



Labour Heritage

Bulletin Summer 2015

Contents – Alfred Linnell, Labour prime ministers, Labour and the Government of Ireland Act, ‘Rebel footprints’ review, Staines NUR, Elections in Acton

The Brick, Bloody Sunday, and Alfred Linnell

John Grigg

At a Trafalgar Square demonstration in 1887 Alfred Linnell died as a result of injuries received when mounted police charged the crowd. A century later in November 1987 a small ceremony took place at the TUC headquarters to mark the centenary of what had become known as ‘Bloody Sunday.’ At the ceremony Labour Heritage presented a small slate, later referred to as ‘the brick’, with the wording ‘Alfred Linnell 1846 – 1887’ which was to be displayed at the TUC headquarters.

Alfred Linnell was a poor man who earned an uncertain living as a ‘Law Writer’ - copying legal documents for solicitors. When his wife died he left his two children in the care of his sister and brother-in-law who, as they had four children of their own, sent Alfred’s children to the Holborn Union Workhouse in Mitcham where the oldest child died.

Two years of protest

Bloody Sunday occurred on November 13th 1887. It was the culmination of two years of processions and outdoor meetings initiated by the Social Democratic Federation (SDF) in protest against unemployment. It began with meetings in Dod Street, Limehouse where there were tussles with the police. Jack Williams, the SDF parliamentary candidate in Hampstead, was arrested and imprisoned. At once, in defence of free speech, other socialist groups, radical working men’s East End clubs, and trade union branches rallied to the cause. Numerous marches and rallies were held in Dod Street and elsewhere.

William Stead, radical editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and Annie Besant, best known for her support of a strike of women at the East End Bryant and May match factory, formed the Law and Liberty League to provide bail and defence services for arrested demonstrators and strikers. The League challenged abusive police practices, limitations on public demonstrations and the unlawful exploitation of workers.

Riot in the West End

A year after the first Dod Street protest, there was trouble in Trafalgar Square when two rival groups held demonstrations at the same time.

One group supported tariffs on imports, a policy opposed by the mass of the labour movement because it would increase food prices. There were scuffles and the police, who were frequently few in numbers at these demonstrations, appealed to the SDF leaders to take their demonstration elsewhere. They agreed to lead their several thousand followers to Hyde Park. The route took them along Pall Mall past many gentlemen's West End Clubs. All was orderly until members of the Carlton Club, perhaps influenced by after lunch brandies, taunted and jeered at the motley ill-kempt crowd. Road repairs were going on in Pall Mall. Some members of the unemployed crowd, provoked by the Carlton Club gentlemen, hurled cobble stones through the club's windows, and a riotous attack spread to other clubs and into Piccadilly and St James Street, where shop windows were broken. Some took advantage of the disturbance to loot a few shops. The next day several leaders of the demonstration were arrested and charged with seditious conspiracy. At the subsequent trial the jury unexpectedly acquitted them.

Alarm now spread through the West End. More riots and revolution were feared. The Government imposed a ban on demonstrations in Trafalgar Square, and frequent clashes between unemployed demonstrators and the police occurred.

Bloody Sunday

The 13th November 1887 demonstration was called by the Metropolitan Radical Federation, a campaign group attached to the Liberal Party which supported Irish nationalism. The purpose was to protest against the government's suppression of civil rights in Ireland,

but other groups such as the SDF and the Socialist League became involved and it widened to include protests against unemployment and restrictions on public meetings in the capital.

The military were called in to prevent columns of marchers converging on Trafalgar Square. All the Thames bridges were garrisoned, and most of the marchers were driven back before they could reach the square. But one contingent from North London got there. The police, on foot and on horses, charged the crowd with batons. 75 marchers were injured and 400 arrested.

Death of Linnell

Alfred Linnell was not there that day but the following Sunday a considerable crowd gathered in the square protesting against the police violence of the previous week. Mr Linnell was walking in Northumberland Avenue and went down towards the square to see what was going on. Once again foot and mounted police charged the crowd. Mr Linnell was knocked over by a charging horse and his thigh was shattered. By-standers carried him to Charing Cross Hospital in the Strand where he gave his name as 'Reynolds', a name by which he was known when a boy.

Days passed and an old work companion went to see him. After a week the visitor's son met Linnell's sister in the street and told her that her brother was in Charing Cross Hospital. She rushed there only to be told that no one of the name Linnell was in the hospital. She concluded that her brother was not hospitalised and said so when she met her informant again. He insisted and said her brother was in the Albert Edward Ward. She went

there with her young daughter and found him on Wednesday, November 30th. He was in pain but the broken thigh had been set and the doctors said he would be well in a month.

“Don’t worry,” said his sister, “there’s a dear; you will soon be well again.” Ada, his niece, promised to come back on the Friday. When she got there she found that blood poisoning had killed her uncle earlier that day. There were three deaths in the hospital that Friday. Two bodies were sent for burial and Linnell’s was sent to the mortuary to investigate the cause of death. But it wasn’t Linnell’s body that went to the mortuary. The hospital muddled the bodies and the mistake was only discovered when Mrs Hann, taking one last look at her husband, found a stranger – Mr Linnell - in the coffin. The body was returned to the hospital where there were apologies for the cruel blunder.

The Inquest

News of Linnell’s death spread. The hospital’s house doctor, Mr Smith, said at first that no death had occurred arising out of the disturbances in Trafalgar Square, and that there was no bruise whatever on the body of the deceased. Later at the inquest at St. Martin’s Vestry Hall he stated that newspapers had called to ask if anyone had died on the Sunday who had been injured in Trafalgar Square. He had replied ‘No’, because the death was on a Friday and the injuries were received in Northumberland Avenue, not Trafalgar Square. Other witnesses, however, were quite clear about the cause of Linnell’s death.

The coroner adjourned the inquest and ordered a fresh post mortem. A bruise was discovered, that could have been caused by a horse’s hoof, the existence

of which had been overlooked by the house doctor. Linnell’s character was blackened when the police produced a witness, who swore that Linnell was so drunk the night before the Trafalgar Square events that he was incapable of writing out his account for work done at a law firm. But a representative from the firm was called and produced Linnell’s neatly written account for the night before the fatal Sunday. The police then explained that their horses were walked so quietly that it was impossible for anyone to be knocked over. It was claimed that Linnell just fell over somehow and that was the cause of the injury. Other witnesses insisted that he was knocked over by a police horse, and others that the broken bone was caused by a horse stamping on his thigh.

The jury, faced with this conflicting evidence, returned an open verdict and the body was handed over to an undertaker in Lexington Street.

