Labour Heritage

Bulletin Summer 2019

Contents: Labour Heritage AGM (Labour correspondents and London Labour), Morgan Jones book launch, Letters from the Chiswick Times 1920, Acton Employment Committee, Socialist Fellowship and Socialist Outlook, Southall Resists 40, Barnhill Estate (Hayes), Book review: Struggle for Power in the Labour Party

Labour Heritage AGM

The AGM of Labour Heritage was held on Saturday 15th June at Conway Hall. There were two speakers, Steve Schifferes and Michael Tichelar.

The Lost Tribe: the Rise and Fall of the Labour Correspondent

By Steve Schifferes (former economics correspondent for BBC News Online and Director of Financial Journalism MA, City University)

The labour or industrial correspondent was a major part of the UK media scene for many years. In their heyday in the 1960s and 1970s, they had a high-profile role that reflected the increasing power of the trade unions and their close relationship to the Labour Party's policy-making process. But following the miners' strike in 1984, the union reforms introduced by Mrs Thatcher, and the weakening of trade union influence in the Labour Party under Tony Blair, they largely disappeared from the newspapers.

The labour correspondent occupied an unusual and sometimes uncomfortable place in most newspapers. Their role as 'industrial' correspondent was to cover 'industrial relations' in industry rather than the general state of business; and as 'labour correspondents' their role was to cover the political role of trade unions within the wider labour movement, as opposed to the Westminster lobby correspondents who covered the Labour Party in Parliament. At their peak, there were more labour correspondents for some newspapers than political correspondents. Many went on to prominent roles as political correspondents, columnists and press officers, including in the case of Bernard Ingham, who started as a labour correspondent for the *Guardian* newspaper, as Mrs Thatcher's press secretary.

The labour correspondents gave a direct channel for the trade union movement to communicate its message to the wider public in the mainstream press. Correspondents developed close personal relationships with many union leaders, which were cemented at a private dinner and cricket match at the end of each TUC conference. Although strikes were often the focus of coverage, such issues as redundancies, pay and conditions, and fairer distribution of wages got far more coverage than before.

The initial creation of the new role of labour correspondent was facilitated by trade unions, in particular by Ernest Bevin, the general secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union, who had long worried about the lack of a labour voice since the General Strike of 1926. When he

became the Minister of Labour in 1940 under the Coalition government, and believing that good labour relations were the key to increased output in wartime, he suggested the creation of a labour correspondents lobby based in the Ministry of Labour with exclusive access to labour-related matters in government. The initial membership was 15, but by the 1960s there were more than one hundred correspondents.

Why did the mainstream press, especially the right-wing press expand its coverage of the labour movement? The basic reason was a recognition that national economic and political developments where increasingly influenced by the actions of the trade union movement. In fact it was the *Financial Times* who had the most labour correspondents, including several who were based in regions were trade union activity was strong, such as the car industry in the West Midlands. For the popular press, such as the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Express*, there was also the fact that the majority of their readers were trade union members. When the owner of the *Daily Express*, Lord Beaverbrook, questioned why the paper had appointed a labour correspondent, he relented after hearing that the majority of his readership were either trade union members or had family members who were. Most of the labour correspondents were initially told by their editors to cover the trade unions as objectively as possible, ignoring the general political orientation of their paper.

The 'Winter of Discontent' in 1979, and the Miners' Strike in 1984, turned out to be the swansong of the labour correspondent. While they had an enhanced role in explaining union actions in a broadly sympathetic way, increasingly the right-wing press began to emphasize in its political coverage the risks to the political order posed by the militant trade unions. As the Miners'Strike loomed, the *Daily Mirror*'s labour correspondent Geoffrey Goodman even attempted to mediate a deal between the Coal Board and the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM). But under NUM leader Arthur Scargill, the miners' union rejected a close relationship with most labour correspondents, which made it more difficult for it to win public support.

As the size of the trade unions declined, and the number of strikes dropped even more dramatically, fewer and fewer newspapers kept their labour correspondents on. It seems unlikely that, despite the growing difficulties faced by workers, with wage freezes in the public sector and a further decline in the manufacturing sector, we will see their return any time soon.

Labour in London: 1939 to the present: from a 'Municipal Social Democracy' to a 'Post-Industrial City.'

Michael Tichelar, Visiting Fellow at the University of West of England

How are we to account for the way Londoners voted after the Second World War? It cannot be denied that social class, however understood, played a key role in the growth of the Labour Party in London, certainly in the period 1929 to the late 1960s, when the politics of the capital can be best characterised in terms of a 'municipal social democracy'. It formed part of a general European political settlement based on egalitarian principles of social justice, achieved through the framework of liberal democracy and a mixed economy. But after 1945 social class cannot by itself account for the voting behaviour of about a third of the

British electorate which did not, according to electoral sociologists, 'vote in agreement with its objective class' position in the social structure. Other social factors, or combinations of characteristics (such as age, race and sex), together with subjective assessments of social class and involvement in politics, need to be taken into account. Also, voting Labour during this period was not influenced to any significant extent by an explicit socialist ideology. Rather historians have seen support for Labour as based on a defensive and homogeneous working-class culture. For example, the historian John Marriott argued that support for the Labour Party in East London before 1939 was 'derived from a vague, passive, un-theorised, instinctive identification with the Party, rather than from active ascription to its ideals.'

But Labour's electoral success in London was also dependent on its fluctuating appeal to sections of the middle-classes in some of the expanding suburbs in inner and outer London. It has been argued that before 1914 the party in London 'could not become a purely proletarian party because it had to rely on an alliance of artisans, manual workers and middle-class reformers. Printers, dockers, transport workers, black-coated workers and Fabian socialists were the major constituency of Labour's vote.' This tradition carried on after 1918 and can be seen in the vote for Labour in 1929, after 1935 and much more so in 1945. Middle-class allegiance to Labour was probably different to that of the manual working-class, based on a closer identification with specific policy issues and perhaps a more progressive outlook, reflecting a metropolitan identity or sensibility, with support coming from public sector and white-collar employees as the welfare state expanded after 1945. Studies of the British electorate show the professional and managerial classes took a much greater interest in politics than the manual working class. Labour also had less success in attracting the votes of women before 1939 as the evidence suggests that a high proportion of them voted Conservative during the interwar period. It was not until after 1960 that the gender gap started to narrow, particularly noticeable amongst the professional and managerial classes. The proportion of women from the manual working class voting Labour fluctuated between 63% and 48% in the period from 1963 to 1992.

