

Good Times, Hard Times? Making Australian Labour History, Remaking Australian Society

The 13th Biennial National Labour History Conference will be held 11-13 July 2013 at Unions NSW, Trades Hall, 4-10 Goulburn Street, Sydney. The theme is: *Good Times, Hard Times? Making Australian Labour History, Remaking Australian Society*. The conference organising committee consists of Nikki Balnave, Anthony McLaughlin and Nick Dyrenfurth.

The Australian Society for the Study of Labour History, together with its partners, the Business and Labour History Group at the University of Sydney, and Unions NSW, is delighted to announce our international keynote speaker, Maurice Glasman. Maurice is a Reader in Political Theory at London Metropolitan University and the author of *Unnecessary Suffering: Managing Market Utopia* published by Verso. He has been a key figure, along with Jon Cruddas, the head of Labour's policy review and James Purnell, in developing the idea of 'Blue Labour', described in April by the New Statesman as 'the dominant intellectual influence in the Labour Party.' He describes Blue Labour as the 'renewal of the Labour tradition based upon the values of reciprocity, responsibility and labour value.' In 2010 he was elevated to the Lords as a Labour peer by Ed Miliband. Prior to his appointment he worked with London Citizens on their Living Wage campaign and is centrally involved with the reorganisation of the Labour Party with Arnie Graf.

Call for Abstracts

It has become something of a cliché to suggest that the organised labour movement is in crisis, both within Australia and globally. It has also become received wisdom to suggest that the crisis of labour has triggered a decline in interest in the themes of labour and social history. Seen through a different and more positive lens, one might consider crisis as a means of creating heightened opportunities to pursue old questions in new ways and ask new questions of old subjects. Indeed, the central purpose of labour history – bringing a historical perspective to the lives of working people and the nature of work itself – is more valid and pressing than ever before. The conference theme, then, encourages participants to reflect on the activist dimensions of labour history and the challenges and opportunities our field currently faces. A particular concern is how labour movement activists and historians have engaged with each other and the wider community, both in terms of conflict and cooperation. Presenters are especially encouraged to take into account not only class, but other constitutive elements of working-class identity and activism, such as gender, ethnicity, localism, religion, and nationality as well as comparative and transnational approaches.

Presenters can submit two forms of abstract. For the first time, we will be accepting abstracts with a view to putting them through a formal process of review. These should be between 450 and 500 words and establish the main purpose, arguments and findings of the proposed paper. We will also continue to accept non-refereed abstracts which should be between 250 and 300 words. Please email your abstracts to Yasmin Rittau [yasmin.rittau@sydney.edu.au] with the email subject 'Labour History Conference' and indicate whether you intend for your abstract to be reviewed.

All abstracts are due by 15 April 2013.

This conference is co-sponsored by the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History, the Business and Labour History Group at the University of Sydney, and Unions NSW.