

## Labour Heritage

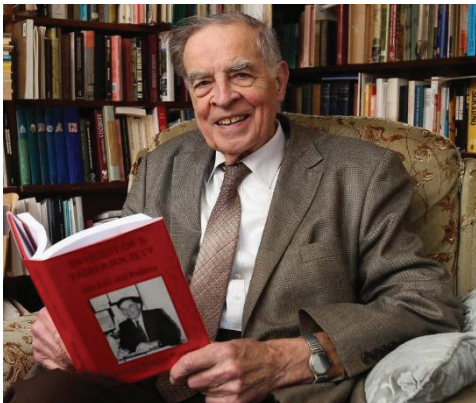


# Labour Heritage

## Bulletin Spring 2021

**Contents:** Stan Newens, The Independent Labour Party, Labour in Suffolk, Tom Braddock part 2, Rank and File Journals on London Transport, Labour History Online, Book Reviews: A Lakeland Boyhood, Why is London Labour? Derek Wheatley, Christopher & Margaret Lancaster (pamphlet)

## Stan Newens 1930- 2021



### A Tribute from Wayne David MP, President of Labour Heritage

I was saddened to hear that Stan Newens had passed away. I first met Stan in the European Parliament when I became an MEP in 1989. Stan had previously been a Labour MP and had been an MEP since 1985, and from the moment I met him it was obvious to me that Stan was a man of 'principle'; someone who believed that 'democratic socialism' was not a short term tactic but a set of practical principles which provided an analysis of the unequal world in which we live, a method for bringing radical change to that world and a vision of what a new world order could look like. Although Stan and I would often

have political disagreements, I never doubted his sincerity.

Throughout his life, Stan was an 'internationalist' and always believed that exploitation and discrimination had to be confronted and defeated at home and abroad. He was an unflinching opponent of colonialism and believed that racism, in all its forms, was an evil which was totally unacceptable in a civilised society.

Once a schoolteacher, Stan was always at heart an educator. And he strongly believed that 'history' was a vital weapon in the armoury of a socialist. Not for him the view that history was a polite, dispassionate description of the activities of the ruling class. Stan believed in history from below. He correctly held the view that history had lessons to teach us and that 'people's history' was about the struggle of the extraordinary, ordinary people, throughout history, to create a better world.

In his own writing, he showed that he practised what he preached. In his pamphlets and in his splendid book on 'North Weald Bassett and its People' Stan displayed well the products of his craft. They showed his in-depth research, clear writing, and consistent Marxist analysis. But they were also imbued with quite a few romanticised undertones (which Stan would have, of course, steadfastly denied).

Stan lived a good life. A life that was about doing all he could to help improve the lot of his fellow men and women.

His contribution to labour history was enormous. If we can continue his work, that will be the greatest tribute that we can pay to Arthur Stanley Newens.

### **A Tribute from Barry Buitekant**

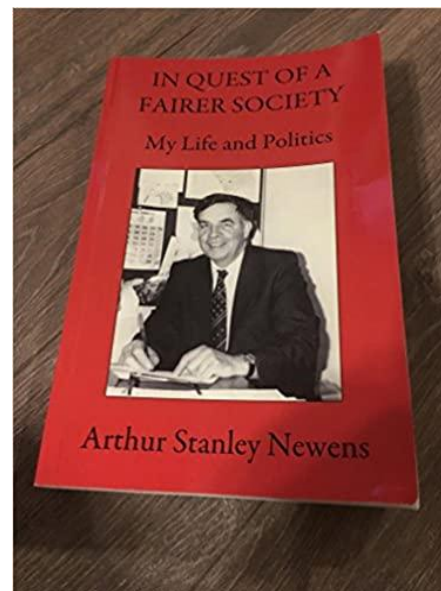
Stan was my history teacher at Edith Cavell Secondary Modern school in Hackney. I can't recall the date he started teaching me but I left school in 1962. I only achieved 3 O levels - given that Stan was my teacher, unsurprisingly history was one of them.

I recall Stan being very good at explaining that history was not a question of great men but of the social forces at work. He was also insistent that if we wanted to make our way in the world we had to work hard for that to happen. He would tell us (and he often did so) that whilst studying for exams he would even spend several hours on Christmas Day doing so.

After leaving school I joined several Trotskyist groups and learnt that Stan had early on joined the Socialist Review group led by Tony Cliff. It wasn't until 1991 that I met Stan again. In the meantime Stan had been Labour MP for Epping (those were the days) & Harlow, and was then MEP for London Central. It was at Sam Bornstein's funeral at the City of London cemetery that we met. I noticed Stan affably chatting away with Mildred Gordon MP, Tony Cliff and Ted Grant. At the wake I took the opportunity to introduce myself to Stan and he was pleased to hear that I was active in the Labour Party and on the Editorial Board of *Revolutionary History* journal and had been an active trade unionist in the Post Office and British Telecom. Stan said he recalled me from school as my English grammar was awful but that I picked up political ideas quickly. First of all I thought that Stan was being diplomatic in

saying that he remembered me, but I think he really did as my English grammar was indeed awful. We kept in intermittent contact afterwards.

Stan was particularly pleased when in 2006 I told him that I had been elected as a Labour councillor for Haggerston ward - which included parts of Hackney Road and Bethnal Green Road, the area his family knew so well; it is literally yards away from what was Edith Cavell school. So farewell Stan and thanks for putting me on the political road.



Stan's autobiography *In Quest of a Fairer Society* was reviewed in *Labour Heritage* Spring 2014

## **The Independent Labour Party and the Foundation of the Labour Party**

**By John H. Grigg**

Just recently I had a disagreement with a comrade who insisted that the Labour Party was founded by the trade unions. My point was that although trade unions were dominant in the party from the outset they were not the driving force that led to the founding conference at the Congregational Memorial Hall in Farringdon Street, London in 1900 which was attended by a number of trade unions, the Fabian Society, the Marxist Social Democratic Federation (SDF) and, what I consider to be the driving force, the Independent Labour Party (ILP).

During the 1800s the craft trade unions associated themselves with the Liberal Party, particularly in mining areas where the Liberals allowed 'working man' candidates to represent them. These 'LibLab' MPs were a pressure group within the Liberal Party. The Fabian Society, one of the Socialist Societies that attended the Conference in 1900 also had links with the Liberals and sought to influence its policies. In the past there had been moves towards the establishment of a political party representing the interests of the working classes independent of the Liberal Party. These moves were not greeted with enthusiasm by the majority of trade unions and they failed to get very far.

One Liberal Party member was Keir Hardie, a coal miner who was appointed secretary of the Ayrshire Miners' Union in 1886 and successfully persuaded other miners' unions to join together in the Scottish Miners Federation. The Federation sent Hardie as their secretary to London to try to persuade the Liberal MPs to vote for an eight hour day for miners. He was not successful and even the Lib-Lab MPs did not back him. In April 1888 he unsuccessfully stood as an 'Independent

Labour' candidate at a Mid-Lanarkshire by-election, and a month later he left the Liberal Party and led the foundation of the Scottish Labour Party. His view was that the interests of the working classes could only be progressed by independent parliamentary representation.

