

Medieval London

Collected Papers of Caroline M. Barron

Edited by
Martha Carlin and Joel T. Rosenthal



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RESEARCH IN MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN CULTURE

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Chapter 11

Ralph Holland and the London Radicals, 1438–1444

THE PROSPERITY OF THE City of London depends not upon the merchants but upon the artisans'. So declared the tailor John Bale in 1443. He spoke for a large group of Londoners, many of whom were excluded from active participation in the government of the City and whose sense of injustice and grievance, while firmly rooted in the kind of company demarcation dispute which was common in the period, extended to the whole fabric of civic government.

The basic conflict arose between the Tailors and the Drapers and this was symptomatic of the fundamental rift in City life: the rift between the artisans and the merchants. The artisan companies might be ancient, but in wealth and power they lagged some considerable way behind the merchant companies who controlled the City government and so also gained the royal ear. The opposition which the ruling merchant oligarchy encountered in these years fed upon a variety of grievances, but its unity and driving force depended upon one man, a tailor called Ralph Holland. By his personal ability he articulated the artisans' grievances, and out of the original dispute between the Tailors and Drapers there developed an organised opposition party in the city. This party first attacked the method of electing the Mayor and then, in 1443, resisted the new London charter which gave the Mayor and Aldermen powers as Justices, over and above their existing powers as Guardians of the Peace. When its attempts at reform within the existing framework of City government failed, the opposition party resorted to an attempt at an armed uprising. The failure of this in the autumn of 1443 marked the triumph of the conservative merchant elements but, during their brief period of agitation, Ralph Holland and his allies left behind them a record which helps to illuminate the actions and desires of that elusive being, the medieval common man.

The Tailors and Linen-Armourers of London had received letters patent from Edward III in 1327 whereby they were allowed to hold their guild once a year and to exercise the rights of search for defective work

and correction of offenders, subject to the Mayor of London.¹ It was not until 1364 that the Drapers first received letters patent. By these they were granted a monopoly of buying and selling cloth in the City, and the power to elect four wardens to oversee and rule the mystery by aid of the Mayor and Sheriffs if need be.² In the fourteenth century there appears to have been no conflict between the two companies. Whereas the Tailors made up cloth, especially linen cloth, and did not act as retailers, the London Drapers were primarily concerned with the buying and selling of woollen cloth.³

In 1390 the Tailors received further letters patent from Richard II which granted them the right to elect a Master as well as their four Wardens and to make ordinances for the better government of the mystery.⁴ Finally Henry IV incorporated the Tailors' Guild and authorized them to use a common seal and to hold land to the annual value of £100.⁵ So it would appear that in the first part of the fifteenth century the Tailors were the more established and the wealthier of the two companies. They had had a Master since 1390, they were incorporated in 1408 and there is evidence that they had a company hall as early as 1392, whereas the Drapers only began to build their hall in 1425.⁶ Moreover in 1413 when the income from the London property of the Tailors' company stood at £44 3s. 7d. that of the Drapers was only £22 13s. 6d.⁷

Yet in spite of all this the Tailors appear to have occupied a relatively subordinate position in the government of the City. In the years between 1327 and 1435, when Ralph Holland became an Alderman, the Tailors provided no Aldermen, and consequently no Mayors, whereas the Drapers in the same period furnished 34 Aldermen, 14 of whom became Mayors. The other companies from whom nearly all the Aldermen were drawn in this period were the Mercers, Grocers, Fishmongers, Goldsmiths, Skinners and Vintners. What reason can be found for this subordinate position of the Tailors? Why did they not achieve civic office? The situation may, perhaps, be explained by the fact that the Tailors were an artisan guild, albeit a wealthy one. A Tailor worked with his hands; a Draper bought and sold. A Tailor could make no more money than his hands could earn; a Draper in this period of the expanding English cloth trade could become wealthy and a man of influence at home and abroad. The other great London companies of this period were also primarily merchant guilds. Merchant Drapers like John Hende, William Crowmer and Simon Eyre were rich men and generous benefactors, but there were no Tailors who stood out in this way. Furthermore, since the Drapers had the monopoly of buying and selling woollen cloth in London, the Tailors became dependent upon

them for the means to carry on their own trade. Thus the London Draper had established himself securely as the indispensable middle man and the Tailor had no choice but to accept his dependent position.

In these circumstances an ambitious man, who had the necessary capital, would choose, if he could, to become a Draper. A few men appear to have belonged to both companies simultaneously, although this was unusual.⁸ Ralph Holland was one of these. He appears first in the records of the Drapers' company for 1413–14 when he was sufficiently advanced in status to owe money for the enrolment of his apprentice, Thomas Holme.⁹ In 1414–16 he paid 20s. to enter the livery of the Tailors' company and even after he was Master of the Tailors two years later, he is still to be found in the Drapers' accounts contributing 40s. towards the new Drapers' Hall.¹⁰ Indeed, even as late as 1441, when the Drapers' accounts end, Holland was still being assessed for quarterage, although it is clear from other evidence that by this date he had fully identified himself with the interests of the Tailors' company.¹¹

Ralph Holland may have come originally from Newington in Surrey in the early years of the fifteenth century.¹² By 1416 he was well established in London and was probably in his early twenties. Of his parents nothing is known, but sometime before 1419 he had married a wife Mathilda and by her had at least one son, also Ralph, who entered the livery of the Tailors' company in 1435/6 but appears to have died before his father.¹³ In 1419 Ralph Holland was elected Master of the Tailors' company¹⁴ and he appears first in the civic records when, on 5th September 1426, he was committed to prison, having criticised the Mayor for correcting the Tailors. This is the first hint of the outspoken radical who was to disturb the peace of the City at intervals over the next twenty years. On this occasion Holland was bound over with a caution, but he seems to have paid little attention to this.¹⁵ In the court of Aldermen on 8th October John Olney, a Mercer, Thomas Cook, a Draper, and Thomas Reynwell, a Grocer, gave evidence on oath against Holland. On that day the Mayor had re-issued an ancient royal writ of 1315. This writ enjoined that only those citizens who had been summoned might attend the elections of the Sheriffs on 21st September and the Mayor on 13th October, and not the freemen of the City at large. It would seem that the practice of summoning citizens individually to these elections had lapsed, and that all interested freemen were accustomed to attend. By reverting to the older practice the Mayor and Aldermen were clearly intending to exercise some control over the composition of the electorate on these important occasions. Suspecting

this motive, Holland had been heard to declare that the writs about the election of the Mayor were new, fabricated and untrue and were not to be found recorded in any of the City's ancient books. In fact Holland was mistaken on this point for the royal writ of 1315 was recorded in the City Letter Book and, as a result of his ill-judged words, Holland was sent to Ludgate prison.¹⁶ The Sheriffs in their return to the royal writ of *habeas corpus* justified Holland's imprisonment on the grounds that he had not only 'wantonly declared that such ordinances were fabrications' but had also threatened the Draper, Thomas Cook, with violence.¹⁷ Early, therefore, in his career Ralph Holland fought for a wide civic franchise and consequently fell foul of the ruling oligarchy. This problem of the civic franchise and of the right of the 'inferior' citizens to vote at civic elections was to become an important plank in Holland's later platform and, by tackling the problem of the constitutional basis of government, he showed a political awareness which raised him above his contemporaries. On this occasion Holland submitted and he was released on £100 bail provided by four men of whom three may be definitely identified as Tailors.¹⁸