Women clerks at the Royal Mail

How far did the culture of 'labourism' survive after 1945 and was it replaced by a different type of political culture and values reflecting changes in the socio-economic nature of London? While Party members almost certainly regarded the success of 1945 as the first step towards a socialist society, the slow decline in the Labour vote in both national and local elections, combined with a continuing drop in Party membership after the high point of recorded membership in 1951, represented a severe disappointment. It tended to reinforce their negative view about the apathy and alleged backwardness of the working-class electorate. The record of the Attlee government may also have 'locked Labour into a particular kind of political identity', based on austerity, rationing and nationalisation. The Party then failed to adapt to the new economic and social conditions of affluence after 1951. For some voters and historians alike, the Labour Party was perceived as only representing the interests of male trade unionists as producers, and as a result could not relate to the discontent or needs

of voters as consumers in an age of increasing living standards.

By the 1970s, a combination of class de-alignment, the loss of manufacturing jobs and the migration of many working-class voters to the suburbs and new towns, some to escape the growing immigrant communities in certain areas of inner London, created a crisis for the Party in London. Many constituency parties had become moribund and a new generation of activists took them over. They challenged the old guard identified with the shrinking blue-collar trade unions which controlled the machinery of the party at a regional level, and pursued a more left-wing agenda, still influenced albeit by traditional workerist issues, but also the politics of personal identity, nuclear disarmament and foreign policy issues like the Vietnam war. At the same time the Labour vote continued to decline in national elections, from an average of over 45% between 1945 and 1970, to under 35% between 1974 and 1992. In London it fell from 44% in 1974 to 31% in 1987, recovering to only 37% of the vote in 1992. By this date the debate on 'The Forward March of Labour Halted', had been initiated by Eric Hobsbawm and commentators had started to forecast the death of the Party in London and elsewhere.

However urban redevelopment and a powerful process of gentrification after 1980, reversed Labour's electoral decline in the capital. Despite the deregulation of the City, the growth of London as a centre of international financial capitalism and its transformation into a 'post-industrial city' of extraordinary economic vibrancy, the middle-class suburbs turned red in 1997 and again in 2001 and 2005, with the Labour vote increasing in many of the gentrified areas of inner London. By 2017 the electorate in London voted Labour by clear and increasing majorities. Its population had become 'socially liberal, multi-racial and cross-class', made up of a significant proportion of students and ethnic minorities (35% of the population is non-white, 54% of which votes Labour). It has been estimated that a quarter of the membership of Momentum, the left-wing pressure group supporting Jeremy Corbyn, lives in London. Many of the traditional working-class areas of the capital now have high concentrations of socio-economic groups made up of upper-middle-class professionals and managers working in the city and in creative industries. They have been joined by an enlarged 'middle-mass' of lower professionals and other non-manual workers who 'have now displaced the manual working classes as the single largest group in most areas of London.' These gentrified neighbourhoods are now very different to the type of homogeneous working-class communities in the urban villages that made up London in the 1930s. A good example is Hackney. It was a mixed-class area before 1914 electing Liberal MPs; increasingly a working-class area during the interwar period electing Conservative, Liberal and then Labour MPs, and after 1980, the area continued to vote Labour despite experiencing the highest level of gentrification in the capital. In the 2017 general election the party polled over 40,000 votes in each constituency (Hackney North and South), with majorities of over 35,000 in each, and the borough polled over 78% to remain in Europe in the Referendum of 2016.

Social class by itself therefore cannot account for the way the electorate voted in London, particularly after the 1960s. Other factors need to be explored, such as housing tenure, race, religion, age and levels of educational achievement. It is also important to identify the policies and values underpinning voting intentions as well as the way citizens engage with politics in an era when traditional neighbourhood allegiances have been largely displaced by alternative networks of communication, such as the internet. It is the relationship between values and policies, taken together with changes in the

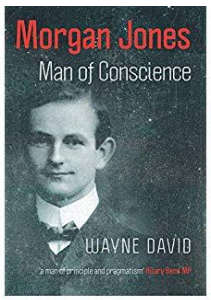
demographic and social structure, that account for the continuing strength of Labour, similar perhaps to the vibrant tradition of Progressivism that existed as a political culture before 1914.
(The talk is based on part of a chapter in a book entitled *Why is London Labour*? to be published by Routledge in 2020)

The Labour Heritage AGM took place before the two speakers. Reports were given of successful events in West London and Essex, and a book launch for *Morgan Jones: Man of Conscience* written by Labour Heritage President, Wayne David. Stan Newens reported that he had been given an unfinished autobiography of the Labour MP for Southall 1966-1992, Syd Bidwell. This had been discovered by Bidwell's son, John, and it was hoped that Labour Heritage could prepare this for publication.

Stan Newens, chair of Labour Heritage since its inception in 1982, announced his decision to step down as chair. He said that now in his 90th year and with health issues he can do less work than previously. Many tributes were made to Stan in the meeting and a vote of thanks was given. It was decided to leave the position of chair vacant for the time being, with a rota of volunteers to chair meetings from existing officers. The following were elected: secretary- Linda Shampan: treasurer - John Grigg: bulletin editor- Barbara Humphries: Social media co-ordinator - Tom Newens. The following were elected to the National Committee - Stan Newens, Andy Love, Bill Bolland, Kit Snape, Mel Jones, Caroline Needham, Maurice Austin, Derek Wheatley, Brian Odell, and honorary members - Stephen Bird and Khatchatur Pilikian.

Book Launch for *Morgan Jones: Man of Conscience by* Wayne David MP

Wayne David, MP for Caerphilly and President of Labour Heritage has written a biography of Morgan Jones, a Labour MP who was a conscientious objector during World War 1.



The inspiration for this book began in 2014, when Wayne David was asked to give a talk in the Speaker's House as part of the World War 1 commemorations. He then embarked on further research on the life of Morgan Jones, leading to the publication of this book.

Morgan Jones was elected in 1921 in a by-election in Caerphilly, the first conscientious objector to be elected to Parliament. He was to remain an MP until his death in 1939, aged only 53. During World War 1 he faced a military tribunal and imprisonment, as is described in the book.

The book launch was held on Wednesday 8th May in the Speaker's House, attended by over 50 people, including MPs and their staff, relatives of Morgan Evans and members of Labour Heritage. Refreshments included coffee and fruit juice, but no alcohol, to mark the fact that Morgan Jones had been a teetotaller all his life.

Wayne introduced several speakers. The first of these was Hilary Benn MP who has written a foreward to the book. He said

that Morgan Jones had been a politician who was both principled and pragmatic. He had inherited his pacifism from his mother, and along with other members of the Independent Labour Party he had faced imprisonment during World War 1 for refusing to be conscripted into military service. When he stood for Parliament in a by-election in 1921, he was opposed by a Liberal representing the wartime coalition government and by a member of the Communist Party, but he comfortably won the seat. Representing a South Wales mining community he campaigned in Parliament for the nationalisation of the mines. He also supported self-government for Wales. Education however became one of his main policy concerns. He was appointed government spokesman for education in both the 1924 and 1929-1931 Labour governments. He became an early convert to comprehensive education. During the 1930s, due to the threat from European fascism, Jones moved away from pacifism in favour of collective security under the League of Nations. He found that the Spanish Civil War was a challenge to his previous pacifist convictions.

