

People's History

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What is 'people's history'? The term is difficult. Some would prefer 'labour history'; others favour 'history from below'. The less politically committed may simply opt for 'social history'. The words of James McLachlan (1869–1937) serve well, though, as a starting point from which to capture the spirit of this branch of the discipline:

I believe in telling children the truth about the history of the world, that it does not consist in the history of Kings and Lords and Cabinets, but consists in the history of the mass of the workers, a thing that is not taught in the schools. I believe in telling children how to measure value, a thing that is not taught in any school.¹

McLachlan, a Scots-born miner, was leader of the Cape Breton mineworkers in early twentieth-century Canada. His life was bound up with the rise of the international labour movement. A self-educated man and ardent socialist, his view of history grew directly out of his life experience: it was strongly partisan and asserted that the only history of value was the history of the common people. McLachlan contended, moreover, that the teaching of history had a revolutionary purpose. Its aim was not to celebrate the achievements of society's rulers, but to provide the workers with an account of their past from which they could build a consciousness that would enable them to make a better future.

To contemporary British readers, this partisan, revolutionary, class-based view of history may appear extreme. It has nevertheless served to inspire and define an important impulse within the discipline of history – an impulse that has played a crucial role in challenging, widening and expanding the discipline as a whole. Focusing on British historiography, this chapter will explore people's history by first examining the growth of labour history in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and then discussing the ways in which labour history has been broadened into a wider people's history. Finally, it will examine some of the problems this has raised, and reflect on the current state of people's history.

Foundations: the making of labour history

People's history is the intellectual child of the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century labour movement. In Britain, its development may be traced to the period immediately after the French Revolution, when radicals such as Thomas Paine (1737–1809) constructed a view of the past that stressed the loss of the people's natural rights to usurpation by an elite 'banditti of ruffians'.² This view of history intellectually nourished the radical movement of the early 1800s. In their debating societies and newspapers, radicals discussed not just the contemporary condition of the common people, but also its historical roots. Works such as William Cobbett's *History of the Protestant Reformation in England and Ireland* (1824–6) elaborated narratives of dispossession and oppression, while in their autobiographies and memoirs, and in one or two exceptional historical works, such as R.G. Gammage's *History of the Chartist Movement* (1854), radicals also began to write the history of their own struggles. Thus in the febrile atmosphere of the industrial revolution were laid the foundations of working-class history.

An increasingly strident working-class presence in politics across Europe also encouraged academic interest in the study of the history of the common people.³ In Britain, this was represented in the work of Liberal historians such as Goldwin Smith and J.R. Green. Green's *Short History of the English People* (1877) purported to present 'a history not of English kings or English conquests, but of the English People', which focused not on 'foreign wars and diplomacies' or the 'personal adventures of kings and nobles', but 'the incidents of that constitutional, intellectual, and social advance, in which we read the history of the nation itself'.⁴ The common people also played a central role in the work of another radical Liberal, James Thorold Rogers (1823–90). In order to understand the past, he concluded in his influential *Six Centuries of Work and Wages* (1884), the student 'must take account not only of the process by which the machinery of our social condition has been made and constantly marred, but much more of the opinion and action which have developed and moulded the character of the English people'.⁵

Rogers' work was widely read by students of the growing adult education movement, which was a powerful agent in the popularization of social history. From the 1870s onwards, a variety of adult education colleges and associations promoted the study of such people's history.⁶ These institutions were guided by liberal values; their aim, as expressed by the founders of Oxford's Ruskin College, was to turn students into 'sandbags for stability not windbags for revolution'.⁷ In the historical texts used in such institutions, the villains were usually grasping landlords, and the heroes were industrious workers, allied with a virtuous middle class in pursuit of the great Whiggish project of (English) national evolution.⁸ In its blandest form, this type of history could become, in the words of its last advocate G.M. Trevelyan (1876–1962), 'the history of a people with the politics left out'.⁹