Hardie recognised that trade union support was essential if an independent party was going to make progress, but the Scottish trade unions, apart from Hardie's miners, preferred to stay out of the Scottish Labour Party. In 1893 Hardie moved beyond Scotland and led the foundation of the Independent Labour Party (ILP) at a meeting in Bradford. The name was significant. There had been small groups of trade union candidates and MPs in the past and one called itself the Labour Party but they worked within the Liberal Party. Hardie's vision was a party independent of the Liberals – hence the word 'Independent'. The Scottish Labour Party merged with the ILP a year later, and for the first time there was a national organisation seeking to compete electorally with the Liberal Party. Negligible electoral progress was made and after the 1895 general election, won by the Conservatives, the ILP sought trade union support for independent Labour candidates. At the TUC resolutions favouring the ILP position were opposed by most old craft unions, but with the support of new groups of trade unions representing semi and unskilled workers, enough votes were mustered to get these resolutions passed. However, the resolutions were referred to the TUC Parliamentary Committee - that preferred the old arrangements with the Liberal Party - and no action was taken.

A way forward emerged at the 1899 TUC Conference, when by a narrow majority a Railwaymen's resolution, written by Keir Hardie, was passed to summon a joint conference with 'Socialist Societies' to make plans for parliamentary Labour

representation. The resolution's sponsors persuaded the TUC congress to refer the resolution to a joint meeting with the ILP and the socialist societies rather than leave it in the hands of the Parliamentary Committee where, it was feared, no action would be taken.

At the Memorial Hall 1900 Conference the ILP were represented by Keir Hardie and Ramsay MacDonald and it was they who drove the project forward. Only a minority of trade unions attended and the powerful miners' unions continued their arrangements with the Liberal Party. The unions attending represented 353,000 workers compared to the 23,000 combined memberships of the ILP, SDF and the Fabian Society.

Financial support from the unions for the Labour Representation Committee, as it was initially called, was negligible and was insufficient to employ staff. The unpaid job of secretary attracted little interest and the ILP nominee, Ramsay MacDonald, was appointed to the post. This appointment was to have a significant effect on the committee's future. These early events illustrate the trade unions' uncertainty compared to the firm commitment from the ILP.

Later in 1900, at another general election won by the Conservatives, the LRC endorsed 15 candidates, but mustered only £32 to support them so they were sponsored directly, most by individual trade unions and a few by the ILP or the SDF. Two were elected: Keir Hardie in Merthyr and Richard Bell in Derby. Bell, however, was soon absorbed back into the Liberal Party. However, by the end of the 1900 parliament Keir Hardie was not alone and the LRC had increased its number to four through by-election successes. Also, by 1903 affiliated trade union membership rose to well over 800,000 and the only large unions not represented were the miners. Money came

in from the unions and it was agreed to make allowances to LRC MPs (MPs were unpaid in those days.)

What inspired this burst of union interest was the House of Lords Taff Vale Railway decision, which held that trade unions could be sued for damages caused by strikes. The Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants had to hand over £23,000 and the ruling rendered unions powerless. Unions began to see that parliamentary representation was necessary to bring pressure to nullify the House of Lords decision. In 1906, there was a landslide against the Conservatives and the LRC won 29 seats, all but one of them trade union sponsored. From then on the LRC was known as the Labour Party. The Lib-Lab miners' MPs switched to the Labour Party in 1907, increasing the numbers to forty two.

Although Labour had in essence become the trade union party, it would not have existed but for the driving force of the Independent Labour Party led by Keir Hardie, and in spite of the reluctance and even opposition from much the trade union movement.



Labour Election Poster from the 1920s

## **Sudbury (Suffolk): a Surprise Labour Gain in 1945**

**By Terence Chapman**

The year 2020 marked the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the election of the first majority Labour Government. In that election Labour made 227 gains. One of the most unexpected was at Sudbury in Suffolk where the Liberals had always been the main opponents of the Conservatives and Labour had no previous history of success.

The Sudbury constituency in 1945 consisted of the Market Town and Municipal Borough of Sudbury on the River Stour, the urban districts of Glemsford, Hadleigh, and Haverhill and the rural districts of Clare, Cosford, Melford and parts of Moulton and Thingoe. The electorate in 1945 was 35,408 which included 2,755 service voters.

### **Political History**

The seat was held by Colonel Henry Burton, a Conservative, who had gained the seat from the Liberals in 1924. Labour had contested the seat on only two occasions, the last time being in 1935 when the result was: Conservative 11,700, Liberal 8,344 and Labour 3,670. With a Labour vote of only 15.5% in the previous election the chances of a successful Labour campaign in 1945 seemed unlikely even if there was a general trend to Labour. However the Labour candidate and activists were optimistic.

### **The Candidates**

The Conservative was Colonel Henry Burton OBE the sitting member. The Liberal was Mrs Margaret Hitchcock the General Secretary of the National Federation of Women's Institutes. The Labour candidate was Lieutenant Colonel Roland Hamilton OBE (1885-1953). He had been educated at Cheltenham and the

Royal Military Academy, Woolwich. He was a regular army officer from 1905-1934. In 1937 he joined the Labour Party and in the following year was selected as the prospective Labour candidate for Sudbury. He did a good deal of political work in the constituency prior to the war when he was recalled to the colours.

### **The Campaign**

In early 1945 with the war in Europe showing signs of coming to an end, political activity started to resume. In February Norman Ward from Exmouth was appointed agent by the Sudbury Divisional Party. He found no central organisation and worked to achieve this with the activists in the constituency. Roland Hamilton returned to the constituency and in February 1945 addressed a public meeting at the Sudbury Corn Exchange and another at the Stoke-by-Nayland Institute.

On 15 June a Royal Proclamation dissolved Parliament and Polling Day was fixed for 5 July. Labour planned a large number of public meetings starting with an open-air meeting at the Market Hill, Sudbury on Friday 15 June addressed by Roland Hamilton. In the following week he spoke at 20 public meetings, (at Hundon, Barnardiston, Great Wratting, Kedington, Chedburgh, Chevington, Brockley, Lidgate, Hadleigh, Cavendish, Clare, Great and Little Bradley, Cowlinge, Wickhambrook, Great and Little Thurlow, Withersfield and Haverhill), a tempo maintained throughout the campaign and culminating in eve of poll meetings at Long Melford, Lavenham and the Grammar School, Sudbury. At one of the meetings the supporting speakers included Dame Anne Loughlin of the Tailors and Garment Workers' Union. After polling day there was a pause to allow the service votes to be received from at home and abroad. These were verified on 25 July and the count took place on July 26.

