Democratic Socialism in Britain

Richard Crossman (Editor)
New Fabian Essays

Edited by
David Reisman

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DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM IN BRITAIN

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Classic Texts in Economic and Political Thought 1825–1952

Edited by
DAVID REISMAN

VOLUME 9

RICHARD CROSSMAN
EDITOR

New Fabian Essays

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 1996 by Pickering & Chatto (Publishers) Limited

Published 2016 by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN
52 Vanderbilt Avenue, New York, NY 10017, USA

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

BRITISH LIBRARY CATALOGUING IN PUBLICATION DATA
Democratic socialism in Britain : classic texts in economic and political thought, 1825–1952
1. Socialism 2. Economics – Great Britain 3. Political science – Great Britain I. Reisman, David
335.5

Set ISBN 1 85196 285 9
ISBN 13: 978-1-13875-245-0 (hbk) (vol-09)

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOGING-IN-PUBLICATION DATA
Democratic socialism in Britain : classic texts in economic and political thought / edited by David Reisman.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
Contents: v. 1. Ricardian socialism / Hodgskin and Thompson -- v. 2. The Christian socialists / pamphlets by Kingsley, Ludlow, and Maurice -- v. 3. William Morris : selected writings -- v. 4. Fabian essays / edited by G.B. Shaw – v. 5. Old worlds for new / A.J. Penty -- v. 6. A grammar of politics / H. Laski -- v. 7. Principles of economic planning / G.D.H. Cole --v. 8. The socialist case / D. Jay -- 9. New Fabian essays / R.H.S. Crossman -- v. 10. In place of fear / A. Bevan.
ISBN 1–85196–285–9 (set). -- ISBN 1–85196–294–8 (vol. 9)
1. Socialism--Great Britain--History--Sources. I. Reisman, David A.
HS241.5.L65 1996
335'.1'09--dc20 **96–26896**
CIP

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INTRODUCTION
NEW FABIAN ESSAYS

The proposal for a successor-volume to the influential *Fabian Essays* of 1889 was not a new one. Ramsay MacDonald in 1896 had offered to edit a second intellectual manifesto and Shaw had agreed to contribute: the project had collapsed when the editor-designate, becoming closer to the leftist Independent Labour Party, had resigned from the Fabian Society. Shaw in 1930 had returned to the idea and made a serious attempt to commission a new set of papers: a discussion-group had been established (Laski was a participant) but, the members unable to reach a consensus, it had faded away without a book. G.D.H. Cole in 1944–5 had gone so far as to produce a draft synopsis for the elusive second volume: his prognosis being the decline of socialism, at home and abroad, he had had to abandon his enterprise when he discovered that few if any Fabians were prepared to ally themselves with his pessimism. Rita Hinden had kept the quest alive by editing, in 1945, a book of *Fabian Colonial Essays* for the Fabian Colonial Bureau (a self-contained society-within-the-Society that concentrated on the future of the British Empire): a further collection, *New Fabian Colonial Essays*, appeared much later, in 1959, edited by Arthur Creech Jones. Shaw, meanwhile, brought out a new edition of the 1889 *Essays* in 1948: published in the year when Ben Tillett and John Burns had led the London dockers to victory and the sixpenny-minimum, republished in the year when the nationalisation of British railways and the Communist *coup* in Prague were showing that democratic socialists had more urgent issues to address than the relevance of Marx's *Manifesto*, then celebrating its centenary, perhaps Shaw's decision to reprint his classic was a subtle reminder to a younger generation of gradualists not to let a further six decades slip by before they decided to produce the long-awaited successor-volume.

Cole was the Chairman of the Fabian Society from 1939–46 and from 1948–50. Laski, succeeding Cole in 1946, had continued to press for the second set. Cole, succeeding Laski in 1948, reached the conclusion that the comprehensive reappraisal of the case for socialist democracy could no longer be put off. In July 1949 he brought together a group of 21 Fabians

to discuss the topic of 'problems ahead' and to prepare papers for subsequent publication. Lord Faringdon (as Gavin Faringdon, Chairman of the Fabian Colonial Bureau) made his stately home at Buscot Park available for the July conference and for the second meeting, in January 1950. Thereafter the group met at University College, Oxford (Crosland having accidentally broken a priceless vase belonging to Lord Faringdon and his family) and in London. By Christmas 1950 it had completed its deliberations. The convenor himself had already pulled out. Cole was so angered by the Labour Government's capitulation to what he saw as American pressures in respect of British rearmament at the time of the Korean War that – he explained himself fully in a letter to *Fabian News* in March 1951 – he did not feel able to remain a part of a discussion-group that refused to distance itself from an unsocialist foreign policy. Cole's withdrawal, in Autumn 1950, is the reason why he was not a contributor to, let alone the editor of, the published *Essays* when they finally appeared.