The Funeral March

The Law and Liberty League began arrangements for Mr Linnell’s funeral. William Stead stated that Mr. Linnell should be buried simply, but with every expression of sorrow and sympathy for a man who had fallen as one of the people, on a field whereon the cause of the people was the great issue of the battle.

The first intention was to begin the funeral march to Bow Cemetery on 18th December from the spot in Northumberland Avenue where Mr Linnell was injured. The police banned such a gathering and, not wishing to have another clash with the police, an alternative route was taken by the undertakers to where Aldwych meets the Strand. A large crowd gathered, greatly increased by marchers crossing Waterloo Bridge

from south of the river. The Strand was blocked preventing the passing of normal traffic and there were scuffles with the police.

At the head of the cortege was the reverend Stewart Headlam, a prominent Christian Socialist, followed by the hearse drawn by four horses bearing the black coffin draped with a red flag, above which fluttered red, green and yellow flags, emblems of revolution. Pallbearers included William Morris, Annie Besant, William Stead, Mr Cunningham-Graham MP and Mr Bowling of the Irish National League. Behind the hearse were two coaches conveying Mr. Linnell's relatives, friends and other mourners. And then, stretching back along the Strand, were the bands and banners of many thousands of marchers from London's Socialist and Radical Clubs.

The cortege set off at half past two. The crush was terrific and the police, on endeavouring to restore some kind of order, were greeted with fierce hooting. As the procession approached St. Pauls, the Cathedral's afternoon bells ceased out of respect for the dead, and the bands struck up the Death March while marchers and onlookers raised their hats. The procession was joined by members of the Hackney Working Men's Club to which Mr Linnell belonged and the streets were lined with masses of spectators. Occupants of passing trams and omnibuses bared their heads.

At Ludgate Circus a number of clubs were waiting to join the procession and it was there that a short fracas occurred between the police and a portion of the marchers, resulting in several people being knocked about. Apart from another slight skirmish in the Mile End Road the procession, estimated to be of

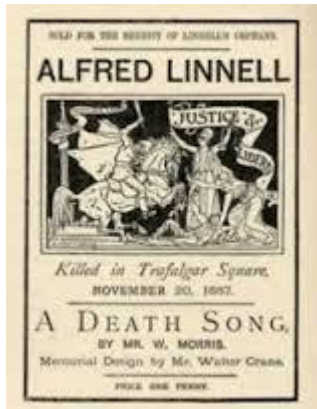
100,000 people and a mile-and-a-half long, wended its way along the five mile route to the Bow cemetery in good order.

It was getting dark when the cemetery was reached at half past four. Progress towards the gates was hampered by a large waiting crowd, and the gloom gathered as a small number of mourners were allowed through the gates to gather around the grave. Heavy torrents of rain fell as the Reverend Headlam read the service. By then it was pitch dark. The processionists had neglected to bring a lantern and the necessary light had to be supplied by wax matches held inside a tall silk hat under an umbrella.

Mr. Tims of the Battersea Liberal and Radical Federation spoke of the scandalous brutality and astounding cruelty of the police. William Morris expressed condolences with the relatives of Mr Linnell, who he said was a man of no particular party who, until a week or so ago, was only known to a few. He might have lived to have a happy and beautiful life, and it was their business to try and make this earth a very beautiful and happy place for all. They were engaged in a holy war to prevent their rulers making this great town of London nothing more than a prison.

Mr Dowling of the Irish National League and Mr Quelch of the Social Democratic Federation called upon working people to organise, challenge, and take over the power possessed by the ruling classes.

The graveside ceremony closed with the Death Song composed by William Morris. It was pitch dark and the rain descended in a perfect deluge when the little band of mourners, at half past five, left the cemetery.



The funeral was widely reported and described by some newspapers as one of the most imposing spectacles ever witnessed in the metropolis. Reports appeared in newspapers across the country from the *Aberdeen Journal* to the *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette*. There were even accounts in Australian newspapers - the *South Australian Register* and the *Kerang Times Swan Hill Gazette*.

The labour movement had its martyr.

The Brick

So what happened to the brick donated by Labour Heritage in 1987? Instead of being displayed on a wall at the TUC headquarters, it was put in a cupboard, until found when their archives were transferred to London Metropolitan University in the Holloway Road. The curator did some research and returned it to Labour Heritage, and the committee then considered what would be an appropriate location for the brick, in order to honour Alfred Linnell's memory.

The Bow Cemetery is now called the Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park and the staff are aware of the burial but the grave cannot be found. The exact place where Mr Linnell is buried is recorded, but there is no headstone and other graves have crowded out the

spot. So Labour Heritage have erected a stone on the path near where Mr Linnell is buried, with an inscription that Alfred Linnell, 1846 - 1887, is buried near this spot. It includes these words from William Morris.

Not one, not one, nor thousands must they slay. But one and all if they would dusk the day

The Labour Heritage brick has been set into the stone above the inscription. Labour Heritage will be hosting a commemoration of Alfred Linnell, together with the Friends of Tower Hamlets Cemetary on Saturday 5th September 3-5 pm at Tower Hamlets cemetery. (Southern Grove, E3 4PX. The nearest tube station is Mile End (District and Central Lines). All members and friends are welcome to attend.



Photo by David Sankey

Prime Ministers in Labour's Pantheon

Archie Potts

Labour historian Ben Pimlott once described Clement Attlee as 'top deity' in the modern Labour Party's pantheon. (*Independent*, 16 March 1977) and few people would challenge this judgement. Becoming prime minister of a bankrupt and exhausted country in 1945 Attlee successfully presided over the implementation of Labour's radical programme of social and economic reform that ushered in thirty years of full employment within the framework of a welfare state and a large public sector. Attlee also played a leading part in the granting of independence to India, Pakistan, Burma and Sri Lanka, and he was prominent in the creation of NATO. More controversially he authorised the building of a British atomic bomb. No other Labour prime minister can match these achievements and his reputation has grown over the years rather than diminished. There is little doubt that Attlee is top of the league table of Labour prime ministers. But what of the other Labour prime ministers: where do they fit in?

Methodology

There have been six Labour prime ministers. In chronological order: Ramsay MacDonald 1924 and 1929-31; Clement Attlee 1945-51; Harold Wilson 1964-70 and 1974-76; James Callaghan 1976-79; Tony Blair 1997-2007; and Gordon Brown 2007-10. Drawing up a league table of Labour prime ministers is fraught with difficulties; there are problems of selection of sources, the need to consider the context in which individual prime ministers had to operate, and an element of subjectivity is always present. This said, an attempt

can be made. For the purposes of comparison my approach is to divide Labour's prime ministers into two groups.

