

## Labour Heritage



# Labour Heritage

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## The General Election of 1945

Much has been written and, particularly during this 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, will be written about the magnificent achievements of the Labour Government of 1945-1951. By comparison, very little has been recorded about the events leading up to the election victory of 1945. This article, although only skimming the surface, attempts to deal with these events.

To begin at the beginning it is necessary to go back to the early months of the Second World War. In 1940 a general election was due but circumstances ruled this out. The Prime Minister, Chamberlain, recognised that to continue with a government with a huge Tory majority would be undemocratic and that it would be in the country's interest to form a National Government as a coalition with each of the three main parties (Conservative, Labour and Liberal) taking part. This he put to Attlee, the Labour leader, but Attlee declared that neither he nor the Labour Party could work with the one man whose policy of appeasement of Hitler had inevitably led to war. Shortly after this there was a vote of no confidence which Chamberlain won, but the number of MPs who did not support him left him with no option but to resign. In his place stepped Churchill who made the same suggestion which Attlee was pleased to accept. By chance, the Labour Party conference was being held at Bournemouth at the same time and Attlee, with the deputy leader of the party, Arthur Greenwood, travelled down to address conference and seek the support of the

delegates. This was given unanimously. In his speech to conference Attlee said:

“We are here to take a decision not only on behalf of our own movement but on behalf of labour all over the world. We have to stand today for the souls in prison in Czechoslovakia, in Poland, yes, and in Germany. We have to stand for those whose freedom is threatened all over the world. We have to fight for the freedom of the human spirit.”



Clement Attlee

Joining Attlee in the government were Ernest Bevin, Herbert Morrison, Hugh Dalton, Stafford Cripps and Albert Alexander ('A.V.') and others all of whom demonstrated their competence in their various offices and won themselves (and the Labour Party) the trust of the British people. When the next election came they would be able to go to the country with the confidence of knowing that they had proved their ability to govern. Cripps, by the

way, had been expelled from the party in 1939 because of his joining with the Communists and Independent Labour Party in calling for a United Front against Hitler; Churchill first appointed him as Ambassador to the Soviet Union believing that, as a Marxist, he would be able to negotiate with the Soviet leaders. He later held other posts in the coalition government and rejoined the Labour Party in 1945.

The three main parties agreed upon an electoral truce under which, in any by-elections, the incumbent party would not be opposed by the other two parties. However, this did not rule out other contesting candidates and soon independents of all political hues, Communists, and a new party, Common Wealth, were fighting for vacant seats although not necessarily all at the same time. Common Wealth was a party, to the left of Labour but some way to the right of the Communists, founded by Richard Acland. As the war progressed it soon became apparent that the electorate was moving to the left this being demonstrated by the number of Tory candidates who were being defeated in the by-elections. In fact, the only losses occurred in Tory seats where defeats were mainly at the hands of Independents with a few going to Common Wealth. Independents were often aligned to the left but in one case aligned to the right; this latter was in the Rugby constituency where W.J.Brown defeated the Tory candidate, his view being that the Tories had gone to bed with Labour in the Coalition and it is clear that he abhorred socialism in any form.

The Tories believed that the electoral truce was also a political truce and, accordingly, disbanded their national and local organisations until 1943 when they were re-established. But Labour argued that the political truce, if one existed at all was only concerned with the conduct of the war and that they were free to campaign on matters devoted to the manner in which post war conditions

were to be handled. The Labour Party maintained its national organisation and held its annual conference throughout the War. Local Labour Parties continued to function after a fashion and were able to mount campaigns against interlopers in by-elections in Labour-held constituencies. Often, in by-elections in a Conservative- or Liberal-held seat, Labour members worked on behalf of a Common Wealth or left-inclined Independent candidate. So it was that when the General Election finally was called the Labour organisations were well prepared whilst the Tories and Liberals were almost starting from scratch.

Another important element in the swing to Labour during these years was a series of books published by Victor Gollancz under the imprint of the Left Book Club and written by prominent Socialists using pseudonyms. Commencing in the late 1930s two or three books a year were issued, the most influential of which were *Guilty Men* (1940) and *Your MP* (1944) both detailing the culpability of certain Tory MPs in supporting Baldwin's and then Chamberlain's appeasement of Hitler. These books sold in hundreds of thousands and many copies would have found their way into servicemen's hands. During the latter part of the war J.B.Priestley wrote a novel entitled *Three Men in New Suits*. It was set just after the war and concerned the lives of three former Army colleagues from different backgrounds who were living in the same rural town. Each faced his own difficulties in settling down to civilian life but each shared the view that the future they faced should not be the same as that of servicemen after the First World War. Again some copies of this would have passed to men in the services.

And it was these men and women in the services who played a large part in bringing about the new Labour Government. Most of them had experienced life under the Tories during the 1920s and 1930s and, just like the "*Three Men in New Suits*", they were

determined that the land fit for heroes promised to their fathers would come to fruition for themselves. In the main they trusted Churchill as a war leader but many doubted his interest in the ordinary man and woman in peacetime. They also attended lectures given by the Army Bureau of Current Affairs (ABCA), an organisation set up to educate servicemen in such matters as economic and social affairs, which almost certainly reinforced their feelings. The Tories were deeply suspicious of the ABCA believing it to be a surreptitious mechanism for the promotion of Socialism, one even citing as evidence that Colonel Wigg (a future Labour MP) was its director!

Finally, in gauging the public's attitude, Gallup had been measuring voting intentions quarterly since before the war. In February 1945 Labour's lead over the Tories was 47.5% to 27.5%, the remaining 25% being shared equally by the Liberals and others; by June this lead had been cut to 45%/32% with the Liberals on 15% and others 8%. These polls were generally ignored as they were neither understood nor trusted but believed to be a wartime aberration.

### **Momentous General Election**

The scene was therefore set for the most momentous General Election in modern times.

As 1944 drifted into 1945, following the failure of the last major German offensive in the Ardennes (the 'Battle of the Bulge') and the relentless Red Army advance on Berlin, it was clear that the war in Europe would soon be at an end. As early as 1943, Churchill had suggested that the election should be held either as soon as the European war ended or delayed until victory over Japan was secured. This indicated that even Churchill was uncertain about the meaning of the 'duration' used in the original Coalition agreement - there was then only war in Europe, the war against Japan was still to come. At this stage

it was only hinted at and there was no discussion about it.

