

P/LAN	<p>Fonds</p> <p>Title: <i>Papers of George Lansbury and Edgar Isaac Lansbury</i></p> <p>Extent: 2 volumes, 2 documents</p> <p>Description: Scope and Content Manuscripts and photograph albums.</p> <p>Administrative History:</p> <p>George Lansbury (1859-1940) was a pioneering campaigner for peace, women's rights, local democracy and improvements in labour conditions.</p> <p>He was born near Lowestoft, Suffolk. George Lansbury's association with East London began when his parents moved to Bethnal Green and then Whitechapel in 1868. He attended St. Mary School Whitechapel, his formal education ending at 14; for a time he worked unloading coal trucks.</p> <p>In 1880 he married Elizabeth Brine, daughter of the owner of a sawmills and veneer works in St. Stephen's Road, Bow. He sailed with his family to Australia in 1884, but the venture was a failure and he returned to England the next year. He was offered a partnership in the business of his father-in-law, and he made a home at 39 Bow Road, where he lived for the rest of his life.</p> <p>Influenced by Christian socialists he entered local politics, first as a radical but in 1890 he was converted to socialism. In 1892 he was elected to the Poplar Board of Guardians and was a moving spirit with Joseph Fels in setting up the Hollesley Bay colony for unemployed men in Suffolk.</p> <p>George Lansbury had a remarkable knowledge of conditions and labour in inner London and was appointed to the Royal Commission on Poor Laws. At the end of its sittings he was one of the four signatories of what became a famous minority report.</p> <p>Elected to Poplar Borough Council in 1903 he became Mayor in 1922 and again in 1936. He was sent to Brixton Prison with other Poplar Councillors in 1921 for refusing to levy Poplar's share of the London County Council, Police and Metropolitan Asylum contributions, on the grounds</p>	1897-1920s
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that local ratepayers were already impoverished with high levels of unemployment. He held meetings inside the prison with other councillors and spoke to crowds each day through the bars of his cell. The term 'Poplarism' became a word of national significance and was given an entry in the Oxford English Dictionary.

George Lansbury was elected Member of Parliament for Bow and Bromley in 1910, resigning in 1912 to stand again as supporter of women's suffrage. He was defeated, and not re-elected until 1922.

He founded the 'Daily Herald' and edited it until 1922, when it became the official paper of the Labour Party. In 1929 he was appointed the First Commissioner of Works in Ramsay MacDonald's Government and he opened London's Royal Parks for games.

A great worker for peace, he undertook a series of journeys in 1937 to see heads of states, including Adolf Hitler, to attempt to persuade them to disarm.

From 1931 to 1935 he was leader of the Labour Party and leader of the Opposition in Parliament. He resigned over the rearmament issue and was succeeded by Clement Attlee.

He was a great friend to all working people in Poplar and gave of himself freely on their behalf. When he died on 7 May 1940 large crowds attended his funeral. His home at 39 Bow Road was destroyed in an air raid shortly afterwards.

He is commemorated by the Lansbury Estate in Poplar, built in 1951 as part of the Festival of Britain, an exhibition of British trades and arts held to celebrate the centenary of the Great Exhibition of 1851. Lansbury Gardens and Lansbury Lodge, Grundy Street, E14, a home for the elderly, were also named after him.

Source of information on George Lansbury: this text is from 'The Tower Hamlets connection : a biographical guide' by Harold Finch, 1996. Library reference: L9517. Class 100.1 FIN

See also biography - 'The Life of George Lansbury' by Raymond Postgate, 1951. Library reference: L671. Class 100.

Edgar Lansbury:

George Lansbury's son Edgar Isaac Lansbury (3 April 1887 - 28 May 1935) ran the family's timber business in Poplar,