The background to Buscot was rearmament and Korea, nationalism and communism, the Berlin airlift and the lengthening of conscription. The Second World War was over but the Cold War had just begun. The 1889 *Essays* had been able to treat the rest of the world as being of little direct relevance to the domestic redistribution of privilege and power. Buscot, on the other hand, was simply not able to assume that the *Pax Britannica* would forever insulate the British reformer from the outside disruptions of foreign wars and international alliances. Buscot, moreover, had to recognise that, the basic industries nationalised, the National Health Service in place, the Attlee Government by 1949 had effectively accomplished what it had promised to do in Labour's 1945 election-manifesto, *Let Us Face The Future*. The transition from Asquith's Liberalism of 1906 to the left-of-centre compromise of welfare capitalism had largely been completed; and the result was the sense of an intellectual vacuum. The Buscot Fabians saw that the Government was beginning to drift and that it was in urgent need of new objectives to see it through a second term of office. A general election as well as the war in Korea was in the offing when Cole and his collaborators began to meet.

The general election when it did come only heightened the Fabians' fears. The Labour majority, 146 in July 1945, was cut to 5 in February 1950, making a new election inevitable. The fact that the Conservatives were returned to power in October 1951 meant that the *New Fabian Essays* when they appeared in Spring 1952 were read as the *post mortem* of a defeated faction taking stock when the truth is that they had largely been written for a governing party that was losing direction. The *New*

Fabian Essays were also read in the context of a debate between the Morrisonian consolidators and the Bevanite radicals that was still being conducted with the relative politeness of Cabinet colleagues when the essays were written, circulated and discussed: Bevan's resignation from the Labour Government on a matter of principle took place on 22 April 1951, after the last meeting of the Buscot group. Bevan, of course, was not himself a member of the Buscot group. Crossman and Mikardo, however, were; and so, in the opposite camp, were Crosland and Jenkins. Yet it would be a mistake to comb the *Essays* too thoroughly for evidence of the conflict between the economists and the sociologists, the proponents of nationalisation and the theoreticians of equality, that was to have so divisive an impact on the democratic Left in the difficult years from Bevan's *In Place of Fear* in 1952 to Crosland's *The Future of Socialism* in 1956. Published and reviewed in the period when the Bevanites and the revisionists were competing to speak for British Labour, it is important to remember that the *New Fabian Essays* were conceived and discussed at a time when Labour, forming the Government, was increasingly under threat from the Opposition *across* the House.

The discussions that produced the *Essays* were held while Labour was in power. That is the reason why the Labour big names were conspicuous by their absence: Attlee, Cripps, Morrison, Bevin, Dalton and other experienced politicians could not afford to attend without appearing disloyal to the Cabinet and its policies. John Strachey held a ministerial appointment in the Labour Government, and so did Harold Wilson. Otherwise, the group was made up of young academics (Allan Flanders, G.D.N. Worswick, Hugh Clegg), new back-benchers (Crossman, Jenkins, Mikardo), Fabian Society officials (John Parker, Chairman 1950–53; Donald Chapman, General Secretary 1949–53; but not W.T. Rodgers, General Secretary 1953–60), Labour Party officials (Denis Healey, Michael Young – the latter the author of the 1945 manifesto).

About 16 papers were written and discussed. R.H.S. Crossman and Margaret Cole, taking over the editorship from G.D.H. Cole, were responsible for selecting the final 8. They sought, they said, 'to achieve a balance between theoretical analysis and practical application'. Two other volumes were planned as a home for the remaining essays. One was to be called *Fabian Economic Essays* while the other (the arrangements were less well advanced) was to deal with social interaction and social structure. The contributors subsequently disagreed and the books were never published. Hugh Gaitskell (not a member of the Buscot group) was asked to write a paper for the proposed *Fabian Economic Essays*. Much later, in

1956, that paper appeared as Fabian Tract No. 300 under the title of *Socialism and Nationalisation*.

