrative challenges for both cities, as the gutting of catchment areas required the redistribution of resources like schools and clinics, and for retailers, who often followed their customers to greener climes.

Liverpool's population peaked at nearly 800,000 relatively early in the twentieth century, around 1940. Thereafter population decline set in and continued through the rest of the twentieth century (*see chart*). Multiple reasons for population decline existed: some of the decline was planned by city authorities through a process of decantation, by which residents of overcrowded slums in the city centre were relocated to new housing estates on the outer rim of the city or beyond its municipal boundaries, in places like Speke and Knowsley (discussed in greater detail below). As work became increasingly difficult to find from the late 1960s forward, those who could leave the city often did in order to find better employment opportunities elsewhere—leaving behind a city centre population that was increasingly lacking in skills and education. The 1981 census revealed that Liverpool had the lowest proportion of employers, managers, and professionals in its economically active population of all cities in Britain, and unskilled, semi-skilled and 'unclassified' (typically unemployed, or those who had never worked) respondents made up 41.3 percent of the city's economically active population, compared with a 30.3 percent average for cities nationally.⁸⁹

While overall population decline became an important consideration for city authorities, in some ways falling population density created greater dilemmas. Beginning in 1961, Liverpool's population declined at a greater rate than did its number of households; while population decreased by 23 percent between 1961 and 1991, the number of households decreased by a little less than 16 percent.⁹⁰ More people were living alone, and neighbourhoods had fewer children. This falling population density had important implications for neighbourhood facilities and

⁸⁹ Meegan, 'Merseyside in Crisis and Conflict', 93.

⁹⁰ Couch, *City of Change...*, 23.

institutions, like shops and schools. School catchment areas, in particular, would become sources of contention as the local education authority attempted to reorganise primary and secondary education facilities by closing some neighbourhood schools.

Between 1950 and 1990, the population balance between Baltimore City and Baltimore County, along with the other suburban counties in the Baltimore metropolitan region, would shift dramatically. While the city itself lost 182,000 residents, the region as a whole gained 910,000 residents.⁹¹ This drop marked a 23 percent decrease in population for the city, and a drop from 71 percent to 31 percent of the metropolitan region's total population. At the same time, city families' average income dropped from 92 percent to 59 percent of suburban families' average income, and African Americans made up a disproportionate 60 percent of the city's remaining population.⁹² Baltimore had been on track for such outcomes since the beginning of the post-war period, and by the 1970s racial growth in the city and Baltimore county mirrored one another: 83 percent of black growth occurred in the city; 83 percent of white growth occurred in the county.⁹³

As in Liverpool, the shift of population toward the suburbs had important implications for city facilities, including retail outlets, schools, and housing itself. Baltimore city officials did not come to grips with population decline—between 1950 and 1960 the city had already lost about 10,000 residents, despite the influx of black migrants—and from 1965 forward, about 15,000 city dwellings were continually vacant.⁹⁴ The 'vacants' eventually became a key organising issue for BUILD under both the Schaefer and the Schmoke administrations. Such a large number of empty dwellings (including entire blocks in some neighbourhoods) contributed to Baltimore's growing crime problem: crime rates rose more than 300 percent in the 1960s and

⁹¹ Rusk, *Baltimore Unbound*, xiii.

⁹² Ibid. xiv.

⁹³ Pietila, *Not in My Neighborhood*, 217.

⁹⁴ Nix and Weiner, 'Pivot in Perception', 180; Callcott, *Maryland and America*, 83.

more than 200 percent in the 1970s in the state of Maryland, with Baltimore accounting for a disproportionate amount of that rise. Drug-related arrests in Baltimore, which had remained relatively constant up until 1960, increased 260% between 1960 and 1975.⁹⁵

Housing

Housing issues provide some of the most natural issues around which neighbourhood groups organise because they are so unavoidable for residents living in the affected homes. By the 1980s, both Liverpool and Baltimore found themselves fighting deteriorating housing stock, rising vandalism, and pervasive empty dwellings—far from the dreams of city planners in both cities in the 1950s and 1960s. Both cities faced terrible overcrowding after World War II, a problem that both cities hoped to conquer through a mixture of mass slum clearance and moving people out of city centres and into outer estates or suburbs. High-rise public housing, used to a much greater extent in Liverpool but also present in Baltimore, ended up creating as many or more problems than it solved in both places.

In Liverpool, however, more conflict centred around the Housing Corporation and the quality of municipal housing, whether within the urban core or on outer estates, as the consequences of pre-fabricated materials and high-rise flats became clear. In Baltimore, racial turnover played a huge role in housing conflict. Black migration combined with white flight to the suburbs to transform the racial make-up of the city's core, while real estate agents used the tools of blockbusting and land-installment contracts to cheat white sellers and black buyers alike. In Liverpool, the MCRC was concerned about the segregation of minority tenants in Liverpool 8 and a lack of sheltered accommodation for minority elders; the Eldonians' entire conflict with the city council was based on their desire to create a housing cooperative rather than be relocated to outer estates; multiple members of the Anti-Cuts Campaign clashed with the council over the

⁹⁵ Callcott, *Maryland and America*, 209.

tearing down of homes or community facilities as part of the Urban Regeneration Strategy. In Baltimore, BUILD conducted its first major campaign around mortgage financing for black residents of Baltimore City, and possible solutions to Baltimore's thousands of vacant homes preoccupied the organisation from the beginning of the 1980s forward, eventually resulting in the Nehemiah low-income home development programme under Mayor Schموke. All of these campaigns will be discussed further in the findings section.

Liverpool

The destruction inflicted on Liverpool by air raids in 1940 and 1941 compounded the problems faced by an already overcrowded city. The 1944 *Merseyside Plan*, drawn up the Corporation in anticipation of the efforts that would be needed to rebuild Liverpool and re-house her population after the war, estimated that 148,000 Liverpudlians—almost 20% of Liverpool's total population—would need to be re-housed beyond the city's existing built up areas.⁹⁶ It proposed dealing with the problem through rapid slum clearances and a policy of 'decanting' people to pre-fabricated bungalows dotted along the perimeter of Liverpool's city boundary. Even in 1947, Liverpool found itself with a 'cancer of 20,000 unfit dwellings in the centre of the city' and 33,000 applicants on its housing waiting list.⁹⁷ This mismatch, a dilemma faced by local authorities throughout the country, made housing *the* political issue for years to come, including in the 1980s when the Militant-directed Labour council introduced its Urban Regeneration Strategy. At the national level, housing concerns helped the Conservative party return to power in the 1951 elections largely on its rallying cry of '300,000 houses per year.'⁹⁸ After the 1954 Housing Repairs and Rents Act, Liverpool began its first wave of large-scale slum clearances. A 1954 visit to the United States to look at new public housing high-rise projects so

⁹⁶ Murden, 'City of Change...', 396.

⁹⁷ Ibid. 395.

⁹⁸ P. Dunleavy, *The Politics of Mass Housing in Britain, 1945 – 1975* (Oxford, 1981), p. 34.

enthused the City Council that it embarked on a high-rise building spree of its own, and in May 1954 ground was broken on what would be the city's first high-rise estate at Sparrow Hall. The 1956 Housing Subsidies Act, which increased the amount of subsidy with the number of floors in a building, further encouraged the proliferation of high-rise estates. Because of the difficulty of procuring large tracts of land in central areas, these estates were often built in outer industrial areas like Netherley, Speke, and Aintree, thus draining thousands of people from the city centre.

At first, many residents of the new estates were thrilled with the change in their living conditions. The new flats boasted previously undreamt of luxuries, such as bathrooms, fitted kitchens, hot and cold running water, space for children to play, and high-rise views.⁹⁹ Despite the fact that decantation disrupted established neighbourhoods and scattered their residents throughout the city, many people believed that their children would reap the benefits of growing up in a healthier environment that seemed to promise better school facilities and employment opportunities; as one Kirkby resident explained, 'It is a new way of life when we come here: we don't benefit but our children will.'¹⁰⁰

By the late 1960s, it was far less clear to those whose homes were now scheduled for demolition that they would be headed for something better in the form of high-rise towers and/or outer estates. As it turned out, the pre-fabricated and low cost materials that had been used to build dwellings cheaply led to weak infrastructures that required costly regular repairs (that the council could not always keep up with, or afford to make) and serious sanitation problems, such as mould and damp.¹⁰¹ The issues flagged by the Netherley Flat Dwellers Action Group are representative of the challenges that arose on estates throughout the city (and the country): dangers to children and ill effects on mental health caused by the high-rises' brutal and

⁹⁹ Murden, 'City of Change...', 413.

¹⁰⁰ Quoted in R. Meegan, 'Paradise Postponed: The growth and decline of Merseyside's outer estates' in Cooke (ed.), *Localities: The changing face of Britain* (London, 1989), p. 203.

¹⁰¹ For a fuller discussion of the structural problems of prefabricated dwellings built in this period, see D. Green, *Power and Party in an English City: An Account of Single-Party Rule* (London, 2006).

inhuman design, conditions of paintwork, problems with waste disposal, structural faults, poor landscaping and drainage of open space, vermin, lack of social facilities, transport difficulties, and repair backlogs.¹⁰² Facilities for shopping and leisure lagged years behind the completion of flats and schools that triggered the arrival of residents; in estates with large youth populations, petty crime and vandalism took off. Bus services and rail links to the city centre were also lacking, creating great difficulties for those who continued to work in the city (since a number of the industrial estates had established workforces by the time that residents moved into the new housing estates) and did not own cars. As such conditions became known, more and more groups—including the Eldonians, examined in Chapter 4—sought to form housing cooperatives and remain in their neighbourhoods rather than accept relocation to an outer estate.

Residents' dissatisfaction and fiscal stress in the 1970s led to some important policy changes. In 1972, when Labour retained a majority on the City Council, the Council approved a plan for improving—not demolishing—61,000 older dwellings in inner areas, a sign that the era of sweeping slum clearance was coming to a close.¹⁰³ In 1973, the evils of high-rise building finally acknowledged, all further municipal building was limited to two stories. While these developments did not solve all the problems of municipal housing, they did mark a turn toward development on a more restrained and human scale. The Liberal party, which emerged as a major force in Liverpool politics in 1973, doggedly pursued a policy of 'community politics' that focused on repairs and rehabilitation, as well as refurbishing some council homes for sale as private dwellings.

¹⁰² Murden, 'City of Change...', 415.

¹⁰³ Ibid. 65. Though not totally to a close—in 1976, the Council did identify 57 slum clearance areas to be tackled that would affect 1,500 people. Still, this is a fraction of the number of people who had been targeted by the 1965 plan.

Baltimore

The most important change in Baltimore in the 1950s was the change in racial geography, a change whose consequences would reverberate for the rest of the twentieth century. Though the city of Baltimore's population peaked in 1950, the 1950s did see the 'last great wave' of rural black migration to Baltimore from Virginia and the Carolinas. Between 1950 and 1955, 32,000 additional African Americans settled in the city.¹⁰⁴ Racial covenants (a tool that Baltimore pioneered in the U.S.) formed in the early part of the twentieth century had crowded the black community into cramped quarters in the city's core—three-quarters of the black population lived in blighted dwellings in 1955—but the Supreme Court's 1948 decision in *Shelley v. Kraemer* ruled such covenants could not be enforced by the courts, opening up a legal path for racial transition in neighbourhoods formally governed by these private agreements.¹⁰⁵ Pressed by postwar migration and the 'Baltimore Plan' for slum clearance, and encouraged by the breaching of Baltimore's unofficial color line in 1944 and the Supreme Court ruling of 1948, African Americans began moving into formerly white and Jewish neighbourhoods at an accelerating pace.¹⁰⁶ By 1953, the Federal Housing Authority (FHA) declared that the racial turnover in west and northwest Baltimore was 'one of the most rapid and extensive shifts in racial occupancy that ha[d] occurred in any city' in the country in the years following World War II.¹⁰⁷

The real estate industry used two primary tools in the process of racial turnover: blockbusting and the land-installment contract. Blockbusting describes the process by which real estate agents would 'break' a city block in a white area in order to resell the houses at inflated prices to black families desperate to escape the overcrowding and poor conditions in the city's

¹⁰⁴ Nix & Weiner, 'Pivot in Perception', 181; Durr, *Behind the Backlash*, 91.

¹⁰⁵ Pietila, *Not in My Neighborhood*, 109.

¹⁰⁶ Unlike many East Coast cities, Baltimore's housing market was actually *three*-tiered up until the early 1980s, with white Gentiles, Jews, and African Americans making up the different rungs. Neighbourhoods tended to turn over from one group to the next in that order.

¹⁰⁷ Pietila, *Not in My Neighborhood*, 109.

dilapidated core. In order to do so, real estate agents used a variety of aggressive techniques to convince residents that the neighbourhood was about to ‘flip,’ and that residents needed to sell their houses before the coming rush if they hoped to get any value out of their homes.¹⁰⁸ While the first couple of homeowners on a block who agreed to sell their homes to the agents often did in fact receive good prices for their homes, those who sought to leave once the turnover was in process found the value of their homes had plummeted. Since homeownership served as many middle-class families’ primary source of savings and financial security, blockbusting real estate agents came to be deeply resented by Baltimore’s white middle class.¹⁰⁹

Once real estate agencies owned a property, they typically sold it at an inflated price to black occupants, to whom conventional mortgage financing was not available, under the terms of a land-installment contract. A land-installment contract differed from a conventional mortgage in three primary ways: it required very small down payments from buyers; the seller retained the title of the property until the buyer had paid enough to the seller (usually on a weekly basis) to gain a certain amount of equity in the property; and the terms of the contract were negotiated between buyers and sellers directly rather than through a lending institution.¹¹⁰ While the land-installment contracts were not inherently sinister—indeed, they enabled a number of black families and individuals to purchase homes when they had no other means to do so—they were also easily abused, so much so that ‘land-installment contract’ became a byword for cheating and exploitation.¹¹¹ In the post-war period, the real estate industry took on an ambiguous role: while it helped the black community to move into neighbourhoods previously inaccessible to them

¹⁰⁸ Agents’ tactics ranged from calling residents incessantly and at inappropriate hours of the day and night; putting ‘For Sale’ signs in front of homes that were not for sale in order to sow fear and doubt; and hiring black teenagers to steal bikes and commit other forms of petty crime and vandalism in the neighbourhoods they were attempting to flip.

¹⁰⁹ W.E. Orser, ‘Flight to the Suburbs: Suburbanization and Racial Change on Baltimore’s West Side’ in Fee, Shopes, & Zeidman (eds.), *The Baltimore Book* (Philadelphia, 1991) as well as Pietila (2010) and Stegman (1972) for extensive descriptions of blockbusting and land-installment contracts.

¹¹⁰ M. Stegman, *Housing Investment in the Inner City: The dynamics of decline; a study of Baltimore, Maryland* (Boston, 1972), 199.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

(sometimes much more quickly than they would have been able to otherwise), it also encouraged resegregation and the maintenance of racial barriers through listings according to skin colour and blockbusting. The heavy financial burdens of land-instalment contracts, which buyers often did not understand when they signed them, contributed to the deterioration of what had been solid neighbourhoods as new owners divided houses into multiple units and shirked on maintenance and upkeep in order to make their weekly payments.

At the same time, racial turnover was not just a product of blacks moving out of the city centre, but also about white flight to the suburbs supported by federal housing policies that 'promoted homeownership in new—and primarily suburban—neighbourhoods so long as they were white and not ethnically or economically diverse.'¹¹² That is, the mortgages that enabled millions of white families to move to the suburbs were not available to black families, and would not be so until the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Even amongst people with no deep racial antipathies, racial turnover seemed inevitably to result in a neighbourhood's deterioration, even when the new black occupants had roughly the same incomes as the white occupants they replaced. This happened for several reasons: as a neighbourhood became increasingly African-American, residents noticed that the city began cutting back on services; merchants, sometimes with false assumptions, moved on to other neighbourhoods or suburbs; and black homeowners often had less opportunity for professional advancement than their white counterparts (or were amongst the first to be released in an economic slowdown), meaning they often had less capital to invest in their homes. Considering that their home financing was on less favourable terms than those enjoyed by white occupants, this last factor only compounded black homeowners' existing difficulties in home maintenance. Blockbusting, land-instalment contracts, the lack of well-regulated home financing, and racial turnover combined to systematically deprive members of Baltimore's black community with what has typically been the bedrock of American middle-

¹¹² Pietila *Not in My Neighborhood*, 72.

class wealth: the steady or rising values of the homes they own. Rising anger about their inability to access this resource was a key animating cause for some BUILD participants and specifically fuelled two of the case studies examined in the findings here.

Like Liverpool, Baltimore's Housing Authority began to build its first high-rise public housing projects in the 1950s.¹¹³ Baltimore found that it was nearly impossible to acquire land for public housing projects anywhere but in slums, so slum clearance and public housing construction went hand in hand in the 1950s and 1960s.¹¹⁴ However, the former proceeded more quickly than the latter: between 1950 and 1953, 3,427 public housing units were built for African Americans (public housing facilities were also segregated until 1954), less than the number of residences razed to make way for them.¹¹⁵ All in all, between 1951 and 1971, some 75,000 residents were displaced in Baltimore because of slum clearance, urban renewal projects, and highway construction, but only 15,000 public housing units were constructed—further pushing those who could afford it toward the suburbs, and those who could not toward increasingly crowded city centre neighbourhoods.¹¹⁶

Deterioration, vandalism, and abandonment came to describe large swathes of residential areas in inner-city Baltimore by the early 1970s, creating a dark underbelly to the city centre redevelopments started by the GBC and picked up with great gusto by the Schaefer administration. Though some suburbanites had begun to creep back to the city, attracted by distinctive architecture and historic neighbourhoods with 'ethnic character', the pockets of restoration that did appear were not nearly large enough to be taken seriously by bankers, real

¹¹³ Since the passage of the 1937 U.S. Housing Act created the country's public housing program, public housing projects had been built under two conditions: first, they were to be tied to slum clearance projects, with only as many public housing units built as slum dwellings were torn down; second, public housing options were to be confined only to those too poor to afford options on the private market. Thus, public housing played a different role in the U.S. than it did in Britain, where a much larger swathe of the population took advantage of public housing options.

¹¹⁴ D.R. Weiner, 'From New Deal Promise to Postmodern Defeat' in Elfenbein, Breihan, & Hollowak (eds.), *From Mobtown to Charm City* (Baltimore, 2002), p. 208.

¹¹⁵ Pietila, *Not in My Neighborhood*, 144.

¹¹⁶ McDougall, *Black Baltimore*, 100.

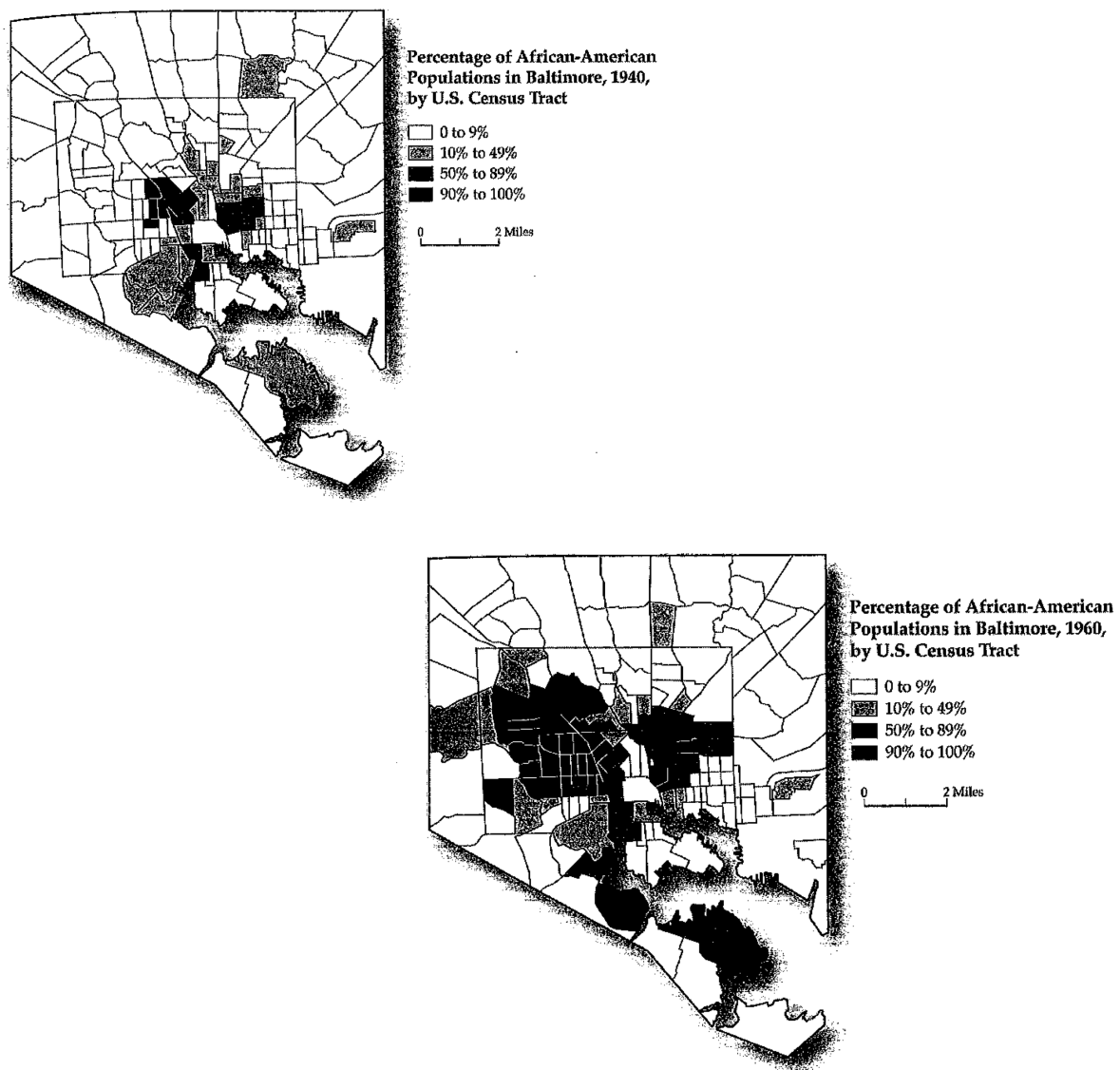
estate agents, and insurers, and conventional mortgage financing for an inner city property remained almost impossible to obtain.¹¹⁷ The FHA, finally deciding to spread its subsidies beyond the suburbs, ended up encouraging further concentration of low-incomes in the inner-city with its 221(d)(2) programme, which allowed low-income buyers to obtain a loan to buy *existing* homes in inner city areas without putting any money down.¹¹⁸ When the BCPS announced school integration plans in 1974 after federal department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) demanded that the district do more to achieve racial balance in its schools, thousands more white families left the city over the next two years.¹¹⁹ Despite isolated gentrification and regeneration efforts, Baltimore's housing stock continued to deteriorate throughout the 1980s, creating obvious organising targets for BUILD.

¹¹⁷ J. Kelly, 'Neighborhood Revitalization' in Nast, Krause, & Monk, *Baltimore: A Living Renaissance* (Baltimore, 1982), p. 6.

¹¹⁸ Pietila, *Not in My Neighborhood*, 243.

¹¹⁹ M. Orr, *Black Social Capital: The Politics of School Reform in Baltimore* (Lawrence, 1999), p. 56.

Figure 1: Racial change in Baltimore neighbourhoods, 1940–60. These two figures demonstrate the dramatic shift in racial geography that took place in the 1940s and 50s. (Source: Pietila, Not in My Neighborhood, 69)



GOVERNMENT STRUCTURES AND RESPONSES

Having set out the economic and residential living conditions in Liverpool and Baltimore that shaped government agendas, stoked the case study groups' desire to organise, and constrained local government's scope to respond, we now turn our attention to the form of those government bodies and instruments that attempted to govern these struggling cities. The

differing national and local government structures in the two cities are critical for understanding the political opportunity structure that the case study groups faced, since different distributions of resources and decision-making authority as well as different levels of accessibility in the local political system shaped the strategies the groups would choose as they attempted to grasp place-shaping power themselves and helped to determine the outcome of their efforts. Given the dramatically different government structures at the local level in the two cities, it is all the more remarkable that they both sought to bring about a ‘renaissance’ through property-led regeneration focused on transforming their respective harbours into tourist destinations.

National urban policy

National and state government support played a major enabling or constraining role in both cities in the post-war period. Both Liverpool and Baltimore became increasingly reliant on national government funds in the decades following World War II, which left both cities especially vulnerable to cutbacks in central government funds in the 1980s under Thatcher and Reagan. Baltimore additionally had to cope with the state of Maryland’s increasing fiscal conservatism, and lost clout in state politics as it lost population and tax revenues. In an important difference, Liverpool enjoyed the direct attention of the central government in the 1980s through the Merseyside Task Force, created by Environment Secretary Michael Heseltine after the Toxteth riots of 1981. Though the central government was still clawing back fiscal resources from Liverpool and other cities during this period, the presence of the central government directly in the city, in the form of the Task Force and the Merseyside Development Corporation, would prove to be a resource that the Eldonian Community Association could exploit with the help of Liverpool’s Anglican and Catholic bishops when they found themselves locked in conflict with the city council. By contrast, the federal government remained a largely distant figure to Baltimore’s community-level projects and agencies.

Prior to 1968, the British government had policies that were intended to be implemented in cities, but it did not have an 'urban policy' *per se*. However, Whitehall's decisions nevertheless had important consequences for Liverpool and other cities. Two such consequences have already been discussed above, in the areas of regional policy and housing. The government's three Distribution of Industry Acts, in 1945, 1950, and 1958, supplied incentives to companies to spread their facilities throughout the country, and the 1958 act was particularly important in attracting the automobile industry to Liverpool.¹²⁰ The national government's housing policies also had shaped the local policy of Liverpool and other cities, as when the 1954 Housing Repairs and Rent Act triggered large-scale slum clearances and increased building on overspill estates and the 1956 Housing Subsidies Act incentivized high-rise building. Indeed, much of the 'high-rise bubble' was rooted in government incentives, and the bubble permanently burst only when the Labour government changed the subsidy structure in 1965 such that it became set against high-rise schemes.¹²¹

In the late 1960s, however, the nature of the central government's presence in the city changed. In response to the growing perception of an 'urban problem' characterised by deteriorating neighbourhoods, a permanent 'underclass' or set of 'problem families', and rising crime, Harold Wilson announced the beginning of Urban Aid in May 1968. Thus began the era of urban policy in Britain, as well as the era of area-based community initiatives and urban regeneration goals.¹²² Rather than providing inducements to multinational corporations, the central government's most visible activity in the city came in the form of urban programmes designed to intervene in the 'cycle of deprivation' that, according to contemporary theory, was preventing inner city residents from climbing the ladders of social and economic mobility. Over

¹²⁰ Murden, 'City of Change...', 408.

¹²¹ Dunleavy, *Politics of Mass Housing*, 37.

¹²² A. Tallon, *Urban Regeneration in the UK* (London, 2010), p. 29.

the next two decades, Liverpool would host a local version of every area-based urban policy each successive government devised.

Liverpool's active pursuit of Urban Aid meant that by 1974, fifty Urban Aid projects were active or had been completed in the city, mostly focusing on education and welfare advice.¹²³ Urban Aid money funded both the MCRC and the vast majority of the groups that participated in the Anti-Cuts Campaign, binding them to local government decisions to ensure their continued existence and, especially in the case of the Anti-Cuts Campaign, significantly shaping the content of their goals. The Department of the Environment established one of its Community Development Projects in Vauxhall in 1970 and an Inner Area Studies region in Edge Hill, a Liverpool ward adjoining Toxteth, in 1974. The Inner Areas Studies led to Labour's 1977 White Paper on inner cities and the 1978 Inner Urban Areas Act, which proposed significantly more funding for what was now called the Urban Programme and giving more power to local authorities in deprived areas to deal with the challenges facing them. However, the Tory victory in 1979—and the Thatcher government's determination to take a very different approach to inner cities—meant that the 1978 Act was effectively shelved, and the country experienced a 'sea-change' in urban policy as in so many other areas.¹²⁴

Tallon describes the post-1979 shift in urban policy as 'part of a wider agenda to restructure the UK economically, socially, spatially, and ideologically around a new consensus of the free market, individualism, and a clear rejection of the post-war Keynesian welfare state.' The goal of the new government's policies would be wealth creation rather than welfare delivery; its emphasis efficiency, rather than equality.¹²⁵ Central-local government relations in the 1980s were characterized by the centralization of authority and shifts away from the rate support grant toward 'targeted spending'; privatization initiatives and the prevalence of private-sector/national

¹²³ Couch, *City of Change*, 74.

¹²⁴ Tallon, *Urban Regeneration in the UK*, 40.

¹²⁵ Ibid. 48.

government partnerships; and the transfer of powers to non-elected agencies to bypass the perceived obstructions created by local authorities. That is, local authorities had less and less say over how they could use the central government funds that came to them. Not surprisingly, such shifts led to conflict between the Thatcher government and local authorities in Liverpool and elsewhere. As described in an Interim Report of the Widdicombe Commission, local governments were frustrated by the central government's abandonment of certain principles of consultation and increased spending powers, while the central government was angered by some local authorities'—including Liverpool's—resistance to the Government's public expenditure programme.¹²⁶ The scale of the Government's cuts to local authorities prompted part of this resistance; in Liverpool, the reductions of the rate support grant were particularly drastic: in 1979, the central government's rate support grant provided 62% of the city's income, but by 1983 that number had fallen to 44 percent.¹²⁷

Though it was not officially framed as such, the United States effectively began an urban policy during the Great Depression. However, the national government did not embark on a unified set of policies, but rather on an ad hoc collection of programmes designed to relieve the tremendous pressure on state and municipal governments.¹²⁸ Building on this new relationship between municipalities and the federal government, Baltimore, like many other American cities, became increasingly reliant on state and federal funds in the coming decades: between 1940 and 1980, the proportion of the city's budget financed by state and federal funds more than tripled,

¹²⁶ Interim Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Conduct of Local Authority Business (Widdicombe Commission), Department of the Environment (London, 1985), ¶30.

¹²⁷ Parkinson, *Liverpool on the Brink*, 10. The drop-off in Liverpool's rate support grant was particularly steep in part because of the Liberal party's use of long-term borrowing to finance spending in the seventies, which had kept rates artificially low while keeping spending levels relatively high. Because the Thatcher government recalculated rate support grant based on expenditure levels in the previous decade, this strategy meant that Liverpool was penalised particularly severely by the new rate support grant system. So, Parkinson goes on to argue, when the new Labour council came to power in 1983, it did have a point when it complained of its 'missing' rate support grant money.

¹²⁸ R. Florida & A. Jonas, 'U.S. Urban Policy: The Postwar State and Capitalist Regulation', *Antipode* 23.4 (1991), p. 358.

from 18 percent in 1940 to 61 percent in 1980.¹²⁹ This meant that Baltimore's (like Liverpool's) fiscal fortunes were increasingly vulnerable to a decline in federal generosity, as witnessed during the Reagan era, when many neighbourhood programmes ceased to be financed as the national government tightened its fist.

Like Liverpool, Baltimore took part in each of the major federal urban initiatives from the 1960s forwards, from Johnson's Great Society to Nixon and Carter's 'new federalism'. Under Mayor McKeldin in the early 1960s, Baltimore became an early enlistee in the War on Poverty and established a Community Action Commission under Parren Mitchell, later a Congressman and BUILD ally. Controversial from the start for providing funds directly to grassroots activists and community groups—circumventing state and municipal governments—and so destabilizing some local political regimes, the Community Action Program was eventually dismantled; in Baltimore, its neighbourhood centres made little substantial impact in turning around the fortunes of deprived neighbourhoods—rather like the Liverpool's area-specific programmes.¹³⁰ Observing the failure of such efforts was part of what motivated some clergy, like those who formed BUILD, to think about forming citywide organisations instead.

Nixon's policy of 'new federalism' transformed American urban policy. Block grant funding in the form of community development block grants (CDBGs) replaced categorical funding, and cities earned more federal funds by demonstrating their ability to upgrade their communities with funding for specific projects.¹³¹ Baltimore did fairly well in this system, in particular taking advantage of CDBGs to help finance the Inner Harbor redevelopment.¹³² At the same time, the Nixon administration made substantial cuts to funding for public housing, including a 1972 cut to the subsidy enabling housing authorities to make up the difference

¹²⁹ Callcott, *Maryland and America*, 85.

¹³⁰ Callcott, *Maryland and America*, 204.

¹³¹ Ibid. 206; Florida & Jonas, 'U.S. Urban Policy', 372.

¹³² D. Harvey, 'A View from Federal Hill' in Fee, Shopes, & Zeidman (eds.), *The Baltimore Book* (Philadelphia, 1991), p. 231.

between rents collected and operating costs. Housing authorities could literally no longer pay the bills for all necessary repairs, maintenance, and services.¹³³ The further deterioration of public housing that ensued expanded the gap between poor neighbourhoods and sites of urban regeneration like the Inner Harbor, and contributed to the sense of ‘two Baltimores’ that so angered grassroots activists and peppered BUILD rhetoric.

Ronald Reagan’s election brought about the dismantling of a number of urban programmes.¹³⁴ Budget negotiations proved to be the primary vehicle of such cuts, as the Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 1981 ‘resulted in very severe cuts in urban social programmes including education, job training, unemployment, income maintenance, food stamps, and social services.’¹³⁵ The Reagan administration’s second ‘new federalism’ eliminated dozens of categorical grants and consolidated dozens more into block grants. These policies exposed Baltimore’s vulnerability to federal cuts in urban funding, and a number of neighbourhood-level programmes supported by federal funds were cut (though projects related to Inner Harbor redevelopment were preserved). In total, between 1980 and 1990 the federal government’s share of Baltimore’s budget was cut in half, making any large-scale project less feasible.¹³⁶

Finally, an additional important layer of government not present in Liverpool shaped Baltimore politics—state government. Like Baltimore’s business community, state government was another potential resource holder for BUILD to approach that was not available to the Liverpool case study groups. Baltimore’s continued population decline in the post-war period, set in the context of Maryland’s population growth, meant that Baltimore found itself with less and less clout in the state house as the century wore on, setting the stage for an eventual showdown with the suburbs in the state house with regards to education policy, expenditures,

¹³³ Weiner, ‘From New Deal Promise...’, 217.

¹³⁴ McDougall, *Black Baltimore*, 87-8.

¹³⁵ Florida & Jonas, ‘U.S. Urban Policy’, 375.

¹³⁶ McDougall, *Black Baltimore*, 110.

etc.¹³⁷ Nevertheless, Baltimore actually enjoyed more support from its state government than did many Frostbelt cities in this period, as was amply demonstrated in 1969, when Maryland stepped in to relieve the city of some fiscal responsibility for school construction, property tax assessment, and the non-federal share of its welfare costs, while also agreeing to pay a major proportion of the city's police and public health costs as well as take over the administration of the Port of Baltimore and Baltimore-Washington International Airport.¹³⁸ In light of the city's dire financial straits in 1969, such aid was welcome, and necessary.

By 1980, however, Maryland was facing the same challenges as many other states in the face of a weakened national economy and a dramatic shift in international finance and trade. The state became increasingly fiscally conservative while remaining relatively prosperous; progressive taxation and local school base tax equalization produced little enthusiasm in the state house, which instead imposed ceilings on state and county taxes.¹³⁹ Fiscal retrenchment on both the national and the state level left Baltimore city's government with fewer and fewer resources, and increasingly difficult choices. These sorts of fiscal constraints are important for understanding how BUILD's success would be limited even when working with a mayor who was a willing partner to its projects: the city government's own resources were finite.

Local politics

The structure of local government was a critical factor shaping who the case study groups would have to access in order to influence decisions in Liverpool and Baltimore. For all the similarities between the two cities' economic and geographical challenges in the post-war period, the manner in which policy was set and political power operated was quite different. In Britain, where district and city councils exist as creations of Parliament, local governments may

¹³⁷ Orr, *Black Social Capital*, 75.

¹³⁸ Brambilla & Longo, *Learning from Baltimore*, 131.

¹³⁹ Callcott, *Maryland and America*, 306-10.

only execute functions that fall within the purview of national statutes, and final authority for the administration of local affairs rests with the central government. As stated by Lord Templeman in the ruling that dismissed Liverpool's 'rate rebel' Labour councillors from office (discussed in Chapter 3):

A local authority is created by Parliament, must perform the duties imposed by Parliament and can only exercise powers conferred by Parliament in the manner and for the purposes intended by Parliament.¹⁴⁰

In the United States, local governments exist as creations of the states and have greater executive powers to form policies in areas where states retain political authority. Furthermore, Liverpool, like other British cities, was governed by a city council during the 1980s, while Baltimore's city council had minimal governing authority compared to the mayor. Different governing structures created a different set of opportunities for influence in the two cities and shaped the strategies that the case study groups chose when attempting to accomplish their aims.

In the aftermath of World War II during the creation of the welfare state, local government in Britain expanded its capacity enormously in direct relation to its increasing responsibilities as the on-the-ground agent administering expanded welfare provisions (though healthcare, notably, became part of a national system). Thus, local government's growing importance was found in service delivery, rather than increased decision-making capacities.¹⁴¹

During Britain's 1974 local government restructuring, the Merseyside County Council and the Liverpool District Council began to jointly govern Liverpool. Unlike non-metropolitan areas, Liverpool District Council retained much of its pre-reorganisation responsibilities, including for education, housing, and social services. The only notable transfer of responsibility to Merseyside County Council was road maintenance and public transportation, and the Merseyside Council was, along with the other county councils and the Greater London Council,

¹⁴⁰ Quoted in J. Watson, 'How the Law Lords laid it on the line to the rebels', *The Liverpool Echo*, 12/3/87, 14.

¹⁴¹ M. Temple, *How Britain Works* (Basingstoke, 2000), p. 19.

abolished by the Thatcher government in 1986 in order to create a unitary system of government. Crucially, Liverpool also retained its former boundaries after the 1974 reorganisation (unlike, notably, Birmingham, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and Leeds and Bradford). This had major implications for the city's revenue: Liverpool did *not* get to swallow the rate base of its more affluent suburbs, and the large industrial complexes, oil refineries, and chemical plants at Widnes, Runcorn, and Ellesmere Port were all included in Cheshire, where they subsidised the rates of Cheshire's commuter population.¹⁴² Particularly as Liverpool's own population continued to decline, age, or become increasingly unemployed, the failure to incorporate new sources of revenue into the city would place increasing financial strain on the local authority. In this matter, Liverpool's situation was notably similar to Baltimore City's, which, because of a state amendment passed in 1919, was unable to annex any part of its growing white-collar suburbs during its own population and revenue decline. Indeed, geographic boundaries limited local government's scope for action in Liverpool and Baltimore in multiple ways.

Both legislative and executive responsibilities in Liverpool resided with the city council, which consisted of ninety-nine city councillors, three from each of the city's thirty-three wards. Political parties operated at the ward level, where low levels of participation made it easy for a small group of people to dominate the selection of council candidates for a given ward. The council accomplished its business through a series of committees and sub-committees, where much of its substantive debate and decision-making took place. The division of authority across committees meant that, once on the council, a councillor's influence was very much dependent on the committee positions they were able to obtain; for example, successful navigation of the committee structure would be crucial to the accomplishment of the Anti-Cuts campaigners' aims once they were elected to local office in 1987 (Chapters 6, 8). The committees relied heavily on

¹⁴² P. Carmichael, *Central – local government relations in the 1980s: Liverpool and Glasgow compared* (Aldershot, 1995), p. 137.

the help of local civil service officers, who served at the pleasure of the council and were 'expected to ride above the political fray; both their views and their behaviour must be non-partisan.'¹⁴³ However, as will be seen in the MCRC's efforts on the Race Relations Liaison Committee and in the Anti-Cuts Campaign, officers could also advance or frustrate agenda items depending on their sympathies, making them important resource holders for case study groups to influence in order to be successful.

Baltimore's City Charter, adopted in 1797, set out the structures and responsibilities of city government in Baltimore and acts as a sort of constitution for the city. Baltimore's charter calls for 'the strongest of strong mayoral governments'; it is the mayor who sets the budget, appoints head of city departments, enforces ordinances, grants permits and licenses for all businesses, and establishes pensions and benefits for city employees.¹⁴⁴ The mayor also holds veto power over all city council ordinances. Because Baltimore exists as a freestanding political unit in Maryland, not falling under the jurisdiction of any county, it controlled a wider range of public services than did other American municipalities and was 'functionally self-contained to a far greater degree than the majority of cities in the United States.'¹⁴⁵ One important aspect of government functions the mayor did not control, however, was the city's public education system, which was instead governed by an independent school board and superintendent. While the mayor was responsible for appointing the nine school board members, they operated with six-year terms and minimal influence from City Hall. This relative lack of mayoral power in public education would be important when BUILD was forced to devise ways of tackling its agenda while cut off from the mayor and City Hall.

¹⁴³ W.E. Nelson, *Black Atlantic Politics* (Albany, 2000), p. 169.

¹⁴⁴ C.F. Smith, *William Donald Schaefer: A Political Biography* (Baltimore, 1999), p. 119; Baltimore City Department of Education, Adult Education Division. 'City Government, Our Agency', October 1950, 5.

¹⁴⁵ M. Crenson, *Neighborhood Politics* (Cambridge MA, 1983), p. 37.

In contrast to the central decision-making authority of the Liverpool City Council, the Baltimore City Council provided only a light counterweight to mayoral authority in Baltimore; for example, it could only make cuts to the city's budget rather than propose new additions. It was also a far smaller body than the Liverpool council, consisting of three representatives from the city's six councilmanic districts. Controlling one of Baltimore's six councilmanic districts required far more resources than controlling one of Liverpool's thirty-three wards, and separate political machines operated in Baltimore's districts in the early and mid-twentieth century. A Board of Estimates oversaw most of the city's day-to-day spending. But the board was largely an extension of the mayor's power, given that the mayor controlled three of its five seats. In Baltimore, then, a capable mayor like William Donald Schaefer could expect to tackle his agenda with few roadblocks from other branches of city government. The dramatically smaller number of elected representatives in Baltimore's city government compared to Liverpool's would have important implications in the 1987 local elections in each city, where Anti-Cuts Campaign leaders and BUILD leaders would choose different strategies for moving toward the centre of decision-making power.

Renaissance Cities

Despite their differences in national-local government relations and local government institutions, by the 1980s strikingly similar economic strategies were in place in the two cities. Via the national government in Liverpool and the city government in Baltimore, quasi-public entities in both cities attempted to engineer renaissances whereby revitalized dock and harbour areas would provide the cornerstone for new tourism and leisure services industries. The strategy produced similar results in both places: new museums, stores, restaurants, and public spaces that transformed formerly derelict swathes of land into tourist destinations that attracted millions of visitors annually, but failed to address root economic weaknesses and the daily struggles of

poorer residents. Disparities in investment between the new tourist magnets and desperately needed resources in lower income neighbourhoods contributed to a sense of cities split between the haves and the have-nots. Especially in Baltimore, where the investment was orchestrated by the Schaefer administration, such disparity became an important political rallying point—a helpful animating cause—for BUILD. In Liverpool, the presence of central government funding mechanisms on the ground did not create useful resources for the MCRC and the Anti-Cuts Campaign, who wanted to exercise greater influence with the city council. It did, however, become an important resource for the Eldonians when they sought funding for a housing cooperative that the city council opposed.

The Liverpool City Council and Merseyside County Council both repeatedly drew up plans for city centre and docklands redevelopment in the 1960s and 1970s. Not unlike the office building and highway plans that shaped Baltimore’s downtown, the city council’s 1965 Liverpool City Centre Plan envisaged 7.5 million square feet of new office space to be created over twenty years’ time; a series of American-style shopping arcades, building off of the project already begun in St. John’s precinct in 1959; the redevelopment of the city’s transportation system with an underground ‘loop and link’ Merseyrail network; the construction of a new tunnel linking Birkenhead and Liverpool; and a new motorway connecting the M62 directly to the heart of the city.¹⁴⁶ However, these plans were shelved as economic and population decline weakened the demand for offices and shops, and central government funds for such projects proved difficult to come by.¹⁴⁷ By the mid-1970s, the remains of a local economy gasping for breath were everywhere to be seen. Port facilities were abandoned. Coal-fired power stations in the city centre had long given way to newer facilities out of town, but their hulking shells remained. Falling rail traffic led to the closure of a number of lines and stations without the clearance of

¹⁴⁶ Couch, *City of Change*, 50–9.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid. 43.

their infrastructure, and facilities of inner city manufacturing firms that had closed or relocated dotted the landscape. Indeed, ‘dereliction came to characterise parts of the inner city and the pervasive atmosphere of decay became a discouragement to new investment.’¹⁴⁸

Central government funds did come to Liverpool in the 1980s, however, in the form of the Merseyside Development Corporation (MDC) and the Merseyside Task Force. Following the ‘Toxteth riots’ of July 1981, Environment Secretary Michael Heseltine visited Liverpool and concluded, ‘There are critical problems...that only the public sector can tackle and that the level of unemployment in the worst urban areas warrants the use of additional resources.’¹⁴⁹ In response, Thatcher made Heseltine ‘Minister for Merseyside’ in October 1981 and the Merseyside Task Force was created. The Government intended that the Task Force, along with the MDC, should serve the dual purposes of jump-starting the city’s economy while also demonstrating the effectiveness of property-led regeneration free from the political ambiguities and hold-ups of local authorities. Urban development corporations served as the centrepiece of the Thatcher government’s urban policy. Quasi-public agencies, they held vast powers of land acquisition and planning implementation. The first two development corporations were established in the London Docklands and in Merseyside in 1981.

The MDC’s initial mandate covered 865 acres of derelict dockland, mostly isolated from the rest of the city. At first, the MDC intended to focus on industrial stimulus by devoting over half the land to industrial purposes. However, when it became clear that industrial demand was not forthcoming—again emphasising the lack of resource holders in Liverpool—the MDC shifted its strategy to one based on tourism and leisure. The MDC’s most notable achievements between 1981 and 1988 were the 1984 International Garden Festival, which drew over 2 million visitors, and the redevelopment of the Albert Dock, a Jesse Hartley-designed Grade I building at

¹⁴⁸ Ibid. 19.

¹⁴⁹ PRO, M. Heseltine, *It Took a Riot*, ¶8. AT81/241, ¶43.

the heart of Liverpool's now derelict docklands.¹⁵⁰ The extensive redevelopment of Albert Dock eventually accommodated the Tate Gallery, a Maritime Museum, the Granada Television news studios, shops, and luxury flats, and carried a price tag of about 25 million pounds. By 1988 it was attracting over three and a half million visitors a year.¹⁵¹ In addition, the MDC redeveloped most of the closed South Docks into housing, offices, hotels, workshops, showrooms, and a marina.¹⁵²

By 1988, the MDC was able to state that it had helped reclaim ninety-seven hectares for residential and commercial development and forty-eight hectares for open and recreation space; refurbished 135,000 square meters for commercial and housing uses; and created 1,160 jobs, all while landing 97 percent of its contracts with firms in the Merseyside area.¹⁵³ Nevertheless, some still questioned the efficiency of the MDC's efforts, since its investment of 170 million pounds of public funds had attracted only 25 million pounds of private investment. Furthermore, some critics pointed out that while the waterfront may have been revived, the physical infrastructure of the wider city had been neglected, and the number of jobs created was roughly equivalent to the number lost by the closure of but one large factory.¹⁵⁴

Baltimore's city government embarked on its redevelopment plans decades before the MDC was in full swing in Liverpool. In a crucial difference from Liverpool, Baltimore's redevelopment was also driven and coordinated in large part by its business community. Redevelopment began in earnest when the city accepted the Greater Baltimore Committee's Charles Center plan in 1959. The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) had been formed in 1955, in part as a response to a 1954 report from the federal Commission on Governmental

¹⁵⁰ Murden, 'City of Change...', 446.

¹⁵¹ J. Dawson & M. Parkinson, 'Merseyside Development Corporation, 1981 – 1989: Physical Regeneration, Accountability, and Economic Challenge' in Keith and Rogers (eds.), *Hollow Promises: Rhetoric and reality in the inner city* (London, 1991), p. 48.

¹⁵² C. Couch, 'Urban Regeneration in Liverpool' in Couch, Fraser, and Percy (eds.), *Urban Regeneration in Europe* (Oxford, 2003), p. 40.

¹⁵³ Murden, 'City of Change...', 446.

¹⁵⁴ Dawson & Parkinson, 'Merseyside Development Corporation', 60.

Efficiency and Economy that warned of ‘dire consequences’ if Baltimore was not able to reverse the pattern of falling property tax revenues. Corralled by such local business heavyweights as real estate developer James Rouse and attorney Clarence Miles, a group of downtown-oriented executives organised themselves into the GBC both to represent business interests and bring business expertise to municipal government, and to make on the spot commitments on behalf of their companies.¹⁵⁵ The central role that the GBC played in Baltimore’s city centre redevelopment marked an important difference in development patterns in Liverpool, where private industry would play no such catalysing and organising role. The relative diffusion of decision-making resources in Baltimore that it highlights also foreshadows the opportunities that the existence of such non-government, resource-rich bodies would eventually create for BUILD as it pursued its own goals.

Charles Center would transform downtown through the redevelopment of thirty-three acres in the heart of downtown Baltimore into shops, apartments, and office buildings, including the Mies Van Der Rohe-designed flagship office tower, One Charles Center.¹⁵⁶ While the city was responsible for site acquisition and clearance, it was the GBC that hired a developer, raised the capital for the project, and found tenants for the office buildings. Charles Center was deemed a quick success: both its flagship office buildings were full within a year and produced more in property taxes for the city than the entire thirty-three acre area had before redevelopment.¹⁵⁷ Though more successful than Liverpool’s office-building ventures in the same period, this continuing revenue may have not represented a net gain for the city, since the centre as a whole

¹⁵⁵ K. Lyall, ‘A Bicycle Built for Two: Public-Private Partnership in Baltimore’ in *National Civic Review* 72 (1983), p. 543.

¹⁵⁶ Levine, ‘Downtown Redevelopment...’, 106.

