



## Keir Hardie: Labour's Greatest Hero?

*Bob Holman*

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# Keir Hardie: Labour's Greatest Hero?

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**Keir Hardie: Labour's Greatest Hero?** Bob Holman

**The extraordinary forgotten story of the founder and first parliamentary leader of Britain's Labour Party, Keir Hardie**

At the turn of the 19th century he was Labour's most famous face. However, despite being voted Labour's "Greatest Hero" at the 2008 Party Conference, in recent years his amazing story seems all but forgotten. With an illegitimate birth just outside Glasgow in 1856, his life didn't start gently. Before the age of 10, he was the sole wage earner in his working class, atheist family. He never went to school but was self-taught, avidly reading books lent him by a kind young clergyman. This led to two major conversions in his life—first to Christianity, and then to socialism. While earlier biographies have neglected the former, pointing out his experience of hardship as the source of his passion for social justice, the role of Christianity in Hardie's life was profound. It shaped his involvement in many of the greatest social changes of the time, and is the main focus of this illuminating biography of the world famous leader.

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