Urban Politics in Victorian England

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The New Poor Law in the Nineteenth Century of which he
is the editor.

Urban Politics in Victorian England

The structure of politics
in Victorian cities

Derek Fraser

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To Jim Dyos

Preface

This book is the product of about a dozen years' research, some of which was not originally intended for the present purpose. My initial research was in the field of newspaper history and, though dimly aware of it at the time, I struck a vein of political consciousness which informed opinion across a wide range of issues. Later when I began my study of Leeds politics, I was able to explore the institutional framework of this intense urban political sensibility. Having completed a doctorate, I extended the chronological range of the Leeds material and ventured further afield to other cities in a search for evidence for a more general model of urban history in the nineteenth century. The present book is the fruit of that search and it has benefited much from the help of many whose aid I am delighted to acknowledge.

I am indebted to the School of History at Leeds which not only gave me my undergraduate training but also provided the opportunities to pursue two postgraduate research projects. I owe much to the early guidance of Asa Briggs and Donald Read, who were my initial mentors. At a later stage Arthur Taylor and Gordon Forster were sympathetic and helpful supervisors. Over the years many scholars have been generous in the provision of advice and guidance. I am pleased to record thanks to Michael Rose, Norman McCord, Maurice Beresford, Peter Hennock, Bob Morris, Vic Gatrell, and Reg Ward. Many others with whom I had less frequent contact, and countless librarians, also deserve thanks. Jack Reynolds, my colleague at Bradford, has provided much stimulating conversation and has been characteristically generous in sharing with me his unrivalled knowledge of Bradford history. Two of our research students, David Ashforth and Adrian Elliott, gave me interesting leads which flowed from their work and I thank them both. I have learned a great deal, especially about source material, from the many theses I have consulted and I am grateful to their authors for permission to cite their work. I am particularly indebted to Tom Nossiter, with whom I have had some healthy disagreements, but who also supplied valuable statistical data with the appropriate instruction. The dedication records my respectful thanks to one who has encouraged and supported my work over a number of years.

Nearer home Carol Baxendale made an excellent job of typing up a complex manuscript and Jim Morgan demonstrated his friendship by reading the book at both typescript and proof stage. I thank him for his many useful suggestions. At home my wife and family bore well the mounting piles of photocopies which littered every room. It has been a pleasure to deal with Leicester University Press, for whom Peter Boulton has been unfailingly courteous and helpful. I trust that those who, by their aid, have demonstrated the existence of a community of scholars will consider that I have used their counsel wisely. Responsibility for errors and shortcomings remains mine alone.

DEREK FRASER
University of Bradford
November 1975

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Front Cover: The high point of the 'Leeds new move' on suffrage reform was the splendid festival held in Marshall's new mill in January 1841. Ominously, the Chartists passed a universal suffrage amendment and O'Connor dubbed the gathering the Fox and Goose Club. The *Northern Star* published a cartoon, from which this is a detail, depicting the working-class audience as geese among the Egyptian pillars of Marshall's mill, and the middle-class leaders as foxes ready to feast upon an easy prey.

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