By 1429 Ralph Holland had become a Common Councilman and in February of that year he was presented to the Court of Aldermen by the men of the ward of Baynard's Castle as one of their four candidates for the vacant Aldermanry. The other candidates were Ralph Skinnard, who had been one of Holland's sureties, the Vintner Thomas Walsingham and Thomas Duffhous who was a Fishmonger and, currently, one of the Sheriffs. The Aldermen unanimously chose Walsingham.¹⁹ This rebuff did not make Holland more conformist. On 13th May 1429 Thomas Bradby, a Fishmonger, reported to the Court of Aldermen that in a meeting of Common Council held two days earlier, when the question of providing the King with a loan had been discussed, Holland had said that the King's necessity was not as great as the Mayor and Aldermen represented.²⁰ Then, in September of the same year, Ralph Holland finally gained access to the 'establishment', for the Commonalty elected him as their Sheriff for the succeeding year.²¹

Unfortunately the civic Journals are missing for the seven years following November 1429 so it is impossible to trace Holland's career in any detail.²² In September 1434 he was elected one of the annual City auditors.²³ From the Tailors' company accounts it is clear that he was prospering and in July 1435 he was able to lend £100 to the King.²⁴ By October of that year he had been chosen as Alderman for the ward of Bread Street.²⁵ But by now the rivalry between the Tailors and Drapers had crystallised

into a dispute over the rights of the two companies in searching for defective cloth in the City. In the year ending August 1435 the Tailors had spent £14 4s. 4d. on fees and entertainment for the lawyers who were helping them to construct their case against the Drapers.²⁶

The dispute between the two companies was aggravated by the statute of 1437 which demanded that the rules and regulations of all guilds, fraternities and companies should be submitted for approval to the local Justices of the Peace or to the governors of the cities concerned.²⁷ In London it had always been necessary for guilds and companies to submit their regulations to the Mayor for approval, and, if the company wardens exercised rights of search for defective work they never did so absolutely, but as the Mayor's deputies. As a result of the statute many City companies sought a new royal confirmation of their charters. In November 1438 the Drapers received new letters patent incorporating them as a company and empowering them to elect a Master as well as their four Wardens.²⁸ The new charter did not specifically grant the Drapers the right to search for defective cloth in the City, but the King appointed two Drapers as aulnagers in London, i.e. as collectors of the tax payable to the King on every piece of woollen cloth. No cloth could be sold, or made up, until it had been sealed by the aulnager to show that the tax had been paid and that the piece was of the correct width and length. Although the aulnagers were concerned with money, and not with defects of quality or workmanship, the grant of the office to two Drapers in February 1439 was regarded by their company as a considerable 'coup' and was greatly displeasing to the Tailors.²⁹

But the Tailors were not to be outdone. They also received letters patent dated 24th February 1439 which confirmed their earlier royal grants but also added a new and important clause empowering the Master and Wardens to 'have and make full search in and of the misteries aforesaid and of all those persons who are or shall be privileged with the Tailors and Linen Armourers . . . and to correct and reform all defects found among them . . . by the survey of the Mayor of your said City . . .'³⁰ By the considerable outlay of £79 18s. 3d. the Tailors had secured a signal advantage, for the search of members of their company was to be carried out by either the Mayor or their own Wardens.³¹ The Mayor had, before this, always been entitled to choose those deputies he wished, although in practice he usually selected the Wardens of the company concerned. Thus the Tailors' new charter could be argued to have infringed the rights of the

Mayor of London, and it was upon this ground that the Drapers chose to launch their attack.

Later in 1439 the Mayor ordered that both the Tailors and the Saddlers, whose new charter contained a similar search clause, should deposit their charters at Guildhall while it was decided whether they infringed the City's liberties.³² The Drapers' accounts for the year ending August 1440 show that they were seriously worried by the search clause in the Tailors' new charter whereby they were completely excluded from any search of the artisan company. They paid 2s. for a Chancery copy of 'the newe article in the Taylours charter' and a further 2s. for the drafting and writing of two bills which they sent to the Mayor 'for the same article'.³³ The Tailors, however, spent a further £60 in this year for a total confirmation of the new charter and other attendant expenses.³⁴

During the early years of this dispute there is no evidence that Ralph Holland was promoting the Tailors' cause at the Court of Aldermen in a provocative or outspoken way.³⁵ Rather he would seem to have been taking steps to become accepted as a conventional Alderman and, hence, a candidate for the Mayoralty. He was appointed to committees and selected to put the City's case in the dispute with the Prior of Holy Trinity to the Duke of Gloucester.³⁶ This would suggest that Holland was known and liked by Duke Humphrey, and the Tailors' accounts indicate that their recent success may have been due to his patronage, which would be of particular importance in this period of conciliar rule.³⁷ On 13th October 1439 the City Journals record for the first time the names of the two Aldermen whom the assembled freemen presented to the Court of Aldermen for their choice of Mayor for the following year. The candidates were Robert Large, a Mercer, and Ralph Holland. The Aldermen chose Robert Large.³⁸

One rejection did not cause a constitutional crisis and Ralph Holland was content to bide his turn. The ill feeling between the Tailors and Drapers certainly continued. In November of that year John Pevenel was sent to prison for saying that he could prove six members of the Drapers' company to be false, when in fact he could not substantiate any of his charges.³⁹ Meanwhile Holland continued to be appointed to various committees of the Court of Aldermen⁴⁰ and on 13th October 1440, the freemen again selected two candidates for the Mayoralty: John Paddesley, a Goldsmith, and Ralph Holland. The Aldermen chose Paddesley.⁴¹

It was during the Mayoralty of John Paddesley that the dispute between the Tailors and Drapers came to a head. Since 1439 both com-

panies had been arguing their case before the Chancellor, and before the Court of Aldermen. Then on 5th August 1441 the Wardens of the Drapers' company complained to the Mayor and Aldermen that they did not have their customary scrutiny of lengths of cloth in the possession of Tailors. The particular reason for their concern was the forthcoming St Bartholomew's Fair which was held for three days around 24th August. On this occasion much cloth was bought and sold by both Tailors and Drapers and it had been customary for the Drapers to exercise the right of search. The Court postponed replying to this complaint until all the Aldermen who were absent at the time, including Holland, should have been consulted.⁴² On 14th August 1441, the Mayor and Aldermen produced a compromise in time for the Fair. The Master and Wardens of the Drapers' company were to exercise their general rights of search for defective woollen cloth as before. But as a temporary expedient to preserve the peace, and to give the Tailors a chance to present their case later, the Mayor himself would search the unmade-up woollen cloth displayed for sale by the Tailors at the Fair.⁴³ Clearly by this date the Tailors were acting as retailers of cloth and it would seem that the artisan company was attempting to encroach upon the trading activities of the Drapers. It was this desire on the part of the Tailors to upgrade themselves into a merchant company which lay at the root of the dispute, of which the trouble over the right of search was but the symptom.

While the Drapers had been busy furthering their cause at the Court of Aldermen, the Tailors had prevailed upon the King to send a letter to the Mayor instructing him to allow the Tailors to search and remedy defects in their mistery in accordance with the earlier royal letters patent of February 1439.⁴⁴ In spite of this regal command it would appear that the Mayor continued with his original plan of searching the Tailors at the Fair himself for, although four Drapers were sworn in Court to exercise the scrutiny, no Tailors were similarly sworn.⁴⁵

The election of the Mayor on 13th October 1441 was, in these circumstances, of more than passing significance. Success or failure in the dispute over the rights of search would depend very largely upon the decisions of the Mayor in the coming year. Again there is little evidence to suggest that Ralph Holland had been acting in a way which his fellow-Aldermen might consider obnoxious. It is true that in March 1441 the Mayor's sergeant, John Russel, had been examined in Court about certain words which he had heard spoken by Holland,⁴⁶ but throughout the year he had continued to be appointed to arduous and important committees

of the Court of Aldermen.⁴⁷ There would seem to be no grounds on which the Aldermen could reasonably reject Holland as Mayor if he were presented as a candidate for the third time.