1. Harold Wilson won four general elections and Tony Blair three. Both men served long spells as prime minister.
2. James Callaghan and Gordon Brown inherited the premiership and failed to retain it in a subsequent general election.
3. Ramsay MacDonald was prime minister of two minority Labour governments after general elections had failed to provide an overall majority for any single party.

Harold Wilson and Tony Blair

Harold Wilson seemed uniquely qualified to tackle Britain's economic problems when he took office as Prime Minister in 1964. Yet he failed in this area in spectacular fashion and his reputation never recovered. Inheriting a balance of payments deficit from the previous Conservative government he chose not to devalue the pound and instead pursued deflationary policies for three years before being forced by market forces to devalue in 1967. One beneficial result of the need to cut public expenditure was that Britain was forced to wind up her military commitments in the Far East. Perhaps Wilson's main achievement was that he kept Britain out of the Vietnam War. He failed however to deal with the rebellious white settler regime in Southern Rhodesia. On the domestic front the Wilson government passed an Equal Pay Act, legislated on racial discrimination and reformed the laws on abortion, homosexuality, and censorship. Returning to Downing Street in 1974 Wilson tied up some of the mess left by the Heath Government, skilfully steered the country through a referendum on EEC

membership, and passed some sex discrimination legislation before hand over the premiership to James Callaghan.

New Labour under Tony Blair took power with a huge majority in 1997 and he inherited a buoyant economy. Blair's main achievements were to introduce devolution to Scotland and Wales, and pass a Human Rights Act. He also played a major role in securing a peace settlement in Northern Ireland and brought in a national minimum wage. His most controversial action was his wholehearted support for the invasion of Iraq and dragging the Labour Party behind his war chariot. Harold Wilson and Tony Blair are similar in that they promised much more than they ever delivered and disappointed many Labour supporters. Harold Wilson, however, faced difficult economic problems during his premiership and never lacked critics inside his own party. Blair, on the other hand, enjoyed the spin-off engendered by a world boom and his decisions were rarely challenged by anyone in the Labour Party. Wilson encountered difficulties never experienced by Blair and he showed great skill in holding his party together through a series of crises that could have ripped it apart.

James Callaghan and Gordon Brown

James Callaghan took over from Harold Wilson in 1976 and faced the problem of rampant inflation stemming from a massive hike in oil prices. Callaghan was experienced in government and his previous job as an official of a white collar union stood him in good stead when he sought the co-operation of the trades unions in the struggle to curb inflation. The unions agreed to wage restraint in the form of a social contract. The Labour

Government, however, was also forced to borrow from the International Monetary Fund and cut public expenditure. Labour's income policy held until the winter of 1978 when the Callaghan government tried to extend wage restraint for a further year. This was a serious misjudgement. The result was the so-called 'winter of discontent' when the trade unions broke ranks and pressed for wage increases. The general election held in 1979 brought Mrs Thatcher to power.

Gordon Brown took over the premiership from Tony Blair in 2007. Without doubt his finest hour was his leading role in helping to resolve the global banking crisis of 2008-9. This also showed Brown at his best in an otherwise lacklustre period in office. At the general election of 2010 Labour lost power and was replaced by a Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition still fresh in our memories. Both men would have done better as Prime Ministers if they had come to office earlier in their careers.

Callaghan in his autobiography (*Time and Chance*, 1987), wished he had been given the opportunity a few years earlier when he had possessed more energy. 'I ran out of steam' he observed. Gordon Brown always maintained that Blair had reneged on a promise made at that famous meeting in the Granita Restaurant, to step down after two years in his second term of office and hand over to him. Of course this did not happen and when Brown did succeed Blair the shine was most definitely off New Labour.

Ramsay MacDonald

Ramsay MacDonald became Britain's first Labour prime minister in January 1924 under unusual circumstances. The retiring Conservative Prime Minister, Stanley Baldwin, had called a general election in December 1923 to

secure a mandate to impose tariffs in order to protect the British economy. He failed to win an overall majority; the Conservatives won 258 seats to Labour's 191 with the Liberals returning 158. The Liberal leader, Herbert Asquith was clear what should be done. The electorate had rejected protection therefore Labour as the largest opposition party should be invited by the King to form a government and this is what happened. MacDonald not only became Prime Minister but also served as foreign secretary.

The first Labour government lasted nine months. Lacking a majority in the House of Commons meant that no socialist measures could be attempted. There were some minor improvements in social benefits and a housing act was passed that gave subsidies to local authorities to encourage the building of council houses. The Labour Government achieved more in its foreign policy. It recognised the new Soviet state, eased the reparations burden on Weimar Germany and MacDonald became the first Prime Minister to attend meetings of the League of Nations. It was not a bad record for a Prime Minister at the head of a minority government.

The same could not be said of the second Labour Government. In the general election held in May 1929 Labour won most seats but again failed to win an overall majority. Ramsay MacDonald formed his second government. Unemployment in Britain was already high when Labour took office and it went rocketing up with the onset of the world slump later in the year. The Labour Government was overwhelmed by the crisis and resigned, whereupon MacDonald ditched his Labour colleagues and became Prime Minister of a Conservative dominated National Government. Because of his inept

handling of the economic crisis and the harm he did to the labour movement MacDonald must be placed at the bottom of any league of Labour prime ministers.

Conclusion

In conclusion then we have Clement Attlee at the top and Ramsay MacDonald at the bottom of the Labour prime minister's league but what about those in between? I think that Harold Wilson and Tony Blair by reason of their long periods in office and ability to win general elections must follow Attlee, with Wilson ranked above Blair. Wilson was prime minister during tumultuous times and he led a restless Labour Party with skill. Blair had a much easier premiership with fewer crises to surmount and a tightly disciplined party at his command. James Callaghan and Gordon Brown both served three years in 10 Downing Street. For them it was a case of what might have been. If they had come to the premiership earlier and had a longer run in office both would probably have had more substantial records to their credit. I would rate Brown above Callaghan because he had a better grasp of economics. Callaghan's incomes policy ended in disaster and he handed over a deeply divided party to his successor as Labour leader, Michael Foot.

The final table is as follows:

1. Clement Attlee
2. Harold Wilson
3. Tony Blair
4. Gordon Brown
5. James Callaghan
6. Ramsay MacDonald.

Partition Resisted: the British Parliamentary Labour Party and the Government of Ireland Act 1920

Ivan Gibbons

Before the First World War, the fledgling British Labour Party was content to follow the Liberal government's policy of general support for home rule in Ireland. However, as events in Ireland both during and immediately after the War saw the political initiative move away from the moderate demand for Home Rule towards an increasingly militant demand for a completely independent Irish state, the Labour Party was forced to reconsider its relationship with Irish nationalism. This occurred as the Labour Party was becoming a major political and electoral force in post-war Britain. The political imperative from the Party's perspective was to portray itself as a responsible, moderate and, above all, patriotic alternative governing party and thus it was fearful of the potential negative impact of too close an association with extreme Irish nationalism. This explains the Party's often bewildering and erratic changes in policy on Ireland at various party conferences in 1919 and 1920 ranging from support for Home Rule to outright "self-determination" for a completely independent Ireland.