The unconditional surrender of German forces was signed on May 7 1945. There was then a lull as neither Labour nor the Liberals withdrew from the Coalition; they felt that such action would have been inappropriate. Days passed and Whitsuntide approached, the time appointed for the Labour Party Conference at Blackpool. Two days before this conference opened Churchill wrote to the leaders of the Labour, Liberal, and Liberal National Parties again proposing that they should stay in the Coalition until the end of the Japanese War or withdraw from it immediately so that an election could be held in July.

Both Attlee and Sir Archibald Sinclair (leader of the Liberal Party) rejected the idea that there should be an immediate election but were prepared to consider the continuation of the Coalition even though at this time the war against Japan was expected to go on for another 2-3 years. Their preferred option though was an election in October 1945 when new electoral registers would be in force and service candidates would have time to become known in their constituencies. Churchill rejected out-of-hand the October date claiming that the Coalition could not survive for such a short period as there would be major differences about home affairs after the war. My own opinion is that Churchill was using a crafty ploy: there was no prospect of the Coalition continuing for another 2-3 years and so he could go to the country before the euphoria of victory started to fade away; the country would sweep him back into power out of gratitude for his war leadership (or so he believed).

There was also a strange suggestion by Churchill that a referendum be held to decide upon when a general election should be held; this carried no weight and both the Labour and Liberal Parties rejected it.

This was all quite academic though; historically it had always been the Prime Minister's prerogative to decide when to dissolve parliament and call an election, and this Churchill now did. On May 23 he sought an audience with the King where he tendered his resignation as Prime Minister, First Lord of the Treasury, and Minister of Defence before returning to Downing Street. He was again summoned to Buckingham Palace a few hours later and was invited to form a new administration; he then asked for a dissolution of Parliament. This was granted with a date of June 15.

This new administration would, of course, exclude any Labour ministers and be made up of members of the Conservative Party reinforced by the National Liberals. A few independents and any Sinclair Liberals who wished to remain would also be included. On hearing this news Attlee, who was still at conference in Blackpool, headed back to London to wind up his affairs as Deputy Prime Minister, the other Labour ministers following later in the week.

The election timetable set out the date for nominations to be June 25 and polling day July 5; polling was delayed until July 12 (19 in one case) to take account of Wakes weeks and other local holidays in 23 constituencies in the northwest (10) and Scotland (13). The count was to take place on July 25 to allow sufficient time for the service votes to be received from around the world (1.7 million were eventually returned).

When nominations closed 1683 names had been put forward for 640 seats, 12 of which were University seats, an anomaly that was to be soon abolished (Oxford [2], Cambridge [2], London [1], Combined English [2], Scottish [3], Welsh [1], Northern Ireland [1]). There were also 15 two-member constituencies, existing because of the size of their electorates, another anomaly that would be abolished: Dundee, Sunderland, Preston, Bolton, Blackburn, Stockport, Oldham, Derby,

Norwich, Southampton, Brighton, City of London (historical only), Antrim, Down, and Fermanagh and Tyrone. Thus there were actually 618 constituencies returning 633 members if the University constituencies are discounted.

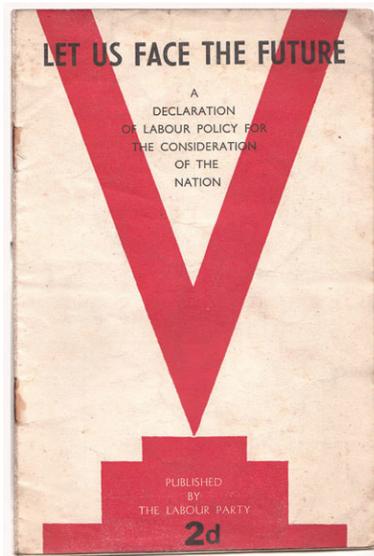
At this point it might be appropriate to have a brief look at those University seats. They were unique in that if there were more candidates than seats in any constituency (a better word to describe them would be 'communities' as their electorates resided all over the country) a form of proportional system using a quota system decided the result; it is too complex to explain in detail here. Historically there was also an unwritten rule that candidates should not stand as party political candidates although their election addresses would normally indicate their leanings (or none). Nevertheless, in 1945 7 nominated candidates declared themselves to be party candidates. When nominations closed there were 25 candidates for the 12 seats; they can be broken down by their allegiances (or none) by having declared their party or by inference from their election addresses as follows: Conservatives and supporters 8 (of whom 6 were elected), Labour and supporters 5 (none elected), Liberal and supporters 4 (3 elected), Welsh Nationalist 1 (not elected), Independents 7 (3 elected).

In the other constituencies 1658 candidates were nominated; these were Labour 603, Conservative (including those describing themselves as Conservative and Liberal National, Liberal National and Conservative, or simply Liberal National) 593, Liberal 305, Ulster Unionist 12, National 16, Communist 21, Common Wealth 23, ILP 5, Democratic 5, Irish Nationalist 3, Scottish Nationalist 8, Welsh Nationalist 7, and Independent 57.

### **Campaigning**

The issues and the proposed solutions put before the electorate are sufficiently well-known and need not be detailed here. Suffice

to say that Labour, the Tories, and Liberals had prepared manifestos well in advance: *Let Us Face the Future* (Labour), Mr Churchill's *Declaration of Policy To The Electors* and the uninspiringly titled *The Liberal Party Manifesto*. These were followed to the letter in the ensuing election campaigns by most of the parties' candidates although a few went slightly off-message on minor points.



Campaigning in 1945 was totally different from present-day campaigning. There was no real national campaign, except for the production and distribution to local parties of posters and literature. There was no television, and newspapers were very thin (some were of only 4 pages) which meant that space for the daily election news had to compete with news of the war against Japan, other home and international news, and sport. The BBC, charged with impartiality under the terms of its charter, could only report significant daily events in radio news bulletins and, even then, only very briefly. The only opportunity for the majority of people to see the party leaders was in their local cinema in the screening of news reels there and these were often a few days out-of-date. The three major parties were given party political programmes on the radio; the Communists and Common Wealth were given one each.

In the first Tory broadcast Churchill launched a vitriolic attack on the Labour Party leaders whom he had trusted for 5 years in the Coalition and who were completely loyal to him. He asserted that, if Labour were to form a government, they would need to use a political police force akin to the Gestapo to stifle any opposition to their policies, people's freedom being put at grave risk. The old scare tactic of the threat to people's savings under a Labour government was also trotted out. Attlee, in a very dignified reply, rebutted the claims of course, and went on to say that the sort of freedoms that the Tories would want to preserve were for business to continue to make huge profits whilst paying the lowest wages they could get away with and, when times were hard, laying-off numbers of their employees. He also mentioned that there was a time when employers were free to send young children down coal mines, or making them working twelve hour days in mills and factories. It was said that Churchill's outburst and Attlee's response boosted Labour's vote.