Meg Hillier, the current chair of the Public Accounts Committee spoke about the role played by Morgan Jones in the same post, which is always held by an Opposition MP. It was more arduous in those days, with only printed resources available, although there were less accounts to scrutinise.

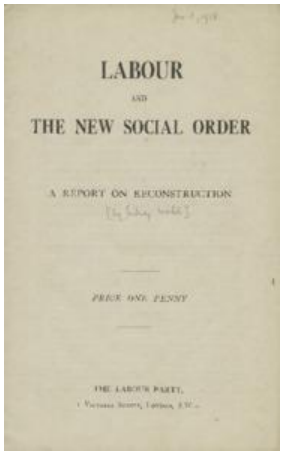
Before becoming an MP, Jones had been a local councillor representing Bargoed, part of the Caerphilly constituency. He was a grassroots socialist. There is a public park named after him in the town. The current leader of Caerphilly council, Dave Poole, described the work of Jones in promoting municipal socialism on the Urban District Council. His local concerns were the low pay of council workers and overcrowding on local railways. His main policy achievement however was in the area of housing. He saw that private enterprise had completely failed to provide decent housing for local people and oversaw the building of 800 new homes in Bargoed. These are still owned by the local council. The final speaker was Nick Sheaff, a grandson who described Morgan Jones as the son of a miner, who could take on 'the best brains in the country'.

Morgan Jones: Man of Conscience by Wayne David is published by Welsh Academic Press, £17. It is hoped to have a full review of the book in a later *Labour Heritage Bulletin.*

Labour's Answer to Unemployment in 1920

By John H. Grigg

After the First World War there was a brief boom that soon collapsed and by 1920 unemployment was a serious problem. On the 10th December 1920 the *Chiswick Times* reported on the first of a lecture series on 'The Programme of the Labour Party' delivered by Mr. D J Bolton of the Fabian Society at the Society's Chiswick branch on Tuesday 7th December. They met at the Quaker Meeting House in Essex Place which is now the site of a Sainsbury Super Market. The meeting attracted a fair attendance.


LABOUR
AND
THE NEW SOCIAL ORDER
A REPORT ON RECONSTRUCTION
PRICE ONE PENNY

Labour's Election manifesto 1918

Mr. H. J. Sander (branch secretary) presided and said they were often asked why there should be a Labour Party and why not be satisfied with the Liberals or Conservatives. It behoved them to give reasons for belonging to the Labour Party.
Mr. Bolton began with historic dates relating to the creation of the Labour Party. Political representation really began with the Magna Carta, but it was the 1868 Reform Act and the formation of trade unions that showed that men's minds were being exercised industrially and politically. In 1881 came the Socialist and Fabian Societies and the Democratic Federation. He touched on the 1889 Dock Strike and Trade Union Congress of 1899 when the Labour Representation Committee was set up. 29 Labour candidates were elected to Parliament in 1906.
Socialisation of industry took place during the war (1914-1918) for munitions manufacturing which brought manufacturers into line, and the nation benefitted from regulated prices instead of the old system under which every maker got as much as he could. Shipping, mines, railways and even land for agricultural purposes was brought under the same scheme as munitions. In a word the Government, for the time being, had to be Socialists, almost against their will. If we could have similar advantages in peace time we should be well on the way to solving unemployment. Instead we have reverted to the old inefficient private system of 'Grabism,' and hence the present chaos. Now instead of competition being wiped out in the national interest we have private concessions and trusts which eliminate competition for the purpose of profiteering.
Labour did not want any more control than was necessary. Control should be at the producing and not at the consumers end.
Depreciation of the currency was due to the enormous issue of paper money, and the difference of exchange rates between ourselves and other countries which made it difficult to do business with them and consequently caused unemployment. We had large numbers out of work and other people who wanted the goods they could produce, but owing to the nation's chaotic state, neither could employ the other.
The Labour programme did not include the taking of money and goods and dividing them up equally all round. They insisted on the freedom from starvation and also undue interference with individual liberty, but also each person should have an equal chance in life. At the moment full liberty was only for the rich who had a monopoly of everything they liked.
They had to establish a minimum of food, clothing, education and leisure. They had to work for self-government in industry and do away with preparation and waging of wars. Production should be at economic rates based upon a scientific and a published system of costings. Basic raw materials upon which industries depend must be controlled to give manufacturers freedom from exploitation by the holders of raw materials.
During discussion Captain Hamilton said the middle man was the great enemy and he urged that equity could only be secured by unity. The old Roman law was the best because people had rights in the land and other rights we did not have today. More money was no remedy. We wanted a revolution of intellect. Control by the plutocracy bought seats in parliament. He believed in compulsory voting.
A questioner asked what the Labour Party would do with the Royal Family. Mr. Bolton said that the Labour Party had not laid down any programme with regard to the Royal Family, as it had so many other important things to deal with.

A week later the *Chiswick Times* published two letters questioning Mr. Bolton's conclusions.

Mr. J T Cunningham of 35 Wavendon Avenue wrote that Labour Party members

'fail to appreciate facts and to draw true conclusions. They too much accept 'catch phrases' from their leaders'. He added: 'that it is quite true, as Mr. Bolton says, that the Government was Socialist during the War but the assumption that the same system should continue after the War is open to serious objection. 'He contends that the trade unions were chiefly responsible for the termination of the war conditions. To their honour they suspended many of their rules concerning the admittance of unskilled labour for production purposes into traditionally skilled labour trade areas – dilution. They insisted on the termination of this arrangement once Germany surrendered which has restricted production as is seen in the fact that houses cannot be built by men who could build them but who are unemployed.

Another fact is that war time production was paid for with borrowed money. We are enormously in debt not only to War Loan holders but also to the United States. We and our descendants have to repay these debts. Does Mr. Bolton suggest we should go on producing on borrowed money? We cannot do it because we have reached the limited of our credit.

A further fact is that Socialism to be effective requires some compulsion applied to the workers. This was avoided during the war by paying extravagantly high wages out of the borrowed money. Boys and girls were on £5 to £10 a week to operate machines that required very little training. We cannot go on borrowing forever and wages should be paid out of the value of goods produced. Goods must find a market and to find a market the cost of production is a factor.

The cause of present unemployment is that wages have been forced up by the unions while the demand for goods, and consequently prices, has slumped. Employers are forced to discharge workers in order to avoid bankruptcy.

These things are matters of economics rather than politics. The economics of the Fabian Society are all wrong. The working man would benefit more by a radical reform of the trade unions rather than listening to Socialist theories.'