On one aspect of its Irish policy however the Party was adamant and united – its opposition to the partition of Ireland enshrined in the Government of Ireland Bill of 1920 which established Northern Ireland. Curiously, this aspect of Labour's Irish policy was never discussed in the Party at large at the time the legislation was being debated in Parliament. All the running was made by the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP) in the House of Commons as the Bill proceeded through its various stages. In effect, the PLP's outright opposition to the Bill acted as a balm throughout the wider party, binding together the confusing and often contradictory positions promulgated on the long-term constitutional future of Ireland and its relationship with Britain. The

British Labour Party remained resolutely opposed to the partition of Ireland although, paradoxically, it had no difficulty in accepting the Anglo-Irish Treaty one year later which in effect underpinned the partition settlement in Ireland initiated by the Government of Ireland Act the previous year.

Labour's policy on Ireland overall may have oscillated frequently after the First World War but on one aspect of that policy - opposition to the Lloyd George's coalition government's proposal to partition Ireland - the party was steadfast; at least until the proposal became a reality. The party's adamant hostility to the proposals contained in the Government of Ireland Bill served to mask the shifting nature of Labour policy on Ireland generally. Furthermore, that evolving policy was first outlined in the debates on the Bill in the Commons and only afterwards ratified by the party's official decision-making machinery. In effect, therefore, the debate on partition in the House of Commons determined the nature of Labour Party policy on Ireland.

In December 1919, the Government of Ireland Bill, with its proposals for two Irish parliaments and an all-Ireland federal council, was presented to the Commons and the following February it received its first reading. There had been no discussion on Ireland at the 1919 Labour Party Conference and the Party's official position remained that it was nominally for full independence and against partition. When the Bill was formally introduced on 25 February, Labour gave notice of an amendment, which stated that 'this House cannot assent to the second reading of a Bill which would divide the Irish nation in a manner repugnant to the great majority of the Irish people; which would foster and accentuate religious animosities between sections of the Irish people; and which would lead to no settlement of the Irish question.'

Positioned uneasily between a traditional commitment to an increasingly irrelevant Home Rule proposal and a growing clamour for complete Irish self-

determination, the PLP announced in December 1919 that it would send a parliamentary delegation to Ireland to meet Irish political representatives, including Sinn Fein. This was to be a fact-finding trip to help prepare Labour's opposition to the constitutional proposals in the Government of Ireland Bill, but it was also obviously an attempt to deflect accusations of apathy or disinterest in the Irish issue which were being increasingly heard both on the left of the British Labour Party and in the Irish Labour Party.

Irish in Britain

For Labour, J.R. Clynes MP challenged the partitionism of the Bill on the second reading on 29 March when he argued that Labour opposed partition because it enshrined sectarianism and ignored the historic unity of both Ulster as well as that of Ireland as a whole. Ulster's ability to veto any decision of the proposed Council of Ireland as well as its equal representation on the Council with the rest of Ireland, despite the disparity in population both helped to 'concede to a minority of the country the selection of a form of Government which it denies to a majority', and were good reasons for Labour to oppose the bill. In his speech, Clynes outlined Labour's evolving policy on Ireland by calling for the maximum of self-government compatible with the unity of the Empire and the security of the United Kingdom in war-time. He also demanded the maximum devolution of financial and economic responsibility, adequate safeguards for Ulster and the establishment of an Irish assembly to decide upon the country's future constitutional and financial arrangements. Clynes argued that such proposals, which he termed dominion self-government, would maintain Irish unity, in contrast to the Government of Ireland Bill which would perpetuate division on religious grounds. Looking to the future, Clynes predicted that workers in the North of Ireland would, in the years immediately ahead, be more concerned with advances in social and economic conditions rather than sectarian division. Clynes, himself born in Lancashire of Irish parents, always

maintained that the solution he outlined was in the best interests of both Ireland and Britain.

In the same debate, John Allen Parkinson, the MP for Wigan, elaborated on why, even though it resolutely opposed partition, the Labour Party's definition of 'self-determination' did not include complete separation. He stated that:

The Labour Party is not, and by its own nature never can be, a separatist party. It is a federalist party, and far from wishing to detach the Irish people from the English, it aims at establishing the closest possible relations between both, and all the workers of the modern capitalised world.... We think there ought not to be two Parliaments imposed upon one country.... What we would like to see would be for the Government to withdraw the Bill for the time being, and having withdrawn the Bill, to consider fully, along with representatives of the Irish nation, Dominion Home Rule.

Despite the fact that it inevitably drew attention to the party's inconsistencies on Ireland, one of the main reasons Labour MPs adopted a far more vigorous approach on the Government of Ireland Bill was because they were spurred on by the prospect of losing support amongst the Irish in Britain. The essential predicament the growing British Labour Party faced on Ireland was the need to present itself to the British electorate as a responsible, moderate and, above all, patriotic government-in waiting while at the same time not alienating the bedrock of Irish working-class support in Britain it depended upon in order to continue its electoral advancement.

Jack Jones, MP for West Ham, Silvertown, was even clearer when he stated that Labour adamantly opposed the partition of Ireland because 'we object to partition, we object to the setting up of two Parliaments in Ireland; we claim there should be only one.... The Labour party in Great Britain is opposed to any action which is going to

divide the people of one nation into two hostile factions.’

On the third reading on 11 November 1920, William Adamson MP stated quite frankly that:

I do not believe that in their heart of hearts they [the Irish people] really want a republic, they are simply putting forward, in my opinion, their maximum demand. The Labour Party does not believe in an Irish Republic. The Labour Party does not wish to see an Irish Republic established. They do not think it would be good for the people of this country or for Ireland.

Adamson was merely repeating the strongly held view inside the Parliamentary Labour Party that, despite the Scarborough Conference commitment to full self-determination, the leadership of the Party preferred for there to remain a meaningful constitutional link between the two countries. He asked:

what does the Labour Party propose?... we say, first of all the British army of occupation should be withdrawn, and the coercive measures being applied to Ireland repealed... let the army of occupation be withdrawn, and let arrangements be made at once for the calling together of a Constituent Assembly, elected on the basis of proportional representation by a free, equal and secret vote... let that Constituent Assembly draw up a Constitution for Ireland, on the understanding that that Constitution shall be accepted subject to two conditions.