The *New Fabian Essays* in 1952 enjoyed an importance by association that had been denied to the original *Fabian Essays* of 1889. Affiliated to the Labour Party under Cole's new rules of 1939, the Fabian Society no longer allowed its members the freedom to join the Liberal or any other Party that had been their right before the Society had made itself a *party*-political organisation. The Social Democratic Federation having ceased to operate and the Independent Labour Party having been cut adrift, the Fabian Society by the time of the Buscot conferences and of the *Essays* had become the only outside association to be thus affiliated. The Society was strongly represented in the House of Commons: out of 394 Labour MPs elected in 1945, 229 were Fabians, including the Prime Minister himself. Boasting a Preface by the Party Leader, fielding contributors who might one day figure prominently in a Labour Cabinet, the *New Fabian Essays* was read with a respect which it might not have commanded had it not enjoyed an importance by association which enabled it to be judged by its title and not exclusively on its merits. This is not to play down the merits, only to say that the contributors tended to be dwarfed by the long shadow of the Party for which the Fabian Society was believed to be the intellectual cutting-edge.

The *New Fabian Essays* were hardly as incisive, as searching, as trenchant as the original *Fabian Essays* had been 63 years before. The original volume had taken as its connecting theme no less fundamental an issue than 'the basis and prospects of socialism'. The successor volume had no obvious connecting theme at all – save a desperate recognition that something new had to be said. As *The Times* wrote in its review: 'Nothing, the Socialists appear to agree, threatens the Labour Party more than the possibility that it will soon hold office again and be as lacking in a sense of direction as it was during the last years of Mr. Attlee's administration.' Galbraith welcomed the search but was disappointed with the outcome: 'One is left with the unshakable conclusion that very little socialism is left in socialism, and nothing much else is available to take its place.' David McCord Wright was even more blunt about the book: 'Intended as a rallying point, it seems to me much more a confession of intellectual bankruptcy.' *The Times* at least had this to say in favour of the *New Fabian Essays*, that it had 'cleared away a lot of undergrowth which had long obscured socialist thinking'. Some of the chapters, arguably, did a bit more than that. Some, on the other hand, possibly did less.

The first of the chapters is entitled 'Towards a Philosophy of Socialism'. Its author is R.H.S. Crossman.

Richard Howard Stafford Crossman (15 December 1907 – April 1974), the intellectually-gifted son of a Conservative barrister, won a scholarship to Winchester and, later, another to New College, Oxford. He obtained First Class Honours in Classical Honour Moderations (essentially the whole of Greek and Latin literature) in 1928 and an additional First in *Literae Humaniores* (history and ancient philosophy) in 1929. In 1930 he was offered a Fellowship at New College; but first he spent a year abroad, in Germany. Watching the rise of Hitler, he came to appreciate that politics could be a matter of life and death.

From 1931 he was a teacher of philosophy at New. His most original publications were conceived in this period, including *Plato Today* (1937), *Socrates* (1938) and *Government and the Governed* (1939). Crossman left New College in 1937: the immediate reason was his divorce (probably finalised in 1938) from Erika Landau, whom he had married in Germany shortly after her own (second) divorce and his subsequent remarriage (in 1939) to Inezita Hilda Baker, also divorced, also a member of the College. Although apparently a brilliant tutor, he never returned to full-time University teaching. Nor did he ever complete the major work on socialist theory which he always intended to produce.

Crossman lectured for the Workers' Educational Association from 1938–40. He also wrote on politics for the *New Statesman*. He was the Assistant Editor of the *New Statesman* from 1938–55 but failed to secure the post of Editor in 1955. In 1940 Hugh Dalton drew him into the Ministry of Economic Warfare. In 1943 he was made Deputy Director for Psychological Warfare at the Allied Forces Headquarters, Algiers. From 1944–45 he was the Assistant Chief of the Psychological Warfare Division for the Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Forces, London. Already known to be independent-minded, difficult and rebellious, his excellence in the field of propaganda led nonetheless to his being awarded the Order of the British Empire in 1945.