¹⁵⁷ Lyall, ‘A Bicycle Built for Two’, 551.

was so heavily subsidized that it was a tax *drain*, and since most of the jobs it attracted were taken by suburban residents.¹⁵⁸

Mayor Theodore McKeldin announced the city's intentions to redevelop the Inner Harbor in 1963, and in 1964 revealed plans for a \$270 million, 30-year project that would transform the city's railroad harbor into a tourism and leisure mecca of shopping centers, restaurants, museums, hotels, a baseball stadium, and convention facilities.¹⁵⁹ Political turmoil and financing difficulties somewhat delayed the start of the project, but by 1970, 439 buildings had been razed to make way for the new Inner Harbor.¹⁶⁰ When William Donald Schaefer ascended to the mayor's office in 1971, his aggressive boosterism and 'MetroCenter plan'—which, in its 1,000 acres, included downtown, the Inner Harbor, and the city's primary retail and financial districts—pushed development to pick up pace, and the area underwent rapid change through the 1970s. Between 1967 and 1979, square footage for office space in MetroCenter increased by 80.1 percent.¹⁶¹

While Baltimore's government directed this redevelopment itself, as in Liverpool funds from the national government made all of it possible. Between 1975 and 1981, Baltimore spent 34.5 percent of the \$296 million it received in UDAGs, CDBGs, and special grants solely on Inner Harbor Projects.¹⁶² During this period, the city built the Maryland Science Center (1976), the World Trade Center (1977), the Baltimore Convention Center (1979), and the Baltimore Aquarium (1981). Perhaps the crowning achievement, Harborplace (a waterfront 'festival marketplace'), opened in 1980 and proceeded to draw more visitors in its first year than Disneyworld. A hotel boom around the harbour followed, and the number of available rooms

¹⁵⁸ Harvey, 'View from Federal Hill', 233.

¹⁵⁹ Brambilla & Longo, *Learning from Baltimore*, 53.

¹⁶⁰ J. Friedrichs & A.C. Goodman, *The Changing Downtown: A comparative study of Baltimore and Hamburg* (New York and Berlin, 1987), p. 21.

¹⁶¹ Ibid. 62.

¹⁶² Levine, 'Downtown Redevelopment...', 115.

tripled between 1980 and 1986, as did tourist visits and expenditures. Convention business also grew quickly, and was pumping an estimated \$52 million per year into the city by 1984.¹⁶³

However, as described earlier in this chapter, the ‘pink collar’ jobs around the Inner Harbor were poor replacements for the manufacturing jobs that had left the city in the preceding two decades.

Two primary bureaucratic tools made the Baltimore Renaissance possible. First, throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the city had steadily consolidated its housing, inspection, and planning departments, culminating in the creation of the Department of Housing and Community Development in 1968. The department acted as a city-level HUD (the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development), and by placing all the city’s redevelopment decisions in the hands of one department, decisions could be reached much more swiftly.¹⁶⁴ Second, a dizzying array of quasi-public development corporations and organisations possessed the authority to allocate public capital, acquire land through eminent domain, and perform a host of other development functions—all while being overseen only by two ‘trustees’ who were appointed by the powerful Mayor Schaefer.¹⁶⁵ The proliferation of such quasi-public organisations led to charges of a ‘shadow government’ running the city, but throughout his time as mayor Schaefer relied on these bodies to create a ‘pro-business’ environment in the city and lure federal funds with their demonstrated efficiency in completing projects.¹⁶⁶ While Schaefer responded to charges that such bodies were undemocratic by pointing out that their spending decisions were overseen by the Board of Estimates, given that he controlled three out of the five spots on the board such a response actually pointed back to the incredible authority of Schaefer himself in engineering the city’s development schemes. Though the ‘shadow government’ may not have been the most publicly accountable way to do so, it did help Baltimore to acquire ‘a

¹⁶³ Ibid. 110.

¹⁶⁴ Lyall, ‘A Bicycle Built for Two’, 537.

¹⁶⁵ Levine, ‘Downtown Redevelopment...’, 107.

¹⁶⁶ C.F. Smith, ‘Two trustees and a \$100 million “bank” skirt the restrictions of city government’, *The Baltimore Sun*, 13/4/80, A1.

reputation for political efficacy at a time when such reputations had become rare among urban governments’—a reputation that proved useful for the city’s bond rating and HUD applications.¹⁶⁷

SUMMARY

Going into the 1980s, Liverpool and Baltimore had suffered a string of similar urban calamities: the flight of manufacturing, dramatic port workforce contraction, steep population decline. Housing challenges, in the form of crumbling tower blocks in Liverpool and an ever-growing number of vacant and blighted rowhomes in Baltimore, were paramount in both cities and created rallying causes for the case study groups in both cities. With their cursed geography—too far from Europe, too far up the Chesapeake Bay—and their inability to expand into the ‘noose’ ring of suburbs encircling them, their economic prospects seemed bleak and the financial constraints upon them were severe.

The old political bosses had faded. They were replaced by a string of hapless hung councils and central government quangos (who felt to some residents like ‘imperial governors’) in Liverpool, and a dominating mayor in Baltimore. Despite these governmental differences on the ground, by the 1980s property-driven, tourism-based regeneration strategies were underway in both cities. While these strategies did produce sparkling new waterfronts and cultural facilities, they left much of the ‘rot beneath the glitter’ and could not resurrect the cities’ fortunes on their own. Indeed, especially in Baltimore, where local government had lead the regeneration charge, the growing sense of ‘two Baltimores’ would provide yet another rallying cry for BUILD.

A survey of the cities’ economic conditions and their different government structures has also begun to reveal key elements about the distribution of resources in each city, which would

¹⁶⁷ Crenson, *Neighborhood Politics*, 292.

be important factors in the success of the pressure groups presented here. While in Liverpool, both financial and decision-making resources were concentrated in the city council, the council was also heavily dependent on the central government both for funds and for policy direction. This combination of concentration and limitation would prove difficult for the MCRC and the Anti-Cuts Campaign to overcome, even as central government quangos created an opportunity for the Eldonians. By contrast, more local actors, including the GBC, the city's public school district, and the state of Maryland, held financial resources and/or decision-making authority in Baltimore. This more diffuse arrangement would work in BUILD's favour when it was locked in conflict with Mayor Schaefer, but also meant that BUILD was likely to have to target a larger number of players to accomplish a given goal.

Chapter 2, Personalities and particulars: Local politics and group origins

This chapter will finish laying out the political opportunity structures that groups faced in Liverpool and Baltimore at the beginning of the 1980s by introducing the key political leaders the case study groups engaged and the dynamics that shaped those leaders' time in office. While macroeconomic forces and political structures were key factors shaping the challenges the case study groups faced, the resource holders available for them to seek out, and the constraints upon local government, the individual parties and politicians and their attitudes toward neighbourhood-level participation in city decision-making made success even more difficult by resisting the groups' attempts to participate in decisions affecting both their members and citywide issues. In Liverpool, the Militant Tendency's intransigence and focus on national priorities at the expense of local services, as well as the single-mindedness of Housing Committee chairman Tony Byrne, provoked conflicts with the MCRC, the Eldonians, and the Anti-Cuts Campaign; as long as Militant dominated the local council, the groups would be unable to move forward on their agendas unless they worked with national government bodies to do so. In Baltimore, the dominance of Mayor William Donald Schaefer for sixteen years defined local politics, and BUILD would have to learn to work both with Schaefer and without him. Understanding how Militant, Byrne, and Schaefer exercised control over local political processes is essential to understanding the case study groups' analysis of how they themselves might be able to accomplish their goals, including exercising influence in city affairs.

Liverpool

Though Liverpool's economic decline in the 1980s was depressingly predictable, its politics were unique and produced an on-going series of showdowns between the city council and other bodies. When it was elected in 1979, the Thatcher government was determined to rein

in the spending of ‘wasteful’ and ‘unwieldy’ local authorities by reducing the amount of rate support grant they received from the central government. Because the adjusted grant was based on each authority’s spending in the 1970s—a period when the Liberals controlling the Liverpool council had in fact underspent and financed certain local authority functions with long-term loans—Liverpool was pinched particularly sharply by this policy.¹⁶⁸ The city council’s 1980 budget negotiations revealed that the city would have to increase rates substantially (50 percent according to Labour, 42 percent according to the Liberals) merely to maintain existing jobs and services. In a city where the local authority was by far the largest employer, with 30,000 people on the payroll by the mid-1980s, and one of the few that was regularly hiring, the threat of losing local authority jobs was greeted with particular anxiety.¹⁶⁹ It was during these negotiations in May 1980 that Derek Hatton, a flashy and charismatic Militant Tendency member and the future deputy leader of the council, was able to effectively throw down the Militant hatchet when he proposed an amendment calling for ‘no cuts in jobs and services’ and no rate increases beyond those necessary to keep up with inflation, and calling on the council to unite with Labour and the trade union movement to fight for the necessary funds from the government.

The Militant Tendency was a Trotskyist faction within the Labour party whose ultimate goal was the overthrow of capitalism and the implementation of a socialist government. To that end, their approach to work on the council was to use it ‘first and foremost...as a platform from which to raise the political consciousness of the working class.’¹⁷⁰ This goal made them ill-disposed to the case study groups, who were interested in matters of local governance and whose pursuit of their interests exposed rifts—racial, religious, educational—within Labour’s ranks. Such diverse and particular interests did not fit with the Militant ideology of a united working-class struggle. Militant had been active in Liverpool since the 1960s, when it began to gain a

¹⁶⁸ Parkinson *Liverpool on the Brink*, 9.

¹⁶⁹ F.F. Ridley, ‘Liverpool is Different: Political Style in Context’, *Political Quarterly* 57.2 (1986), 130.

¹⁷⁰ P. Taaffe & T. Mulhearn, *Liverpool: A City that Dared to Fight* (London, 1988), 69.

foothold in a number of unions by supporting their efforts to strike and organise. Its workers were present in the bus workers' strike of 1968; the GEC—AEI—EE factory closures of 1969; and the occupation of the Fisher-Bendix and Lucas CAV plants in 1971, to name but a few.¹⁷¹ It further established its reputation by supporting the organisation of tenants' associations and housing groups during the rent protests of 1967 and 1971-73. The importance of these ties would become manifest a decade later, when the Labour council was able to gain unanimous support from the trade unions (at first) in its budget fights with the Thatcher government. Over the course of the 1970s, Militant members had begun to take advantage of the Liverpool Labour party's brittle ward-level parties, where two decades of boss politics had weakened ward parties and made many of them easy targets for a well-organised insurgent faction like Militant.¹⁷²

While Hatton's 1980 budget amendment failed to pass, Militant's rallying cry had been raised for the first time—and in a city where voters were so economically squeezed, it resonated. Labour was punished severely in the next election cycle for pushing through a 50 percent rate increase, which encouraged the District Labour Party to accept the amendment as official Labour party policy and thus set the stage for conflict with the Thatcher government when Labour returned to power in 1983. Meanwhile, the rate support grant's proportion of the city's income fell from 62 percent in 1979 to 44 percent in 1983, and the proportion provided by local rates rose from 37 percent to 55 percent.¹⁷³ By forcing Liverpool's finances to suffer a serious economic shock in such a short period of time, the Thatcher government may have unintentionally opened the door for Militant influence to overrule more moderate voices and dictate local Labour policy.

¹⁷¹ Murden, 'City of Change...', 450.

¹⁷² P. Kilfoyle, *Left Behind: Lessons from Labour's Heartland* (London, 2000), 51.

¹⁷³ Parkinson, *Liverpool on the Brink*, 10.

In its 1983 elections, Liverpool bucked national trends and turned out strongly for Labour. As Peter Taaffe and Tony Mulhearn, key figures in the Militant Tendency movement that helped to secure Labour success in Liverpool, boasted in their memoir:

In a brilliant victory, Labour gained twelve seats [on the city council], ten from the Liberals and one from SDP [the Social Democratic Party]. Not a single Labour seat was lost...This in a city dominated by the Tories up until 1964! Labour's vote increased by an astonishing 40 percent—22,000 extra votes.¹⁷⁴

In a national election in which the vote had swung 3.9 percent from Labour to the Tories, Liverpool did not return a Conservative MP for the first time in a century while its vote swung 2.4 percent in the opposite direction.¹⁷⁵ Liverpool's new Labour council took the election results as a mandate to implement sweeping reforms in the city, as well as to challenge Whitehall—the latter being the primary goal of the city council's Militant members, who believed such confrontations would be useful for recruiting members to the Militant Tendency nationally.

Despite never having more than twelve to sixteen of its members on the city council (analyses of who was and was not a member of Militant differ), the Militant Tendency was able to effectively control council policy because of the grip it had on the District Labour Party (DLP)'s leadership.¹⁷⁶ The Militant leadership recognised as much, with Taaffe explaining in an internal document, '...on the DLP the Marxists hold sway, and therefore, in effect, their tactics and strategy can determine the course of battle.'¹⁷⁷ After 1983, Militant had a clear majority on the DLP's 32- member Executive Committee and could rely on support in the General Committee from the blue-collar public sector unions, the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) and General, Municipal, Boilermakers, and Allied Trades Union (GMBATU). With their combined 85 delegates, the two unions had more representatives on the General

¹⁷⁴ Taaffe & Mulhearn, *Liverpool: A City that Dared to Fight*, 82.

¹⁷⁵ M. Crick, *The March of Militant* (London, 1986), 215.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid. 222.

¹⁷⁷ Cited in *ibid.* 232.

Committee than all the constituency and ward parties combined.¹⁷⁸ GMBATU, or the ‘General and Municipal’, was in particular an ‘old-fashioned’ manual workers’ local authority union with strong Militant leadership at the branch and shop steward levels.¹⁷⁹ Militant further solidified these unions’ support through patronage in the form of Liverpool’s most valuable currency, employment. One of the 1983 council’s early actions gave public sector unions more nomination rights for council jobs, allowing them to nominate people for fully half of all council posts rather than posting openings in local Jobs Centres.¹⁸⁰ Furthermore, Militant members became both the chairman and deputy chairman of the council’s Personnel Committee, posts which further facilitated Militant’s ability to secure council jobs for its members. The practice of rewarding members with jobs eventually became so egregious that council leader John Hamilton would complain, ‘You can’t get a job here [with the council] unless you are a Militant.’¹⁸¹ The *Liverpool Echo* would also repeatedly report on the Militant practice of ‘jobs for the boys and girls.’¹⁸²

In addition to effectively having the ability to set council policy after 1983, the DLP was also responsible for drawing up the list of approved Labour candidates for council elections. This combination of factors made it extremely difficult for outside groups like the MCRC, Eldonians, or Anti-Cuts Campaign to exercise influence within the Labour group, and thus on the city council, until Militant’s grip on the council began to show signs of cracking in 1986.

However, the single most influential individual on the council was not a member of Militant, though he sympathised with their aims. Contemporary observers recognised Tony Byrne, chair of the Finance and Housing Committees (arguably the council’s two most important committees, along with Education), as the mastermind of much of the Labour council’s policy

¹⁷⁸ Ibid. 254.

¹⁷⁹ Parkinson, *Liverpool on the Brink*, 41.

¹⁸⁰ Ridley, ‘Liverpool is Different’, 132.

¹⁸¹ Cited in Crick, *March of Militant*, 253.

¹⁸² J.Watson, ‘Jobs for the boys and girls’, *Liverpool Echo*, 12/3/87, 7.

from its election in 1983 to its fall from power in 1987.¹⁸³ Byrne became a critical antagonist for two of the case studies, the Eldonians and the Anti-Cuts Campaign, examined here. Unlike the Thatcher government and the Merseyside Task Force, Byrne was convinced that the local council could not influence the private sector's decisions about whether to invest in Liverpool or not.¹⁸⁴ So, he sought to make what it could change—housing, and the city's residential physical environment—the centrepiece of the council's agenda. Bishop Sheppard and Archbishop Worlock, who became intimately involved in the city's governmental affairs in the mid-1980s, described Byrne as 'single-minded to the point of ruthlessness in his determination to tackle the housing problem.'¹⁸⁵ As he told the pair shortly after Labour's 1983 victory, 'I believe in public ownership, control and accountability for housing through the elected council. It is the local authority that must satisfy the needs of the working class.'¹⁸⁶ His vehicle for doing so was the Urban Regeneration Strategy.

The Labour council's Urban Regeneration Strategy was an ambitious plan to clear dilapidated slums, tear down now-hated high-rises, and build single-family homes complete with gardens in eighteen 'Priority Areas' across the city. By the middle of the decade, the council had achieved a number of its goals: 1,000 traditional homes had been built in what was then the country's largest building programme; despised tenement blocks, like the aptly nicknamed Piggeries, in Everton and Speke had been demolished; Everton Park was created; and both the housing and the landscape in Croxteth were transformed, all in less than three years.¹⁸⁷ However, the strategy's implementation was very much a council-driven process, and as Byrne's words above suggest, the council's Housing Committee in this period brooked little opposition.

¹⁸³ David Alton, in discussion with the author, 2/9/11; Jane Kennedy, in discussion with the author, 9/9/11; Tony McGann, in discussion with the author, 13/9/11.

¹⁸⁴ Ridley, 'Liverpool is Different', 129.

¹⁸⁵ D. Sheppard & D. Worlock, *Better Together: Christian partnership in a hurt city* (London, 1988), p. 206.

¹⁸⁶ Byrne quoted in *ibid.*, 206-7.

¹⁸⁷ Murden, 'City of Change...', 462.

Working-class people in neighbourhoods targeted by the Urban Regeneration Strategy, including the Eldonians and members of the Anti-Cuts Campaign like the Langrove Street Action Group and the Speke Community Centre, found themselves barred from shaping the process that would shape their homes and lives. While many people were pleased to see the destruction of tower blocks, the destruction of facilities like community centres was not at all welcome. In meetings with council representatives, residents were often surprised by the intractability of the council's plans, the dictatorial manner in which they were handed down, and the refusal to listen to or take seriously the concerns of residents—an attitude that carried over into other areas of policy and would be an animating force for all the Liverpool case studies included in this work.¹⁸⁸

The Militant strategy for attacking the Thatcher government (and mobilising working-class consciousness in the process) was in fact remarkably simple. In 1983/84, they would run the city on a deficit budget in order to force the Thatcher government to return the £30 million it had 'stolen' from Liverpool (in the form of reduced rate support grant) since 1979; if it did not, they would allow all public services in the city to collapse.¹⁸⁹ Public support for this strategy encouraged the council on its course. As an editorial in the *Liverpool Echo* read on the occasion of Jenkin's visit to the city in June 1984:

The scale of the deprivation explains why so many people in the city support the council's Labour rulers in what must seem to outsiders to be a suicidal plan to pass an illegal budget. When the sodden wallpaper lies in a heap on the floor, the rats have to be shooed away from the baby's cot and a job is not even a distant prospect, then talk of anarchy on the streets holds few tears.¹⁹⁰

While this approach did enable them to secure minor concessions from Home Secretary Patrick Jenkin in 1984, the city council's proud trumpeting of 'their victory to the labour movement

¹⁸⁸ Meegan, 'Merseyside in Crisis and Conflict', 100-2; Henry Corbett, in discussion with the author, 9/9/11; John Hutchison, in discussion with the author, 9/9/11.

¹⁸⁹ Parkinson, *Liverpool on the Brink*, 38. The city council was not simply whining—the government was asking Liverpool to deal with massive regeneration needs on a disproportionately reduced budget because of their Liberal predecessors' misleadingly low spending levels.

¹⁹⁰ 'We need cash as well as compassion', *Liverpool Echo*, 8/6/84, 6.

nationally’ prompted Jenkin to complain that they had responded to his generosity by ‘dancing on [his] political grave’—meaning that, when the council would attempt the same tactic in later budgets, he would be unwilling to play along. With Jenkin refusing to meet for budget negotiations, the council passed an illegal budget for 1985/86.

In June 1985, the district auditor (an appointed officer with no political role) surcharged the 49 Labour councillors who voted in favour of the illegal 1985/86 budget, thus beginning a long legal road that would eventually result in those councillors’ dismissal. In the meantime, the council faced such steep budget cuts without a renegotiated rate support grant that it chose to ‘symbolically’ pass those cuts along to the public sector workforce, infamously using a fleet of black taxis to deliver 31,000 redundancy notices one day in October. Though the tactic was intended to dramatize the threat of ‘Tory attacks,’ and the council did not intend for the redundancies to be permanent, it backfired completely. The white-collar public sector unions were furious, both at having their jobs swept away and for the seemingly reckless manner with which the council disposed of essential services, even if temporarily.¹⁹¹ With the redundancy stunt, the council lost the last shreds of local white-collar public union support and found itself publicly denounced by Neil Kinnock at the 1985 Labour party conference.¹⁹² The national Labour party began an investigation into the Liverpool party that led to the expulsion of a number of known Militants, including Derek Hatton and Tony Mulhearn, from the party and the disbandment of the DLP, all of which would be important factors shaping the political field for the Anti-Cuts Campaign in 1986.

The discord spread into the Labour group itself. The national Labour party expelled Hatton, who lost his deputy chairmanship of the council as wavering support amongst his comrades led at least 26 of them to sign a loyalty pledge to the Labour party swearing to ignore

¹⁹¹ Kennedy discussion, 9/9/2011.

¹⁹² Liverpool Socialist Workers’ Party, *Socialism in Liverpool* (Liverpool, 2000), 26.

him.¹⁹³ But an internal coup in 1986 replaced the non-Militant and widely liked John Hamilton with Tony Byrne (who, since he had never joined Militant, was safe from the possibility of Labour party expulsion), leading to a failed counter coup by Hamilton and his supporters the following year. As Hamilton told the press, ‘Tony Byrne is running this city in an unacceptable way. Too many meetings are being held in secret. It is undemocratic.’¹⁹⁴ Though unsuccessful, Hamilton—who had long been criticized as going too easy on the Militant elements within the council—continued to speak out against the ‘broad left’ voting block within the council that allowed Byrne to withstand the vote of no confidence, effectively acting as a ‘clique’ that ran the city.¹⁹⁵ Furthermore, the council’s relationship with the white-collar unions, the National Union of Public Employees (NUPE) and the National and Local Government Officers Association (NALGO), which had been all but destroyed by the false redundancy tactic of the previous October, managed to deteriorate even further as council officers leaked documents showing that the councillors were contemplating massive cuts to social services.¹⁹⁶ The general atmosphere of conflict that pervaded the council at the end of 1986 as the so-called rates rebels’ appeals process played out in court created a window for the Anti-Cuts Campaign, which was able to exploit the confusion to maintain its members’ funding until after the councillors’ eventual dismissal.

Overshadowing all the council’s local conflicts, though, was its looming appeal in the Judicial Committee of the House of Lords (at that time Britain’s equivalent of the U.S. Supreme Court), the outcome of which could signal a sea change in Liverpool local politics. The district auditor disqualification of the forty-nine Labour councillors who had voted for an illegal budget in 1985 had been upheld throughout the appeals process (during which the councillors remained

¹⁹³ J. Watson, ‘Cry for peace as axe looms over Hatton’, *Liverpool Echo*, 17/11/86, 2.

¹⁹⁴ J. Watson, ‘Showdown’, *Liverpool Echo*, 8/12/86, 5.

¹⁹⁵ J. Watson, ‘Secret Army’, *Liverpool Echo*, 9/12/86, 7.

¹⁹⁶ Only days before Hamilton’s attempted coup NUPE and NALGO members surrounded councillors going into a budget meeting and accused them of running the city like a ‘dictatorship’, demanding a guarantee that planned budget cuts would be discussed ‘in the open’ so that essential services could be protected. J. Watson, ‘Byrne trapped by 200 in union demo.’ *Liverpool Echo*, 3/12/86, 1.

in office). Should the forty-seven councillors still living a year and a half later lose their final appeal in the House of Lords, they would all be barred from holding office for ten years, an outcome that would necessarily result in a massive turnover on the 99-member city council.

Because of the Militant focus on class struggle and Byrne's insistence on the local authority as the proper vehicle of service provision for the working-class, the groups in the case studies examined here faced an extremely hostile political opportunity structure. For the MCRC, the challenge lay in Militant's refusal to acknowledge the particularity of the problems that minority groups faced and their desire to subsume all political conflicts under the banner of class, prompting their opposition of positive action schemes. For the Eldonian Community Association, the desire to create a housing cooperative that would manage its own affairs clashed with Byrne's Urban Regeneration Strategy and conviction that the local authority should exercise all authority in the creation and management of working-class housing. Finally, for the Anti-Cuts Campaign, the goals of increased consultation and participatory decision-making did not sit well with an ethos that emphasised hierarchical decision-making and councillors who relied on secretive processes of caucusing and backroom dealing for the adoption and implementation of their agendas. However, by its willingness to engage in clear-cut conflicts with the groups, the city council inadvertently contributed to their later successes by giving them visible animating causes around which to gather members. Indeed, the lack of such an adversary contributed to the Anti-Cuts Campaign's successor's disintegration after the 'forty-seven' were dismissed.

Baltimore

The political opportunity structure BUILD faced in Baltimore in the 1980s was much more straightforward than that faced by the Liverpool groups because of the political dominance of one man: William Donald Schaefer. Baltimore had, like Liverpool, been run by its share of machine politicians in the early and mid-twentieth century, and Schaefer was himself the product

of the city's most prominent Democratic machine. Because of Democrats' dominance of Baltimore's local political scene—except for the one-term mayoralty of progressive Republican and former Maryland governor Theodore McKeldin from 1963 to 1967, Democrats have held the mayor's office without interruption since 1947—Schaefer did not have to worry about the shifting party dynamics that defined Liverpool politics in the 1970s.¹⁹⁷ Rather, as soon as he arrived in office, Mayor Schaefer responded to fiscal crisis with what the then-city council president described as a 'fetish' of budget cuts, including cutting back the municipal workforce from 38,000 to 35,000 and cutbacks in fuel and other supplies.¹⁹⁸ Social spending bore the brunt of the cuts while spending on economic development continued to grow; between 1974 and 1984, Schaefer slashed municipal expenditures by 20 percent while real expenditures on economic development grew by 400 percent.¹⁹⁹ By the middle of the decade, such measures resulted in a \$52 million surplus and the promotion of the city's credit rating from A to A-1, but shifts in federal funding and continued economic and population decline—key factors that, as explained in Chapter 1, constrained a mayor's policy options—kept Schaefer scrambling for solutions to the city's problems throughout his time as mayor.²⁰⁰ Described by contemporaries as strong, intimidating, a grudge-holder, someone who acted quickly and did not tolerate dissent, Schaefer's political success lay with his strong support in the city's white working-class political clubs as well as in the enclaves of the city's elite, who appreciated his pro-business stance.

¹⁹⁷ In a political twist duplicated nowhere else in the country, the Liberals surged to the forefront of Liverpool's political scene in the 1973 City Council elections behind the charisma of local party leader Trevor 'Jones the Vote' Jones, and they remained there for the following decade. The Tories, after holding 100 seats on the council in 1970, were virtually spent as a solo local political force, barely hitting double digits in council seats in 1973. However, after 1973, the Liberals would not be able to maintain an outright majority on the City Council and needed Conservative help to implement their agenda. Furthermore, Labour actually won the greatest number of council seats on several occasions between 1974 and 1982, yet refused to take control of the council. Knowing that their proposals would be defeated by a Liberal-Conservative alliance, Labour chose to hand over leadership rather than be saddled with the responsibility of implementing an agenda they could not form. This constant churning of a majority-less council made for repeated hung councils and shifting minority coalitions; medium-term planning became nearly impossible under this 'toytown politics', as the *Liverpool Echo* called the council's situation.

¹⁹⁸ Brambilla & Longo, *Learning from Baltimore*, 131.

¹⁹⁹ Levine, 'Downtown Redevelopment...', 108.

²⁰⁰ Friedrichs & Goodman, *The Changing Downtown*, 20.

McDougall describes the manner in which Schaefer adopted a ‘Richard Daley’ approach to running Baltimore, centralising power in his own office while making city leaders and activists feel as if they had power because of their access to him:

Schaefer built a political machine that combined strong relationships with business and professional interests, inner-city ethnic white support on the basis of large-scale citizen participation, and black support based on social welfare. Schaefer put community activists on his payroll, coopting many of the city’s once strident neighbourhood workers. Those who refused to play along were shut out.²⁰¹

Schaefer’s strategy for governing Baltimore revolved around the development of glamorous projects, such as the Inner Harbor, while also addressing mundane details like trash collection, potholes, and streetlights; he favoured bricks-and-mortar projects that produced visible results.²⁰² He brought remarkable energy to both sets of tasks. A lifelong bachelor, he devoted himself fully to mayoral tasks as he understood them. He was widely known within City Hall for spending weekends cruising Baltimore neighbourhoods on the lookout for such unacceptable eyesores as trash or abandoned cars, informing relevant departments on Monday morning of his findings (without necessarily revealing the location of the specific problems he spotted, prompting city officials to scramble, for example, to remove as many abandoned cars as they could find by Schaefer’s deadline). Someone who wore his neighbourhood roots proudly, he was unafraid to abandon decorum or protocol in meetings with developers and state and federal officials in pursuit of the funds needed for a particular project.²⁰³ Schaefer’s persona was carefully calculated to produce a desired result, however:

He was maniacal, unpredictable, and politically incorrect—aggressively so. He knew that his rough edges were assets. He was, like every modern politician, an actor, ever on stage, projecting his own image as he promoted his city.²⁰⁴

²⁰¹ McDougall, *Black Baltimore*, 87; Pierce & Johnson, ‘The Neighborhoods: New Hope Glimmers for the Future.’ *The Baltimore Sun*, 5/5/91.

²⁰² Smith, *William Donald Schaefer*, 153.

²⁰³ *Ibid.* 173.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.* 8.

Schaefer placed a premium on visible progress in part because cleaning up the city's image was an important focus of his administration and part of a larger strategy to attract business, investment, and tourists to Baltimore.²⁰⁵ In his attempts to boost the city's morale and portray it as a fun place to be, Schaefer was willing to play the showman and the bandleader himself. When the National Aquarium opened in the Inner Harbor in 1981, Schaefer donned a Victorian bathing suit and straw boater and jumped into the seal tank clutching a rubber duck; after Baltimore lost its National Football League team in 1984, the Schaefer administration sought to cure the city's 'blues' by proclaiming a 'Pink Positive Day', covering the city with pink paint and balloons and featuring a pink-clad Schaefer waving to crowds from the balcony of City Hall.²⁰⁶ Furthermore, Schaefer hated to have the city's failings, particularly city government's failings, covered in the local press. *Baltimore Sun* and *Evening Sun* reporters who covered failures of oversight or accounting, for example, often found themselves greeted with a string of expletives when they went to Schaefer for comment and ignored at press conferences thenceforward.²⁰⁷

Schaefer dominated Baltimore's city government as few mayors had before (or have since). Upon his election, he reorganised city government to increase the flow of information to himself by creating a cabinet, merging smaller departments, and setting up policy councils on human and physical development.²⁰⁸ The 24 quasi-public corporations that made up the city's 'Shadow Government' looked to the mayor as their ultimate authority (see p. 78).²⁰⁹ With his famous 'do it now' attitude, Schaefer was indeed able to garner for the city a reputation for political efficacy—'at a time when such reputations had become rare among urban

²⁰⁵ Harvey, 'View from Federal Hill', 237.

²⁰⁶ D. Rodricks, 'He was a master of politics as performance art: William Donald Schaefer, 1921 – 2011', *The Baltimore Sun*, 19/5/11, A16.

²⁰⁷ Rodricks, 'He was a master'; Jeff Valentine, in discussion with the author, 27/5/14.

²⁰⁸ Smith, *William Donald Schaefer*, 120.

²⁰⁹ Levine, 'Downtown Redevelopment...', 108.

governments’—that gave Baltimore a competitive edge when applying for federal funds.²¹⁰

Baltimore under Schaefer met with unusual success in its applications for UDAGs, CDBGs, and other special federal grants. Without these funds, the Inner Harbor and other major development projects would have been impossible; they formed part of the foundation of his popularity both within the business and development community and with voters and determined the scope of his agenda.²¹¹

Though Schaefer may have focused his fiscal energies on Baltimore’s downtown, he nevertheless maintained a willingness to work with neighbourhood groups and civic associations—as long as such groups were willing to play by his rules. Unlike the Militant Tendency and Tony Byrne, who actively discouraged groups like the Eldonians from forming a housing cooperative for fear that this would detract from the council’s authority in the housing arena, Schaefer believed that neighbourhood-level groups could be valuable partners as long as he could see evidence that they were willing to take initiative and positive action themselves.²¹² As he explained his background before entering formal city politics to one political scientist studying Baltimore:

I’d been working for years in improvement associations and I knew what positive improvement associations could do against negative improvement associations. I was in the Allendale-Lyndhurst Improvement Association years ago, and one of the things I remember talking about [was that] improvement associations shouldn’t always be ‘anti’.²¹³

‘Positive improvement associations’, Schaefer believed, could help to manage the task of governing a resource-strapped city; in Stone’s language, they could enhance City Hall’s ‘power to’. They did so the most, however, when they worked along the lines laid out by Schaefer and his deputies at city agencies. Thus co-optation was the most likely outcome when energetic

²¹⁰ Crenson, *Neighborhood Politics*, 292.

²¹¹ Ibid. 291.

²¹² Callcott, *Maryland and America*, 90.

²¹³ Cited in Crenson, *Neighborhood Politics*, 293.

neighbourhood-level groups attempted to win resources for themselves or influence the mayor. Even the Southeast Community Organisation (SECO), the city's largest and most powerful umbrella organisation of neighbourhood groups in the 1970s, had by the 1980s become a government partner and 'part of the establishment it had once fought.'²¹⁴

Mayor Schaefer, then, posed multiple challenges for BUILD as it began to rise in prominence and sought to become a more powerful player in the city's decision-making structure. Schaefer had been in office for a decade by the time BUILD conducted its first major campaign against local banks and had cemented both his authority within city government and his popularity with voters. Though not opposed to working with outside groups, Schaefer insisted on doing so on his own terms—problematic for a group premised on helping its members to become term-setters themselves. Finally, Schaefer-the-civic-cheerleader hated to have any attention drawn to the city's shortcomings, while BUILD was intent on holding city government accountable for the problems that its member institutions faced. BUILD would break the mould of previous umbrella organisations in its refusal to be co-opted, and both its goals and its methods made conflict with Schaefer inevitable.

PRESENTATION OF CASE STUDIES

Finally, before moving on to the findings, it will be helpful to understand the background of the case studies themselves and the resources that they possessed as groups. Three out of the four case studies here—the MCRC and Anti-Cuts Campaign in Liverpool, and BUILD in Baltimore—were in fact coalitions of smaller organisations. They were chosen as the foundation of this study because they all sought not only specific resources for their members, but also to gain and exercise political power. While securing concrete outcomes that benefitted their members or the populations they served was certainly an aspect of their work, they also wanted to influence publicly significant decisions despite their lack of economic resources. What

²¹⁴ Durr, *Behind the Backlash*, 172.

facilitated or prevented the achievement of these goals during the 1980s is the central inquiry of this dissertation.

Also included is a third Liverpool case study, the Eldonian Community Association. Unlike the other case study groups, the Eldonians did not seek to change the way that power flowed in Liverpool, nor did they seek to influence decisions beyond those that affected their neighbourhood. Instead, they sought only to secure resources for their members in the form of planning permissions and funds for a new-build housing cooperative. They are included here, though, because they demonstrated a remarkable ‘power to’ assemble resources, and their strategies for doing so support the argument that a pressure group’s success depended in part on the nature of its goals and its analysis of who had the resources to turn those goals into a reality. As will be shown in the findings, because the Eldonians sought tangible resources and not to exercise influence in citywide decisions, the national government’s instruments in Liverpool were useful allies to them in ways that they could not have been useful to the MCRC and the Anti-Cuts Campaign.

Liverpool

Race equality and the Merseyside Community Relations Council

By the time of the Labour council’s election victory in 1983, Liverpool’s deep-seated and enduring problems of racial discrimination had been extensively documented and dramatically displayed. Only two years before, in July 1981, the Toxteth Riots, with their three nights of looting, burning, Molotov cocktails and tear gas, had shocked the nation and rattled the Thatcher government. Unlike other British cities with burgeoning non-white populations in the 1960s and ‘70s, Liverpool’s black population dated back to the city’s days as a key port in the Atlantic slave trade, and blacks who found their way to Liverpool in the eighteenth century included not only

those who were sold as slaves but also runaways and students from Africa and the Caribbean.²¹⁵

A substantial black community emerged in the city after 1870, when the Elder Dempster Shipping Line began to employ Africans on ships traveling between Liverpool and West Africa.²¹⁶ Integrating the black population into Liverpool's economic and political structure in the 1970s and 1980s, then, was not so much a matter of making room for a new group as it was acknowledging and addressing the unique challenges of a centuries-old one.

A series of government, academic, and advocacy reports stretching back to the Fletcher report of 1930 highlighted the employment challenges faced by Liverpool's minority population. The Liverpool Youth Organisation Committee's 1969 *Special but not Separate* report documented the existence of a mere 75 non-whites amongst 10,000 employees in nineteen Liverpool stores, and ten years later the Merseyside Area Profile Group of the 1980 Home Affairs Committee reported that Liverpool Careers Service had a 27.8 percent success rate in placing black young people in employment, compared to a 45.5 percent success rate with white young people.²¹⁷ Indeed, between 1974 and 1981, unemployment in Liverpool as a whole rose 120 percent, but in the black population by 350 percent, and the Department of the Environment estimated that the figure for black unemployment amongst 16 – 20 year olds in Liverpool 8, where approximately 70 percent of Liverpool's black population lived, was around 60 percent.²¹⁸ Meanwhile, despite the requirement of the 1976 Race Relations Act that local authorities should take steps to promote equality of opportunity, black people constituted less than 1 percent of the council workforce—though they comprised roughly 8 percent of the city's population.²¹⁹ To add insult to injury, even after the 1976 Act the council refused to create an equal opportunity policy on the

²¹⁵ Nelson, *Black Atlantic Politics*, 39.

²¹⁶ Ibid. 39.

²¹⁷ G. Ben-Tovim *et al.* (eds.), 'Racial Disadvantage in Liverpool: An Area Profile'. Evidence Submitted to the Parliamentary Home Affairs Committee, Race Relations Sub-committee, Session 1979 – 1980 on Racial Disadvantage, 13.

²¹⁸ PRO, M. Heseltine, *It Took a Riot*, ¶8. AT81/241.

²¹⁹ Liverpool Black Caucus, *The Racial Politics of Militant: The black community's struggle for participation in local politics 1980 – 1986* (Liverpool, 1986), 18.

grounds that ‘to do so might create the impression that previously the Council’s policy might have been otherwise.’²²⁰ The black population’s employment challenges were compounded by the systematic clustering of black people in substandard council housing in South Liverpool.²²¹ Discrimination against these residents was so open that job advertisements sometimes carried the tag line ‘L8 need not apply’, and on the eve of the 1981 riots, multiple community professionals had already observed that it was virtually impossible for black youth in the area to secure employment.²²² All of these factors combined into an animating cause for the MCRC to push for a mechanism of sustained influence on the city council.

Nationally, Community Relations Councils (CRCs) were the primary bodies responsible for forging links between minority organisations and local governments. Created by the second Race Relations Act of 1968, the CRCs enjoyed semi-statutory status and were overseen by the national Commission for Racial Equality. In many British cities, they controlled access to government funding for race-oriented community organisations. Because of this power of the purse, CRCs often acted as moderating influences on these organisations. As Nelson explains:

Black community organisations have often been willing to sacrifice autonomous political development for the benefits to be derived from the stable and productive relations they have established with governmental bodies through the intervention of the CRCs...To put the matter more precisely, Black community organisations in Britain have often been forced to choose between independence and accommodation, autonomy, and cooptation.²²³

The Merseyside Community Relations Council was different. Black activism in Liverpool reached a turning point in 1979, when leadership of the MCRC transitioned from members of the Asian community to members of the Liverpool-born black community. The new leadership was intent on expanding the political capacity of Liverpool’s minorities.²²⁴ The MCRC consisted

²²⁰ Quoted in Ben-Tovim et al., ‘Racial Disadvantage in Liverpool’, 15.

²²¹ Ibid. 31.

²²² Colin Oxenforth, in discussion with the author, 6/9/11; Wally Brown, in discussion with the author, 12/9/11.

²²³ Nelson, *Black Atlantic Politics*, 265. In this instance, Nelson uses ‘Black’ to refer to minorities generally.

²²⁴ Ray Quarless, in discussion with the author, 2/4/13.

of most of the ethnic minority organisations on Merseyside as well as individuals concerned with race relations issues.²²⁵ Wally Brown, the chairman elected in 1979, was the head of the Liverpool Black Organisation (LBO) and established ‘a commanding presence as the city’s most visible and influential Black community activist.’²²⁶ Along with the Merseyside Anti-Racist Alliance (MARA), the LBO had organised marches, anti-racist festivals, and the production and distribution of leaflets highlighting aspects of racism in Liverpool beginning in 1978. Brown’s election to the chairmanship of the MCRC was interpreted by those involved in the organisation as an embrace of this more adversarial stance by Liverpool’s ethnic minority organisations as a whole.²²⁷ Behind Brown’s leadership, the MCRC would successfully lobby the council for the creation of a Race Relations Liaison Committee, which in turn led to the creation of the MCRC’s Black Caucus (Chapter 3). The MCRC’s primary resources, then, were the standing it enjoyed as a semi-statutory body, the funding it received from national and local government, and the strong leadership that took over the organisation from 1980.

Housing Cooperatives and the Eldonians

The Eldonian Community Association grew out of what by the 1980s was a pattern in Liverpool of organising around housing issues. By the end of the 1960s, the novelty of outer estate and high-rise living had worn off, and the challenges of disrupted inner city communities, few neighbours, limited shopping and community facilities, and poor transport links with the city centre all became increasingly evident. Crime rates climbed in the outer estates, and the structural deficiencies of pre-fabricated high-rises made for miserable living situations despite the modern amenities such dwellings boasted. All these factors contributed to the Eldonian Community

²²⁵ Ben-Tovim et al., ‘Racial Disadvantage in Liverpool’, 101.

²²⁶ Nelson, *Black Atlantic Politics*, 266.

²²⁷ Gideon Ben-Tovim, in discussion with the author, 23/4/13.

Association members' desire to avoid moving to outer estates and instead remain together in their Vauxhall neighbourhood.

Building off the support they enjoyed under the Liberal-controlled councils of the 1970s and early 1980s, housing cooperatives had more momentum in the 1980s in Liverpool than in any other British city. 'Secondary cooperatives' provided essential resources in the form of knowledge, experience, staff, and connections for the housing cooperatives, including the innovative 'new build cooperatives' that came to the forefront of Liverpool's community action efforts in this period. Neighbourhood Housing Services was established jointly by Liverpool's first two cooperatives in 1972 to provide housing development services to other cooperatives and became particularly involved in cooperatives rehabilitating older properties. Cooperative Development Services, a secondary cooperative based in London, originally came to Liverpool at the invitation of the Housing Authority in 1975. It became independent of its London parent two years later and became a major force behind the development of the new-build cooperatives of the 1980s.²²⁸ The Liberal city council appointed Neighbourhood Housing Services and Cooperative Development Services, along with Merseyside Improved Houses, to work on developing cooperatives that would use municipal funds in the early 1980s. Some observers pointed to the presence of these secondary cooperatives as one of the key factors in the proliferation of housing associations in Liverpool during the 1980s—29 by 1989, with almost 2,000 properties.²²⁹ Merseyside Improved Houses' support would be a crucial resource for the Eldonian Community Association, which was not exceptional in its desire to form a cooperative. What was exceptional was the scale on which it hoped to raze and build those homes (Chapter 4).

²²⁸ D. Clapham & K. Kintrea, *Housing Cooperatives in Britain* (Harlow, 1992), 92–3.

²²⁹ Clapham & Kintrea, *Housing Cooperatives in Britain*, 95.

Voluntary sector and the Anti-Cuts Campaign

The voluntary sector in Liverpool relied on government support to fund its activities. To an extent unusual in England by the 1980s, Liverpool's clergy also often played a strong supporting role in neighbourhood development efforts. Government funding and clergy support, then, were two of the key resources the voluntary sector possessed in this period, though as the findings will show, government funds often caused as many problems as they solved. Neighbourhood-based associational activity was supported by government-sponsored efforts throughout the 1970s. The Edge Hill Inner Areas Study led to £600,000 of investment in community projects in that neighbourhood, and for the five years that it operated in Vauxhall during the late 1970s, the Vauxhall Community Development Project coordinated and supported a number of community-based initiatives, including the Scottie Press, a local Information and Law Centre, community centres, and the Vauxhall Neighbourhood Council, all while the ward itself continued to shed jobs.²³⁰ The Vauxhall Neighbourhood Council (VNC) would go on to become one of the founding members of the Anti-Cuts Campaign.

Liverpool's Catholic and Anglican churches, which, because of their parochial structure, maintained priests even in the city's roughest neighbourhoods, became key links between neighbourhood groups and larger political or philanthropic bodies during this period. The Catholic Archbishop and Anglican Bishop of Liverpool, Derek Worlock and David Sheppard, both encouraged their clergy to engage in community development work and became outspoken social critics themselves on a national level. While their personal support would be crucial to the Eldonian Community Association's Success, the efforts of the parish churches and priests under them were sustaining forces in the Langrove Street Action Group and West Everton Community Council, two of the most active groups in the Anti-Cuts Campaign.²³¹ The bishops' efforts and

²³⁰ Couch, *City of Change*, 80.

²³¹ John Hutchison, in discussion with the author, 9/9/11.

interventions were also essential to the creation of the Liverpool 8 Law Centre in the wake of the Toxteth riots, another eventual Anti-Cuts Campaign member.²³² The willingness of Liverpool's local organisations and community groups to turn to the Catholic and Anglican hierarchy for help was unusual in English cities during this period, and Ridley suggests it was a reflection not only of those leaders' attitudes but also of how limited the city's elite structure had become.²³³

While the government-supported neighbourhood efforts of the 1970s pointed to the potential that existed within low-income neighbourhoods for associational activity, their example also demonstrates the importance of the community worker and/or priest—the professional funded by a state or religious body whose job it was, either in full or in part, to help 'rebuild' the community. Community workers employed by the council's Community Development Section were deployed throughout Liverpool beginning in 1974. The presence of such professionals was a double-edged sword: while they provided energy, vision, advice, and sometimes ties to funding, all of which may have been necessary to begin worthwhile community projects, that could also mean the fate of those projects was tied to their presence:

No matter how committed they were to the manners and practices of popular democracy by diligently playing subordinate roles of offering advice and passing information, the fact was that the community professionals were almost invariably the initiators of the groups they were helping. And because their work also required them to interpret neighbourhoods to the larger world of city institutions, they understood better than the locals the connectedness of everything. Consequently, it was often they who became more expert and more successful at representing local communities to the appropriate bodies and agencies than elected city councillors.²³⁴

Community development professionals would continue to play an important facilitating role in the 1980s, including in the Anti-Cuts Campaign. The experience and insight of community

²³² L. Longino, 'Strategies for Change: Local Interest Groups, the Church of England, and Urban Politics in 1980s Liverpool' (Oxford Univ. MPhil thesis, 2012), pp. 31-52.

²³³ Ridley, 'Liverpool is Different', 129.

²³⁴ Lane, *Liverpool: City of the Sea*, 141.

development workers, as well as the connections they provided to council officers, were key resources for campaign members going into their conflict with the city council.

Baltimore

BUILD was officially founded in 1977, but it grew out of a rich history of civil rights leadership and black political action in Baltimore. From the 1940s to the 1960s, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the *Afro American* newspaper, and the black churches comprised Baltimore's 'triple generals' in civil rights struggles.²³⁵ The Baltimore NAACP was established in 1913 and, under the fiery leadership of Lillie Mae Jackson, grew to be the second largest NAACP chapter in the country in the 1930s. Its targets were the legal bases of discrimination and segregation in housing, employment, and education, and the chapter won a series of major court victories while also spawning other organisations that became active in the civil rights struggle.²³⁶ The *Afro American*, meanwhile, was bought in 1890 by John H. Murphy and eventually grew to a circulation of 200,000 and revenues in excess of one million dollars. Available in New York, Newark, Raleigh, Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, and Richmond, as well as Baltimore, the *Afro* became one of the most widely circulated African American newspapers in the country.²³⁷

The situation changed after the 1964 Civil Rights Act, as the legal bases for discrimination fell away and middle-class black families were increasingly able to follow their white counterparts to the suburbs and prosperous city neighbourhoods. Old West Baltimore was no longer the geographical focus of Baltimore's black establishment. At the same time the

²³⁵ Callcott, *Maryland and America*, 56.

²³⁶ Examples include the Citizens Committee for Justice, a coalition that campaigned against police brutality and for jobs and representation; the Colored Women's Democratic Club, which trained black women on how to vote and how to register other people to vote; and the Me-De-So Club, a group of black professional men who helped to finance civil rights activities across the city. Orr, *Black Social Capital*, 34-5.

²³⁷ McDougall, *Black Baltimore*, 44.

geographic dispersal occurred, both the NAACP and the *Afro* waned in influence: the former lacked strong leadership and financial support, while the latter saw its circulation slip until it launched a public appeal for subscriptions in the 1980s.²³⁸

What remained, however, were the city's black churches. The strength and experience of these churches and their clergy was one of BUILD's primary resources. Baltimore's first black church was established by a portion of Baltimore's free black population in 1792; by 1860, the city had no less than sixteen.²³⁹ The churches were, for decades, the African American community's spiritual, social, and cultural hub. They provided the community with its first schools and launched the earliest civil rights efforts. Ministers, likewise, became pillars of African American society. It was not surprising, then, that leading black clergy were at the forefront of Baltimore's civil rights struggle. Particularly through the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance (IMA), black clergy and churches played key roles in marches, boycotts, voter registration drives, and lobbying of political leaders. Orr describes the way in which the NAACP, the *Afro*, and the churches worked together on civil rights initiatives: 'Whenever the NAACP undertook a fight, the *Afro American* gave it great publicity, black ministers preached sermons, and literature was distributed at church services.'²⁴⁰

However, Baltimore's black church was not a monolith, and by the 1970s the differences between individual churches became increasingly clear. Though some of the large historic churches maintained their locations in Old West Baltimore, congregants now drove in from affluent suburban neighbourhoods, and paid attendants kept watch over their cars while the services proceeded inside. Other churches remained rooted in Baltimore City's black community, including a few Catholic churches that successfully navigated the transition from white to black while their parishes underwent racial change.

²³⁸ Orr, *Black Social Capital*, 36.

²³⁹ Ibid. 24.

²⁴⁰ Ibid. 35.

It became clear to ministers like Vernon Dobson and Marion Bascom—long-time veterans of the civil rights struggles and past presidents of the IMA—that in the 1970s, the old institutions were no longer sufficient to address the mounting needs of increasingly troubled communities in Baltimore. As those who had remained in the city, their concerns and experience would put them and their congregations at the forefront of efforts to revive Baltimore’s grassroots activism in the 1980s. Furthermore, as the black community began to realise that electing black leaders to government seats was not a solution to all their woes—indeed, that the ‘pretensions to power of black elected officials have too often degenerated into petty squabbling or, worse, remoteness from the communities they were elected to serve’—some black churches have become increasingly important loci for an alternative politics because of their relative freedom from corporate influence.²⁴¹ Dobson, Bascom, and Rev. Wendell Phillips, who had also served as a state legislator, comprised three of BUILD’s four founding members. As Dobson explained the clergy’s decision to begin BUILD:

Any attempt like the Panther Party or the Congress of African People cannot survive in the modern context without connecting to an institution that has a history, that can interpret the sweep of events in the black community over a period of fifty, maybe a hundred years. The only such institution we have is the black church, and it was the breakdown of our communities following the civil rights movement that made black churchmen realize we had to get ourselves together again, and look for new forms of action.²⁴²

The fourth BUILD founder, Msgr. Clare O’Dwyer, came from Baltimore’s large Catholic community. The local Catholic Church would be another crucial resource for BUILD, particularly in its early years. As in Liverpool, Baltimore’s Catholic church had deep roots and enjoyed pockets of committed community support, especially in the city’s ethnic neighbourhoods. As the seat of the first American Catholic diocese, the church’s presence in Baltimore dated back to the early eighteenth century. Tied to their neighbourhoods by the

²⁴¹ McDougall, *Black Baltimore*, 122.