A 'Liberal' wrote that Mr. Bolton is falsifying history by jumping from Magna Carta to the Reform Act of 1868. Men's minds were exercised for reform before the Duke of Wellington was Prime Minister which resulted in the great Reform Act of 1832. Further agitation for the franchise produced the Chartist movement which owing to a physical force within it was a failure (as there is in the Labour Party today). John Bright's campaigning gave us the 1868 Reform Act.

The rest of Mr. Bolton's lecture may be summed up of the usual socialistic nostrums. The government had to be socialistic in war-time therefore it ought to be socialistic now. Competition with the rest of the world was impossible during the War and now it is returning this kind of socialism stands no chance unless you have conscription of labour and find a Lenin and a Trotsky.

Captain Hamilton said the middleman was the enemy. Does he say the same thing to the Middle Classes Union? (A society formed in 1920 to promote the interests of the Middle Classes).It is not inconsistent to be a member of the Middle Classes Union and the Labour Party. Both are 'class conscious.' He advocates a 'revolution of intellect.' The first difficulty is to find the intellect. Here's a chance for a new society.

1918 election poster

Acton Juvenile Employment Committee (report from the Acton Gazette and Express 11 June 1920

A sub-committee of the Acton Education Committee has arranged a series of lectures for boy and girl school leavers by trade experts. The first was at the Central Hall, chaired by Councillor Miss Smee, on the advantages offered by the needlework trade and laundry industries. The girls, average age 14, came with their teachers and a few parents.

Mr. Cotlow said London had taken the centre of fashion from Paris. Dress making apprentices started at 10/- a week increasing to 21/- and, if competent, can command £3 a week. Forewomen and fitters earned from £200 to £700 per annum and designers £1,000 upwards. The girls must not waste their time in the streets or at picture houses but must devote all to their education and knowledge of the trade. The London County Council trade schools scheme includes classes on the trade for girls.

Miss V. Maclean spoke for the laundry industry and deprecated the prejudice against what was a most interested scientific occupation. Hours were from 8am to 5pm with an hour for lunch and half a day on Saturday. Girls began at 12/- a week with 3/- increases each year until 23/- at the age of 17, going on to 32/- and 35/-.

Miss Smee put in a good word for domestic service. It had been unpopular but now shorter hours, separate bedrooms and good food made it more attractive. And it was the best preparation for marriage.

On Wednesday afternoon it was the boys' turn and Mr. G Edwards warned against the 'overcrowded electrical engineering'. He spoke of the attractions of the silversmith trade. They would find their lives a perfect vision of machinery, lathes, hammers, vices, files and delicate tools. He gave a practical illustration in the making of a silver teapot.

As to prospects he admitted that trade unions were against many boys being taken on and also objected to demobilised soldiers but if they could get in as apprentices, serve five or seven years, they would soon be able to earn £5 to £7 a week.

Mr. W G Ferris described possibilities in the building trades that provided good openings if ready to work hard. They should strive to become clerks of works and master men. Unlike the professional societies the trade unions did not take much interest in education schemes.

Major Champness, in the chair, urged present day boys to take full advantage of the great opportunities for self-improvement.

Laundry workers in Soap-Sud Island, South Acton

Socialist Outlook and Socialist Fellowship: The Labour Left, Trotskyist entrism and the Cold War

By Jonathan Wood

Introduction

Socialist Outlook, a new Labour left newspaper, began publication in 1948 and Socialist Fellowship, an affiliated organisation which brought together left-wing MPs, trade union activists and rank and file Labour Party members, was established in 1949. *Socialist Outlook* was founded by Trotskyists who had chosen to work inside the Labour Party. The key figures in the creation of Socialist Fellowship were not Trotskyists but Trotskyists were active in the Fellowship and gained increasing influence within the group.

Socialist Outlook and Socialist Fellowship were active in the late 1940s and early 1950s when the Cold War between the Soviet Union and the Western nations including Britain was especially intense and was associated with an illiberal and intolerant political climate in the British labour movement. Their activities within the Labour Party and uncompromising criticisms of official policy resulted in the proscription of Socialist Fellowship in 1951 and of *Socialist Outlook* in 1954.

The Origins of British Trotskyism

Trotsky argued that Russia's poverty and backwardness had enabled the Soviet bureaucracy to become a privileged ruling elite and this bureaucratic elite was represented by Stalin's regime. He emphasised the contradiction between the Soviet Union's state-controlled economy and its authoritarian ruling elite and categorised the Soviet Union as a degenerate or deformed workers' state.Trotsky asserted the Soviet Union was still a worker's state and therefore revolutionaries had to defend it against capitalist aggression.

Trotsky decided his adherents should adopt a strategy of entryism in mass social democratic parties like the British Labour Party. Entryism meant they would enter the Labour Party and other reformist mass organisations but retain their party organization, internal discipline and revolutionary socialist ideology to promote the Trotskyist political perspective in the larger political organisation and perhaps eventually transform it into a revolutionary party.During the 1930s, the tiny British Trotskyist groups operated mainly inside the Labour Party though Trotskyists were also active within the Independent Labour Party (ILP) which had disaffiliated from the Labour Party in July 1932.

In September 1938, Trotsky and his supporters established a new international of Trotskyist groups, the Fourth International. In Britain the Revolutionary Socialist League (RSL), formed in 1939, was recognised as the official British section of the Fourth International. However a group of South African Trotskyist emigres, the most prominent of whom had adopted the pseudonym Ted Grant, combined with Jock Haston and Gerry Healy, an Irish former Communist Party member, to form a new Trotskyist group, the Workers' International League (WIL).The WIL began as a diminutive splinter group but Ted Grant and Gerry Healy became leading figures in British Trotskyism.

During the Second World War, the impact of wartime conditions on the main political parties weakened the RSL which concentrated on work within the Labour Party. The WIL focused on trade union activity and by 1943 was considerably larger and more effective than the RSL.

The Revolutionary Communist Party

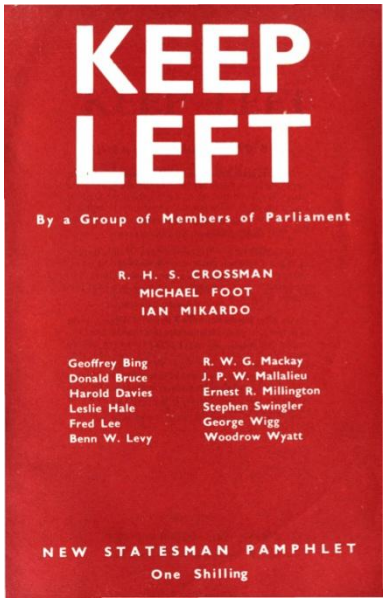
In 1944, the WIL and the RSL merged to form the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP). The new RCP was dominated by

former WIL members. Jock Haston became the RCP's General Secretary, *Socialist Appeal*, the WIL's paper, became the RCP's paper, with Ted Grant as its editor and most of the RCP's Central Committee were former WIL members. The RCP's belief that the War would be followed by a revolutionary situation proved fanciful and after 1945 their membership and political influence decreased. A group of RCP members led by Gerry Healy operated as an entrist group inside the Labour Party. Healy and his supporters argued the RCP should adopt a policy of entryism in the Labour Party and, in December 1948, the organisation accepted that working inside the Labour Party was the only realistic option and disbanded with its members joining Labour. The former RCP members who entered the Labour Party called themselves the Club and Gerry Healy eventually became the Club's leader.