A sharper political edge to the study of history was provided in the closing decades of the nineteenth century by the emergence of a more militant labour movement. The aftermath of Chartism (a political movement which sought rights for the working classes and which reached its height in the 1830s and 1840s) had witnessed the growth of moderate, conciliatory labour organizations. However, by the 1880s, more aggressive trade union expansion was accompanied by increasing demands for the creation of an independent Labour Party, fuelled by increasing acceptance among labour activists of the ideology of socialism. At one end of its ideological spectrum, socialism could virtually merge into Liberalism. At the other, though, the ideas of Karl Marx (1818–83) and Friedrich Engels (1820–95) were more influential. Marx and Engels placed a theory of economic exploitation at the centre of their social analysis, allied with a supposedly scientific view of history that identified class struggle as the driver of a dialectical process of social development. This supposition was to have huge ramifications for the writing of history.¹⁰

This said, the first modern labour historians were shaped less by Marxism than by a concern to document the rise of their own movement. One important agent in this process was the Fabian Society (founded 1884). This small but influential group of middle-class socialists rejected the Marxist analysis of class struggle, and instead asserted that careful, evolutionary social planning was the key to progress. The intellectually well-connected backgrounds of Fabians such as Sidney and Beatrice Webb allowed them to become prominent in both the world of politics and the writing of history. Works like their monumental *History of Trade Unionism* (1894) form the bedrock of British labour historiography. They initiated a classic age of British labour historiography, during which the history of the labour movement was first defined, narrated and celebrated. From the 1890s until the Second World War, labour historians developed a narrative in which the labour movement developed from riotous and unlawful beginnings into a model of reason, discipline and moderation, befitting it to play a central role in the governance of the nation. Its heroes were temperate, moderate, self-educating, male trade unionists, generally skilled craftsmen, who – along with a cast of supportive middle-class sympathizers very much like the authors of the works themselves – guided the labour movement towards power.¹¹

From the 1880s, British socialists began writing Marxist history, which contested the influential narratives of Fabian labour historians.¹² In the early twentieth century, their efforts were supplemented by organizations that represented a direct challenge to both the moderate labourism of the Fabians and mainstream liberal adult education. In 1909, the Plebs League, formed by a group of worker-students at Ruskin College, initiated the establishment of the Central Labour College (CLC) with the aim ‘of equipping organized workers with the knowledge adequate for the accomplishment of their industrial and political tasks’ (i.e. the overthrow of capitalism).¹³ The time had come, according to Noah Ablett (1883–1935), one of the movement’s

leaders, 'when the working class should itself enter the educational world to work out its own problems for itself'.¹⁴ This development coincided with a sharp upturn in labour militancy in the years immediately preceding the Great War, and was further encouraged by the Russian Revolution of 1917 – an event which led to the consolidation of those on the left of British politics into the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) in 1920.

The nature of the early twentieth-century Marxist contribution to labour history may be illustrated with reference to one of the CLC's early text books, Mark Starr's *A Worker Looks at History* (1917). A coal miner in South Wales,¹⁵ Starr based his book on CLC classes he taught in the south Wales coalfield in the years after 1915, and his work is people's history in two senses: it is a history *of* the people, written *by* one of them. Starr explained the genesis of the book:

Written by a wage-worker for the use of other wage-workers, by one alternately using a mandrill and a pen, these Outlines were composed in week-ends, evenings, and other intervals snatched from the time occupied by classwork, and the getting of a living 'by helping to milk the black cow.' While the disadvantages of such conditions are obvious, yet they have had their compensations in keeping the writer close to the objective world of reality, often ignored by college professors, which will have to be faced and altered by the workers before they have the sufficiency of means, time and energy to demand for themselves books giving a more adequate treatment of the history of the Labour-process.¹⁶

Starr's explicit purpose was to equip the labour movement to undertake its revolutionary work of social transformation. Class struggle was central to his interpretation of English history. Starr therefore consciously applied the Marxist materialist conception of history (the belief that historical development is driven by economic and social conditions), which, he asserted, provided a tool that would 'not only [...] help us to explain past history, but it will enable us to make it in the future'.¹⁷

Starr's readership was largely confined to CLC students, but his assumptions were nevertheless broadly shared by several generations of historians on the left of British politics. The narratives offered by activist-historians offered a clear alternative to those of the Fabians: rather than gradual evolution towards reason, their driving force was class conflict.¹⁸ By the end of the 1930s, a grand synthesis was available in the form of A.L. Morton's *A People's History of England* (1938). A Cambridge graduate and *Daily Worker* journalist, Morton viewed the past as a series of transformations driven by class conflict. Beginning in prehistory, sweeping through the rise and fall of feudalism, the Reformation and the industrial revolution, the book ended in 1938 with capitalism in crisis, class struggle intensifying and the world on the brink of war. Morton's people's history located its readers at the culmination of a grand Marxist narrative. It also

represented a broadening of labour history into a wider people's history, and in this sense it both reached back to the work of writers such as Green and Rogers and pre-empted post-war developments in historiography. However, although the people were centre stage in Morton's narrative, they were also trapped within the determinism of the Marxist conception of history, subject to massive, impersonal economic and material forces that circumscribed their freedom of action.