Campaigning, therefore, was very much at the local level. The three party leaders made fleeting visits to constituencies around the country and spoke at a few meetings. Local parties arranged meetings in church halls, schools and anywhere suitable for mass gatherings. These were always packed and sometimes overflowing although those attending were, in the main, almost entirely supporters of the party hosting the meeting. Candidates toured their constituencies in cars or vans equipped with a loudspeaker and which were covered in posters, usually stopping at a busy spot or factory gates (when workers had finished their day) for a short street-corner-type meeting. And, of course, canvassing was extensively carried out, especially by the Labour Party. Clearly, campaigning was then more frenetic than it is today.

## **Counting the Vote**

During this period the Tory press was consistently forecasting a Tory victory even though opinion polls were indicating otherwise. They believed that these polls and the string of by-election results over the 5 years of the Coalition were merely aberrations.

The doors to polling stations were opened on July 5 and throughout the day a steady stream of voters indicated that there would be a large turnout. When polling ended later that night the boxes were sealed and handed over to the care of each returning officer for safe keeping until July 25. Party workers could now take a long rest after their weeks of hard work trying to persuade voters to cast votes for their own particular party.

On July 25, the day before the count proper, ballot boxes were opened and the process of counting the number of votes in each and comparing it with the number reported by the polling officer was undertaken; this was, and is, a normal feature of any count. The next stage, however, was unique to this election. Service postal votes were opened and a search begun to find any duplicate proxy votes cast; although servicemen were given the opportunity to appoint proxies there was nothing to prevent them from sending in their own voting paper – it was not illegal. When such duplicates were found the proxy vote was discarded.

Although those carrying out these counts were not concerned with the actual marks on the ballot papers they must have observed, even if only in a cursory manner, the way in which the voting had gone. They were sworn to secrecy, and this held; if there was any leak to the Fleet Street press there was no mention of it in the following morning's newspapers. When these processes were completed (and the second was quite time-consuming) the boxes were again sealed and secured for the night.

Even before the count started three results were already known. When nominations closed, candidates in three constituencies were unopposed: Will John (Labour – West Rhondda), D.G.Logan (Labour – Liverpool, Scotland) and Sir William Allen (Ulster Unionist – West Armagh).

The count proper commenced at 9.00 am on the morning of July 26. Because the preparatory work had been completed the day before, separation of votes into piles for each candidate started immediately and, in most cases, was completed very quickly. The first declaration was at shortly after 10 a.m. when E.A.Hardy was found to have gained Salford South for Labour, a significant pointer for what was to follow. As the hours passed, an onslaught by Labour was under way as gain after gain was recorded. It soon became apparent that the figure of 320 to secure a majority was almost a certainty unless some totally unforeseen disaster were to happen; it was merely a question of how large the majority would turn out to be. By the evening the position was clear; at 7.00 p.m. Churchill left Downing Street to tender his resignation.

## **Labour Victory**

So great was the magnitude of Labour's victory that included in the list of Tory scalps were 13 Cabinet-rank ministers and 19 other ministers who lost their seats; among these were some big names: Brendan Bracken (Paddington North), Harold Macmillan (Stockton), Leslie Hore-Belisha (Plymouth, Devonport – the victor was Michael Foot), Duncan Sandys (Norwood), Lord Dunglass later to become Lord Home (Lanark), Peter Thorneycroft (Stafford), Leo Amery (Birmingham, Sparkbrook) and Sir D. Somervell, the caretaker government's Home Secretary (Crewe).

When the final result was announced the final seat tally for each party was: Labour 393, Conservative (including the Speaker, National and Liberal National) 204, Liberal 12,

Independents 13, Ulster Unionist 9, I.L.P. 3, Communist 2, Irish Nationalist 2, Common Wealth 1, Labour Independent 1; this gave Labour a majority of 146 over all other parties but it should be borne in mind that, for most votes in Parliament, the support of the I.L.P., the Communists, Common Wealth and the Labour Independent was almost certain. Votes cast for Labour, Conservative, and Liberal candidates were respectively (figures rounded) 11.99 million (47.8%), 9.99 million (39.8%) and 2.25 million (9.0%) although it should be noted that these figures include votes for two party candidates in those two-member constituencies where they were candidates. Incidentally, six years later when Labour lost power to the Tories, they polled 13.95 million against the Tories' 13.72 million; this figure was not surpassed until 1992 when John Major won with over 14 million votes but this was with a much enlarged electorate, the voting age having been reduced from 21 to 18.

When Churchill entered the House on August 1 as the new Parliament assembled for the first time, the Tory benches greeted him with a rendition of *For He's a Jolly Good Fellow*. Immediately afterwards, a Labour member started singing *The Red Flag* and was joined by the other Labour members. The peaceful revolution had begun.

Derek Wheatley

## **Wayne David MP – Honorary President of Labour Heritage**

We are delighted to announce to our members that Wayne David has accepted the invitation from Labour Heritage to be our first Honorary President.



Wayne David has been a member of Labour Heritage for some years and has contributed to our Bulletin. He has been the Labour MP for Caerphilly since 2001, and previously was the MEP for South Wales, 1989-99. Prior to his political career, he gained a degree in history and Welsh history at Cardiff University, and taught first at a comprehensive school and then with the W.E.A.

He was Leader of the European PLP from 1994-98, and later as an MP was a Minister in the Wales Office. Since 2013, he has been PPS to Ed Miliband.

Last year, several Labour Heritage members attended a moving lecture at the House of Commons, Speaker's House, given by Wayne David on the life of Morgan Jones, who had been a conscientious objector during WW1, and was elected as Labour MP for Caerphilly in 1921. [NB his article on Morgan Jones is in our Summer 2014 Bulletin]

## West London labour history day

Labour Heritage organised a West London labour history day on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> February at Ruskin Hall, Acton. It was attended by 25 people. There were three speakers.

### The General Election of 1945

Derek Wheatley, member of Brentford and Isleworth Labour Party and former councillor gave a talk on the general election of 1945. It is reproduced in the article written for this bulletin. He began however with his own personal recollections, as a child in 1945. All the children at his school, he said, were either Labour or Tory, Labour was for the ordinary man, and the Conservatives were for the wealthy and better off. When he asked his mother who she was going to vote for, she replied that she would vote for John – his brother. Of course John was not a candidate, but she meant that she would vote for him as he was overseas in the armed forces. She would use a proxy vote on his behalf. He was however back home for the election results and Derek recalls his brother's pleasure as the election results were announced.