Socialist Outlook

The Trotskyist group in the Labour Party now attempted a broader appeal to the Labour Left. Gerry Healy and Jack Stanley, General Secretary of the Constructional Engineering Union, co-founded of a new left-wing monthly, *Socialist Outlook*. It was published by the Labour Publishing Society, whose chairman was Jack Stanley, and its editor was a Trotskyist called John Lawrence. The idea of *Socialist Outlook* originated at the 1948 Labour Party Conference when some delegates, critical of what they regarded as the party leadership's move to the right, decided to set up a new left-wing paper through which rank-and-file Labour Party members and trade unionists could discuss and influence Party policy. The new journal was not an explicitly revolutionary socialist publication but was intended to appeal to a broad section of the Labour left who were critical of Government policy. The first issue of *Socialist Outlook* appeared in December 1948.

It was an opportune moment to launch a new paper for the Labour Left. Many left-wingers in the Party were critical of the direction of Government policy in 1948. The pace of Labour's nationalisation programme was slowing down and many activists were disappointed by the slow progress in nationalising the steel industry. Herbert Morrison advocated concentrating on the 'consolidation' of the existing nationalised industries rather than proposals for extending nationalisation to new industries Many left-wingers believed Morrison's policy of 'consolidation' represented an abandonment of Labour's socialist goals. The most contentious issues in Labour's internal debates were foreign and defence policy. By 1947, the relations between the United States, Britain and their allies and the Soviet bloc were marked by constant hostility and tension, the state of affairs called the Cold War.



The Keep Left group of Labour MPs, whose proposals for more radical domestic and foreign policies were outlined in the pamphlet *Keep Left*, believed Britain should become part of a democratic socialist Western Europe independent of both the United States and the Soviet

Union. The left-wing weekly *Tribune* was closely associated with the Keep Left group. The Soviet Union's ruthless establishment of its dominance over Eastern Europe made most of the Keep Left group willing to accept an anti-communist foreign policy and close alliance with the United States.

As Cold War tensions increased, the Labour Party became increasingly intolerant of left-wing challenges to official policy, In April 1948, 37 Labour M.P.s signed a telegram wishing success to Pietro Nenni, the Italian Socialist leader, who had formed an electoral alliance with the Italian Communist Party. The Labour Party had broken off relations with Nenni's faction of the Italian Socialist Party because of the alliance with the Communists. Signatories of the Nenni Telegram who refused to disown their action were threatened with expulsion from the Party unless they promised to refrain from organised opposition to official Party policy.
The issues that prompted left-wingers to support *Socialist Outlook* can be seen in the views expressed by Tom Braddock, MP for Mitcham, and Ronald Chamberlain, MP for Norwood, who were active supporters of both *Socialist Outlook* and Socialist Fellowship. Braddock declared there could be 'no talk of consolidation until the worker received the full fruits of labour' and opposed Britain's alliance with the United States while Chamberlain spoke against the Government's proposed wage freeze at the 1948 Party Conference.

The Policies Advocated by *Socialist Outlook*

Socialist Outlook expressed criticisms of the rightward shift of Government policy which were shared by a significant element of the Party's Left. Its contributors rejected Morrison's policy of 'consolidation' In *Socialist Outlook's* first issue, Ernie Roberts, Vice-Chair of the Labour Publishing Society, denounced 'consolidation'. John Lawrence, the paper's editor, dismissed Morrison's claim that private enterprise could be efficient and work for the common good. He and Tom Braddock called for workers' control of industry.
Socialist Outlook was hostile to the Government's anti-communist foreign policy and objected to British policy in Greece and Malaya. In the *Socialist Outlook* of July 1950,Tom Braddock accused the Labour Party's National Executive Committee (NEC) of 'handing over Western Europe to Yankee capitalism' and urged unity with the workers in the countries which had abolished capitalism.

***Socialist Outlook's* Circulation and Support in the London Labour Parties**

In July 1949, it was claimed *Socialist Outlook* had achieved a circulation of 7,000 copies in the Labour Party and the unions. In May 1950 the paper became a fortnightly and Tom Braddock claimed its circulation was 9,000 to 10,000.
Socialist Outlook had committed supporters in two London constituencies, Norwood and Islington East, whom Labour Party officials regarded as 'Trotskyist entrists'. Norwood's Labour MP was left-winger Ronald Chamberlain. One Norwood Labour Party activist was David Finch, a former RCP member who left that Party in 1947 and joined the Labour Party. He became a Labour councillor, was nominated to the List B of Labour's parliamentary candidates by Norwood Labour Party and contributed to *Socialist Outlook.* In 1949, Thomas Mercer joined in Norwood. He had been a member of the Labour Party in Glasgow but had been expelled for publishing and selling *Voice of Labour,* which Labour officials considered a Trotskyist journal. Mercer and Finch collaborated with

Edward Knight, Norwood Labour Party's secretary.
D.H. Daines, Secretary of the London Labour Party, became concerned after reading an issue of Norwood's constituency paper and asked Knight if there had been a 'Trotskyist putsch' in the Party. Norwood Labour Party sent a large delegation to a *Socialist Outlook* conference in autumn 1949. *Voice of Labour* merged with *Socialist Outlook* and Mercer became a member of the paper's editorial board. Finch was a member of *Socialist Outlook's* management committee and Knight encouraged sales of the paper to Party members. A meeting of the Labour Publishing Society's shareholders was held in Norwood Labour Party's headquarters.
In Islington East, Bill Hunter, a local Labour councillor, and his wife, were former members of the RCP, close associates of the veteran Trotskyist Gerry Healy and enthusiastic adherents of *Socialist Outlook*.