The events of 13th October 1441 were of such an unusual nature that they even attracted the attention of contemporary chroniclers. The London freemen, gathered together in Guildhall, chose two candidates, the Tailor Ralph Holland and Robert Clopton, a Draper. Then, while the crowd waited breathlessly in the outer hall, the Aldermen deliberated in private. Finally John Paddesley, the current Mayor, emerged leading upon his right hand the Aldermen's choice—Robert Clopton, the Draper. Instantly a commotion broke out and the Tailors and other 'handycrafty' men called out 'nay, not that man but Raulyn Holland'. Nothing the Mayor could do nor his Sergeant's attempts at crying 'oyes' could quieten the incensed Tailors. Finally the Sheriffs had to round up the protesters and send them to prison. Indeed it appears that the Tailors not only rejected Clopton but even unofficially declared Holland to have been elected Mayor.⁴⁸

The story in the chronicles is substantiated by the official version of the events of October 13th to be found in the City Journals.⁴⁹ An *ad hoc* jury of eighteen men declared that eleven men had been responsible for breaking the King's peace, six Tailors and five Skinners. These eleven were committed to prison and on the following day the Master and Wardens of the Tailors' Company asked to be allowed to go bail for the prisoners. This was refused on the grounds that a mandate from the King had instructed the Mayor that the Tailors were not to be released on bail. On 4th November the men were still in prison and the Court of Aldermen sent a deputation to the King's Council to discuss the matter. Three days later a further committee of more senior Aldermen was sent again to the Council to urge that the Tailors and Skinners should not be set free without the consent of the Mayor and Aldermen. A note was added in the Journal to state that the Aldermen had been graciously received and their petition heard.⁵⁰ On 8th November Shefuld, the warden of Newgate prison where the eleven men were kept, reported to the Court of Aldermen that the prisoners claimed that they were not guilty of the offences for which they were imprisoned and that they knew that their release depended not upon the Mayor but upon the Lords of the Council. Shefuld further informed the Court that Kent and White, who were Tailors, and Sherde and Palmer, who were Skinners, were the ring-leaders, and that Palmer and Kent had declared that even if they never left

prison they would make no 'mediaciones' to the Mayor for their freedom. These were brave words.⁵¹ Subsequently, however, the men were released by a writ of privy seal and were bound over to keep the peace, to appear before the Mayor's Court and the King's Council and to make reparation for their transgressions.⁵²

With the troublesome Tailors and Skinners thus subdued, the new Mayor, the Draper Robert Clopton, turned his attention to achieving the suspension of the obnoxious scrutiny clause in the Tailors' charter. In this year the Drapers spent £10 2s. 11d. to some purpose for, on 21st August 1442, the King wrote to the Master and Wardens of the Tailors, withdrawing the exclusive right of search which had previously been granted to them and vesting this right once more in the hands of the Mayor or those deputies whom he chose.⁵³ Another royal letter was sent to the Mayor confirming his right of search over all companies and misteries in London, in accordance with the City's ancient liberties and customs, notwithstanding the opposition of certain Tailors and other men in the City.⁵⁴ Thus the Tailors found themselves once more subject to the scrutiny of the Mayor or, what was worse, any deputy whom he chose to appoint. Currently, moreover, the Mayor was a Draper and he was always a representative of the merchant classes. The Tailors had spent a great deal of money in obtaining their new charter and now it was worthless and had to be returned to the King's Council before Michaelmas 1442. How differently might events have turned out for the Tailors if their man, Ralph Holland, had been chosen Mayor.

It is not surprising that in these circumstances the City governors feared renewed trouble at the election of the Mayor which was due to take place on 13th October 1442. Accordingly they obtained a royal writ instructing the Mayor and Sheriffs to proclaim that, because of recent disturbances, no one but the Aldermen and other discreet and powerful citizens were to attend the Mayor's election.⁵⁵ As early as 1426 Ralph Holland had protested at this limitation of the civic franchise, and for fear of protest, the Aldermen decided to proclaim not only the King's recent writ but also the ancient one of 1315, to show that this limitation was not an innovation.⁵⁶

At the election on 13th October 1442 John Atherley, an Ironmonger, was chosen at a meeting consisting only of those who were summoned and whose names were checked off at the door of Guildhall.⁵⁷ The Journals do not record the election so that the name of the rejected candidate is unknown. Three days later a clergyman who was considered to have preached a seditious sermon at St Paul's Cross appeared before the Court

and was asked to provide a written text of his sermon. On the following day the Court was informed that it was an Alderman who had provided the clergyman with his seditious material, namely that the first and the best Mayor whom the City had ever had was a Cordwainer named Walsh. No Cordwainer Walsh, nor indeed any Cordwainer, had ever filled the Mayor's office, but such an assertion was no doubt intended by the clergyman and his Alderman informant to be an incentive to the artisan classes to restore the ancient order of civic life when, in the golden age, the artisans ruled the City. The Court took the matter sufficiently seriously to require each Alderman to swear on the Gospels that he was innocent of providing such seditious information.⁵⁸ Nine Aldermen were absent from this meeting of whom Ralph Holland, the only artisan Alderman, was one. His guilt appears likely but not proven.

Even if Ralph Holland was not the ultimate source of the seditious sermon at St Paul's Cross, he was stirring up trouble elsewhere. On 26th October 1442 the Court questioned Holland about his statement that John Paddesley during his Mayoralty in the years 1440–41, had spent 1,000 marks belonging to the City on his private concerns.⁵⁹ Holland's dislike of Paddesley is not difficult to explain for it was during his Mayoralty that the Mayor had taken back into his own hands the search of cloth exposed for sale by Tailors at Saint Bartholomew's Fair. Paddesley could also be held responsible not only for the choice of the Draper, Robert Clopton, to succeed him as Mayor, but also for the stern imprisonment of those Tailors and Skinners who raised their voices in protest at Clopton's election. The leader of the artisan Skinners in these years was Nicholas Toller who also criticised Paddesley. At Stourbridge Fair he had openly declared that Paddesley had been a false judge during his Mayoralty, had judged Toller himself unfairly and, in particular, had imprisoned men in Newgate unjustly. The Skinners' leader was here referring to Paddesley's imprisonment of the eleven Skinners and Tailors in October 1441. As a result of these injudicious words, the Court placed Toller under an obligation to keep the peace on penalty of paying £20 to the City Chamber.⁶⁰

Meanwhile, although the Tailors' charter had been suspended since August 1442, it had not yet been finally quashed by the King's Council. The Court of Aldermen sent the Recorder to present the City's case and then engaged two sergeants at law to represent them before the Council. The Tailors also employed legal counsel and spent money on journeys to Westminster and on dinners for important people.⁶¹ The Tailors' quandary was that their new charter was contrary to the liberties of London

since the right of search over all misteries lay by customary right with the Mayor or the deputies whom he appointed. Thus for companies like the Drapers, whose influence in civic affairs was considerable, the Mayor's right of search presented no problem. If the Mayor himself were not a Draper, he could be easily persuaded to appoint Drapers as his deputies. The Tailors, on the other hand, seemed unlikely to provide a Mayor and could exercise no influence over his choice of deputies. It was essential to them, therefore, to enjoy a right of search independent of the civic authority. There were two alternatives open to the Tailors; either they must have their independent right of search confirmed by the King, or they must achieve some influence in civic government. It seemed now as if they were about to lose both battles and so the situation between the artisans in the City who sided with the Tailors and the merchant governors who supported the Drapers, remained explosive. While the Tailors fought for their hard-won charter, resentment seethed among the poorer classes in the City. It is not surprising that the Draper, Robert Clopton, should have thought it worthwhile to buy a charter of pardon from the King for all trespasses and quarrels which had occurred during his Mayoralty.⁶²