## West London – How the Landscape Changed

Barbara Humphries explained how the transformation of west London from 1918, as it became one of the major industrial areas in Britain with a strong basis in Labour support, was important in contributing to the 1945 Labour landslide. As G.D.H. Cole commented in his history of the Labour Party, the traditional Labour heartlands had stayed loyal since 1929. It was the transformation of the political scene in Greater London, Essex and Lancashire that swept Labour to power. In 1945 the Tories retained only 7 of 17 seats in Greater London.

### GENERAL ELECTION, 1918

UXBRIDGE PARLIAMENTARY DIVISION OF MIDDLESEX.

Polling Day, Saturday, 14th December.



HARRY GOSLING, C.H., J.P., L.C.C.,  
LABOUR CANDIDATE.

From 1910 to 1918 the electorate nationally almost tripled from 7 to 21 million. Much of this was increased enfranchisement of working class men and women (women over 30 till 1928). In west London the increased voting figures also reflected the influx of workers into the newly industrialised areas of Acton, Southall and Hayes. 1918 was the first time that the Labour Party had contested

the parliamentary divisions of Uxbridge, Acton and Ealing. It had held out hopes of winning Uxbridge, which contained the industrial areas of Southall and Hayes and stood a high profile candidate, Harry Gosling, who had been president of the TUC, and leader of the Labour Group on the London County Council. Acton was also seen as an industrial area which Labour could win. However the only parliamentary victory for Labour in the interwar years was to come in 1929 when Joe Shillaker had won in Acton. This seat was lost in to the Tories in 1931.

Southall had traditionally been a railway town. Factories flooded into Hayes, alongside the railway, the largest being a national munitions factory during the First World War. Industrial estates based on smaller factories involved in electrical engineering or food processing for the Capital grew up in Acton Vale, on the Park Royal Estate and later along the Great West Road and Western Avenue. Land was relatively cheap here and firms such as AEC, Napier and EMI relocated from inner London, often bringing their skilled labour force with them. There was also a major underground works in Acton and a bus works in Chiswick. Later employment prospects in the area benefited from the rearmament drive before the Second World War.



EMI in the 1950s

In the nineteenth century West Middlesex had mainly been a market gardening area just outside London. Later the working class districts that emerged in the twentieth century were intermingled in constituencies with the residences of City commuters like parts of Ealing, the ‘Queen of the Suburbs.’

The main trade unions involved in politics locally were the National Union of Railwaymen (now called RMT) and the Amalgamated Engineering Union (now part of Unite). The semi-skilled workers in the factories were not well organised till the Second World War.

To begin with, this industrialisation was not automatically reflected in a rise in Labour Party organisation, since many of the workers commuted in from other parts of London. Later migrants from the ‘distressed areas’ such as the Rhondda Valley, brought their labour movement traditions with them. For instance Dai Cousins was the first Labour Mayor of Ealing.

In the interwar years Labour took control of Hayes and Southall councils, and built council houses for its natural supporters. The London Council Council built the Cuckoo Estate in Hanwell in the late 1930s, one of several which were to lead to population changes in the suburbs of London.

In west London the Labour Party recovered from the defeat of 1931, taking part in membership campaigns such as the ‘socialist crusade week’ in 1933. The Uxbridge Divisional Party became one of the largest in the country with over 2000 members. Labour continued to campaign

during the Second World War, in spite of the war time electoral truce.

In 1945 Labour took Acton, Southall, Ealing West and Uxbridge, a complete political change from 1918. Only Ealing East stayed Tory. West London looked like it could become a Labour heartland. Until the deindustrialisation which gathered pace in the 1980s it was one of the most industrialised areas in Britain, and one with a very high trade union density among working class people.

### **The Contested Cultures of Suburbia**



Dr Rupa Huq, prospective parliamentary candidate for Acton and Ealing Central, having spent an afternoon canvassing, gave a talk to the meeting on the contested cultures of suburbia, her field of academic research. Suburbia meant different things to different people, and the majority of the population now lived in the suburbs of major cities. Ealing Common for instance was very different to Beckenham. Originally suburbia had been seen as somewhere safe and aspirational to live, like Metro-land in the interwar years. But

over time it had gained pockets of deprivation. It was also a location for creativity and music. The Beatles for instance had come from a suburb of Liverpool. Suburbia had changed politically over time, comparing 1945, 2005 and 2015. In 1992 Rupa had voted in her university town of Cambridge as Acton had been seen as Sir George Young (the Conservative MP) territory. But now the seat was winnable for Labour again.

Were there comparisons with 1945 and today? Many of the issues were still the same such as the NHS and education.

Illustrations and photos provided by Tom Newens and Hayes Peoples History blog.

### **Shaping the Labour Party conference, Bangor University 23-24<sup>th</sup> March, 2015**

This conference was organised by staff and students in the School of History, Welsh History and Archaeology to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the first majority Labour government in 1945.

There were three keynote speakers. Professor Steven Fielding of the University of Nottingham, author of *England Arise* (1995), spoke on his current research on labour featured in the novels of the interwar years. Novelists included J.B.Priestley and Labour MP Ellen Wilkinson. They used the medium of the novel to portray the lives of the working class at a time when films and plays faced censorship. Professor Andrew Thorpe of Exeter University and author of many books on the history of the labour movement, talked about his research on the relatively neglected Labour leader Arthur Henderson. Arthur Henderson he argued, was heavily influenced by his religious views as a Wesleyan

Methodist, who believed that a new social order could be created on earth. Although he had similar views to Ramsay Macdonald in his hostility to the secret diplomacy which led to World War 1, he chose to join the wartime cabinet in order to protect the interests of labour. He was instrumental in the reconstruction of the Labour Party after 1918 with an individual membership, which would prepare the Party for power. He visited Russia in 1917 but was opposed to revolution, believing that this would bring about civil war. He maintained his religious beliefs and helped to found the Brotherhood, which was to recruit young men to the cause of Methodism. His commitment to temperance reform was to prove controversial within the labour movement.

An open debate was led by Professor Sir Deian Hopkins of the National Library of Wales, who asked the question “whatever happened to labour history?” By this he meant labour history in general, not just the history of the Labour Party. It had its heyday in the 1960s and 1970s with the formation of the Society for the Study of Labour History, but had seemed to be in decline ever since in academic institutions. This was due to the political climate and decline in funding. In many universities it had always been marginal. However it could be argued that it had been incorporated into the main stream, featuring in courses on economic and social history, gender studies and politics. Many academics researching aspects of labour history did not regard themselves as labour historians. The interest in labour history outside of the academic sphere and amongst activists (as in Labour Heritage!) was only briefly mentioned.

