

national states' (p. 144). What he, perhaps, neglects to say at the very end is that Brexit takes the world in the opposite direction. His conclusions are, though, thought-provoking and salutary. Bogdanor does, indeed, have something new to say.

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## Labour biographies

Keith Gildart and David Howell (eds.), *Dictionary of Labour Biography*, vol. XV (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019)

Review by Michael Meadowcroft

IT MAY SEEM perverse to recommend a series of reference books based firmly in Labour history, but I consult one or other of the fifteen volumes more often than most Liberal publications. Early Labour history is also Liberal history and most Labour pioneers, even Keir Hardie, began as members of the Liberal Party and only moved on when frustrated by the inability, as they saw it, of the Liberal Party adequately to accommodate the justified aspirations of working men and, more particularly, its failure to enfranchise women. The whole period of Lib-Labbery is portrayed within the biographies. Later, with the post-First-World-War decline of the Liberal Party and its failure to deal with internal divisions, more Liberal luminaries moved to Labour and figure in the relevant biographies. Finally, the term 'Labour' is interpreted very broadly and a number of men and women who have a Liberal background are included, including Arthur Acland, Richard Bell, Charles Bradlaugh, Henry Broadhurst, John Burns, Thomas Burt, Charles Roden Buxton, Noel Edward Buxton, William Randal Cremer, Richard Denman, Barbara Bodichon Gould, Vernon Hartshorn, John Atkinson Hobson, William Jowitt, David Low, Arthur Ponsonby and Tom Ellis.

The occasion for reviewing the whole series is the publication of volume XV. The previous volume only appeared after an interval of eight years, so a single year's gap is positively

spritely! The first volume of the series appeared in 1972 and a swift calculation shows that it has taken forty-eight years to produce fifteen volumes – certainly no race to the finish. There are now over one thousand biographies covered, plus a number of generic articles on aspects of Labour history, such as the entry in volume XIV on 'The Working Class Movement Library', alongside an essay on its two founders, Ruth and Eddie Frow. Volume XV has an essay on 'Patriotic Labour 1918'.

Biographies in the new Volume XV that have Liberal connections include William Dobbie of York, Edward Cadbury of the Quaker chocolate family, Frank Chapple and combatting electoral malpractice, Henry Charleton and Arthur Fox – both of whom had electoral battles with Leeds Liberals – Victor Grayson who, of course, took over the Colne Valley seat vacated by Liberal Sir James Kitson (who was crucial to the saving of the official party for the Gladstonians in the 1886 struggle over home rule for Ireland), Ben Spoor, the disastrous Chief Whip in the first Labour government in 1924, Richard Llewelyn Jones and his involvement with the Cardigan Liberals, and Tom Ellis, Labour and then SDP MP for Wrexham and one of the most Liberal members of the SDP.

The original editors were Joyce Bellamy and John Saville, based at Hull University, and they remained in charge until volume X – a span of twenty-eight years. The constants over the past five volumes have been Keith

Gildart, Professor of Labour and Social History at the University of Wolverhampton, and David Howell, Professor of Politics at the University of York. Gildart and Howell have followed the wise and eclectic example of Bellamy and Saville in including worthy subjects as they were available from reputable writers. Each succeeding volume contains a cumulative index of the subject biographies enabling them to be easily referred to, plus, of course, a detailed index to each individual volume. Each essay contains full references, a list of the subject's writings plus a note of related essays. In researching articles on Liberals and Liberal history, I find myself not only checking whether there is an essay on my subject, but also going through the individual indices for relevant references.

The main problem for individual historians is the high price – typical, alas, of most academic books these days. It is always worth asking the publishers, Palgrave Macmillan, whether they would give a discount for an individual purchaser. If not, then at least recommend your local library to obtain them.

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