The final outburst of artisan discontent in these years was caused, in part, by the City's new Commission of the Peace in 1443 which was incorporated into the new charter in 1444. The text of the 1443 Commission was not enrolled in Chancery and has not survived among the City's records. It was read out to the Court of Aldermen on 13th August 1443 and appears to have regularised the judicial powers of the Mayor and Aldermen, making them not simply Guardians of the Peace, but Justices with power to hear and terminate cases.⁶³ Until this date the Mayor and Aldermen had always been wary of acting as judges in criminal cases and had preferred to leave such matters to the royal judges, especially where the City Companies were concerned. For example, when Paddesley, the Mayor, in October 1441 had committed the eleven Tailors and Skinners to Newgate prison for breaking the King's Peace, they had been released on bail by a royal judicial decision. It was, no doubt, the need for stronger measures to safeguard law and order in the City which had led the Court of Aldermen to seek for this regularisation of their powers. But in the prevailing atmosphere, it is not difficult to see why the new Commission of the Peace provoked such a violent reaction. As a contemporary chronicler wrote 'A commission was sued for the City of London which was called a charter, and the Commons were greatly aggrieved therewith.'⁶⁴

The Aldermen may have particularly wanted the new Commission to be in operation before the St Bartholomew's Fair held in the middle of August, since the dispute between the Tailors and Drapers had not yet been finally settled by the King's Council, and the Court decided that the Mayor should search the woollen cloth sold by Tailors at the Fair as had been arranged during Paddesley's Mayoralty.⁶⁵ This compromise was known to be bitterly resented by the Tailors, but there is no evidence that they caused trouble during the Fair. Early in September, however, Ralph Holland launched a vehement attack upon the new Commission in the Court of Aldermen. He claimed that it would subvert the peace of the City and undermine its customary good rule to the detriment of the London artisans. Moreover he considered that the Recorder, Robert Danvers, and the Common Clerk, Richard Barnet, were particularly responsible for procuring the new Commission and he levelled other more scandalous charges against these two men which the Journal's clerk declined to record. Holland ended his attack upon a ringing note, 'This is a commission' he declared 'not of peace, but of war'. Indeed he was almost proved right.⁶⁶

The storm broke on 21st September 1443, the customary day for the annual election by the freemen of London of the Chamberlain, and the two Sheriffs. While the Sheriffs changed every year, the Chamberlain was usually re-elected since the office required experience and skill. On this occasion a large crowd of 'inferior' citizens refused to agree that John Chichele, who had served the City as Chamberlain since 1434, should continue in office the following year. Instead they raised their hands and cried for 'Cottisbrook'. Chichele may have been singled out for attack in this way because it was thought that by controlling the City's finances he was, in some sense, responsible for the purchase of the new Commission. But it may have been that, since the office of Chamberlain was one of the few important civic offices which the citizens controlled directly by annual election, their purpose was simply to exercise their powers rather than to attack Chichele. But they did not succeed, for the Mayor ordered that all those who had not been personally summoned should depart and the election take place again. The question was now put to the more select body of citizens and 'John Chichele was nominated Chamberlain with the unanimous consent of the Mayor and Aldermen'. The Journal's clerk added to his version of these events that Chichele was elected 'as a man faithful, wise, diligent and prudent'.⁶⁷

Who was Cottisbrook, the radicals' candidate? Before these events it is not easy to identify him with the artisan cause. He was a Grocer and a Common Councilman who had served the City as a Member of Parliament in 1442.⁶⁸ He was not unqualified to act as Chamberlain since he had already been one of the City's auditors.⁶⁹ After his rejection as Chamberlain by the Mayor and Aldermen, he became one of the more vocal and informed of the City radicals, but he appears to have died in 1444 or 1445.⁷⁰

The City governors now moved quickly. John Bakewell, a member of Christopher Water's household (a Skinner who was subsequently associated with Holland's conspiracy) was imprisoned for publicly cursing the authority of a City sergeant.⁷¹ John Arcall, a Tailor who had earlier insulted the Chamberlain, now declared in court that even if he were offered £100 he would not want Chichele as Chamberlain since he had been responsible for acquiring the new Commission.⁷² On 24th September 1443 the Masters and Wardens of all the City companies were summoned to the court of Aldermen and instructed to warn the men of their companies and the members of their own households, to desist from spreading false rumours and scandals about the Mayor and Aldermen. Three days later these same men were again summoned before the Court to be informed that the new Commission of the Peace was not contrary to the liberties of the City.⁷³ But this did not deter William Goldyngton, a spirited Carpenter, from declaring to the Mayor's sergeant that he had enough hurdles to draw all those traitors who had obtained the new Commission of the Peace from the Tower to Tyburn. The new Commission, he added, was contrived to bring the citizens of London into bondage.⁷⁴

To add to the problems of the City governors, the date for the election of a new Mayor was fast approaching. In the circumstances the Mayor and Aldermen felt the need for the support of the whole body of Aldermen many of whom had not attended the Court since August. The absent Aldermen were sent letters drafted in English by the Journal's clerk in which they were asked to come and give their counsel and advice in 'diverse matters of great charge that be full peysaunt touching the governance of the City of London which remain in suspension and undetermined'.⁷⁵ Most of the Aldermen responded to these letters and returned from the country. Ralph Holland, not surprisingly, attended the Court only once between the Sheriff's election on 21st September and the Mayor's election on 13th October. As a further precaution the Court obtained from the King, as it had done in the previous October, a writ which restricted the electorate at the Mayor's election to those who had

been personally summoned. This writ was made public in the City on 12th October, and the following day a Grocer, Thomas Catworth, was elected Mayor without any overt trouble.⁷⁶

But, in fact, it is clear from evidence that was later heard by the Court of Aldermen, that some considerable show of artisan force had been planned for the day of the Mayor's election. The Tailors had men armed with swords, poleaxes and other weapons ready for the occasion.⁷⁷ There had been a series of secret meetings. John Bale, a Tailor, had urged Thomas Shrub to attend a meeting to discuss the new Commission.⁷⁸ A Draper, Clement Lyffyn, gave evidence at second hand that two thousand people were ready to rise in the City and that the insurrection would be led by Master William Clif.⁷⁹ But as Clif was a perfectly respectable surveyor who was subsequently employed by the City on a variety of projects, his connection with the radical cause is doubtful. A man named Fayrefeld gave evidence that there was a meeting of men from the Tailors', Saddlers', Skinners', Goldsmiths', and Brewers' companies, who were summoned by the beadles of the Tailors and met at the house of the Friars Minor.⁸⁰ Another Draper, Thomas Cook, who had earlier crossed swords with Ralph Holland, reported that in the house of a Pewterer named Lambe, the Tailor John Blake had uttered words which violently threatened the King's Peace. Lambe himself was examined and declared that Blake had said that if the Commission remained in force the commons would rise, and if the commons rose there would then be great danger.⁸¹

The conspirators did not, however, confine themselves to planning an armed rising. William Cottisbrook, the Grocer whom the 'inferior' citizens had tried to make Chamberlain, had displayed a copy of the 'Great Charter of London' to his associates, and in the City at large. The 'Great Charter' of 1319 was so-called not only because it incorporated a large number of privileges which were important to the poorer freemen, but also because it had been confirmed in Parliament. Cottisbrook used this charter to try to undermine the authority of the Mayor and was heard to say that an elected Mayor is not the Mayor of those who had not elected him, hence those who had been excluded from the Mayor's election could withdraw their obedience to him. These were indeed radical doctrines about the basis of authority and must have appeared very novel to most contemporary Londoners. But in the end Cottisbrook denied that he had said any of these things.⁸²