²⁴² Quoted in *ibid.*, 61.

parochial system, Catholic churches could not follow their congregants when they moved to the suburbs, as some Protestant churches did. However, the presence of parochial schools in these neighbourhoods also created alternative education options for those parents disturbed by the racial change taking place in local public schools, making some families less anxious to flee their neighbourhoods.²⁴³

The Catholic Church as an institution came to represent one of the most important bridging institutions in inner city Baltimore by the 1970s and 1980s. Especially after Vatican II and the creation of a Church-sponsored community organising drive throughout American inner cities, Catholic priests and laity sponsored and participated in some of Baltimore's largest and most successful grassroots activism efforts, including HARBEL, NECO, SECO, and eventually BUILD. With the combination of their parochial binds to geographic spots and their access to the Archbishop's Urban Fund, Baltimore's Catholic parish churches offered a unique combination of neighbourhood legitimacy, material self-interest, theological conviction, an educated workforce, and potential funding that no other institution could quite match. Msgr. O'Dwyer knew Bascom, Dobson, and Phillips from the IMA as well as from participation in various civil rights efforts, and he had also been one of the driving forces behind NECO, a large umbrella organisation very active in the 1970s. Like his African American counterparts, however, O'Dwyer began to believe that a vehicle for citywide action was necessary to address the social and economic problems he saw in his parish.

²⁴³ Vinny Quayle, in discussion with the author, 12/9/13. The phenomenon of Catholic rootedness in America's changing urban landscapes in the twentieth centuries has been well documented in McGreevy's *Parish Boundaries* (1996) and Gamm's *Urban Exodus* (1999). In those traditionally Catholic neighbourhoods where racial turnover did, nevertheless, proceed, parish priests had mixed responses to incoming black residents. Priests could sometimes be the most outspoken opponents to racial turnover in their neighbourhoods, whether in the form of blockbusting or in the form of new public housing projects, and downright hostile to the new black residents who appeared in their churches.²⁴³ However, some Catholic churches—whether out of different racial attitudes and theological convictions or whether out of a correct reading of the geographical tea leaves—embraced new black residents.

O'Dwyer was crucial to securing the \$70,000 grant from the Catholic Church's Campaign for Human Development that seeded BUILD, and together with Bascom, Dobson, and Phillips invited IAF national director Ed Chambers to begin an IAF affiliate in Baltimore. BUILD was different from a number of other community organisations and neighbourhood associations from the start. It did not grow out of a response to a particular problem or issue, like deteriorating houses or highway building. Rather, its vision was more holistic; in a sense, it was intended by its clergy founders as a way for the people of Baltimore generally, and the black community specifically, to continue to pursue the vision of the civil rights movement—a vision which had extended far beyond integration to include an end to poverty and social relations pervaded by equality, fairness, and mutual respect. Its animating cause had deeper roots than a single construction project or piece of policy, and its founders realised that addressing that cause would be a long-term project. As an IAF affiliate, BUILD's goals were overtly political and power-oriented; the pursuit of different resources was not simply about the creation of new homes or schools, but an exercise to empower poor, working-, and middle-class communities. Finally, because BUILD's constituent congregations paid annual membership fees, as in other IAF affiliates, BUILD could avoid the co-optation experienced by many of the city's umbrella organisations under Schaefer.

SUMMARY

While the case study groups share some basic similarities in terms of their orientation and composition, there are also some important differences between them. They were animated by different causes. First, while the Anti-Cuts Campaign would be formed in response to a specific event (dramatic surprise cuts in grant money to a wide range of voluntary groups—Chapter 5) and the Eldonian Community Association in pursuit of a specific goal, new leadership took over

the MCRC and ministers formed BUILD with broader goals in mind. In Liverpool, the post-1980 MCRC sought to consistently bend more resources toward the Black community and effectively incorporate minorities into the city's decision-making structure. In Baltimore, BUILD prioritised building up influence in city decision-making arenas first, and used campaigns for resources in service of that goal. Eventually, the Anti-Cuts Campaign would similarly seek to shape decision-making in Liverpool. However, it took an existential threat to organise its members around that goal, and once that threat faded, the campaign as an independent organisation soon faded, too (Chapter 7). The Eldonians were simply never interested in exercising power or influencing decisions on a citywide level, and as such were willing to use strategies that actually thwarted the authority of the city council.

The groups also differed in the sources of their financial resources. The MCRC and members of the Anti-Cuts Campaigns all relied on government funds, while BUILD funded itself on membership dues, foundation grants, and individual donations. This financial independence enabled BUILD to operate more freely under hostile political conditions (Chapter 6) when the MCRC's Black Caucus and Anti-Cuts Campaign members basically had to retreat into positions of resistance (Chapters 3 and 5), and also gave the organisation greater stability and longevity (Chapters 7 and 9). Church support was also critical to case studies in both cities, but in Baltimore churches (including, indeed especially, the Catholic Church) were more willing to support BUILD's efforts financially, whereas in Liverpool the churches' support took the form of the political connections of the bishops and the energy and organising talents of parish priests.

In the Introduction, we discussed Stone's concept of power as closely linked to a group's capacity to amass resources to effect projects or changes that would not have happened in the absence of that group's actions. Stone argues that political rulers choose governing partners based on the resources they bring to the table. Limited as they were financially, the primary

resource that each of the case study groups brought to governing authorities was leadership. The MCRC and Anti-Cuts Campaign's great achievement was to create a degree of coherence (for a moment, at least) in the aims of their member groups, which in the past had been prone to ignoring one another or squabbling over limited grant money. Even the Eldonians would catch the attention of church and national government leadership because of the quality of the leadership within their group and the unity with which they acted, which encouraged those dispensing funds that their housing cooperative could be a success. BUILD organisers taught their clergy leaders how to mobilise around a unified agenda, and how to raise money and turn out voters in support of that agenda. This dissertation argues that this leadership was one of the necessary, though not sufficient, factors for these groups to successfully accomplish their goals.

The challenge for each of the case study groups, however, was that the political leaders of the early and mid-1980s in Liverpool and Baltimore were not interested in incorporating even these unified and organised voices into their decision making process. For the Liverpool groups, the principal obstacles of the political opportunity structure under the Militant-directed Labour council were goals and ideology. On the one hand, the Militant leaders of the DLP were in fact more interested in building the strength of the Militant organisation than in governing Liverpool well, and groups that veered from Militant's Trotskyist narrative did not contribute to this goal. On the other hand, Tony Byrne, who controlled much of the substance of the council's policy, was ideologically committed to keeping as much authority and service provision as possible within the confines of the local authority. Because the DLP also controlled who could run for council, the two Liverpool groups who sought to influence citywide decisions and council policies, the MCRC and the Anti-Cuts Campaign, were effectively forced into foxholes in the period leading up to the forty-seven 'rates rebels' councillors' dismissal. The Eldonians could be successful in this period only by finding an alternative source of resources that allowed them to leapfrog the council.

BUILD's challenge with Schaefer had more to do with personality than with policy or ideology. Schaefer despised groups who grabbed headlines by drawing attention to Baltimore's shortcomings, and he desired an almost paternalistic mixture of respect and affection from neighbourhood groups. BUILD did not hesitate to do the former, and utterly failed to produce the latter (Chapter 6). Because of this, Schaefer sought to block them from access to City Hall—but, in part because of its financial independence, he could not stop BUILD from continuing its operations. As we will see in the next section, this factor, combined with a relatively diffuse network of resources and decision-making even in this strongest of strong mayor cities, allowed BUILD to exercise greater 'power to' in Baltimore than the MCRC and Anti-Cuts Campaign were able to exercise under a hostile local council in Liverpool.

PART TWO: NAVIGATING HOSTILITY, 1980 - 1987

The first part of the findings will look at the shape of pressure groups' actions and their relative success under local government administrations that were unusually centralised and authoritarian, the Militant-directed Labour council in Liverpool and the Schaefer administration in Baltimore. The findings in Part Two support the argument that their success under such conditions depended on the nature of their goals and the distribution of resources in Liverpool and Baltimore. In Liverpool, the MCRC and the Anti-Cuts Campaign's success rested on their ability to navigate the city council committee structure and find allies within the local authority officers; in the absence of these, they could do little other than resort to a protest posture and attempts to be obstructionist. Because they sought only financial capital and planning permissions and not systematic influence, the Eldonians, by contrast, were able to accumulate the 'power to' build their housing cooperative by working with national government quangos. In Baltimore, BUILD was able to pursue its campaigns by working through other decision-makers and resource holders: banks, the organised business lobby, and the public school system. Ironically, Baltimore's corporate sector ended up being a more empowering body for a low-income people's pressure group in this period than were the working-class revolutionaries on Liverpool's city council.

Chapter 3, The MCRC and the Equal Opportunities Agenda

The findings begin with the struggle of the MCRC and the Black Caucus to incorporate themselves into Liverpool's decision-making structure, a struggle that highlights the extent to which public policy resources were concentrated in Liverpool City Council and its committees. Liverpool's minority communities had no lack of struggles to spark their organising efforts. In order to address problems ranging from minority unemployment and underemployment to racial

harassment to housing provision for minority elders, the MCRC's leaders sought to integrate themselves into the local authority—a reflection of their analysis that the council held the financial and decision-making resources necessary to accomplish their goals. They sought this integration through the creation of a central Race Relations Unit within the council bureaucracy and adoption by the council of an official equal opportunities policy. Lacking the numbers to pose an electoral threat to any of the city's political parties, the MCRC had to rely on reprimands from national government bodies and moral suasion with key members of the council in order to obtain such recognition. That is, they lacked the electoral or financial resources that BUILD was able to amass in Baltimore that demonstrated a potential 'power to' insert themselves into local politics, and instead sought to publicly shame the council into making room for MCRC representatives in its decision-making.

The creation of a Race Relations Liaison Committee on the city council in 1980 raised hopes within the MCRC and led to the formation of the Black Caucus as the MCRC's political arm, but in the following years those hopes faded. The Black Caucus realised that councillors and officers used bureaucratic tactics to evade taking action on an equal opportunities agenda. The final failure of political engagement came when Militant councillors engineered the fixed appointment of a London Militant member to head the MCRC's long-sought Race Relations Unit—what would eventually be the MCRC's reason for joining the Anti-Cuts Campaign. After the appointment, the Black Caucus broke off relations with the council and retreated into a protest posture, from which it demonstrated far less willingness to compromise than BUILD would during moments of conflict in Baltimore. From such a protest posture, which the entire MCRC maintained until the Militant-directed Labour group was dismissed in 1987, the group made no progress on its agenda. When BUILD was shut out of City Hall by Mayor Schaefer, the distribution of resources in Baltimore was such that the group could continue developing its organisation and moving forward on its agenda by building relationships with the corporate

community and school system. In Liverpool, without access to the council and the local authority bureaucracy, the Black Caucus could not amass the power to accomplish any of its policy goals. It saw no other relevant resource holders to pursue.

Access: Gaining recognition from the council

Leading up to the establishment of a Race Relations Liaison Committee, the Liverpool City Council was not totally blind to its minority population. A number of organisations providing services around adult education and employment successfully garnered Urban Programme funding (most of which was paid by the Department of the Environment, but the local authority did nevertheless have to approve groups' applications). A Black Social Workers' Project was set up in the Social Services Department in 1975 and an Ethnic Minorities Liaison Committee in the Housing Department in 1978. However, the holy grail of the equal opportunities agenda—an official equal opportunities policy that would take specific steps to address employment problems and coordinate council policies to address race—remained elusive:

...the general lack of acknowledgement paid to race both in terms of an absence of political will to develop overall race relations policies and the lack of a corporate local authority mechanism within which such policies could be developed had the effect of keeping race projects and initiatives in the margins of local authority spending and service-delivery, and restricted responsibility for pursuing such developments to individual departments and committees within the authority.²⁴⁴

What the MCRC sought, then, was not a specific policy or programme from the council, but a method by which to access the council bureaucracy and bend resources toward minority groups. That is, it sought to change the way that the council made decisions around race and equal opportunities. Believing that 'disjointed, unsystematic devices for financing and implementing community programmes [were] inherently incapable of achieving the kind of structural change

²⁴⁴ Liverpool Black Caucus, *The Racial Politics of Militant in Liverpool* (Liverpool, 1986), p. 24.

and redistribution of benefits needed', the group focused on creating structures within the local authority to support programme development instead of working on such programmes directly—a markedly different approach from BUILD's strategy of focusing on specific solutions to policy problems in order to develop leaders within the organisation and relationships with political bodies.²⁴⁵

As it sought this 'corporate local authority mechanism', the MCRC was supported in its efforts by Liverpool Black Organisation and the Merseyside Anti-Racist Alliance (see p. 99). National government commentary further bolstered its case for the necessity of such a mechanism. The all-Party Parliamentary Select Committee that visited Liverpool in October 1980 expressed concern about the local authority's clear lack of race initiatives and structures, which may have additionally helped to alter the mood on the council.²⁴⁶ Following the protests, pamphlets, and Parliamentary expression of concern, the council's Policy and Finance Committee passed a resolution on 9 December 1980 that finally seemed to clinch the goals of a council-wide policy and 'official access to the decision-making process for the black community', adopting an equal opportunities policy and creating a Race Relations Liaison Committee to 'examine the ways in which the City Council's policies might be extended or altered' so as to overcome 'obstacles to the achievement of greater racial harmony in Liverpool.'²⁴⁷ Crucially for the MCRC, the Committee would be comprised of councillors and representatives from Liverpool's minority community as chosen by the MCRC. Eager to take advantage of their new access to council decision-making, the organisations of the MCRC organised elections for the twelve representatives invited to serve on the Race Relations Liaison Committee, and it was agreed that:

²⁴⁵ Nelson, *Black Atlantic Politics*, 193.

²⁴⁶ Liverpool Black Caucus, *The Racial Politics of Militant*, 31.

²⁴⁷ Liverpool PRO, Minutes of the Finance and Policy Committee, 9/12/80. 352/MIN/FIN II/1/140.

the members should report back regularly to the wider group of minority organisations who appointed them, as well as having their own regular ‘caucus’ meetings at which to organise policy input and tactics.²⁴⁸

Having secured their access point to the council, the MCRC then created the Black Caucus to make minority representation on the Race Relations Liaison Committee as effective as possible.

As Brown explained:

And to be able to go into the race advisory meetings with a common purpose and be able to hold that line was an achievement. Many groups in Britain go into advisory situations, and they go with what’s in their heads. There is no strategy; they argue against each other. Council meetings go very fast. If you are not organised, you don’t have a chance. We were able to caucus people and develop strategies.²⁴⁹

Unlike BUILD, which worked to build up a string of campaign ‘wins’ before attempting to engage City Hall, the Black Caucus began concerted work on its policy agenda only after garnering representation within the city council. Its methods for gaining this access, too, were different from BUILD’s, favouring a public education and protest campaign centred on the inadequacies of the city council’s response to the particular struggles of Liverpool’s minorities (and especially its black population—see p. 97) rather than the sort of concrete resource wins that will be discussed in Chapter 6. This is not to suggest that BUILD did not want the sort of regular access to decision makers that the MCRC believed it had secured going into 1981; rather, as will also be discussed in Chapter 6, Mayor Schaefer was unwilling to extend it to them. Whether the Black Caucus would be able to translate this access into actual influence in council decision-making, however, remained to be seen.

Engagement: The Race Relations Liaison Committee

Despite the creation of a Race Relation Liaison Committee and the acceptance of an equal opportunities policy, the implementation of measures that would give the policy teeth was

²⁴⁸ Liverpool Black Caucus, *The Racial Politics of Militant*, 35.

²⁴⁹ Brown cited in Nelson, *Black Atlantic Politics*, 267.

slow in coming. Instead, Black Caucus members began to receive lessons in the cumbersome nature of a local authority bureaucracy and the ways in which a council committee could simply become a way to say 'no' to policies that previously received no consideration. The council's refusal to assign senior officers to the committee placed a weighty burden of policy research and generation on the committees' members, tasks for which the Black Caucus members unsurprisingly did the heavy lifting.²⁵⁰ Though these members did produce detailed proposals both on increasing black and minority participation in the council's workforce and creating a multi-cultural, anti-racist curriculum for schools, these proposals were not acted upon. Their recommendations for setting up a working party on racial harassment on council estates, a training scheme for housing managers, racial monitoring in employment, and sheltered accommodation for the minority elderly were also all rejected.²⁵¹

The Black Caucus members received a lesson, too, in how committee members from a minority party could sway a committee. For while the Race Relations Committee was created under a Liberal council, its failure to make any significant headway on the implementation of an equality agenda was in part due to the strenuous opposition of the committee's Labour members. Given that the Liberals had demonstrated no particular enthusiasm for equal opportunities policies in the years leading up to the establishment of the Race Relations Liaison Committee, Labour opposition combined with Liberal apathy proved a deadly combination for such efforts. This was demonstrated just a year after the council's historic 'embrace' of an equal opportunities policy, when in response to what should have been an uncontroversial motion regarding research into methods for increasing black employment in the council workforce Labour councillor and emerging Militant Tendency firebrand Derek Hatton put forward a counter amendment:

²⁵⁰ Ibid. 37.

²⁵¹ Ibid. 181.

That the resolution of the Emergency Sub-Committee be not approved and in an attempt to increase the job opportunities for both white and black the moratorium on the filling of vacancies within the Authority be lifted...²⁵²

This line—that no particular ‘positive action’ be taken to address challenges for black workers, who would benefit most from efforts to improve the situation of the working-class as a whole—reflected the official stance of the Militant Tendency. As Militant central committee members Peter Taaffe and Tony Mulhearn described their position:

...it is only by uniting the struggles of all workers in combating their day to day problems and linking this to the establishment of a socialist society, that the antagonism of black and white workers will be dissolved.²⁵³

The Militant or Militant-leaning Labour councillors’ opposition to equal opportunities efforts was rooted in a political vision more concerned about large-scale revolutionary aims than about the particular problems faced by a group of residents in the city where they governed. As such, while members of the Black Caucus may have had official access to decision-makers, they had little ability to influence them, meaning the extent of the MCRC’s political success ended with the creation of the Race Relations Liaison Committee.

Its influence was also limited by the MCRC’s own lack of electoral and policy-making resources. BUILD would eventually catch the attention of Baltimore mayoral candidates by gathering so many signatures in support of its agenda that, as its lead organiser framed it, it seemed the organisation might be able to ‘punish’ uncooperative politicians. Liverpool’s relatively small minority population posed no similar threat to the Labour party, and its residential concentration in Liverpool 8 meant that its electoral influence, too, was concentrated. In addition, according to the IAF principles by which BUILD operated in Baltimore, a group should aim to ‘go to power with a decision, not for a decision.’²⁵⁴ That is, a group should try to accumulate sufficient resources around a policy proposal before approaching a decision-maker in

²⁵² Liverpool PRO, Minutes of the Race Relations Liaison Sub-Committee, 18/12/81, 352 MIN/RAC 1.

²⁵³ Taaffe & Mulhearn, *Liverpool: A City that Dared to Fight*, 252.

²⁵⁴ Arnie Graf, in discussion with the author, 4/1/14.

order to make the proposal too good a deal to pass up. In its dealings with the Race Relations Liaison Committee, the Black Caucus did the opposite: it consistently went to the committee with recommendations and requests for actions, or ‘for a decision’, rather than presenting the committee with new resources for implementing the policies. The pattern underscores the extent to which the local authority itself held governing resources in Liverpool, and how difficult it could be to access those resources when a committee chose to withhold them.

So, despite once believing that they had managed to pierce the city council’s colour-blind mind-set in 1980, by 1983 the Black Caucus was deeply frustrated by councillor and officer apathy and/or opposition to the equal opportunities agenda, which made any actual implementation of such policies impossible. The organisations electing the Black Caucus members were fed up as well, and in 1983 a minor ‘coup’ took place that brought a more activist Caucus into being, one that was younger and (at least according to one of those elected in 1983) less willing to accept ‘no’ as an answer from the council.²⁵⁵ The new Black Caucus also included more women and more Liverpool-born black members.

Of course, the 1983 Black Caucus coup coincided with another sort of takeover—that of the city council by the Labour group (itself controlled by the Militant Tendency via the District Labour Party—see p. 84). However, Labour’s outright majority did open up the potential, at least, for more dramatic action in that the confused ‘toytown’ politics of the preceding years came to an end.²⁵⁶ Furthermore, while Derek Hatton was appointed chair of the Race Relations Liaison Committee, a more moderate councillor who had in the past demonstrated some sympathy for positive action was appointed deputy, which some members of the Black Caucus found encouraging.²⁵⁷ Indeed, several early gestures suggested flickers of progress within the committee. Most notably, the Labour councillors agreed to the creation of a Race Relations Unit

²⁵⁵ Ray Quarless, in discussion with the author, 2/4/13.

²⁵⁶ Liverpool’s ‘toytown politics’ are discussed in footnote 197.

²⁵⁷ Liverpool Black Caucus, *Racial Politics of Militant*, 51.

within the council. A Race Relations Unit would, in theory, coordinate the council's equality agenda across departments, and as a permanent fixture of the council bureaucracy it would give minority communities a foothold in the policy-making process that they could never hope to secure through the vote. A strong Race Relations Unit, in other words, had the potential to implement an agenda that thus far had been articulated, but not turned into a concrete reality. The Black Caucus, like the Anti-Cuts campaigners who would follow them, continued to believe that the correct bureaucratic mechanisms were necessary to the achievement of their goals, pointing to the concentrated financial and decision-making resources the council held.

However, after almost a year of working under the Labour administration, the Black Caucus members once again felt frustrated. On 6 July 1984, they walked out of a Race Relations Liaison Committee in protest:

Representatives of the Black Caucus drew attention to issues which they had raised at meetings in the past and which had not yet been brought to fruition or had not been approved at subsequent Committee meetings. The representatives questioned the commitment of the City Council to a policy of positive action in the area of race relations. The representatives of the black community asked to be informed of the policy of the City Council in relation to race relations and in particular:

- positive action
- monitoring of service delivery
- 8% employment target
- representation on all Committees of the Council...

The representatives of the black community then left the meeting.²⁵⁸

Despite such tensions, the relationship between Black Caucus members and Labour councillors was not completely acrimonious. Ray Quarless, a housing liaison worker and prominent member of the Caucus, emphasised that there was little opposition within the Caucus to Labour's policy centrepiece, the Urban Regeneration Strategy²⁵⁹, and that he and other Black Caucus members had supported the council's budget policies by joining its marches and protests.

²⁵⁸ Liverpool PRO, Minutes of the Race Relations Liaison Committee, 6/7/84. 352 MIN/RAC 1.

²⁵⁹ See p. 86.

Furthermore, when the reconstituted Race Relations Liaison Committee began meeting in 1983, there had been some optimism that even Hatton would prove to be a decent working partner:

Derek's okay. We're mates, we're fine, we're happy. I know Derek from a previous life, so he's happy, we're happy. The issues are on the agenda. We're going along quite smoothly...²⁶⁰

Hatton likewise characterised the relationship as a friendly one, saying, 'I know the black community very well.'²⁶¹ Cordial personal relations, however, could not overcome the Militant agenda, as became clear in October 1984.

Resistance

Whatever shreds of goodwill might have remained between the Black Caucus and the Labour group vanished after the appointment proceedings for the head of the Race Relations Unit in October 1984. By this point, the Black Caucus had pinned its hopes for overcoming the sluggishness of council officers and implementing their agenda on a vigorous Unit. Thus, Black Caucus members were particularly keen to see a capable and enthusiastic officer leading the new department; one member even applied for the post himself.²⁶² Understanding the extent to which the Black Caucus anticipated relying on the Race Relations Unit for the successful implementation of its agenda is important for understanding the vociferousness of their reaction when Militant fixed the appointment. The fixed appointment dashed their final hope for influence within the council.

Hatton himself admitted the appointment was fixed. He travelled to London, where Peter Taaffe and other members of the Militant leadership instructed him to appoint Sam Bond, a London Militant member, to the post of Principal Race Relations Advisor, despite his having no experience working in the area of race relations or equal opportunities and despite the

²⁶⁰ Quarless discussion, 2/4/13.

²⁶¹ Derek Hatton, in discussion with the author, 28/3/13.

²⁶² Quarless discussion, 2/4/13.

presence of several exceptionally well-qualified candidates. Hatton acknowledged that the appointment emanated from the London headquarters of the Militant Tendency:

I let myself be influenced by people in London, in Militant, who said, ‘We’ve got this lad’ and I said, ‘Fine, let’s look at him.’ ...He came from London, and the headquarters of Militant recommended him. He came up, and instead of us turning around and saying, Hang on a minute, this is not right—and I should’ve done—I just said, Yeah we’ll appoint him.²⁶³

With Labour councillors holding six out of the ten spots on the appointment panel, they had the power to single-handedly decide the appointment.²⁶⁴ What had happened was immediately obvious to those taking part in the proceedings. Black Caucus members walk out and the union representative from NALGO together walked out. Gideon Ben-Tovim, Professor of Sociology at Liverpool University, was one of those who quit the session, and his account of the day’s events made clear the egregiousness of the Labour councillors’ favouritism:

After lunch, Cllr Hatton began—he stated that the major issue to him was appointing someone who would carry out Council policies as put forward by the Labour Party...There can be no doubt that this appointment was ‘fixed’ in advance—the unanimity, lack of doubt amongst the Labour members in the face of a weak candidate facing competition from well qualified and capable people (including a Principal Race Adviser with a Labour-controlled Authority) is sure evidence for me that they had made up their minds in advance of the interviews. The rote delivery by Bond of his answers to the set questions indicate that he may very well have been briefed in advance himself on those questions and the expected answers. Hatton himself openly admitted that they were elevating ‘loyalty to Labour Policy’ above any other criteria...²⁶⁵

Ben-Tovim’s comments are also revealing for the extent to which they demonstrate the ability and willingness of the Labour group—and the Militant Tendency through it—to make unilateral decisions once in control of the council. BUILD grew to a point where it could regularly gather thousands of people to its events. Because of their limited numbers, the best strategy for the MCRC’s equal opportunity activists to implement their agenda was to work through the council’s committee structure. But that committee structure proved difficult to wrangle. When no party

²⁶³ Hatton discussion, 28/3/13.

²⁶⁴ Liverpool Black Caucus, *The Racial Politics of Militant*, 76.

²⁶⁵ Gideon Ben-Tovim quoted in *ibid.*, 76.

held an outright majority, policy proposals could easily languish on an officer's desk or in a different committee, and it was difficult to build a consensus around moving it beyond the point of bureaucratic sticking. By contrast, when one party had an outright majority and strong convictions about its agenda, decisions could be moved quickly through council committees. However, the ability of other political parties or interested bodies to shape that policy was almost entirely dependent on the willingness of the ruling group to take their advice on board in sub-committee and committee meetings. In the absence of such willingness, such groups had few options for recourse should their advice be rejected. Militant's ideology barely allowed it to acknowledge that minorities might face particular difficulties apart from their membership in the working-class, much less enact policies to address such issues.

For its part, the activist-oriented Black Caucus refused to continue to engage with a council that, in its view, no longer even maintained pretences about a desire to pursue the 1980 equal opportunities policy adopted. Instead, it moved from a strategy of engagement to one of resistance. Part of the group lay 'siege' to Derek Hatton's office on the day following Bond's appointment and did not leave until Hatton signed a document agreeing to readvertise the post. Despite the language used by Labour spokespeople to describe this action, according to those on both sides who were present it was actually a relatively calm, easy-going affair—perhaps because Hatton was following orders in the Bond appointment, rather than acting out of any particular conviction of his own.²⁶⁶ However, the following day, the Militant-controlled DLP overturned this agreement, insisting that Hatton had acted due to 'intimidatory action'.²⁶⁷ The instance is a clear demonstration of the limits even Militant city councillors faced in acting independently, monitored by a DLP that stood ready to redraw the boundary lines should any particular decision raise its ire. That is, even when the Black Caucus was able to influence a Militant

²⁶⁶ Hatton discussion, 28/3/13; Quarless discussion, 2/4/13.

²⁶⁷ D. Clay, 'Many Happy Returns', *Liverpool Link*, 10-11/85, 14.

councillor, council policy was so controlled by the DLP that the Caucus could not be sure his agreements would stick—supporting the argument of this thesis that pressure group success depended not only on access to and influence with decision makers, but also on the scope of their own authority.

Not ready to back down either, members of the Black Caucus organised meetings throughout Liverpool 8 on 17 October 1984 to condemn the city council's turnabout. This mass mobilisation of resistance seems to have been the council's last straw, and on 26 October, it suspended the Race Relations Liaison Committee.²⁶⁸ The carefully nurtured formal linkages that emerged only after years of effort on the part of the MCRC and its allies were dashed. The clash had consequences for the Labour group, as well, though they were less dramatic. Until the uproar created over the Bond appointment, the Labour council had enjoyed 'something of a honeymoon' in Liverpool.²⁶⁹ The Black Caucus's shift to a posture of resistance was significant in part because it triggered the first major public rift amongst the council's supporters (many of the people involved in the unions, voluntary sector groups, and churches who supported the boycott of Sam Bond would still have voted for Labour, and some were even Labour party members). In retrospect, Hatton acknowledged the scale and seriousness of the rift: 'It was a major tactical error... Massive distraction, massive distraction. And it's the most stupid thing we [the Labour council] did.'²⁷⁰

For the Black Caucus convinced other groups, including unions, to support its boycott of Bond. The National Association for Teachers of Higher Education, the Union of Construction, Allied Trades and Technicians, the National Union of Teachers (NUT), and NUPE joined NALGO in refusing to acknowledge not only Bond, but also any other appointments the council

²⁶⁸ Ibid. 14.

²⁶⁹ Ben-Tovim discussion, 23/4/13.

²⁷⁰ Hatton discussion, 28/3/13.

made to the Race Relations Unit as long as he was its head.²⁷¹ Liverpool's Anglican and Roman Catholic bishops, whose public profile as advocates for the city and those marginalised within it had risen steadily at the local and national levels since the Toxteth riots, also publicly condemned the appointment, and their churches too refused to work with Bond in his capacity as Principal Race Relations Advisor.²⁷² In November 1984, the week before Bond was to take up his post, some 300 black people marched through Liverpool in protest, and a smaller group broke up the city council meeting at which the appointment was to be confirmed.²⁷³ Accusations of violent threats flew from both the Militant Tendency and the Black Caucus.²⁷⁴ Inevitably though, given the makeup of the council and the stance of the DLP, Bond took up his appointment on schedule. Indeed, the non-Militant and fairly well-ignored leader of the council John Hamilton 'was rapped over the knuckles' for so much as suggesting that the appointment might be delayed.²⁷⁵

Publicly, all interaction between the conflicting parties ceased. Privately, in the early months of the conflict, Bishop David Sheppard and Archbishop Derek Worlock brokered a series of talks between members of the Black Caucus and Cllrs Hamilton, Hatton, and Tony Byrne (highlighting Byrne's influence despite his not being a member of Militant), Liverpool Labour party leader Tony Mulhearn, and chief executive Alfred Stocks in the basement of Liverpool's Metropolitan Cathedral.²⁷⁶ Hatton offered that the council would finance two additional posts in the Race Relations Unit in exchange for the Caucus's endorsement of Bond, a deal which the Caucus representatives refused outright.²⁷⁷ It is interesting to speculate whether BUILD leaders would have taken a similar line. One of the IAF's best-known mantras was 'no

²⁷¹ Clay, 'Many Happy Returns', 14.

²⁷² Liverpool PRO, David Sheppard/Derek Worlcok joint press release, 14/11/84. 920SHP/24/9.

²⁷³ M. Nally and A. Harris, 'Race chief defiant', *The Observer*, 18/11/84, 2.

²⁷⁴ A. Dunn, "'Cool it'" call on council dispute', *The Guardian*, 16/11/84, 4.

²⁷⁵ D. Sheppard, *Steps Along Hope Street* (London, 2002), p. 233.

²⁷⁶ Quarless discussion, 2/4/13.

²⁷⁷ Sheppard, *Steps Along Hope Street*, 233.

permanent enemies, no permanent allies', and at its trainings it emphasised the importance of pragmatism and compromise in political dealings. As will be discussed in Chapter 6, BUILD did eventually find itself at a similarly complete impasse with City Hall under Mayor Schaefer after attendees at a BUILD electoral event offended the mayor. But rather than adopt a posture of resistance like the Black Caucus, BUILD instead chose to seek out new resource-rich partners who exercised influence over policy areas where City Hall had less sway, such as Baltimore City's education system. A lack of partners who were not in some way attached to Liverpool's local authority would have made such a strategy difficult for the Black Caucus to imitate. Nevertheless, successful though it may have been in drawing attention to itself and to the council's actions, the limits of the Black Caucus's strategy were found in the almost total stalling of any official equal opportunities efforts for the remainder of the Labour council's time in office.

Analysis and outcome

After the failed meetings in the basement of the Metropolitan Cathedral, the council took some symbolic steps to continue to address race relations issues, but these proved largely empty gestures: an Equal Opportunity Committee formed in 1985 and intended to address both race and gender issues did not meet.²⁷⁸ The Merseyside Action Group—intended as a counterweight to the MCRC that would support Bond's activities, and widely believed to be manufactured by Militant organisers—itself collapsed when the key local members walked out in March 1986, frustrated at the way in which they were being 'used' by the council.²⁷⁹ Meanwhile, substantive efforts to address gaps in service delivery to ethnic minorities, much less the employment issue, were 'few and far between'; indeed, the council responded to housing manager John Kenny's

²⁷⁸ D. Clay, "'I'm staying where I am'"—says Bond', *Liverpool Link*, 11/86, 8.

²⁷⁹ D. Clay, 'New twist in Sam Bond saga', *Liverpool Link*, 3/86, 9; Y. Khan, 'Blacks v Militant: the years of conflict', *Liverpool Echo*, 24/11/86, 6.

chairing of a group that found systematic discrimination in Liverpool's housing allocations by suspending him on the day the report was published.²⁸⁰ Even the boycott campaign's visibility decreased as time passed. Only when the city's political opportunity structure shifted, and the Black Caucus was able to link itself to broader efforts to resist the council, did its campaign begin to gain traction once again.

Under the political opportunity structure of the Militant-directed Labour regime, then, the strategy of resistance—even resistance that involved a citywide boycott of a council appointee—on the part of the Black Caucus was largely futile. At least, it was futile in progressing the Caucus's original goals of establishing formal access to decision-making within the city council, influencing the shape of council policy and outcomes with regard to ethnic minorities, and addressing employment disparities within the council workforce. And without other relevant resource holders to approach for initiatives like balancing the racial makeup of the council's workforce or implementing an anti-racist curriculum in schools—resource holders like the organised business lobby or city school system that BUILD tapped during a hostile mayoral administration in Baltimore—the Black Caucus could see no other options for accumulating the power to implement its agenda during the period that it ceased working with the city council. However, even when the Black Caucus had enjoyed regular access to councillors via the Race Relations Liaison Committee, its goals had proved difficult to accomplish because of the Caucus's inability to influence councillors and officers or single-handedly mobilise resources around its own proposals. Access to decision makers did not automatically translate into pressure group success, a lesson that BUILD would also eventually learn under Mayor Schmoke (Chapter 8).

²⁸⁰ Clay, "I'm staying where I am", 8; Khan, 'Blacks v Militant', 6.

Ch. 4, The Eldonians and Alternative Paths to Resources

The second of our cases looks at the Eldonian Community Association, which successfully replaced its decaying 1930s tenements in the Vauxhall ward of Liverpool with the award-winning, 145-home Eldonian Village over the course of the 1980s. In order to do so, they obtained approximately £6.7 million of central government funding.²⁸¹ They accomplished this feat despite determined opposition from the Militant-directed city council, which was both ideologically opposed to housing associations and deeply committed to its own Urban Regeneration Strategy, and despite the national government's determination to develop the site without significant public investment. How were they, unlike the Black Caucus, able to navigate the fraught political scene so successfully?

This thesis argues that an animating cause and strong leadership were necessary, though not sufficient, conditions for these pressure groups' success. The residents comprising the Eldonian Community Association possessed both. Their cause was the desire to reclaim the closed Tate & Lyle factory site for a new-build housing cooperative, and the city council's opposition only strengthened their commitment to it. The Eldonians, as the residents called themselves, also possessed strong local leadership in the form of Tony McGann, their charismatic and energetic chairman, and Monsignor Jim Dunne, a local Roman Catholic priest who helped to spark the residents' very first resistance to council-imposed plans for the area. Beyond their cause and their leaders, the Eldonians also took advantage of what resources were available in Liverpool outside the city council, including the social capital of Bishop Sheppard and Archbishop Worlock (at a time when the bishops' political patronage was particularly significant within Liverpool) and the financial capital and decision-making authority of the national government. By courting the Merseyside Task Force, the residents were able to sidestep

²⁸¹ R. Cowan, P. Hannay, & R. Owens, 'Community-Led Regeneration by the Eldonians: The light on top of the tunnel', *Architects Journal*, 23 March 1988, pp. 49-51.

the city council's objections and secure the necessary funds—that is, obtain both financial and decision-making resources—to clear the Tate & Lyle site and build their homes.

While these strategies enabled the Eldonians to amass remarkable resources to their neighbourhood, their aims were also more straightforward than those of the MCRC or the Anti-Cuts Campaign. The Eldonians did not need sustained access to resource holders, because they wanted resources for only one project; when they did engage in Labour party politics via the Vauxhall ward, it was more to punish the councillor that had opposed their plans than an attempt to redirect council policy. They did not seek a policy that would be applicable to the entire local authority bureaucracy, as the Black Caucus did, nor did they want the council to abandon one of its primary mechanisms for making decisions, as the Anti-Cuts Campaign did. While their use of clergy leaders and alternative sources of finance and planning authority resembles a BUILD campaign more closely than it does the other Liverpool pressure groups, the Eldonians did not have an eye to building a long-term vehicle for exercising power, as BUILD's leaders most certainly did. While the Eldonians' goals were far from small, they were simple, and this simplicity contributed to their success.

Identifying resources: Militant opposition and the Merseyside Task Force

When Tate & Lyle announced the closure of its Vauxhall factory in 1980, everyone agreed that the consequences for the surrounding population would be disastrous. In a city council meeting Sir Trevor Jones, the Liberal leader of the council, proposed a motion expressing the council's 'profound dismay' at Tate & Lyle's decision, which would cause 'irreparable harm to the economic life of the city', only to be one-upped by Labour councillor Tony Byrne, who proposed amendments to the motion that called on all 'consumers, trade unionists, and community groups' to boycott Tate & Lyle products in protest.²⁸² The Thatcher

²⁸² Liverpool PRO, Liverpool City Council meeting minutes, 28/1/81, 352/MIN/COU-II/1/93.

government was also concerned and kept tabs on the Merseyside County Council's redevelopment talks with the company.²⁸³

For those living in Vauxhall, the closure of the factory meant the loss of 1,700 jobs in the area and particular devastation for those families in which multiple family members had worked at the factory.²⁸⁴ However, the vacant 22-acre site became the focus of home-building aspirations over the next eight years as area residents worked to reclaim it for a housing cooperative.

Determined to avoid the fate of family and friends who had been separated from their neighbours and relocated to outer estates, Vauxhall residents enthusiastically responded to the Liberal housing committee chairman's suggestion that they form a cooperative.²⁸⁵ The Liberals' housing policies had helped to make Liverpool one of the most cooperative friendly cities in the country, and the planning process for the residents' proposed 'Portland Gardens' housing association progressed smoothly.²⁸⁶

However, the Labour council elected in 1983 quickly quashed the project soon after coming to power. Housing Committee chairman Tony Byrne's resistance to cooperatives and strong preference for public ownership was discussed in Chapter 2 (see p. 86). Such a stance bewildered many of the 1,000 or so Liverpool families living in housing cooperatives by 1983, who felt they were part of a radical social vision that empowered the working class and believed that Labour, once elected, was going back on pro-cooperative positions expressed during the campaign.²⁸⁷ As one member of the Portland Gardens Co-op explained the neighbourhood's sentiments around the May 1983 election,

²⁸³ PRO, Letter from Merseyside County Council to Michael Heseltine, 13/8/81, AT 81/241.

²⁸⁴ J. McBane, *The Rebirth of Liverpool: The Eldonian Way* (Liverpool, 2008), 114.

²⁸⁵ Cowan, Hannay, & Owens, 'Community-Led Regeneration by the Eldonians', 40.

²⁸⁶ Liverpool PRO, N. Wates, 'The Liverpool Breakthrough on Public Sector Housing', clipping from *Architects Journal* (date not legible) found in papers of Councillor David Vasmer, 920VAS/3/1/1.

²⁸⁷ Liverpool PRO, G. Howarth, 'Liverpool's new council threatens housing co-ops,' *Tribune*, 24/6/83 in 920VAS3/1/1.

There were rumours around that a Labour council in office would smash the co-op. We thought it was just scaremongering by the other parties. We were sure that a Labour council would see us as slumdwellers trying to improve our lot.²⁸⁸

The group was particularly crushed, then, when their scheme was tossed aside by those they had assumed would be their allies. George Howarth, a Labour party member and housing cooperative worker, suggested that the city council's real objection to housing associations was their challenge to the council's monopoly on housing-related employment. All the same, he argued, the benefits of membership in housing cooperatives for the working-class should outweigh such concerns, and 'the overriding principle of tenants' control and management should not be ditched purely to satisfy the interests of the public sector unions.'²⁸⁹

The Militants themselves defended their stance toward cooperatives by arguing that it 'flowed from the understanding that, with very limited resources, the first task was the designated priority areas and to house people in the greatest need.'²⁹⁰ With regard to the Eldonians specifically, the council defended its response by pointing out that to have given them the '£6.5 million being demanded would have meant severely cutting the council's housebuilding programme.'²⁹¹ This is undoubtedly true; it was remarkable that the council did manage to build 2,900 houses or bungalows and demolish several thousand flats and maisonettes, all while teetering on the edge of bankruptcy, from Labour's victory in 1983 to the House of Lords ruling in 1987.²⁹² Doing so required a high level of determination (or recklessness, depending on whose perspective was sought) on the part of Byrne and his fellow councillors.

Transforming the Tate & Lyle site into the Eldonian Village required the Vauxhall residents to accomplish two principal objects: obtaining planning permission to turn the site into housing, and accessing the funds for clearance and new building to make such a transformation

²⁸⁸ John Livingstone in Cowan, Hannay, & Owens, 'Community-Led Regeneration by the Eldonians', 42.

²⁸⁹ Ibid. 42.

²⁹⁰ Taaffe & Mulhearn, *Liverpool: A City that Dared to Fight*, 161.

²⁹¹ Ibid. 161.

²⁹² Cowan, Hannay, & Owens, 'Community-led Regeneration by the Eldonians', 42.

possible. The Eldonian leadership determined who held the decision-making and financial resources necessary for these goals. Prior to the creation of the Merseyside Task Force, the city council would have held both sets of resources. Indeed, early in its interactions with the Eldonians, the council was adamant that as the funds for new housing in Vauxhall would come from their allocation from the government, ‘they were within their rights to control the development process and the management of the new schemes.’²⁹³ However, after the creation of the Merseyside Task Force, potential developers did not have to work through the city council in order to access central government funds, but could instead attempt to leap-frog the council and apply directly to the Task Force and Secretary of State for inclusion on their list of development projects. In 1981, as part of Heseltine’s package of Liverpool plans, a ‘30 projects’ initiative had been set up by the Department of the Environment which would be administered by the Merseyside Task Force and the Liverpool office of the Housing Corporation; in their 1983/84 budget, the Task Force set aside £11.3 million for refurbishment of run-down housing estates.²⁹⁴ Crucially, these projects would not require council approval. The straightforward, concrete nature of the Eldonians’ goals—as opposed to those of the MCRC or Anti-Cuts Campaign—meant that inclusion on this list of projects could be the key to its ultimate success. Having found their resource holders, they needed the ability to access them—part of the third set of factors determining pressure group success.

Using connections to reach decision makers

The Eldonians were notable, even to contemporary observers, for their ‘extraordinary network of contacts with influential people’ that helped them to accomplish their goals.²⁹⁵ While more neutral observers characterised these partnerships as extraordinary, the Militants

²⁹³ McBane, *The Rebirth of Liverpool*, 97.

²⁹⁴ PRO, ‘Civil Commotion and the Inner Cities’, AT81/241; ‘Merseyside: Future Programme Expenditure’, AT81/246.

²⁹⁵ Cowan, Hannay, & Owens, ‘Community-led Regeneration by the Eldonians’, 44.

themselves took a more sinister view, claiming the national government's eventual partnership with the Eldonians was predicated on their opposition to the city council:

On the principle of 'the enemy of the enemy is my friend', the Tories were prepared to use *any* opponent of the city council, no matter how ideologically opposed to themselves.²⁹⁶

Because of their experience working on the Portland Gardens project, the Eldonians were not without some contacts on the city council, the national Labour party, the Housing Corporation, and Merseyside Improved Houses (MIH) when they regrouped to embark on the Eldonian project after negotiations with the Labour council over Portland Gardens failed in August 1983.²⁹⁷ These contacts included their local councillor, Paul Orr, and MIH caseworker Jack McBane.²⁹⁸ It was McBane who would connect the Eldonians to their 'most valuable local allies,' Anglican Bishop David Sheppard and Catholic Archbishop Derek Worlock, in the fall of 1983.²⁹⁹ Sheppard and Worlock were at the height of their unofficial role as chief negotiators between the city council and the national government; throughout multiple rounds of difficult budget talks, both sides used the pair as 'go-betweens.'³⁰⁰ As discussed in Chapter 3, they also acted as intercessors between the Black Caucus and the city council after the Sam Bond appointment³⁰¹, though intransigence on both sides made those negotiations unfruitful. Clergy leaders would also provide bridging social capital to BUILD. In Baltimore, however, clergy support was not limited to social capital—churches' financial capital also provided the bulk of BUILD's budget, enabling the financial independence from government funds that helps to differentiate BUILD from the Liverpool groups.

²⁹⁶ Taaffe & Mulhearn *Liverpool: A City that Dared to Fight*, 161.

²⁹⁷ Cowan, Hannay & Owens, 'Beginning: Portland Gardens Co-op', *Architects Journal*, 23/3/88, 46.

²⁹⁸ MIH, along with Community Development Services, was one of the two most important institutions in Liverpool for helping groups form housing cooperatives.

²⁹⁹ Cowan, Hannay, & Owens, 'Community-led regeneration by the Eldonians', 44.

³⁰⁰ 'Bishop defends go-between role,' *Liverpool Echo*, 1/10/85, 5.

³⁰¹ See p. 124.

The Liverpool bishops' support was nevertheless valuable, because representatives of both the local and national governments trusted them. A handwritten note from council leader John Hamilton thanked Sheppard for all of his 'quiet behind the scenes work' to 'help the council achieve a rates settlement' in July 1984, and Kenneth Baker would write in his memoir that the two bishops 'were to prove very helpful in trying to find a way through the dramas' of the rates crisis.³⁰² But eventually it became apparent that they were not neutral in their stance toward Militant's methods and aims. In a press release from July 1985, in the midst of the city council's second attempt to wrest greater funds from the government by setting an illegal budget, they wrote:

We are also disturbed at the City Council's apparent policy of confrontation with the Government. Party Politics should not stand in the way of a working partnership between local and central government...we cannot feel that this policy is the right way forward or of benefit to the community they [the council] wish to serve.³⁰³

The church leaders did not trust a council that was willing to sacrifice basic services 'for the vulnerable, the weak, and those who fe[lt] powerless in this crisis' in order to attempt to demonstrate the moral bankruptcy of Tory budget cuts.³⁰⁴ Their public comment that 'Party Politics should not stand in the way of a working partnership between local and central government'—particularly compared to the strong words that BUILD clergy used to rally their faithful around BUILD causes—points to the more restrained, 'act for the common good' political culture that was still prevalent in certain corners of the British elite in the 1980s.³⁰⁵ In addition to his broad concern for the city and its ability to navigate conflict with the national

³⁰² Liverpool PRO, Letter from John Hamilton to David Sheppard, 27/7/84. 920SHP/6/9; K. Baker, *The Turbulent Years: My Life in Politics* (London, 1993).

³⁰³ Liverpool PRO, Statement by Bishop David Sheppard, Archbishop Derek Worlock and Moderator John Williamson, 18/7/85. 920SHP/6/9.

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

³⁰⁵ In a further show of diminishing neutrality, regular meetings began to be held at Bishop's Lodge, Sheppard's residence, for those public workers who were also concerned about their ability to continue service provision in the face of looming bankruptcy (a concern at multiple points during the Militant-directed council's tenure). NUPE secretary Jane Kennedy called those gatherings called them 'extremely important' for providing encouragement to 'internal dissenters' and for building an alternative vision of how the city's problems might be tackled.

government and potential bankruptcy, the Eldonians were also fortunate in that David Sheppard had shown a particular interest in inner city housing issues since publishing a book on the topic in 1974. Sheppard's vision for urban regeneration relied heavily on the presence of local leadership and the decision of those locals with leadership potential to remain dedicated to their communities.³⁰⁶

Because of their connections and their disposition, then, the Eldonians believed the bishops both could and would support their community association and link the group to central government actors who could provide the resources to build new homes in Vauxhall. McBane had become acquainted with Sheppard when both were in London earlier in their respective careers, and he set up a meeting for himself and McGann with the bishop. When he met Tony McGann, Sheppard believed he had found just the sort of leader he had written about and immediately expressed his support for the project, promising to convince a more cautious Worlock to do the same.³⁰⁷ Sheppard and Worlock's assurances that they would 'stand shoulder to shoulder' with the community, and even stand in front of bulldozers with them if necessary, infused the Eldonians with enthusiasm after the crushing disappointment of Portland Gardens' failure.³⁰⁸ This morale boost was in and of itself important to the Eldonian campaign. As McGann described, many people in the area looked up to the church and believed that their quest for new housing had come to an end. 'The support from the bishops made it easier for locals to continue to support the campaign, because it helped them to believe that it would in fact succeed—a faith that would be tested in the coming months and years, when the city council would continue to send housing officers to people's doors to convince them that there would be no housing development, and that they should accept the council's rehousing offer.'³⁰⁹

³⁰⁶ Sheppard, *Steps Along Hope Street*, 231.