To prove that labour history is nowhere near dead, the conference attracted almost 40 papers, which were delivered in 14 parallel sessions. These were very wide ranging and were written by a assortment of labour historians, modern historians and political scientists. They included themes such as the

Labour Party and Europe, housing, local government, defence policy and education. Chronologically they covered the interwar years right up to New Labour and beyond. They featured lesser known and forgotten Labour politicians such as Reginald Bassett and George N. Barnes, and William Walker, Labour politician in Ireland. There were some on local labour history, especially in Wales, and also the Welsh migration to London in the interwar years. There were papers on the trades union links with Labour including the sponsorship of Labour members in the 1930s, and on the lesser known union, the Association of Officers of Taxes, which predated the Inland Revenue Staff Association. There were also two papers on aspects of the Co-operative movement. It is of course impossible to report on all these papers but they will be made available on the University of Bangor web site. On the morning before the conference there was a workshop on labour archives and their value to researchers.

Barbara Humphries

## **The Centenary of the Armenian Massacres**

The killing of a huge number of Armenians in Turkey in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries is still a bitterly disputed issue. Armenian representatives state that 1,500,000 out of a population of 2,000,000 of their kinsfolk were killed by the Turkish Government during the First World War and half a million were driven from their homes. Turkish authorities, however, strenuously deny this and suggest that only 300,000 lost their lives in the fighting – more or less the same proportion of their total population as the 3 million Turks who died during the same period. Anyone in Turkey who argues against the government line does so at considerable risk – even of his or her life.

The Armenians’ origins in eastern Anatolia go back to pre-historic times. They emerged as

an identifiable people by the fifth century BC, although the area was overrun by Scythians, Medes (the ancestors of the Kurds) and other invaders in the last millennium BC. They adopted an Indo-European language, became Christians after the conversion of their king, Tiridates III, by St. Gregory the Illuminator, in 301 AD, and began using their own alphabet, invented by St. Mesrop Mashtots in the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD. Although there were Armenian states in Anatolia down to the 14<sup>th</sup> century, they were repeatedly conquered by outsiders and, finally, by the Ottoman Turks – except in the east, where their territory fell under Persian rule until annexed by Tsarist Russia in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

In the 1890s, when revolutionary Armenian groups began to emerge, demanding independence, the Ottoman authorities and their Kurdish allies are estimated to have killed 300,000 Armenians. The Turkish Sultan was overthrown by the Young Turk revolution of 1908 and more killings occurred the following year.

It was, however, during the First World War when Turkey was allied with Germany and Austria-Hungary, that massacres on the greatest scale occurred. Despite the fact that 250,000 Armenians were initially called up for military service, they were subsequently disarmed. Many of the men were shot, while women and children were ordered to leave their homes and marched to the deserts of northern Syria. Many died en route and others were killed. Some were thrown into the sea or down the Kemaleh Gorge near Erzingyan. As stated above, Armenians claim that 1,500,000 died and many more were made homeless.

The population of Armenia declared their independence on 28<sup>th</sup> May, 1918, but famine and appalling hardship overtook them. The western allies had learnt of the massacres and promised to support Armenian independence. Prime Minister Lloyd George for Britain, Georges Clemenceau for France and President Woodrow Wilson for the USA went on record

in favour of the Armenians. Armenian representatives attended the Paris Peace Conference and, in August 1920, the Treaty of Sevres was signed providing for an independent Armenian republic extending over eastern Turkey as well as former Tsarist territory further to the east.

In September 1920, however, Mustafa Kemal-Ataturk, who had assumed power in Turkey, ordered his forces to crush the infant republic and incorporated its territories, including the former Russian districts of Kars, Ardalom and Sumalu, into Turkey. The western allies did nothing to prevent this, despite previous promises, and officially recognised Turkish seizures in the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923. A much diminished Armenian state survived in the east by becoming a Soviet Republic. The majority of surviving Armenians were obliged to accept a life of exile and dispersion. They have, however, never forgotten the massacres and continue to campaign for the Turkish authorities to recognise that the government of the time organised and authorised the killings and was guilty of genocide.

A tiny minority of Armenians resorted to terrorism in revenge. Talat Pasha, Minister of the Interior in the First World War, was assassinated and a number of Turkish diplomats and innocent bystanders subsequently. The mass campaign has, however, been peaceful and has consisted of demonstrations, meetings, lobbying and the production and circulation of leaflets, pamphlets and volumes of evidence. The testimony of contemporary witnesses and authoritative figures is overwhelming. Henry Morgenthau (US Ambassador), Arnold Toynbee (eminent historian), Viscount Bryce, the German expert Dr. Johannes Lepsius and many others have produced vast amounts of factual data which supports the Armenian charges.

Turkish governments have, however, continued strenuously to deny the charges. When the present writer hosted a meeting in

the House of Commons in 1978 and when, some years later, he worked in the European Parliament to support the Vandemeulebroucke Report, which condemned Turkish genocide, the Turkish authorities deluged Parliamentarians with literature, telephone calls and other approaches to try, unsuccessfully, to defeat the Armenian case.

Regretfully, western countries in recent years have, on the whole, refused to back the Armenian case for fear of offending Turkey, a NATO ally. If, however, we wish to prevent future massacres or acts of genocide it is vital to expose and condemn genocide out of hand. This stand is rightly taken almost universally in the case of the Nazi holocaust against the Jews. It is equally valid in the case of the horrific mass killings of the Armenians in earlier times.

Stan Newens

This article is also published in *Liberation* (vol.58, 1, 2015)

*April 24, 2015 is the 100th Remembrance Day of the Genocide of the Armenians. Here is a documentary produced by German Public Television, now in English too, where impeccable cast of actors personify historical figures retelling their eyewitness accounts of the politics of the Armenian Genocide, including testimonies of Ambassador Morgentau. and Raphael Lemkin.*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ybSP04ajCDg> (Preview)

[1915 AGHET - The Armenian Genocide \(In English\) - Duration: 1:33:02. by saxa99fun 27,516 views](#)(Preview)

## Labour Heritage AGM

The AGM of Labour Heritage was held at Conway Hall, on the 28<sup>th</sup> March, attended by 30 members. To commemorate the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1945 Labour Government, Norman Howard, author of *New Dawn: the General Election of 1945* (2005) was invited to speak on the subject. He began by stating that the decision to leave the wartime coalition in 1945 was taken by the Labour Party conference, as was the decision to join it in 1940, as long as it was not to be led by Neville Chamberlain. He pointed out that Labour leaders had a high profile during the war, with Ernie Bevin, Herbert Morrison and Stafford Cripps all having ministerial responsibility. The size of Labour's majority had been a surprise but there had not been a general election since 1935. Between 1935 and 1939 the Tories had lost 30 seats in bye-elections, due to the unpopularity of the National Government, particularly on the issue of unemployment. This remained an issue during the War, with members of the armed forces fearing that they could return to the dole after it had ended. Several influential books had been published, including *Why you should be a socialist* by John Strachey and *Why not trust the Tories* by Nye Bevan.