## **The Result**

The count commenced at 9 am and at shortly before noon the Deputy Acting Returning Officer went to the top of the Town Hall steps and announced the result.

Lt-Col. Hamilton OBE (Labour) 9906  
(40.3%)

Colonel Burton OBE (Conservative) 9659  
(39.2%)

Mrs Hitchcock MBE (Liberal) 5045  
(20.5%)

Labour majority 247

The turnout was 69.5% and the increase in the Labour Party share of the vote in Sudbury was nearly 25%, one of the biggest increases in the country.

Roland Hamilton's success was greeted by applause as he moved the vote of thanks to the Returning Officer and his staff. Both defeated candidates were shown to be good losers. In congratulating the new MP, Colonel Burton said he had found him a most chivalrous friend. He had fought a clean fight, the cleanest we have had in Sudbury.

After the declaration, Roland Hamilton undertook a victory tour of the constituency. On his return to Sudbury he attended a special meeting at the Brotherhood Rooms. The Agent, Mr Norman Ward, was given a tremendous welcome. In an emotional speech he stated that this was the first time in 25 years as a Labour election agent that he had been on the winning side. Roland Hamilton and his wife were greeted by prolonged cheering when they arrived at the meeting. He gave a brief speech of thanks to the party members and activists for the result that had been achieved. The meeting ended with three cheers for Roland Hamilton MP.

## **Why Labour won Sudbury**

Roland Hamilton attributed this to several factors – to the amount of support he had received from the farm workers, the large proportion of the Forces Vote he received, to the great efforts of the party workers and to the support he had received from the factory workers at Hadleigh and Sudbury.

## **Postscript**

Roland Hamilton was the one and only Labour MP for Sudbury because the Representation of the People Act 1948 changed the electoral boundaries and Sudbury (Labour majority 247) was combined with Woodbridge (Conservative majority 4693).

The result of the election in 1950 in Sudbury and Woodbridge was a win for the Conservatives by 4537 in a poll of 84.5%.

## **Sources:**

*The Suffolk and Essex Free Press* 1945,  
*The British General Election of 1945* by R.B. McCullum and Alison Readman,  
*British Parliamentary Election Results 1918-1949 and 1950-70* compiled by FWS.Craig, *Boundaries of Parliamentary Constituencies 1885-1972* compiled by FWS Craig.

I would also like to acknowledge the assistance given to me by Desmond Crone of the Suffolk Archives.

## **Tom Braddock: a Left-wing Maverick during the Cold War (part 2)**

**By Jonathan Wood**

### **Tom Braddock's Defeat in the 1950 General Election**

In the General Election of February 1950, Labour's parliamentary majority was dramatically reduced to 5 seats and Braddock lost his Mitcham seat.

*The 1950 General Election in Mitcham*

<i>Robert Carr – Conservative</i>	<i>31,881</i>
<i>Tom Braddock – Labour</i>	<i>27,055</i>

The victorious Conservative, Robert Carr, later served as Home Secretary during Edward Heath's Premiership.

### **Tom Braddock, Socialist Fellowship and the Korean War**

In June 1950 North Korea invaded South Korea and the United Nations responded with military intervention in Korea led by the United States and including British armed forces. The editorial board of *Socialist Outlook* reacted by proclaiming its opposition to the war and demanding the withdrawal of all British armed forces from the Far East and a free and united Korea. Socialist Fellowship's national committee condemned American and British military operations in Korea as 'imperialist aggression'. Socialist Fellowship's original founders, Ellis Smith and Fenner Brockway were vehemently opposed to this policy and eventually resigned from Socialist Fellowship in protest. Other MPs dissociated themselves from the group. In contrast, Braddock was a committed supporter of the Fellowship's campaign against the US-led military intervention in Korea. Braddock and John Lawrence were both convinced the Korean War was an example of American

imperialist aggression and were determined to resist British participation in what they considered an American anti-communist crusade. Braddock collaborated closely with Lawrence and other Trotskyists in an anti-war campaign.

### **Tom Braddock and the Radicalisation of Socialist Fellowship**

Following the resignation of Smith and Brockway, Socialist Fellowship espoused more radical policies which contradicted official Labour policy. Braddock backed this more radical posture and expressed highly contentious views which were more extreme than those of better known leftists such as Michael Foot and Richard Crossman. He claimed there would be electoral benefits for Labour if Attlee, Bevin, Cripps and Morrison all retired from politics and asserted that the Labour Government had failed to achieve the Party's goals. Braddock became Socialist Fellowship's President at its second national conference in 1950. The conference asserted that only a 'vigorous socialist policy' could save Britain from economic catastrophe and a third world war and urged that all large-scale industry be nationalised and placed under workers' control. Socialist Fellowship's new radical programme was published as a pamphlet which was written by Tom Braddock and entitled *From Labour to Socialism*. In his summary of the pamphlet Braddock repudiated the mixed economy declaring: 'The mixed economy is nuts. And the Fellowship utterly condemns the idea that we can continue it. *From Labour to Socialism* contains a programme that would make us 100% socialist democracy – and it would have it done NOW'

### **Party Officials' Opposition to Braddock's Selection as Parliamentary Candidate**

Braddock's philippics against Government policy brought him into conflict with the

Labour hierarchy. The Cold War made Labour's leaders and officials less tolerant of left-wing challenges which in the general climate of fear and suspicion might be perceived as communist subversion. Mitcham again selected Braddock as its parliamentary candidate. However, after Morgan Phillips interviewed Braddock in October 1950, there was an exchange of letters between them in which Phillips made strong objection to Socialist Fellowship's policies, especially its statement on the Korean War. Shortly after, the NEC decided not to endorse Braddock's candidature in Mitcham. In 1951, Braddock asked the NEC to reconsider their refusal to endorse his candidature but could not persuade them to change their decision.

### **The Disaffiliation of Socialist Fellowship**

In April 1951, the NEC decided to disaffiliate Socialist Fellowship from the Labour Party which made membership of the Fellowship incompatible with being a member of the Labour Party. In their letter to Morgan Phillips, Braddock and the other members of Socialist Fellowship's National Committee deplored the disaffiliation of the Fellowship but agreed to disband the organisation to avert disciplinary action against the group's members.

### **Tom Braddock's Campaigning in the Early 1950s**

Braddock's parliamentary ambitions had been frustrated but he was active in extra-parliamentary campaigns. In April 1951 Braddock and John Platts-Mills were the main speakers at a meeting in Croydon organised by the Croydon Peace Committee. Rather ironically for a meeting organised by a peace committee, a mass brawl broke out in the audience and the police had to be called. In the summer of 1951, a conference of delegates from Labour parties in London and the Home

Counties backed a proposal for an emergency national conference of the Labour Party. A Campaign Committee for an Emergency National Conference of the Labour Party was established. Tom Braddock became its President while Karl Westwood, another former member of Socialist Fellowship was its secretary. In an open letter to Labour Party organisations, Braddock and Westwood argued that Labour had no policy with which to fight a General Election and proposed that Labour adopt a policy of peace and higher living-standards. They asked Labour Party organisations to send resolutions calling for an emergency conference to Transport House. Many Labour parties and trade union branches supported this demand but Labour officials were hostile to the campaign, Morgan Phillips claiming that the campaign had been inspired and organised by Socialist Fellowship.