The first half of the twentieth century, then, saw the foundations of British labour history established from two distinct building blocks: Fabianism and Marxism. These two views of history diverged sharply in many senses. One was moderate, drew comfortably on the resources of the academy, viewed progress as resulting from gradual improvement and celebrated the role of sensible, compromising, respectable working-class leaders; the other was militant, rejected the academy, viewed progress as arising from class conflict and celebrated confrontation. Despite these differences, the two schools were united by some essential common aims. Central to the concerns of both was the desire to recover the past of the working class. Moreover, both understood class primarily in terms of its structures – trade unions and political parties – rather than as inherited tradition or lived experience. In other words, both focused upon the economic and political aspects of class, rather than on its cultural manifestations. Likewise, both focused almost exclusively upon active, politicized workers; there was little place for the apathetic, reactionary or unorganized in either narrative. They also shared some of the same basic prejudices. Both schools were Anglocentric, presented history from an overwhelmingly male perspective, and were largely celebratory. They rejoiced in the 'Forward March of Labour' – a concept that was to be scrutinized more critically by labour historians in the second half of the twentieth century.

From labour history to people's history

The Second World War was a powerful force for social reform. The demands of the 'People's War' led to a 'People's Peace'. The Labour electoral landslide of 1945, the nationalization of key industries and the creation of the National Health Service and welfare state seemed to justify the belief that a socialist utopia had been realized. In post-war Britain, the celebratory nature of labour history seemed appropriate. Labour historians now made the inexorable rise of the Labour Party, the movement that had built the New Jerusalem, central to their heroic historical narratives.¹⁹ The period thus witnessed considerable growth in labour history. As increasing numbers of working-class students entered university, labour history secured a firmer foothold within the academy. The growing strength of the discipline was reflected in 1960 by the foundation of the Society for the Study of Labour History. In some respects, this growth confirmed the major outlines of pre-

war labour history. In other ways, though, the scholarship of the post-war years began to transform the scope and nature of the field.

One important agent in this process was the Communist Party, which from 1946 exerted influence upon the writing of history in Britain through its Historians' Group (CPHG). In its heyday, the CPHG fused the study of history and political activism with considerable intellectual intensity. Eric Hobsbawm (1917–2012), one of its most prominent members, later described the energy behind the group's philosophy:

History is the core of Marxism [...] For us and for the Party, history [...] had put our struggles on its agenda and guaranteed our final victory. Some of us even felt that it had recruited us as individuals. Where would we, as intellectuals, have been, what would have become of us, but for the experiences of war, revolution and depression, fascism and anti-fascism, which surrounded us in our youth? Our work as historians was therefore embedded in our work as Marxists, which we believed to imply membership of the Communist Party. It was inseparable from our political commitment and activity.²⁰

Galvanized by political commitment, Hobsbawm and other members of the CPHG made a major contribution to the development of working-class history. In 1952, the group was instrumental in launching the journal *Past & Present*, which quickly became an influential forum in which Marxist and non-Marxist historians could engage. Seeing themselves as 'part of a general movement against "old fashioned" politico-constitutional or narrative history', the CPHG influenced historical writing in two main ways. First, for example, in Christopher Hill's work on the English Revolution of the 1640s, they extended the chronological reach of labour history, which had traditionally focused on the period from the late eighteenth century onwards. Secondly, in work such as George Rudé's writing on the crowd in history, they shifted focus away from the structures of the labour movement towards an understanding of the wider working class, including their social and cultural experiences.²¹