There was also a wide-spread belief among the artisan conspirators that the royal writ restricting the attendance at the Mayor's election to

those who had been personally summoned, had not emanated from the royal Chancery but was, in fact, a fabrication by the Aldermen. Ralph Holland had attacked a similar royal writ in just these terms as early as 1426.⁸³ John Bale the Tailor who had already emerged as an agitator, and organiser of the movement, claimed that he heard the Lord Chancellor declare that the writ had not been recorded and that it had not passed through his hands nor come to his notice.⁸⁴ At some date around the middle of October the Tailors had come into contact with the Lord Chancellor since twelve of them had appeared before him. It would seem that they had been accused of making an armed—but obviously ineffective—rising or protest on the occasion of the Mayor's election. While Christopher Water, a Skinner of radical inclinations, had been attending a conspiratorial meeting at Ralph Holland's house on 15th October, a group of Tailors arrived with the news that the twelve Tailors who had appeared before the Lord Chancellor had been told by him that no writ about the Mayor's election had been sent by him.⁸⁵ Another Tailor named Henxton who, like John Bale must have been one of the twelve accused, had declared that there was no writ to prevent any freemen from attending the Mayor's election, and that the Lord Chancellor had told him this and Adam Moleyns had confirmed it.⁸⁶ On the face of it, it would seem unlikely that the Lord Chancellor, or Adam Moleyns, would have taken rebellious Tailors into his confidence in this way. But Henxton further declared that, whether the King's writ were a fabrication or not, it was, in any case, not authoritative since the power and authority of Parliament lay behind the City Charter. Here Henxton was thinking about the same Great Charter of the City which William Cottisbrook had been displaying to support the radical cause.⁸⁷ It is of no little interest that as early as 1443 an ordinary workman was aware of the antithesis between the authority of Parliament and that of the Crown. Indeed Henxton, whoever he may have been, fits more closely into the pattern and ideas of seventeenth century history than fifteenth. A child born before his time, John Bale, the Tailors' organisation man, had more pressing matters at heart when he stoutly maintained in Court, that the prosperity of the City depended upon the artisans and not upon the merchants.⁸⁸

Ralph Holland had lent his authority and his house to the conspirators. He was a Tailor and the ring-leaders in the movement were Tailors. The conspiracy, in its resort to force of arms, had clearly failed dismally, although it had also produced a brief flowering of ideas which could be dignified with the title of political thought. Although several men were

involved in the movement, Ralph Holland was obviously the most powerful and the richest of the radical agitators.⁸⁹ Moreover the Court of Aldermen was informed that for the last six years, since 1437, Holland had had many deputies appointed to organise the opposition.⁹⁰ In these circumstances it is not surprising that the failure of the movement should mark also the end of Ralph Holland's civic career.

The Court of Aldermen now turned its wrathful attention upon the radical leader, who prudently absented himself from its meetings. Thomas Catworth, the Mayor elect, and other Aldermen affirmed that they had been present when Ralph Holland had declared a number of objectionable things which were now listed by the Alderman John Reynwell for the benefit of the Court.⁹¹ Holland had asserted that the control of St Bartholomew's Fair belonged, not to the City, but to the Prior of St Bartholomew's, which would mean that the Mayor was exceeding his rights in searching the cloth sold by Tailors at the Fair as he had done since 1441. In fact Holland's assertion was well-founded since the control of the Fair had been granted to the Prior by Henry I and the matter had been in dispute between the Prior and the City since 1428 although it only became serious (as a result, perhaps, of Holland's activities) in May 1444, and a compromise on the matter was finally negotiated in 1447.⁹² In this case Holland was championing the partisan interests of the Tailors as against the general good of the City as a whole. Holland was also said to have declared openly that the King's writ, restricting the electorate at the Mayor's election in October 1443, had not been proclaimed in the City as it had been written under the King's seal.

The Court of Aldermen heard also of his scandalous words about certain individuals. Holland had said that the late Mayor John Paddesley was a brawler and always was and always would be, that the Common Clerk, Richard Barnet was out of his wits, that the Recorder Robert Danvers had been a disturber of the peace in his own part of the country and had come to spread discord in the City, and that Sir William Estfeld, the most venerable of the Aldermen, had an 'understanding' with Lord Cromwell, the King's Treasurer and had revealed to him the City's secrets.⁹³ Holland had further declared that the Court of Aldermen was under the sway of two or three of its members and, moreover, that he himself was the most able of its number to expedite City business when it was discussed by the King's Council. If Holland did, in fact, enjoy the confidence of the Duke of Gloucester this might well have been the case,

although the conceit and condescension of Holland's attitude would not have endeared him to the rest of the Court.⁹⁴

Apart from these statements the Court was told that Holland had advised the freemen of the City to present two bills to the Mayor and Aldermen to right their wrongs. In the first they were to demand that those who were party to a case should not act as judges, as had happened when the Court considered the dispute between the Tailors and Drapers. In the second bill they were to demand a restoration of their customary freedom to take part in the Mayor's election. Finally the Court was told that Holland had declared that he wished that all those who were in prison for love of him might be sustained. Indeed here spoke a man truly a forbear of John Wilkes. The fifteenth-century radical also knew how to play to his gallery.

In the light of these various declarations, and in view of the fact that Holland had supported the Tailors' case when it came up before the Council, although it threatened the City's liberties, the Mayor and Aldermen considered that it would be expedient if Holland were exonerated from his Aldermanry. But the Court wanted Holland to reply first to the charges against him. When Ralph Holland failed to appear on 23rd October 1443, John Combes, one of the sergeants, was sent to collect him. Combes, however, reported back to the Court that Holland had said that he could not come because his wife was lying gravely ill and so he had to go to Newgate to distribute money among the poor prisoners that they might pray for her recovery.⁹⁵ Holland continued to avoid an appearance in Court⁹⁶ and on 18th May 1444 he was finally exonerated from his Aldermanry, in the traditional formula, that he had sought to be dismissed and that the Court had found his reasons acceptable. A new Alderman was to be elected for Bread Street ward as soon as possible.⁹⁷ So ended the civic career of a premature radical and the movement to which he had given impetus, organisation and expression died with him.⁹⁸ As late as 1459 Holland's acts were cited as precedents, but the cause had been lost.⁹⁹ The radical movement had worked at first through the legitimate channels in its attempt to achieve the election of an artisan as Mayor. Then, thwarted in this, the movement had turned to conspiracy and attempted violence in October 1443.

But even after the failure of the rising and the eclipse of Ralph Holland the spirit of rebellion could be detected here and there. In January 1444 a man named John Farndon had to be sent to Newgate for presenting an unsuitable and scandalous bill against his Alderman in the

wardmote of Bishopsgate, in which he had affirmed that Thomas Chalton, the Alderman, had perverted the course of justice by delay, favour and negligence.¹⁰⁰ Similar bills had been presented in the ward motes of Bread Street, Broad Street, Queenhythe, Cornhill and elsewhere.¹⁰¹ In these bills the Aldermen had been accused of being usurers as well as supporters of robbery and adultery. The Chamberlain was said to have appropriated the Common Soil of the City and the Recorder to have forced men into obligations of £20 to observe ordinances which they considered to be unjust. There was, it had been claimed in the bill, one law for the rich and another for the poor.¹⁰² Resistance to the new Commission of the Peace continued also. A Dyer named William Haylyn was also sent to Newgate in January 1444 because he had protested at the spending of 2,000 marks to buy a charter which was contrary to the liberties and franchises of the City and would destroy freedom.¹⁰³

In general, however, the mood of the Londoners had softened. In September a meeting of the Common Council approved a revised draft of the charter which now included other new clauses which would be acceptable to the citizens, as well as the clause dealing with the powers of the Mayor and Aldermen as Justices of the Peace.¹⁰⁴ The City gained extensive rights in Southwark and the statement that nothing was to be done which would be to the detriment of the City's liberties, was reiterated constantly throughout the new Charter. Of course such a charter cost money, but the Common Council was sufficiently pleased with the new draft to agree that it should be paid for out of common funds, and even went so far as to vote great thanks to the Mayor and Aldermen for their efforts in obtaining it.¹⁰⁵ The new charter was finally sealed on 26th October 1444.¹⁰⁶