Even before the war Crossman had been active in Labour politics. At the local level he had served on the Oxford City Council from 1934–40, leading the Labour group on the Council from 1936. Nationally, he had campaigned with Dalton for British rearmament; he had (unsuccessfully) fought the West Birmingham by-election in 1937; and he had, in 1938, been adopted as the Labour candidate for the seat of Coventry East. The long-postponed election was held at last in July 1945 and Crossman

entered Parliament for the constituency he was to represent until the election of February 1974 at which he did not stand.

Elected in 1945, Attlee knew that he was not a team-player and did not advance him beyond the back-benches. Crossman's major achievement was to be nominated by Ernest Bevin, then Foreign Secretary, to be a member, in 1946, of the Anglo-American Palestine Commission that surprised the politicians by recommending the admission into the British-administered territory of still more Jewish immigrants. Out of the experience came his *Palestine Mission* (1947). More popular with the membership than with the leadership, he was elected on to the National Executive Committee in 1952. He remained on the NEC until 1967.

By 1951 he was a Bevanite, his house at 9 Vincent Square serving as the focal point for Keep Left Parliamentarians like Mikardo, Foot, Wilson, Driberg and Mallalieu as well as Nye and Jennie Lee. In 1954, however, when Bevan resigned from the Shadow Cabinet, he supported Harold Wilson when Wilson took Bevan's vacant place. This made Crossman unpopular with the Labour Left but it did prepare the way for Crossman to become Wilson's close collaborator. Following the death of Hugh Gaitskell (with whom Crossman had been at Winchester and New but to whom he had never, in politics, been especially sympathetic), Crossman from January 1963 managed Wilson's campaign for the leadership. One consequence was that Crossman was finally invited to join the Shadow Cabinet, as front-bench spokesman on higher education and science.

Following the Labour victory in October 1964, Crossman (becoming a Privy Councillor at the same time) took over the Ministry of Housing and Local Government. In August 1966 he was made Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons. From November 1968 to June 1970, as Secretary of State for Social Services, he combined the two previously-separated Departments of Health and of Social Security, presiding over his super-ministry with whatever success was possible in the wake of devaluation and in a period of austerity. His national superannuation scheme (a pet project since he had chaired Labour's working party on pensions-policy in 1956) was lost when the Labour Government was replaced by Heath's Conservatives in 1970.

In the same year Crossman, aged 62, finally fulfilled a long-standing ambition by becoming Editor of the *New Statesman*. His success was short-lived: he was dismissed in 1972 due to disagreements with the staff. Further controversy was to follow. Crossman in the 1950s had begun to keep a political diary. In it he made a practice of recording events, ideas, personalities, his reflections on the constitutional process itself. His diaries

for his Cabinet years, called *The Diaries of a Cabinet Minister*, appeared posthumously in three volumes, in 1975 (Vol. I: 1964–66), 1976 (Vol. II: 1966–68) and 1977 (Vol. III: 1968–70): he had been able to prepare them for publication before his death. The Labour Attorney-General in 1975 sought to prohibit the distribution of the volumes. It was an odd decision since the most revelatory sections had already been serialised in the *Sunday Times*. In 1981 Janet Morgan edited, under the title *The Backbench Diaries of Richard Crossman*, a further selection from Crossman's voluminous records, now kept at the University of Warwick.

Crossman in 1950 edited *The God That Failed*, a collection of essays by former communists. In 1958 he published *The Charm of Politics*, in 1960 *A Nation Reborn*, in 1965 *Planning for Freedom*, in 1972 *Inside View*. The 50-page introduction he wrote for the 1964 reprint of Bagehot's *The English Constitution* shows that, 27 years after New, he was still capable of arguing a philosopher's case. As, needless to say, does his contribution to the present volume. Material conditions do not produce socialism and nor does accumulated knowledge. Human will and social conscience are alone capable of harnessing the State and disarming the capitalists. Ideas have consequences, pragmatism is not enough, theory is the *sine qua non*: 'The Labour Party has lost its way', Crossman wrote in the *New Fabian Essays*, 'not only because it lacks a map of the new country it is crossing, but because it thinks maps unnecessary for experienced travellers.' Crossman criticised the anti-intellectual bias of the British Labour movement. It was the thesis of his essay that progress would be impossible so long as socialists treated principles and abstractions as 'dangerous Teutonic verbiage', incompatible with the common-sense reaction and the step-by-step response.