### **Tom Braddock and Political Divisions at Socialist Outlook**

*Socialist Outlook* attempted to fill the gap left by the disbandment of Socialist Fellowship. Braddock was a member of *Socialist Outlook's* editorial board and worked very closely with John Lawrence the paper's editor. Braddock and Lawrence became embroiled in an acrimonious dispute with Gerry Healy, leader of the Trotskyist entrism group known as the Club. Braddock, Lawrence and their allies fought with Healy for control of *Socialist Outlook*, the printing firm, John Stafford Thomas, and the Labour Publishing Society. The management committee of the Labour Publishing Society narrowly favoured Lawrence and on *Socialist Outlook's* editorial board Healy was outnumbered by Braddock, Lawrence and Jack Stanley. However, an agreement was reached which allowed Healy to take over the print shop and this may have been because Braddock wanted to recoup his financial investment in this enterprise.



Jack Stanley decided to support Healy, depriving Lawrence of majority support on the management committee of the Labour Publishing Society. A vote of confidence in Lawrence at the management committee resulted in his defeat and Braddock, tiring of the prolonged factional struggle, resigned from the editorial board of *Socialist Outlook* in April 1954. In his resignation letter, Braddock wrote of Lawrence's work as editor in laudatory terms and criticised his opponents in an attempt to strengthen Lawrence's position but this did not prevent Healy ousting Lawrence and replacing him as the paper's editor. Healy's tenure as editor was brief because in July 1954 the NEC proscribed *Socialist Outlook* and the journal ceased publication.

### **Tom Braddock's Unsuccessful Attempts to become a Parliamentary Candidate**

Braddock's attempts to become a parliamentary candidate in the early 1950s were frustrated by the opposition of the NEC and Labour officials. Their attitudes towards rebellious left-wingers had been made more intolerant by the Cold War and the Bevanite challenge to the Party hierarchy. Braddock's unsparing criticisms of official Party policy and Party leaders and his association with the far left meant he was viewed with deep suspicion. The NEC refused to endorse him as parliamentary candidate for Mitcham in 1952 and would not approve him as Wimbledon's parliamentary candidate in 1954. Wimbledon Labour Party opposed the decision not to endorse Braddock but was warned it would be disbanded if it refused to adopt another candidate.

### **Tom Braddock on London County Council**

In 1957, Kingston-on-Thames selected Braddock as its parliamentary candidate, a decision which was opposed by the NEC. However on this occasion, protests

convinced the NEC to give Braddock an interview and his candidature was endorsed though his campaign in Kingston in the 1959 General Election ended in defeat. He enjoyed more success in local politics. Braddock applied to become a candidate in the London County Council elections (LCC) in 1958. Initially, the London Labour Party refused to endorse his candidature and referred the matter to the NEC. The NEC referred it back to London Labour Party which decided to endorse Braddock. In the 1958 LCC elections, Braddock was elected councillor for Holborn and St Pancras South, defeating the Conservative incumbent. On the LCC, Braddock demonstrated he was still willing to contradict majority opinion. In 1958, the LCC was considering whether to redesign Piccadilly Circus and the LCC Town Planning Committee recommended Piccadilly Circus be kept gay and cheerful with abundant bright lights. The Committee's proposals were accepted by almost all the councillors, Tories and Labour, with the single exception of Tom Braddock. He said he regarded Piccadilly Circus in its existing state as 'an absolute degradation' and asked how many could truthfully say that what he described as the 'garish, vulgar advertising matter surrounding Piccadilly' was gay. Braddock served only a single term as an LCC councillor and stood down in 1961.

### **Tom Braddock in his Later Years**

Tom Braddock stood as the Labour parliamentary candidate in Kingston - upon-Thames in 1964 and 1966 but lost both times. After 1961 he was never again an elected representative at either parliamentary or municipal level but he continued to be active in the Labour Party and attended Labour Conference in 1966 and 1970 as a delegate from Wimbledon Labour Party. At the 1970 Labour Conference, Braddock, then aged 84, made a memorable speech. He was speaking in

support of a resolution urging more help for pensioners, including an annual adjustment to the pension rate and free telephones for pensioners who lived alone. Braddock called on the Labour Party to act immediately and adopt the resolution's proposals as a first step towards justice for pensioners. He argued that the old age pension should be equivalent to the average weekly wage. He recalled that when he joined Labour in 1918 the Party had intended to study ways of using the country's wealth to benefit the whole community and concluded 'It is just about time our studies were finished.' His words were applauded by the Conference delegates.

### **The Politics of Tom Braddock**

Tom Braddock was a maverick and a non-conformist, whose radical views, especially on foreign and defence policy, conflicted with official Party policy. His political opinions often set him apart from much of the Labour Left. His antipathy to a close relationship between Britain and the US distinguished him from *Tribune* and its adherents in the late 1940s and he remained an ardent supporter of Socialist Fellowship after it was abandoned by Ellis Smith, Fenner Brockway and other left-wing MPs. Braddock has often been described a Stalinist fellow-traveller and he continued to be sympathetic to the Soviet Union when it was being censured by prominent leftists such as Bevan and Foot. However, his willingness to criticise repression in the Eastern European Communist States shows he was not an uncritical apologist for the Soviet bloc. Braddock maintained his distinctive left-wing views in the intolerant political climate of the Cold War. As a result, his attempts to re-enter Parliament were frustrated by the Labour hierarchy and he was marginalised within his own Party.

**[Part One was published in the Labour Heritage bulletin, Autumn 2020]**

## **Rank and File Journals on London Transport in the 1970's & 1980's**

**By Martin Eady**

*Rank and File*: common soldiers, ordinary people (Oxford English Dictionary). I am using the term in its general sense, not just to denote the movement initiated by the Socialist Workers Party.

Rank and File or other unofficial journals and publications usually arise in our movement as a result of perceived failings of the official movement to respond adequately to challenging situations. In some cases Rank and File movements and publications are what pushed the official unions into action or led to the formation of new 'official' Unions, for example the Oil Industry Liaison Committee (OilC) which turned into a union and is now part of RMT.

George Sanders, one of the militant leaders of the London and Provincial Union of Licensed Vehicle Workers, which became part of the TGWU, (Transport and General Workers Union) believed that Rank and File action and journals are a necessary complement to official Unions, not in opposition to them.

(See [libcom.org/history/1891-London-bus-workers-strike](http://libcom.org/history/1891-London-bus-workers-strike)).

The Working Class Movement Library in Salford has a large collection of these unofficial publications, mostly related to the transport industry, and London Transport in particular. Right through from the General Strike to the 1950's these were almost exclusively produced by Communist Party members and sympathisers. But after the war, and especially following the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956, the Party lost much of its influence.