The dispute between the Tailors and Drapers took somewhat longer to settle. In 1447 it was necessary to re-enact the compromise of 1441 whereby the Mayor was to search woollen cloth sold by Tailors at St Bartholomew's Fair.¹⁰⁷ Then, on 6th October 1447, the Drapers' right of search over all woollen cloths sold by retail in the City was confirmed by the Mayor and Aldermen. This confirmation was subsequently cut out of the Letter Book of the City—no doubt by the indignant Tailors.¹⁰⁸ In January 1448 John Lucock, a Tailor, protested at the Drapers' scrutiny and Richard Adkyns, one of the Wardens of the Tailors' Company, was examined in Court.¹⁰⁹ The Lord Chancellor considered the case again in April of that year¹¹⁰ and in February 1450, the King himself reviewed the matter.¹¹¹ It would seem that a compromise, born of exhaustion, in the end prevailed in the City whereby the Tailors maintained their right to

search woollen cloth in Tailors' shops whereas the general right to search unmade-up cloth in the City remained with the Drapers. The quarrel may also have died because of the need for joint action against the pretensions of the Shearmen.¹¹²

The opposition movement led by Ralph Holland was short-lived, primitive and unsuccessful; but it need not be disparaged for that. It showed what an able—and affluent—leader could do for a cause. Indeed there is more to admire in Ralph Holland than, perhaps, in either Wat Tyler or Jack Cade. The opposition which he formulated and nurtured was not simply a case of the 'have nots' against the 'haves'; there lay behind it a seriousness of purpose, and an awareness of the way in which civic government could function. It is surely of importance that in the years between 1438 and 1444 men of little learning, but much zeal, were formulating ideas which were to continue to be the backbone of the 'Good Old Cause' for centuries to come. The advocacy of a wide civic franchise; the belief that the authority of a governor rests upon a basis of conscious consent; the assertion of the greater authority of an act of Parliament than the sole act of a King; the consciousness of the well-being of the whole depending upon all its parts—in this case the artisans as well as the merchant governors; and, lastly, the determination that all men should be equal before the law; all these beliefs are important ones and, perhaps, especially so for being found so early and in such a humble context.

NOTES

¹ F. M. Fry and R. T. D. Sayle, *Charters of the Merchant Tailors' Company* (1937), pp. 9–11.

² A. E. Johnson, *The History of the Worshipful Company of the Drapers of London* (1914), vol. I, pp. 204–8.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 121–22.

⁴ 30 July 1390, Fry and Sayle, *op. cit.*, pp. 13–15. Entered in the City's Letter Books, together with a writ from the King, dated 27 September 1392, instructing the Mayor to allow the Tailors to enjoy their guild and customs, *Calendar of the Letter Books of the City of London, Letter Book H*, ed. R. R. Sharpe (1907) p. 384. (Hereafter cited as *L.B.H.*; so also *L.B.K.*)

⁵ 2 August 1408, Fry and Sayle, *op. cit.*, pp. 15–18; P[ublic] R[ecord] O[ffice], Ancient Petition no. 12781; *C[alendar of] P[aten]t R[olls]*, 1405–8, p. 466.

⁶ H. L. Hopkinson, *The History of the Merchant Tailors' Hall* (1931), chapters i and ii; Johnson, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 112–13.

⁷ 'Lay Subsidy temp. Henry IV', ed. J. C. L. Stahlschmidt, *Archaeological Journal*, vol. XLIV (1887), pp. 56–82; Johnson, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 128.

⁸ John Derby was variously described as a Draper and as a Tailor, see A. B. Beaven, *The Aldermen of the City of London*, vol. I (1908), p. 330 n. 1. In the early fifteenth century three men successfully petitioned to be allowed to transfer from the Tailors' to the Drapers' company, *L.B.K.*, pp. 39, 224, 309.

⁹ The surviving Drapers' accounts are printed by Johnson, *op. cit.*, vol. I, Appendix no. 18, pp. 283–348, see esp. p. 287.

¹⁰ Merchant Tailors' Hall, Wardens' Accounts 1397–1445, Ms. A4 f. 90. (Hereafter cited as Tailors' Accounts i.)

¹¹ Holland continues to appear in the Drapers' Accounts as a debtor until they end in 1442; otherwise the last description to be found of him as a Draper is in 1440, *C[alendar of] C[lose] R[olls] 1435–41*, p. 378. A deed enrolled in the Husting Court 13 March 1444 suggests that Holland had severed his connection with the Drapers since he claimed that a London shop had been granted to him as 'Ralph Holland per nomen Radulphi Holland pannarii', G[uildhall] R[ecord] O[ffice], Husting Roll 172 (21).

¹² In his will Holland made a bequest to the poor there, and he also owned property in Surrey, see Sylvia M. Thrupp, *The Merchant Class of Medieval London 1300–1500* (Ann Arbor Paperback edn., Michigan, U.S.A., 1962), pp. 350, 381.

¹³ Mathilda, wife of Ralph Holland, entered the livery of the Tailors' Company 1419–20 and 'My mistress Holland' contributed 20/- for the chapel in 1438–39, Tailors' Accounts i, f. 113, 304v. 26 March 1421 a licence to have a portable altar was granted to Ralph Holland and his wife Mathilda, *Calendar of Papal Registers: Petitions* vol. VII p. 333. Ralph Holland, junior, in his will dated 24 October 1445, bequeathed tenements in the parish of St Dunstan in the East.

¹⁴ Tailors' Accounts i, f. 112.

¹⁵ G.R.O. Journal ii, f. 82v.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* f. 85; for the 1315 writ see *L.B.D.*, pp. 24–26.

¹⁷ *L.B.K.*, pp. 55–56.

¹⁸ 10 October 1426, G.R.O. Journal ii, f. 85v.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* f. 131v.

²⁰ *Ibid.* f. 133v.

²¹ *L.B.K.*, p. 102.

²² Although the civic records of the Court of Aldermen and Court of Common Council (Journals) are missing, the Tailors' Accounts reveal some of Holland's activities. He enrolled two apprentices in 1425–26; two in 1428–29; one in 1433–34; one in 1434–35; one in 1438–39; two in 1440–41; two in 1443–44, Tailors' Accounts i., f. 159v, 193v, 244, 303v, 329, 370. Holland was probably the wealthiest member of the Tailors' Company. His contributions to the new kitchen in 1425–26, 1430–31 and 1432–33 were larger than those of any

other member of the Company, *ibid.*, f. 161v, 237v. Holland's contribution of £4 towards the new charter in 1439–40 was larger than that of anyone else, and in 1433–34 he lent the Company £15 but took as security two silver gilt basins and two silver pottles. He was repaid 10 years later, *ibid.*, f. 317v, 375.

²³ *L.B.K.*, pp. 183–84.

²⁴ 9 July 1435, *C.P.R. 1429–36*, p. 467; P.R.O. Receipt Roll E 401/742. Holland also lent to the Crown in June 1437 (£100), April 1442 (£200), April 1445 (£200), July 1449 (£100), July 1449 (£500), April 1451 (£100), all recorded in the Receipt Rolls under the relevant term.

²⁵ *L.B.K.*, p. 193.

²⁶ Tailors' Accounts i, f. 258v–259v.

²⁷ *R[olls of] P[arliament]* (1832), vol. IV, p. 507; see *L.B.K.*, p. xii.

²⁸ Text of charter, Johnson, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 214–15.

²⁹ The Drapers were Robert Shirborne and John Derby. Grant printed by Johnson, *op. cit.*, pp. 216–20.

³⁰ Fry and Sayle, *op. cit.*, pp. 21–22.

³¹ Tailors' Accounts i, f. 313v, 302. The largest items of expenditure were £30 for the Duke of Gloucester and £10 for the Bishop of Bath, the Lord Chancellor. Adam Moleyns, the Clerk of the Council, received £8 6s. 8d. and cloth worth £2. Most of the rest of the money was spent on dinners for important people, and fees for writing and enrolling the charter. See also C. M. Clode, *The Early History of the Guild of Merchant Tailors* (1888), part I, Appendix iii., pp. 345–46.