³⁰⁷ Jack McBane, in discussion with the author, 30/11/11.

³⁰⁸ McGann discussion, 13/9/11.

³⁰⁹ McBane, *The Rebirth of Liverpool*, 97.

Securing financial resources, though, remained essential for the Eldonians to make the housing cooperative a reality, and they wanted the bishops to help them access those resources and influence the individuals controlling them—part of the third set of factors in pressure group success. McGann asked Sheppard and Worlock to use their political connections to attempt to secure a place for the Eldonian project on the Merseyside Task Force’s 30-projects list. They agreed to do so. Housing Corporation officer Max Steinberg joined the bishops in their efforts to lobby the national government. Between February 1984 and February 1985, Sheppard and Worlock met with Jenkin on eight separate occasions to discuss Liverpool issues and were in frequent contact with the minister’s staff; they had at least one meeting with the Prime Minister herself during the same period.³¹⁰ In a letter to the Bishop of Derby, Sheppard described their dealings with Jenkin as congenial, despite the thorny issues they faced.³¹¹ On his end, Jenkin recalled that the pair were ‘very keen to use such influences they had, to promote the changes that would lead to an improvement.’³¹² Steinberg recalled that the two had a way of ‘opening doors’ that had otherwise seemed thoroughly closed.³¹³

For its part, the national government had its own reasons to be interested in the Eldonian cause. In June 1984, Environment Secretary Patrick Jenkin toured the rundown housing estates of Liverpool, including the tenements of the Vauxhall residents, and the former Tate & Lyle site.³¹⁴ Jenkin acknowledged the seriousness of the housing problems in the council’s seventeen priority areas, admitting in a press conference following the tour, ‘I have seen some families living in conditions the like of which I have never seen before. They are very grim.’³¹⁵

³¹⁰ Liverpool PRO, Letter from David Sheppard to the Bishop of Derby, 15/2/85. 920SHP/30/1.

³¹¹ Ibid.

³¹² Jenkin, quoted in McBane, 122.

³¹³ Max Steinberg, in discussion with the author, 3/10/11.

³¹⁴ N. Bunker, ‘Jenkin left in little doubt of the problem’, *Liverpool Echo*, 8/6/84, 8.

³¹⁵ Quoted in P. Phelps, ‘Budget crisis looks no nearer solution’, *Liverpool Echo*, 8/6/84, 9.

While promising that he wanted ‘to help where I can,’ Jenkin also used the opportunity to highlight flaws in the council’s regeneration strategy:

I think the withdrawal of finance from the cooperatives should be looked at again. It requires a mixed approach because the problems are so serious...I don’t think we ought to let ideology stand in the way of solutions.³¹⁶

Thus, Jenkin—the same politician who complained that the city council had ‘danced on his political grave’ after the 1983/84 budget negotiations—was able to paint himself as the one willing to rise above politics in order to produce solutions, in contrast to the city council. His tour had also given him insight into the fissures Militant provoked amongst the city’s residents; when Militant supporters showed up to sell copies of their publication to the crowd following Jenkin in Everton, residents told them to ‘be quiet’ since they weren’t locals.³¹⁷ Thatcher likewise made an unannounced, abbreviated tour of run-down estates in October 1984 on her way to Huyton for a Conservative party engagement.³¹⁸ After taking pictures with smiling estate residents, who commented positively on her politeness, interest, and willingness to listen, Thatcher reiterated that the Government was ‘committed to helping’ Liverpool residents.³¹⁹ Like Jenkin, she also suggested that a large part of the problem was the negligent management of the estates—echoing a point that Liberal councillors had been making just months earlier in council meetings about Labour’s insistence on cancelling improvement grants so that more money could be poured into the regeneration strategy.³²⁰

The city council derided both visits, insisting that Jenkin’s was purely ‘cosmetic’ and that Thatcher’s ‘hush-hush’ manner, with her sneaking ‘in and out like a thief in the night,’ pointed to an unwillingness to deal openly and realistically with the city’s problems.³²¹ But the Thatcher

³¹⁶ Ibid.

³¹⁷ Bunker, ‘Jenkin left in little doubt...’, 8.

³¹⁸ ‘Gizza house Maggie!’, *Liverpool Echo*, 2/10/84, 3.

³¹⁹ ‘Thatcher slams city “wastrels”’, *Liverpool Echo*, 2/10/84, 3.

³²⁰ Liverpool PRO, Minutes of council proceedings, 7/3/84, 352MIN/COUII/I/96. According to the Liberals, the cancelled grants even included those for indoor bathrooms and toilets.

³²¹ Bunker, ‘Jenkin left in little doubt...’, 8; ‘Thatcher “sneak” visit under fire’, *Liverpool Echo*, 4/10/81, 14.

government had reason to believe that the mood in Liverpool was shifting, in part because of the reports they received from Sheppard and Worlock about sentiments in their parishes which suggested 'that the ordinary people of Liverpool were becoming increasingly alarmed at the reckless policies being implemented by the council.'³²²

In their joint opposition to the majority of the Labour councillors, the Eldonians and Patrick Jenkin made natural allies. Through another political patron, Lord Sefton, the Eldonians had managed to secure a meeting with Jenkin in London in July 1984.³²³ In early October, Jenkin would infuriate the city council by insisting on personally calling on the Eldonians when he visited Liverpool; just weeks later, the Eldonians had their funding. McGann and Jenkin took a liking to one another. McGann made it quite clear that he was willing to work with any 'reasonable person' of whatever political party, and Jenkin was likewise pleased to find a group 'prepared to do business' at a time when 'a lot of other people simply wanted to abuse.'³²⁴ It seems unlikely that in their meetings the two talked about discrediting the city council directly.³²⁵ For the Vauxhall residents, such an outcome mattered little as long as they received the means to build their houses; to Jenkin, the opportunity for political point-scoring (and practical problem-solving) must have seemed obvious. The Eldonians came to the attention of the central government at a moment when it was looking to demonstrate that its commitment to

³²² K. Baker. *The Turbulent Years: My Life in Politics* (London, 1993), 106.

³²³ Cowan, Hannay, & Owens 43.

³²⁴ McGann, discussion; Jenkin quoted in McBane, *The Rebirth of Liverpool*, 126.

³²⁵ To the extent that the Eldonians did engage with the council, however, it only created a deeper rift between themselves and the majority of the Labour group. One of the councillors who had supported the scrapping of Portland Gardens represented the Vauxhall ward; he had, not unusually, been selected as the neighbourhood's candidate at a Labour party meeting attended by only eleven party members. Having decided that it was time to ensure their councillors were working for their own best interests, McGann gathered a group of about one hundred residents to attend the local Labour ward meeting one night. After all registering as members of the party, they commenced a period of 'ruthless politicking' until Eldonian sympathisers controlled the nominations for Labour councillors from Vauxhall. This, combined with their relationship with Paul Orr, put the Eldonians at the forefront of in-party resistance to the Militants in Liverpool. Orr, a long-time Vauxhall councillor who had helped the neighbourhood to pursue its Portland Gardens plan, became the leader of the 'scabby six' or the 'sensible six' (depending on the speaker) group of Labour councillors who publicly dissented from the council's illegal budget plan in March 1984; Vauxhall councillor Joe Morgan was also among the dissenters. From thenceforth, Mulhearn declared that they would be seen as 'political lepers' by the mass of the working-class in Merseyside.

Liverpool's housing crisis was substantial, but also seeking opportunities to highlight the inadequacies of the council's government-centric approach. The Eldonian cause presented a golden opportunity for it to do both. Schattschneider (1975) suggested that groups lacking in financial resources might yet accomplish their political aims by exploiting cleavages between other actors. In order to access relevant resource holders, both the Eldonians and BUILD would tap into cleavages that did not involve them directly: the Eldonians by enabling the Thatcher government to appear more pro-active and flexible than the Liverpool council, and BUILD by supporting Schaefer as governor of Maryland in a referendum opposed by the National Rifle Association.³²⁶ Their willingness to act flexibly in order to gain favour with resource holders helped to ensure both groups' success.

Analysis and outcome

Before the Eldonians were able to begin construction on their cooperative, the city council would make one final concerted effort to undo their aspirations. The group had had the funding for their project in hand for over six months when they received notice that the council had rejected their application for planning permission on the (spurious, as it turned out) grounds that 'surrounding noxious industries made this [their planning site] an unsuitable site for housing.'³²⁷ The residents appealed the decision, and a public inquiry began in October 1985. The city council was embarrassed when its expert witness was discredited by the residents' barrister, who pointed out that the charts the witness was using to demonstrate how wind patterns would carry offensive smells from nearby factories to the planning site were in fact upside down—in short, humourously demonstrating that the council was grasping for reasons to

³²⁶ See p. 258.

³²⁷ 'Home Sweet Home: The Eldonian Village' in Cowan, Hannay, & Owens, 'Community-led Regeneration by the Eldonians', 51.

turn down the application rather than doing so based on the facts of the matter.³²⁸ The clergy leaders once again came to the Eldonians' aid, as Archbishop Worlock made a dramatic impression in the courtroom by arriving in full clerical regalia to give his testimony that the community members were facing 'a threat to their existence' and his firm opposition to 'the destruction of community bones' that the council was attempting in its plan to disperse the residents.³²⁹ Worlock's appearance at the inquiry took place the day after he and Sheppard had published an opinion piece denouncing Militant tactics in *The Times*, warning that the city 'was tearing itself to pieces' in a conflict due largely to 'Militant's intransigence and unwillingness to engage in serious dialogue' and threatening 'the most vulnerable elements of the community', namely the schoolchildren and elderly who would suffer if the city reached bankruptcy and all services ceased.³³⁰ Though but the background to the Eldonians' micro struggle with the council, the piece demonstrated the reach and stance of the players with which the group had aligned itself as they entered the court. The residents won their appeal in November, and in the same month the participative planning process for their 145-home village began in earnest.³³¹

Sheppard and Worlock were invited back to the Eldonian Village in September 1987 to lay the first brick at the new site; a year later, when the last resident moved into their home, they were invited back again and greeted with a banner that read, 'Our thanks to Archbishop Derek, to Bishop David and to all our friends. WE DID IT BETTER TOGETHER.'³³² However, as the team from the *Architects Journal* pointed out in the conclusion to their major feature on the village in 1988, Eldonians' motto had shifted over the course of their campaign, and would perhaps continue to shift with regard to the rest of Liverpool:

³²⁸ McGann, discussion, 13/9/11.

³²⁹ K. Kendrick, 'Archbishop's fight to rebuild homes', *Liverpool Echo*, 3/10/85, 11.

³³⁰ D. Sheppard and D. Worlock, 'The tragedy of our city', *The Times*, 1/10/85. So strong was the reaction to their article that Byrne, in a rare move, invited the bishops to give evidence to the council—which, not surprisingly, did not result in any policy change.

³³¹ Cowan, Hannay, & Owens, 'Community-led Regeneration by the Eldonians', 51.

³³² Sheppard & Worlock, *Better Together*, 212.

The Eldonians' motto used to be 'We do it better ourselves'. When they cemented the alliances that could offer them land, money and influence they changed it to 'We do it better together'. In relation to the rest of the city the future message may be 'We do it better apart'.³³³

The Vauxhall residents had recovered from their Portland Gardens disappointment in a show of remarkable resilience. However, neither their pugnacious leaders nor their dogged commitment to their cause was enough, on their own, to secure their success. Rather, they accomplished their goal only when they identified a group—the Merseyside Task Force—with both the resources and the authority to make their new homes a reality, and when they determined a strategy—using the church leaders—for accessing those resource holders. The resources extracted were substantial. The £6.7 million of public investment dwarfed the total cost of city council's Inner City Partnership housing bid in the year the Militant-dominated Labour council came to office, which was a mere £2.5 million.³³⁴ This £6.7 million, provided entirely by national government instruments, is particularly impressive in light of the Government's original aim to rely on private investment to the greatest extent possible in the redevelopment of the Tate & Lyle site. However, as the journalists from the *Architects Journal* noted, the Eldonians not only were not interested in exercising citywide influence: they were decidedly willing to take actions that would alienate them from the larger Labour group. Such a strategy would have made little sense for the MCRC or the Anti-Cuts Campaign, given that they hoped to change the way the Labour group, and through it the entire council, made decisions around the distribution of certain resources.

Ch. 5, The Anti-Cuts Campaign and Challenging the Council

³³³ Cowan, Hannay, & Owens, 'Community-led Regeneration by the Eldonians', 63.

³³⁴ Liverpool PRO, Liverpool City Council Housing Strategy Statement, 1983/42, 920VAS/3/1.

This chapter explores the tumultuous period in Liverpool politics between October 1986 and May 1987, during which time the vast majority of a splintering city council Labour group was dismissed from office and a Liberal caretaker council attempted to regain elected control of the council, only to lose to a rebranded Labour slate of councillors. The Black Caucus had attempted to work through local government machinery in hopes of implementing its race equality agenda and bumped up against the potential difficulties associated with concentrated decision-making authority. In contrast to the Black Caucus's effort, the groups that formed the Anti-Cuts Campaign had the problem of concentrated decision-making—their animating cause—brought directly to them in the form of bulldozed buildings and slashed budgets. They organised against these invasive decisions with a clearly articulated goal of changing power dynamics in Liverpool by calling for an end to 'delegated powers'. The strategies they employed ultimately failed to end delegated powers—decision-making power in the council at that point rested too thoroughly in the hands of Tony Byrne, who was immune to the Anti-Cuts Campaign's influence—though they did help the member groups with subsidiary goals of maintaining funds and facilities. Even with the entrance of a caretaker council, the Campaign relied on favourable political circumstances in order to secure the short-term concessions its member groups needed to survive. Unlike in Baltimore, where BUILD created sufficiently broad and/or powerful support for its agenda to convince elected officials to work with it, in 1987 leaders from the Anti-Cuts Campaign responded to these institutional roadblocks to influence by attempting to become part of the very establishment they had fought, and ran for the council.

The inability of the Anti-Cuts Campaign to go beyond obstructing the council's decisions and actually change its decision-making structure illustrates the difficulty that groups with limited resources had in participating in the exercise of power in Liverpool during this period. With power and resources concentrated in the hands of the council, these groups had few options for recourse when their efforts to influence the council failed—unless their goals could, like the

Eldonians', be characterised as part of the Merseyside Task Force's remit. Ironically, by ultimately leaving the organisation they had begun to build in order to join the council, the Anti-Cuts Campaign leaders helped ensure that publicly significant decision-making would continue to remain firmly in the hands of formal government structures rather than advancing their original goals of greater resources and influence for the groups they represented.

Delegated powers

At the heart of the Anti-Cuts Campaign's efforts lay the issue of delegated powers. Typically, council policies had to wind their way through a series of sub-committee and committee approval procedures and a final ratification vote before the full council in order to be implemented as council policy. Though potentially cumbersome, at least in theory the process also meant that a given policy would be exposed to criticism and input at numerous points before it appeared before the Policy and Finance Committee (though in practice, committees did not always review their colleagues' work very closely). Because the Policy and Finance Committee controlled the council purse strings, it had the ability to block any proposal requiring a financial expenditure, and its approval almost always preceded passage by the full council. By 1986, however, council leaders like Policy and Finance Committee chairman Tony Byrne, who was more interested in seeing the Urban Regeneration Strategy implemented than the democratic process upheld, were becoming fed up with this process. Increasingly, they resorted to the use of delegated powers to be able to make decisions more quickly. 'Delegated powers' involved a vote by the full council that permitted binding policy decisions to be made solely by a committee chairman and deputy chairman. While this might speed progress considerably on large-scale construction projects, which required the approval of numerous contracts and planning permissions, a determined committee chairman might also use his or her delegated powers to

make larger decisions. That is, other councillors might not fully realise which of their powers had been 'delegated' until after decisions had been made.

Combined with the Militant practice of deciding on policy and tactics in closed-door meetings and then enforcing those decisions through a series of caucuses, the increasingly extensive use of delegated powers made the exercise of power even more centralised in a process that already concentrated power heavily in the local authority. Some Labour moderates began to protest this centralisation in 1986, fingering Byrne's use of delegated powers as particularly egregious. The issue was significant enough to cause the first major split in the Labour group's ranks since it had taken control of the council in 1983, when on 29 October deputy council leader Derek Hatton and his supporters lost a motion to grant delegated powers to every council committee in the run-up to the final challenge facing Labour's forty-seven 'rates rebels' in the House of Lords. The motion's defeat by a vote of 46 – 37 demonstrated that concern was spreading about the threat that the widespread use of such powers posed.³³⁵ Charges of secrecy and obfuscation by council leaders continued into the winter. In the press, deposed council leader John Hamilton loudly decried the closed-door, small group meetings through which Byrne was running the council, and at a December protest of some two hundred NUPE members spokeswoman Jane Kennedy explained, "Tony Byrne is running this city like a dictatorship."³³⁶

In the fall of 1986, with the swelling delegated powers controversy in the background, clouds had been gathering over the Liverpool voluntary sector's Urban Programme-funded projects to an even greater extent than usual. The council agreed to a lawful budget in September 1986, but that budget provided only £1.5 million to cover £5.1 million worth of costs associated with the Urban Programme.³³⁷ Policy and Finance Committee chairman Byrne and deputy chair

³³⁵ J. Watson, 'Rebels rage over split in the ranks', *Liverpool Echo*, 30/10/86, 4.

³³⁶ J. Watson, 'Byrne trapped by union demo', *Liverpool Echo*, 4/12/86, 1; J. Watson, 'Secret army', *Liverpool Echo*, 9/12/86, 4.

³³⁷ 'City Budget a fragile balance', *Liverpool Link*, September 1986, 2.

Frank Mills met on 20 October to look at Urban Programme expenditures and, using delegated powers to make a dramatic decision, cut the entire grant of twenty-three of the sixty-four projects supported by the Urban Programme, including four homeless hostels, four community councils, services for single parents, and Merseyside's only residential alcoholism treatment programme.³³⁸ Voluntary groups received notice of the decision on 28 October. Their response was outraged and immediate; on 29 October, the same day that the motion to extend delegated powers to every committee chairman and deputy chairman was defeated, some 200 representatives from the organisations facing cuts picketed the Town Hall.³³⁹

The problem, according to the organisations, went beyond the cuts themselves, though certainly the loss of the funding posed an existential threat to those twenty-three groups. Rather, their anger focused on the manner in which the decision had been made and announced as much as its content. The press release from the Liverpool Council of Voluntary Organisations (LCVS), the closest thing the voluntary sector had to an umbrella organisation, read:

Just as worrying as the decision itself is the way in which it has been taken. Without any consultation with those affected or any vestige of public discussion, these decisions have been taken under delegated powers by a handful of City Councillors.³⁴⁰

Thus, the themes of consultation, transparent decision-making, and who had the power to act emerged at the very outset of the yet-to-be-formed Anti-Cuts Campaign. While access to and influence over publicly significant decisions resonate with BUILD's aims, the Anti-Cuts Campaign formed under markedly different circumstances. Whereas BUILD was seen by its founders as a new vehicle for carrying forward the vision of the Civil Rights movement and grew out of a general sense of powerlessness, Anti-Cuts formed as a defensive response to a specific set of council actions. That is, from the start BUILD was focused on creating a stable

³³⁸ O'Gorman collection, 'Liverpool City Council Grants to Voluntary and Community Organisations', Press release from the Liverpool City Council; 'Council Axes City Welfare Services', Press release from LCVS, 28/10/86.

³³⁹ 'Blockade over cuts', *Liverpool Echo*, 30/10/86, 4.

³⁴⁰ O'Gorman collection, LCVS press release.

organisation that could alter the political balance of power in Baltimore, an aim that would shape its selection and conduct of issue campaigns. Anti-Cuts was first animated by the existential concerns of its member organisations; it would have trouble transitioning into more pro-active, non-defensive campaigns, as will be explored below.

Sector response

Other Urban Programme-funded organisations, though not included on the cuts list, also had concerns about the council's 28 October announcement. Eleven organisations were set to be transferred to the council's own Main Programme expenditure.³⁴¹ While at first blush this may have seemed a welcome development—it would have removed them from the fight to be included on the Urban Programme roster of projects—in fact the organisations were rightly suspicious of the council's motives and concerned for their on-going independence. According to Nigel Mellor, the head of the Community Liaison Unit and the council officer with primary responsibility for Urban Programme-funded projects, the council's 'municipalisation' of these projects was not simply about ensuring on-going funding for what it perceived to be valuable efforts, but also about consolidating control over the services being provided in the city. Byrne, a strong believer in municipalisation though not a member of Militant, wanted the council to have greater say in the operations of these groups, including their budgets and their staffing levels, and their workers feared the implications of a more bureaucratic management style for the services they provided.³⁴² While local authority funding was necessary for their operations, they understood a certain independence from government regulation of those day-to-day operations as essential to providing a warm and flexible service. Home Office Section 11 funding (reserved for projects working on issues of racial equality) was to be sought for a further three projects, yet

³⁴¹ O'Gorman collection, Liverpool City Council press release.

³⁴² Nigel Mellor, in discussion with the author, 19/6/13.

it was not at all clear that these projects qualified for it, leaving them in limbo.³⁴³ Finally, even those projects not set to be affected immediately nevertheless faced future changes, as they too were slated to be progressively transferred to Main Programme funding in coming years.³⁴⁴

In short, all the Urban Programme projects in Liverpool would be affected by the council's decision, either immediately or in the future. Thus, their lack of input and the absence of transparency in the decision-making process was a potential concern for all of them, and it was around this point that an Anti-Cuts Campaign began to coalesce. Leaders from the Vauxhall Neighbourhood Council, the largest of all Liverpool's Urban Programme projects and one of the 23 groups that stood to lose all its Urban Programme funding, began to meet in the days immediately following the council's announcement with representatives from LCVS and groups from Speke and West Everton.³⁴⁵ The latter were locked in their own battles with the council over the possible demolition of cherished community buildings as part of the Urban Regeneration Strategy; the council's intransigence and neglect of seemingly common-sense points pushed them to look for alternatives to what minimal consultative exercises they had engaged in with councillors. In their early meetings, the representatives from the VNC, LCVS, Speke, West Everton, and other affected groups discussed forming a joint strategy 'to stop buildings being closed down or demolished and grant aid cut without warning.'³⁴⁶ Their anger over delegated powers fuelled the discussion:

What incensed people at that first meeting was the way in which decisions to close services had been made—under 2 councillors with little knowledge of the projects or what services they provided decided to axe them. No consultation with communities served, ward Councillors or trades unions and no evaluation of projects' worth.³⁴⁷

³⁴³ O'Gorman collection, Letter sent to city councillors from the Anti-Cuts Campaign, 10/11/86, 2.

³⁴⁴ O'Gorman collection, Liverpool City Council press release.

³⁴⁵ The VNC had grown out of the Vauxhall Community Development Project in the 1970s, and retained a certain degree of prestige and leadership authority from that.

³⁴⁶ O'Gorman collection, 'How it started', 1; Marie McGiveron, in discussion with the author, 20/6/13.

³⁴⁷ D.Clay, 'A new dimension to community solidarity', *Liverpool Link*, January/February 1987, 8; O'Gorman collection, 'How it started', 1.

Given these common concerns and their widespread implications, this core group of activists and community workers began to reach out to other groups throughout the city to see if they, too, would be interested in forming a united front against the council. Among the groups they contacted was the MCRC, still unable to advance its own agenda after the dissolution of the Race Relations Liaison Committee and the appointment of Sam Bond as Principal Adviser to the Race Relations Unit.³⁴⁸ Their outreach efforts bore fruit, and at a larger meeting on 13 November, the organisations represented fell into four different categories: those whose grant was being cut; those whose buildings were to be bulldozed; black organisations, including the MCRC and the Black Caucus, who were engaged in long-standing feuds with the council; and finally, groups not on the cuts list but who wished to express solidarity with those who were, ‘because they knew it might only be a matter of time before they were on the cuts list’ themselves.³⁴⁹ Out of this gathering, the Anti-Cuts Campaign was born.

As the Labour party organiser for Liverpool noted, there had been anti-cuts campaigns mounted by various members of the voluntary sector in the past, so the existence of such a campaign in and of itself was not novel.³⁵⁰ However, what was exceptional about this group—and exciting to its participants—was the geographic and racial diversity it represented.³⁵¹ Not in any of the participants’ memories had so many voluntary and community groups from across the city joined together under a common banner; the partnership between black organisations from south Liverpool and white working-class organisations from other parts of the city was unprecedented. The Anti-Cuts Campaign seemed, like BUILD in Baltimore, to be coalescing into a bi-racial, citywide alliance. And while most of the groups had immediate, obvious goals for the campaign, it was also—again, like BUILD—motivated by larger concerns about a lack of

³⁴⁸ See p. 122.

³⁴⁹ Ibid.

³⁵⁰ Peter Kilfoyle, in discussion with the author, 8/10/13.

³⁵¹ Helen O’Gorman, in discussion with the author, 9/4/13.

democratic process in the city and the quashing of voices in the voluntary sector and in low-income neighbourhoods.³⁵² Where BUILD drew strength from churches schooled in community organising, the Anti-Cuts Campaign built itself largely on the backs of voluntary groups rooted in community development. Theirs was a campaign about cuts to the voluntary sector, but it was also a campaign about political power in Liverpool, who possessed it, and how they wielded it. By forming a united front, the new Anti-Cuts Campaign sought not only to challenge existing powers, but to carve out more for themselves, too.

Political opportunity structure and the Anti-Cuts strategy

Of course, the Anti-Cuts Campaign began in response to specific events shaped by political circumstances, and the strategies the campaign used to pursue its goals were likewise shaped by the city's political opportunity structure. As demonstrated by the split vote on the use of delegated powers at the end of October 1986, Militant's grip on the council was not nearly so iron-clad as it had seemed a year previously, or certainly not as it had been at the outset of the Sam Bond – Black Caucus dispute. Kinnock's speech at the 1985 Labour party conference signalled the beginning of Labour's Militant purge. Shortly thereafter the Labour National Executive Committee (NEC) launched an official inquiry into the Liverpool DLP, and in February 1986 it issued a report chronicling the malpractices of the body, including misuse of the power of the DLP, selective notification of executive meetings, swamping the body with unelected members, false accounting of membership, and intimidation and abuse of members.³⁵³ Long-time Labour member Peter Kilfoyle was then hired as a full-time organiser by the Labour party to 'unravel the mighty mess' and curtail the influence of the Militant Tendency on

³⁵² While their organisations may have faced an existential threat, most of the campaigners' employment status was not tied to the fate of their organisations, as the council did make clear that they would work to redeploy the staff of those groups on the cuts list either to other voluntary groups or within the council itself. So, while they may have stood to lose jobs they liked and a certain degree of authority, the campaigners were not facing the dole queue of their groups shut down.

³⁵³ Kilfoyle, *Left Behind*, 153.

Merseyside, in part by ensuring that Labour party rules were followed throughout constituency and ward level operations.³⁵⁴ The NEC's report also led to the suspension of the DLP, and Derek Hatton himself was expelled from the party shortly thereafter. Given the importance of the DLP to directing policy in Liverpool, its suspension combined with Kilfoyle's watchdog tactics were a significant blow to Militant's ability to exercise influence on the city council. Hatton found himself further removed from influence when 26 Labour councillors signed a loyalty pledge to the Labour party swearing to ignore him; in November he lost the deputy chairmanship.³⁵⁵ In the shuffle, the enigmatic Tony Byrne, with Militant support, became the council leader.

While the Militant group may have backed Byrne's leadership bid and found him ideologically amenable, his own goals were distinct from that of the larger Militant Tendency operation and his mastery of the council budget enabled him to manoeuvre on the council with little accountability to any larger grouping. Assuming an even greater degree of control in the vacuum created by the DLP's suspension, Byrne's convictions, personality, and mastery of the council machinery significantly shaped the political opportunities of the Anti-Cuts Campaign as it sought to challenge the council. For a brief period, his authority in Liverpool matched that of imperial mayor William Donald Schaefer in Baltimore. From his perch as chairman of both the Policy and Finance and Housing Committees, Byrne controlled the council's spending decisions and oversaw the implementation of the council's central policy, the Urban Regeneration Strategy; combining these positions with formal leadership of the council put all the council's primary decision-making bodies under his control. A non-Militant militant, Byrne was considered untouchable by other Labour group members because of his budget mastery, and 'dangerous' by political opponents and allies alike because of his single-minded devotion to the vision of

³⁵⁴ Kilfoyle, discussion, 3/10/13.

³⁵⁵ J. Watson, 'Cry for peace as axe looms over Hatton', *Liverpool Echo*, 17/11/86, 2.

building 'homes fit for workers'.³⁵⁶ He had no political ambitions beyond Liverpool. For the Anti-Cuts Campaign, this meant that navigating the council's power structures in late 1986 and early 1987 would largely be a matter of navigating Tony Byrne.

The looming appeal in the House of Lords, the ruptures within the Labour group, and the increasingly vehement protests from white-collar unions NALGO and NUPE about other budget cuts that affected their own members (decisions about which, the union members asserted, there was also a striking lack of consultation and transparency) also created opportunities for the Anti-Cuts Campaign. In general:

It was a very, very tumultuous period. There were strikes, there were lockouts, y'know, you turned up at work one day and you never knew if you'd be able to get in because the doors might be locked...there were all sorts of reasons there was disharmony and disruption.³⁵⁷

Particularly given the alignment between the Anti-Cuts Campaign and the more moderate members of the Labour group on the issue of delegated powers, at least some non-Militant members of the council would be more sensitive to public pushback that centred on this issue. And given the turmoil already facing the council, campaigners hoped it was possible that even Tony Byrne would not want to give the appearance of strong-arming yet another controversial decision. Schattschneider's analysis of how less powerful political interest groups may engage more powerful ones helps us understand the two broad strategies the campaign then began to employ: widening the scope of its conflict via public protests, and exploiting existing political cleavages by attempting to build support amongst moderate councillors and the trades unions.³⁵⁸ What Anti-Cuts, like the Black Caucus, did not do in the course of its conflict with the council was adopt the BUILD strategy of seeking out other possible governance partners.

³⁵⁶ Sheppard, *Steps Along Hope Street*, 239 – 40.

³⁵⁷ Mellor discussion, 19/6/13.

³⁵⁸ Schattschneider, *The Semisovereign People*, 2.

Carrying out the campaign

The voluntary groups whose funding had been cut were set to have their staff redeployed by 28 November, so there was no time to lose for the Anti-Cuts Campaign to begin implementing its strategies.³⁵⁹ By mid-November, the campaign included representatives from at least fifteen different organisations and individual campaigns.³⁶⁰ It settled on a simple message: ‘No cuts to voluntary organisations and an end to City Council delegated powers which in our view equals dictatorship.’³⁶¹ The message emphasised the issue that had ‘incensed’ participants at the very first Anti-Cuts meetings—their inability to participate in the decisions that affected them—and conveyed their determination to change the mechanisms that made such neglect possible. Internally, the campaign did its best to act in a way that was materially opposite to the council, and those involved fiercely resisted setting up any kind of hierarchy within the campaigners’ ranks.³⁶² The group would act as a network, and even their meeting agendas suggested this sensitivity toward imposing any kind of larger ‘agenda’ on participants. As a note at the bottom of the first meeting agenda read, ‘This Agenda has been drafted to give this meeting some structure, it is not an attempt to impose an Agenda, just a practicality.’³⁶³ As a group, the campaigners began to study some of the campaigning principles of American organiser Saul Alinsky—whose Industrial Areas Foundation network included BUILD—zeroing in on his rules for power analysis, pragmatic action, and using various groups’ self-interest as a

³⁵⁹ Liverpool PRO, Minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee, 3/1/86, ¶90. 352MIN/FIN II/1/148. The council promised to reassign workers of voluntary groups who lost their entire grant to other posts within the local authority, though there was some fear that this would not actually happen.

³⁶⁰ O’Gorman collection, ‘Anti-Cuts Campaign Update’, 11/87. Not all individuals taking part in the campaign had the name of their organisation included, so the author was only able to identify fifteen different organisations or campaigns; there may have been more represented.

³⁶¹ O’Gorman collection, Press release from the Anti-Cuts Campaign, 17/11/86.

³⁶² McGiveron discussion, 20/6/13.

³⁶³ O’Gorman collection, ‘Launching a Voluntary Sector Anti-Cuts Campaign: Rough Agenda’, 11/86.

coalition-building tool.³⁶⁴ BUILD used the same principles in conducting its campaigns and in building relationships with allies necessary to accomplish its members' goals.

Part of Byrne's success on the council lay in his ability to control and master information, and Anti-Cuts sought to make sure that it too possessed the most accurate and up-to-date information on the council's actions. Two members of the campaign, Helen Naylor of LCVS and Marie McGiveron of the VNC, were tasked with trying to keep track of the Policy and Finance Committee's next moves and decisions. Certainly they had a legal right to do so since council business was a matter of public record, as had been confirmed by the 1985 Freedom of Information Act.³⁶⁵ However, the task proved difficult, since committee meeting times and agendas were not made publicly available. One council officer described the accountability and due process measures that should have been a matter of course in a British local authority as 'almost non-existent' in this period, which obfuscated normal processes of obtaining information about the council's actions.³⁶⁶ Naylor and/or McGiveron, both of whom worked relatively close to the Town Hall, took to calling a sympathetic council officer, Ken Corns, every day to see if there was a meeting of the Policy and Finance Committee, because even those schedules that were made available were so often changed.³⁶⁷ Naylor recalled going one step further and at times masquerading with McGiveron as a councillor in order to get access to agendas and meeting minutes—a charade that would have been impossible in Baltimore, where the mere fourteen members of the City Council would have all been recognisable to City Hall officials.³⁶⁸ Whenever the Policy and Finance Committee did meet, Naylor and McGiveron would attend.

³⁶⁴ Paul Edwards, in discussion with the author, 9/4/13. A series of notes and flyers on Alinsky organising principles are also included in the O'Gorman collection. Interestingly, the participants seemed to have skimmed over Alinsky's extensive writings on the importance of seeking out and developing individual leaders, choosing instead to maintain a more collectivist decision-making structure.

³⁶⁵ Mellor discussion, 9/4/13.

³⁶⁶ Mellor discussion, 9/4/13.

³⁶⁷ McGiveron discussion, 20/6/13.

³⁶⁸ O'Gorman discussion, 9/4/13. Presumably officers must have been under orders not to distribute these materials to members of the public, otherwise it is unclear why such a masquerade would have been necessary.

The information exchange that happened at these meetings ended up going in both directions: not only did the two campaigners learn about the committee's decisions, but they were also able to inform committee members of the cuts and demolitions happening to members of the Anti-Cuts Campaign. Attempting to exploit potential political cleavages, Naylor and McGiveron tried to nab councillors as they were going into meetings or leaving them to make sure they understood the decisions that had been made regarding the voluntary sector.³⁶⁹ Often, councillors were not aware that such decisions had been taken—which, combined with the difficulty the two had in accessing meetings in the first place, confirmed their impression that decisions were being made in a purposefully secretive manner.³⁷⁰

At the same time, the Campaign immediately sought to widen the scope of its conflict by making its presence as widely known as possible. Just days after its first large-scale meeting, Anti-Cuts made its public launch on 17 November when fifty campaigners attempted to listen in to the council chairman's weekly gathering. Instead, deputy chairman (though not for much longer) Hatton cancelled the meeting when he learned of the group's presence, so they decided to hold their own meeting to discuss tactics and talk to the press. A spokeswoman explained to reporters:

We are only taking up from where the city council left off in campaigning for jobs and services, and we intend to make it very clear to Labour councillors over the next few weeks that we will not tolerate cuts without consultation.³⁷¹

The publicity had an immediate effect, and the council quickly backpedalled, claiming the campaigners had 'got it all wrong'—no final decisions had been taken, and the council was planning to hold meetings with the affected groups in the coming weeks.³⁷² The deputy finance leader (who with Byrne was required to sign off on decisions made under delegated powers),

³⁶⁹ O'Gorman discussion, 9/4/13.

³⁷⁰ McGiveron discussion, 20/6/13.

³⁷¹ Y. Khan and J. Watson, 'Hatton walkout', *Liverpool Echo*, 17/11/86, 2.

³⁷² Ibid.

Frank Mills, claimed the letters that voluntary groups had received were a mistake: 'Letters, unfortunately, went out early before we had the chance to arrange consultation with the groups.'³⁷³ Widening the conflict's scope had bought Anti-Cuts some time, and at least some form of consultation. What remained to be seen, however, was whether or not time and consultation would translate to an actual shift in the council's decision; Anti-Cuts had not yet demonstrated that mere publicity led to the power to shape policy.

Before consultative meetings began, however, Anti-Cuts continued to attempt to exploit cleavages within the Labour ranks by meeting with the recently deposed council leader, John Hamilton. Hamilton was universally admired for his integrity, though his lack of forcefulness as council leader had frustrated many moderates, and the meeting underscored several points.³⁷⁴ First, Hamilton stated that decisions were indeed being made by a very small group of Militant councillors and Tony Byrne. More importantly for the campaigners, though, he confirmed that the Labour group was becoming increasingly upset about this, as evidenced by its surprise revolt against the further use of delegated powers on 29 October. And finally, Hamilton's own frustration can be felt through the notes that one attendee took on his address: 'Difficulties in group. L.P. (Labour Party) should represent the people...Power corrupts. Give strength give power back to democratic process.'³⁷⁵ Notably, the listener's notes suggest that Hamilton also saw the Labour group's errors as ones of process rather than of policy. So, the decisions made with respect to the Anti-Cuts members were representative of a whole category of action that increasingly frustrated the more moderate members of the Labour group, meaning that as long as the Anti-Cuts Campaign continued to make itself visible, these councillors were likely to pay attention to it. The meeting with Hamilton fuelled the campaigners' hope that a potential vote to

³⁷³ Ibid.

³⁷⁴ Those who attested to both his integrity and his weakness as a leader ranged from the Bishop of Liverpool at the time (Sheppard, *Steps Along Hope Street*, 233) to the Militant leadership (Taaffe & Mulhearn, *Liverpool: A City that Dared to Fight*, 452).

³⁷⁵ O'Gorman collection, 'Minutes of Meeting, 24 Nov., Anti-Cuts'.

confirm the cuts (now that Mills had backpedaled, another decision regarding the time-expired grants would have to be made by the Policy and Finance Committee, either as a committee or via delegated powers) a controversial one, and the re-use of delegated powers with regards to the voluntary sector politically costly.

Anti-Cuts, then, continued with the strategy of making itself visible. Along with NALGO members, campaigners took over two separate (8 a.m.) committee meetings the following week and demanded ‘open discussion’ about cuts to the voluntary sector and the social services department, and restoration of telephone lines and gas supplies at the Granby Aid housing centre.³⁷⁶ Determined not to let such disturbances happen again, when ‘hundreds’ of people organised by the Anti-Cuts campaign showed up to the Town Hall for an 11 December city council meeting, council decision-makers prevented them from accessing the public galleries by packing the seats with apprentice gardeners half an hour before the doors opened to the public, leaving only a handful of seats available for campaigners.³⁷⁷ The next week, Anti-Cuts gave up on trying to get inside the Town Hall building, and instead experimented with Alinsky’s tactic of ridiculing one’s opponent.³⁷⁸ Rather than attempting to attend the council meeting, campaigners stood in front of the Town Hall and regaled passers-by with a series of council-appropriate Christmas carols, including ‘O Murky Town of Liverpool’, ‘Away in a Back Room’, and ‘Good King Hatton’.³⁷⁹

In the first six weeks of its existence, then, the Anti-Cuts Campaign had managed to build the city’s first biracial voluntary sector alliance and had used the strategies of widening its conflict and exploiting political cleavages to gain attention and access to information. These

³⁷⁶ Watson, ‘Byrne trapped’; J. Watson, ‘City hall siege over housing aid’, *Liverpool Echo*, 4/12/86, 3. The council had withdrawn its staff from the Granby center in September, leaving south Liverpool without any homeless shelters. A Liverpool 8 housing consortium had taken over the building and was continuing to operate the shelter, but wanted the council to restore heat and communication lines.

³⁷⁷ M. Jones, ‘What a circus!’, *Liverpool Echo*, 12/12/86, 10.

³⁷⁸ Edwards discussion, 9/4/13.

³⁷⁹ O’Gorman collection, Anti-Cuts Campaign Christmas carols.

actions enabled them to take a step toward their goal of preventing cuts to the voluntary sector by prompting Byrne and Mills to backpedal and promise the groups a chance to make their cases for continued funding. However, they had not been able to secure any concessions on the matter of delegated powers, and they did not know if they would be able to translate delay and consultative exercises into a shift in the council's decision. That their efforts were focused entirely on the council itself underlines the extent to which decision-making was, indeed, centred on the council. The new consultative exercises would be key to seeing whether or not the new Liverpool association could shape that process.

Navigating consultation

The consultation process in which the council engaged in late 1986 and early 1987 is a prime example of the way in which an adept civil servant could outmanoeuvre city councillors. Throughout it, the groups examined were almost totally dependent on the wits of the city's head of the Community Liaison Section, Nigel Mellor, for positive outcomes regarding their funding. While the Anti-Cuts connection to Mellor, like connections that BUILD also maintained to key officials in Baltimore resource-holders' offices, demonstrates the potential productivity of bridging social capital, it also highlights the fragility of most of the groups involved in the Anti-Cuts Campaign under a hostile local political regime.

Mellor arrived in Liverpool to work in the City Planning Department in 1971 and moved to the newly created Community Development Section (later the Community Liaison Section) in 1974.³⁸⁰ So by the time he was assigned to accompany deputy finance chairman Frank Mills on consultation meetings with the time-expired projects, he had been at his post for over a decade. Furthermore, as the head of the Community Liaison Section, it was Mellor's job to write the annual report for the council on its Urban Programme projects, meaning that he was intimately

³⁸⁰ N. Mellor, 'Career remembered' in R. Morris and H. Russell (eds.), *Rooted in the City* (Liverpool, 2010), p. 121.

familiar with their operations, challenges, and shortcomings.³⁸¹ Mellor believed deeply in the importance of the voluntary sector and in the community development agenda, as well as in the importance of having a unit ‘within the bureaucracy’ that could help to guide community and voluntary groups through the council’s bureaucratic machinations—that is, in the importance of bridging social capital. He thought it was necessary for these groups to ‘make links to make change’, and it was his unit that made these links in Liverpool.³⁸² Yet Mellor was also a council officer, and as such it was his job to help the council implement its policy. Moreover, he well knew how the councillors had dealt with officers who appeared to be flouting their agenda; the example of the housing manager who had signed off on a meticulously documented report demonstrating discrimination in the authority’s housing distribution only to find himself suspended weighed heavily on Mellor.³⁸³ He described the period as ‘a bit like being in a bunker and feeling like you had to just keep going’; he perceived the outcome of the councillors’ legal appeal as yet uncertain, and as such did not know how long the tension within the corridors of the Town Hall would last.³⁸⁴

But as Mellor’s job also obligated him to keep in close touch with community and voluntary organisations, he was well aware of their anxieties. He was sympathetic to them. Over the course of the coming months, Mellor’s task would be to navigate between the council and the voluntary sector, and attempt to work for the best outcome for the latter while appearing to help the former carry out a policy of contraction and restriction. It was a task he described as ‘walking a tightrope that was vibrating.’³⁸⁵

He decided to walk that tightrope by attempting to make a convert of Frank Mills, Byrne’s sidekick on the Finance and Policy Committee and the council’s designated henchman

³⁸¹ Mellor discussion, 9/4/13.

³⁸² Mellor discussion, 19/6/13 .

³⁸³ See p. 125.

³⁸⁴ Mellor discussion, 19/6/13.

³⁸⁵ Mellor discussion, 9/4/13.

for this particular task. Luckily for Mellor, Mills was also inexperienced, and somewhat malleable: he lacked the singular devotion to housing of Tony Byrne, the loyalty to the Militant agenda of Tony Mulhearn, and the self-promoting drive of Derek Hatton. The time-expired projects were notified in advance of Mills and Mellor's visits, which gave them time to prepare. Anti-Cuts campaigners held pre-meetings with the member groups as their consultations approached, a key step in the Alinsky organising principles in which campaign participant and community worker Paul Edwards had been trained, in which Edwards coached each group on how to best make their case to the visiting pair.³⁸⁶ Their strategising often produced the intended effect. Mellor recounted:

Frank and I used to go meet with them [the groups on the cuts list]...And we'd go in there and talk to whoever it was, and Frank was really impressed with the work. And uh, again, Frank was a really nice bloke, but not the most bright and able intellectually. The guy would say to Frank, 'So what do you think, Frank—Cllr. Mills? How do you think we've got on?' And Frank'd go, 'Aw, yeah, well I'm really impressed with what you're doing.' He says, 'Let me go away, and Nigel'll write a report'...

Safely ensconced in the car, Mellor would then follow up on the performance, affirming Mills' impression that the group was, indeed, doing good work:

He'd say, 'Well what do you think about that?' And I'd say, 'Well, what do you think? They're doing a really good job; can't cut that, can ya?' [imitating Mills] 'No, no we can't, no—but don't tell the other fella.' Meaning Tony Byrne. And so in the end, Frank and I had a really good kind of, you could say subversive partnership.³⁸⁷

Having secured his cover via Mills' tacit approval, Mellor would then put to work every delaying trick he had learned in his fifteen years of working inside the council bureaucracy. Reports were written, and re-written. Multiple rounds of consultation were held in order to garner 'additional information'. Other tasks were prioritized. Mellor knew, and now Mills began to believe as well, that the cuts 'would have had a devastating effect' had they gone ahead, not just on the groups

³⁸⁶ O'Gorman collection, 'How it started'; Edwards discussion, 9/4/13.

³⁸⁷ Mellor discussion, 9/4/13.

themselves but on key areas of service provision in the city (Byrne had starved other departments' budgets in order to feed the housing beast, making some of the concerned groups' tasks all the more essential). The task was to delay; Mellor handled it ably. And Mills? 'I suppose Frank went a bit native,' explained Mellor upon reflection.³⁸⁸

So the 'subversive partnership' delayed, and delayed. Again, however, like the organisation's November and December protests, all Mellor could do was delay a decision and attempt to influence its outcome by emphasising to Mills the importance of each individual group's work; Anti-Cuts still did not have the power to shape the decision's content, to secure alternative sources of funding within formal government machinery, or to move the citywide conversation on delegated powers. In BUILD terms, Anti-Cuts could still only go to power for a decision, rather than with a decision. Meanwhile, campaign members continued to meet, share information, and support one another in individual campaigns, especially those engaged in fights for facilities. Several Anti-Cuts members, mostly neighbourhood-based groups, were attempting to preserve community facilities scheduled for demolition in the Urban Regeneration Strategy. The buildings concerned prompted strong loyalties from residents because they were deeply woven into the fabrics of their respective neighbourhoods, emblematic of the sorts of common institutions that went alongside the 'bricks and mortar' of houses in creating a sense of community and essential as gathering and socializing spaces for neighbourhood residents. They also provided services from youth recreation (Shrewsbury House and the Speke Community Centre) to laundries (Fred Robinson Washhouse) to technical education for minorities (Charles Wootton Centre). Each had already exhausted attempts at further consultation in sessions that, if they took place at all, felt more to meeting participants like checking boxes on the part of the council rather than a genuine hearing out of residents' concerns.³⁸⁹ With the failure of

³⁸⁸ Mellor discussion, 19/6/13.

³⁸⁹ Henry and Jane Corbett, in discussion with the author, 5/4/13.

consultation, these facilities groups attempted more directly adversarial tactics, namely squatting campaigns and resorts to the court system. Under the banner of the Anti-Cuts Campaign, they helped one another with advice, resources, and information: Liverpool 8 Law Centre helped those campaigning for the Fred Robinson Washhouse get a solicitor; the Speke Community Centre shared its van; and campaign members from other facilities would circle the Town Hall while representatives from a given group met with city councillors, shouting slogans and encouragement into a megaphone.³⁹⁰

As they had by meeting with more moderate members of the Labour group, the campaigners continued their attempts to exploit existing cleavages within Labour's support by bringing the trades unions, including NALGO, NUPE, NUT, ASTMS, TGWU, CYWU, and the GMBATU, on board with their campaign.³⁹¹ Union support was 'patchy'. Some did not come out in support of Anti-Cuts publicly because the Campaign included non-union members, while unions like the GMBATU were very much in the thrall of Militant and its agenda.³⁹² However, even patchy support could be helpful, and some of the TGWU's regional leadership in particular were helpful in exerting pressure behind the scenes on councillors who were also TGWU members to support the campaign's goals.³⁹³ The usefulness of even limited union support demonstrated the potential effectiveness of the strategy to widen the scope of the campaign's conflict with the council. That union support was never more than patchy, however, continues to demonstrate the paucity of options for neighbourhood-based and voluntary groups for influencing the council's decisions in Liverpool, much less shaping the city's agenda.

³⁹⁰ Peter Brennan, in discussion with the author, 26/3/13.

³⁹¹ O'Gorman collection, 'Anti-Cuts Campaign Update', 11/86.

³⁹² O'Gorman collection, Anti-Cuts Campaign narrative, 2.

³⁹³ Mellor discussion, 19/6/13.

Education and transition

The on-going meetings rotating between different campaign participants' offices continued to strengthen the ties of those involved in Anti-Cuts, as did the education that campaign members underwent at those meetings. According to LCVS worker Helen Naylor O'Gorman, Paul Edwards (a community worker in Mellor's Community Liaison Unit who felt it very much within his job description to help community and voluntary groups organise against the council) was especially keen on this educational aspect of the campaign:

It was educational as well to the groups about how these decisions were made...Paul was really keen on trying to do stuff around understanding the system, how is power exercised, y'know, where do they meet, can they make those decisions without going back to the full council, that kind of thing.³⁹⁴

That is, learning about power and its exercise was a key component of the campaign; its aims did not stop at restoring lost funding or stopping bulldozers. Anti-Cuts members realised that they were on the verge of losing funding and facilities because they lacked access to the city's decision-making nodes, and they wanted to address this, the root of their woes. Somewhere in the midst of these discussions about power and decision-making, a group of campaigners had an idea: they should run for council seats themselves. Instead of trying to fight the council year after year or change councillors' minds, they should simply become councillors. Marie McGiveron of the Vauxhall Neighbourhood Council, who would herself go on to be a prominent councillor, described it as an 'if you can't beat 'em, join 'em' kind of moment.³⁹⁵ However, their conclusion that they themselves should stand for the council demonstrates a crucial aspect of the local political opportunity structure in 1980s Liverpool: attempting to run for the city council did not require resources, financial or otherwise, beyond the grasp of voluntary workers. Even more significant, though, was the leaders' conclusion that the council could not be 'beat.' That is, the Anti-Cuts Campaign leaders had spent enough years relying on the council's good graces for

³⁹⁴ O'Gorman discussion, 5/4/13.