As the post war bulge generation came of age in the 1960's, a wave of industrial militancy grew. New or revived left wing

organisations grew rapidly, both inside and outside the Labour Party.

The International Socialists, founded in 1962, became the Socialist Workers Party in 1977. They decided in 1973 to build factory branches. They were accused of opportunism, but were more alert than other left groups in responding to this upsurge of militancy with their industrial strategy. The Rank and File groups they formed in various industries oriented towards the growing shop stewards movement, which often acted independently of the trade union leaderships. But this strategy was abandoned in 1982, although many of the Rank & File groups continued with non-party people or activists who left the SWP. (See article by Alex Callinicos in *International Socialism* Autumn 1982, in [www.marxists.org/history/etol/writers/callinicos/1982](http://www.marxists.org/history/etol/writers/callinicos/1982)). Possibly the charge of opportunism may not have been wrong. In the transport industry many journals appeared, partly organised by political groups but involving many individual activists and local union branches.

### **On the Buses**

The *Busman's Punch* had been a highly successful unofficial journal produced by Communist Party workers and others from 1931 to 1937.

The failure of the 1937 strike put paid to that but in November 1949 the first edition of a new journal *Platform* was produced. This followed the banning of communists from office in the TGWU, a ban that was not lifted until 1969 (see my book: M. Eady, *Hold on Tight: London Transport and the Trades Unions* (London, 2016), pp 114-115). *The Platform* opposed the Labour Government's pay freeze, which was supported by TGWU General Secretary Arthur Deakin. The new journal gained

support from eleven bus and tram depots but no organisation was built around it. Opposition to the banning of communists from office, which had a disastrous effect on the union's organising abilities, was signed by 68 branch officers. Issue No 100 of *The Platform* appeared in May 1958 in support of the bus strike of that year. A special issue came out in 1967 which made reference to the journal ceasing publication "last December". The collection at Salford has an almost complete run of these.

It also contains *Liverpool Busmen's Bulletins* for December 1959 and March 1960, which make reference to disputes in Sheffield, and an overtime ban at London's Croydon, Kingston and Norbiton garages. Then there is nothing in the collection until *The Platform* No. 2, relaunched in June-July 1976. A full twelve pages, this was clearly produced under the influence of the Socialist Workers Party. The late Pete Glatter, a bus driver at Tottenham garage, was prominent. Issues raised included a strike against cuts at Wandsworth and Willesden garages, the Anti Nazi League, Troops Out Movement (Ireland), bus workers on trial in Kingston, Jamaica, National Union of Railwaymen activist John McMorrow's seminal book *Asbestos-Killer Dust*, a statement of aims, and notice of regular meetings. These took place in The Roebuck, Tottenham Court Road, a venue I remember well.

*The Platform* continued to be produced regularly until at least 1978. A special national issue in 1977 had reports from Merseyside, Romford Green Line, Dundee, South Wales, Eastern National, Alder Valley, Glasgow, Jamaica, South Africa and New York. The editorial committee was Steve Johnston, Pete Glatter, and Steve Cushion (who I am still in touch with). The Working Class Movement Library at Salford has several issues of the 1970's *Platform*.

Dave Welsh, who is one of the organisers of the *Britain at Work 1945-1995* oral history project, has lent me his large collection of unofficial publications. A pamphlet entitled *On the Buses* by Penny Fair was produced in December 1976 by the syndicalist organisation Solidarity. Along with news that Willesden was the only bus garage to strike against new schedules, it is critical of *Platform*. It says there is a need to create ‘something new’, but the style is rather academic.

*Busworker Monthly* appears to have been a successor to *Platform*. Issues no 13 (March 1983) and no 14 (April 1983) are in Dave Welsh’s collection. The contact given is Ken Fuller. Ken was at one time in the Communist Party and was an officer in the TGWU. He is the author of *Radical Aristocrats*, a superb history of trade unionism on London’s buses. (2<sup>nd</sup> edition Ishi Press 2011) The March 1983 issue (38 pages long) reports that One Man Operation (OMO as they called it then) had been accepted by the TGWU and that a fight-back was needed. There is an article on pirate buses and opposition to privatisation. No 14 (price 15p) says that it is published by the Busworkers’ Group, which included Steve Cushion. It does not appear to have been associated with any political group. It notes that OMO is being implemented and that there has been no action from the Joint Trade Union Defence Committee to fight the Law Lords decision to ban the Greater London Council’s Fares Fair policy. I recall that the Joint Trades Union Committee was the bureaucratic official organisation that did absolutely nothing to organise London Transport workers. There is also a useful critique by Doug Wright of the Alternative Economic Strategy, beloved of the Communist Party and Labour left. There is a report of a meeting of the Campaign to Improve London’s transport, which was an attempt to build a campaign uniting the trades unions and passenger groups.

Other publications on the bus side in Dave Welsh’s collection include:

*The Upton Park Radical* (1985), *The Branch* (Stamford Hill Garage 1982), *Dispute at Chalk Farm Garage* (1984), *Shepherds Bush Garage against One Person Operation* (1982).

### **On the Underground**

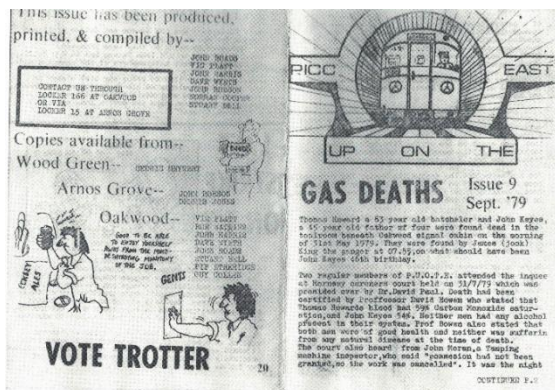
Several rank and file papers appeared, most of which had a mass appeal. There was no journal like *Platform* that covered the whole network but publications aimed at individual depots became quite popular. *East Ham NUR Branch News* (second edition) proposed a strike over staff assaults.

The *Baker Street Bulletin* produced by the ASLE&F (Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen) branch, referred to the success of the 28<sup>th</sup> March 1984 strike, which was joint with the NUR (National Union of Railwaymen). This was an official strike by all the unions on London Transport against the Government plan to remove London Transport from the control of the Greater London Council. A GLC call for all out strike action went unheeded by the unions though. The bulletin also built support for the Miners’ Strike 1984/85. A 1986 issue for the Bakerloo and Jubilee lines opposes One Person Operation on deep level tubes “until safety problems can be overcome”, not on principle.