Adamson went on to provide the clearest exposition yet of how the Labour leadership interpreted self-determination and this was to form the basis of the PLP’s position on Ireland up until the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty a year later. He continued by stating that:

The first is that it affords protection to the minority.... The second

condition is that the Constitution will prevent Ireland from becoming a military or naval menace.... Ireland must be given full freedom of choice; that is where their self-determination comes in. On the other hand, we recognise that an independent Ireland would be a grave menace to this country, and it is self-determination on our part to say that the peace and safety of this realm shall be safeguarded.

Adamson argued that it was no good the Prime Minister talking about self-determination in Czechoslovakia if he was not prepared to concede the same principle in Ireland. Lloyd George riposted that self-determination was only for ‘the debris of the Austrian Empire not for the British Empire’, and went on to say that Ireland did not know her own mind and that a Republic would be disastrous for her. Despite Adamson’s criticism of government policy, his was a conditional interpretation of free and absolute ‘self-determination’ which was clearly at odds with the policy of the party as established at the Scarborough Conference in the summer. The reality of the situation was that Labour had few realistic counter-proposals beyond vague references to ‘self-determination’, itself conditional and implying everything from an independent republic, through Dominion Home Rule, to the traditionalist pre-1914 view of what constituted Home Rule. However, this confusion itself accurately reflected the vast range of opinions on Ireland inside the Labour Party. Only in their opposition to partition were all Labour politicians (except those in Belfast who had indicated their support for partition at the Scarborough conference earlier in the year) saying the same thing and even then the increasing emphasis from 1918 onwards on the need to ‘protect minorities’, at least implied that consideration of partition must be one of the ways of achieving this end. Lloyd George often criticised Labour’s vagueness on ‘self-determination’. What did the party mean by this phrase? According to J. R. Clynes, it meant the

maximum of national self-government consistent with the unity of the empire and the safety of the UK. Obviously, the Government of Ireland Bill with its reserved powers, both economic and political and most of all, its endorsement of partition, did not satisfy those criteria. It was designed not to concede but to exclude national self-government.

Government of Ireland Act

On 11 November 1920, the Bill received its third reading and on 23 December the Government of Ireland Act received royal assent. The Act created two Parliaments and a Council of Ireland with 20 representatives from each Parliament and a President of the Council nominated by the Lord Lieutenant of Southern Ireland. The Council could only receive or assume further powers with the mutual authority of both Parliaments. Partition could be terminated, theoretically at least, as soon as Irishmen agreed amongst themselves in wishing to have a single national government. It is hard to disagree with Fanning's succinct conclusion that 'the Government of Ireland Act was not so much a sincere attempt to settle the Irish question as a sincere attempt to settle the Ulster question'.

Undoubtedly, the passing of the Government of Ireland Act enabled Lloyd George to satisfy the Ulster Unionists and his Conservative government allies prior to beginning negotiations with a resurgent and strident Irish nationalism. The partition solution establishing two Irish Parliaments took Ireland out of the realm of British politics allowing Britain to withdraw from Ireland on her own terms. Sovereignty would be retained by Britain 'de jure' but 'de facto' the Irish could now govern themselves and no Irishman could complain about domination from Westminster. In theory, all Ireland was autonomous. It is difficult to imagine another option to partition from the British point of view, if their overriding concern was to withdraw from Ireland without coercing Ulster. If the Irish Nationalist Party, rather than Sinn Fein, had been the dominant political force in the south, the

Act would have been a brilliant solution. In 1886, 1893 and 1912-14, Home Rule had foundered on the rock of Unionist opposition. Ironically, in 1920 the 'Fourth Home Rule Bill' satisfied Ulster but not the extreme nationalists of Sinn Fein, the new masters in the south.

From the Conservative point of view, they had realised as early as 1917, that an Irish settlement involving some kind of Home Rule was essential to the war effort in order to attract the United States into the war and probably inevitable if the Empire was going to survive after the war. Equally, it is apparent that Conservative support for the Ulster Unionist case weakened between 1913 and 1918 undoubtedly because, since 1916, the Conservatives were the dominant partners in the coalition government and there was no further need to play the Orange card in the quest for office. Furthermore, as the Irish crisis intensified, it became increasingly obvious to both parties that although their short-term interests might coincide, the Conservatives were ultimately concerned about the future welfare of the UK whereas the Ulster Unionists' overriding concern was maintaining their own identity in Ireland. After 1918, therefore, the Tory commitment to the unionists was based more on 'a stoical determination to honour a debt rather than a burning desire to reward their Ulster friends'.

Labour's Policy

The Labour Party, however, did not have any such political debts to pay. There had never been a cohesive and logically planned Irish policy in the Labour Party. For historical reasons there was a deep and genuinely held emotional attachment by nearly all of the Labour Party (except in Belfast) to the moderate home rule policies of the Irish Nationalist Party. The Party's opposition to partition again reflected the Irish nationalists keenly felt antagonism to any proposal which threatened the territorial integrity of Ireland. Consequently, the partition debate during the progress of the Government of Ireland Bill provided certainty for the

Labour Party at a time when its own policies on Ireland were in a state of flux. It was experiencing increasing criticism for merely slavishly following the traditional home rule policy of the Irish Nationalist Party when it was obvious that in nationalist Ireland itself mainstream political demands had moved well beyond that. The British Labour Party's cautious constitutionalism and parliamentarianism were threatened by demands for direct action and a closer identification with the extra-parliamentary nationalism of Sinn Fein. The resultant evolution from 'Home Rule' to 'unqualified self-determination' and then back to again to a contradictory 'conditional self-determination' made it easy for Lloyd George to undermine Labour's position by constantly probing at the vagueness and vacuity of what the Labour Party's position on Ireland truly meant.

The 1921 Parliamentary Report recorded, somewhat defensively, that the debate on the Bill gave Labour an opportunity to stress its alternative Irish policy and it went on to detail how Adamson presented this when it argued that:

The Party had decided that its speakers should in opposing the Bill, take the following line: That the British Army of Occupation should be withdrawn, the question of Irish Government should be relegated to a Constituent Assembly, elected on the basis of Proportional Representation, and that the Constitution drawn up by the Constituent Assembly should be accepted, provided it afforded protection to the minority, and would prevent Ireland becoming a military or naval menace to Britain. The policy adopted by the Party was shortly afterwards endorsed by the Irish labour Movement and complete unity of policy between British and Irish Labour was thereby achieved.