³⁹⁵ McGiveron discussion, 20/6/13.

funding and enough months battling a highly centralised council's decision-making structures to realise that the political opportunity structure of Liverpool in the late 1980s required a seat on the council to exercise meaningful influence. This, as will be discussed below, sharply contrasts with BUILD participants' conclusions about exercising influence in Baltimore, where formal government machinery was less permeable, but where it was also possible to shape public decisions without access to that machinery.

It was a critical conclusion to reach, because by March 1987, Mellor and Mills could delay no further. The House of Lords verdict on the Labour councillors' fate was scheduled to be handed down on 12 March 1987. In a series of desperate final gestures—acting once again under the hated delegated powers—council leader Tony Byrne and deputy leader Frank Mills grabbed headlines the preceding day by using their final hours in office to approve £25 million of building contracts.³⁹⁶ Though it went unnoticed in the press, they also made a series of decisions with regards to the time-expired projects in the Anti-Cuts Campaign: six projects were granted funds (though not necessarily enough to cover the full range of their expenses), and workers from nine projects were to be redeployed by 30 April.³⁹⁷ The Anti-Cuts Campaign had failed not only in its attempt to protect all its member groups' funding, but also in its quest to end the use of delegated powers.

But the campaign was about to be granted a second life. The next day, the Law Lords ruled that 'the councillors' belief could not alter the councillors' duty' and upheld the district auditor's disqualification and fine of the forty-seven councillors who had voted for an illegal budget.³⁹⁸ Tony Byrne may have made his decision, but all of a sudden, neither he nor his allies on the council had the power to implement it. Anti-Cuts may have been unable to move Byrne

³⁹⁶ J. Watson, 'Fury over last ditch deals', *Liverpool Echo*, 11/3/87, 1.

³⁹⁷ O'Gorman collection, Update, 3/87, 1.

³⁹⁸ J. Watson, 'How the Law Lords Laid it on the Line to Rebels', *Liverpool Echo* 12/3/87, 14. Two councillors had died over the course of the appeals process, bringing the total number of 'rates rebels' down from the original forty-nine.

and a council under his control, but they had held on long enough to make their case to a rather different audience, in a different set of political circumstances. Would the shift in personalities and circumstances also produce a new mode of council decision-making, one that would enable Anti-Cuts to exercise ‘power to’ rather than cling perpetually to delay and obstacle-raising tactics?

New politics, new opportunities

The ousting of the forty-seven rates rebels renewed hope for the Anti-Cuts Campaign, because the new Liberal ‘caretaker’ administration installed in Liverpool until elections for new councillors would be held in May immediately underscored the power of formal government machinery, and the fragility of local authority decisions once a given authority changed hands. This was particularly true of decisions that, like those made by Byrne and Mills under delegated powers, lacked robust support from the rest of the council. The same day the Labour councillors were dismissed from office, Liverpool Liberal leader Sir Trevor Jones stood under a party poster and declared ‘The time has come’ to restore honour and dignity to the city.³⁹⁹ Presented with a unique opportunity to demonstrate their own readiness to govern, Sir Trevor and the Liberals promptly put a number of decisions Byrne and Mills had made in the previous council’s final hours ‘on ice.’⁴⁰⁰ At a council meeting on 20 March, the caretaker regime stalled plans for £25 million in housing contracts, a £10 million spend-now-pay-later loan arranged with Satman Developments, and the sale of a wing of Calderstones community school.⁴⁰¹ Furthermore, they would stop the involvement of councillors in appointments of council staff below the Principal Officer 2 grade, a move that brought the Liverpool council back in line with other local authorities and signalled the end of the Militant ‘jobs for the boys and girls’ strategy that had

³⁹⁹ J. Watson, ‘Hurricane at the Town Hall’, *Liverpool Echo*, 24/3/87, 6.

⁴⁰⁰ J. Watson, ‘Deals iced!’, *Liverpool Echo*, 16/3/87, 3.

⁴⁰¹ J. Watson, ‘Liberals swing planning axe’, *Liverpool Echo*, 30/3/87, 8.

been so effective in sealing blue-collar union loyalty.⁴⁰² Unlike their Labour predecessors, the Liberals insisted, they would manage the city's finances responsibly, award contracts fairly, stop starving other council departments in order to feed the Urban Regeneration Strategy—and be open to consultation with a range of concerned parties, including community groups.

The Anti-Cuts Campaign had immediate indications, then, that decision-makers' attitudes, and potentially their practices, would be changed. The most relevant initiative was the 'community regeneration strategy', intended to differentiate the Liberals from Labour and its Urban Regeneration Strategy. The community regeneration strategy, promised Jones on 20 March, would be about 'involving residents in full consultation over changes in their neighbourhoods'—picking up on the exact language of 'consultation' championed by the Anti-Cuts group.⁴⁰³ After much lobbying, the activists (who in a move to indicate the more pro-active stance they hoped to take thenceforward had changed their name to the Community Rights Campaign) secured a meeting with Jones on 30 April, at which they successfully convinced him to fund all the time-expired projects under threat until the end of June and to implement a mechanism for consultation before funding decisions were taken in the future.⁴⁰⁴ That the campaigners struggled to secure a meeting with Jones during a heated election season points to the relatively small portion of the electorate that the campaigners could claim to influence, a concern that BUILD was determined to nullify during Baltimore's 1987 elections by gathering tens of thousands of signatures in support of its agenda. While Jones's promises were not permanent solutions to the activists' aims since new elections would be held in May, they did eliminate the immediate threat of closure and re-assignment of staff for most of the projects and guaranteed that the community groups would be able to present their case to a newly elected council.

⁴⁰² Ibid., 1.

⁴⁰³ Watson, 'Liberals swing planning axe', 8.

⁴⁰⁴ O'Gorman collection, Speech to voluntary sector representatives, April 1987, 7.

Though they may have had difficulties actually securing a meeting with Jones, it is not surprising that he should have agreed to their requests given the political circumstances. Their aims and rhetoric fit perfectly with the Liberals' community regeneration strategy, and even if there were doubts in his mind around the viability of some groups, it cost relatively little in terms of financial capital to fund them for two more months. Furthermore, considering the desperation of the groups' plight, it potentially bolstered the Liberals' political capital in a group that was staunchly pro-Labour. Particularly given Jones' promise to implement new consultative procedures around funding decisions, the meeting represented a step forward in Community Rights' quest to change decision-making structures.

Analysis and outcome

But, as discussed above, the group's activists had their own ideas about the May 1987 election, and they did not involve voting for the Liberals and their community regeneration strategy. Rather, in the spirit of 'if you can't beat 'em, join 'em', a number of the campaign's most energetic members decided to stand for election themselves.⁴⁰⁵ That is, rather than perennially fight the council for what the group believed to be their rightful share of budget expenditures and for the right to be consulted on decisions affecting them, they decided instead to attempt to take hold of the city's financial reins and consultative mechanisms themselves. Though there were plans to establish Community Rights as a permanent association, a number of its most prominent and energetic leaders did not want to be the ones to build it into a strong organisation capable of influencing political decisions from a perch outside the local authority. Rather, they preferred to become part of the establishment they had been fighting, seeing the council and its committees as the most direct route to exercising 'power to' in Liverpool.

⁴⁰⁵ McGivern discussion, 20/6/13.

The spring of 1987 proved to be a particularly opportune time to run for council because of the city's dramatically altered political opportunity structure and the huge challenges facing the local Labour party (and the national party organisers now directing it) in the May elections. In a typical local election, thirty-three of the council's ninety-nine seats would be contested. However, following the dismissal of the rates rebels, fully fifty-nine seats would be contested—and the local Labour party had just lost almost all of its experienced councillors, including many who were not Militant members themselves but had merely gone along with the Militant budget tactics.⁴⁰⁶ Finding enough new candidates to stand, especially in less than two months, would prove a struggle. One former council officer described Labour officials as 'scurrying around' trying to find candidates and 'straining the barrel' in order to fill the Labour panel, knowing all along that 'the odds were against them'; the *Liverpool Echo* described the attempt by Labour organisers to 'breathe new life into their devastated political party' as 'Mission Impossible.'⁴⁰⁷ The temporary coordinating committee's options were further limited by national insistence, and some local demand from people like Vauxhall branch secretary John Livingston, that councillors with Militant or broad left ties be kept from the panel.⁴⁰⁸ While such exclusions did keep to Neil Kinnock's 'purge' policy, they also meant the loss of needed bodies to fill empty slots on Labour's panel: five Militants were excluded for failing to turn up at election meetings, and one for expressing support for ousted Labour party member Derek Hatton.⁴⁰⁹

In this scenario, Community Rights members presented attractive options as possible candidates. They had strong Labour credentials, and their work with their respective organisations sat well with the city's new Labour leadership and its determination to be more responsive to 'local people,' especially those from the working and lower-middle classes. At the

⁴⁰⁶ J. Watson, 'Trots edged out as poll rivals choose troops', *Liverpool Echo*, 6/4/87, 13.

⁴⁰⁷ Mellor discussion, 19/6/13; J. Watson, 'Derek's spectre hangs over Labour', *Liverpool Echo*, 16/4/13, 6.

⁴⁰⁸ C. Walker, 'Thuggery rap for the Militants', *Liverpool Echo*, 26/3/87, 2.

⁴⁰⁹ Watson, 'Trots edged out...'.

same time, they had been amongst those most vocally opposed to the Militant regime in the months leading up to its demise, placing them squarely in line with those who wanted to see the local party purged. No less than six former Community Rights activists made it onto the panel: Gideon Ben-Tovim and Liz Drysdale of the Merseyside Community Relations Council, Peter Coventry and James Doyle of the Speke Community Centre, Juliet Herzog of the Merseyside Play Action Council, and Vicky Roberts of the Liverpool Council for Voluntary Services.⁴¹⁰

But did Labour have any chance of winning the election, with their image tarnished, their slate of councillors ravaged, and the Liberals doing all they could to quickly prove themselves the safer, more capable, and more responsive option? Luckily for Labour, the Liberals' performance was not flawless in the interim weeks between the forty-seven's dismissal and the May elections. The swiftness with which they took their decisions—without, technically, the electoral legitimacy to lead the council—rankled the remaining Labour councillors, and not all their actions seemed to be on firm legal footing.⁴¹¹ While some spectators might have appreciated the icing of Labour-approved contracts as a sign of fiscal responsibility, the parents who had expected their children to enjoy new classrooms in the autumn were not pleased, nor were the city builders now fearful of lay-offs.⁴¹² Furthermore, like Mayor Schaefer in Baltimore, Labour could point to some concrete attempts to address Liverpool's ongoing employment and housing crisis, attempts that the average person could understand more readily than budget blunders. Most notably, the local Labour party could point to 2,900 solidly constructed single-family homes, the demolition of hated slums like the Piggeries in West Everton, and the almost total transformation of some neighbourhoods, like Croxteth and Breckfield, in less than four years.⁴¹³ While the Anti-Cuts Campaign pushed back against real deficiencies in the consultative process around resources

⁴¹⁰ 'Your Liverpool Councillors', *Liverpool Link*, 6/87, 8-9.

⁴¹¹ J. Watson, 'The Liberals plot "night of knives"', *Liverpool Echo*, 18/3/87, 3; J. Watson, 'Bond in battle to keep council job', *Liverpool Echo*, 23/3/87, 3.

⁴¹² J. Watson, 'Hurricane at the Town Hall', *Liverpool Echo*, 24/3/87, 6.

⁴¹³ Murden, 'City of Change...', 462.

their neighbourhoods valued, ultimately their protests focused on a relatively small percentage of the council's Urban Regeneration Strategy—others were quite happy to enjoy their new homes and school buildings, never mind where the funds were coming from or a proper consultation process.⁴¹⁴ The new leader of the local Labour party, Keva Coombes, recognised the party's strengths and focused on them in the run-up to the election.⁴¹⁵

More relevant for this inquiry, however, is why the Community Rights leaders made the choices that they did—to run for council themselves via the Labour party, or to support their colleagues who chose to do so—rather than ally with the Liberals, whose rhetoric around a community regeneration strategy so neatly echoed their own and whose actions in the interim period suggested an openness to working with their association. The most obvious answer, of course, is that most of them were members of the Labour party already.⁴¹⁶ Party loyalty combined with sympathy for a number of Labour's policies—the campaign's focus had always been more on decision-making and implementation processes than on the broad content of Labour policies—would have encouraged them to maintain their Labour affiliation. Furthermore, the leadership with which the campaign had clashed was gone; the national party was making a concerted effort to suppress new Militant candidates; and the new leadership was consulting with people like former council leader John Hamilton, who had been sympathetic to the Anti-Cuts Campaign.⁴¹⁷ So, there were reasons to hope that a new Labour group would exercise power with a different attitude and methods, even if its priorities would remain largely unchanged.

However, even more significant than the activists' ties to the Labour party was their experience working with previous councils via their respective organisations. Many of those

⁴¹⁴ McGiveron discussion, 20/6/13.

⁴¹⁵ K.Coombes, "Presenting a brighter and better face to the world", *Liverpool Echo*, 1/5/87, 7.

⁴¹⁶ Paul Edwards and Helen O'Gorman, in discussion with the author, 5/4/13; McGiveron discussion, 20/6/13.

⁴¹⁷ O'Gorman collection. Minutes of the 24 November meeting of the Anti-Cuts Campaign.

involved in the campaign, like Helen Naylor and Marie McGiveron, had been active in the voluntary sector for years, under multiple councils. For them, the Labour council's funding threats had in fact been part of a larger pattern of annual council threats to cut their funding, though the manner in which the Militant-directed Labour council had attempted to actually carry out such threats was new and extreme.⁴¹⁸ The activists had found themselves in an antagonistic relationship with the council under both Liberal and Labour control, and history suggested they would find themselves in the same situation again under a new Labour group—unless they themselves became the councillors. Only as councillors, they believed, could they protect the voluntary sector's funding, and only as councillors could they control other council resources to implement the sort of programmes and initiatives they wanted. That is, only as councillors did they believe they would have the power to shape the city's agenda around issues of poverty and community development that mattered to them. That this choice would be so different from that of BUILD leaders to focus on the strength of their own organisation rather than seek office themselves can in part be explained by the fact that BUILD leaders had experienced success acting on their agenda under a hostile political opportunity structure, whereas the Black Caucus and the Anti-Cuts Campaign had not. Because of the diffuseness of governing resources in Baltimore, BUILD could construct resource-holding collaborations even without the City Council, making it more productive in the period from 1981 to 1987 than its Liverpool counterparts.

That the activists were able to act on such ambitions reflects both the political opportunities afforded by Liverpool's local government structure and the unusual circumstances of 1987. With 99 councillors, Liverpool's council had a large number of seats to offer a city of less than 500,000 people, and as discussed above, it was a challenge for the Labour party to find 59 candidates. With the District Labour Party disbanded and the national party directing the

⁴¹⁸ McGiveron discussion, 20/6/13.

selection process, there was no concern that the activists would fail to be selected on ideological differences. Fortunately for them, Labour prevailed. The group ‘squeaked home with a majority of three seats,’ winning eighteen wards to the Liberals’ fifteen in an election with an unusually high turnout.⁴¹⁹ After years of tussling and months of outright fighting with the council, the activists were ‘in.’ Furthermore, because Labour had had to find so many new candidates to replace the forty-seven dismissed councillors, their collective years of experience engaging council bodies made them some of the most politically seasoned members of the new Labour group—an advantage they would translate into the committee positions so necessary for shaping the council’s agenda. After the 1987 election, then, it seemed the campaigners had played their hand well and would soon be in positions to fulfil the vision of the Anti-Cuts Campaign.

Summary of Liverpool groups

This thesis argues that, after animating causes were found and leadership established, the next set of factors in these pressure groups’ success included the nature of their goals and their analysis of the distribution of the resources necessary to accomplish those goals. The Liverpool groups discussed in this and the preceding two chapters have illustrated this assertion. Only the council could implement an equal opportunities policy for the local authority and set up a Race Relations Unit; since the MCRC was unable to influence the council, achieving this goal proved impossible. The Eldonian Community Association met with greater success in creating its new-build housing cooperative because it was able to make links to the Merseyside Task Force and use central government funds for the project. As long as the Militant- and Byrne-directed council was in office, even the broad-based Anti-Cuts Campaign could not affect its use of delegated powers, though its coherence as a group and links to the council bureaucracy did help its

⁴¹⁹ J. Watson, ‘Labour victory purge on Trots’, *Liverpool Echo*, 8/5/13, 1; C. Rallings and M. Thrasher, *Local Elections in Britain, A Statistical Digest* (Plymouth and Local Government Chronicle Elections Centre, 1993), 50.

members to survive by maintaining their funding for long enough to ride out the Labour councillors' appeals process. Greater success for the MCRC and the Anti-Cuts Campaign—successes like those that BUILD achieved under Mayor Schaefer, to be investigated in the next chapter—would have to wait until Liverpool's political opportunity structure shifted dramatically and, with it, the pressure group members' ability to access and influence the council.

Ch. 6, BUILD and pursuing a ‘place at the table’

The coalition of Catholic and African American clergy that invited the Industrial Areas Foundation to Baltimore in 1977 sought to create a new kind of power organisation that could carry forward the incomplete legacy of the Civil Rights Movement. However, there were cracks in BUILD’s foundation from the start. Though supposedly a broad-based organisation, the group’s original support base was narrow, with almost all of its start-up capital (\$70,000) coming from the Catholic Campaign for Human Development and very little coming from the dues of member institutions.⁴²⁰ Early organisers were weak or abrasive; they were also all white, a problem in the eyes of founding black clergymen like Vernon Dobson.⁴²¹ The issues the organisation took up, like rat eradication, arson control, and police patrols, were neighbourhood-oriented and of marginal importance to the central political dynamics of the city.⁴²²

Moreover, the political opportunity structure was not hospitable to the kind of citizens’ power organisation the ministers sought to create—nor was it particularly hospitable to those ministers themselves. Baltimore’s city charter called for ‘the strongest of strong mayoral governments’, and Mayor William Donald Schaefer mastered all the levers of government at his disposal and, through the quasi-public development agencies that managed Baltimore’s highly visible waterfront transformation, created a few more besides.⁴²³ Schaefer was beloved by most neighbourhood associations because of the politics of access and ‘new patronage’ he created. The mayor willingly met with many associations—his affection for the city’s neighbourhoods was by all accounts genuine—and, particularly if a group displayed an ability to achieve results within a given neighbourhood’s confines, would find ways to support their efforts with relatively small beautification grants or with a phone call to the right city agency able to provide the

⁴²⁰ McDougall, *Black Baltimore*, 128.

⁴²¹ H. Boyte, *Commonwealth: A Return to Citizen Politics* (New York, 1989), 115. Arnie Graf, in discussion with the author, 25/11/13.

⁴²² BUILD Archives, ‘BUILD: Listening, Learning and Leading for Thirty-Five Years in Baltimore City’, 1.

⁴²³ Smith, *William Donald Schaefer*, 119. Also see pp. 78, 93.

services sought.⁴²⁴ In return, however, Schaefer expected the associations to be his eyes, ears, and allies throughout the city; he wanted both their loyalty and their love. Groups or individuals unwilling to play by these rules, however, routinely found themselves shut out of City Hall.⁴²⁵

Nevertheless, despite its early weaknesses and a hostile mayor, by its tenth anniversary congress in 1987, BUILD had moved from the very outskirts of Baltimore politics to the very centre, achieving notable issue victories and recognition along the way. BUILD's successes in this period relied heavily upon the leadership provided by its organisers and senior clergy, and on the distribution of financial and decision-making resources in Baltimore. Struggling to survive as an organisation, IAF staff first had to stabilise the group's finances and grow its membership. This they accomplished not through in-depth relational organising, but through a series of 'movement-style' victories that would attract attention from potential member churches and build confidence in their capacity to achieve their goals—a very different strategy from the Liverpool groups' attempts to secure support and funding from the city council before moving forward on issues. After trying and failing to establish a working relationship with Mayor Schaefer, BUILD then had to find alternative pathways into the city's decision-making apparatus. Here, the devolution of authority to the city's public school system and local business community—authority that, in Liverpool, remained squarely in the hands of government, either at the local or national level—created opportunities for BUILD to continue to pursue public influence, despite being locked out of City Hall. Finally, BUILD cemented its place as a city power player through the 1987 mayoral election, in which it fielded its own 'candidate', the BUILD agenda, and eventually convinced both mayoral candidates that publicly committing to the BUILD agenda was a political necessity. When a new mayor, Kurt Schmoke, was sworn into

⁴²⁴ McDougall, *Black Baltimore*, 87-88; Callcott, *Maryland and America*, 90.

⁴²⁵ Harvey, 'View from Federal Hill', 237.

office in the fall of 1987, he anticipated a close working relationship with BUILD leaders and clergy.

Step One: Movement

When veteran IAF organiser Arnie Graf arrived in Baltimore in August 1980, however, such success was a very distant dream. The organisation was \$32,000 in debt and had less than \$5,000 in the bank; institutional membership dues amounted to no more than \$10,000 per year. BUILD had already been through three organisers in less than four years. It was shedding member institutions, particularly amongst its primarily white congregations—not, insofar as Graf could tell, because of any particular racial animus, but simply because the organisation did not seem to be effective. Since IAF affiliates do not take public funding, issue victories were BUILD's lifeblood; they were necessary to convincing member institutions that their dues were worth paying. Msgr. Clare O'Dwyer, one of BUILD's four founding clergy members and a powerhouse in the archdiocese, was getting ready to retire, and his parish would likely pull out once he did so. Only ten congregations remained, but even their interest in the venture was weak.⁴²⁶ Two rounds of IAF-style relationship building—dozens upon dozens of one-on-one meetings between an organiser and clergy, church members, and neighbourhood residents, along with multiple group sessions called 'house meetings', all intended to identify potential leaders and build working 'public' relationships amongst the organisation's members—had produced few notable victories.

Though he had previously organised in Milwaukee and with the IAF in San Antonio, Graf's own organising background originated in the civil rights movement of the 1960s. Assessing the situation in Baltimore, Graf decided that in order to survive as an organisation, what BUILD needed was not another round of individual conversations and house meetings, but

⁴²⁶ Graf discussion, 25/11/13.

rather momentum, visibility, victories, and the confidence that comes with these. That is, BUILD needed to become a movement if it was to survive as a broad-based organisation. That is, it needed to amass wins relatively quickly rather than going through the process of relationship-building and collective reflection that typically characterises IAF organising. Furthermore, in the IAF, movements typically refer to efforts that rely on charismatic leaders to rally people to a cause, while broad-based organisations are led by groups of people representing the interests of the institutions (churches, unions, etc.) of which they are members. BUILD, in its movement phase, needed to have a recognisable target in its first campaign. It needed to convince people that, by working together as BUILD, they could touch what had long seemed like untouchable authorities. Finally, it needed to feel relevant to a wide body of people, not just those living in one particular neighbourhood. Unlike the Black Caucus, which was formed only after the MCRC had already gained some degree of access to council decision-making via the Race Relations Liaison Committee⁴²⁷, BUILD needed a stable organisation and issue victories in order to push for a place at Baltimore's decision-making table.

After convincing friends in the non-profit foundation community to fund his salary for six months (since the organisation, as it turned out, had no money with which to pay him), Graf got to work. Underneath an affable personality and a low-key demeanour, Graf possessed a keen political intuition and ability to read the strengths and weaknesses of others. He began an intensive 'listening campaign' of his own, meeting with eight to ten individuals a day (mostly on Baltimore's West Side, where BUILD's strongest remaining congregations were situated), six days a week, in order to figure out what issue might make for a strong campaign. 'Housing came up a lot,' Graf recalled, and people's inability to get loans for repairs or new homes. Financial institutions could make for a good organising target: pervasive, necessary, and seemingly impossible to influence. Indeed, a particularly unsuccessful interaction with the president of

⁴²⁷ See p. 115.

Maryland National Bank around higher credit card fees had been the last straw for one particular young African-American minister with great leadership potential, Douglas Miles; in that meeting, four ministers' utter inability to influence the bank convinced Miles that it was time to pull back from social engagements and focus solely on building his young church's membership.⁴²⁸ So, Graf concluded, Baltimore's white-owned banks 'were like a big beast. It would be good to sort of touch them.'⁴²⁹ Before engaging local government directly, Graf wanted to demonstrate that BUILD could influence another significant source of power in Baltimore.

Furthermore, banks had legal obligations to lend a certain amount of their funds to the neighbourhoods in which they were located in order to receive various approvals from federal bank regulators—obligations with which Graf was very familiar, since he had worked with the Milwaukee group that catalysed the legislation, the Community Reinvestment Act, which mandated that they do so.⁴³⁰ Finally, Maryland had its own programme designed to support lending in low-income neighbourhoods, the Maryland Housing Investment Fund, which insured mortgages in lower-income areas without cost to the lender. Not only were the banks legally required to be lending in the neighbourhoods where many of BUILD's participating individuals lived; they basically could not lose in doing so. Graf had found his issue: relevant to a large body of people, targeting an indisputably powerful set of institutions, and legally compelled to maintain certain obligations they seemed to be failing to uphold. In other words, not only was the target big and bold, but the prospects for victory were strong. If the point was to ignite a movement that would solidify into an organisation, designing a campaign around 'community banks' and local lending practices was a good strategic move.

⁴²⁸ Boyte, *Commonwealth*, 110.

⁴²⁹ Graf discussion, 25/11/13.

⁴³⁰ P. Dreier, 'Community Empowerment Strategies: The Limits and Potential of Organizing in Low-Income Neighborhoods' in Strom & Mollenkopf (eds.), *The Urban Politics Reader* (New York, 2007), p. 199.

First, though, suspicions and lived experiences needed to be translated into data if a campaign was to succeed. Under the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act, banks were required to disclose their residential lending patterns to groups requesting such information.⁴³¹ Graf led a small group of people from BUILD congregations in the necessary research, and the numbers they discovered were dramatic: out of \$434 million worth of mortgage lending in Baltimore City in 1979 by the city's fifteen largest banks, a mere \$10 million was lent in the predominantly black neighbourhoods that comprised BUILD's 'target area', which included large swathes of West and Northwest Baltimore and parts of East Baltimore that totalled about 60 percent of the city's census tracts.⁴³² At a gathering of 200 BUILD member church congregants organised largely by Rev. Dobson, BUILD clergy revealed the lending numbers for each bank, one by one. The dramatic findings and revelation had the intended effect: by the end, Graf said, 'people were really angry.'⁴³³

In IAF teaching, 'cold anger', or controlled anger, is a prized virtue because it is seen as a powerful motivating force—busy people are more likely to stick with an effort when they encounter obstacles if it is to remedy some issue that makes them mad, rather than simply believing it to be a good idea. Graf's task, then, was to translate that anger into a campaign that would give BUILD member congregants the fight they were itching to have. At first, the effort seemed to be unfolding *too* smoothly. BUILD leaders began meeting with officials from the banks in March 1981 to share their findings and request that they participate in the Maryland Housing Investment Fund.⁴³⁴ Each set of bank officials they was all too willing to do so, prompting Graf to counter intuitively conclude, 'We're really in trouble.'⁴³⁵

⁴³¹ Ibid. 199.

⁴³² P. Constable, 'Inner-city group organizes for share of mortgage funds', *The Baltimore Sun*, 13/4/81, C14.

⁴³³ Graf discussion, 25/11/13.

⁴³⁴ Constable, 'Inner-city group', C14.

⁴³⁵ Graf discussion, 25/11/13.

One of the most significant lessons Graf learned in the civil rights movement was that the other side does the organising for you. When Martin Luther King, Jr. won the Nobel Peace Prize, he famously stated that he should be sharing it with Bull Connor, the virulently racist Birmingham Commissioner of Public Safety who attacked peaceful protesters in Alabama with fire hoses, police dogs, and night sticks. The organising target's angry response can actually contribute to the momentum of a movement by further convincing people that they are engaged in a just struggle that requires commitment and sacrifice. Easy acquiescence and conciliation do not allow for heroic stands—and heroic stands (or at least the appearance of them) could be useful for developing a grassroots political organisation. As will be discussed below, Liverpool's Community Rights would go on to learn this lesson in 1989 when a friendly council's generosity stifled the group's growth rather than encouraging it. Since Graf's aim was less to secure actual concessions from the banks and more to stir up enthusiasm that would overflow, eventually, into a stable organisation, he and the BUILD leaders needed to alter their course.

In order to prompt a different set of responses from the banks, the BUILD team changed its ask. Now, instead of simply requesting that banks enlist in a programme that insured their loans, they decided to get specific about how much they wanted the banks to lend in these areas. If they were to be more than underwriters for mortgage lending happening in suburbs and more affluent neighbourhoods, BUILD leaders decided they should get as much from the banks as they put into them; the banks should lend to the neighbourhoods in which their branches were located as much as the residents in those neighbourhoods were depositing in them. 'We've been putting our money into these banks just like anyone else, but we're getting no return. It's not an equitable business relationship,' one BUILD participant at Union Baptist Church told *The Baltimore Sun*.⁴³⁶

⁴³⁶ Constable, 'Inner-city group', C14.

That is, engaging banks required BUILD to use the language of capital and caused them to emphasise their collective private resources, foreshadowing the manner in which the group would highlight the financial resources it could bring to the table during negotiations with Governor Schaefer for state support of their ambitious low-income housing development project toward the end of the decade. It was also markedly different from the rights-based language used by the Anti-Cuts Campaign as it recruited members by emphasising that the voluntary groups' right to consultation had been violated. The differences in language point to the different natures of each group's target—private banks versus the local authority—and also to their different expectations of what would justify their inclusion in decision-making processes that would hold true even when BUILD also shifted to engaging public actors.

The new ask led to another round of participatory research, designed to figure out how much BUILD congregants had deposited in the fifteen banks. During church services one Sunday in early 1981, BUILD churches took up a 'second collection' in which people were asked to write down, anonymously, how much money they had deposited in each institution. When all the slips were counted, they added up to \$15 million.⁴³⁷ Graf recognized that this was a 'drop in the bucket' for the banks' balance sheets—but it was a 'substantial sum' to the mostly lower and lower middle-income families in BUILD churches.⁴³⁸ It gave them a sense that their collective resources, including their collective financial resources, might be more significant than they had imagined: 'As individuals, the banks don't look at us with respect, but as a group we can demand a response from them,' asserted BUILD's lay president and member of St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church, Phyllis Douglass.⁴³⁹

The specific bank from which Graf and BUILD leaders decided to demand a response was Provident Bank, which had a large number of branches in the target area and which,

⁴³⁷ Graf discussion, 25/11/13.

⁴³⁸ J. Kelly, 'Soft-spoken activist puts BUILD on firm foundation,' *The News American*, 3/3/82, A8.

⁴³⁹ Constable, 'Inner-city group', C14.

according to its Home Mortgage Disclosure reports, invested \$660,000 in the target area out of \$51 million invested across the city. The second collection survey disclosed that BUILD congregants had about \$2 million deposited with Provident.⁴⁴⁰ When Provident Bank president Ronald Mason failed to show up for a scheduled meeting with BUILD leaders on 10 April 1981, he inadvertently set BUILD up to stage a classic Saul Alinsky-style ‘action’ at Provident’s downtown branch. On 28 May, about 75 members of BUILD churches held a ‘bank-in’, in which they asked tellers to change small bills into pennies, then returned to the back of the queue, and asked for the pennies to be changed back into small bills when they made it back to the teller window.⁴⁴¹ The bank manager panicked and embarrassed himself by calling the police, who were underwhelmed by the manager’s distress at individual’s asking for change. The bank-in led to a meeting with Mason in June, at which he agreed that Provident would set aside \$2 million for low- and moderate-income families in BUILD’s target area.⁴⁴² In meetings brokered by the Greater Baltimore Committee, Baltimore’s high-powered business alliance, other banks made similar agreements.⁴⁴³

Graf had succeeded in his goal of creating a movement: ‘[The campaign] was very exciting for people: ‘beating the banks’ or making them negotiate. So it brought a lot of energy to BUILD. We had a movement.’⁴⁴⁴ The organisation received press coverage for its actions, and people began to feel optimistic about BUILD’s potential. What the press stories did not mention was that BUILD had intentionally sought to accomplish its goals in a public, attention-getting manner; indeed, it had eschewed the efforts of one liberal city councilman who sat on Provident’s board (and who had close ties to Mayor Schaefer) to broker a deal in a manner that would have avoided any public fuss. In this BUILD’s strategy again differed from that of the

⁴⁴⁰ BUILD Archive, C. Gunther, ‘75 from BUILD hold Provident ‘bank-in’’, *The Sun*, 29/5/81.

⁴⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴⁴² BUILD Archive, ‘Tactics controversial, but BUILD counts successes’, *The News American*, 19/12/83, 6A.

⁴⁴³ Jeff Valentine, in discussion with the author, 29/5/14.

⁴⁴⁴ Graf discussion, 25/11/13.

Anti-Cuts Campaign, which allowed council officer Nigel Mellor to discreetly secure permission from Councillor Frank Mills to continue funding the member organisations in such a way that Labour leader Tony Byrne would not notice. Because Anti-Cuts members relied almost entirely on the city council for their funding, they could not afford to run the same risks that BUILD could when relating to public authorities.

Furthermore, in their meetings with bank officials, Graf and BUILD representatives had not relied only on the collective deposits of their members as evidence of their clout—those were a ‘drop in the bucket’ after all—but had also pointed to the Catholic Archdiocese, a far more significant customer of the banks, with whom BUILD had close ties through one of its four founders, Msgr. O’Dwyer.⁴⁴⁵ Graf and BUILD leaders wanted to communicate to members of BUILD churches a sense of their collective power; however, in meetings with the banks, they did not hesitate to exploit connections to a much larger institution and threaten to widen the scope of the conflict. The Black Caucus used the same strategy in Liverpool when it invited the public sector unions and Anglican and Catholic churches to join their boycott of Sam Bond’s fixed appointment. However, while the Black Caucus publicly recognised these partners, in this instance, the source of BUILD’s ‘big stick’ was not necessarily emphasised to all BUILD congregants.

Despite the mortgage lending campaign’s success, Graf believed that BUILD’s movement phase was not yet over, and again directed the organisation toward a campaign that was as much about building up organisational strength as it was about securing new resources. ‘I knew we would suffer some if we just stopped it, and said, “Let’s go back to individual meetings”,’ Graf recalled. ‘We did that for two years...People would say, “Why go back to a

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid.

loser, what's the point?"⁴⁴⁶ In determining the organisation's next target, Graf again relied on previous experience:

I knew from other experience that auto insurance companies did their ratings by boundaries, and inner cities were always charged a lot more than people outside beltways or in suburbs. Part of it was because there was more theft, but part of it was insurance companies argued that because cities are more crowded there are going to be more accidents...⁴⁴⁷

While on its face the argument seemed to be purely actuarial—there were, in fact, more fender benders in Baltimore City than in the surrounding counties—in the course of researching the issue Graf came across a particularly helpful study from New Jersey. In considering the same issue with regard to the city of Newark, New Jersey's automobile insurance commissioner had found that 62 percent of accidents in the city involved cars coming in from outside it.⁴⁴⁸ Could the same be true in Baltimore, such that city residents' higher premiums were helping insurance companies to cover losses from accidents involving suburban drivers?

Armed with research completed by BUILD leaders and volunteers demonstrating that city residents with a clean driving record paid up to \$205 more per year than suburban residents for the same automobile insurance, BUILD confronted Maryland auto insurance commissioner Edward J. Birrane on November 4, 1981.⁴⁴⁹ The organisation wanted him to stop granting rate increases to insurance companies until they stopped calculating premiums based on where drivers lived.⁴⁵⁰ Birrane's exchange with BUILD leader Gary Rodwell in front of 600 – 700 BUILD congregants was 'heated', and under aggressive questioning, Birrane lost his temper—which, since the goal was still about sustaining a movement and building an organisation more

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁸ BUILD Archive, 'On Auto Insurance, Part One', Editorial, WJZ-TV 13, Baltimore, Maryland, 11/2/82.

⁴⁴⁹ BUILD Archive, J. Fairhall, 'City group want brakes put on costly car insurance,' *The Baltimore Evening Sun*, 16/10/81.

⁴⁵⁰ BUILD Archive, J. Fairhall, 'There auto be a law, Birrane told', *The Baltimore Evening Sun*, 5/11/81.

than winning on a particular point, was ‘great for us’ from Graf’s perspective.⁴⁵¹ Birrane’s frustration, and his admission that the insurance companies’ practices were ‘discriminatory...[but] it is legal’, helped to convince those assembled that they were, again, fighting a good fight.⁴⁵²

Birrane agreed to appoint a high-level staffer to help BUILD continue to research the issue of whether suburban drivers were involved in city accidents, but the group was able to make no further headway with Birrane himself—in this instance, the law (and the composition of the state legislature, where there were more delegates from areas not regarded as ‘high risk’ than from inside those areas) was not on BUILD’s side.⁴⁵³ Though unable to make any headway with Birrane, after almost a year of searching Graf and BUILD leaders eventually found a way forward through an insurance agent with Home Insurance Group, which offered a Gold Key Policy that charged premiums based on drivers’ records rather than their residential postal codes.⁴⁵⁴ BUILD eventually signed up about 1,000 households to the policy.⁴⁵⁵

That the organisation eventually found a solution to the auto insurance problem through market research rather than through organising tactics specifically mattered little to its success as a ‘movement.’ Over the course of 1981, BUILD had ‘touched’ large banks, large insurance companies, and state officials. In the course of trying to stabilise and grow the organisation, Graf had not steered BUILD’s most public campaigns toward local government targets—a major difference from the MCRC and Anti-Cuts Campaign in Liverpool, where the concentration of relevant resources in local government hands meant that their efforts focused almost exclusively on pressuring local government bodies. Rising membership numbers reflected growing interest

⁴⁵¹ BUILD Archive, D. Brown, ‘Birrane agrees to aid insurance rate drive’, *The Baltimore Sun*, 5/11/81; ‘BUILD taking car insurance bias fight to Annapolis’, *The Baltimore Afro-American*, 7/11/81, 1.

⁴⁵² Fairhall, ‘There auto be’; Brown, ‘Birrane agrees’.

⁴⁵³ Brown, ‘Birrane agrees’.

⁴⁵⁴ D. Henry, ‘Cheaper car insurance in city found, group says’, *The Baltimore Evening Sun*, 1/12/82, B2.

⁴⁵⁵ Graf discussion, 25/11/13.

from institutions around the city in getting on board: 1,800 people from 30 churches and community associations attended the 1982 convention.⁴⁵⁶ It also meant that the movement phase of the organisation could begin to give way to more traditional IAF-style relational organising, and Graf could begin to direct BUILD leaders toward actions that would move them toward relationship with the city's central decision-making authorities. In Baltimore in the early 1980s, this meant moving into relationship with Mayor Schaefer.

First Pathway: City Hall

BUILD and William Donald Schaefer were ill suited to one another from the start. As discussed above, Schaefer was not opposed to community groups in general, and indeed successfully co-opted many of them into his administration.⁴⁵⁷ However, he had reason to be wary of BUILD before it ever conducted its first campaign because of the African-American leaders with whom BUILD was affiliated.⁴⁵⁸ Schaefer himself had come up through Baltimore's strongest political machine under the patronage of well-known bosses like Irv Kovens; when he won the mayoral election in 1971, he did so in large part because two African-American candidates split the black vote.⁴⁵⁹ There were influential African-Americans affiliated with this machine, but they were not the leaders who had backed BUILD. Two of BUILD's four founding clergymen, Wendell Phillips and Vernon Dobson, were both prominent political figures in their own right who opposed the Kovens machine; furthermore, they were part of a group of influential African Americans who Schaefer perceived to be opposed to him first and foremost because he was 'standing in the way of the inevitable': a black mayor in Baltimore.⁴⁶⁰

⁴⁵⁶ 'BUILD Holds Convention; Continues Insurance Fight', *The Baltimore Afro-American*, 7/3/82, 1.

⁴⁵⁷ McDougall, *Black Baltimore*, 87-88.

⁴⁵⁸ Graf discussion, 25/11/13; Mark Wasserman, in discussion with the author, 21/2/14.

⁴⁵⁹ Harvey, 'View from Federal Hill', 237; P. Jay, 'Political History' in Nast, Krause, & Monk (eds.) *Baltimore: A Living Renaissance* (Baltimore, 1982), p. 149.

⁴⁶⁰ Graf discussion, 25/11/13; Wasserman discussion, 21/2/14.

Congressman Parren Mitchell of the Mitchell-Murphy dynasty, another machine-independent black politician and Schaefer antagonist, was also an early supporter of BUILD.

Furthermore, BUILD had chosen to expose inequities and voice frustrations with the state of Baltimore in a deliberately public manner. Schaefer, on the other hand, was extremely concerned with the city's image and morale—this was, after all, the mayor who sponsored 'Sunny Sundays' to applaud the sun and 'Pink Positive Days'⁴⁶¹—and despised groups who created what in his mind was unnecessary negative publicity for a city that already suffered from an image problem.⁴⁶² BUILD's embrace of public controversy did not sit well with a mayor trying to project a positive image to attract corporations, tourists, and conventions to Baltimore.

But Schaefer was about action as well as image; his well-known motto around City Hall was 'Do it now', and he placed a 'huge premium' on staff members and organisations that were able to produce results.⁴⁶³ His success as mayor was built around a bricks-and-mortar strategy of obtaining federal grants (which his administration did with great success) to support large commercial projects, as well as thorough attention to more mundane aspects of city living like rubbish collection and rat eradication.⁴⁶⁴ Schaefer perceived some of the ministers involved with BUILD, including Vernon Dobson, as all rhetoric and no action by contrast.⁴⁶⁵

BUILD initiated its relationship with City Hall not by attempting to meet with the mayor directly, but by first reaching out to the department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). Trying to work up to the mayor via HCD made strategic sense given Baltimore's political opportunity structure. The department was amongst the most influential in the Schaefer

⁴⁶¹ See p. 93.

⁴⁶² Boyte, *Commonwealth*, 111. This tendency extended to the press; when Jeff Valentine broke a story about public employees comping their vacation time for tens of thousands of extra dollars in salary each year, Schaefer reacted by publicly dressing him down on the steps of City Hall and stonewalling him at press conferences. Only later did he acknowledge to Valentine that he was more upset to discover the practice than by Valentine's good reporting—still, Valentine paid a price.

⁴⁶³ Wasserman discussion, 21/2/14.

⁴⁶⁴ Crenson *Neighborhood Politics*, 291; Smith, *William Donald Schaefer*, 153.

⁴⁶⁵ Wasserman discussion, 21/2/14.

administration, custodian that it was of the many federal and state grants that buttressed Schaefer's political power, and headed by the formidable M. Jay Brodie.⁴⁶⁶ Housing, furthermore, was an important issue for BUILD's constituents, as Graf's one-man listening campaign had revealed, and through the mortgage lending campaign BUILD had already begun to engage in the issue. By early 1982, 6,000 vacant houses already scarred inner city Baltimore neighbourhoods; while housing was also a perennially headline issue in Liverpool during the 1980s, the problem of 'vacants' was specific to Baltimore and reflected the prevalence of private ownership in the American housing market.⁴⁶⁷ The vacants were more than an eyesore, however; they also created a potential safety hazard, as homeless people and drug addicts lit fires in them while using the vacants for shelter. Should the fires not be properly put out or begin burning out of control while, for example, the person who started them slept, they could easily do damage to multiple properties in Baltimore's compact row house neighbourhoods. BUILD began meeting with HCD in early 1982 around the relatively simple issue of boarding up vacants with fiberglass, rather than wood, which would make the vacants less susceptible to breaking and entering.⁴⁶⁸

That summer, after having begun to build a relationship with Brodie and the HCD staff, Graf and BUILD leaders approached Mayor Schaefer for a meeting to, according to BUILD president Dixon's introductory letter, 'inform you of our directions [and]...hear your views on your concerns for our city.'⁴⁶⁹ The meeting took place on 5 August 1982, and included three top staff members from HCD and twelve BUILD representatives.⁴⁷⁰ Graf worried that Schaefer would attempt to co-opt BUILD leaders as he had co-opted representatives from other

⁴⁶⁶ Brambilla & Longo, *Learning from Baltimore*, 69.

⁴⁶⁷ Kelly, 'Soft-spoken activist', 8A.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid. The problem of murdered bodies being dumped in the rowhouses—a Baltimore scourge made famous by the HBO television show *The Wire*—would not become more prevalent until drug gangs' struggles for territory reached a higher level of violence in the 1990s.

⁴⁶⁹ BCA, BRG9-42-803, Letter from Marian Dixon to Mayor Schaefer, 1/6/82.

⁴⁷⁰ BCA, BRG9-42-803, Attendance list, BUILD meeting with the Mayor, 5/8/82.

community associations.⁴⁷¹ Graf's suspicions were correct; indeed, Schaefer's efforts in the meeting went beyond mere co-optation and began as an outright charm assault. Not only did Schaefer open the meeting by suggesting that they put away their agendas, but shortly after the introductions he also began stroking BUILD president Marian Dixon's hand and suggesting they all go by their first names.⁴⁷² When Dixon withdrew her hand, insisted on using formal titles, and redirected the mayor toward the agenda, he became frustrated and curt. Nevertheless, while Schaefer did not outright agree to meet with BUILD three times a year around housing issues as the BUILD team requested—an action that would have been a strong step toward incorporating the group into the city's decision-making structure around housing—he did agree to a follow up meeting with them in late September to hear more about their proposals concerning the vacant houses.⁴⁷³

At this meeting, on 30 September, even more of Schaefer's top staff people attended, suggesting that Schaefer saw the group at this point as worth hearing out in a serious manner.⁴⁷⁴ BUILD responded by demonstrating its 'power to' address the concerns of its member congregations and then by continuing to press for inroads into the city's decision-making bodies. BUILD leader Gary Rodwell reported progress on the auto insurance front—the kind of substantive results that greatly pleased Schaefer, the meeting minutes suggest.⁴⁷⁵ In terms of a housing initiative, the BUILD representatives eschewed discussion of the mayor's Adopt-a-House programme, which he had put forward in previous correspondence as one possible avenue for BUILD to do something for the city's vacants problem but which would have confined the organisation to fixing up isolated houses, rather than the participation in

⁴⁷¹ Crenson, *Neighborhood Politics*, 295.

⁴⁷² Graf discussion, 25/11/13.

⁴⁷³ BCA, BRG9-42-803, Minutes, 'Mtg w/ new officers of BUILD', 5/8/82, 2.

⁴⁷⁴ BCA, BRG9-42-803, Brodie, M.J., 'Mayor's Meeting Report', 30/9/82.

⁴⁷⁵ BCA, BRG9-42-803, Minutes, 'Meeting w/ BUILD', 30/9/82, ¶1.

discussions around large-scale solutions that it sought.⁴⁷⁶ Instead, BUILD representatives presented a proposal whereby BUILD churches would raise two to four million dollars to set up a revolving loan fund that would make interest-free loans to rehabbers and low-income home buyers.⁴⁷⁷ While this proposal would create grounds for deepening the working relationship between City Hall and BUILD—BUILD's immediate request from HCD was information on the location and condition of all the city's vacant properties—the organisation's leaders further demonstrated their desire to move closer to the city's decision-making structures by asking the mayor to set up a meeting between themselves and the Greater Baltimore Committee to discuss possible remedies for the city's unemployment problem.⁴⁷⁸

That is, in its first two meetings with the most politically powerful person in Baltimore, BUILD asked for regular access to high-level staffers in the city's most well-respected department, detailed information on the shape and extent of one of the city's most challenging issues, a connection to the city's most influential private sector alliance, and a working relationship marked by on-going meetings with the mayor himself. Their one request for monetary support was not for their own organisation, but for a matching contribution to a possible revolving loan fund for low-income homebuyers. The message from BUILD was clear: it was not another community group looking for a hand-out, but a political organisation looking for a seat at Baltimore's decision-making table. It was a very different message from that of Liverpool's Anti-Cuts Campaign, which had as one of its animating purposes the securing of funds from the city council in addition to its demands for consultation in the dispersal of city resources.

However, Mayor Schaefer was cautious about inviting BUILD to pull up a metaphorical chair to the table of political power. He did not agree to connect the organisation to the GBC,

⁴⁷⁶ BCA, BRG9-42-803, Correspondence, Mayor Schaefer to Ms. Marian Dixon, 11/8/82.

⁴⁷⁷ BCA, BRG9-42-803, Minutes, 'Meeting w/ BUILD', 30/9/82, ¶4.

⁴⁷⁸ BCA, BRG9-42-803, Minutes, 'Meeting w/ BUILD', 30/9/82, ¶3.

though he did suggest that if they were able to secure money for an unemployment initiative from the governor that he might be willing to do so.⁴⁷⁹ And while he did agree to provide them with the information they requested on vacants from HCD, BUILD did not receive a list of city-owned vacants until late December.⁴⁸⁰ A third Schaefer—BUILD meeting did take place on 18 January 1983, and a fourth may have taken place in late April.⁴⁸¹ However, not much progress was made in the Schaefer – BUILD relationship in early 1983, and that winter and spring BUILD focused more of its energy on fighting proposed rate increases from Baltimore Gas & Electric and the formation of a holding company for the utility via the City Council and the Maryland Public Service Commission, a fight in which Mayor Schaefer was hesitant to lend his political support.⁴⁸²

Though the BUILD – Schaefer relationship got off to a slow start, it did not reach an actual breaking point until the summer of 1983. The outcome of the 1983 mayoral election was certain—early polls suggested the mayor had a dominant lead, and he would go on to soundly beat his opponent—but they nevertheless chose to organize an ‘accountability night’ for candidates for mayor, city council president, and comptroller.⁴⁸³ At the accountability night, candidates would be asked to respond to issue questions with a ‘yes, no, or maybe’ answer, and would be given three minutes after the questions to explain their answers and issue their own statements about their vision for the city. The format was typical of IAF affiliates and was designed to force candidates to focus on issues important to those gathered in the audience, and stake out clear positions on specific questions.

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁰ BCA, BRG9-42-803, Correspondence, Ms. Marian Dixon to Mayor Schaefer, 3/1/83.

⁴⁸¹ BCA, BRG9-42-803, Minutes, ‘BUILD’, 18/1/83, ¶3.

⁴⁸² BCA, BRG9-42-803, Correspondence, Benjamin Brown (city solicitor) to Mayor Schaefer, 25/2/83; R. Ruby, ‘Bulk of audience walks out of hearing on BG&E rate rise’, *The Baltimore Sun*, 21/4/83; ‘BUILD group walks out of BG&E rate-increase hearing’, *The Baltimore Evening Sun*, 21/4/83, D3.

⁴⁸³ C.F. Smith, ‘Schaefer is blamed by liberals’, *The Baltimore Sun*, 24/10/83, B3.