The *East Hammer* was a joint publication of East Ham ASLE&F and NUR branches. No 5 opposed One Person Operation on the Hammersmith City & Circle lines and called for a strike on 27<sup>th</sup> July 1984. No 6, August 1984, opposed job cuts on stations. It noted that the Bus Conference had voted to strike. It reports that driverless trains are proposed for the new Docklands light Railway. *Finsbury Park NUR Branch Bulletin* opposed cuts following the removal of London Transport from the

GLC and formation of London Regional Transport (LRT), and supported the Miners' Strike. Wood Green ASLE&F and Finsbury Park NUR joint leaflet noted that LRT climbed down and would not sack 200 staff on 1<sup>st</sup> October 1984, so the planned industrial action was called off. They supported the miners and the dockers. 'The Deal' refers to a 29<sup>th</sup> January 1979 mass meeting which rejected any talks on productivity. Metropolitan-Bakerloo-Jubilee line joint ASLE&F and NUR branches appeal for funds to support the Miners' Xmas 1984.

*Picc Up On The East* was an SWP inspired journal on the East end of the Piccadilly Line, edited by SWP member the late John Robson it was in a popular style and cheaply produced. Issue 3, (Xmas 1978), took up problems of fire safety. It criticised Xmas Day running. That was the last year that the London Underground had a Xmas day service. It said that there was no difference between the ASLE&F and NUR in the elections for Sectional Council 3 (the negotiating body for train staff).



Issue 9 (September 1979) laid down conditions for the introduction of OPO. It promoted an unofficial candidate for the Sectional Council. There is a demand for a single union for all of London Transport. Gossip and chat items make it very readable. Issue 14 (September 1980) criticises the NUR secretary of Sectional Council 3, but also opposes the Staff

Council scheme as a whole (it was finally done away with in 1993). There is criticism of ASLE&F's investment policy and a report of a railway strike in East Berlin.

Issue 15 (November 1980) contains criticism of a former *Picc Up On The East* contact who has left ASLE&F and joined the NUR. It now favoured voting for ASLE&F for SC3, a marked change from the previously bipartisan position. There is no statement from the NUR.

*Close Encounters on the District Line* covered Barking and Upminster depots and was edited by Dave Welsh.

Contents : No 1 (Dec-Jan 1981) *A Voice for the Rank and File* argued for local union representatives, which did not exist under the Staff Councils scheme and reported on disciplinaries and Health and Safety. It is better written and produced than *Picc Up On The East*, but has less light gossip and chat.

No 2 (March-April 1981) noted that the first issue had sold 300 copies. It had contacts at Parson's Green depot. It noted that there were 17 women members of ASLE&F nationally, of whom 12 were on the London Underground:

No 3 (July-August 1981) included 'farewell' to CO/CP stock (a type of train on the District Line), criticism of failings of the Health & Safety at Work Act, and opposition to the Social Democratic Party.

No 4 (Dec-Jan 1982) included a report from the North London Line. Readership is now 400, described as a "Socialist Rank and File Magazine". Article "Amazing Space travel News" by E.P.Brake (railway staff in-joke). Report on redundancies at the LT Works & Building Department, the Law Lords ruling on Fares Fair and criticism of health and safety reps.

No 5 (March-April 1982) included refusal to work new rosters. Transport subsidies were needed. It noted that the Tory

Employment Bill gave protection to non-union members. There was a letter from a Hackney bus driver calling for a unity. "Fare Fight" campaign.

No 6 (Dec-Jan 1983) included "Your future – OPO and automatic trains", 10<sup>th</sup> March day of action, a report that the TGWU Bus Section had accepted cuts and the need for a rank and file alternative strategy. It noted that there had been no walkout in October when new duty sheets were posted and that the June 1982 action had not been followed up. Noted that the 'Unity in Action' rank & file group published London Transport Worker.

**LT Builder** was published January 1982. The in-house Works and Building Department was privatised and soon closed down.

### ***Unity in Action***

This group originated out of a large meeting of bus and underground workers in Whitechapel in 1982. It aimed to unify activists within London Transport in the light of the Law Lords decision to outlaw Fares Fair in December 1981. Fares Fair was the GLC policy to arrest the continual decline in London Transport services by a drastic fares reduction. The group tried to involve activists from the Fares Fair campaign. The fiasco of the "Can't pay won't pay" campaign was controversial. Unity in Action was built around the six day official strike in June 1982 on the London Underground. This strike was against the cuts which followed the Law Lords decision. Signal Engineers were threatened with disciplinary action for refusing to programme the new reduced schedules. Unity in Action produced leaflets but declined after the 1982 strikes.

**Transport Worker** was another attempt to build a broad rank and file group across LT. It was built on the *Busworker* group led by Ken Fuller but did not catch on

on the Underground. Following the loss of control of London Transport by the Greater London Council, rampant privatisation and what many saw as a sell-out by the TGWU, most activists had left the buses. (See *Hold on Tight* p.158 for more details).

### ***Tubewatch***

A new monthly bulletin was launched in February 1988 edited by Dave Welsh, it was independent of the GLC but initially received some funding from them. Sixteen issues appeared bi-monthly until October 1991. It covered the King's Cross fire, and many other fires, along with issues on British Rail, One Person Operation, catering, black workers, Rail Against Apartheid and many other progressive issues. An Equal Opportunities Pressure group was set up in 1984, which published a booklet and pushed LT into setting up an Equal Opportunities Unit. This was closed down when LT was split up.

### **The Greater London Council**

The GLC had been given control of London Transport in 1970, but not until Ken Livingstone became leader did things really begin to change. The Fares Fair policy is well known, but the Popular Planning Unit (PPU) did a lot of analysis and put out many pamphlets and journals. Dave Welsh left his job as a District Line guard and joined the PPU.

Transport chief Dave Wetzell opposed One Person Operation (OPO) on the buses, but favoured it on the Underground, a position that did not go down well with the rail unions. Nevertheless, the Strategic Policy Unit in 1987 published a booklet opposing OPO on the Piccadilly Line. Unfortunately the NUR strike against OPO on 20<sup>th</sup> May 1985 had been a failure, so the issue had become the rate of pay for OPO. This issue was to explode with the 1989 strikes, initially unofficial. (See *Hold on Tight* pp.170-177).

A PPU bulletin entitled *Jobs for a Change* appeared in April 1984. It opposed OPO on buses and trains, and campaigned against the closure of Aldenham bus works and Acton rail works. Aldenham closed. Acton works remains open, albeit with much reduced staff numbers. The June 1984 edition opposed the removal of GLC control of LT and opposed privatisation. As we know, both went ahead. A South East Region TUC day of action day of action on 27<sup>th</sup> June called unsuccessfully for union action on the issue.

A further article is planned, looking at Rank & File publications from the General Strike up to the Second World War. The Working Class Movement Library, 51 The Crescent, Salford M5 4WX [www.wcml.org.uk](http://www.wcml.org.uk)

## **Labour History Online during Lockdown and Two Anniversaries in 2020**

**By Barbara Humphries**

**The Society for the Study of Labour History held its AGM on Zoom** on November 21<sup>st</sup> 2020. Attendance was higher than usual, leading to the conclusion that an online event could continue even after members are allowed to meet face to face.