With its overall Irish policy constantly in a state of flux and open to justifiable criticism for its lack of clarity, the Party was on much safer political ground relentlessly and consistently attacking the

proposal for partition. Such a strategy served to mask the uncertainty underneath as to what Labour policy on Ireland actually proposed. The *Daily Herald* was in no doubt about the validity of Labour's position. In a valedictory editorial as the Government of Ireland Bill became law it argued:

British Labour has only two alternatives before it. It can acquiesce in the Government's methods of shame, or it can put an end to them. It has its own plan - clear, simple, definite, honourable and immediate, to withdraw the British forces from Ireland and leave to a Constituent Assembly of the Irish people the settlement of their own destinies. This is the way of peace and honour. There is no other way.

Between 1918 and 1921, the Labour Party's position on Ireland moved bewilderingly from home rule to unqualified self-determination and back to dominion status. However, during the same period the party's outright opposition to the Government of Ireland Bill and partition in 1920 provided certainty in terms of its Irish policy and served to bind all sections of the Party, however much they may have disagreed on other aspects of its Irish policy. Furthermore, the Parliamentary Labour Party with its opposition to partition and its set of alternative proposals outlined in the debates on the Government of Ireland Bill, in effect determined Labour's policy in this period and enabled it more easily to accept the constitutional arrangements which resulted from the Anglo-Irish Treaty the following year.

Dr Ivan Gibbons is Senior Lecturer in Irish History at St Mary's University, Twickenham and is author of *The British Labour Party and the Establishment of the Irish Free State 1918-1924* (Palgrave Macmillan 2015).

Labour's Lost Membership Records

John Grigg

At a Labour Heritage Committee meeting in June a member asked where Labour Party membership records were held before 1992. The answer is they were not held centrally and it is just possible, but unlikely, that some CLPs may have old records.

The national membership system was introduced in 1991, which is why anybody who joined before that date is recorded as joining on 01/01/91. Before 1991 statistics for the number of members nationally was based upon the number of membership cards paid for by each CLP. Each year a CLP would order a number of cards. The CLP secretary would then arrange the collection of subscriptions and issue of cards to members. The local system varied but one way was to send a number of cards to each ward secretary, who would arrange for collectors to call on each member. A record was kept in each collector's 'Collectors Book'.

At the end of the year unused cards were returned to Head Office with a payment for the used cards. For example if the CLP received 1,000 cards at the beginning of the year and 800 were used, 200 would be returned with a payment for 800.

The payment to Head Office was a proportion of the subscription and the CLP kept the rest. I have a copy of the 1938 Constitution and Standing Orders and the amount required in old money by Head Office was 4½d per card. I don't know what the full subscription was in 1938 but in 1950, when I joined, I vaguely remember it being 6/- (six shillings per annum) Each

CLP's membership figure was based upon the number of cards paid for.

The weakness of the system is obvious. Cards could be lost but had to be paid for. I remember when I was a ward secretary in Brentford and Isleworth I issued a dozen cards to one collector who disappeared. A CLP might have 500 members, but with cards being sent to say 10 wards and then sent out to 5 or 6 collectors in each ward, the job of getting back the unused cards (and the money!) was an arduous task. Some CLPs might even exaggerate their membership by paying for cards that were not used.

The end result, of course, was that membership was exaggerated.

Book review – Rebel Footprints: a Guide to Uncovering London's Radical History by David Rosenberg, Pluto Press, 2015 Barbara Humphries

This is a collection of essays written in memory of London historian Bill Fishman, 1921-2014. It covers themes in London's radical history from the 1830s to the 1930s, illustrating a rich tradition of radical political and labour movement history. As well as covering aspects of radical politics such as Chartism, the strikes of the match women and dockers, the suffragettes, and the anti-fascist struggles of the 1930s, these essays have extensive biographical interest covering the lives of, for instance, the Pankhursts, Tom Mann, John Burns and George Lansbury. However what makes this book particularly interesting is its setting in the localities of London, making the point that the City is a collection of places with their own radical traditions. Each chapter is

accompanied by a map and a self guided tour, so that the reader can use it to walk around each area, connecting locations of past struggles such as Clerkenwell and Cable Street with the city as it is today.

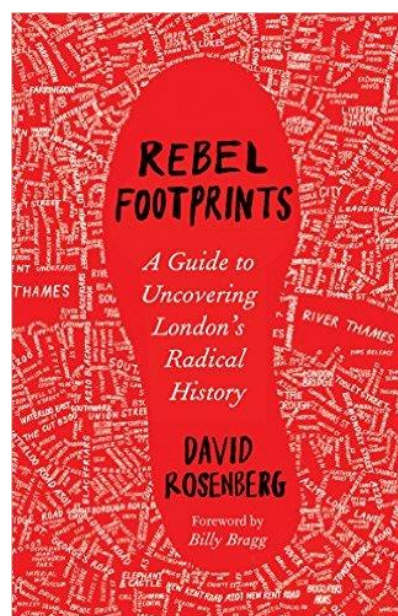
Early London radical history is centred in Clerkenwell. Visitors to Exmouth Market in Clerkenwell walking along Spafiel Street might be interested to know that Spa Fields was where a radical teacher, Thomas Spence organised protest meetings in 1816. One of his meetings was violently disrupted by police and he was accused of high treason, a case which finally collapsed. He advocated universal suffrage, egalitarianism and land nationalisation.

Several of the chapters are located in the East End, covering the dockers' strike in 1889, and lives of the tailors of Spitalfields. One recurrent theme is the extent of immigration into London and how its communities, Jewish and Irish for example gave support to radical politics and the labour movement. Battersea in South London attracted a growing Irish population to work in its factories. It produced early trades union leaders such as Tom Mann and Ben Tillet. It was also to see the foundation of the Battersea Labour League with its motto "Not for me, not for you but for us", and the Progressive Alliance which was to make an impact on the London County Council, when it was set up in 1889. The legacy of 'Red Battersea' continued into the 20th century, providing the most militant supporters of the 1926 General Strike in London, and the Aid for Spain Committee in the 1930s, when Nye Bevan addressed an audience at Battersea Town Hall. Bermondsey, one of the poorest parts of London also receives coverage with the fight of the Poplar councillors led by George Lansbury to equalise rates

across London, thereby obtaining justice for the poor.

However the West End is not without its radical traditions. Westminster itself was the focus of political protest particularly by the suffragettes, fighting for the rights of women to vote. Also Bloomsbury was home to radical émigrés such as Karl Marx who studied in the British Library Reading Room, and his daughter Eleanor, who lived in Soho for much of her life and played an enormous role in assisting strikers in London, like in Silvertown, West Ham. She helped to form the Bloomsbury Socialist Society in 1888, part of the socialist revival in late 19th century London.