Arguably, then, it was through the development of historical understanding that communism made its most important contribution to British life. In this endeavour, the historians of the CPHG, and their fellow contributors to *Past and Present*, were inspired by the work of the French *Annales* school. Since the late 1920s, scholars such as Marc Bloch, Lucien Febvre, George Lefebvre and Fernand Braudel had sought to develop historical interpretations focusing upon the totality of social development, scorning narrow political history in favour of wide-ranging histories which borrowed approaches and methods from geography, anthropology, literature and psychology. By the 1960s, their influence upon left-wing British historians was palpable. In 1966 E.P. Thompson (1924–93) adopted in English a term originally used by George Lefebvre: 'history from below'. The 'engaged tradition' of

labour history, he argued, had concentrated too heavily on 'filling the blank spaces and correcting the outlines of the maps left by the Webbs and G.D.H. Cole', and was in danger of becoming conservative. To revive labour history, attention must be shifted from the classic institutions of labour to such topics as the popular culture of labouring people. This would make labour history 'more dangerous to the established constitutional and parliamentary-political Thing, because more pervasive'.²²

Thompson's recently published *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963) had already made a definitive contribution to this process. Written while he was working in adult education in Yorkshire, the work narrates the evolution of working-class politics from the years immediately following the French Revolution up to 1832. Thompson's agenda was to rescue the 'lost myriads of eternity' – the generations of workers who lived through the industrial revolution – from 'the enormous condescension of posterity'. In so doing, he offered an interpretation that transformed the existing assumptions of labour history. An emphasis upon the historical role of class had been a defining feature of labour history since its foundations, but prior to Thompson historians had tended to see class as a category or a structure, and to see individuals within classes as involuntarily subject to the workings of external, economically driven material forces. *The Making of the English Working Class* effectively turned this understanding upon its head. Thompson presented class not as a structure, but as an experienced relationship that 'is defined by men as they live their own history'.²³ He thus put individual human agency and lived experience at the centre of historical understanding. No longer was it sufficient merely to chronicle and celebrate the growth of working-class institutions. Rather, the whole lived experience of the working class had become a necessary field for historical investigation.

The movement to history from below was part of a wider post-war growth in local and social history. Nevertheless, Thompson's book gave the politically conscious, bottom-up study of working-class history a phenomenal boost. One indication of this was another important development at Oxford's Ruskin College: the History Workshop movement, described by its leading protagonist Raphael Samuel (1934–96) as a 'loose coalition of worker-historians and full-time socialist researchers'.²⁴ Like the earlier Plebs League, it sprang from opposition to the control of the college authorities.²⁵ The philosophy behind History Workshop was to encourage students to take education into their own hands, engage in their own primary research and bring their life experience to bear upon historical understanding. From 1976, the movement published the *History Workshop Journal*. A manifesto-style editorial in the first issue proclaimed that the journal would have a 'strong grounding in working-class experience' and champion the role of history within 'the battle of ideas'. Explicitly socialist, it would seize history from the hands of the academics and place it in the hands of ordinary people:

The journal is dedicated to making history a more democratic activity and a more urgent concern. We believe that history is a source of inspiration and understanding, furnishing not only the means of interpreting the past but also the best critical vantage point from which to view the present. So we believe that history should become common property, capable of shaping people's understanding of themselves and the society in which they live.²⁶

The emergence of history from below, and the wider development of the new social history of which it was a part, amounted to a revolutionary transformation in historical studies. It demanded a fundamental reassessment of the relationship between the historian and historical sources, encouraging interest in sources previously considered marginal. Oral testimony, folk ballads, local government records, diaries of ordinary people, the landscape itself: all these and more were accorded new prominence, as the focus of study shifted from the national to the local.²⁷ New sources also implied new ways of reading: 'We cannot be positivists', reflected Eric Hobsbawm, 'believing that the questions and the answers arise naturally out of the study of the material. There is generally no material until our questions have revealed it'.²⁸ This logic demanded the adoption of new interrogative methodologies drawing upon disciplines beyond history, which in turn implied the dissolution of disciplinary boundaries and a redefinition of history itself. The new scholarship, commented one History Workshop Journal editorial, 'asks the philosopher to look at history, the economist at politics, the sociologist at art'.²⁹

This methodological diversification reshaped the representation of the past. Even Thompson's work was not immune from the critical re-writing that it encouraged. It was soon made clear, for example, that a primary area of neglect in the work of traditional labour historians was the role and experience of women. By the 1970s, a generation of female historians deploying the methods of the new social history had begun to redefine the past by recovering the experience of the half of society that had been all but invisible to their male antecedents. Sheila Rowbotham's *Hidden from History* (1973) presented a new narrative, around which feminist historians began to elaborate a more inclusive view of the past. The work of Barbara Taylor and Anna Clark restored the role of women to Thompson's classic narrative, fundamentally reshaping it in the process.³⁰ Others began to focus their studies on the experience of women entirely outside of the labour movement, and indeed outside of the working class.³¹ People's history was, for the first time, beginning to represent more than half of the people.