Join the LABOUR PARTY TODAY

Socialist Outlook WEEKLY

THE OUTLOOK DISCUSSION AT SCARBOROUGH

DOCKERS' CASE

MERSEYSIDE DOCKERS JOIN BLUE UNION

LONDON DOCKERS BATTLE FOR NEGOTIATING RIGHTS

JOHN McSHANE Chairman of Birkenhead Portworkers Committee Says:

We Need a Fighting Union

Solidarity Can Win

By Dan Brendon

Salford Token Strike

Dogmatic Attitude of Employers

Support fro T. & G. Members

The Founding of Socialist Fellowship

Socialist Outlook became closely associated with Socialist Fellowship, the new left-wing organisation formed in 1949 by left-wingers disenchanted with official Labour policies.
Many Labour Party members were discontented over government policy. The Government displayed little enthusiasm for further major extensions of public ownership, there were frequent criticisms of the lack of industrial democracy in the nationalised industries and many in the labour movement felt government financial and taxation policies were unfair to the working class.
Some left-wing activists were disillusioned with existing journals and leaders of the Labour Left. In January 1949, *Tribune*, one of the Labour Left's most notable journalistic voices, and Transport House agreed the latter would pay for two pages in the left-wing weekly. *Tribune* thereby received a financial subsidy but ceased to be an outspoken critic of Government policy. A critical Jack Stanley said Transport House was subsidising Tribune and spoke of the weekly's '100% uncritical position.'
Against this background, Ellis Smith, a left-wing Labour M.P and President of the United Pattern Worker' Union, wrote an article announcing his decision to create a national organisation of socialists based on local branches inspired by the example of the ILP before its disaffiliation from the Labour Party.
At the Labour Party Conference in June 1949, *Socialist Outlook* organised a fringe meeting at which Smith formally announced the formation of Socialist Fellowship. Fenner Brockway MP, a former leading figure in the ILP who had re-joined the Labour Party also supported the new group. The fringe meeting was addressed by Ellis Smith, Tom Braddock and John Lawrence. At Socialist Fellowship's first national founding conference in November 1949 the new

organisation was described as ‘an association of members of the Labour Party pledged to work for the early attainment of a socialist society.’
Socialist Fellowship aimed to be a national organisation based on local branches which would bring together left-wing parliamentarians, councillors, trade union activists and rank-and-file Labour Party members.
Socialist Outlook gave an enthusiastic welcome to Ellis Smith’s proposal for a Socialist Fellowship. It organised and advertised the Conference fringe meeting which announced Socialist Fellowship’s formation and its editor, John Lawrence, was elected to the Fellowship’s national committee in November 1949. *Socialist Outlook* was not Socialist Fellowship’s official organ but there were very close links between the paper and the organisation.

Socialist Fellowship’s Policies

Socialist Fellowship’s first conference advocated polices which, though considerably more left-wing than the Government’s policies, would be approved by much of the Labour Left. It wanted food and clothing subsidies to compensate for price increases, maintenance of the building programme and the social services, the linking of pensions and benefit to a cost of living scale and an end to the government’s wage freeze The goals outlined in Socialist Fellowships’ manifesto were more ambitious: socialisation of the economy and workers’ control, an end of gross inequalities of income, a socialist Europe and freedom for Britain’s colonies. More controversially, Socialist Fellowship strongly opposed Britain’ alliance with the United States.

Support for Socialist Fellowship among M.Ps, Trade Union Leaders and Constituency Parties

Socialist Fellowship was supported by several Labour MPs. Ellis Smith was elected President of the new group and was joined by Fenner Brockway .Tom Braddock and Ronald Chamberlain were elected vice -Presidents of the Fellowship. Bessie Braddock, the outspoken M.P. for Liverpool Exchange, spoke on Socialist Fellowship platforms while she was identified with the Labour Left though she later moved rightwards.

Socialist Fellowship branches were established in many constituencies There were Socialist Fellowship branches in several London constituencies and a Socialist Fellowship branch was set up in Manchester where Frank Allaun (later a well-known MP) was its chairman. In the Midlands, Fellowship supporters were active in the Birmingham and Nottingham Labour Parties
Some of the members of the Socialist Fellowship branches in the Nottingham and Salford Labour Parties played important roles in their local parties. Two notable members of Nottingham’s Socialist Fellowship were Bob Shaw and his wife. Shaw worked as a goods guard on the railways and was the local secretary of Nottingham’s Socialist Fellowship. A former ILP member, he contributed regularly to *Socialist Outlook* and at the 1949 Labour Party Conference he had advocated workers’ control as a solution to the problems of the nationalised railways. In 1949, he was elected secretary of Nottingham Central Labour Party.
Salford Labour Party had an exceptionally large membership. In 1950, Salford East Labour Party had over 3,800 members, one of the highest constituency party memberships in the country, and a reputation as a left-wing party. Socialist Fellowship’s most prominent member in Salford was Harry Ratner, an engineering

shop steward who wrote regularly for *Socialist Outlook* and was a vocal advocate of nationalisation and worker's control. At the 1948 Labour Party Conference he moved a resolution calling for the iron and steel industry to be nationalised without compensation and placed under workers' control, arguing that workers' control should be established in all the nationalised industries.

Socialist Fellowship and the Korean War

The General Election of February 1950 reduced Labour's parliamentary majority to five and Tom Braddock and Ronald Chamberlain, two of Socialist Fellowship's most ardent parliamentary advocates, lost their seats. Later that year, the outbreak of the Korean War produced serious conflict within the group. In June 1950, North Korea invaded South Korea The Labour Cabinet agreed to join the United States in resisting North Korean military aggression. A United Nations military operation, led by the United States, intervened in the Korean conflict and British servicemen fought in Korea as part of this operation.

Socialist Outlook and the bulk of Socialist Fellowship adopted a political position on the Korean War which was incompatible with the Labour Government's policy. Trotsky had argued that revolutionaries had a duty to defend the Soviet Union against capitalist aggression because it was a workers' state and his position shaped the policy of the Trotskyist entrists in Socialist Fellowship who held that although North Korea was a Stalinist dictatorship, it was still a 'workers' state, which had to be defended against attack by capitalist nations. Braddock was not a Trotskyist but shared their belief that the Korean War had been caused by the United States' belligerence.

Socialist Outlook's editorial board issued a statement which opposed the war, demanded the withdrawal of all British armed forces from the Far East and the colonial world and called for a free and united Korea. Socialist Fellowship's National Committee passed a resolution which described American and British military intervention in Korea as imperialist aggression. This public denunciation of the Labour Government's policy was deeply unwelcome to Labour officials. In a letter to Tom Braddock, Morgan Phillips, the Labour Party's National Secretary, said he viewed the resolution as 'extremely embarrassing to the Party'.

This contentious resolution produced damaging internal conflict in Socialist Fellowship. The resolution was unacceptable to Ellis Smith, the organisation's President and Fenner Brockway, and they attempted to persuade Fellowship's National Committee to abandon its controversial policy. They failed and resigned from the group in July 1950. As a result of their resignation, there were no longer any MPs in Socialist Fellowship. A majority of Fellowship's branches backed the National Committee's view of the Korean War and Tom Braddock became the group's new president.