The self guided walks last no longer than an hour. They bring to life, (with some imagination) a radical past which could have been lost with the changes which have taken place in London over the past centuries.



George Wardle MP speaks to a National Union of Railwaymen (NUR) meeting at Staines (Middlesex) on Sunday evening, 30th April 1916

Staines branch of the NUR held a meeting at the Co-operative Hall where George Wardle MP, for Stockport spoke on 'Trade Unions and the War'. There was a fair attendance.

Trades unions had shown they could hold themselves together even in the great crisis of the War said George Wardle. Great progress had been made since 1911. When he first joined the union its membership was between 56-70,000. Now it was over 300,000. The first big strike in 1911 marked the commencement of their progress for it brought about the consolidation of five railwaymen's unions, making one great union, which had achieved improved working conditions and brought employers and men together in a way never known before.

Conciliation Boards were controversial but had smoothed over a great deal of trouble and had helped the men get their grievances redressed. A stronger union had been able to get more done for the workers in three years than had been done in the previous thirty.

He dealt with the benefits unions gave for their members – a death grant, free legal defence, an insurance policy, unemployment pay etc. The NUR had pioneered provision for orphans by paying a widow a weekly sum until the children grew up, keeping them out of an institution – an illustration of how the state should seek a solution to poverty. The death of the breadwinner was a great cause of poverty. They had spent £200,000 on this work and laid out £10,000 a year for it. The state

ought to follow this example as was done in Australia and even in Germany.

Many reforms had been affected by the representation of labour over the last ten years. They now had political as well as industrial power, but must use it wisely. If they did not alter most things from which they suffer, the blame would be on their own head. If the War meant a split in the Labour Party they would lose their power in the House of Commons and the Party would suffer. Everything was in the melting pot, and everything depended upon them. They must win the War – no half measures, because it was the turning point in their lives and the history of the world. It demanded sacrifices. There had been a lot of talk about equality of sacrifice – all cant and humbug, because there never could be such a thing. However, we are getting a good deal closer to it in this War, than ever before. Men's hearts were opening to each other and he hoped that after the War there would dawn a new era for the country and if this could be done it was worth making a few sacrifices now. He had had the privilege of going into the trenches and had seen the men who were making the most supreme sacrifice of all. Nothing at home could equal that and the men were of all classes of society. There was still a lot of 'tommy rot' in the army but a great deal more comradeship and good feeling between officers and men than before the War. The view was growing that the men who were fighting would be given something worth fighting for. A French Deputy had told him the socialists of France had thrown everything into winning the war and when it was over, would say 'We have won the War for you and we demand that France will do its duty by every citizen and give them better lives

than before'. The working men of Britain would be able to say the same if they were wise.

If we win the War – and I am confident we will – it would not be because of the politicians, but because the working men and women of England had spirit enough to do it and whoever was failing, they were not. They were bearing the burdens of the War – working long hours in making munitions without the protection of their trades union rules which they had scrapped in order to win the War and this was the biggest sacrifice they could make. Their minds and efforts were concentrated on winning the War and having done this should demand a fair and reasonable opportunity of having full advantage of the joys and pleasures of life. They had a strong claim.

He was a believer in democracy and human nature and if they won the War they wanted a new start in which there would be no internal war but co-operation in which the workers would be recognised as the foundation of all effort. The War would leave a lot of problems. Either there would be unemployment or hard times or a new co-operative commonwealth and a new social structure.

He did not think unemployment would be as serious as some supposed for Belgium and part of France would need rebuilding – and goodness knows a part of England needed rebuilding badly (laughter) and there need be no lack of work.

They had got to set themselves the task of winning the War because of the ends they were seeking – to rebuild a new England, a new Scotland and still more, a new Ireland, in which enmity between the classes should not be a

great feature but in which co-operation and help should predominate. To gain that end the workers had to be strong, be of good courage, stand to their guns, and keep the unions intact and strengthen them and they could command respect because they deserved it. It would be madness to let loose the floods of anarchy, civil war and enmity.

He finally appealed once again, to the workers to do their part in defeating the enemy.

Middlesex County Times, 16th May, 1916

Labour Wins Elections in Acton 1918-1945 **Barbara Humphries**

In 1918 Acton was a new parliamentary division, having been previously part of Ealing. It was contested by the Labour Party for the first time. Due to the Representation of the People Act of 1918 the combined electorates of Ealing and Acton had increased from 25,073 to 58,229 (43%). Part of this would have been the extension of the electorate, but these divisions also had a growing population.

Labour had introduced political campaigning in a very visible way. Open air meetings were held on a regular basis and candidates campaigned on aspects of Labour Party policy. Labour's parliamentary candidate in Acton was 'Dunsmore – the man for Acton and the man for action!'

Born in Kilmarnock, Lanarkshire, Dunsmore had been a councillor for the Acton's South West ward for thirteen years. He set up committee rooms in Acton High Street and appealed to workers for funds. His

agent was a Mr Connolly, trades unionist born in Dublin and convert from Liberalism. Mr Mawby of the National Union of Railwaymen chaired the selection meeting. Dunsmore said that war was the wrong way to settle disputes. He called for war widows and orphans to be properly looked after. He wanted more public works, no hoarding of capital and for government controls to continue. He called a special meeting for women, who had just enfranchised. In his election address he said that liberty was not compatible with the private ownership of the means of life. Land and capital must be owned by the people, wealth created enjoyed by the people. He supported the League of Nations, Home Rule for Ireland, war pensions, more power for local government, trades union freedom, building more housing, education and equality for women.

Public meetings were held on Saturday evenings at the market place in Acton. This came to be known as Dunsmore's Corner. Meetings could last for four hours or more. Dunsmore also appealed to the middle class voter, saying that those timorous people who regarded him as a Bolshevik should take the trouble to attend his meetings. Labour's capital levy, to eliminate the war debts, would not hit the middle class, only those with over £1000. However the seat was won by Conservative candidate Sir Harry Brittan. He complained that his meetings had been disrupted by Labour supporters singing 'The Red Flag.' These were the results. Brittan (Conservative) 11,671; Dunsmore (Labour) 4,241 (29,542 electors in total).

Industrialisation of Acton

By the 1920s Acton had become a growing industrial area. South Acton

known as 'Soap-sud island' was home to a working class community of laundry workers, and there were large numbers of railway workers living in the town. There were to be dozens of new factories in North Acton and the Park Royal Estate. The largest and most well known was *Napiers* on Acton Vale. Building aero-engines it was to employ thousands of workers. So the Labour Party hoped to win the Acton Parliamentary Division. However many who came into Acton to work did not live in the town, and although there were working class communities in south Acton and east Acton, parts of the division, were leafy suburban streets as they are today. In Gunnersbury homes with all mod cons were advertised for City workers to buy. A far cry from the overcrowded slums of south Acton.