Geographically too the scope of people's history became more inclusive. In 1961, a Scottish committee of the Society for the Study of Labour History was established, which by 1966 had evolved into the autonomous Scottish Labour History Society. Wales too established its own independent labour history society, Llafur, in 1970. Both launched their own journals, which

encouraged a level of understanding of the labour and social history of parts of Britain that had been all but absent in earlier analyses.

By the 1980s, then, labour history had dissolved into a wider, more inclusive people's history, which explored the world beyond organized labour and ventured into all areas of working-class existence. Social class, although still a central concern, was supplemented by other means of understanding human relationships, including the importance of gender and place in forming identities. This shift of understanding profoundly enriched the discipline of history. It nevertheless offered a fundamental challenge to the very concepts upon which labour and people's history were based – a challenge that was soon intensified by a changing social and economic climate.

Crisis and resilience

By the end of the 1970s, some on the British left were becoming concerned by what they perceived to be the diminishing vitality of the labour movement. In his 1978 Marx Memorial Lecture, Eric Hobsbawm argued that the Forward March of Labour had halted. Economic and social change since the 1950s had made the world familiar to traditional labour historians a thing of the past.³² By the end of the next decade, after the onslaught of Thatcherism, one historian was even beginning to doubt that Labour's Forward March had ever happened at all.³³ With the decline of the labour movement, a force that had underpinned the study of working-class history for over a century was waning. The 1990s also witnessed setbacks in the world of adult education, as funding changes led to the closure of some adult education institutions and circumscribed the activities of others.³⁴ Thus, two of the wellsprings of people's history threatened to run dry.

Historians of the late twentieth- and early twenty-first centuries also had to contend with the intellectual influence of postmodernism (a movement related to poststructuralism, discussed in Siobhan McGurk's chapter in this volume). The central idea of the so-called 'linguistic turn' in historical studies was that reality is structured by language.³⁵ This encouraged a refocusing of interest from lived experience to the way in which power is exerted, mediated and challenged in society – a tendency anticipated by Raphael Samuel in the 1980s as a shift in attention 'from the reservoirs of revolt to the structures of social dominance'.³⁶ This was arguably an appropriate intellectual response to the dominance of capitalism's ideological power. However, the iconoclasm of the postmodernists was so thorough that it threatened to dissolve the whole basis of working-class history. Class was already losing its historiographical centrality to other aspects of identity, such as gender, race, sexuality, disability, occupation and locality. The influence of postmodernism further marginalized class as a category of historical analysis by shifting the focus of historical study to representation.

The view that historians can never access the reality of the past, and can do no more than deconstruct linguistic systems of meaning, denied even the possibility of the historical study of material, embodied experience. This development, then, not only marginalized class as a historical framework, but denied the ultimate reality of class experience and its recoverability. The very idea of working-class history was itself becoming a part of history.

By the mid-1990s, labour historians were contemplating what they perceived to be a crisis. The collapse of the Soviet Union portended the death of academic Marxism, which, alongside the dominance of neo-liberal, free-market politics at home, led labour historians to adopt either a 'bunker mentality' or to engage in open soul-searching.³⁷ The confusion of the period was expressed in the wider sphere of people's history by a retreat from political commitment, a tendency that was confirmed in 1995 when *History Workshop Journal* dropped reference to socialism from its subtitle.³⁸ Arguably more serious was the growing detachment of people's history from the people whose history it sought to represent. The field had won respectability within the academy, but as it did so, the involvement of those outside had become less evident. The language of the linguistic turn was exclusive, rarefied and inaccessible to those not trained in its terminology. People's history was becoming the property of a professional elite of middle-class historians.