According to Graf, there was some concern leading up to the event that Schaefer would be unhappy with its format, in particular given that a number of questions had to do with how federal funds should be spent in the course of future harbour development.⁴⁸⁴ Given this concern, Graf tried to be especially conscientious about preparing Schaefer for the evening:

So we met a number of times, we met with the mayor, we were really concerned that he was going to get upset. And we didn't want that, because he was gonna win...But we wanted to show that we could get him to come, that we were something to be reckoned with.⁴⁸⁵

While it is certain that Schaefer received written communication from BUILD about the format of the evening, the extent to which he understood the rules of the yes-no-maybe format are unclear. The sole document in his archives referencing the event explains:

Firstly, we want to hear from candidates on their views on the issues which we have outlined in the enclosed material; and secondly, we would like to give the candidates an opportunity to address our membership...⁴⁸⁶

but does not elaborate further. Graf, still BUILD's lead organiser at the time, and Mark Wasserman, the Schaefer staff person in charge of prepping the mayor, have different recollections about the extent to which the yes-no-maybe format was laid out ahead of time. In the course of the actual event, however, while all the other candidates cooperated with the format without issue, Schaefer immediately became flustered upon taking the podium in front of some 500 BUILD congregants gathered at Brown's Memorial Baptist Church.⁴⁸⁷ Unlike the other candidates, he wanted to make his statement before answering questions; though this point of tension was resolved, Schaefer refused to be bound to the yes-no-maybe format of the questioning, arguing that 'no one can say 'yes' or 'no' to these questions unless they are naive.'⁴⁸⁸

⁴⁸⁴ BCA, BRG9-42-970, 'BUILD's Agenda for the City', 7/7/83.

⁴⁸⁵ Graf discussion, 25/11/13.

⁴⁸⁶ BCA, BRG9-42-970, Letter from Marian Dixon to Mayor Schaefer, 7/7/83.

⁴⁸⁷ BUILD Archive, J. Blevins, 'Forum's 'Yes, No' rules annoy Schaefer', *The News American*, 23/8/83.

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid.

When Schaefer was told that he had three minutes to address the crowd, he waved good night and left the church without making a statement.⁴⁸⁹

The crowd gathered did not respond well to Schaefer's uncooperative spirit and repeatedly jeered him and his answers. Though BUILD president Dixon made attempts to be conciliatory, the overwhelming mood was hostile; when a BUILD clergyman offered Schaefer a glass of water, a voice from the back yelled for him to pour it on the mayor instead.⁴⁹⁰ For a mayor who desired not just respect from his constituents, but affection—and often received it at this point in his political career [approval ratings]—the encounter came as a shock and an unforgiveable affront. A man widely acknowledged as a grudge bearer, Schaefer then set about 'to destroy' BUILD—or at least block it on all fronts.⁴⁹¹ For the next two years, not only would BUILD have no access to Schaefer or City Hall departments, but Schaefer would do his best to discourage anyone else from working with the organisation as well.⁴⁹² If BUILD was going to finagle its way into a seat at Baltimore's decision-making table, it would have to forge alternative pathways to do so.

In this, BUILD was in luck compared to its counterparts in Liverpool, who had to rely on formal government institutions in order to secure access to decision-making. After the 1983 accountability forum, BUILD's relationship with City Hall was as broken as the Black Caucus's in Liverpool after the Sam Bond appointment and the dissolution of the Race Relations Liaison Committee. Because the local authority held both the financial and decision-making resources necessary for the Black Caucus to move forward on any part its agenda, including issues around employment, housing, and education, such a break froze the MCRC's equal opportunities agenda. Faced with more dispersed resources in Baltimore—with more tables at which publicly

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid. In doing so, he was also accompanied by roughly thirty African-American children wearing Schaefer campaign t-shirts, who had also accompanied him into the church and applauded his every statement.

⁴⁹⁰ R. Davis, 'Yes or no format irks Schaefer', *The Baltimore Sun*, 23/8/83, D2.

⁴⁹¹ Michael Fletcher and Michael Ollove quoted in Boyte, *Commonwealth*, 111.

⁴⁹² Graf discussion, 25/11/13.

significant decisions were made—BUILD’s break with even a mayor as authoritarian and effective as Schaefer did not have to put a stop to its campaigns or prevent it from continuing to build power.

Alternative paths to power: The school system and the business community

In Baltimore as in other American cities, two groups outside of formal city government institutions also exerted significant influence over public resources: school systems and the business community. Unlike Liverpool’s comprehensive schools, Baltimore’s school system, Baltimore City Public Schools, was largely a self-governing entity over which the mayor had minimal control. The school board had the power to make personnel and budget decisions, and though its nine members were appointed by the mayor, once appointed they were supposed to serve out their terms as autonomous actors.⁴⁹³ Indeed, part of the mayor’s reasoning for staying away from education as an issue, by and large, was because it was a ‘no win’ situation for him—he would inevitably be held accountable for that which he failed to fix, yet he could not bring his ‘do it now’ mentality into a system governed by a school board and superintendent.⁴⁹⁴ As the *Baltimore Sun* described in the aftermath of 1983 election, work on the city schools in his fourth term would make the accomplishments of his previous three terms ‘look easy by comparison.’⁴⁹⁵

As has been discussed above, the Baltimore corporate community’s vehicle for public influence was the Greater Baltimore Committee, or GBC. As in other American cities, the GBC had significantly shaped Baltimore’s post-war physical redevelopment, particularly around expressways, the downtown, the port, and Inner Harbor.⁴⁹⁶ Since its inception in 1955, the GBC had also worked on issues regarding convention facilities and mass transportation.⁴⁹⁷

⁴⁹³ BUILD Archive, S. Banisky, ‘No. 1 on the agenda: Better schools’, *The Baltimore Sun*, 18/9/83.

⁴⁹⁴ Valentine discussion, 29/5/14.

⁴⁹⁵ Banisky, ‘No. 1.’

⁴⁹⁶ Lyall, ‘A Bicycle Built for Two’, 543. Also see p. 75.

⁴⁹⁷ GBC Archive, ‘Where Vision Takes Shape: A Retrospective, 1955 - 95’ (Baltimore and Greater Baltimore Committee, 1995), 6.

Despite Schaefer's dominance of City Hall and local government machinery, leaders at both the school system and the GBC had reason to pay attention to overtures from a group of politically organised, mostly African-American clergy and church members such as BUILD that had demonstrated the power to act on issues important to them. In 1983, Alice Pinderhughes was a newly appointed school superintendent who, despite her decades of experience in the system and being African-American herself, was struggling to overcome suspicions in some corners of the black community and the school system.⁴⁹⁸ She lacked a doctoral degree (supposedly a requirement for the position), and her appointment seemed to be as much a result of social connections to the mayor and her late husband's prestige as an administrator as of actual qualifications for the job.⁴⁹⁹ A public relationship with a primarily African-American political organisation such as BUILD could be a coup for her. Furthermore, Pinderhughes was widely acknowledged to be a person who genuinely cared about the wellbeing of the system's students and, as someone who had not reached her position by climbing the school system's administrative ladder, she might be unafraid to step on toes.⁵⁰⁰

The GBC was also open to new partnerships. Beginning in the early 1980s, particularly following the appointment of former *Baltimore Evening Sun* editor Robert Keller to be its executive director in 1981, the GBC began to turn its attention from the physical infrastructure of Baltimore City to its 'social infrastructure', and in particular to the school system. Keller later explained his move from the newsroom to the boardroom by referencing his own concerns for the city's future:

The physical development of the community was under control, the harbor and further out. But there were major fundamental problems in jobs, education, the cultural infrastructure. I felt this was a community that was either going to be on

⁴⁹⁸ Boyte, *Commonwealth*, 119; Valentine discussion, 3/7/14.

⁴⁹⁹ Boyte, *Commonwealth*, 119; GBC Archive, Board meeting minutes, 10/6/83, 5; Valentine discussion, 29/5/14.

⁵⁰⁰ Gerald Taylor, in discussion with the author, 17/2/14; Graf discussion, 25/11/13; Valentine discussion, 3/7/14. Jeff Valentine described Pinderhughes keeping a television blaring near the door of her office because she was so concerned that others in the building were eavesdropping on her conversations.

the edge of a new forefront of civic cooperation, or we were going to disappear into the bay.⁵⁰¹

Keller moved to fill the GBC staff with like-minded colleagues, and so persuaded veteran *Evening Sun* political reporter Jeff Valentine to join him as the GBC's policy director. Valentine was attracted by the possibility of looking at the same issues he covered as a reporter and being able to help shape their outcome, rather than simply report on it. He also sensed that the GBC was at a turning point when it hired Keller:

There was a change in attitude: people recognized that you could build all these great things, but if the people are deteriorating, you're not getting ahead. So Bob outlined a strategy for building the social infrastructure, starting with education.⁵⁰²

The GBC board was ready to expand its remit, and it hired the staff necessary to take on a broader agenda—staff that would later become a key linking point with BUILD staff. While the GBC maintained a cordial relationship with Schaefer, it was by no means under his thumb. By June 1984, Schaefer and the GBC were not coordinating their efforts around increased collaboration between the corporate community and the city schools—Schaefer had started a foundation to fund special experimental programmes in the schools that he hoped businesses would contribute to, while the GBC was looking to expand its school-business partnership model—and the relationship between Schaefer and the GBC showed signs of strain:

The Mayor acknowledged that his relationship with GBC has had its ups and downs. He also indicated support for the GBC's current agenda but said he does not feel comfortable coming to the GBC for help. He would rather solicit help from individual businessmen. Mr. Hoblitzell said he suggested that the Mayor come first to GBC for help on projects.⁵⁰³

While the mayor and the GBC could not ignore one another, then, their agendas were not entirely in sync.

⁵⁰¹ Quoted in Boyte, *Commonwealth*, 112.

⁵⁰² Valentine discussion, 29/5/14.

⁵⁰³ GBC Archive, Board meeting minutes, 8/6/84, 6; Board meeting minutes, 13/7/84, 2.

Despite its broken relationship with Mayor Schaefer, BUILD as an organisation was on substantially firmer footing than it had been when Graf arrived in 1980. At its November 1983 convention, just months after the public falling out with Schafer, the organisation boasted 34 member congregations—a large and diverse enough gathering to make the organisation stand out amongst the city’s other political pressure groups and umbrella organisations, and one that could point to concrete victories and ties with influential religious bodies like the Catholic Archdiocese and the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance. Graf knew it was time to think about translating the movement-style successes into something more organisationally sustainable that could ‘get into the arena with the mayor and the Greater Baltimore Committee.’⁵⁰⁴ As soon-to-be BUILD lead organiser Gerald Taylor explained:

I always tell people when you are building an organisation, when you are building for power and for your own long-term notion of governing and place, I really taught and pushed that we were always seeking to govern. That is we looked at ourselves as the equivalent of a governor or mayor in a particular geography.⁵⁰⁵

It would be almost impossible for BUILD to be part of citywide decision-making around vacants and housing without being in relationship with the mayor. Taylor’s grouping of IAF organisations like BUILD with executive branches of local government also points to facets of local government structure in Liverpool and Baltimore that were particularly relevant for the case studies examined here. In Britain during this period, such executive positions simply did not exist; that fact, combined with the neutrality of local government officers, created a political opportunity structure that drew strong community leaders onto the city council itself. BUILD’s determination to be another player with enough power to engage a mayor or governor, rather than seeking ways for its leaders to become part of a formal decision-making body, points to a more conflict-oriented local politics in which more access points to resource distribution made pressure group politics a worthwhile venture.

⁵⁰⁴ M. Miller, ‘BUILD: To get, use political power’, *The News American*, 19/12/83, 1A.

⁵⁰⁵ Taylor discussion, 17/2/14.

However, even if BUILD could not move forward on housing, it could be part of the city's decision-making structure when it came to the school system, another issue of great importance to its members. White flight and suburban growth had sapped Baltimore City Public Schools of much of their vitality; as the BCPS superintendent described the situation in the 1980s:

We had developed a few citywide schools with high-achieving students. But the majority are not. White exodus started. Then middle-class blacks began sending their children to private schools. The comprehensives [neighbourhood-based, non-magnet schools] lost their image of being community schools. There was a major morale problem there; they felt like second-class citizens.⁵⁰⁶

In order to act on this issue, BUILD would have to establish a relationship with the school system administration. Conveniently for the goal of 'getting in the arena with...the Greater Baltimore Committee', education would also prove to be a relatively neutral issue through which it could begin to establish a working relationship with the GBC.

Establishing a relationship with the school system meant establishing a relationship with Alice Pinderhughes. In January 1984, BUILD had grounds for getting her attention. A several months-long BUILD investigation into reports of supply shortages disclosed 'gross inequities' between different schools across the city, including acute shortages of paper (both for writing and for lavatories), cassette players, film projectors, and typewriters at some schools.⁵⁰⁷ However, rather than confront the school system over the disparities via a large public action, as they had with Provident and other local banks, BUILD leaders decided to use the issue as a springboard into conversations with Pinderhughes. Knowing that she faced some suspicions within the school system, BUILD chose to present itself as a potential ally to Pinderhughes first, rather than moving directly into confrontation.

⁵⁰⁶ Alice Pinderhughes quoted in Boyte, 111.

⁵⁰⁷ BUILD Archive, M. Miller, 'BUILD has earned respect', *The News American*, 22/3/84.

They were unsure how they would be received. At first, Pinderhughes was reluctant to believe their reports, but she was open to investigating the findings herself. When her own staff reported similar disparities, Pinderhughes was ‘horrified’—and moved quickly to rectify the error.⁵⁰⁸ Furthermore, she willingly credited BUILD with bringing the findings to her attention, and at a BUILD gathering in March pledged her

plans to work closely with the organisation and call on its members to join a coalition that will monitor problems in the school system and help set priorities on how and where money should be spent to aid education in the city.⁵⁰⁹

BUILD had its initial ‘in’ with Baltimore City Public Schools.

Establishing a partnership with the GBC would prove more difficult. Graf and BUILD jobs chairman Rev. Douglas Miles initially approached the GBC in October 1983 to attempt to begin a dialogue on minority unemployment and underemployment, based in part on research BUILD’s jobs committee had completed that suggested Baltimore firms were failing to hire or advance black workers.⁵¹⁰ The topic was a non-starter. It took the pair ten phone calls to the chairman of the board of the GBC to get a meeting scheduled with Keller, the GBC’s executive director, and in January he rebuffed further attempts at conversation, claiming that Miles had been ‘too confrontational’.⁵¹¹ Nevertheless, Graf and Miles persisted, reaching out in the spring of 1984 to the board’s incoming chairman, Alan Hoblitzell.

Jeff Valentine, the GBC’s public policy director and Keller’s right-hand man on the staff, described Hoblitzell as a ‘fascinating character’ who, ‘psychologically, morally, whatever his driver...cared’ about social issues in Baltimore.⁵¹² Hoblitzell was the president of Maryland National Bank, the largest bank in Baltimore at that time. According to the GBC’s informal caste system, by which banks and developers had the highest status amongst board members, this

⁵⁰⁸ Graf discussion, 25/11/13.

⁵⁰⁹ Miller, ‘BUILD has earned’.

⁵¹⁰ BUILD Archive, S. White, ‘Probe of firms’ hiring data urged’, *The News American*, 9/3/83.

⁵¹¹ BCA, BRG9-42-666, Letter from Douglas Miles to Richard Sullivan, 25/1/84.

⁵¹² Valentine discussion, 3/7/14.

made Hoblitzell amongst the most revered members of the GBC's board and thus one of the most powerful men in Baltimore.⁵¹³ Still, he also wanted Baltimore's corporate leaders 'to be aware of and sensitive to the needs of minority groups.'⁵¹⁴ Hoblitzell responded positively to Graf and Miles' request for a meeting, and despite officially telling the rest of the board that he would keep them at arm's length from the GBC, was sufficiently interested by the possibility of working with BUILD to continue meeting with the pair in a 'personal capacity' for several months.⁵¹⁵

If Hoblitzell was wary about moving forward on the employment issue—he wanted to steer clear of 'quotas, track programmes, things that seemed to invade the way people ran their businesses'—Graf and Miles were willing to be flexible for the sake of forging a relationship with the corporate community.⁵¹⁶ After a series of conversations, in a last ditch effort to keep Hoblitzell from walking out of what would be his last meeting with Graf and Miles if they could not come to an agreement, Graf threw out the possibility of their two organisations working on 'something for the kids.'⁵¹⁷ Education was already squarely on the GBC agenda as well as BUILD's, making it a sensible issue on which to attempt to move forward together. Furthermore, education was a relatively 'neutral' issue, in part because neither the businessmen nor the clergy could claim an edge of expertise in that arena. Graf's suggestion got Hoblitzell's attention, and after several more conversations Graf and Miles managed to convince him that a programme begun in Boston might be worth replicating, in a modified form, in Baltimore.

In Boston, under what was known as the Boston Compact, some two hundred businesses reserved hundreds of entry-level jobs for Boston Public Schools graduates who

⁵¹³ Ibid.

⁵¹⁴ Hoblitzell quoted in Boyte, *Commonwealth*, 120.

⁵¹⁵ GBC Archive, Board of Directors meeting minutes, 8/2/85, ¶2.

⁵¹⁶ Hoblitzell quoted in Boyte, *Commonwealth*, 120.

⁵¹⁷ Douglas Miles, in discussion with the author, 7/8/14.

demonstrated an ability to read and write at a minimum standard.⁵¹⁸ Linking skill acquisition to actual jobs and requiring tangible results from both the school system and the corporate community were the programme's key innovations that BUILD hoped to replicate in Baltimore. In late January 1985, BUILD publicly announced that it was working with Hoblitzell and Mathias DeVito, the CEO of the country's largest publicly development company, the Baltimore-based Rouse Corporation, on a similar agreement for Baltimore, whereby graduating seniors from BCPS would receive job seeking training and preferential access to positions with local companies.⁵¹⁹

Shortly thereafter, on 8 February, Hoblitzell disclosed to the GBC board that he had in fact been meeting with BUILD leaders for several months around the concept and asked for their advice on a similar programme in Baltimore. Hoblitzell emphasized that 'the program has nothing to do with creating jobs since the jobs the students will be applying for already exist' and the idea that the program would put pressure on schools, not on businesses, 'to ready students for the working world.' The GBC would set standards for students who would receive the preferential hiring and recruit businesses to participate on a volunteer basis. The pitch worked, and Hoblitzell 'received consensus support for GBC involvement.'⁵²⁰ A group of BUILD leaders and GBC staff made a joint trip to Boston to learn more about that city's model in March 1985, and, in a remarkable demonstration of a power to assemble resources and create new coalitions, on 24 April 1985 BUILD, along with the GBC and BCPS, announced their own 'Baltimore Commonwealth' agreement at Brown's Memorial Church in front of about 1,000 BUILD congregants and elected officials.⁵²¹ The agreement almost faltered at the last minute around whether or not an 85 average should be one of the requirements for graduates to receive

⁵¹⁸ BCA, BRG9-42-714. W. Greider, 'Computers in the Ghetto', *Rolling Stone*, 3/2/83.

⁵¹⁹ BUILD Archive, M. Fletcher, 'BUILD wants a job for each graduate,' *The Evening Sun*, 30/1/85.

⁵²⁰ GBC Archive, Board of Directors meeting minutes, 8/2/85, ¶2

⁵²¹ M. Fletcher, 'Pact BUILDS market for city school grads', *The Evening Sun*, 25/4/85, A1; M. Evans, 'Passport' plan to help graduates find jobs', *The News American*, 24/4/85, 1A.

the ‘passport’ that would give them preferential hiring privileges at participating firms. Keller believed he would be able to convince the GBC to skip the requirement for a certain grade average as long as students obtained their diplomas. When he was not able to do so, BUILD leaders, remembering the IAF training that emphasised pragmatism over hard lines, agreed to reinsert the grade requirement at the last minute—and in so doing demonstrated a willingness to compromise that helped to cement the organisation’s relationship with Keller.⁵²²

BUILD’s success in bringing together the partners that made up the Baltimore Commonwealth is all the more notable for the fact that it was a feat that not even the Schaefer administration had been able to accomplish. The mayor himself had also been interested in the Boston programme, and two of his top deputies visited Boston in November 1983 to learn more about it. Upon their return, they attempted to incorporate some of its principles into the city’s own jobs programme for high school students, but they were unsuccessful in bringing the GBC on board. Referring to the Baltimore Commonwealth, Schaefer’s chief of staff wrote in a memo to the mayor, ‘As you know we have been trying to persuade GBC in this direction for ten years....Apparently BUILD was able to finally turn them on.’⁵²³

The programme itself got off to a slow start as students struggled to meet the attendance and grade requirements. Though the GBC had managed to sign 107 local firms onto the agreement in time for the graduating class of 1986, only 469 out of a total of 5,500 students met the passport requirements of 95 percent attendance in their last two years of high school and an 85 grade average.⁵²⁴ BUILD organisers were not surprised by the early results, however, and the BCPS staff person in charge of the Commonwealth Placement Office maintained that all parties

⁵²² Taylor discussion, 17/2/14.

⁵²³ BCA, BRG9-42, Memo from Marion Pines to Mayor Schaefer, 11/4/85.

⁵²⁴ GBC: Board of Directors meeting minutes, 11/7/86, ¶E; K. Thomas, ‘Thousands of 12th-graders forfeit BUILD jobs’, *The Evening Sun*, 21/4/86, A1.

did not expect to see significant increases in the number of eligible students for several years.⁵²⁵

Meanwhile, BUILD members worked to broaden the Commonwealth's impact by bringing more parties into the process of its design and implementation. The goal of the Commonwealth was 'to stimulate academic and support activities throughout the system', and in order to do so, the staff inside school buildings would have to become part of the effort.⁵²⁶ Taylor, BUILD's lead organiser, reached out to numerous teachers and administrators and established strong working relationships with the leaders of both the Baltimore Teachers Union (BTU) and the Public School Administrators and Supervisors Association (PSASA). Eventually, both groups elected to become formal members of BUILD, an achievement in bridge building in and of itself:

It was a unique relationship. The principals organisation and the teachers didn't really get along all that well, so we used to laugh I was the Kissinger, I had to go back and forth between teachers and the principals—but we had 'em in, and that was the key, and that gave us additional clout and leverage...⁵²⁷

With the personnel inside the schools so committed to the Commonwealth, BUILD members then felt prepared to begin reaching out to parents themselves. Using information and facilities provided by BTU members, BUILD members conducted a phone campaign to inform some 12,000 parents from the city's eleven 'zoned' secondary schools of the Commonwealth and, in April 1986, conducted a series of workshops with parents at each school.⁵²⁸ Believing that parent participation was crucial to improving student performance, BUILD facilitators held workshops that not only informed parents about the details of the Commonwealth Agreement, but also sought their input on how it could be improved and how the schools themselves could do a better job of preparing students to meet the Commonwealth requirements. By the summer of 1986, BUILD members and other Commonwealth participants were pressing the school board to accept their ideas for a new 'co-ownership' model of the city's zoned secondary schools by

⁵²⁵ Taylor discussion, 17/2/14; 'Only 469 of 5,500', *The Baltimore Sun*, 22/4/86.

⁵²⁶ BCA: BRG9-42. Commonwealth Agreement, 24/4/85, p. 2.

⁵²⁷ Taylor discussion, 17/2/14.

⁵²⁸ Thomas, 'Thousands of 12th-graders'.

parents, teachers, and administrators, as well as recommendations on the adoption of a new curriculum.⁵²⁹

At the same time, Graf, now on the regional staff of BUILD's parent organisation, worked to bring area colleges and universities under the Commonwealth banner. The effort paid off, and in June 1986 BUILD—continuing to demonstrate its power to amass resources and grow coalitions—announced the expansion of the Commonwealth to include pledges from twelve regional higher education institutions to put together four-year financial aid packages for Commonwealth students who met their admissions criteria.⁵³⁰ With the combination of new incentives and new participants, as well as the initiation of some processes to bring together often antagonistic parties to collaborate on improving the city's zoned secondary schools, the parties to the original agreement hoped to steadily increase the number of graduates who would meet the Commonwealth's requirements.⁵³¹

The Baltimore Commonwealth was unique for the unusual partnerships it forged and for creating relationships essential to the more ambitious systematic reforms that would be attempted (also under the banner of the Commonwealth) under a new mayoral administration. By 1986, the parties to the agreement included the GBC, BCPS administrators, principals, teachers, parents, and the region's most prominent colleges and universities, as well as BUILD. As the catalyst for the Commonwealth and as the force that continued to bring new stakeholders into its orbit, BUILD continued to rise in prominence on the Baltimore political scene. However, the organisation remained alienated from City Hall because of the rift with Mayor Schaefer. Schools offered a unique opportunity to work on publicly significant decisions without

⁵²⁹ BUILD Archive, K. Thomas, 'Tonight they start BUILDing better schools for top students', *The Evening Sun*, 5/6/86.

⁵³⁰ BUILD Archive, K. Thomas, '12 schools to give some city grads a financial-aid edge', *The Evening Sun*, 4/6/86.

⁵³¹ Indeed, the numbers qualifying for the Commonwealth passport did increase each year—in part because of the efforts to involve more stakeholders, but also in part because the GBC agreed to first lower the grade requirement, and then drop it all together.

the mayor because of the autonomy enjoyed by the school board and the superintendent—a feature of Baltimore’s political opportunity structure that created opportunities not available to the MCRC in Liverpool. Goals in other policy areas, notably housing, would require at least the semblance of a relationship with City Hall. As long as such a rift existed, BUILD would face difficulty expanding its policy portfolio. Knowing this—and knowing as well that Schaefer would likely pursue the governorship when his mayoral term ended—BUILD organisers used the creation of the Commonwealth agreement as a way back into talks with the mayor. BUILD members finally sat down for another meeting with Schaefer on 17 May 1985, a full year and a half since the fateful accountability forum on which their fledgling relationship had faltered.

Graf, Taylor, and the BUILD clergy sought little more than the mayor’s blessing on the Commonwealth effort; they relied on Superintendent Pinderhughes and powerful allies in the Maryland state senate to secure the meeting.⁵³² Schaefer was quick to express that he only agreed to sit down with the organisation because of these relationships; he conveyed that the BUILD accountability forum had been the ‘worst experience of his political life’, that he was ‘very upset that ministers were involved in setting it up’, and that he didn’t know whether or not he supported the Commonwealth effort. However, he also acknowledged that he was ‘glad to get his feelings out’ and that he would support the agreement if it turned out that it produced better results from the schools.⁵³³ While the meeting was thus extremely tense and of little immediate practical significance, it once again established the most tenuous of communication channels between BUILD and Baltimore’s political king. When BUILD embarked on its most ambitious foray into Baltimore’s political process yet—introducing the ‘BUILD agenda’ in time for the 1987 mayoral election—Schaefer would be convinced to appear at the BUILD convention in which the agenda was first presented, and announce that he would, if reluctantly, work with the

⁵³² Taylor discussion, 17/2/14.

⁵³³ BCA, BRG9-42-666, ‘Mtg w/ BUILD’ and ‘BUILD’ [two different accounts of same meeting], 17/5/85.

organisation from Annapolis.⁵³⁴ BUILD had demonstrated enough ‘power to’ to gain recognition from the individual who was now Maryland’s most important political figure.

Entering the political arena: the BUILD agenda

In the months prior to the 1987 city council election in Liverpool, members of the Anti-Cuts Campaign had decided, ‘If you can’t beat ’em, join ’em’ (see p. 161). That is, that they would run for the city council themselves, because they saw doing so as the best strategy for guaranteeing the funds and implementing the consultative measures they believed were necessary to a thriving voluntary sector. In part because of the unusual nature of the 1987 elections in Liverpool, with their 59 contested council seats, the campaigners and their allies were extraordinarily successful in not only getting elected to the council, but obtaining chairs and deputy chairs of key committees and sub-committees, where much of the council’s decision making in fact took place. 1987 was also a significant election year in Baltimore. In both cities, the departure of strong individual leaders who favoured unilateral action—Tony Byrne in Liverpool and William Donald Schaefer in Baltimore—from the local scene created a shift in political opportunity structure that groups looking to create a more inclusive decision-making structure could take advantage of. BUILD, however, approached the election not as an opportunity to launch its own candidates, but as a mechanism for solidifying its own position as an independent political power player.

The successful creation of the Baltimore Commonwealth catapulted BUILD to a new level of prominence within the city’s political and governing circles. Even if the programme was off to a slow start in terms of the number of students placed into jobs, building a resource-rich coalition of the BCPS, the GBC, the Baltimore Teachers Union, the PSASA, and a number of the city’s most prominent black churches under one banner, working on a common cause, was

⁵³⁴ P. Davis, ‘Schaefer gives cool reception to BUILD’, *The Baltimore Sun*, 17/11/86, D1.

recognized as a major achievement. The Commonwealth received extensive local and regional press coverage, in which BUILD received credit for being the catalyst of the unusual arrangement.⁵³⁵ Politicians took notice: at its 1985 convention, six months after the public announcement of the Commonwealth agreement, BUILD welcomed two gubernatorial candidates, two U.S. Senate candidates, and two sitting members of Maryland's delegation to Congress alongside a sizeable group of state and local politicians. It also welcomed more member institutions—an impressive 45 churches, two labour organisations, and one public housing association.⁵³⁶ After showcasing the Commonwealth in the first half of the convention, each politician pledged his or her 'support to BUILD and to the group's agenda of more jobs and better education.'⁵³⁷

The next challenge for Graf, Taylor, and the BUILD organisation would be to translate this prominence into the sort of political clout that would force Baltimore's governing elite to incorporate the group into publicly significant decisions that required the involvement of City Hall. The 1987 mayoral election offered a perfect opportunity for them to do so. The election could not help but be a significant one in the city's political history: the winner would be the first elected black mayor of Baltimore, a major milestone in a city that was 55 percent African-American and, despite its history as a cradle of African-American culture and religious institutions, had gone longer than many majority black American cities without electing a black mayor.⁵³⁸ Furthermore, it would be the first mayoral election after the Schaefer era, since Schaefer had successfully run for governor of Maryland in 1986.

⁵³⁵ For example: M. Fletcher, 'BUILD wants a job for each graduate', *The Baltimore Evening Sun*, 30/1/85; 'Making Schools Pay', *The Baltimore Sun*, 30/4/85, A8; 'Program Encourages Education', *The Washington Post*, 3/7/86, A5; A. Goldstein, 'BUILD eyes aid, incentives for the college bound', *The Baltimore Sun*, 17/4/86.

⁵³⁶ P. Davis, 'Politicians turn out for BUILD', *The Baltimore Sun*, 4/11/85, D1.

⁵³⁷ BUILD Archive, A. Langley, 'BUILD flexes its political muscle', *The News American*, 4/11/85.

⁵³⁸ P. Valentine, 'Baltimore Mayoral Race Heats Up', *The Washington Post*, 5/1/87, B1.

The two candidates—interim mayor Clarence ‘Du’ Burns and state’s attorney Kurt Schmoke—presented a marked contrast in style and background. Burns was a wily politician out of Baltimore’s Eastside Democratic Club and styled himself as the working man’s candidate; he himself had climbed from a janitorial position in a local high school to president of the city council with only a high school degree. On the city council, he took credit for ‘marshaling the votes and...keeping the forces in line’ to facilitate the Schaefer renaissance, and he promoted his close affiliation with the newly elected governor.⁵³⁹ Schmoke, by contrast, had his political base in the city’s more middle-class west side, and with his impeccable education, good looks, and social graces, could embody the aspirations of Baltimore’s African-American population while speaking the language of its mostly white upper middle class. While Schmoke did not seek to make an outright attack on Schaefer’s legacy, his campaign did promise a change in the thrust of the city’s political energies, applying the language of renaissance to the city’s school system and neighbourhoods rather than to the downtown and Inner Harbor.⁵⁴⁰ It was widely known that Schmoke and Schaefer’s relationship was cool at best, and the former duly emphasised the importance of Baltimore’s having an ‘advocate’ independent from the governor in the mayor’s office.⁵⁴¹

Furthermore, Schmoke stood ready to embrace BUILD as a governing partner. Inspired by what Henry Cisneros, the first Mexican-American mayor of San Antonio, had been able to achieve with Communities Organised for Public Service (COPS), another IAF affiliate, Schmoke believed that BUILD could be a valuable governing partner before he was ever approached by the organisation itself:

It was pretty clear to me that we were going to be resource constrained in Baltimore when I became mayor, and that one way of responding to that was by

⁵³⁹ Valentine, ‘Baltimore Mayoral Race’, B1, B5.

⁵⁴⁰ A. LoLordo & M. Ollove, ‘Schmoke pledges neighborhoods aid, more for education’, *The Baltimore Sun*, 23/3/87, D1.

⁵⁴¹ Wasserman discussion, 21/2/14; Valentine, ‘Baltimore Mayoral Race’, B5.

having a motivated citizenry of people that were gonna do work for themselves rather than wait for government to do so...I ran thinking that this is going to be an important relationship to have that would be beneficial for the city, so I wanted to embrace the BUILD/IAF agenda.⁵⁴²

That is, as Stone (1989) would have predicted given his study of governing in Atlanta, Schmoke wanted a positive relationship with BUILD because of the resources it could assemble, not out of some desire for fair procedures and inclusive decision-making for their own sake—the grounds on which the Anti-Cuts Campaign based its work. By contrast, and not surprisingly given his close affiliation with Schaefer, Burns took a more cautious approach to a relationship with BUILD.

For its part, BUILD was unabashed in publicly proclaiming its desire to be recognised as a force to be reckoned with in city governance, ‘an independent organization that could participate as an equal partner with business and government on behalf of the poor and powerless.’⁵⁴³ According to Graf, elections—particularly ones in which the outcome was not certain—presented unique opportunities to broad-based organisations. These opportunities did not take the shape of BUILD leaders running for office themselves, as Anti-Cuts participants did in Liverpool, but rather of a chance to secure commitments from candidates both on issues and on their willingness to consult regularly with the organisation’s members. They also ‘exercised’ the organisation, forcing it to make renewed efforts to knock on doors and reach out to individuals, and potentially created means by which to ‘punish’ candidates who were unwilling to acknowledge or agree with the organisation’s platform:

It’s an opportunity to show that you have some capacity to either reward or punish, because in politics if you don’t have that capacity...after awhile you’re not taken very seriously...so they’re a way to show political relevancy.⁵⁴⁴

⁵⁴² Kurt Schmoke, in discussion with the author, 13/2/14.

⁵⁴³ A. Graf and C. Reckling, ‘BUILD’s agenda for a struggling city’, *The Baltimore Evening Sun*, 20/1/87, A10.

⁵⁴⁴ Graf discussion, 7/1/14.

However, despite the large turnouts, the membership numbers, and the issue victories, no one was quite sure what BUILD's actual capacity to 'punish' might be—even if it did manage to engage or register a large number of voters, would it actually hold any sway over how they—or even the congregants at their own member churches—voted on election day? This uncertainty proved useful to BUILD.⁵⁴⁵ The *Sun* editorial board compared candidates' responses to BUILD to a person who does not believe in the efficacy of prayer but nevertheless prayed just in case they were wrong; candidates made the calculation that it was wiser to treat BUILD as if its actions mattered a great deal rather than wait until after election day to determine if this was actually the case.⁵⁴⁶

Like all IAF affiliates, BUILD staunchly refused to endorse candidates—a stance for which it often took heat from those running for office, given that many of the African-American candidates for various municipal offices often came out of BUILD churches.⁵⁴⁷ For the 1987 election, though, BUILD wanted to stake out clearer political territory than it had when Schaefer dominated the city's politics. But rather than choose an actual candidate to endorse, the organisation chose to present its own 'candidate' in the form of a six-point anti-poverty agenda, which it would then ask its institutions' members and other voters to 'endorse' with their signatures. And in an effort to flex political muscle, BUILD promised to garner no less than 75,000 signatures for its candidate—more than twice the number of votes by which Burns had won his last election for the city council presidency.⁵⁴⁸ Given the small size of Liverpool's minority population, the MCRC could never have hoped to garner such a large number of signatures in support of its agenda; the Anti-Cuts Campaign, though also a 'broad-based

⁵⁴⁵ 'Part of BUILD's mystery is that no politician can yet determine the consequences of not dealing with BUILD. It is an organization in the making, not yet where it might eventually be.' – Ollove, 'BUILD influence', D2.

⁵⁴⁶ BUILD Archive, 'BUILD and the Politicians', *The Baltimore Sun*, 19/11/86.

⁵⁴⁷ Taylor discussion, 17/2/14.

⁵⁴⁸ R. Hilson, 'BUILD to enter mayor's race', *The Baltimore Evening Sun*, 17/11/86, D1; 'Racial voting patterns by district', *The Baltimore Sun*, 15/9/83, A5.

organisation' with black and white members across the city, never attempted to translate that reach into concrete evidence of potential electoral reach.

The actual content of the BUILD agenda was ambitious, and probably unattainable. It included items ranging from bringing average class sizes in Baltimore City schools down to 25 students to a financing a minimum of 1,000 new low-income homeowners a year to the development of a full employment plan aimed at reducing unemployment by 50 percent each year over the next four years.⁵⁴⁹ When it was presented to governor-elect Schaefer at BUILD's 1986 convention, he gave it a cool reception, calling it 'not totally realistic'.⁵⁵⁰ Still, he also called the convention the largest non-political gathering he had ever seen, and pledged to work with the group once he was in Annapolis—a pledge that delegates to the '86 convention celebrated as a major victory in and of itself, considering that up until that point the organisation had barely been able to nab a meeting with Schaefer after the 'set up' of the 1983 accountability forum.⁵⁵¹ In an editorial published in the *Sun* in January 1987, Graf and new BUILD president Carol Reckling defended the agenda as attainable 'if the city had the political will' and pledged to spend the election season creating that political will.⁵⁵² In any event, the organisation's willingness to put forward concrete policy proposals gave its positions a bite that the more amorphous positions of groups like the NAACP and the Urban League lacked and demonstrated more thought on issues of citywide importance than did the Black Caucus and Anti-Cuts Campaign during Liverpool's '87 election.⁵⁵³

Candidates Burns and Schmoke had their first opportunity to respond to the BUILD agenda several months later, in May. Their responses were predictable. Burns found the agenda's goals laudable, but 'essentially unrealistic because the city government couldn't afford it';

⁵⁴⁹ Graf and Reckling, 'BUILD's agenda', A10.

⁵⁵⁰ Davis, 'Schaefer gives cool reception', D3.

⁵⁵¹ L. Leff, 'Schaefer, Coalition Square Off', *The Washington Post*, 17/11/86, B1.

⁵⁵² Graf and Reckling, 'BUILD's agenda', A10.

⁵⁵³ M. Ollove, 'BUILD influence in political arena gaining attention', *The Baltimore Sun*, 8/6/87, D2.

Schmoke, by contrast, ‘pledged support to the entire BUILD agenda’.⁵⁵⁴ In addition to presenting the candidates their agenda, BUILD leaders also asked the candidates to make a trip with them to East Brooklyn, where BUILD’s sister organisation had recently completed the construction of 1,100 new homes in the midst of an urban wasteland with the help of federal grants known as Nehemiah funding. BUILD’s organisers hoped to pull off a similar effort in Baltimore and knew that they would need the future mayor’s support in order to do so; indeed, they would also need the future governor’s support, which was part of why securing a commitment from Schaefer to meet with BUILD had been so important in November.⁵⁵⁵ Burns’ and Schmoke’s responses to this request mirrored their responses to the BUILD agenda: Burns declined the invitation while Schmoke accepted.

Over the course of the month of May, BUILD volunteers continued to gather signatures for their agenda. This, along with an intervention by BUILD’s clergy president, Rev. Douglas Miles, who had a long personal history with Burns, convinced Burns to make the journey to Brooklyn, as well.⁵⁵⁶ Television cameras and newspaper reporters accompanied the candidates on both trips, and both candidates were impressed by what they found. When BUILD held a follow-up candidates forum at the end of June, their efforts to gather signatures and convince the candidates of the feasibility of a Baltimore Nehemiah initiative were rewarded. Before the candidates spoke, different delegates brought forward both the number of ‘endorsements’ their church or organisation had secured for the BUILD agenda and the cheques for their membership dues and fundraising efforts. After this demonstration of voter reach (the BUILD agenda had received 55,000 endorsements by that point) and financial resources, the candidates

⁵⁵⁴ M. Ollove, ‘Mayoral candidates speak to 600 delegates of BUILD’, *The Baltimore Sun*, 1/5/87, B1.

⁵⁵⁵ Graf discussion, 7/1/14; Taylor discussion, 17/2/14.

⁵⁵⁶ Miles discussion, 7/8/14. That so prominent a BUILD leader would write the speech for one of the candidates to deliver to a BUILD audience—an action that BUILD’s organisers did not know he had taken—calls into question the extent to which BUILD’s leadership took a neutral approach to the election. It also points to the importance of individual relationships, or bridging social capital, in BUILD’s work to gain recognition and prominence.

stood up to make their addresses.⁵⁵⁷ Burns, in an about face, delivered a stirring speech—written by Miles—and came out strongly in favour of the agenda:

I must admit, when the agenda was first presented to me, I did not believe its goals were realistic. Then I remembered my name was ‘Du’ Burns, not ‘Can’t’ Burns...I come to confirm my commitment and the city’s commitment to the BUILD municipal agenda.⁵⁵⁸

The BUILD delegates assembled cheered his change of heart. Schmoke then made his way to the podium and, not surprisingly, reiterated his commitment to the agenda, though in slightly less exuberant terms than Burns had used.

The local press made much of Burns’ turnabout; ten days after the event, Burns also made his mayoral aide and BUILD co-founder Wendell Phillips his campaign chairman.⁵⁵⁹ When asked by reporters what had prompted his change of heart, his answer was simple: ‘I can count’ (referring to the presentation of signatures and money that had preceded his speech).⁵⁶⁰ Graf felt that Burns’ turnaround, specifically, earned BUILD a new level of recognition—“The guy who defied us, now was coming back and saying he would do it [commit to the agenda].”⁵⁶¹ Both Graf and Taylor felt that the second accountability night marked a victorious campaign, despite the work the organisation would still have to do to get the promised 75,000 signatures. Taylor described it as ‘the high point for me: we had won that battle, we had gotten this agenda adopted by both candidates, people could vote for whoever they wanted to vote for.’⁵⁶²

As it turned out, Schmoke would go on to win the election—though by less than 5,000 votes, a much smaller margin than polls had indicated earlier in the spring.⁵⁶³ Despite Schmoke’s earlier and more enthusiastic embrace of BUILD, Graf acknowledged that the tighter election

⁵⁵⁷ S. Banisky and M. Ollove, ‘With Schmoke on record favoring it, campaigning Burns also backs BUILD’, *The Baltimore Sun*, 1/7/87, D1.

⁵⁵⁸ Burns in Banisky and Ollove, “With Schmoke on record”, D1.

⁵⁵⁹ S. Banisky, ‘Phillips takes over Burns campaign, fires Henderson’, *The Baltimore Sun*, 11/7/87, A7.

⁵⁶⁰ Taylor discussion, 17/2/14.

⁵⁶¹ Graf discussion, 7/1/14.

⁵⁶² Taylor discussion, 17/2/14.

⁵⁶³ S. Banisky, ‘Schmoke Edges Out Burns’, *The Baltimore Sun*, 16/9/87, A1.

results may have ended up further boosting BUILD's reputation: the timing of his public about face made Burns' endorsement of the BUILD agenda appear to be the start of a surge in his poll numbers.⁵⁶⁴ Whether or not the BUILD agenda had actually shaped voter preferences and the ensuing election results mattered little, though, in light of the prominence that both candidates' attention and endorsement afforded the organisation. Between 1984 and 1986, BUILD demonstrated its capacity to form public relationships with a range of unlikely parties that could actually result in bending resources, public and private, toward lower and lower middle income individuals who typically exercised little influence in the distribution of such resources. That is, it demonstrated Stone's 'power to' accomplish its goals on a citywide stage. In 1987, it finally moved into Baltimore's political nerve centre by securing commitments for a working relationship from both of the city's mayoral candidates. Given the collection of relationships it had developed by the end of the 1987 election and the victories the organising work had produced, BUILD stood poised to be what it had sought to be from its inception: a legitimate player in the city's governance structure representing the interests of lower income communities. Whether it would be able to make the move from the political gadfly that Schaefer despised to the governing partner that Schmoke desired, however, remained to be seen.

Analysis and outcome

Between 1980 and 1987, members of the Black Caucus and Anti-Cuts Campaign in Liverpool and BUILD in Baltimore moved from being outsiders to insiders in their respective local political scenes. Groups in both cities could do so largely because of dramatic shifts in political opportunity structure, neither of which the groups had any role in engineering: the Militant- and Byrne-controlled Labour group on Liverpool's City Council was wiped out by the Law Lords' dismissal of the 47 'rates rebels' who had voted for an illegal budget, and Mayor

⁵⁶⁴ Graf discussion, 7/1/14.

Schaefer finally moved on from Baltimore to become Governor Schaefer in Annapolis. Such dramatic shifts are unusual in the political life of a city, and the vacuums they created provided opportunities for prepared individuals and pressure groups.

That Anti-Cuts campaigners would take advantage of the shift to run for office themselves, while BUILD would use it in order to cement its status as an independent political player to be reckoned with, reflected their divergent experiences with hostile political regimes. Under the Labour council that came into office in 1983, the Black Caucus and the Anti-Cuts Campaign after it had little ability to accomplish their own priorities, much less shape the city's agenda. Though they could widen the scope of their conflicts with the council and utilise relationships with council officers in such a way that allowed them to survive, they could accomplish neither their substantive aims (e.g., training programmes to address minority unemployment) nor their procedural ones (e.g., more consultative measures for voluntary groups). Furthermore, because of Militant's dominance of Labour party politics in this period via the District Labour Party, the Liverpool groups could not hope to exercise influence via party channels, either. And neither group was large enough to have any serious chance of engaging with the national bodies and civil service agencies that so significantly shaped local policy in Britain. By contrast, even when cut off from City Hall, BUILD could still act on its agenda and amass 'power to' by forming relationships and exercising influence with other significant resource holders. Both demonstrations of collective power, through dues collected and large turnouts at events, and the bridging social relationships of its leaders to key figures like Alan Hoblitzell and Du Burns enabled BUILD to be effective. Having achieved notable successes even with a figure as hostile as Schaefer in office, BUILD expected to be able to achieve even more under a Schmoke administration while still retaining its independent, informal status.

However, different approaches to elections were also rational responses to the different local government structures in each city. It was a far simpler task for BUILD to secure

commitments from two mayoral candidates than it would have been for the Anti-Cuts Campaign to attempt to secure commitments from every candidate for one of the 59 council seats up for grabs in Liverpool's 1987 election. While a strong mayor had created a challenge for BUILD when that mayor opposed the organisation, Baltimore's strong mayor structure created an opportunity for BUILD in a moment of political transition, because commitments honored by the new mayor could have a significant impact on city policy. The fact that Baltimore was a one-party town, in which the Democratic primary essentially determined who would be the next mayor, made BUILD's task that much more straightforward. In Liverpool, where the 1987 election represented a real struggle between Liberals and Labour, using the election as a time to secure commitments on future policy direction would have been far more complicated for the Anti-Cuts Campaign. Different local government structures meant that a group in one city could not necessarily wield strategies that enabled a group in the other city to be successful.

PART THREE: RESPONDING TO OPENNESS, 1987 - 1991

The new political rulers in both cities had markedly friendlier dispositions toward the case study groups and granted their members a high level of access to decision-making processes. While the conditions seemed ripe for golden eras of community power federations in both cities, neither Community Rights in Liverpool nor BUILD in Baltimore accomplished the full range of its goals. In Liverpool, ironically, the extent of the council's support and openness hampered Community Rights as a pressure group by depriving it of a meaningful adversary to organise against and by luring Community Rights' best leaders away from the organisation and onto the council itself. Indeed, the most notable feature of Community Rights in this period was its success in launching the local political careers of individual leaders. Thus, Liverpool's friendly council deprived Community Rights of what this thesis argues were two necessary elements for the pressure groups' success: an animating cause and strong leadership. The legacy of Community Rights, then, may be best considered with an examination of what those former Community Rights leaders did once they became councillors themselves. There, they found that even the concentrated resources and decision-making authority of the council had serious fiscal and political constraints that limited the extent to which they were able to achieve their equal opportunity and community development goals.

Meanwhile, in Baltimore BUILD was able to capitalise on its access to the new mayor to attempt even more ambitious projects than it had under Mayor Schaefer. However, it still had to reckon with the distribution of financial and decision-making resources in Baltimore, and so still had to go through the same process of coalition building with other resource holders in order to accomplish its goals. While that distribution of resources had created opportunities under a hostile mayor, it created burdens and fragilities under a friendly one. Though BUILD both posted several concrete 'victories' in the same period that Community Rights folded up, it too was hemmed in by the limitations and shifting preferences of its partners. Part Three, then, speaks clearly to the first and third sets of factors this thesis argues shaped pressure group success: the necessity of an animating cause and strong leadership in the first place, but the limitations of governing bodies that all the political access in the world cannot overcome.

Ch. 7, Liverpool and community development in power

In the period following the 1987 election, Community Rights, the organisation that took the place of the Anti-Cuts Campaign, completely collapsed. Stripped of dynamic leadership and without 'battles' around which to rally member organisations, the organisation floundered shortly after its inaugural gathering. In Baltimore, BUILD took advantage of a more hospitable political opportunity structure to expand its education portfolio and make a concerted attempt to address low-income housing with new sources of financing. In Liverpool, the shifted political opportunity structure proved favourable for the advancement of individual campaigners' careers

in local politics, and the campaigners did attempt to remedy some of the many problems that the various members of Community Rights wanted to address. However, no leadership and vision emerged around the project of building up a neighbourhood-oriented political counterweight to the council, despite brief flashes of a desire for such a body.

As councillors, the former campaigners worked to institutionalise and extend the consultative procedures that they themselves had been denied in the preceding years. In terms of increasing the influence of the community groups and neighbourhoods they came from, the councillors' greatest accomplishments were structural: creating committees that would pay more attention and be more responsive to those interests; increasing the representation of outside groups like voluntary associations on those committees and sub-committees; creating a major new forum for tenants to voice their concerns and participate in decision-making around housing. However, they demonstrated only a limited 'power to' marshal resources to initiate major policy projects, instead focusing on how to open up access to decision-making around how to use already existing resources. Such a decision reflected the limited scope of local government in Britain in terms of policy innovation.

The campaigners' relative dominance of the council was short-lived. By 1990, the Broad Left faction in the Labour Group was gaining in influence, and the political opportunity structure began to shift against the former Anti-Cuts campaigners. Keva Coombes, the Labour group leader that had been so friendly to them, was voted out, and several campaigners lost their committee chairs.⁵⁶⁵ By 1991, Broad Left members began to run as 'Ward Labour' candidates apart from the Labour slate, further complicating Labour's control of the council. Because of the Ward Labour candidates' willingness to collaborate with the Liberals, they could block the Labour group's agenda. By the May 1991 elections, then, any sense of a 'community development era' on the council was over. Though Labour still technically controlled the council,

⁵⁶⁵ Kilfoyle 255.

then, this chapter will limit its investigation to the period between the 1987 and 1991 local elections.