The Labour Party was not well prepared for an election campaign. Many parliamentary divisions did not have candidates. A third of candidates had a military background, and some like Denis Healey were selected in their absence, whilst still serving overseas. Ian Mikardo was selected for Reading on the grounds that he was the only local contender. It had been a struggle to maintain Party organisation, with many members relocated or in the forces. Those at work often had a seven day week, with additional responsibilities such as air raid protection duties. Nevertheless Labour published an election manifesto *Let us face the future*, written by Michael Young, who was to be the founder of the Open University. It talked of winning the peace as

well as the War. The wartime electoral truce had been observed by Labour, but the left-wing Common Wealth Party had a limited amount of success in contesting by-elections. The Communist Party had increased its influence during the War, and through the Amalgamated Engineering Union, it had called for a unity campaign with Labour to contest the 1945 general election.

At a national level the election campaign was fairly low-key with little national newspaper coverage. The *Times* and *Daily Express* had predicted a Conservative victory; only the *News Chronicle* had a prediction of the extent of a Labour victory. Labour leader, Clement Attlee was relaxed, using only twenty minutes of his allocated one hour's speech slot at a meeting in Nottingham. Winston Churchill on the other hand used an unmonitored speech opportunity to say that Labour's programme would require a 'gestapo' to implement. This negative campaigning was to go down very badly indeed, being accusations against his former cabinet colleagues in the wartime coalition government.

The result of the election has often been attributed to the forces' votes, but in reality Norman said that it was very difficult for them to register and get their ballot papers. Many were under 21 years old and did not even have the vote. They had the option of proxy votes.

John Grigg, treasurer of Labour Heritage spoke on its committee's plans to draft a pamphlet on the history of the Labour Party to be made available to the membership. He has started on the first part of the pamphlet, up to 1914 and gave his outline of this to the meeting. (This will feature as an article in the next bulletin).

Labour Heritage held a short AGM to receive reports of activities for the past year. These had included successful evens in Essex and Acton, West London. The following officers were elected-

Chair –Stan Newens; Secretary- Linda Shampan; Treasurer-John Grigg; Bulletin editor- Barbara Humphries; members of the committee- Bill Bolland, Derek Wheatley, Kit Snape, Alan Spence, Khatchatur Pilikian and Richard Hawkins

## Reviews

### ***Voices from Labour's Past* by David Clark** (Lensden Publishing, £14)

David Clark, now Lord Clark of Windermere but formerly the Labour MP for South Shields, is an indefatigable historian of the Labour Movement in northern England. He has, to date, produced nine books on the area, including one on the mysterious Victor Grayson, the unlikely winner of the Colne Valley by-election of 1907, who disappeared after a tempestuous career as a Labour left-winger.

His latest publication, *Voices from Labour's Past*, deals with the contribution of eight pioneers born in the 1890s, who dedicated their lives to building the Labour Party: William Watson, Frank Parrott, Tess Nally, Willie Brook, Gladstone Mathers, John Beaumont, Connie Lewcock and Margaret Gibb.

When they began their activities, before the First World War, the alternative to a Conservative government was provided by the Liberal Party, which achieved some vital reforms but fully accepted the capitalist system. The subjects of this book and many of their associates and partners, who also appear on its pages, however, were not satisfied with this. They were captivated by the idea of a new social order – a socialist society – as projected by the Independent Labour Party (ILP), which had been founded by socialist idealists in 1893.

Alice Nally, the daughter of Tess Nally, expressed the ideal she had inherited from her parents in a speech to the South Lancashire Fabians in 1995:

*“The party born in 1900 should, in 1995, be more than a political party. It should be a faith and a positive force for good, for security, for justice at work, nurture for families. A crusade to deliver people from the tyranny of poverty, prejudice and the abuse of power.”* [p.180]

All the eight individuals featured in this book were, along with many comrades, members of the ILP and opponents of the First World War. Willie Brook, Gladstone Mathers and John Beaumont were conscientious objectors who went to prison for their stand, and Frank Parrott served in the Friends Ambulance Unit.

Three of David Clark’s pioneers were women who, in two cases, were closely associated with the work of their husbands within the Movement as well as being active on their own account.

None of the eight became MPs or leading figures in the Party, although Connie Lewcock’s husband, Will, and Margaret Gibb became regional organisers. Most of them were elected as councillors for some years of their lives and all of them gave solid support to trade unions. The book underlines the fact that the Labour Party, and the labour movement as a whole, is not just the creation of its leaders – however important their contribution – but the collective achievement of a dedicated fellowship of grassroots activists of whom the eight pioneers featured here are typical.

When Ramsay MacDonald, the Labour Prime Minister, dismissed his Cabinet and formed a coalition with other parties, leading to the catastrophic electoral defeat of Labour in 1931, it was the loyalty of the rank and file to the Party’s ideals which facilitated the recovery and enabled it to go forward to the great electoral victory of 1945.

The media today present politics as a duel between party leaders and focus on personalities. This undoubtedly influences voters, but the process is superficial and ignores fundamental objectives. David Clark’s word reminds us that the Labour Party was originally a cause to which a committed band of people devoted themselves with the aim of creating freedom and equality, a caring, sharing community and peace in the world at large.

It was pioneers like those described in this book who did the spadework which built the Labour Party and thereby achieved the transformation of life in Britain in the 20<sup>th</sup> century – an achievement we need to defend and enhance in our own day.

This book is an inspiring account and should give impetus to its readers and those campaigning for the success of Labour at the present time. I strongly recommend it.

Stan Newens

### **Steve Bassam also reviews ‘David Clark’s latest gem of oral history’**

Few parliamentary colleagues will know David as a writer but he has written extensively about the origins of the Labour movement in the North East and North West of England. His latest volume draws on the lives of eight activists born in the 1880s and 1890s.

There are common threads to the stories. Many were from non-conformist backgrounds, with most from poverty-stricken households. Their politics were born of necessity and forged by a vision of the change they might bring. They were often self-taught, helped by trades unions and the cooperative movement, and also through the political education afforded by the Independent Labour Party (ILP). For most, the First World War became part of a defining

moment in their lives, especially those who were to become conscientious objectors.