The controversy over the Korean War exacerbated an ideological schism within British Trotskyism. Ygael Gluckstein, a political exile from Palestine joined the RCP and became known under his pseudonym Tony Cliff. He argued that the Soviet Union was an example of state capitalism. This represented a break with orthodox Trotskyism. Trotsky himself rejected the suggestion the Soviet Union was state capitalist and insisted it remained a workers' state, albeit a deformed one. At the time of the Korean War, Cliff and his sympathisers argued North Korea was not a workers' state but state capitalist and consequently socialists should adopt a position of neutrality between the belligerent nations in the Korean War which was anathema to orthodox Trotskyists. In 1950, Cliff established a

journal *Socialist Review* and formed a new organisation, the Socialist Review Group. Stan Newens, Chair of Labour Heritage, became a member of this group and a contributor to *Socialist Review*. His autobiography *In Search of a Fairer Society*: *My Life and Politics* contains a vivid and amusing account of his meeting with the loquacious Tony Cliff. This was the beginning of an enduring division in British Trotskyism.

This is the first half of an article. Part 2 will be published in the next *Labour Heritage Bulletin*

Southall March for Unity Against Racism April 2019

By Barbara Humphries

This year marked the 40th anniversary of the death of anti-fascist campaigner Blair Peach at the hands of the police in Southall on 23rd April. He had gone to Southall to protest against a meeting called by the National Front. This so-called public meeting was one of many racist attacks on this black and Asian community. Three years earlier a student called Gurdip Singh Chaggar had been stabbed to death in a racially motivated attack. In 1976 and 1979 the local community, particularly the youth, rose up in protest. Police with riot shields and on horseback moved into the town, resulting in countless injuries, over 700 arrests and over 300 charged with criminal offences. The town was under occupation for most of the day, with local residents unable to leave or go home. Young children were witness to police violence against a defenceless population. Previous anniversaries of this event have been low-key events. This year however, with the rise of racism and far right groups again in political life, it was decided to set up a Southall Resists 40 Committee to prepare for a significant commemoration. This included visits to schools, with local children making artwork, guided walks, and a film show. Blue plaques were unveiled on the site of the town hall and flowers were laid at the street corner where Blair Peach was killed. It was attended by relatives and friends of both Peach and Chaggar and Clarence Baker, manager of a reggae band who had survived a serious injury at the hands of the police. On the Saturday 27th April there was a march through Southall Town Centre supported by members of the local community, trades unionists and political activists. Ealing Southall CLP had a new banner made up for the march. This was followed by a rally at the town hall.

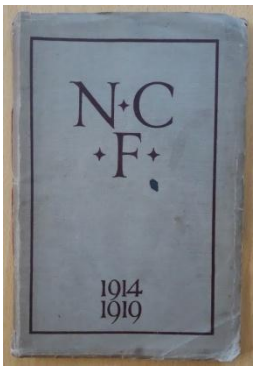
Art-work by Southall school-students to commemorate Blair Peach and Gurdip Singh Chaggar

1979 was to mark a watershed in British politics with a Tory election victory and within five years of this attack on the Asian community in Southall, striking miners were to face police brutality at Orgreave as were London printers at Wapping.
A public meeting was also organised by the three CLPs in Ealing, the first for many years. Addressed by a local campaigner, Suresh Grover, a young local councillor and David Rosenberg, the meeting attracted over 100 people.

The Barnhill Estate (Hayes)

By Barbara Humphries

The heritage of the labour movement can be seen in names of streets, schools and other public places throughout the country. Hayes in west London had a Labour council going back to the 1920s and beyond. It was commended for its housing policy, creating a new town in what had been an area of orchards and brickworks. This continued after 1945 when it elected its first Labour MP Walter Ayles, and local elections led to 100% Labour representation on Hayes Council.



Walter Ayles was elected MP for Southall in 1945 and Hayes and Harlington in 1950. He had been a member of the No-Conscription Fellowship during World War 1

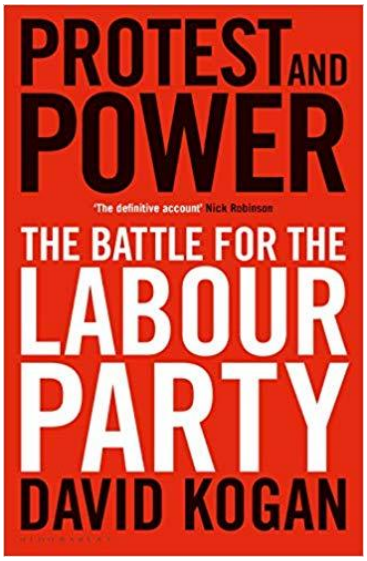
One of the estates built by the council post 1945 was the Barnhill Estate, on the borders of Hayes and Ealing. Local residents, some of them Labour Party members had noticed that local streets were named after the following: Hardie, Bevin, Morrison,Bondfield and the Webbs. So on May Day members in Hillingdon came to a meeting when I gave a talk describing how these individuals had built the labour movement. I also explained the likely reason why there was no MacDonald Road! There is however a Lansbury Drive in Hayes, in a different part of the constituency.
At the end of the meeting local MP and Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer, John McDonnell arrived having been voting in Parliament to declare a Climate Emergency, a measure proposed by Labour, and carried, due to lack of opposition from the Tories. He praised the work of Labour Heritage and encouraged members of Hayes CLP to join.

Hayes People's History, 26th July 2007

For more on the history of the labour movement in west London (Ealing and Hillingdon) you can access my thesis from the University of Reading depository.
http://centaur.reading.ac.uk/85254/

Book Review

Protest and Power: the Battle for the Labour Party by David Kogan (Bloomsbury, £20). Reviewed by Archie Potts



I joined the Labour League of Youth in 1949 and over the years have served the party at branch and constituency levels in various positions, and have been a county councilor and Parliamentary candidate. In my years of Labour Party membership I have experienced many peaks and troughs. I remember the Labour Government of 1945-51, Bevanism, Gaitskell's attempt to modernize the party, the Wilson and Callaghan governments, Labour's long period in opposition ended by Tony Blair's victory in 1997, followed by Gordon Brown's premiership and Ed Miliband's time at the top. But I must admit that the election of Jeremy Corbyn to the leadership came as a surprise to me and I picked up David Kogan's lastest book *Power and Protest* in order to learn more about the unforeseen events of recent years. I was not disappointed.

David Kogan works for Reuters and is the co-author of this book published in 2018, in which he described Labour's civil war of the early 1980s, a struggle for power won very narrowly by Labour's centre-right wing over the Bennite left-wing. The triumph of New Labour in the 1990s appeared to settle this matter once and for all. Under Tony Blair's leadership Labour had been transformed into a neo-liberal party. But this was not the case. The flame of left-wing socialism burned low but it was not extinguished and it was fanned into life by Jeremy Corbyn and his supporters.