³² P. E. Jones, ed., *Calendar of Plea and Memoranda Rolls 1437–57* (Cambridge, 1954), p. 33. In 1439–40 the Tailors paid ls. 8d. 'for a copy of the bill which the Mayor of London brought to our Lord the King and to the Council, for the charters of all the different mysteries of the City', Clode, *op. cit.*, p. 346.

³³ Johnson, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 337.

³⁴ Tailors' Accounts i, f. 317v–319v; Clode, *op. cit.*, pp. 345–46.

³⁵ Holland had, of course, been involved in the activities of his Company. The Recorder of London in 1438–39 had been entertained at Holland's house when his advice was sought by the Company and Holland had contributed £4 towards the cost of the new charter, Tailors' Accounts i, f. 203. 317v.

³⁶ G.R.O. Journal iii, f. 7; *L.B.K.*, p. 230. March 1439, Holland appointed to Committee to supervise City Aqueduct, G.R.O. Journal iii, f. 11.

³⁷ The Duke entered the livery of the Company in 1414, and men were enfranchised as Tailors at his request in 1416, 1417 and 1436, Tailors' Accounts, f. 73v, 89v, 94v, 265v. Other men entered the livery of the Company at his instigation in 1425 and 1433, *ibid.*, f. 150v, 237. Gloucester was given a hood in 1432, 1436, 1437, 1439, 1441–45, *ibid.*, f. 229v, 272, 283, 309, 333, 346, 361, 376, 397. Eleanor, Duchess of Gloucester, was enrolled in the livery in 1434 and Richard Nedeham described as 'with my Lady of Gloucester' entered the livery in 1445, *ibid.*, f. 246, 338. In 1431 Gloucester sold the 'Maison de Riall' to the Company for £40 and the sale was negotiated by Holland, *ibid.*, f. 216v–217v.

When the trouble with the Drapers became serious the Tailors spent 36/8d. on cloth for Gloucester's confessor in 1435, in 1439 paid the Duke £30 (a bribe?) and at Christmas 1440 the Company paid his Mummers £6 13s. 4d., *ibid.*, f. 259v, 313v, 332v. In July 1443 Holland acted as Gloucester's financial agent in receiving repayment of a loan for him, P.R.O. Issue Roll E 403/762.

³⁸ G.R.O. Journal iii, f. 14v.

³⁹ 27 November 1439, G.R.O. Journal iii, f. 30v.

⁴⁰ In August 1440 Holland was appointed to oversee the work on the new bars at Smithfield, in September he was one of the Aldermen sent to the King to put the City's case about the abuse of the sanctuary of St Martin's-le-Grand, and he was on a second, smaller, committee set up to deal with the same problem later in the month; G.R.O. Journal iii, f. 52v, 59, 60.

⁴¹ G.R.O. Journal iii, f. 62v.

⁴² G.R.O. Journal iii, f. 93v.

⁴³ *L.B.K.*, pp. 259–60.

⁴⁴ 14th August 1441, *L.B.K.*, p. 260. The Tailors spent a considerable amount of money 'upon divers men for the search of St Bartholomew's Fair'. They also paid 6s. 8d. to a secretary 'for devising and writing a letter from the King to the Mayor of London' (the letter of 14th August 1441), and other sums upon travelling expenses and suppers, amounting in all to £6 12s. 1d. Tailors' Accounts i, f. 351–351v.

⁴⁵ G.R.O. Journal iii, f. 94v.

⁴⁶ G.R.O. Journal iii, f. 80.

⁴⁷ Holland had been appointed to the committees to supervise the new work on London Bridge, to deal with the Aqueduct accounts, and to arbitrate between the Bridge Wardens and the auditors of their accounts, G.R.O. Journal iii, f. 67, 67v, 76v.

⁴⁸ C. L. Kingsford, ed., *Chronicles of London* (Oxford, 1905), pp. 154–55; F. W. Brie, ed., *The Brut, or the Chronicles of England* (Early English Text Society, 1906), p. 508; A. H. Thomas and I. D. Thornley, eds., *The Great Chronicle of London* (1938), pp. 175–76; R. Flenley, ed., *Six Town Chronicles of England* (Oxford, 1911), p. 115; Robert Fabyan, *The New Chronicles of England and of France*, ed. Henry Ellis (London, 1811), p. 615.

⁴⁹ G.R.O. Journal iii, f. 97v.

⁵⁰ G.R.O. Journal iii, f. 98, 10lv, 102. Holland did not attend the Court of Aldermen between 11 October 1441 and 31 January 1442, and his attendance after this date is very infrequent until July 1442.

⁵¹ G.R.O. Journal iii, f. 102v.

⁵² Only eight of the men appear to have been bound over in this way, in the sum of 100 marks each. They largely acted as mainpernors for each other, although Nicholas Toller, a Skinner who came into prominence as an artisan leader in 1442 (see p. 344, also acted in this capacity, G.R.O. Journal iii, f. 103v–104. The Tailors paid 6s. 8d. to 'men of our craft and others that were at Newgate', Tailors' Accounts i, f. 351v.

⁵³ Johnson. *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 343–44. Their expenditure included £3 12s. 0d. to Lord Salisbury and 18s. to Adam Moleyns, the Clerk of the Council, and the costs of employing lawyers. Moleyns had also received money from the Tailors and gifts of cloth yearly to the value of 33s. 4d. p.a. since 1439, Tailors' Accounts, f. 321, 333; *L.B.K.*, pp. 260–61; Sir H. Nicholas, ed., *Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council of England* (1834), vol. v, p. 196.

⁵⁴ *L.B.K.*, p. 260. 23 August 1442, these two letters were received and read in the Court of Aldermen, G.R.O. Journal iii, f. 150.

⁵⁵ 10 October 1442, *L.B.K.*, pp. 274–75.

⁵⁶ 11 October 1442, G.R.O. Journal iii, f. 152v.

⁵⁷ *L.B.K.*, p. 275 and n. 1.

⁵⁸ G.R.O. Journal iii, f. 153.

⁵⁹ G.R.O. Journal iii, f. 154v.

⁶⁰ 11 October 1442, Toller was bound over to abide by the decision of the Court; 29 October 1442, the £20 obligation was substituted for the earlier one, G.R.O. Journal iii, f. 153, 154v. Toller is first mentioned as a Skinner in 1426, J. J. Lambert, ed., *Records of the Skinners' Company* (1933), p. 94. He was a Master or Warden of the Company in 1438–39, *L.B.K.*, p. 222. It would seem that the artisan Skinners, as opposed to the merchant Skinners like Henry Barton, sided with the Tailors in their opposition to the City government in these years. Apart from the obvious community of interest, an explanation may lie in the fact that Nicholas Toller's brother, John, was a Tailor, *C.C.R. 1429–35*, p. 351. See n. 52 above.

⁶¹ 20 October, 5 November 1442, G.R.O. Journal iii, f. 153v, 156. In 1442–43 the Tailors spent a total of £11 16s. 9d. on expenses for legal counsel at Westminster and Guildhall, dinners and journeys to the King. Tailors' Accounts i, f. 365v–366.

⁶² *C.P.R. 1441–46*, p. 136.

⁶³ Journal iii ends 17 November 1442 and Journal iv does not begin until 13 August 1443. For the text of the new charter see G.R.O. Charter 55 and *Calendar of Charter Rolls* vol. VI, pp. 41–44. The process whereby the Mayor and Aldermen became fully integrated into the national system of local jurisdiction is discussed by A. H. Thomas, ed., *Calendar of Plea and Memoranda Rolls 1323–64*, pp. i–xxxiii.

⁶⁴ R. Flenley, ed., *Six Town Chronicles of England* (Oxford, 1911), p. 117.