David's material is based on conversations he captured on tape during an enforced absence from Parliament in the 1970s. Oddly, given the outcome nationally, he won a seat for Labour in the 1970 general election only to lose it in 1974. One of those quirks of his political history.

The eight narratives paint a compelling picture of Labour in its formative years as a new fledgling party emerging from the trades union movement, Lib-Lab MPs and the emergence and decline of the ILP. What is striking about the stories is the lifelong commitment of the activists and their families to the pursuit of social justice, fairness in the workplace, and the communities they came from. Those early pioneers did not see their work as part of a career in politics, but a living breathing expression of their values in all that they did.

Take Connie Lewcock as an example. Born in 1894, by the time she was in her teens she became seized of the importance of women's suffrage and as an activist contemplated blowing up Durham Cathedral to highlight the cause. Fortunately, she had second thoughts. But her rebellious streak was channelled into taking on the male dominance of the teaching profession. It was this, and working in North East mining communities as a teacher that drew her increasingly into Labour politics.

Together with Will, a miner who became her husband, they became party organisers. They took their hard working values and principled commitments into the communities in which they worked. In time, they helped secure Labour's great position of strength in Durham and Newcastle on local councils and with parliamentary elections. Connie herself

eventually became a leading local councillor specialising in housing and representing Benwell ward in the West End of Newcastle – now Jeremy Beecham's patch.

What is fascinating is the way that the pioneers built up branches, developed the cultural side of our political heritage through socialist Sunday schools, cycling clubs, Women's sections and Labour clubs. These things helped our party take root in communities and gave us relevance to the everyday world of work and home.

David Clark's pioneers teach us much and remind us of our values. They also enable us to peer into the world from which Labour drew strength and helped generations of working people grow and aspire to a better life for all. We are indebted to David for setting down the people's history of our early activists told by them, not mediated and told for them. I found 'Voices' calling out for a bigger audience seeking to inform what we all try to achieve for future generations today.

**Lord Steve Bassam of Brighton is Shadow Chief Whip in the House of Lords. He tweets @StevetheQuip**

***A City of Light: Socialism, Chartism and Co-operation – Nottingham 1844* by Christopher Richardson**

The *City of Light* is an exceptionally well researched book, containing so much detail that sometimes you have to search through the trees to find the wood. But the search is worthwhile because an unsettling picture of the struggles in Nottingham of working people against the ruling elites is revealed. The author chose 1844 as a reference point because it was a year of change and transition for 'Owenite Socialism' and the Chartist

Movement, but a lot is here that happened before and after that date. The Co-operative and Chartist Movements are ever present and lesser known issues are covered.

One chapter deals with the fight against the church rate which was levied on parishioners for the maintenance and expenses of the parish church. The days when people could be fined or imprisoned for not going to church had long gone, but such was the deference accorded to the parish vicar that his decision on the rate was by custom accepted at vestry meetings. But resentment built up from non-conformists and others against paying money to the wealthy Church of England, and at Bulwell in 1844 the parishioners took control of the vestry meeting and defied the vicar's 2d rate. There was uproar when the vicar declared the rate approved without taking a proper vote. A vote was taken and the rate was defeated by about 100 votes to 20.

A recurring theme is the struggle for freedom of expression. Numerous instances are cited of the church or the state taking individuals to court for blasphemy or sedition, and people were imprisoned or fined for offending church dogma or demanding parliamentary reform. Susannah Wright, a native of Nottingham, was in prison in London for publishing 'blasphemous tracts'. Later she opened a bookshop in Nottingham where 'a mob of Christians' tried to have the shop closed by laying siege to it for several days. A charge of blasphemy by the 'Committee for the Suppression of Vice' failed. It seems that the Nottingham magistrates were more enlightened than those in London.

The government's attempt to suppress discussion and debate included a 4d stamp duty on newspapers that put them beyond the means of poor people. Yet several unstamped radical papers circulated in Nottingham and John Smith came before the magistrates charged with selling such publications. The town's lenient magistrates sentenced him to a fortnight's imprisonment giving him a 'choice

of place of confinement.' There was a different outcome in nearby Derby where George Harney, a leading Chartist, went to gaol for six months for selling unstamped newspapers. He had previously served three years in London for selling *The Poor Man's Guardian*.

In the section on Chartism we learn that a Nottingham Female Political Union was formed in 1838 and there are reports of women addressing and attending meetings in great numbers. Emma Martin is particularly mentioned campaigning against capital punishment, and expounding socialism the Market Square after being banished from the Assembly Rooms Hall.

The book carries accounts of numerous Nottingham Co-operative enterprises, the establishment of Co-operative and Chartist schools for children and adults, and the protests against the New Poor Law Act that replaced relief with workhouses motivated by a belief that poverty was a consequence of idleness.

Overall this is a mine of information and an insight into life in a Midland town in the mid-1880s.

John H Grigg

*A City of Light. Christopher Richardson. £7.99. Loaf on a Stick Press, 2, Devonshire Promenade, Nottingham, NG7 2DS. [acityoflight.wordpress.com](http://acityoflight.wordpress.com)*

### ***Still the Enemy Within – Film and DVD***

This film was made for the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1984/85 miners' strike in Britain. Directed by Owen Gower, the story of the strike is narrated by Yorkshire miners and a miners' wife, one of whom is appropriately named Norman Strike. There are moments of humour in the film as we are told how the police refuse to believe his name when he is stopped, or

that of another miner, Will Picket. Pickets from South Yorkshire, when stopped from going into Nottingham to talk to miners who are still working, get out of their cars and jog past road blocks or hide in car boots. Otherwise this is a sombre documentary with archive film footage not widely seen before. As the film develops we sense a changing mood amongst these Yorkshire miners who had believed that the strike would only last weeks. In the autumn of 1984 the possibility of a strike by the pit deputies, members of NACODS, is seen as one last chance for the strike to end in victory. But the pit deputies accepted assurances from the government, stayed at work, and like the Nottinghamshire miners who worked through the strike ended up losing their jobs as the grim predictions of the NUM about the scale of pit closures became true. The film does not avoid contentious issues. The decision not to hold a ballot of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) is defended. Trade union and Labour Party leaders are bitterly criticised for their lack of support for the strike. However support was given by thousands of trade unionists in collecting money and food for the strikers, and perhaps this is not given enough coverage in the film. *'Still the enemy within'* is on limited release. At the Waterman's cinema, in west London, it was shown to a packed house, most of whom stayed behind to discuss the political issues behind the strike. To get a copy of a DVD of the film and to donate to support its costs go to the web site. <http://the-enemy-within.org.uk/>

Barbara Humphries

***Review of Sailing Close to the Wind: Reminiscences by Dennis Skinner (Quercus, 2014, £20)***

'I am proud to be a trades unionist, to be a member of the Labour Party and to be a socialist. I stick to my principles. I know of no other way in politics.'