2020 was the centenary of the founding of the Communist Party of Great (CPGB) and in recognition of this, Kevin Morgan, professor of history and politics at the University of Manchester, was invited to give a talk on the history of the CPGB. He chose to talk about the role of the party's congress under the title 'The Communist Party Congress as a Syndrome of Political Ideas'. Those who attended the party congresses were representatives, not delegates. Unlike Labour Party conferences they could not be mandated by a local branch, but were entrusted to take decisions on hearing the debates. Much of

the Congress would be taken up with hearing reports from the Central Committee or from the party leaders, such as Harry Pollitt. Indeed it was reported that no-one could leave the room whilst the leader was speaking! Much of the business of the congress was conducted in commissions, away from the main gathering. Attendances were relatively small – in the 100's in the 1920s and 1930s.

The Congress of the CPGB was overshadowed by the international congress of the Comintern to which the British party send representatives. Congresses had a theme to illustrate the political direction of the party. In 1945 it was entitled 'It can be Done' defeating fascism and ensuring world peace. They were very much about rallying the faithful and taking the message out to the working class movement. In 1937 Harry Pollitt gave a roll call of members who had been killed in the Spanish Civil War, as volunteers with the International Brigades. In 1938 the Congress took place in Birmingham, in a protest against Neville Chamberlain's appeasement policies and also to make overtures towards a new working class in the engineering factories. Much support for the CPGB had been from the coal mining areas before this.

There were however political disagreements within the party which led to clashes on the floor of the Congress. In 1929 there was opposition to the new line – Class Against Class, attractive to the young unemployed, but not to industrial workers such as Wal Hannington. The 1939 congress was cancelled at a time when policy on whether to support the War or not was in dispute. In contrast the Labour Party conference met in 1940 and took the significant decision to join a coalition government. By 1942 however the Congress of the CPGB met. With the Soviet Union now in the War, it had a very clear line from the Comintern.

This was to be its largest congress to date, with 1300 attending, and its membership approaching 50,000.

Kevin's talk was followed by questions and discussions. It was recorded and hoped that a YouTube record would be made available on the SSLH'S revamped web site.

### **Engels Anniversary Lecture Hosted by the Marx Memorial Library and the Working Class Movement Library**

November 2020 was the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Frederick Engels. An anniversary lecture was co-hosted by the Marx Memorial Library and the Working Class Movement Library. The speaker was Mary Davis, visiting professor of labour history at Royal Holloway College. Held via Zoom it attracted over 200 people.

Engels lived for much of his life in England and had close connections with the British labour movement, including the Chartists. One of his most famous books was *The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844*. This work was based on observations of working class life in Manchester, both in the factory and at home. It remains a work of social history and condemnation of capitalist society, providing primary source material for Marx's *Capital*. It describes the militancy of the working class in early 19<sup>th</sup> century England, including the 1842 General Strike, dismissed by conservative historians as 'The Plug Riots'. Tameside Council have erected a blue plaque to commemorate the strike. This book was written by Engels when he was only 24.

Engels' later work on which Mary Davis spent most of her lecture was written 40 years later, after the death of his colleague Karl Marx. This was entitled *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*. His thesis was that the development of

private property had led to the rise of the family and the enslavement of women by men. For the woman he said, this was her historical defeat. She was no longer an equal citizen as she had been under primitive communist hunter-gatherer societies, where women's work had been valued equally, but in practice belonged to her husband. His work was in the public sphere; her work was in the private sphere, working for her family. For the property owning class the monogamous family was all important as it guaranteed that private property was rightly passed on to their heirs and so could be maintained in perpetuity.

*Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* was rediscovered by feminists in the Women's Liberation Movement in the 1960s. It threw up though all sorts of debates and some the primary research by anthropologists for the book was challenged. Some feminists championing the 'dual systems' approach, claimed that the mode of production in society and sexual reproduction in the family were not intrinsically linked. Mary Davis defended Engel's thesis and the basis of his research. She however criticised Engels for predicting that the bourgeois family would die out for the working class which did not hold property. That she said had not happened and there were reasons for this that Engels could not have foreseen. The institution of the family became part of the bourgeois ideology, of immense economic use to the capitalist class. Women could be paid less and be confined to parts of the labour market which represented an extension of their work in the home. It could be used as a justification for cuts in the social wage. Cuts in public services mean more of a burden to working women. The ideology of the family also had an impact on the thinking of those trades unionists who called for the maintenance of the family wage and who opposed the introduction of social security measures.



Today we see that entry into the workforce has not resolved problems facing women. They are more likely to lose their jobs. Unemployment is much higher amongst women. They are more likely to work part time (41%) than men (12%). They tend to be concentrated in occupations which are an extension of their domestic duties. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century many more women worked as domestic servants than in textile mills. Skills in female dominated jobs today such as the care sector are massively undervalued. Much work done by women in the homes such as child rearing and providing meals receives no paid recognition at all, but it is socially necessary work. So the analysis given by Engels of the roots of women's oppression remains as relevant today. It is also essentially a class question. Replying to one question, Mary Davis said that not all women in our society can be described as oppressed, as not all face the same conditions as working class women.

### **Recording the 1984/85 Miners' Strike**

In a free online event organised by University College London on 24th November, there was a chance to hear about oral history research into women's experiences in the miners' strike of 1984-5 in the Kent coalfield, including hearing directly from women involved in the strike. A small coalfield, with just three working pits in 1984, Kent was extremely strong in support of the strike. Women there started to organise in support of the National Union of Mineworkers' struggle from just a few days into the strike, and their activism was vital to keeping the strike going for an entire year. But their work in the home and behind the scenes was also vitally important.

## **Book Reviews**

### ***A Lakeland Boyhood,* by David Clark, Hayloft, 2020 Reviewed by Dianne Hayter**

An established Labour historian, with a notable clutch of books to his name, including on the Labour Movement in Westmorland, the South Shield Labour Party, Colne Valley and a superb biography of the radical (though disappeared) MP Victor Grayson, (Lord) David Clark has now written on a subject closer to home – the first two decades of his own life.

Whilst politics is scarcely mentioned, the story of his boyhood amongst his adored Lakes and countryside sets out very clearly his developing life skills and deep love of nature which created the politician he later became.

Born to a gardener and his cook/ cleaner wife in their tied cottage, financial insecurity was worsened by the sudden loss of home when a job ended. His father's own outdoor life however set the young David on a path of exploration of local woods and lakes, collecting birds' eggs (which he now regrets), learning the songs and habits of birds, plants and seasons. This respect for the natural world set him on a path of its preservation, leading to him later being described as "the first green politician of any party to serve on the front bench".

His parents clearly gave him the freedom to roam, leading to long bike rides around the UK and then hitch hiking around Europe – just 13 years after the end of the war, when he found himself warmly welcomed in those recently liberated countries, testimony of their gratitude.