David Kogan writes well, his book is thoroughly researched and he is objective in his approach to people and events. One thing that strikes me in his account is the part played by chance in human affairs. Random decisions by individuals or small groups sometimes have significant consequences. The old campaigner Napoleon knew the importance of luck. Tony Blair had more than his share of good fortune and bad decision-making rather than bad luck destroyed his reputation.

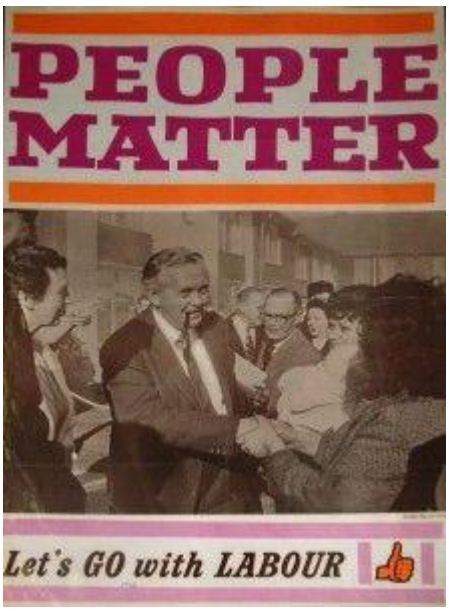
Kogan's book covers 'high politics',that is what people at the top were saying and doing, and it gives a very interesting account of this. But this is only part of the story. What part of the story did Labour's rank and file play? What was the role of the party members who ran the constituencies and did the humdrum work of political activism? They were an important part of the process that brought Corbyn to the leadership, and I should like to have had more analysis of their role.

Disillusionment with New Labour was widespread. The fact that so many people left the party is evidence of this. Socialist ideals had been sacrificed in order to secure the return of a Labour Government but this Government had been largely (no one would say entirely) a disappointment to many rank-and-file members. Furthermore, military intervention in the Middle East in support of Bush's foreign policy was not what many Labour Party members expected, but that is what they got.

Ed Miliband's decision to offer party membership for £3 brought a surge of new members, mainly young people. The time

was ripe for change and Jeremy Corbyn emerged as the new leader of the Labour Party. His victory was no fluke. He was elected with a substantial majority. If the political situation continues to favour Labour he could become Prime Minister.It is a remarkable story and Kogan covers it well.

Labour's 1964 Pre-Election Rally



Archie Potts has sent Labour Heritage a programme for Labour's national rally in 1964, ahead of the 1964 General Election. The rally began with three musical contributions from the Grimethorpe Colliery Institute Band, the Blaenavon Male Voice Choir and the Humphrey Lyttleton Fifteen jazz band. It continued with sketches focused on full employment, social security, free health care, and aid to developing countries. 'Great Times Ahead' was sung by the Frazer Hayes Four and Annie Ross, followed by a performance by the Ispwich Co-operative Junior Girls Choir. This undoubtedly put the audience in a good mood for what would have been a financial appeal by the party's treasurer, Harry Nicholas OBE. After the interval there were speeches by MPs Harold Wilson, Anthony Greenwood and George Brown. The rally concluded with the singing of Jerusalem, together with the massed choirs.

Wild Life at Old Oak Common

Jo Sparks an NUR member who was elected as MP for Acton in 1945 reported in the *Railway Review* that highly skilled men had been transferred to the Old Oak Common depot in his constituency. This depot was on the Great Western Railway line from Paddington to the west country and South Wales. But there were no homes for them. 250 railway workers were 'living like tramps' in railway coaches, many for two years or more, living apart from their families.

Labour in London: Why the Late Start: letter from John Laxton

Thanks to Harry Barnes (our former MP in NE Derbyshire) I have just seen a *Labour Heritage* bulletin for the first time and I look forward to reading more of them.
May I add to John Grigg's article discussing Labour's late start in London? John's article includes the observation that 'In London between 1900 and 1914, apart from the three successful seats courtesy of the Liberals, Labour ran official candidates in only two seats'. He has previously referred to Woolwich, West Ham and Deptford and the casual reader might conclude that in 1903 Labour won the Woolwich seat because the Liberal Party had stood aside. The Woolwich story is worth repeating.
The town was home of the Royal Artillery, Royal Dockyard and Royal Arsenal, the latter with a workforce of 20,000 in 1901, many of whom were artisans well aware of the argument that Conservative governments were more likely to bring them prosperity. The Liberal Association had ceased to function at least five years before the key bye-election. A Progressive Association was formed with activists included socialists, trade unionists and individual Liberals. In 1899 its secretary was a socialist.
Woolwich Trades Council was adamant that a parliamentary candidate had to give a pledge to join the independent Labour members in Parliament. Attempts to find one floundered until November 1902 when Will Crooks was chosen by a joint committee with representatives of the Progressive Association, the National Democratic League and the ILP, but the Trades Council was the decisive political body in the town.
In March 1903 Crooks fought the by-election as the Labour candidate. The Conservatives published leaflets urging support for their man, who claimed to be the 'Conservative and Labour candidate' but he was soon dubbed the 'half a loaf' man by Labour supporters who demanded 'the whole loaf'. Crooks turned over a Tory majority of over 2,000 to win by over 3,000 votes. There is no doubt that that a Liberal could not have won over so much of the Conservative working class vote. A candidate brought in by the national party would in all likelihood have come an embarrassing third
John Grigg discusses differences between the North and London. One aspect was the relative strength of the trade unions, stronger in the North. Woolwich was a special case - the engineers alone had eight branches with 2,000 members and many of the artisans were north-country and Scottish immigrants.
Late in 1902 Ramsay MacDonald put out feelers to James Herbert (Secretary to the Liberals' Chief Whip) about a possible electoral arrangement between the parties. Their first meeting was in February 1903 a month before the by-election. The Woolwich result strengthened MacDonald's hand in negotiations, showing that Labour could build success in a working class Tory area – while the Liberal press tried to claim the success and an anxious MacDonald had to be reassured by key figures in Woolwich that Crooks was 'wholly free from Liberal influences'. They had wisely 'refused all help of both money and personal service unless it has come to us unconditionally'.
The Labour Representation Association, formed in Woolwich immediately after the victory, was organised in what was eventually to become the universal pattern for constituency Labour Parties. And in 1906, Labour candidates were secured a free run in Woolwich and South West Ham but 'in neither constituency was the Liberal Party capable of putting up a serious candidate' (Paul Thompson, *Socialists, Liberals and Labour*, 1967).

For more information about Labour Heritage visit www.labour_heritage.com