This statement in Dennis Skinner's recently published biography sums up his life and politics very well. This is a very enjoyable book about the life of a man who has dedicated himself to the labour movement. Born in 1932 in the Derbyshire mining village of Clay Cross, Dennis decided after he left school, to go down the mines like his father, rather than go to university, which he had the opportunity to do. He became involved in the National Union of Mineworkers and his route into Parliament was decided upon by the union, not by any personal ambition. Simply the NUM wanted one of its own members to contest the Bolsover constituency, instead of a candidate imposed by Labour Party head office. In 1970 Dennis is elected to Parliament, and is immediately faced with the anti working class policies of the Heath government. One of these policies is the Housing Finance Act, which forced councils to raise rents for council house tenants. Not in Clay Cross though where his brother, David was among the Labour councillors who were prepared to break the law. These were tumultuous times, to be followed in the 1980s by attacks on the miners by the Thatcher government. There are humorous moments in the book, where Dennis stands up to Thatcher in the House of Commons Tea Room, much to the dismay of her Tory fan-club. Also he plays the role of an 'extra' for the film *The Iron Lady*, when he has a chance to have another go at his most hated politician again, this time played by actress Meryl Streep.

Aged 82 Dennis Skinner has survived cancer and heart surgery – he praised the multi-ethnic workforce of the NHS for saving his life, and

denounces the hypocrites from UKIP and the Tories who foam on about immigration, but their former leader, Thatcher, was happy to support the Single European Act in 1986 knowing that with the defeat of the trades unions, it would be used to undercut wages. He is standing for Parliament again in 2015, with more nominations than ever before. As he says, perfection does not exist in politics. Vote what is best for you, which unless you are a millionaire banker, means voting Labour.

Barbara Humphries

Reviews also published in *Labour Briefing*

## Obituaries

### John Kotz (1930 – 2014)

John Kotz, who chaired twelve of the Labour Heritage/Essex Labour Party history conferences at Witham in Essex, died on 11<sup>th</sup> November, 2014.

Born in 1930 to a Jewish family in London's East End, he joined Hackney Labour Party and League of Youth in 1945. Deputy agent in Hackney at 21 and agent at 23, he was elected to the Council, and became the youngest mayor of the borough (with the exception of Herbert Morrison) in 1963, after serving for several years as chief whip.

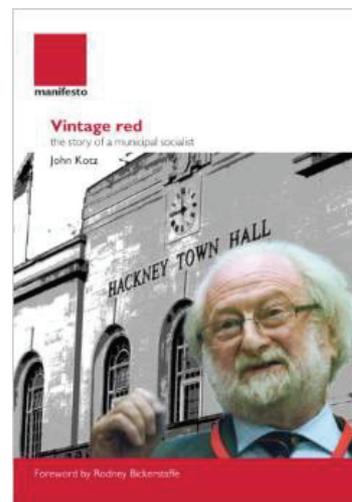
He remained a Hackney councillor until 1986 and served as deputy leader and leader. He was, throughout, committed to the left and allowed CND to hold meetings in the mayor's parlour during his term of office. He was, however, ousted by an intolerant group of ultra-leftists, who later drifted away. John moved with his wife, Betty, to Foxearth on the Essex/Suffolk border and immersed himself in the Essex Labour Party, which he served as secretary and, later, chairman. He was elected to Braintree District Council and stood as the Labour parliamentary candidate in Saffron Walden.

John opposed the US bombing of Vietnam, the privatisation of the utilities and the sale of council housing and remained a totally committed socialist to the end of his life. He was, in addition, a strong trade unionist and a co-operator. He worked as assistant secretary of the LCS Political Committee for a number of years.

John was an activist in all sections of the movement. Without such people, the Labour Party would never have achieved its place in the history of our country.

His second wife, Betty, died in 2013. John is survived by his four sons and their families, a number of whom are active in the Labour movement.

Stan Newens



John Kotz's autobiography "*Vintage Red*" was reviewed in an earlier Labour Heritage bulletin

**Martyn Patrick Grubb - Shop Steward  
and Worker Priest 17<sup>th</sup> March 1927-8<sup>th</sup> July  
2014**



Martyn was born at Little Stanmore, Middlesex. His father was a missionary. His mother died when he was four. He lived with his grandparents in Birkenhead. He went to a weekly boarding school aged seven, in Wirral. When his father remarried, when Martyn was twelve, he moved to Highgate.

In 1945 he left the navy and went to Cambridge to study economics, history and theology. Here he met his wife, Anne whom he married in 1951.

They moved to Southall and became members of the Workers' Church Group. Martyn was ordained as a worker priest. He got a job at AEC in Southall. (AEC made buses for London Transport). At that time AEC had a 'colour bar' and Martyn stood against Tommy Steele (not the singer), the right wing convenor, who was also a Labour councillor. (Tommy Steele was to be expelled from the Southall Labour Group for opposing Labour Party policy. Later he was to stand against Labour in council elections as a candidate supported by the racist Southall Residents' Association). BH

Martyn and Jacqueline Macdonald of the Southall Trades Council founded the Southall International Friendship Council. He became the principal Community Relations Officer for the London Borough of Ealing 1965-1978.

Martyn leaves Anne, his widow, and children, David, Marion, Kenneth and Michael.

His funeral was held at the Brentford and Isleworth Quaker Meeting House on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> July, 2014. A tribute to him was :

“Martyn lived his life with a passion for building peace across divisions whether of class or race and making us aware of the interlacing that unites.”

Richard Hawkins

Notes

*When the Tories left Britain with a deficit*

- *Bill Molloy Labour candidate for Ealing North in his election leaflet of 1970 said that in 1964 Tories had left a £800 million budget deficit – the largest in history. By 1970 after six years of Labour government there was a budget surplus of £550 million.*
- *Correction to article attributed to Dave Welsh in Winter 2014 bulletin which included an article on archives (p16.) it was written by Richard Temple who is the archivist at Senate House Library.*
- *Khatchatur Pilikian, member of Labour Heritage national committee writes on art and society. His paper on William Turner, a painter with working class roots is sent out with this issue of the bulletin.*

Contents – 1945 General Election, reports of West London labour history day and AGM 2015, Armenian massacres, reviews and obituaries