⁶⁵ See pp. 340–1. The Wardens of the Drapers' Company were sworn to exercise their scrutiny. 21 August 1443, G.R.O. Journal iv, f. 1v.

⁶⁶ G.R.O. Journal iv, f. 4v.

⁶⁷ *L.B.K.*, pp. 286–87; G.R.O. Journal iv, f. 5v–6v.

⁶⁸ G.R.O. Journal iii, f. 76v, 115, 108v.

⁶⁹ 21 September 1442, *L.B.K.*, pp. 273–74. Cottisbrook was re-elected in 1443, *ibid.*, pp. 287–88.

⁷⁰ The last reference to Cottisbrook is to be found in July 1444, Thomas Rymer, comp., *Foedera* (3rd edn. 1739–45), vol. v, part i. p. 136.

⁷¹ G.R.O. Journal iv, f. 7.

⁷² G.R.O. Journal iv, f. 4v, 7. Arcall had been associated with Holland in April 1441, P. E. Jones, ed., *Calendar of Plea and Memoranda Rolls 1437–57*, p. 165.

⁷³ G.R.O. Journal iv, f. 7.

⁷⁴ G.R.O. Journal iv, f. 7v. 5 October 1443, Goldyngton was released on bail of £100 to appear in the Mayor's Court, *ibid.*, f. 9.

⁷⁵ Letters dated 30 September 1443, G.R.O. Journal iv, f. 7v–8.

⁷⁶ Writ dated 8 October 1443, *L.B.K.*, p. 288.

⁷⁷ G.R.O. Journal iv, f. 11v.

⁷⁸ G.R.O. Journal iv, f. 7v.

⁷⁹ G.R.O. Journal iv, f. 8.

⁸⁰ G.R.O. Journal iv, f. 9v.

⁸¹ Blake himself subsequently claimed in the Court that he had said nothing, and was allowed bail, 16 October 1443, G.R.O. Journal iv, f. 9v, 10v.

⁸² For the 1319 charter see W. de G. Birch, ed., *The Historical Charters and Constitutional Documents of the City of London* (rev. edn. 1887), pp. 45–50; Gwyn Williams, *Medieval London* (1963), pp. 282–83; G.R.O. Journal iv, f. 10, 10v.

⁸³ See pp. 337–88.

⁸⁴ G.R.O. Journal iv, f. 10.

⁸⁵ G.R.O. Journal iv, f. 10.

⁸⁶ G.R.O. Journal iv, f. 11v.

⁸⁷ G.R.O. Journal iv, f. 10.

⁸⁸ G.R.O. Journal iv, f. 10.

⁸⁹ On Holland's wealth see pp. 340–1 and n. 22 and 24. When he died Holland was possessed of two considerable houses—Basset's Inn and Pembridge's Inn—and eight other tenements in seven London parishes. On the two Inns see C. L. Kingsford, 'Historical Notes on Some Medieval London Houses', *London Topographical Record*, vol. X (1916), p. 56, vol. XI (1917), pp. 67–68. Holland left the two Inns to the Tailors' Company, the Rector of St Margaret Patyns and the Priory of St Leonard at Stratford, Middlesex, R. R. Sharpe, ed., *Calendar of Wills Proved and Enrolled in the Court of Husting, London, 1258–1688* (1889–90), vol. II, pp. 522, 525, 526, 563. Holland also bequeathed £80 to prisoners and £40 to hospitals (Rous P.C.C. 11). His property in London and Surrey was assessed as worth £24 p.a. in 1436, Thrupp, *op. cit.*, p. 381. In 1454, Oxford University wrote to his executors asking for a bequest from the goods of that 'worshipful and notable man Raulyn Holand' for the work of the new Divinity Schools, H. Anstey, ed., *Epistolae Academicæ Oxon.* (Oxford Hist. Soc., 1898), pp. 323, 326.

⁹⁰ Thomas Thornton, a Draper, claimed that he heard Chantrell, a Tailor, declare this, G.R.O. Journal iv, f. 10v.

⁹¹ G.R.O. Journal iv, f. 11v.

⁹² August 1447, G.R.O. Journal iv, f. 188v. Further negotiations in March 1453 led to a more permanent agreement on 28 October 1553, G.R.O. Journal v, f. 106v, 107, *L.B.K.*, pp. 453–55.

⁹³ See pp. 346 and n. 102.

⁹⁴ See p. 340 and n. 37.

⁹⁵ G.R.O. Journal iv, f. 12.

⁹⁶ 25 October 1443. Holland had still not appeared and he was appointed to answer on 28 October. G.R.O. Journal iv, f. 12. On 4 November 1443 he was given a day two weeks away. 6 November 1443 Holland received a royal exemption from holding any civic office such as the Mayoralty or Royal Escheatorship, but nothing is mentioned in the writ about the office of Alderman. *C.P.R. 1441–46*, p. 220.

⁹⁷ G.R.O. Journal iv, f. 25.

⁹⁸ There is no reference to Holland in the City Journals after May 1444, although he continues to appear in the Patent and Close rolls until June 1452, when he received two tenements in Watling Street from the King in recognition of his good services and personal kindness to the King and Henry V. *C.P.R. 1446–52*, p. 861. Holland died between 3 May 1452 (date of his last will) and 23 October 1452 (will enrolled). His executors appear to have had considerable trouble settling the estate and were not helped by the reckless behaviour of one of their number, Thomas Holland, the son of Ralph's brother, Robert. The other four executors had to petition Parliament to have Thomas's powers as an executor annulled. P.R.O. C49/File 32/15.

⁹⁹ 19 June 1459. G.R.O. Journal vi, f. 95v.

¹⁰⁰ 16, 24 January 1444, G.R.O. Journal iv, f. 13.

¹⁰¹ G.R.O. Journal iv, f. 14, 16v.

¹⁰² 19 February 1444, evidence of John Farndon, G.R.O. Journal iv, f. 17v. The bills also claimed that William Estfeld, when Mayor (1437–38), had unjustly brought a case against Holland. This may explain Holland's attack upon Estfeld for collusion with Lord Cromwell, see p. 350 above.

¹⁰³ Haylyn had been assessed to contribute 2s. towards the costs of the new charter, G.R.O. Journal iv, f. 14.

¹⁰⁴ 21 August 1444 a draft of the new charter had been read to the Court of Aldermen which decided to continue negotiations with the King, and to consult the Commonalty, G.R.O. Journal iv, f. 39.

¹⁰⁵ See p. 345 and n. 63. 7 September 1444, G.R.O. Journal iv, f. 47v.

¹⁰⁶ The draft charter was again altered 18 September 1444, G.R.O. Journal iv, f. 42. 19 October 1444 a further levy of £3 from each Alderman was needed to buy the favour of the King's Council, and further discussions about paying for the charter took place in November 1444 and January 1445, G.R.O. Journal iv, f. 44v, 51, 57, 60v.

¹⁰⁷ 23 August 1447, G.R.O. Journal iv, f. 189.

¹⁰⁸ *L.B.K.*, pp. 321–22; Johnson, *op. cit.*, vol. I, Appendix 14, pp. 233–35.

¹⁰⁹ 12 January 1448, G.R.O. Journal iv, f. 205.

¹¹⁰ 19 April 1448, G.R.O. Journal iv, f. 216. The chronicler Robert Bale records in that year 'The Drapers and Tailors of London made great suit upon a truce between them but the Tailors obtained and recovered', R. Flenley, ed., *Six*

Town Chronicles of England (Oxford, 1911), p. 122.

¹¹¹ 4 February 1450, G.R.O. Journal v, f. 30.

¹¹² In 1445 the Tailors had an iron yard made for measuring cloth, and the Company had its standard meter yard 'tynned' for 4d. in 1455, Tailors' Accounts vol. ii, f. 75. On the final compromise see Johnson, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 119–20, and Clode, *op. cit.*, pp. 128–29.