Community development in power

The political opportunity structure in Liverpool shifted dramatically in favour of the Anti-Cuts campaigners after the 1987 election. The day after Labour's victory at the polls, the *Echo* headline read, 'LABOUR VICTORY PURGE ON TROTS'. The article that followed suggested that the new Labour leadership was determined to leave behind the Militant ways of the recent past and proceed with a somewhat different attitude, and with less questionable loyalty to the national party. Despite Derek Hatton's jubilant appearance at the results announcement, senior councillor Keva Coombes insisted, 'Militant is a dead issue. We are back to a competent, caring city council.'⁵⁶⁶ Nevertheless, Militant did manage to see seven councillors elected, ensuring that though their influence may have been severely curtailed, it was not altogether erased (a factor that would become a more significant dynamic in later years).

However, the election had not changed the primary challenges facing the larger council, which informed its agenda and constrained its ability to act in ways that would be relevant to the former Anti-Cuts campaigners' agendas. Margaret Thatcher won her third term shortly after the new Labour group came to power in Liverpool; the city would again be rate-capped, and its Urban Programme grant would continue to fall by about £2 million per year, as it had since 1984.⁵⁶⁷ What to do about the city's hapless bin service, outstanding construction contracts, and school catchment areas in the face of dramatic population decline, all while maintaining the Labour line of 'no cuts in jobs and services', occupied more space in the press and in council committee meeting minutes than did questions about consultation for neighbourhood groups

⁵⁶⁶ Watson, 'Labour victory', 1, 16.

⁵⁶⁷ 'Urban programme—social projects down but voluntaries can bid', *Liverpool Link*, Spring '89, 1.

and procedural fairness.⁵⁶⁸ It was well known that the council had suffered from widespread inefficiencies for years, and early on in its tenure the new council commissioned a report from the Audit Commission to help it address its clunky structure and poor value for money in service provision.⁵⁶⁹ Furthermore, even the Labour group leader spoke openly of the need to attract more private investment to the city, with the closure of the Bird's Eye factory in 1989 and the loss of its 1,000 jobs serving as another dramatic reminder that Liverpool remained one of the poorest cities in Europe.⁵⁷⁰ Furthermore, while the 'forty-seven' may have been dismissed and barred from office, jostling between the 'Broad Left' caucus, in which Militant sympathizers found a home, and the 'Progressive Left' caucus dominated the Labour group.

Amongst the first decisions the new Labour group had to make were the selection of a council leader and committee chairs, and these selections would be the first litmus test of the group's commitment to a new style of doing business. At the Labour group meeting to elect a leader, moderate Harry Rimmer defeated hard left rival Tony Jennings by 31 votes to 20, and no Militant was elected to a leadership post.⁵⁷¹ Rimmer immediately made it clear that he intended to rid the city of its 'abrasive image' by conducting business both within the Labour group and the full council with the utmost politeness, and brought a consensus-oriented approach to decision-making in the Labour group.⁵⁷² However, as important as the selection of the leader would be the selection of the committee chairs, especially in terms of specific policy direction and implementation. The inexperience of so many of the Labour councillors meant that those in positions of influence would be all the more likely to go unchallenged (in the early days, John Hamilton was running workshops simply to help new councillors understand the basic

⁵⁶⁸ J. Watson, 'Voters don't give a XXXX for the election', *Liverpool Echo*, 3/5/88, 1.

⁵⁶⁹ 'Re-organised: Council backs people-power in reorganisation', *Liverpool Link*, 7/88, 4.

⁵⁷⁰ Kilfoyle, *Left Behind*, 222.

⁵⁷¹ J. Watson, 'Mister Cool', *Liverpool Echo*, 12/5/87, 4.

⁵⁷² J. Watson, 'Unleash Harry', *Liverpool Echo*, 16/5/87, 4.

procedures of their new role—few would be in a position to challenge their leaders). As Alan Dean, one of the new councillors, described the atmosphere:

It was the sharpest learning curve I've ever been through. It was unbelievably tense. We were all brand new. Every chair and deputy of the committees had been on the council a week. Most of them had never attended committee meetings.⁵⁷³

The newness of much of the Labour group created a favourable political opportunity structure for the former Anti-Cuts campaigners, because it also meant that first time councillors had an unusually open pathway to take the council reins in those areas where they had experience and a desire to lead. There was broad support on the council for implementing some positive action policies for women and minorities, and a 'new mind-set' that recognised that people had needs beyond the homes and gardens of Tony Byrne's Urban Regeneration Scheme and that was open to consultative mechanisms prevailed. However, the campaigners-turned-councillors benefitted more from the confusion that allowed them to take over key committee posts than from the arrival of any grand community agenda.⁵⁷⁴ Not surprisingly, given their backgrounds, the former Anti-Cuts campaigners did exceptionally well in this process: Vicky Roberts became the chair of environmental services, Gideon Ben-Tovim became the chair of education, and Liz Drysdale became the chair of the newly-formed equal opportunities committee (the formation of which also provided immediate evidence of this council's determination to differentiate its attitude in certain areas from its predecessor's). They also gained several deputy chairmanships: Peter Coventry on social services, Juliet Herzog on leisure services, and Ben-Tovim (again) on equal opportunities. Two more chairs went to councillors who were not part of the actual Community Rights campaign but come from voluntary sector backgrounds: Keith Hackett on leisure services, and Phil Hughes on housing. In their first year on the council, then, Anti-Cuts campaigners or their allies would occupy five of twelve

⁵⁷³ Cited in Kilfoyle, *Left Behind*, 194.

⁵⁷⁴ Dawn Booth, in conversation with the author, 17/7/13.

committee chairs.⁵⁷⁵ It was a dramatic shift from the situation just months previously, when much of the voluntary sector had been in open revolt against the council. Their representatives now had the access and decision-making power they had sought—in the case of the Black Caucus—for years, and those who had only months before circled Town Hall with a megaphone now claimed formal elected office.

In its first months in office, the most concrete action the council took to demonstrate a new relationship to the voluntary sector was to restore the funding of the time-expired Urban Programme projects—that is, to address the very issue that had prompted the Anti-Cuts Campaign in the first place. Exercising their newfound access to the council leadership, representatives from Community Rights met with Keva Coombes early in the summer to plead their case.⁵⁷⁶ Particularly for a group like the Vauxhall Neighbourhood Council (VNC), whose operations were still crippled by ten unfilled posts, the resolution of the funding question was critical.⁵⁷⁷ At a meeting of the full council on 24 June 1987, a motion to maintain funding for the groups impacted by time-expired grants through the end of the year gained all-party support; on 25 November, the Special Sub-committee on Urban Programme Projects decided to continue funding for most of the projects.⁵⁷⁸ Ironically, it was the VNC—one of the galvanising members of the Anti-Cuts Campaign—that had to wait for a final decision on its funding (perhaps because, as a large umbrella organisation, its grant was much larger than that of the other groups concerned). It too would finally receive good (permanent) news, but not until the following August.⁵⁷⁹ At least with respect to the funding question, the Anti-Cuts activists were able to purvey access and influence to council leadership into a victory under the new Labour council. It

⁵⁷⁵ 'Your Liverpool Councillors', *Liverpool Link*, 6/87, 8-9.

⁵⁷⁶ O'Gorman collection, Campaign summary, summer 1987.

⁵⁷⁷ Liverpool PRO, 'VNC Report to Liverpool City Council', 10/86, 4. 352 MIN/FIN II/1/150H.

⁵⁷⁸ 'Safe until December?', *Scottie Press*, 7/87, 1; Liverpool PRO, Minutes of the Special Sub-committee for Urban Programme Special Projects, 25/11/87. 352MIN/FIN II/1/150H.

⁵⁷⁹ 'VNC and Law Centre to Stay!!!', *Scottie Press*, 8/88, 1.

was a victory different from any that BUILD leaders would ever experience, since the Baltimore organisation operated entirely without public funding on principle.

The draft proposal for the council's next Urban Programme bid also demonstrated the shift in attitude that had taken place, even if the resulting shift in resources may have been limited by budget realities. Unlike Urban Programme expenditures under the Militant-controlled council, which were diverted as often as possible into the council's Urban Regeneration Strategy, the council elected in May 1987 chose to elevate two new 'strategic objectives' that seemed to further demonstrate the degree to which the campaigners had won the day: Equal Opportunities and Community Involvement, precisely the larger goals of the Community Rights campaign.⁵⁸⁰ The reasons given for these new objectives in the draft proposal likewise reflected the concerns of the campaign's agenda:

The former is intended as a recognition of the acute need for concerted action to tackle the severe economic and social disadvantage experienced by certain sections of the community, particularly the Black community. The latter is suggested as a demonstration of intent not to develop programmes in isolation. As well as supporting the programmes of community-based organisations, this should involve seeking ways to further promote community involvement in the development and implementation of council initiatives.⁵⁸¹

Thus, even if the absolute size of the grant was reduced, the voluntary groups like those involved in Community Rights campaign had something with which to hold the council accountable when they made their case for on-going Urban Programme funding: the language of the draft proposal allowed them to easily align their efforts with the new 'strategic objectives.' Unlike BUILD leaders, however, the groups would continue to negotiate for a share of strictly state-provided resources, rather than assembling their own resources from an array of actors.

⁵⁸⁰ Liverpool PRO, 'Report of the Director of the Central Strategy Unit' for a meeting of the Urban Programme Sub-Committee, 24/8/87, 1. 352MIN/FIN II/1/150G; Liverpool PRO, 'Report of the Chief Executive' for a meeting of the Urban Programme Sub-Committee, 12/1/88, 1. 352MIN/FIN II/1/150G.

⁵⁸¹ Liverpool PRO, 'Report of the Chief Executive', 12/1/88, 1.

It would be the following year though, after the 1988 election in which Labour secured five more seats en route to victory (a victory which ensured they would be in control of the council for two years, since there would be no local elections in 1989), the completion of the internal audit, and the subsequent reorganisation of the council that councillors and officers could really get to work implementing initiatives important to them. Among the newly elected councillors was long-time VNC director Marie McGiveron, whose more than a decade of experience interfacing with the council had prepared her well to seek out positions of influence—as soon as she arrived, she went straight to the Finance and Strategy Committee, because she rightly perceived it to be the most influential of the council committees:

One thing I always knew was that if you ever wanted control of anything, if you ever wanted power, you had to be where the money was, which was the finance. So I always wanted to be on the Finance Committee, because that's where everything had to get approved. If you're on the Finance Committee, you knew everything...there would be all the different committees, but if ever there was a financial implication, it had to go to the Finance Committee. And I already knew that, because of all the campaigning that we'd done in the past, and the fact that we always had to end up at Policy & Finance.⁵⁸²

The council's reorganisation was perhaps the most significant manifestation yet of its commitment to access to public decision-making for voluntary and community groups, a form of procedural fairness denied them under the Militant-influenced council. Most notably, Community Services and Neighbourhood Development became its own committee, and its first chair was Labour leader Keva Coombes. Key sub-committees that would be used by former Anti-Cuts campaigners and their sympathisers also appeared: Anti-Poverty under the Finance and Strategy Committee, Race under the new Personnel and Equal Opportunities Committee, Community under the Education Committee, and Tenant Involvement under the Housing Committee.⁵⁸³ Speaking to members of the voluntary sector at the Comtechsa annual general meeting, Coombes spoke of the 'mistakes made between 1983 and 1987' and assured his

⁵⁸² McGiveron discussion, 20/6/13.

⁵⁸³ 'Re-organised: Council backs people-power...', 4.

audience, ‘I believe those days have gone and aren’t going to come back again...’ This [the council reorganisation] really is perestroika!’⁵⁸⁴ Like mayor-elect Schmoke’s proclamation that the BUILD agenda was the city’s agenda in his first public address after Baltimore’s 1987 mayoral election⁵⁸⁵, Coombes’ words seemed to confirm to his listeners that they had moved into a position of regard and influence under their city’s new political masters. Furthermore, the former Anti-Cuts campaigners and their sympathisers once again lodged key positions within this new order: besides the Community Services and Neighbourhood Development committee, they held chairs or deputy chairs (and sometimes both) on five of the eight committees, including Finance & Strategy.⁵⁸⁶ This meant that the former campaigners were in a position to wield substantially more influence within the council than the old Black Caucus had via the Race Relations Liaison Committee. However, whether access and influence could be translated into the successful accomplishment of their goals remained to be seen.

The brief life of Community Rights

Having won respite from all existential threats, Community Rights could step back and consider its longer-term agenda, and what its purpose should be at the intersection of community groups and local politics. It began to develop a membership structure and drafted a ‘Community Charter’ with which it hoped to gain the support of a range of groups, not just those in the voluntary sector.⁵⁸⁷

In a draft proposal to establish the organisation, the leaders laid out a list of aims:

- To protect and seek to improve community facilities in the city, particularly those run by local people and those tackling discrimination.
- To fight for adequate and secure funding for community organisations and facilities.

⁵⁸⁴ ‘Keva cues friendly relations’, *Liverpool Link*, 7/88, 5. Comtechsa was an agency providing technical services to voluntary and community organisations in the city.

⁵⁸⁵ See p. 242.

⁵⁸⁶ ‘Re-organised: council backs people power...’, 4.

⁵⁸⁷ O’Gorman collection, Talk given to voluntary sector representatives, April 1987, 8.

- To ensure that communities have real consultation about their area and/or their concerns and that no decisions are taken without their full involvement. [*emphasis in original*]
- To promote community development.
- To help community organisations be more effective by providing education and training.
- To encourage the values of solidarity, mutual cooperation, and collective responsibility as against the pursuit of individual or bureaucratic self-interest.⁵⁸⁸

The original impetuses of the campaign around consultation and funding issues were still present, but the aims were also broadened to include the promotion of larger community development goals and collective values, as well as to continue to increase the say that people had in decisions concerning their neighbourhoods (though perhaps the aim of having ‘no decisions’ taken without the ‘full involvement’ of local people was over-ambitious, both in its expectations of the council’s capacity and of local people’s desire to be involved). These aims could largely be boiled down to one goal: to increase the capacity and influence—the power to—of voluntary organisations, especially neighbourhood-based and equality-oriented groups, in Liverpool. In its new form, Community Rights’ aims sounded increasingly like those of BUILD.

Indeed, early Community Rights leaders envisioned the organisation acting rather like another familiar power player in Liverpool: the unions. It ‘should have been like the union for the voluntary sector.’⁵⁸⁹ Early flyers advertising Community Rights to potential members tapped into the rights-based and solidarity language of unions, telling organisations:

You have a RIGHT to have a say in your future and to receive public support. Only by community and voluntary organisations working together to protect their rights can their distinctive and valuable contribution be continued.⁵⁹⁰

If the aims of Community Rights sounded increasingly like those of BUILD, the language it used to attract member organisations did not. Operating under the influence of IAF principles that recognised politics as conflict and clergy leaders who, coming out of the Civil Rights Movement,

⁵⁸⁸ O’Gorman collection, ‘Draft proposal to establish a Community Rights Campaign’, spring/summer 1987.

⁵⁸⁹ McGiveron discussion, 20/6/13.

⁵⁹⁰ O’Gorman collection, Liverpool Community Rights Association flyer, 2.

had learned that even the most basic rights had to be fought for in order to be secured, BUILD did not expect to have influence as a matter of 'right'. Rather, organisers taught leaders that a 'seat at the table' had to be earned by demonstrating a capacity to mobilise people and money. Furthermore, by the second half of 1987, Community Rights' claim that community and voluntary organisations could only be protected by banding together and working collectively was probably false, given the community-friendly orientation of the council and the presence of former Anti-Cuts campaigners in key council posts.

Amongst Community Rights' goals for 1987/88 was lobbying the council to set up 'a proper mechanism for community consultation.'⁵⁹¹ Without any full-time staff (and with the council dealing with its own relative degree of turmoil in 1987 and 1988), the organisation took some time to get on its feet. However, by winter 1989, it was sending out invitations to Community Matters, a half-day event at the Town Hall that was supposed to be the launch of a formal Community Rights Association.

In fact, Community Matters also proved to be the association's zenith. The workshop, jointly hosted by Community Rights and the city council (represented by Nigel Mellor), was intended to be the first major forum in which community organisations could give their input to the council's new working party on community development and elect representatives to serve both on the working party and as a steering committee for Community Rights.⁵⁹² It was supposed to be a sort of rallying point—'Make sure you attend this workshop to have your say!' read the invitation—around a developing piece of council policy as well as a solidifying moment for Community Rights as an organisation. Held on 10 May 1989, two years after the 'new' Labour group had taken over on the council and one year after the council's major reorganisational effort, the event did enjoy a strong turnout from community and voluntary

⁵⁹¹ O'Gorman collection, 'Liverpool Community Rights Campaign Priorities, 1987/88'.

⁵⁹² O'Gorman collection, Invitation to Community Matters workshop, 10/5/89.

groups across Liverpool, with 41 groups on the final registration list.⁵⁹³ The groups were divided into four different regions (north inner and outer, and south inner and outer), each of which elected two representatives to serve on the Community Rights steering committee; the entire gathering elected eight further representatives to the council's working party on community development.⁵⁹⁴

The workshop proved to be utterly uncontroversial. The consolidated list of demands it drew up for the council's community development working party focused on facilities, training, and consultation mechanisms.⁵⁹⁵ These turned out to be demands the council was happy to accommodate. As one of the regional representatives described the first meeting of the council's community development working party:

We found that many of the suggestions we put forward then [at the Community Matters workshop] were included in the policy declared by the Council at this first meeting. In fact, our policies were almost identical.⁵⁹⁶

Considering the composition of the working party—its members included the chairs of the Finance and Housing Committees, both of whom had backgrounds in the voluntary sector, as well as numerous other community development allies like Mellor—it is perhaps unsurprising that the policies were 'almost identical'. Indeed, so favourably was the Community Rights Association viewed by the council that it was chosen to become part of the formal machinery through which 'community consultation' would take place. The Community Rights Association became largely funded by the city council, which paid the salary of its first full-time worker beginning in early 1990.⁵⁹⁷

When bank managers had been too willing to comply with BUILD's demands around mortgage lending in 1981, BUILD lead organiser Arnie Graf concluded that they were 'in

⁵⁹³ O'Gorman collection, Community Matters List of Registered Participants and Workshop Allocations.

⁵⁹⁴ T. Pritchard, 'Community Rights', *Scottie Free Press*, December 1989, 5.

⁵⁹⁵ O'Gorman collection, Community Matters list of demands, 10/5/89.

⁵⁹⁶ Pritchard, 'Community Rights', 5.

⁵⁹⁷ Pritchard, 'Community Rights', 5.

trouble' because, as he explained, 'the other side does the organising for you'⁵⁹⁸—a sense of a shared struggle can help to build *esprit de corps* and solidarity within an organisation, and can stoke members' and potential members' passions by convincing them they are striving for a just cause. What happened next with Community Rights suggests that Graf was wise to rankle Baltimore's banks. For with seemingly all the resources it needed to flourish, 70 organisations enlisted as members, and a council ready to support it, the Community Rights Association fizzled.⁵⁹⁹ It had no adversaries to rail against, no galvanising cause to animate members and potential members. Tom Pritchard, one of the North Inner area reps, promised to write regular updates on the Association's progress in the *Scottie Press*, Vauxhall's community newspaper, but his first report in December 1989 never had any follow ups. Campaigners-turned-councillors, campaigners who remained in the voluntary sector, and council officers with the community liaison unit all confirmed that nothing much happened after the full-time worker was appointed; no one could bring to mind a single initiative or effort to recount. The only evidence of Community Rights to be found in Liverpool's City Council records from the period refers to a representative from the organisation that sat on the Tenant Participation Unit.⁶⁰⁰

Several people suggested that part of the problem lay with the weak leadership of the full-time worker herself, who, though earnest, lacked the necessary charisma and vision to transform the organisation into an active force.⁶⁰¹ Marie McGiveron, whose own prodigious energy led her to ascend to multiple committee chairmanships and play an integral role in the expansion of the Community Liaison Unit, suggested that once established, Community Rights lacked energy and a battling spirit, and became too much a part of the establishment it was supposed to be ready to oppose: 'It did fizzle out, and it became part of the system... You gotta

⁵⁹⁸ See p. 177.

⁵⁹⁹ Pritchard, 'Community Rights', 5.

⁶⁰⁰ Liverpool PRO, 'Working Party—Tenant Participation Unit, 1/6/89'. 352MIN/HOU/9/21C.

⁶⁰¹ Mellor discussion, 19/6/13; McGiveron discussion, 20/6/13; O'Gorman, written correspondence with the author.

be able to fight the council and fight decisions....it lost its *fire*.⁶⁰² Pauline Connolly, another VNC worker, agreed, and argued that the turning point came when Community Rights became a council-funded initiative:

The people in that Community Rights campaign, they were funded by the council. So then when we as voluntary groups would go and say, “What are you gonna do about this? What are you gonna do about that?” they weren’t taking up the battle line anymore. It was ‘biting the hand that feeds you’, that type of thing. So they weren’t as responsive as it was previously.⁶⁰³

In other words, the very help and support the council extended may have harmed Community Rights, because it was left with nothing it had to fight for; indeed, not even its own existence was imperilled. Furthermore, the fact that the council financially supported the organisation made it less likely, at least in the eyes of some members, to hold the council accountable—part of the reason that IAF affiliates refuse to take public funds for operating expenses. While this may have made little material difference to voluntary and community organisations as long as the council was well-disposed toward them, it left them back where they had started when the Militant-directed council had first attempted to slash their grant aid: without a platform for concerted action, and without a recourse to an influential non-conciliar body. As Connolly’s comments illustrate above, there indeed were times when the council did not act as the voluntary sector would have hoped (though the extent to which a strong Community Rights Association would have been able to alter harsh fiscal realities was possibly quite limited). Furthermore, there could be a danger that even the most community-oriented of councillors might lose touch with their roots and might come to resent community input rather than welcome it. Paul Edwards, the community worker who had been involved with the Anti-Cuts Campaign from its inception, recalled:

I remember I was involved in something called Communities Against Poverty initiative, trying to tackle poverty issues; the council was geared up with its Anti-

⁶⁰² McGiveron discussion, 20/6/13.

⁶⁰³ Pauline Connolly, in discussion with the author, 20/6/13.

Poverty Strategy, and I'll never forget, oh God Almighty...The community wanted to take the council on about something to do with some poverty angle, and the councillors cornered me. I remember, I got pulled in by Marie [McGiveron] and Frank Pindy, and I'd been a colleague with them in different circumstances, but [they told me], 'Don't you be fuckin organising around poverty against *us*...And to me that's power corrupts; it's what happens when people get power, and I just—wow.'⁶⁰⁴

So after a 'lovely start', Community Rights missed its opportunity to become a body that could check councillors. As Graf recognised when he chose to cultivate the excitement of a 'movement' in Baltimore before attempting to create an organisation, it is easier to recruit people to a battle than to a meeting—or a long series of meetings. There were no fortresses for Community Rights to storm by the time it became a formal body; instead, it found that its allies had already slipped into the castle and let down the drawbridge. The permeability of the local political system once Militant was deposed precluded the need for further revolutionaries in Liverpool, and without a rallying cry, Community Rights quietly slipped into oblivion.

Official power: working through the city council

What, then, did the former Community Rights campaigners do once they were insiders, with access to and control over the council's decision-making structures, and the latitude the council gave them in pursuing the resources they had sought since the beginning of the decade?

The equality agenda of the old Black Caucus, now well represented by Liz Drysdale and Gideon Ben-Tovim as councillors, was implemented most completely under the new political opportunity structure. Ben-Tovim described the change in council leadership after 1987 as a 'fresh start for the equality agenda', and he and Drysdale demonstrated the most power to produce tangible outcomes from the old Anti-Cuts agenda while holding their council positions.⁶⁰⁵ From their perches as deputy chair and chair of the Race Sub-Committee of the Personnel and Equal Opportunities Committee, he and Drysdale were given 'quite a good free

⁶⁰⁴ Edwards discussion, 9/4/13.

⁶⁰⁵ Ben-Tovim discussion, 23/4/13.

rein' to develop a positive action training scheme that would actively recruit and train minorities for council jobs, thus aiming to directly address the longstanding disparity between the percentage of Liverpool's population that belonged to an ethnic minority and the percentage of its council workforce that did so.⁶⁰⁶ In 1987, when the first Community Rights members moved into council positions, the council's workforce of 30,410 people included only 490 blacks, meaning that black Liverpoolians constituted a mere 1.6 percent of the council's workforce.⁶⁰⁷ The sub-committee accepted a report on positive action training on 3 October 1988 and moved immediately to implement its recommendations—a marked contrast to the many stalled efforts of the Black Caucus under the Race Relations Liaison Committee, as well as to BUILD leaders' total inability to engage the GBC board of directors on any scheme to address minority underemployment in Baltimore.⁶⁰⁸ When the necessary resources resided entirely within the city council, the former Liverpool campaigners could act on their agenda far more quickly than BUILD leaders could act on theirs.

In the same month that the Race Sub-Committee began to move on positive action training, Drysdale and Ben-Tovim also pushed through the council a proposal to set up an inquiry investigating policing and social conditions for Liverpool's minorities. Labour peer Lord Gifford, QC, oversaw the investigation, and the resulting report castigated previous councils for their failure to support equal opportunities initiatives within its own workforce and address the dire employment situation for black Liverpoolians.⁶⁰⁹ Like the evidence of the all-Party Parliamentary Select Committee in 1980 that helped lead to the creation of the Race Relations Liaison Committee⁶¹⁰, the Gifford report's findings provided further impetus for the Race Sub-

⁶⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁷ A. Dunn, 'Gifford says racism "built into" Liverpool', *The Guardian*, 19/7/89, 5.

⁶⁰⁸ Liverpool PRO, Minutes of the Race Sub-Committee of the Personnel and Equal Opportunities Committee, 3/10/88, ¶1. 352MIN/PER/2/4. See p. 197.

⁶⁰⁹ Dunn, 'Gifford says racism', 5.

⁶¹⁰ See p. 114.

Committee's actions. The council, which as Liverpool's largest employer made a sensible target for addressing the city's minority employment problem, contracted with Merseyside Skills Training to design and implement the training scheme, and it welcomed its first 98 trainees on 1 September 1989.⁶¹¹ The committee further moved to address unemployment in the black community by pressing for the creation of a Business and Training Centre in the heart of Liverpool 8, where most of Liverpool's minority population lived, and the employment of a 'black business adviser' to run the centre and 'promote business development among the City's Black communities and provide advice and support to existing firms.'⁶¹² The Finance Committee included £250,000 for the development of the centre in its Urban Programme submission for 1988/89.⁶¹³

Other elements of the Black Caucus equality agenda were also implemented via the Race Sub-Committee, including the monitoring of council hiring practices beginning in the fall of 1988, approval of the River Avon sheltered housing scheme for minority elders, and the approval of a policy for anti-racist trainings for council officers in January 1990.⁶¹⁴ Meanwhile, from his post as chair of the Education Committee, Ben-Tovim pushed for the creation of a Multi-Racial Educational Unit, which looked at curriculum and hiring issues in Liverpool schools.⁶¹⁵ In other words, there was not a single element of the Black Caucus's (and before it the Merseyside Community Relations Council's) equality agenda that did not go unaddressed by Drysdale and Ben-Tovim once they were on the council.

⁶¹¹ Liverpool PRO, Minutes of the Race Sub-Committee of the Personnel and Equal Opportunities Committee, 7/7/89, ¶1.d. 352MIN/PER/2/5.

⁶¹² Liverpool PRO, Report of the City Planning Officer to the Urban Programme Sub-Committee, 20/7/89, ¶1. 352MIN/FINII/1/152/2F.

⁶¹³ Liverpool PRO, 1988/89 Urban Programme Submission. 352MIN/FINII/1/152/2F.

⁶¹⁴ Liverpool PRO, Minutes of the Race Sub-Committee of the Personnel and Equal Opportunities Committee, 3/10/88, ¶3. 352MIN/PER/2/4; Ben-Tovim discussion, 23/4/13; Liverpool PRO: Minutes of the Race Sub-Committee of the Personnel and Equal Opportunities Committee, 15/1/90, ¶4. 352MIN/PER/2/6.

⁶¹⁵ Ben-Tovim discussion, 23/4/13.

What is less clear, however, is the extent to which Drysdale and Ben-Tovim's efforts resulted in concrete gains for Liverpool's black community, or whether 'the positive action agenda has delivered more symbolic reassurance than substantive goods.'⁶¹⁶ The Merseyside Skills Training programme was touted as a major commitment by the council to working toward its goal of a 10 percent ethnic minority workforce, but as one observer described its outcome:

I think initially the idea of MST was to achieve good quality training for the Black community and offer opportunities for jobs. Unfortunately the politics of the council didn't work to insure those workers, after training, had jobs. Many of them after one year were put back on the dole.⁶¹⁷

The creator of the programme himself concurred that the programme's failure to move participants from training into actual employment—a problem that BUILD solved, at least in the Commonwealth, by partnering with the business community directly⁶¹⁸, as well as the city government—severely hampered its effectiveness.⁶¹⁹ The problems that the former MCRC/Community Rights members had in securing concrete employment outcomes reflect part of the third set of factors this thesis argues shaped the pressure groups' success—the extent of a governing authority's own scope for action. In this instance, the Equal Opportunities Committee could not, though a governing authority, alter the entire council's hiring practices; and the council, though a much larger governing authority, could not single-handedly create more private sector jobs in Liverpool 8.

If other former campaigners focused less on producing outcomes that required or created new resources, they nevertheless instituted procedural initiatives resonant with the localism and valuing of neighbourhood participation reflected in their Anti-Cuts work. 'When we first got on,' remembers campaigner-turned-councillor McGiveron, 'we went to great lengths to

⁶¹⁶ Nelson, *Black Atlantic Politics*, 216.

⁶¹⁷ Cited in *ibid.*, 219.

⁶¹⁸ Skee p. 198.

⁶¹⁹ Quarless discussion, 2/4/13.

involve communities across the city in things that we were doing.⁶²⁰ That is, they sought to extend opportunities for participation in council decision-making they felt they had been denied to even more groups once they were in office. This goal of creating more procedures by which people could be consulted about council decisions differed from BUILD's strategy in Baltimore, which sought to gain influence and develop leaders through campaigns that resulted in tangible outcomes in underserved areas.

The most ambitious of these efforts—and one which underscores the different approaches of the Liverpool campaigners and BUILD leaders—was the Citywide Tenants Forum, which was inspired by efforts to incorporate tenant voices into council housing management in Manchester, Newcastle, Bristol, and several other authorities and was pushed in Liverpool by former campaigners McGiveron of the Vauxhall Neighbourhood Council and Peter Coventry of the Speke Community Centre.⁶²¹ Through the scheme, an optional 'Tenants Levy' of six pence per week was added to council rents in order to fund tenants associations throughout Liverpool that then sent representatives to the citywide forum.⁶²² The Citywide Tenants Forum reported to the Housing Committee, of which Coventry was chair, and its objectives reflected the campaigners' goals of consultation and inclusion; they included 'advising the Council on all aspects of Council housing and associated matters' and 'promoting the participation of local tenants in all aspects of housing management.'⁶²³ Thus, in the period immediately following its creation in 1989, the Citywide Tenants Forum could be found taking recommendations from neighbourhood tenants associations on allocation policy, garden maintenance, tenancy agreements, fixing maintenance issues, and security at sheltered accommodation, and passing

⁶²⁰ McGiveron discussion, 20/6/13.

⁶²¹ Liverpool PRO, Tenants Federations Receiving Direct Council Funding. 352MIN/HOU/9/21C.

⁶²² Liverpool PRO, Minutes of the Citywide Tenants Forum, 31/10/89, ¶E. 352MIN/HOU/9/21C.

⁶²³ Liverpool PRO, Local Tenants Forum—Constitution, ¶D. 352MIN/HOU/9/21C.

these along to the Tenant Involvement Sub-Committee, of which McGiveron was the chair.⁶²⁴ Between Coventry and McGiveron, the delegates to the Citywide Tenants Forum met with encouraging councillors who hoped to facilitate their efforts, which is to say that they had superior access to council decision makers. The council also employed two people who liaised with individual tenants and tenants associations, and these groups could apply for grants from the Unit to carry out improvements on their estates. Some of these efforts were at least baffling, if not concerning, to Militant-leaning members of the council. McGiveron recalled one such member from Speke, elected in 1987:

I remember him coming to me and asking, 'Why are you setting these things up? Cuz *we're* the councillors.' And I was saying, 'Well you gotta work with them. There's no problem with it. Just work with them!' He was coming to me for advice, really, and I went to great lengths to reassure him don't be frightened of talking to people...⁶²⁵

McGiveron, once again demonstrating the importance that the former campaigners placed on people being able to influence decisions that directly affected them, described the thrust of the programme as being about 'tenants having a say and being involved.'⁶²⁶ It did not, however, give tenants access to new resources or the ability to accumulate them. In this way, though they had an official position within the Housing Committee, the members of the Citywide Tenants Forum had less 'power to' than the Eldonians or other housing associations in Liverpool that were able to create new bundles of resources to build or renovate their homes, or than the BUILD members who worked on the Nehemiah low-income housing campaign in Baltimore, to be discussed in the following chapter.

Indeed, the Citywide Tenants Forum's most lasting achievement may, like the Anti-Cuts Campaign before it, have been serving as a training ground for further political engagement for

⁶²⁴ Liverpool PRO, Minutes of the Citywide Tenants Forum, 27/6/89; 6/8/89; 31/10/89; 23/1/90. 352MIN/HOU/9/21C.

⁶²⁵ McGiveron discussion, 20/6/13.

⁶²⁶ McGiveron discussion, 20/6/13.

people who would not otherwise have attempted to involve themselves in local government. The council also funded monthly training sessions for representatives to the forum beginning in 1990, which covered topics from lobbying and using the media to how the council and the housing department worked.⁶²⁷ Some tenants became very turned on to council work through their participation in the forum. One such tenant, Margaret Clarke, so enjoyed being one of its lead tenant representatives that she put her name down for the Labour council slate and was elected councillor; she eventually went on to chair the Housing Committee herself.⁶²⁸ That the Citywide Tenants Forum's most ambitious leaders went on, like the Anti-Cuts campaigners before them, to run for council themselves again highlights the lure of the council's concentrated resources and the relative permeability of Liverpool's local government compared to Baltimore, where BUILD continued to focus on building its own strength as an independent political force rather than produce its own candidates for local government.

Such launching of political careers may have continued to be the forum's surest way to exercise influence, since there is some evidence that the forum itself was, for all the access it enjoyed and the feedback it offered, kept on the periphery of important housing decisions in Liverpool. By 1992, its representatives were protesting their lack of representation on the body responsible for reorganising the Housing Department and pressing the Housing Committee to hold off on making decisions until the forum had discussed relevant committee reports, 'in the interests of meaningful tenant consultation'.⁶²⁹ The voicing of such concerns begs the question of whether the participants in the Citywide Tenants Forum continued to believe in the actual impact of their participation as time went on, or whether a lack of concrete outcomes rendered the appearance of procedural fairness moot. The emphasis on expanded consultation demonstrated by Coventry and McGiveron in creating the forum contrasts with BUILD's main

⁶²⁷ Liverpool PRO, Notes of Meeting of Liverpool City Forum Reps, 30/11/89, ¶1. 352MIN/HOU/9/21C.

⁶²⁸ 'Selected for Smithdown ward elections', *Scottie Press*, 12/90, 5.

⁶²⁹ Liverpool PRO, Minutes of the Citywide Tenants Forum, 31/3/92, ¶7; 8/9/92, ¶3. 352MIN/HOU/9/24B.

housing effort in the same period, the construction of hundreds of units of low-income 'Nehemiah housing' in West Baltimore, which focused on assembling the necessary coalition partners to produce a bricks-and-mortar result that might set the city on a new policy course for solving its vacants problem. The Liverpool forum, however, was not designed to pull together new resources to come up with different policy solutions. Rather, it sought to influence the distribution of resources that the council and Housing Department already had, which limited the scope of its activities. If new committee chairs were less interested in the forum's contributions than Coventry and McGiveron, it had little power to make them pay attention. The Citywide Tenants Forum lasted through most of the 1990s, until the council dismantled it after the Liberal-Democrats regained control in 1997.⁶³⁰

The Community Services and Neighbourhood Development Committee, the most visible symbol of the council's structural reorientation to neighbourhood-level concerns, likewise succeeded in involving more outside groups in council decisions and worked to make council resources more widely accessible. Its primary purpose, though, came to be the evaluation of Urban Programme funding applications. In other words, as with the Citywide Tenants Forum, its existence did not result so much in the creation of new resources for low-income groups as it did give bodies claiming to represent them a different access point for influencing the distribution of old ones. It took up as its first order of business the decentralising of council services and better integration of existing facilities into Liverpool's various residential areas. After a study trip to the London borough of Islington in July 1988 to learn about that authority's handling of decentralisation, the Neighbourhood Development Sub-Committee, under the guidance of former Anti-Cuts campaigner Juliet Herzog, agreed that similar efforts in Liverpool 'should lead

⁶³⁰ McGiveron discussion, 20/6/13.

to major improvements in the effectiveness of Council services.⁶³¹ By March 1989, the sub-committee was approving the decentralisation of a range of services to ‘one-stop shops’, where people would be able to access council services related to transportation, recreation facilities, social services, and other functions identified by the council’s Chief Executive.⁶³² In the same period, Herzog likewise oversaw the implementation of a community schools policy, which opened up school facilities for use by residents in surrounding neighbourhoods during out-of-school hours—an initiative about which Herzog, from her position with the Merseyside Play Action Group, had long been enthusiastic for the possibilities it created for further recreational activities in neighbourhoods.⁶³³ In order to create ‘real consultation’ for community groups, the committee sought the extensive involvement of the voluntary sector and residents’ associations through the creation of small working parties to evaluate different policies.⁶³⁴ And so, the formal consultation measures denied the Anti-Cuts campaigners were instituted by them as councillors. However, the influence of those consultation measures only extended as far as Urban Programme funds; there is little evidence that the committee created an expanded ‘power to’ for neighbourhood and voluntary groups to influence council decisions, again highlighting the extent to which any campaigner-turned-councillor’s success was limited by the council’s own scope for action.

The new Anti-Poverty Sub-Committee, also headed by McGiveron, went one step further to formally incorporate outside groups’ input by including representatives from voluntary organisations as advisory members, including the MCRC and organisations that had been

⁶³¹ Liverpool PRO, Minutes of a meeting of the Neighbourhood Development Sub-Committee of the Community Services and Neighbourhood Development Committee, 12/8/88, ¶4a. 352MIN/LIB/1/57/3.

⁶³² Liverpool PRO, Minutes of a meeting of the Neighbourhood Development Sub-Committee of the Community Services and Neighbourhood Development Committee, 17/3/89, ¶8. 352MIN/LIB/1/57/3; Dawn Booth, in discussion with the author, 17/7/13.

⁶³³ Liverpool PRO, Minutes of a meeting of the Neighbourhood Development Sub-Committee of the Community Services and Neighbourhood Development Committee, 8/7/88, ¶1. 352MIN/LIB/1/57/3.

⁶³⁴ McGiveron discussion, 20/6/13.

involved in the Anti-Cuts Campaign.⁶³⁵ The sub-committee was housed under the powerful Policy and Finance Committee. The Anti-Poverty Unit that the Sub-Committee oversaw looked at how the council

across the board was developing its resources and its responsibility to deal with anti-poverty issues across the city, whether it's to do with entrance to leisure facilities, access to benefits, use of housing benefit, take up of housing benefit, charting policy, pursuance policy for rates in the city.⁶³⁶

For example, the Sub-Committee had a unit that inspected cases in which people had been denied housing benefit and attempted to help them better navigate the system so as to maximise the benefits they could receive. Underscoring the extent to which local government in Liverpool was about managing the implications of decisions made at the national level, much of the committee's early work focused on distributing information about the 1986 Social Security Act. The Act was implemented in April 1988, and the Anti-Poverty Sub-Committee came up with measures to educate residents about the impact it would have on their benefits.⁶³⁷ Once again, former campaigners used their positions of influence on a committee to create some new resources, but more to figure out how to distribute existing ones more effectively and incorporate consultative mechanisms into the council's decision-making.

The outcomes of the Anti-Poverty Sub-Committee's attempts to do so could be seen most clearly in the dramatic expansion of the unit under the Anti-Cuts campaigners' old 'insider' friend, Community Liaison director Nigel Mellor.⁶³⁸ Mellor described the period after 1987 as 'a calm sea and prosperous voyage, by comparison with the rough storms which preceded it.'⁶³⁹ Under Mellor's direction, the Community Liaison Unit grew dramatically from a staff of nine to a staff of 60 in a matter of a few years, and it created a number of new community development

⁶³⁵ Liverpool PRO, Minutes of the Anti-Poverty Sub-Committee, 24/7/87, 3. 352MIN/FINII/1/4.

⁶³⁶ Mellor discussion, 9/4/13.

⁶³⁷ Liverpool PRO, Agenda of the Anti-Poverty Sub-Committee, 11/9/87. 352MIN/POY//4E.

⁶³⁸ See p. 156.

⁶³⁹ Mellor, 'Career Remembered', 127.

teams: Welfare Rights, Credit Union, Local Exchange Trading Scheme (LETS), Community Safety, and Tenant Participation (to support the eponymous unit) Teams were all created within several years of the council reorganisation.⁶⁴⁰ While the schemes are widely acknowledged as originating with Mellor, he himself is careful to point out that they were implemented because the members wanted them to be and voted accordingly:

Well, it was a mixture of the members saying, “We want to do these things,” y’know, it was a decision they made, and they wanted to give prominence to anti-poverty work, see what the council could do to help, to recognise, to deal with poverty issues. And they did quite a lot of useful things, looking at the role of the council as well as looking at our other organisations like energy companies who pursued people who were in arrears...⁶⁴¹

The other part of the ‘mixture’ that led to the implementation of these schemes and the growth of the Community Liaison section was undoubtedly Mellor’s own initiative. McGiveron, who as chair of the Anti-Poverty Sub-Committee and a member of the Finance and Strategy Committee would have shepherded a number of these measures through the council, described them as initiatives that Mellor came up with and the Sub-Committee chose to support because ‘they were always good ideas.’⁶⁴²

The working partnership between Mellor and McGiveron, and the results it produced (like increasing the size of a department by six-fold in less than five years), illustrate the potency of an experienced-technocrat-and-savvy-member team when their goals were aligned. Rather like the alacrity with which the Race Relations and Equal Opportunities Committee responded to the problem of minority underemployment, it also pointed to a certain efficiency in implementing objectives that former Anti-Cuts campaigners could achieve once on the council that BUILD, through its painstaking process of coalition building, could not rival. Though not obviously reflective of the goals of the Anti-Cuts campaign, which had focused on funding, consultation,

⁶⁴⁰ Ibid, 127. Liverpool PRO, Minutes of the Anti-Poverty Sub-Committee, 4/2/88. 352MIN/FINII/1/4.

⁶⁴¹ Mellor discussion, 6/19/13.

⁶⁴² McGiveron discussion, 6/20/13.

and community participation in decisions affecting them, the schemes nonetheless sat well with the basic policy orientation of those councillors with backgrounds in the voluntary sector, many of whom went into such work precisely because they wanted to ‘help people’ and empower or aid the most vulnerable members of their society.⁶⁴³ Programmes that helped people to navigate the benefits system, or access credit, or set up time banks to help one another (the LETS scheme), seemed to do just that. This desire to help people through expanded service provision again points to a basic contrast between those who directed the Anti-Cuts Campaign and BUILD organisers. While far from being against service provision, BUILD organisers nevertheless operated according to the IAF ‘golden rule’ of never doing for others what they could do for themselves. Thus, they taught people to articulate their needs and push for resources to address them, in contrast to Liverpool campaigners who attained elected office themselves and then used that office to distribute what resources they could access.

Analysis and outcome

Lacking an animating cause and strong leadership, Community Rights collapsed under the weight of its own good fortune. However, the legacy of the Anti-Cuts Campaign lived on in the actions of the campaigners who became councillors themselves. Those councillors were fortunate to be members of a new Labour group sympathetic to these aims, even if budgetary concerns, house building, and the education system remained the council’s headline issues. As one Labour councillor from the period who was not affiliated with the Community Rights campaign or the voluntary sector depicted the atmosphere in the Labour Group after 1987, ‘It was a different way of thinking’—gone was the assumption that if a person had a solid house and garden, then all their other issues would simply fall into place. Instead, the group tried to

⁶⁴³ Edwards and O’Gorman discussion, 9/4/13.

‘spread the attention around a little more.’⁶⁴⁴ This implicit support—or at least lack of outright opposition—to the community development agenda, combined with many of the Labour councillors’ newness to council affairs, created a relatively favourable political opportunity structure for motivated former Anti-Cuts campaigners to implement their agenda. While they did not produce new policy initiatives on the scale of the Commonwealth expansion and Nehemiah homes that BUILD achieved in Baltimore under Mayor Schmoke, which will be discussed in the following chapter, they nevertheless significantly opened up avenues by which members of outside groups, including those from low-income neighbourhoods, could access council committees and attempt to incorporate their views into council decisions.

Nevertheless, as this thesis argues, access and influential posts were not guarantees of pressure group success. Liverpool’s financial crisis had not been solved by the election of a council with a more conciliatory tone, and every year cuts had to be made—including cuts to voluntary groups. Even the most energetic councillors had to operate within the constraints set by Whitehall. Though the instigators of the Anti-Cuts Campaign did not relish making cuts to voluntary groups, they nonetheless participated in them:

We always did take some money from the voluntary sector. Because one of the problems was, becoming a councillor, was unfortunately every year, because we had a Tory government, we got cuts.⁶⁴⁵

The Anti-Cuts Campaign leaders had decided to run for council based on the conclusion of ‘if you can’t beat ’em, join ’em’. What they did not fully anticipate, whether on the Equal Opportunities Committee or the Anti-Poverty Sub-Committee, was the extent to which the council itself could not ‘beat’ the national government, and the ways in which external factors would constrain their ability to act as councillors—as they would constrain BUILD’s ability to carry out its agenda, even with a friendly mayor, in Baltimore.

⁶⁴⁴ Booth discussion, 17/7/13.

⁶⁴⁵ McGiveron discussion, 20/6/13.

Ch. 8, BUILD and the Schmoke administration

After the 1987 mayoral election, BUILD was at the height of its influence in Baltimore City: the mayoral candidate that had backed it first and most vigorously had won the election; the partnerships with the Greater Baltimore Committee and the city public school system were strong; and the BUILD agenda had garnered 75,000 signatures of support around the city and been lauded by both mayoral candidates. Schmoke gave his first major public address as mayor-elect at BUILD's November convention, where—as the city council president and U.S. representatives and senators looked on—he proclaimed that ‘the BUILD agenda is really the city’s agenda.’⁶⁴⁶ BUILD and Mayor Schmoke seemed to be a ‘match made in heaven’ to BUILD clergy leaders; if ever there would be a time for BUILD to exercise maximum influence in public decisions as a party with a seat at the table of civic power, it seemed that his administration would be it.⁶⁴⁷ Furthermore, the new mayor rode into office with a wave of goodwill, including from a corporate community that recognised the historic nature of his election and hoped to smooth the transition to an elected African-American mayor by proffering their own support.⁶⁴⁸

The road of governing, however, is filled with unanticipated pitfalls, and Schmoke’s first term would be no different. Fiscal woes loomed over all. Federal revenue sharing, the funding source behind many of the Schaefer-era construction projects that had provided the city with as much as \$23.9 million in 1983, ended in 1987.⁶⁴⁹ By the end of Schmoke’s first term only 9.4 percent of Baltimore’s budget came from the federal government—compared to 34 percent in 1982.⁶⁵⁰ With the end of Reagan-era prosperity, cities across the country faced difficulties balancing their budgets. By the end of his first term, Schmoke received the most accolades in the

⁶⁴⁶ BUILD Archives, M. Fletcher, ‘Schmoke backs BUILD plan’, *The Baltimore Evening Sun*, 9/11/87.

⁶⁴⁷ Miles discussion, 7/8/14.

⁶⁴⁸ Valentine discussion, 3/7/14.

⁶⁴⁹ M.C. Evans, ‘Fiscal prudence exacts its own cost’, *The Baltimore Sun*, 11/8/91, A13.

⁶⁵⁰ P. Gilbert, ‘Looking Toward the Political Future in Baltimore: Can any challenger exploit Schmoke’s weak points?’, *The Baltimore Sun*, 31/3/91, D1.

area of fiscal management; through the downsizing and reorganisation of the city's workforce (what in Liverpool might be called 'cutting jobs and services'), his administration was able to maintain the city's bond ratings and keep the threat of bankruptcy at bay. However, in other areas, Schmoke did not prove to be as effective a leader. Unable to master the levers of the city's bureaucracy as Schaefer had, and hamstrung in the education arena by the failure of two of his key appointments, Schmoke's critics charged that 'he put the city to sleep' in his first term, that he was not able to communicate a strong sense of vision and direction for Baltimore.⁶⁵¹

In Liverpool, the Anti-Cuts campaigners-turned-councillors faced similar fiscal challenges once they were in office: '...because we had a Tory government, we got cuts'.⁶⁵² Community Rights, the group that was to be 'like a union' for the voluntary sector, quickly fizzled after its most energetic leaders began serving within formal government structures themselves. While BUILD achieved some significant successes at the same time that Community Rights faded, a 'seat at the table' did not translate into anything like the full implementation of the BUILD agenda. The distribution of financial and decision-making resources in Baltimore had created opportunities for BUILD during the Schaefer administration and shaped the strategies it chose to accumulate power. During the Schmoke administration, this distribution of resources continued to shape BUILD's work, requiring it to carefully knit together the coalitions that would achieve a significant expansion of the Commonwealth agreement and initiate the city's most ambitious low-income housing project since before the Schaefer era. The laborious nature of coalition building contrasts with the swiftness with which, for example, former MCRC members Gideon Ben-Tovim and Liz Drysdale were able to implement aspects of the MCRC equal opportunities agenda once they became councillors. Furthermore, this period highlights the ways in which working in coalitions created fragilities in BUILD's campaigns, because it left

⁶⁵¹ Miles discussion, 7/8/14.

⁶⁵² McGiveron discussion, 20/6/13. Also see p. 241.

them susceptible to both the shifting preferences and the on-going limitations of their governing partners.

‘The City that Reads’

During his campaign, Schmoke had promised to make the public education system (of which he himself was a product) the focus of his administration, a promise that BUILD and its Commonwealth partners were happy to hear. In his address at BUILD’s November 1987 convention, Schmoke again reiterated his commitment to making Baltimore ‘the city that reads’. Such mayoral support would be crucial to attempting the systematic reform of the school system that the Commonwealth Agreement sought. As important to BUILD, though, was Schmoke’s inclusion of BUILD members in whatever decision-making process did take place around the school system. The Schmoke – Commonwealth collaboration got off to a strong start. In the first five months after Schmoke’s inauguration, the partners announced two major expansions to the initiative: an influx of resources into the jobs placement side of the programme, and the CollegeBound Foundation.