The *Acton Gazette* reported a rally in Acton in July 1924, addressed by Marion Phillips, Labour Party Women's organiser. She said: "Acton people though mainly workers had not realised that it was the workers responsibility and duty to be represented by workers - how long would they continue to allow their politics to be a matter of tradition rather than common sense?" They sent to Parliament a Tory who could not know what working people required."

Mary Richardson

In 1924 however Labour had been hampered by a split in its own ranks, as former candidate, and one-time suffragette, Mary Richardson, stood against the official Labour candidate, Herbert Baldwin. During the course of 1924 her supporters were engaged in an increasingly bitter and public row with other members of Acton Labour Party. She was shouted down at a Party meeting, which broke up amidst quarrels and punches. She launched the

Acton Democratic Labour Party with fifty one members. Mary Richardson and her supporters claimed that the candidate Herbert Baldwin was imposed by Labour Party headquarters. He denied this and claimed that he had won a majority of the votes. The election result in October 1924 showed that she was still attracting support amongst Labour voters, although not enough to decisively split the Labour vote. Labour's first success in Acton came in 1929 where it won the seat, taking 41% of the vote. Its vote had more than doubled since 1924, an indication of how the political landscape was changing. Women over 21 now had the vote and were the majority of the electorate in the division. Joe Shillaker, a researcher and son of a policeman, had been selected as parliamentary candidate. Labour held regular public meetings, campaigning against the Conservative's national record on unemployment and their local record on housing. Land had been sold to speculative builders who built houses that workers could not afford. This was leading to chronic overcrowding in South Acton. Other issues were pensions and school leaving age, and unemployment from which, Joe said, no worker was safe. A spectacular pre-election rally was held in the Globe Theatre, which attracted over 3000 people. An hour before the beginning of the meeting there were queues to get through the door. Confident of the result, Shillaker, was introduced as the first Labour MP for Acton! He won by 467 votes. However he lost in 1931 and the seat was not to be regained until 1945, when Joe Sparks, a local railwayman, was the candidate. The *Acton Gazette* believed that the Conservatives could hold the seat as they had a better organisation but Joe Sparks disagreed, saying that Acton was now a working

class area with trade union support. Labour attracted thousands at election meetings. In what was to be a rowdy election campaign at times, Conservative candidate, Captain Longhurst was booed and heckled at a South Acton public meeting. When he asked 'Is this election necessary?', he was told 'yes' by the audience. 'The Labour Party wanted to nationalise the Bank of England' he said. 'Why not?' They replied. 'What have we to lose from a Labour victory?' they asked. 'Your freedom!' he replied. He appealed to the electorate to 'vote for Longhurst and make Sparks fly'. But they did not and this was the result - Sparks (Labour) 19,590; Longhurst (Conservative) 12,134; Halpin (Liberal) 3,172 (44,861 electors). Two streets on a housing estate in North Acton are named after Joe Sparks today.

Acton Council

On Acton Council Labour support was based in the long standing working class community of South Acton. There were four wards which elected councillors to the Acton Urban District Council - North-West, North-East, South-West and South-East. Labour support was in the South West ward. In April 1919 Labour fielded 15 candidates, 12 of whom were successful. It won 50% of the council, a result which was favourable compared to the 1918 General Election result in Acton, and the best result for Labour on Acton Council in the interwar years. In these elections less than one sixth of the electorate voted. Labour was the only party to identify its political colours. The Conservatives did not stand openly but supported the Anti-Waste Party. By the time Acton had been incorporated as a municipal borough in 1921 Labour faced tougher opposition

from the Anti-Waste Party and did not do nearly as well as in 1919. The electorate were perhaps fatigued by the frequency of elections, which the local Conservatives condemned as a 'waste of money'. The *Acton Gazette* reported that 'elections are threatened in all wards.' Forty four competed for twenty four council seats, and Labour only retained its councillors in the South West ward. The Anti-Waste Party had become better organised in getting its vote out. It had access to motor cars to get voters to the polls, whilst the Labour Party was dependent on a donkey and a cart. After a council estate was built in East Acton, Labour was able to win a council seat in the North-East ward in 1929 by 277 votes. 'Acton needs eight and cannot wait' – this was Acton Labour's campaign for the council elections in November 1930. It campaigned for more housing for the working class, abolition of slums, direct labour on municipal contracts, and land for homes not factories. However it was only to win three of these council seats and as a result claimed only nine out of twenty three seats on the council. The local Conservatives, now openly contesting the council, claimed that a Labour victory would mean higher rates. Throughout the 1930s Labour gained votes in Acton but these were not transferred into council seats. Part of the problem was the lodgers were not able to vote in council elections. In spite of failing to win the council Acton's Labour councillors were able to pressurise the Conservative majority into acquiring more land for council housing, on Acton Vale for instance. After 1945 Labour was to hold the Acton constituency until the 1959 election, (and won again in 1964) and the council until its amalgamation with Ealing and Southall in 1965. Boundary changes over the years have led to Acton being part of Shepherds

Bush or the leafy parts of central Ealing. Now the Ealing Central and Acton constituency, it was won by Rupa Huq for Labour this year by 274 votes.

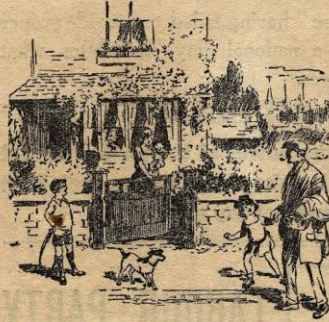
Thanks to the *Acton Gazette* for its coverage of local politics.

HOUSE TO LET

You have not seen that Notice for a long time.

WHY?

Because the Tories and the Liberals have failed to provide enough houses.



A LABOUR GOVERNMENT
WILL PROVIDE
**More Houses,
Better Houses,
Real Homes**
AT
REASONABLE RENTS

Up to November 1st, 1923, only 1,849 houses had been built under the Tory Government's last Housing Act. 20,000 houses, with a rateable value of £26 or less, were built in the six months ended September, 1923.

THERE IS A SHORTAGE OF 800,000 HOUSES.

The Tories will not and cannot give you the houses you need because they rely on "private enterprise," which means that if you want a house now you must pay extortionate rents.

[P.T.O.]

Election leaflet November 1923. John Wheatley, Minister for Health in the first Labour Government in 1924 was to bring in more government subsidies for housing.

(Hayes Peoples History blog)

ourhistory-hayes.blogspot.com