People's history – and even traditional labour history – has however proven to be a resilient creature. For a start, the much anguished 1990s 'crisis of labour history' was not universal. Labour historians in Scotland and Wales, for instance, were less influenced by postmodernism than those in England, and labour history has continued to thrive on the 'Celtic Fringe'.³⁹ Indeed, devolution and a growing sense of national consciousness in 'outer Britain' offers to be a revitalizing force within people's history, inviting new narratives, such as that presented in Chris Bambery's *A People's History of Scotland* (2014). More generally, narrative history, once pronounced dead, has found new advocates. Malcolm Chase's *Chartism* (2007), for example, is a major work that successfully integrates narrative history with individual experience in a way that suggests new and compelling directions for working-class history. Even the concept of class seems to be rising Lazarus-like to reassert itself in the work of a new generation of historians. The work of Katrina Navickas, for example, combines class, place and mythology to breathe new life into such classic themes of labour history such as Luddism and popular protest, while historians such as Selina Todd are making a concerted effort to restore class to an understanding of British social history.⁴⁰ A conference at the University of Essex in 2014 explored 'the resurgence of class in history', including contributions on topics as diverse as early modern oyster dredgers to the miners' strike of 1984–5, while in virtual space, the 'many-headed monster' blog tackles the theme of class in the early modern period from a clearly Thompsonian perspective.⁴¹ On a local level too, groups such as the Bristol Radical History Group testify to a

grass-roots resurgence of labour and people's history.⁴² All are signs that the historiographical wheel is turning full circle.

This should not surprise us. People's history is, to borrow George Orwell's memorable words from another context, 'an everlasting animal stretching into the future and the past, and, like all living things, having the power to change out of recognition and yet remain the same'.⁴³ Harder to define than labour history, it is, as E.P. Thompson suggested, potentially more challenging. If it has been more prone to lose its way, it has also reflected acutely its own contemporary conditions. In the post-crash world of austerity and food banks, in which social inequalities are more obvious than they have been for generations, surely it is appropriate that one of the defining features of the history of the people – their existence and experience in class terms – is restated. That this is done with a sense of political commitment – another defining feature of people's history – is also apposite. As the American historian Howard Zinn put it, in 'a world of conflict, a world of victims and executioners, it is the job of thinking people [...] not to be on the side of the executioners'.⁴⁴ If people's history is to be potent, though, it must reinvigorate another of its defining features: its roots in the world beyond the academy. People's history must exist in two senses: it is not enough for it to be merely a history *of* the people; it must also be created and owned *by* the people.

Study Questions

- When and why did labour history emerge?
- What were the main ideological influences upon the development of labour and people's history?
- Is people's history still important in the twenty-first century?

Notes

- 1 D. Frank (1999) *J.B. McLachlan, A Biography: The Story of a Legendary Labour Leader and the Cape Breton Coal Miners* (Toronto: Lorimer), p. 416.
- 2 T. Paine (1969) *The Rights of Man (Part II)* (Harmondsworth: Penguin) [1791], p. 190.
- 3 For the wider context, see R. Samuel (1981) 'People's History', in R. Samuel (ed.), *People's History and Socialist Theory* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul), pp. xv–xxxix.
- 4 J.R. Green (1960) *A Short History of the English People, Vol. 1* (London: Everyman) [1877], p. xi.