Both BUILD and the GBC had conceived of the Commonwealth Agreement as a vehicle for holistically transforming Baltimore City Public Schools (BCPS) since the agreement’s inception; it was, as one BUILD organiser called it, ‘a real campaign to redo the entire school system in Baltimore.’⁶⁵³ The GBC board had been discussing an expansion of the agreement in the months leading up to Schmoke’s election; the board had agreed to make its ‘clarion call to action’ in the school system its ‘biggest single commitment...since its work on downtown revitalization’ thirty years previously.⁶⁵⁴ The GBC’s education committee would ‘ensure that all efforts in the private sector [were] coordinated and moving in the same direction’, providing a range of incentives to students, teachers, and administrators in return for commitments from the

⁶⁵³ Taylor discussion, 17/2/14.

⁶⁵⁴ GBC Archives, Board of directors meeting minutes, 13/3/87, ¶III.

school system on students' skill levels and graduation rates.⁶⁵⁵ Thus, both groups were ready to take action when approached by the newly elected mayor to formulate a 'grand plan' for the school system that included a dramatic expansion of the Commonwealth.

Schmoke had told a group of BUILD members shortly after his election that BUILD would be 'part of the cabinet', and the meetings that began in late November 1987 between City Hall, the Commonwealth partners, the school system, and the Private Industry Council suggested that Schmoke meant what he said.⁶⁵⁶ The meetings took place regularly in the coming months, and discussion centred on how 'to provide Baltimore high school graduates with significantly greater access to jobs or college.'⁶⁵⁷ Schmoke announced the expansions on 25 February 1988. They included bringing more students under the agreement's umbrella by dropping the grade requirement; a guarantee of job interviews with three of 150 participating businesses within a year of graduation; and remedial classes for qualifying students who did not find a job even after their interviews.⁶⁵⁸ Not announced at the press conference were a further list of more systematic efforts, including the establishment of a set of competency skills for students; a continuum of services to begin in the sixth grade; a more extensive set of work experiences before graduation, including summer jobs and internships; and the creation of a 'one-stop shop' for students and employers in the City's Office of Employment Development (OED).⁶⁵⁹ In a move that the Schaefer administration would never have made, the mayor created a Commonwealth office within OED, and a core group of mayoral, OED, and GBC staff and BUILD members continued to meet on a regular basis.⁶⁶⁰ The expansions would take effect beginning in June 1989.

⁶⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁶ Orr, *Black Social Capital*, 137.

⁶⁵⁷ W. Englund, 'Baltimore leaders huddle over "grand plan" for high school graduates', *The Baltimore Sun*, 27/1/88, B1.

⁶⁵⁸ W. Englund, 'Commonwealth program adds student incentives', *The Baltimore Sun*, 26/2/88, D1.

⁶⁵⁹ GBC Archive, Board of directors meeting minutes, 12/2/88, ¶III.

⁶⁶⁰ Valentine discussion, 29/5/14.

Looking to keep the mayor's education momentum going, the same group announced the creation of the CollegeBound Foundation just two months later. Within months of Schmoke's coming to office, then, BUILD demonstrated a power to bring new combinations of resources to the mayor to an extent that Liverpool's Community Rights, even with council funding, would never attempt. The concept for CollegeBound grew out of the 1986 'listening campaign' that BUILD had conducted with hundreds of parents at each of the city's zoned high schools. Organisers were surprised by how forceful a message they received from both these parents and many of the BCPS students who qualified for the Commonwealth passport: they wanted to go on to college rather than look for work in Baltimore.⁶⁶¹ However, what prevented them from doing so were often not tuition costs, which were covered by a variety of federal and institutional scholarships and loans, but relatively small costs like transportation and books, often totalling no more than \$1,500, that the students and their families could not meet.⁶⁶² On the admissions side of the college equation, BCPS had few resources for guiding students through the college application process, much less the ability to help them cover the cost of standardised entrance exams. BUILD and the GBC decided to step into the breach by creating a foundation that would make 'last-dollar grants' to help students cover gaps in their financing and place paid staff in city schools to encourage students to apply to college and help them navigate the process. George McGowan, chairman of Baltimore Gas & Electric, spearheaded a corporate and individual fundraising initiative that sought to raise \$25 million over five years for a foundation endowment.⁶⁶³

Unlike other aspects of the Commonwealth, the CollegeBound Foundation's resources were squarely separated from the city and the school system. The foundation would be set up as an independent 501(c)3 organisation, initially housed within the GBC and overseen by a board of

⁶⁶¹ Taylor discussion, 17/2/14.

⁶⁶² Orr, *Black Social Capital*, 136.

⁶⁶³ GBC Archive, Board of directors meeting minutes, 11/3/88, ¶IV.

directors that would include the mayor as a non-voting member. All BCPS had to provide was space for the CollegeBound staff to be placed in city high schools; no demands were made of City Hall. The extent to which the GBC and its members took responsibility for the CollegeBound Foundation again highlights the significance of dispersed financial resources for a BUILD campaign's success. There was no comparable organised corporate leadership body for the Liverpool groups to seek out—hence the Eldonians worked with clergy leaders to make the necessary connections to secure financial resources for their cooperative.⁶⁶⁴ Still, the GBC and BUILD cared about the mayor's success and their relationship with City Hall, and they wanted to use the creation of CollegeBound to boost the mayor's education credentials. According to the GBC's education liaison: 'We saw it as a very visible support for Schmoke in his endeavour to make Baltimore the city that reads—well, this is a city that enables its kids to go to college.'⁶⁶⁵ Schmoke was duly invited to be part of the ceremony at the GBC offices that announced the foundation, where he lauded the venture as potentially transformative for the entire city by removing barriers to higher education for its secondary school graduates.⁶⁶⁶

As the 1987/88 school year came to a close, BUILD's education coalition seemed on its way to creating the city school renaissance that had seemed so elusive under a Schaefer administration by assembling the disparate resource-holders—city, school system, corporate community, parents—who shaped the education system. As one *Baltimore Sun* columnist gushed when describing the GBC – BUILD – City Hall partnership in education, 'The degree of cooperation, respect and mutual accountability that seems to be developing among Baltimore's partners...is a rarity in any kind of urban politics.'⁶⁶⁷ The number of groups involved in the coalition, though, also pointed to the pitfalls of operating in a context where resources were

⁶⁶⁴ See p. 135.

⁶⁶⁵ Valentine discussion, 29/5/14.

⁶⁶⁶ M. Ollove, 'CollegeBound fund drive seeks to aid city youth', *The Baltimore Sun*, 27/4/88, B1.

⁶⁶⁷ N. Peirce, 'Revitalizing Baltimore's Public Schools', *The Baltimore Sun*, 14/7/88.

diffuse: even with mayoral support, much effort was needed to draw together all the players necessary for an effort like school reform to even have a hope of working. Still, BUILD's lead organiser was satisfied with his organisation's place in the city's decision-making structure: 'It's the relationship we wanted to have with the mayor.'⁶⁶⁸ Even as Schmoke dealt with the inevitable shortages and compromises of his first budget-making session he maintained his commitment to addressing the BUILD agenda, attracting attention for his decision to reduce class sizes in first and second grade from 28 to 25 pupils.⁶⁶⁹ Like the Liverpool council leadership using the 1988 council reorganisation to create a Race and Equal Opportunity Committee and a Neighbourhood Development and Voluntary Services Committee, Schmoke seemed to BUILD leaders to be remembering his commitments once in office.

Despite this momentum, over the next three years of Schmoke's term the Commonwealth did not translate into the sort of holistic transformation that its founders envisioned. The reasons for its failure to do so points to the extent to which BUILD's efforts relied on the support of key individual leaders and the fragility of those efforts when these leaders disappeared from the scene. While Schmoke's ascent meant greater access to the mayor's office for BUILD and the GBC, one of the original Commonwealth partners did not fare so well under his administration: Alice Pinderhughes, the BCPS superintendent BUILD had originally courted when forming the Commonwealth in 1984. Despite her willingness to defy Schaefer in working with BUILD and her support in getting the Commonwealth off the ground, Schmoke asked Pinderhughes to resign at the end of the school year within days of his taking office. While the decision caught few observers by surprise—it was not uncommon for a new mayor to look to make his own key appointments—some maintained that perceptions that Pinderhughes lacked

⁶⁶⁸ Englund, 'Baltimore leaders huddle...'.
⁶⁶⁹ BUILD Archive, A. LoLordo, 'Schmoke chooses to spend more on youngest students', *The Baltimore Sun*, 31/5/88.

the political cunning and toughness to overcome bureaucratic resistance from other administrators also influenced Schmoke's decision.⁶⁷⁰

Whatever acumen for dismantling bureaucracy Pinderhughes may have lacked, Schmoke's preferred candidate for superintendent also did not possess. A nine-month national search, in which both the mayor and the GBC were very much involved, resulted in the hiring of a nationally respected academic, Richard Hunter, for the superintendent post.⁶⁷¹ Hunter's support would be key to attaining the more systematic reforms that BUILD and its partners hoped to achieve in the school system. However, Hunter's time at the helm of BCPS was marked by strife, confusion, and eventually open conflict with Schmoke. The superintendent and the mayor clashed over a range of issues, including textbook shortages, school safety, curriculum design, and a lack of cultural field trips.⁶⁷² Particularly relevant for the Commonwealth partners, though, was Hunter's tepid support of site-based management and his almost total refusal to work with principals as individuals or as a collective, choosing instead to focus on the system's sprawling central bureaucracy and system-wide projects.

This choice created problems for the Commonwealth partners, because circumventing the BCPS central administration on North Avenue through site-based management and direct work with principals was key to their vision for holistic reform of the school system. North Avenue was consistently cited as a roadblock to improvements in the school system by parents, teachers, principals, departing administrators, and outside consultants. Hunter himself had described it to the GBC as 'lethargic, bureaucratic, complacent, and difficult to motivate' with a 'culture of parochialism'; one of the outside consultants he hired was far blunter in calling it 'a

⁶⁷⁰ Orr, *Black Social Capital*, 85; Valentine discussion, 29/5/14.

⁶⁷¹ GBC Archive, Board of directors meeting minutes, 9/9/88, ¶1.

⁶⁷² Orr, *Black Social Capital*, 90–3.

sick place.⁶⁷³ Despite their access to and influence with the mayor, however, the Commonwealth partners could not similarly influence Hunter to work around the failures and frustrations of North Avenue. Instead, determined to ‘become the school system’s easily identifiable CEO’, he dragged his feet on or blocked two different proposals that Commonwealth partners helped to draw up for site-based management, proposals into which the Commonwealth partners had poured significant amounts of time and energy.⁶⁷⁴ The situation was not helped when Arnett Brown, the president of the PSASA who had led that body into BUILD and championed the Commonwealth amongst principals, died of cancer in October 1990.⁶⁷⁵ His successor was less than enthusiastic about the Commonwealth and working with the other Commonwealth partners, thus depriving them of a key entry point into the schools.⁶⁷⁶

During Schmoke’s first term, then, despite their position, the Commonwealth partners were not able to make the sort of headway in transforming the school system that they had hoped for, largely because of their inability to work with the leader whose approval they needed for the mechanism (site-based management) by which they hoped schools might begin the process of transforming their curricula and redistributing their resources. Furthermore, the links into the school system continued to dissolve after the loss of Brown. The Baltimore Teachers Union, also a key feature of the unique BUILD-created coalition, clashed repeatedly with Hunter, and over the course of his tenure its leadership became less convinced of the Commonwealth partners’ ability to achieve results and less interested in working with them.⁶⁷⁷ Ultimately, Schmoke’s conflicts with Hunter became so acute that he asked the school board to force Hunter to resign in December 1990 (in the process freeing himself of a likely burden to his

⁶⁷³ GBC Archive, Board of directors meeting minutes, 11/11/88, ¶2; W. Englund, ‘The superintendent, the schools, and the bureaucrats’, *The Baltimore Sun*, 23/12/90, J1.

⁶⁷⁴ GBC Archive, Board of directors meeting minutes, 11/11/88, ¶2.

⁶⁷⁵ ‘Arnett Brown, Jr., 62, led principals union’, *The Baltimore Sun*, 23/10/90.

⁶⁷⁶ Taylor discussion, 17/2/14; Valentine discussion, 3/7/14.

⁶⁷⁷ See, for example: S. Crockett, ‘BTU president criticizes city school conditions’, 27/5/88, C1; K. Lally, ‘BTU faults Hunter on classroom gains’, 11/12/90, B4.

re-election campaign).⁶⁷⁸ Unlike Liverpool city councillors, whose formal positions in elected government ensured their access to certain players, BUILD could not force or insist upon any coalition partner's continued participation, whether the teachers union or the school system—BUILD had to demonstrate that it was worth their while. If they could not be convinced, coalitions weakened.

Perhaps the real death knell for the Commonwealth coalition came after Schmoke's re-election, though, when the GBC also chose to pull back on its education commitments. The recession that began to sweep through Maryland in 1990 scalded Baltimore's businesses. Alan Hoblitzell, the president of the largest bank in Maryland who had originally brought the Commonwealth to the GBC, abruptly resigned when a series of risky investments in real estate and junk bonds at Maryland National Bank went bad; Jack Moseley, the president of the largest insurance company in the state who was another one of the Baltimore corporate community's leading philanthropists, met a similar fate. Not only were their replacements people with no local ties who declined seats on the GBC's board, but they—like many of their home-grown counterpart CEOs—became focused on navigating their companies through the dire financial straits of the early 1990s.⁶⁷⁹ The authors of a *Baltimore Sun* magazine article on the shifting terrain of Baltimore's corporate power scene described the consequences for corporate involvement in community affairs:

Others fear that a new breed of corporate executive won't jeopardize a fat paycheck or year-end bonus by wasting time on community affairs. Especially if the executive is reporting to a distant corporate headquarters. Mr. Peck, the retired banker, says his generation was instilled with the need for community service. But he wonders whether younger workers feel the same way. 'People who are 35 years old say, "Why should I bust my ass on all these community activities, when the people in Richmond don't know whether I'm doing it or not?"'⁶⁸⁰

⁶⁷⁸ 'School Reform After Hunter', *The Baltimore Sun*, 20/12/90, A14.

⁶⁷⁹ Valentine discussion, 3/7/14.

⁶⁸⁰ D. Rosenthal & W. Englund, 'Who's Got the Clout?' *The Baltimore Sun* magazine, 17/2/91, 6.

Indeed, the decline in the number of locally based CEOs that accelerated after 1990 meant that Baltimore was looking increasingly like Liverpool, where reliance on ‘branch plants’ likewise meant the pool of local executives was shallow. As members of the GBC became more concerned with running their businesses in the midst of a recession, they became less concerned with the broader social vision that had originally prompted them to hire Robert Keller, a man with a desire to address the ‘human capital’ side of Baltimore’s challenges, who ultimately became the ‘go-between’ for BUILD and the GBC.⁶⁸¹ Keller left the GBC in 1993, and his replacement redirected the organisation toward economic issues and away from education initiatives like the Commonwealth.⁶⁸²

While BUILD’s education coalition proved unable to endure—the Commonwealth formally dissolved in 1993—and unable to implement site-based management, it nevertheless accomplished some of its goals during Schmoke’s first term. Through the jobs placement aspect of the Commonwealth agreement, hundreds of graduates found jobs between 1989 and 1992.⁶⁸³ Because the Commonwealth coalition included employers themselves, it was able to ensure that qualifying students actually received job offers, whereas the Merseyside Skills Training initiative of the Race and Equal Opportunities Committee in Liverpool could not guarantee that its trainees would actually receive job offers and seemed to have little success connecting them to employment. The most impressive results came from the CollegeBound Foundation, which by the 1990/91 school year had college advisors working with over 8,000 students in sixteen city high schools, and which by 1992 could point to increases in the percentage of high school students taking the SATs (from 39.7 percent to 52.9 percent) and filling out critical financial aid

⁶⁸¹ Taylor discussion, 17/2/14.

⁶⁸² GBC Archives, Board of directors meeting minutes, 14/7/95, ¶1; Valentine discussion, 3/7/14. The GBC’s new choice of president also pointed to the ongoing shift in regional influence away from Baltimore City. The new president, Donald Hutchinson, had formally served as the chief local political officer of Baltimore County—bringing a rather different perspective than Keller, who had been an editor with the *Baltimore Evening Sun* before joining the GBC.

⁶⁸³ GBC Archives, Board of directors meeting minutes, 14/7/89, 13/7/90, 12/7/91, 12/6/92.

forms (from 21 percent to 33 percent) since the foundation's creation, and to the distribution of last-dollar grants to more than 200 students.⁶⁸⁴ CollegeBound also proved to be the most enduring aspect of the Commonwealth Agreement; it still operates as of this writing. Part of CollegeBound's stability may be attributed to the fact that, unlike other aspects of the Commonwealth, it was embedded neither in City Hall, where a change of mayoral administration or budget cuts could put it on the chopping block, nor in the school system, where it might be similarly vulnerable to changes in staff or budget. CollegeBound's aims were also more typically philanthropic rather than political; no part of its mission seeks to put it at the centre of decision-making—pointing to how much easier it is to give than to govern in an economically struggling city.

The story of the Baltimore Commonwealth reveals that, despite BUILD's central position at the governing table at the beginning of the Schmoke administration, it still had only fragile links to into the school system. Without the partnership of key leaders, the more ambitious aspects of its agenda could not be accomplished. In later years, organisers from the period would suggest that CollegeBound came to overtake the Commonwealth, and that its ascendance marked the conclusion of the Commonwealth effort. However, BUILD's lead organiser during the Commonwealth period, Gerald Taylor, also acknowledged how much the loss of key leaders impacted their ability to carry forward their vision:

That was a critical issue, that what was going to be required in Baltimore to do that kind of school reform, we needed to have real continuity of the team that was going to try to bring about the reform effort, and that didn't happen. So that larger series of ideas kind of got left.⁶⁸⁵

Without more participation from people 'inside the buildings', even a figurative place on Kurt Schmoke's cabinet led only to limited education reform efforts. BUILD's success relied on its ability to maintain relationships with key leaders and organisations, and for those leaders to in

⁶⁸⁴ GBC Archives, Board of directors meeting minutes, 14/12/90, ¶IV; 11/9/92, ¶II.

⁶⁸⁵ Taylor discussion, 17/2/14.

turn be effective in their posts; it was limited by those leaders own limitations, whether personal, structural, or organisational. Like the Anti Cuts campaigners-turned-councillors in Liverpool whose initiatives were hemmed in by the council's own scope for action or budget limitations, BUILD leaders were hemmed in by the capabilities of their partners. The coalition building approach left BUILD's efforts vulnerable to shifts across a wider range of sectors—whether a new superintendent for the school system or a new CEO at Maryland National Bank—than the electoral shifts that helped or hindered the Liverpool councillors. While more diffuse resources could create opportunities under difficult political conditions, the spread could also render otherwise favourable political conditions less fruitful.

Housing in Sandtown-Winchester

At the same time that BUILD was attempting, with its Commonwealth partners, to accomplish school system reform, it also seized the opportunity provided by a new mayor to move forward on an issue that had been part of its agenda since its inception: housing. Some of BUILD's earliest campaigns had been around using plexiglass to board up Baltimore's vacant houses; mortgage lending had been the igniting issue that finally led the group into citywide prominence and organisational stability; and housing had first brought it to the table with Mayor Schaefer.⁶⁸⁶ What to do about Baltimore's vacant housing stock was a constant theme of organisers' conversations with city residents.⁶⁸⁷ Furthermore, addressing the vacants was an enduring conversation theme in the city's department of Housing and Community Development, where even Schaefer's most conscientious staff members seemed unable to keep up with the deterioration of the city's housing stock.

Brooklyn-based IAF affiliate East Brooklyn Congregations had built some 1,100 new homes in the midst of acres of rubble affordable for low-income buyers with the help of federal

⁶⁸⁶ See p. 186.

⁶⁸⁷ Graf discussion, 7/1/14.

Nehemiah grants, so-named for the prophet who led the rebuilding of Jerusalem in the fifth century BCE.⁶⁸⁸ Thus, BUILD made a trip to Brooklyn a centerpiece of its actions in the 1987 mayoral election, asking both candidates to travel with them to Brooklyn to survey East Brooklyn Congregations' work.⁶⁸⁹ Schmoke twice pledged to incorporate BUILD's ideas for housing into his administration's housing policy, and when he arrived in office, BUILD made it relatively easy for him to follow through on his pledge. As Graf described BUILD's strategy,

We wanted to approach the mayor with money and the developer. We knew that any mayor would say, 'Well who's gonna do it? Who's going to do something this ambitious? You want all this land free, and we don't have that much land. What are you bringing to the table, number one? And number two, who can do something like this?' We hadn't had an affordable housing effort like this in those kinds of neighbourhoods for years and years and years.⁶⁹⁰

If they came to the mayor with both substantial money and a respected developer, the staff reasoned, it would be difficult for the mayor to turn down their proposal—they would be 'coming to power with a decision, not for a decision'—a marked contrast to the operating pattern of the Citywide Tenants Forum, or the Black Caucus before it, in Liverpool.⁶⁹¹ Of course, BUILD would not simply be coming with any decision, but with a decision that fit with its own agenda and integrated the organisation into yet another area of the city's governance structure.

In order to assemble the resources necessary to do so, BUILD worked to build a broad base of financial support amongst the city's Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish institutions and cultivated a relationship with nationally recognised Baltimore-based developer James Rouse. Partially as an inducement to Mayor Schmoke and partially in response to a challenge from Governor Schaefer that they raise \$2 million for the project on their own, BUILD organisers and congregants spent months approaching the finance boards of the city's churches, synagogues,

⁶⁸⁸ BUILD Archive, S. Roberts, 'In East Brooklyn, Churches Preach Gospel of Change', *The New York Times*, 24/4/88.

⁶⁸⁹ See p. 209.

⁶⁹⁰ Roberts, 'In East Brooklyn...'.⁶⁹¹

⁶⁹¹ Ibid.

and denominations, asking them to loan portions of their endowments, interest-free, to a fund that would help to cover construction costs of the new homes. The church funds would be used to leverage government funds such that, according to one BUILD fundraiser, \$10,000 of church money would leverage \$50,000 of government money.⁶⁹² Since the construction of one new home was about \$60,000, BUILD's volunteer fundraisers emphasised to religious organisations that each \$10,000 loaned would effectively build a new home.

At the same time, BUILD courted Rouse who, as the developer of Harborplace and the force behind the nation's largest publicly held real estate development company, was 'revered in the city' and beyond.⁶⁹³ Rouse was a generous philanthropist who tackled low-income housing with the same gusto with which he had once approached urban development. In 1981, he had severed formal ties with the Rouse Company in order to fully devote himself to his foundation, Enterprise, and the cause of housing the poor.⁶⁹⁴ Rouse's actions were motivated in part by a Christian social conscience. He was a member of a BUILD church and had a longstanding friendship with Rev. Vernon Dobson, one of BUILD's four founding clergymen. BUILD organisers had also cultivated a relationship with Mark Sissman, the president of the Enterprise Social Investment Corporation, another Rouse venture. Working through these pre-existing relationships (and through yet another trip to Brooklyn), BUILD organisers successfully gained Rouse's support for a large-scale home-building project in Baltimore. Rouse agreed to act as the project's developer and, with BUILD, formed Enterprise Nehemiah Development, Inc. to oversee the initiative—an impressive instance of relational organising's power to assemble new combinations of resources.

⁶⁹² Sally Thompson, in discussion with the author, 11/9/12.

⁶⁹³ Graf discussion, 7/1/14.

⁶⁹⁴ B. Forgey, 'The Urban Legacy of James Rouse', *The Washington Post*, 24/3/88, C1.

The Rouse connection gave the project ‘huge legitimacy’ with those controlling the purse strings of both churches and government.⁶⁹⁵ The Presbyterian and Catholic churches were the first to step forward with six-figure loans, and BUILD fundraisers ultimately rose to Schaefer’s challenge and amassed \$2.18 million from religious institutions.⁶⁹⁶ Once in office, Schmoke also stayed true to his word and saw to it that the city supported the initiative with funds, manpower, and land. Baltimore’s urban geography, with its extensive neighbourhoods of rowhouses, presented a challenge to a large-scale rebuilding effort in that few large swathes of blighted, city-owned property on which to attempt such a project existed. However, BUILD had identified an abandoned bakery site in the historic black neighbourhood of Sandtown-Winchester, where two of its member churches were located, that would work unusually well. Empty for 20 years and nestled within a residential neighbourhood, the site had become a magnet for crime and squatters, and few would protest its demolition.⁶⁹⁷ Schmoke not only agreed to turn over the site to Enterprise, but he also agreed that the city would cover the cost of demolition and site preparation (including asbestos removal) and subsidise home prices and closing costs.⁶⁹⁸ All told, the city’s contribution came out to about \$12.15 million.⁶⁹⁹ Best of all from BUILD’s perspective, it brought the organisation into a closer working relationship with City Hall and the Department of Housing and Community Development.

However, in order to succeed, the initiative would also require the support of an old nemesis: William Donald Schaefer, now governor of Maryland. The lengths to which BUILD would go to secure a relationship with Schaefer, largely (though not only) in order to ensure his support for the Nehemiah project, again point to the inability of a strong relationship with the

⁶⁹⁵ Graf discussion, 7/1/14. Members of both Schmoke and Schaefer’s staffs also agreed on the significance of Rouse’s support.

⁶⁹⁶ Baltimore Board of Estimates Minutes, 30/5/90, p. 2796.

⁶⁹⁷ E. Canzian, ‘\$17 million city renewal project unveiled’, *The Baltimore Sun*, 3/3/89, A1.

⁶⁹⁸ Baltimore Board of Estimates Minutes, 25/4/90, p. 2108.

⁶⁹⁹ Baltimore Board of Estimates Minutes, 30/5/90, p. 2796.

mayor to resolve all of BUILD's dilemmas. Even with the mayor's backing, resources still had to be cobbled together from a number of other players—a marked contrast to, for example, the rapidity with which former Community Rights members were able to act on their agendas once they held council committee chairs. An unusual opportunity to redefine its relationship with the governor presented itself to BUILD in the summer of 1988, when Schaefer found himself in the crosshairs of the National Rifle Association (NRA). The preceding April, the Maryland state legislature passed—with strong support from Governor Schaefer—a bill aimed at ending the sale of cheap handguns known as 'Saturday Night Specials' by prohibiting the manufacture and sale of guns not appropriate for sport, self-defence, or law enforcement.⁷⁰⁰ Defeating the bill via a ballot referendum became a focal point for the NRA, the United States' near-invincible pro-gun lobby, during the 1988 elections.⁷⁰¹ Though the governor, the state attorney general, most state legislators, and a host of civic leaders supported the bill, a massive NRA-sponsored media campaign wore away at its popular support. By the end of the summer before the November referendum, polls showed 45 percent of voters supported the law while 42 percent did not, with 13 percent of voters undecided.⁷⁰²

Schaefer was determined not to lose to the NRA. However, in order to counter the group's extensive \$4 million operation (it imported an experienced campaign manager from California and employed 40 people full-time), he would have to reach out to people across the state that he believed could effectively turn out the vote.⁷⁰³ This would be particularly critical in Baltimore City, where the pro-gun organisation was targeting inner city black residents with

⁷⁰⁰ R. Barnes, 'Maryland House Snubs NRA in Voting Controls on Cheap Handguns', *The Washington Post*, 1/4/88, D1.

⁷⁰¹ J. Frece, 'Referendum Could Test NRA's Firepower', *The Baltimore Sun*, 5/6/88, C1.

⁷⁰² J. Bock, '13% of voters undecided in tight battle over gun law', *The Baltimore Sun*, 2/10/88, A1.

⁷⁰³ J. Lancaster, 'Activists Choose Weapons', *The Washington Post*, 29/9/88, D11; J. Frece & J. Rosenberg, 'Gun lobby outspends foes 10-to-1', *The Baltimore Sun*, 29/10/88, A1.

mailers, television ads, and door knocking.⁷⁰⁴ Schaefer directed his staff to reach out to BUILD about leading the Baltimore City effort to keep the law.

That Schaefer would reach out to BUILD in the first place marked the extent to which BUILD had established itself as one of the primary political power organisations in the city, one with the ability to deliver results and reach people (like the 75,000 who had signed on to its agenda in the 1987 mayoral race) even if its capacity to ‘punish’ remained undetermined. However, BUILD leaders were uncertain they wanted to join the cause—it was a state-wide issue, it was coming to them via the governor rather than from their member institutions, ‘it wasn’t [their] fight’.⁷⁰⁵ Nevertheless, they also knew that Schaefer’s support would be crucial to their ability to complete the Nehemiah housing campaign, since state support would be necessary to make the mortgages affordable to low-income families and for their application to the federal department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). As Taylor, still BUILD’s lead organiser, characterised the situation:

I always tell people when you are building an organisation, when you are building for power and for your own long-term notion of governing and place, I really taught and pushed that we were always seeking to govern...And governing requires responsibility, you to take a risk, and to work on other things other than what you directly focus on yourself, for the sake of a relationship. And this was a key relationship that we wanted to get.⁷⁰⁶

In return for complete control over the Baltimore operation and a small amount of money with which to rent space for a phone bank, BUILD agreed to deliver Baltimore precincts by a margin of two-to-one. BUILD organisers and leaders then began an intense effort, drawing upon their relationships across the city to ensure voter turnout in African-American neighbourhoods and working connections to the police, the GBC, and other civic groups in order to shore up support for the law. When the ballots were counted on 8 November, it became clear that BUILD had

⁷⁰⁴ J. Lancaster, ‘Maryland Gun Law Opponents Try to Enlist Blacks’, *The Washington Post*, 5/9/88, A1.

⁷⁰⁵ Taylor discussion, 17/2/14.

⁷⁰⁶ Taylor discussion, 17/2/14.

made good on its promise, with Baltimore voters backing the law by a two-to-one margin.⁷⁰⁷ At the Baltimore rally celebrating the defeat of the referendum, BUILD leaders convinced Schaefer to don a BUILD button in front of the crowds and the national press. Later that month, Schaefer invited Taylor and BUILD lay president Carol Reckling to an exclusive dinner in Annapolis celebrating the referendum's defeat, at which he praised BUILD extensively for delivering the vote in Baltimore and presented Taylor and Reckling with gubernatorial proclamations thanking them for their role in the campaign.⁷⁰⁸

The campaign to uphold the gun law and defeat the NRA transformed BUILD and the governor's relationship:

After the NRA campaign, Schaefer opened up. We had more access to Schaefer and his administration than Schmoke did. We had the line—we had the line of access to the governor at that point.⁷⁰⁹

Between the warm feelings from the NRA fight and the \$2.18 million of congregational funds it had already assembled, BUILD had little trouble obtaining Schaefer's support for the Nehemiah initiative. As Schaefer's chief of staff described, Schaefer liked people who worked hard and produced results; by the time BUILD sought funding for the Nehemiah initiative, he saw BUILD as 'people who were reliable partners, who could execute.'⁷¹⁰ Furthermore, Schaefer retained his affection for Baltimore City and enjoyed taking advantage of opportunities to support its neighbourhoods. The Nehemiah project ultimately received \$11.25 million from Maryland's Home Ownership Incentive Program to subsidize mortgages.⁷¹¹

With the land, the big name developer, and the financing assembled, Baltimore's federal Nehemiah grant application had little trouble winning one of the four such grants HUD

⁷⁰⁷ J. Bock, 'NRA outgunned by urban areas' strong turnout', *The Baltimore Sun*, 9/11/88, A1.

⁷⁰⁸ Taylor discussion, 17/2/14.

⁷⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁷¹⁰ Wasserman discussion, 21/2/14.

⁷¹¹ Baltimore Board of Estimates Minutes, 30/5/90, p. 2796.

distributed in 1989.⁷¹² The total package enabled Enterprise to build 283 homes in Sandtown-Winchester with mortgage rates low enough to be affordable for families making between \$11,500 and \$22,500 a year.⁷¹³ The first families moved into the homes in June 1991, all of them first-time homeowners with incomes between \$11,500 and \$35,000.⁷¹⁴

BUILD's place at Baltimore's decision-making table led to tangible outcomes on a scale not attempted by Community Rights or the Citywide Tenants Forum in Liverpool. Furthermore, the Nehemiah construction in Sandtown-Winchester sought to accomplish more than the construction of 283 houses—it sought to develop a new process by which to address one of the city's most stubborn issues. That is, it was about changing the nature of decision-making around housing in Baltimore. BUILD's hope that using Nehemiah grants to build low-income housing for sale might become a model for dealing with blight in other parts of the city seemed to be coming to fruition by the end of Schmoke's first term. By the mayoral primary in the fall of 1991, construction had begun on a Nehemiah II project in the south Baltimore neighbourhood of Cherry Hill, and the Enterprise Foundation had submitted an application for a Nehemiah III grant in the east Baltimore neighbourhoods of Oliver and Johnston Square.⁷¹⁵ However, Liverpool did not fail to act on its own housing challenges in the same period; indeed, one of the first acts the new Labour council performed in 1987 was the unfreezing of £40 million worth of construction projects that would result in 800 new council houses. Indeed, from one perspective, it was the Baltimore city government's failure to act on its housing issues on such a scale that left a vacuum for BUILD and the Enterprise Foundation to fill.

⁷¹² BUILD Archives, T. Bowman, 'West Baltimore gets \$4.2 million housing grant', *The Baltimore Sun*, 30/9/89.

⁷¹³ Ibid.

⁷¹⁴ A. Haar, 'Nehemiah homes attract eager first-time buyers', *The Baltimore Sun*, 28/4/91, J1; E. Gunts, 'Nine buyers close on Nehemiah homes', *The Baltimore Sun*, 12/6/91, B1.

⁷¹⁵ E. Gunts, 'Funds sought for East Baltimore housing', *The Baltimore Sun*, 27/7/91, C14.

Analysis and outcome

Despite the substantial collaborative successes of Schmoke's first term, his second did not begin with the same level of optimism from BUILD leaders. While the accomplishments of the Commonwealth and Nehemiah campaigns required Schmoke's support, mayoral affirmation and involvement was not sufficient to bring about holistic reform of the city's school system or the creation the 1,000 new homes annually for low-income families that BUILD's 1987 agenda had demanded. Rather, particularly as the city's own resources became more constrained in an era of federal retrenchment and economic recession, such efforts required, as Stone (1989) argued they would, the involvement of other resource-bearing partners: the city school system itself, the corporate community, and local philanthropic foundations. Even in a favourable political opportunity structure, BUILD had to continue to work to amass dispersed resources, and its efforts were successful insofar as they were able to forge connections between and maintain influence with these actors. When those relationships weakened or disappeared, BUILD did not have a formal institutional foothold to fall back on to safeguard its efforts. Instead, coalitions like the Commonwealth quietly dissolved.

In some ways, BUILD's shortcomings during Schmoke's first term are only recognised as such because of the size of BUILD's ambitions. The Baltimore Commonwealth may not have achieved all the goals laid out in the 1987 BUILD agenda, but in the pursuit of those goals it still resulted in outcomes like the creation of the CollegeBound Foundation. Mayor Schmoke may not have built 1,000 units of affordable housing each year, but the success of building the 283 homes in Sandtown-Winchester did convince the city to attempt Nehemiah projects in other neighbourhoods and the religious bodies to keep their funds in the revolving loan fund that would support future projects. By maintaining its own fiscal independence and organisational stability, BUILD—unlike Liverpool's Community Rights—guaranteed that it would remain

vigorous enough to continue to pursue new campaigns and new partnerships, even as the political ground continued to shift.

Furthermore, rather as the Liverpool councillors' reach was limited by the scope of local government in Britain, so BUILD's reach was constrained by larger structural forces that originated outside Baltimore. The Anti-Poverty Sub-Committee on the Liverpool City Council, for example, focused largely on providing services that helped Liverpoolians cope with the 1986 Social Security Act. BUILD likewise had to work within the limitations created for Baltimore's finances by the end of federal-revenue sharing and the 1990 recession, which also caused difficulties for BUILD by absorbing its corporate partners' attention. BUILD was also limited by shifts in its partners' preferences that resulted more from personnel changes rather than from external shocks, such as the shift that occurred when Arnett Brown's successor at the PSASA was less keen on the Commonwealth than Brown had been. The case of BUILD under Mayor Schmoke, then, also supports the argument that pressure group success depended on the distribution of resources in a given place. And it could not be guaranteed by access and influence, but would also be shaped by organisational and structural limitations beyond the groups' control.

CONCLUSION

This thesis began by asking how pressure groups in 1980s Liverpool and Baltimore could exercise power and influence in publicly significant decisions, and it has argued that success depended on three sets of factors: strong leadership and an animating cause, the nature of a group's goals and the distribution of resources that could transform those aspirations into reality, and a group's ability to influence how resource-holders behaved within their own constrained scope for action. Considering, finally, in which city these pressure groups more successfully accumulated the power to enact changes that would not have come to pass in their absence, it is clear that BUILD in Baltimore met with greater success than did its counterparts in Liverpool. However, the nature of Liverpool politics may have enabled individual pressure group participants to eventually bend greater resources towards lower-income residents in their city.

Under a hostile local political regime, BUILD was able to win millions of dollars of mortgage lending funds, negotiate lower automobile insurance rates, and form the Baltimore Commonwealth plan to open up opportunities for secondary school graduates. Under a similarly hostile local political regime in Liverpool, the MCRC and the Anti-Cuts Campaign were unable to do more than protest the council's actions and, eventually, outlast those members who had most forcefully opposed them. The key to BUILD's relative success in this period, though, was not superior leadership or even superior access to local politicians—BUILD was in some ways more cut off from City Hall under Schaefer than the Anti-Cuts campaigners were from members of the Militant-directed council—but rather the wider distribution of place-shaping resources in Baltimore as compared to Liverpool. This is most clearly exemplified by the creation of the Baltimore Commonwealth, which BUILD did in partnership with Baltimore City Public Schools, the Greater Baltimore Committee, the Public School Administrators and Supervisors Association, the Baltimore Teachers Union, and local colleges and universities. By contrast the

MCRC, though it too had issues it wanted to address in Liverpool's primary and secondary schools, would simply not have been able to work in and with the schools without the support of the city council's Education Committee. There was no Liverpool figure comparable to Superintendent Alice Pinderhughes in Baltimore, who had the confidence and the authority to act without Mayor Schaefer's approval.

Indeed, the Liverpool group that did meet with the greatest success in accumulating the resources to accomplish its goals under a hostile local authority was the Eldonians—the group that did not seek to exercise influence beyond the confines of its neighbourhood, and so could afford to run the risk of angering the council even more by seeking aid from the Thatcher government. The Eldonians were also, like BUILD and unlike the MCRC and many of the Anti-Cuts Campaign members, financially independent of the city council. Even if financial dependence on the council did not prevent the MCRC and the Anti-Cuts Campaign from criticising and organising against the council, it did eventually dictate their actions in that members had to expend time and energy strategizing around how to maintain their funding without Tony Byrne noticing. The Eldonians and BUILD, because of their financial independence, could be less inhibited in the partners they sought out and in the setting of their agendas.

Under friendlier local political regimes the picture becomes more complicated, but as a pressure group BUILD was indisputably more successful than Community Rights. In the period following the 1987 local elections, however, BUILD's comparative success had less to do with the distribution of resources in Baltimore and more to do with what all the pressure groups had 'enjoyed' under hostile local political conditions: leadership and a clear cause. Community Rights collapsed not under pressure from the council, but because—in the face of the council's overwhelming support—it could not convey a sense of its relevance or purpose to its members. More sophisticated leadership (of the variety that Arnie Graf provided to BUILD, when

Baltimore's banks were complying 'too easily' with the group's demands) may have been able to navigate the situation with more success, but Community Rights lost its best leaders to the council itself in the 1987 and 1988 local elections. Leadership and a sense of purpose were so obviously a part of each of the pressure groups under hostile local political conditions that they could almost be overlooked when considering what enabled the groups to function; it is largely by observing what happened in their absence that it becomes clear how essential they were to any of the groups' successes. As for the distribution of resources that had been so crucial to BUILD's victories under Mayor Schaefer, under Mayor Schmoke that distribution began to seem as much a liability as an opportunity. Even with mayoral support, BUILD's success still depended on its ability to amass broad coalitions of resource-holders inside and outside government, and the loss of a leader like the president of the Public School Administrators and Supervisors Association or the executive director of the Greater Baltimore Committee could seriously compromise years of organising effort.

However, a full consideration of the legacy of the Anti-Cuts Campaign's success under a friendly local political regime cannot stop with the Community Rights Association, and must also include an evaluation of the former campaigners who took advantage of a dramatic shift in local political opportunity structure to become councillors themselves. The fact that they were able to become councillors at all suggests that, while Baltimore may have been the more fertile environment for pressure groups during the 1980s, Liverpool may have been operating closer to the ideals of local democracy. It is true that Baltimore's local government structure and political environment as both a strong-mayor and a one-party town meant that it was more straightforward for BUILD to use elections to secure commitments from future decision-makers than it would have been for the Liverpool pressure groups. This same structure, though, also meant that attempting to access formal elected positions would have been a far taller order for BUILD leaders than it was for Anti-Cuts Campaign leaders. Once the District Labour Party was

no longer controlling Labour's candidate selection in Liverpool, the greatest obstacle to Anti-Cuts campaigners' election prospects was removed. Both the number of seats available and the public financing of elections made entering and winning an election a much more achievable goal for Liverpool's working and lower-middle class members (especially those who had some political experience via the Anti-Cuts Campaign) than for Baltimore's. The relative inaccessibility of elected power in Baltimore may have made a pressure group like BUILD more necessary than the pressure groups in Liverpool. That this may have been the case in Baltimore, however, points as much toward a compromised democracy in which pressure groups coped with governance failures as it does toward a vibrant democracy in which pressure groups contributed to governance successes.

Once on the council, the former MCRC and Anti-Cuts Campaign members did begin both to bend resources toward an equal opportunities agenda and increase service provision for lower-income people, as well as institute more opportunities for outside groups and individuals to participate in council decision-making through bodies like the Citywide Tenants Forum. As individual councillors, then, the former MCRC and Anti-Cuts Campaign members amassed 'power to'; whether they were, as councillors, also able to similarly empower other outside groups and individuals is less clear. It seems more likely that their attempts to involve a wider range of people in government were symbolic efforts rather than substantive power-sharing innovations, in part because the city council itself was perennially coping with central government cuts. It is difficult to empower others when one's own resources for action are diminishing. That as councillors the former campaigners did not obviously enable new groups of people to accumulate the resources necessary to exercise 'power to' does not mean that the new practices they instituted to manage the resources they had were insignificant. As Stone himself acknowledges:

Change may come about, not through the alteration of basic commitments, but through the piecemeal evolution of new practices and patterns of cooperation and exchange. If, as some students of the human experience claim, life is in the details, then we should be more attentive to details—how they can come to matter and how they can cumulate into new but perhaps unintended patterns. In a sense, power may also lie in the details; that is, in the capacity to guide the piecemeal evolution of new practices and make marginal adjustments in prevailing patterns of cooperation and exchange.

This brings us to the question of not just which groups were able to act most successfully as pressure groups during the period concerned, but in which city better outcomes, whether in terms of jobs or houses or education, for lower income people were achieved. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to do much more than acknowledge that the conditions that make a place ripe for pressure group success may not be conditions that support the flourishing of all its residents, regardless of their socioeconomic status (indeed, the findings here gesture in the opposite direction), and that even sizeable victories for a pressure group—such as the Baltimore Commonwealth or the Nehemiah housing projects—are not likely to be transformative on a scale that government-led action might be. Indeed, in roughly the same length of time that BUILD's efforts led to the development of almost 300 units of high-quality low-income housing units, the Militant-directed council, with Tony Byrne at the helm of its Housing Committee, built almost 3,000.

Yet, just as one has to look beyond the lifespan of Community Rights and onto the city council to appreciate the full impact of the Anti-Cuts Campaign, so it is also helpful to widen the scope of one's gaze in order to recognise the full impact of what BUILD, by continuing to grow as an independent group, was able to accomplish in Baltimore and beyond. BUILD's most notable victory during Schmoke's ten years in office was not a project that originally had his support, but one he had to be pressured into accepting: a 1995 'living wage' ordinance for janitors, cafeteria workers, and others employed under contract at city schools and public

buildings—the first legislation of its kind in the United States.⁷¹⁶ This campaign has, in the years since, sparked dozens of similar campaigns in cities around the US and, indeed, abroad. The East London Communities Organisation (TELCO), an IAF affiliate in London, first began organising for living wages in 2001; ten years later, it estimated that an additional 10,000 families who had been surviving on a minimum wage were receiving a living wage through the organisation's efforts, and the 2012 London Olympics became the first 'living wage games' because of TELCO's negotiations with the games' Local Organising Committee.⁷¹⁷ Bishop Douglas Miles, who had spearheaded BUILD's living wage campaign, was invited by TELCO to join its public celebration of the Olympics victory.

Mayor Schmoke had at first opposed BUILD's living wage proposals not because he disagreed with the principle of a living wage, but because he feared the city could not afford it. Like Marie McGiveron and the other Anti-Cuts Campaign leaders who became councillors, he had to rein in his own ambitions for his city to fall within the bounds of pesky realities like budgets. Independence from government proved valuable to BUILD in part because it allowed the organisation to dream beyond the scope of what government thought it could do—and then, eventually, create sufficient political will around that dream to press government leaders to get creative about how they could reach beyond their supposed limitations. Liverpool's campaigners-turned-councillors did not forget their former colleagues when they became city councillors, and they may have been able to participate in bending more resources toward low-income people between 1987 and 1991 than BUILD leaders were—a definite statement on the topic would require a full survey of all the council's budgets and programmes during those years that was beyond the scope of the present work, but given the imperatives of the welfare state and the concentration of resources in the city council, it seems almost sure that they did so.

⁷¹⁶ 'More than just preachers', *The Baltimore Sun*, 15/2/97, A14.

⁷¹⁷ London Citizens Management Committee Report and Financial Statements (prepared for the Charity Commission), 31/3/11, 10.

What they lost when Community Rights collapsed, then, was perhaps less a partner that would have dramatically altered outcomes in Liverpool, and more a loyal antagonist that could have helped them to imagine possibilities they themselves would not have believed they could grasp.

Appendix A – Interviews

David Alton (Baron Alton of Liverpool), 2/9/11

MP (Liberal) for Liverpool, 1979 to 1997

Gideon Ben-Tovim, 23/4/13.

Black Caucus member and city councillor (Labour), Liverpool, 1987 – 1991

Dawn Booth, 17/7/13

City councillor (Labour), 1986 – 1998

Peter Brennan, 26/3/13

Former youth worker, Shrewsbury House, and member, Langrove Street Action Group (part of Anti-Cuts Campaign)

Wally Brown, 12/9/11

President of the Merseyside Community Relations Council, 1980 - 1983

Godfrey Butland, 5/9/11

Chaplain to Bishop David Sheppard, 1978 – 1984

William Calhoun, 10/9/12

Senior pastor, Trinity Baptist Church, Baltimore

Pauline Connolly, 20/6/13

Community worker, Vauxhall Neighbourhood Council (part of Anti-Cuts Campaign)

Henry Corbett, 9/9/11; with Jane Corbett, 5/4/13

Parish priest, St. Peter's Anglican Church, West Everton; Rev. Corbett's wife and future city councillor

Paul Edwards, 7/9/11; 5/4/13

Former community worker, Liverpool Community Liaison Unit

Frank Field, 10/10/11

MP (Labour) for Birkenhead, 1979 to present

Arnie Graf, 26/11/13; 7/1/14

BUILD lead organizer, 1980 – 1984; Metro LAF staff organizer, 1985 – present

Michael Greenidge,

Charles Wootton Centre (MCRC member and part of Anti-Cuts Campaign)

Derek Hatton, 28/3/13

City councillor (Labour), Liverpool, 1979 – 1987

Mark Hedley, 1/9/11

Parishioner, St. Peter's Anglican Church, West Everton

John Hutchison, 9/9/11
Member, St. Peter's Anglican Church and Langrove Street Action Group (part of Anti-Cuts Campaign)

Neil Jameson, 12/10/12
Executive Director, London Citizens (LAF affiliate)

Patrick Jenkin (Baron Jenkin of Roding), 1/5/13
Secretary of State for the Environment, 1983 – 1985

Danise Jones-Dorsey, 15/7/14
Special assistant to Mayor Schmoke, 1988 – 1991

Jane Kennedy, 9/9/11
Former NUPE member and secretary of Liverpool district, 1981 – 1988

Peter Kilfoyle, 3/10/13
Labour Party official representative, Liverpool, 1986 -

Simon Lee, 21/10/11
Chief Executive and Rector of Liverpool Hope University, 1995 – 2003

Jack McBane, 30/11/11
Former officer, Merseyside Improved Houses

Tony McGann, 13/9/11
President of the Eldonian Community Association

Marie McGiveron, 20/6/13
Director, Vauxhall Neighbourhood Council (part of Anti-Cuts Campaign) and city councillor (Labour), Liverpool, 1988 – 1997

Nigel Mellor, 5/4/13; 18/6/13
Director of Community Liaison Unit, Liverpool

Douglas Miles, 7/8/14
Senior pastor, Koinonia Baptist Church, Baltimore

Fr. Joe Muth, 28/3/14
Parish priest, St. Matthew's Roman Catholic Church, Baltimore

Helen Naylor O'Gorman, 5/4/13
Member, Anti-Cuts Campaign

Colin Oxenforth, 6/9/11
Former Anglican parish priest in Liverpool 8

Ray Quarless, 2/4/13
Black Caucus member and MCRC secretary, 1983 – 1986

Vinnie Quayle, 12/9/13
Director, St. Ambrose Housing Aid, Baltimore

Carol Reckling, 26/11/13
BUILD lay president, 1987 – 1994

Kurt Schmoke, 13/2/14
Mayor of Baltimore, 1988 – 1997

Max Steinberg, 13/10/11
Former Housing Corporation Officer

Michael Storey (Lord Storey CBE), 11/10/13
City councillor (Liberal), Liverpool, 1973 - 2011

Gerald Taylor, 17/2/14
BUILD lead organizer, 1984 – 1988

Sally Thompson, 11/9/12
Member, Brown Memorial Park Avenue Presbyterian Church

Jeff Valentine, 29/5/14; 3/7/14
Policy director, Greater Baltimore Committee, 1981 - 1994

Mark Wasserman, 21/2/14
Chief of staff to William Donald Schaefer

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(Helen Naylor O'Gorman worked for the Liverpool Council of Voluntary Services during the period concerned and was an active member of the Anti-Cuts Campaign. She kept two large boxes of material that included meeting minutes, campaign flyers, press releases, speeches, and other assorted papers. Ms. Gorman allowed me to photocopy these materials in May 2013.)

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