Charles Anthony Raven Crosland – Anthony Crosland (29 August 1918 – 19 February 1977) – was later to be the author of the Centre-Left classic *The Future of Socialism*, published in 1956. The chapter on 'The Transition from Capitalism' which he contributed to the *New Fabian Essays* was the first occasion on which he put on record his conviction as a Gaitskellite and a revisionist that socialist theory had urgently to be brought up to date: 'It is now clear that capitalism is undergoing a metamorphosis into a quite different system, and that this is rendering academic most of the traditional socialist analysis.' A landmark on the road that extends backwards to moderate interventionists like Dalton, Jay and Durbin, to managerial socialists like Bernstein, Laurat and Burnham, it looks forward not only to Crosland's major refocussing of the reformer's mission on the twin

objectives of equality and welfare but also to the redefinition of socialism as social-ism which was subsequently to push property and planning into the footnotes of a new political consensus.

Crosland's father was a senior civil servant, his mother a lecturer (in Old French) in the University of London. Their commitment as Plymouth Brethren to responsible attitudes and purposeful effort, their antipathy to social distance and disrespectful snobbishness is no doubt an important source of Crosland's socialism. Crosland was sensitive to the contrast between the privilege of Highgate School and the absolute deprivation of the 1930s. He joined the Labour Party and the Left Book Club when he was 16. Any early sympathy with Soviet Marxism disappeared when the Soviet Union invaded Finland in 1939. A student of classics at Trinity College, Oxford, from 1937–40, Crosland became concerned at the influence of Marxists like Denis Healey and Andrew Shonfield in the Oxford University Labour Club. The rival Oxford University Democratic Socialist Club (established with Roy Jenkins and Ian Durham) was the result.

After war service in the Royal Fusiliers, the Royal Welch Fusiliers and the Parachute Brigade, Crosland returned to Oxford in 1945. He was awarded a First in PPE in 1946 and (replacing Robert Hall, author of *The Economic System in a Socialist State*) was made a Fellow and Lecturer in Economics at Trinity in 1947. In 1950 he entered Parliament for South Gloucestershire. Losing the seat in 1955, he devoted himself to his writing and to his work, from 1956–8, as Secretary to the Independent Commission of Inquiry into the Co-operative Movement. The Commission was chaired by his political ally, Hugh Gaitskell, Labour Leader from 1955 to 1963. Crosland returned to Parliament in 1959 as the Member for Grimsby. He continued to represent the constituency until his premature death in 1977, aged 58.

Crosland held a number of important posts in the Governments of Harold Wilson and James Callaghan. He was Minister of State for Economic Affairs (1964–65), Secretary of State for Education and Science (1965–67), Secretary of State for Local Government and Regional Planning (1969–70), Secretary of State for the Environment (1974–76) (he had shadowed the same portfolio in the Opposition years of 1970–74) and Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1976–77). Crosland never became either Home Secretary or Chancellor of the Exchequer. Nor was he successful in his bid to become the Deputy Leader (in 1972) or (in 1976) the Leader of the Labour Party.

Crosland, an intellectual in politics, published throughout his lifetime in newspapers like *The Guardian* and the *Sunday Times*, journals like

Socialist Commentary and *Encounter*. His most important articles (together with Fabian Tracts such as *Can Labour Win?*, 1960, and *A Social-Democratic Britain*, 1971) are reprinted in two collections: *The Conservative Enemy* (1960) and *Socialism Now* (1974). *The Future of Socialism* was abridged in 1964. It was never revised to incorporate the changes in British social and political life that occurred after the publication of the 1956 classic. In 1953 Crosland wrote a short book – *Britain's Economic Problem* – that dealt with the balance of payments and the world dollar problem. In 1952 there was the contribution to the *New Fabian Essays*.