Whilst, unusually, the author stayed at school to do his O levels, there was never a thought of A levels as he started the world

of work. The post Suez 1956 austerity freeze in civil service appointments suddenly removed his planned job with the Fresh Water Biological Association, but he found more congenial (if physically hard) work in forestry (saving him from a dreaded role “sitting on his bottom” in an office). 60 years later (as Chair of the Forestry Commission) he felled via a computer-controlled machine a token couple of the very trees he himself had planted.

He makes few references to his subsequent career, other than to note that whilst he was born on the estate of a major land owner and hereditary Peer, that family no longer sits in the Lords whereas the son of their gardener does, as well as recording that Harold Wilson appointed him as the Shadow Agriculture minister as he had a “unique” understanding of agriculture within the PLP.

His view of history, however, could as easily fit as his political lodestar. As he says “if one wishes to understand the nature of an age, institution or movement, it is essential to examine the lives of the people not only the leaders .. a bottom-up approach”.

This reflects the considerable impact David Clark made in the Commons, promoting an Act to safeguard badgers as well as an environment Act requiring the Forest Commission to take account of the environment as well as forestry objectives. Later he became Chair of the Forestry Commission – the first forestry worker to fill that role.

What the book – one hopes only the first part of a full autobiography – demonstrates is how the (literal) grounding of his Lake District childhood, his understanding of nature and the rhythms of life, the friendships and community which fostered him and his innate decency and hard work produced the most valuable of a

parliamentarian: never showy, but with determination and the ability to get things done and make a difference. Would that we had more of his sort!

### ***Why is London Labour?***

**By Michael Tichelar (Taylor and Francis, 2020),**

**Reviewed by Barbara Humphries**

There has been a dearth of histories of Labour in London, the most recent having been written decades ago. Most local histories have featured Labour’s ‘heartlands’ in the industrial areas of the north of England, Scotland and Wales. And yet for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the first two decades of the 21<sup>st</sup>, London has been a Labour city. Labour led by Herbert Morrison won control of the London County Council in 1934 which it retained until its replacement by the Greater London Council in 1965. The past three general elections have shown a better result in London and other major cities for Labour, compared to other parts of the country. However London has not always been a Labour city. Before 1914 it had a negligible influence on London politics, leading to the conclusion that Labour had a ‘late start’ in London, with its lack of heavy industry and weak trades unions. Also in the 1980s de-industrialisation and the sale of council estates was to lead to a disconnect between the Labour Party and the London working class. This however proved to be a temporary phenomenon.

This historical account by Michael Tichelar is partly chronological, partly thematic. It draws on substantial local research on selected parts of the capital, such as Lambeth an inner city area, and Croydon, an outer London suburb. It highlights his conclusion that London is a conurbation, where every town has its own history. Every part of London has been

subject to constant change, from industrialisation in the interwar years, de-industrialisation in the 1980s, gentrification of inner city areas, migration to the suburbs and the growth of Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities. These changes have influenced political change.



Support for the Labour Party in London grew markedly after the Representation of the People Act 1918. Previously working class political representation in the capital had been vastly underestimated due a restricted franchise. In 1919 Labour won control of 13 London boroughs, including Poplar unexpectedly. The author illustrates that support for Labour in London was based on working class communities, rather than a strong trades union movement. This was because the London working class was diverse and dispersed between many workplaces. Many were commuting long distances to work. For this reason the role of councils was very important, particularly in the provision of housing. Labour's most dramatic successes in London occurred thereafter at turning points in political history, such as 1945, when it won 48

seats in inner London and 37 in outer London. In the 1997 election London's suburbs again turned 'red'. But was this according to the author was because of a cross-class alliance between the working class and a progressive middle class?

This book is an historical account which throws light on current political issues. The term 'metropolitan elite' does not find an echo in this, as over 60% of London's population regard themselves as working class. The capital has some of the worse areas of deprivation and inequality in the country. This raises the question of what it means to be working class or middle class in 21<sup>st</sup> century Britain. The population of London is younger, better educated and more ethnically diverse. It is also more inclined to be 'socially liberal'.

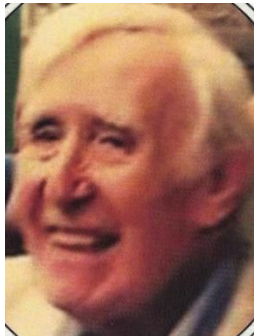
The author looks at the organisation of the Labour Party in selected constituencies and considers the influence of the left and the peace movement, going back to the 1930s. In a chapter on the politics of personal identity he considers the relationship of the party to women's liberation, and the politics of race. What the Tory Press described as the 'loony left' was embedded in the policies of the New Left in London which became influential in the 1980s, with its support for women's committees and black sections. One in five Labour votes in the capital currently comes from BAME voters. Similarly Labour is ahead amongst women voters. He looks at the impact of the declining influence of religion and the dispersal of once tight-knit communities like the Whitechapel Jewish community to more affluent suburbs in the north of the city, like Finchley. However he describes coherent practical work between different religious groups on the provision of Food Banks for instance.

More work needs to be done on the history of Labour in London, particularly in the suburbs, but this is a welcome contribution.

## Derek Wheatley 1936–2020

We are sorry to report that Derek one of our national committee members, died in November. Only a few days before I was on the phone to him offering him a couple of books about railways – one of his favourite subjects. Derek contributed several articles to the *Labour Heritage bulletin*. A couple of them were, of course, about railways. He was an active Labour Party member and a councillor for the Isleworth North Ward in Hounslow in 1964.

Derek and I were at Isleworth Grammar School at the same time where he had a rebellious reputation and sometimes (but not always) being falsely accused of breaking school rules. Several years later, to the dismay of some of the school masters, he was appointed a governor of the school.



We did our national service in the RAF at the same time although our paths never crossed during the two year's stint. In recent years we explored older parts of London and occasionally watched cricket at Lords. Derek was a cheery friend and I will miss the many stories he told – some of them quite long!

John Grigg

## Mick Brooks 1948-2021

Sadly my partner Mick Brooks passed away on the 8<sup>th</sup> January after a short illness. Mick often attended West London Labour Heritage events and he gave a talk on the 2008 financial crisis, comparing it to the depression of the 1930s. His book on the causes of capitalist crises was published in 2012.

(See Labour Heritage bulletins Autumn 2012 and Spring 2013 for Mick's articles)

Barbara Humphries

Labour Heritage has not held meetings since the coronavirus struck but we have been busy publishing our bulletins, a booklet on the Durham Miners' Association and also the autobiography of Syd Bidwell MP, copies of which are available at £5 post free from Labour Heritage.

We hope that later in the year, normal service from Labour Heritage can be resumed as soon as possible, and will keep you informed of forthcoming meetings.

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For more information about Labour Heritage, or to order publications, please see:

[www.labour-heritage.com](http://www.labour-heritage.com)