- 5 T. Rogers (1949) *Six Centuries of Work and Wages* (London: George Allen and Unwin) [1901], pp. 574–5.
- 6 R. Fieldhouse (1998) *A History of Modern British Adult Education* (London: National Institute of Adult Continuing Education).
- 7 K. Gentry (2013) ‘Ruskin, Radicalism and Raphael Samuel: Politics, Pedagogy and the Origins of the History Workshop’, *History Workshop Journal*, 76, p. 190.
- 8 Whig history, deriving its name from the British Whig Party, asserted a natural and inevitable progression in the direction of liberty and enlightenment.
- 9 G.M. Trevelyan (1944) *English Social History* (London: Longmans, Green and Company), p. vii.
- 10 A dialectical process of social development: the concept, derived by Marx from the German philosopher Hegel, that society evolves through the recurrent opposition and synthesis of opposing social forces.
- 11 M. Beer (1919–20) *History of British Socialism*, 2 vols (London: G. Bell and Sons); M. Hovell (1919) *The Chartist Movement* (Manchester: Manchester University Press); J.L. and B. Hammond (1911) *The Village Labourer*, (1917) *The Town Labourer*, (1919) *The Skilled Labourer*, (1930) *The Age of the Chartists* [all (London: Longmans, Green and Company)]; G.D.H. Cole (1925) *The Life of William Cobbett* (London: Collins); G.D.H. Cole and R. Postgate (1938) *The Common People* (London: Methuen); M. Cole (1948) *Makers of the Labour Movement* (London: Longmans, Green and Company).
- 12 H.M. Hyndman (1883) *The Historical Basis of Socialism in England* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench and Company); E.B. Bax (1890) *The Story of the French Revolution* (London: S. Sonnenschein).
- 13 James Griffiths Papers, A1/15, National Library of Wales.
- 14 W.W. Craik (1964) *The Central Labour College 1909–29* (London: Lawrence and Wishart), p. 82.
- 15 R. Lewis (1993) ‘Mark Starr (1894–1985), Workers’ Educationalist’, in J. Bellamy and J. Saville (eds), *Dictionary of Labour Biography* (Basingstoke and London: Palgrave Macmillan), Vol. 9, pp. 274–81.
- 16 M. Starr (1918) *A Worker Looks at History, Being Outlines of Industrial History Especially Written for CLC – Plebs Classes* (Sheffield: Plebs League) [1917], p. 6.
- 17 Starr, *A Worker Looks at History*, p. 14.
- 18 R. Postgate (1923) *The Builders’ History* (London: Labour Publishing Company Limited); T. Rothstein (1929) *From Chartism to Labourism* (London: Dorrot Press Limited); S. Dutt (1939) *When England Arose* (London: Fore Publications); R.P. Arnot (1934) *William Morris: A Vindication* (London: Martin Lawrence Limited), (1949) *The Miners: A History of the Miners Federation of Great Britain 1889–1910* (London: Allen and Unwin).
- 19 F. Williams (1949) *Fifty Years March* (London: Odhams); H. Pelling (1954), *Origins of the Labour Party* (Oxford: Clarendon).

- 20 E. Hobsbawm (1978) 'The Historians' Group of the Communist Party', in M. Cornforth (ed.), *Rebels and Their Causes* (London: Lawrence and Wishart), pp. 21–47, p. 26.
- 21 Hobsbawm, 'The Historians' Group'.
- 22 E.P. Thompson (7 April 1966) 'History from Below', *Times Literary Supplement*.
- 23 E.P. Thompson (1968) *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Victor Gollancz) [1963], p. 11.
- 24 R. Samuel, 'History Workshop, 1966–80', in Samuel, *People's History and Socialist Theory*, p. 410.
- 25 Gentry, 'Ruskin, Radicalism and Raphael Samuel'.
- 26 Editorial (1976) *History Workshop Journal*, 1.
- 27 J. Burnett (1974) *Useful Toil: Autobiographies of Working People from the 1820s to the 1920s* (London: Allen Lane); R. Samuel (1976) 'Local History and Oral History', *History Workshop Journal*, 1, p. 1; P. Thompson (1978) *The Voice of the Past* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- 28 Positivism is the view that the only authentic knowledge is scientific knowledge, and such knowledge can only be affirmed through the scientific method of gathering observable, empirical and measurable evidence. E. Hobsbawm (1997) 'On History from Below', in E. Hobsbawm, *On History* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson), p. 205.
- 29 Editorial (1977) *History Workshop Journal*, 4:1, p. 4.
- 30 B. Taylor (1983) *Eve and the New Jerusalem: Socialism and Feminism in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Virago); A. Clark (1995) *The Struggle for the Breeches: Gender and the Making of the British Working Class* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, CA, and London: University of California Press).
- 31 L. Davidoff and C. Hall (1987) *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780–1850* (London: Hutchinson).
- 32 E. Hobsbawm (September 1978) 'The Forward March of Labour Halted', *Marxism Today*.
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Websites

Bristol Radical History Group	http://www.brh.org.uk
Irish Labour History Society	http://www.irishlabourhistorysociety.com
Llafur, The Welsh People's History Society	http://www.llafur.org
The Many-Headed Monster	https://manyheadedmonster.wordpress.com
Scottish Labour History Society	http://www.scottishlabourhistory.org.uk
Society for the Study of Labour History	http://www.sslh.org.uk