	<p>and was a Labour activist. In 1912, he was elected to the Metropolitan Borough of Poplar, and worked on his father George's campaign in the Bow and Bromley parliamentary by-election, when the elder Lansbury, stood on a 'Votes For Women' ticket.</p> <p>During the Poplar Rates Dispute, he was among the 30 Labour councillors, including his first wife Minnie Lansbury, who went to prison, rather than levy what was regarded as an unfair rating system. He was named co-respondent in a divorce case in 1923, and later married second wife Moyna Magill. He influenced local issues as the second Communist Mayor of Poplar (1924-1925) and as Chair of the Poplar Board of Guardians.</p> <p>The rebels' raison d'etre was to campaign against 'the inequality of London's rating system'(1). Prison was deemed preferable, 'rather than abandon the fight they are waging against the injustice of the present rating system' (2). The coercive element of the Poor Law precipitated the dispute, having been described as 'the most monstrous form of squandermania, because it foments disease and lowers the morale and physique of the nation' (3).</p> <p>Following the emergence of the term 'Poplarism' and then six weeks of imprisonment, the High Court ordered the release of the councillors. Afterwards, came the Local Authorities (Financial Provisions) Act 1921, paving the way for the equalisation of tax burdens between poor and wealthy boroughs.</p> <p>Lansbury was often required to defend the actions of Poplar Board of Guardians, as he does in a contemporary newspaper article. The Guardians, he claimed, 'understand the difficulties which confront working people' (4). He argues that it is not revolutionary for the Guardians 'to organise the public health work of a borough as to halve the death rate and infantine mortality...(where) the bodily condition of the children is 50% better than it was five years ago' (5). The Guardians were a local governing body whereby people 'can change the conditions of their own lives' (6).</p> <p>Sources of information on Edgar Lansbury: 1/2. 'Poplar For Prison ': p. 7 in the 'Daily Herald', 5 August 1921 3. 'Poplar For Prison': p. 4 in the 'Daily Herald', 1 September 1921 4. 'Poplarism AKA The Poplar Rates Rebellion' : islandhistory-wordpress.com, 21 June 2014</p>	
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	<p>5/6. 'The Truth About Poplar': p. 22 in 'John Bull', 13 June 1925 References 2-6 : British Newspaper Archive</p> <p>Related Material:</p> <p>The Local History Library holds many sources on the Lansburys (Class 100) under books, pamphlets, cuttings and images.</p> <p>See also letters from George Lansbury to Bow Vestry, 1898-1900, archive reference: L/SMS/A/10/8. Also archives of Metropolitan Borough of Poplar, collection reference: L/PMB; and John Edward Oakes, collection reference: P/OAK.</p> <p>Records available elsewhere:</p> <p>The main archives of George Lansbury are held at London University: London School of Economics Library, Archives and Special Collections, archive reference: Lansbury. With additional papers under Raymond Postgate's archive, reference Postgate.</p> <p>Further papers relating to George Lansbury are held at the Labour History Archive and Study Centre (People's History Museum/University of Central Lancashire), references LRC, LP GC.</p> <p>Letters by George Lansbury which he sent to individuals are held in collections across the UK. Visit The National Archives Discovery to search for further details: (https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/c/F69076, accessed June 2022).</p> <p>The George Lansbury Memorial Trust was founded in 2012 to commemorate the life, work and legacy of George Lansbury. Visit the Trust's website for more information and for digital copies of the Annual Lectures, https://www.georgelansbury.org.uk/</p> <p>Request: NO - This does not represent a physical document. Please view list of records to find material available to order at file or item level.</p>	
P/LAN/1	<p>File</p> <p>Title: <i>'The Principles of the English Poor Law. G. Lansbury. A Guardian of Poplar Union'</i></p>	1897

	<p>Extent: 1 volume of 30 pages</p> <p>Description: Manuscript in George Lansbury's hand of 'The principles of the English Poor Law being a paper read at the Central Poor Law Conference held at the Guildhall 1897 / by George Lansbury'</p> <p>With memorandum pasted in back cover from Raymond Postgate to the Poplar Borough Council, 1949, donating the manuscript (given to him by George Lansbury) 'in accordance with the arrangements we have made'.</p> <p>Bound by the Local History Library into one volume.</p> <p>Request: YES - You can order this material to consult in our Reading Room.</p>	
P/LAN/2	<p>File</p> <p>Title: <i>'Altogether for Peace by George Lansbury, MP'</i></p> <p>Extent: 1 document of 5 pages</p> <p>Description: Manuscript article or speech by George Lansbury endorsed in another hand at head 'Altogether for Peace by George Lansbury, MP'. 'Therefore comrades once again let us unite in working for peace between ourselves and peace with all the Peoples of the World'.</p> <p>Request: YES - You can order this material to consult in our Reading Room.</p>	c.1928
P/LAN/3	<p>File</p> <p>Title: <i>'Photographs of Hollesley Bay Colony for The Unemployed'</i></p> <p>Extent: 1 volume of 27 pages</p> <p>Description:</p>	1906

	<p>Photograph album, 32 cm, rebound. Inside cover: 'presented by The Right Hon. G. Lansbury.' [to Metropolitan Borough of Poplar Public Libraries].</p> <p>Contains sepia photographs of staff and men at work and play. Each is captioned. Includes farm work, labouring, housekeeping and other activities. Exterior and interior views of the Hollesley Bay Colony estate, Hollesley, Woodbridge, Suffolk. Labour Colony and outpost of the workhouse.</p> <p>Request: YES - You can order this material to consult in our Reading Room.</p>	
P/LAN/4	<p>File</p> <p>Title: <i>Photograph album of Edgar Lansbury</i></p> <p>Extent: 1 volume and 4 photographs</p> <p>Description: Inside title: 'Presented to Councillor Edgar Lansbury at the meeting of the Council of the Metropolitan Borough of Poplar held at the Council Offices on November 9th 1922.'</p> <p>Contains 46 photographs re the Poplar Rates Dispute (1 photo, 3rd in album has been removed). With photographic inscription on inside cover concerning the imprisonment of councillors at Brixton and Holloway Prisons.</p> <p>Also printed pamphlet "The Rate Protest of Poplar" affixed at end of photographic sequence; with four loose photos, George Lansbury with grandchild (Nigel Whiskin?); George Lansbury with Queen Mary, (original prints) and Edgar Lansbury and second wife Moyna Macgill (modern copy prints).</p> <p>Request: YES - You can order this material to consult in our Reading Room.</p>	1920s