In that paper the new Member of Parliament and former academic gave his verdict on the decline of *laissez-faire*, the emergent culture of economic control, the increasing politicisation of the market that had previously been autonomous: 'This one change alone would justify the statement that the capitalist era has now passed into history.' Entrepreneurship had given way to organisation, automaticity to statism. The Left, Crosland argued, should welcome the changes that had occurred. Concerned about the inequalities of wealth, of opportunity, of education, however, it should not assume that the transition from capitalism will necessarily be a transition to socialism as well. For that to be the case, something more would be required than evolution alone, namely conscious action emanating directly from 'a clear vision of where we want, as socialists, to go'. Crosland or Crossman, it is the philosopher and not the economist who is to enjoy the pride of place.

Roy Harris Jenkins (11 November 1920 –) was the son of Arthur Jenkins, underground miner, Member for Pontypool, Parliamentary Private Secretary to Clement Attlee. Jenkins's roots are in the Welsh working class and the inter-war strikes in connection with which his father at one point was sent to prison.

Roy Jenkins was educated at the Abersychan Grammar School, at University College, Cardiff, and then (from 1938–41) at Balliol College, Oxford: there his economics tutor was Thomas Balogh (then in his first year on the staff), his philosophy tutor was A.D. Lindsay (Master of the College), and his tutor for the paper on the History of Labour Movements 1815–1914 was G.D.H. Cole. At Oxford he was the third Chairman (after Crosland and Durham) of the breakaway Democratic Socialist Club. He also served as Secretary and Treasurer of the Oxford Union Society. He obtained his B.A. in Modern Greats (Philosophy, Politics and Economics) with First Class Honours in 1941. Later there were to be many honorary

degrees, including doctorates from Harvard, Bath, Warwick, Louvain, Urbino and Oxford itself. Jenkins succeeded Harold Macmillan as Chancellor of Oxford University in 1987.

Jenkins in the war served (at the end with the rank of captain) with the Royal Artillery, from 1942–46. Most of his time was spent in cryptography work at Bletchley Park. Based in Britain, he continued where possible to attend Labour Party conferences and meetings. In 1945 he stood for Solihull, Warwickshire, in the general election that brought into being the reforming Attlee Government. He was not elected.

From 1946–48, after he left the Services, Jenkins was an officer in the Industrial and Commercial Finance Corporation. The ICFC had been set up by the Bank of England in an attempt to attract investment capital from the joint-stock banks (which preferred to lend short) to medium-sized businesses (too big solely to plough back, too small to cover the costs and the hazards of a new issue). Not really committed to a career as a banker, Jenkins applied (unsuccessfully) for lectureships in Manchester (in philosophy) and Oxford (economics) before entering the House of Commons in 1948 as the Member for Central Southwark. At 27, he was the youngest Member of Parliament.

From 1949–50 he was Parliamentary Private Secretary to Philip Noel-Baker, Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations. In 1949 Jenkins joined the Executive Committee of the Fabian Society. He was to remain on the Executive Committee until 1961 and was the Chairman of the Fabian Society from 1957–58. The seat of Central Southwark having been amalgamated in 1950, Roy Jenkins in that year became the Member of Parliament for Stechford, Birmingham. He represented the constituency in the House of Commons until 1976.

In 1947 he edited (providing linking-sections and a 500-word introduction of his own) a volume of Attlee's speeches, published as *Purpose and Policy*. A year later came *Mr. Attlee: An Interim Biography* (1948): Jenkins's only biography of a living subject, it was made possible by the desire of the then Prime Minister to pay his respects to the family of Arthur Jenkins, who had died in 1946. In the 1950s, the period in which Roy wrote his paper on the theory of equality for the *New Fabian Essays*, he was the author of two short books on the social philosophy of democratic socialism: *Pursuit of Progress* (1953) and *The Labour Case* (1959) (the latter a Penguin Special published in an election-year, Quintin Hogg and Roger Fulford contributing similar volumes on the Conservatives and the Liberals respectively). On balance, however, he was happier with history. In 1954 there was *Mr. Balfour's Poodle*: the title taken from Lloyd George's

description of the House of Lords, the subject of the book was Asquith's attempt to reform the constitution in the years from 1909 to 1911. Jenkins returned to the reforming Liberals in his *Asquith* (1964): his friend and publisher, Mark Bonham Carter, had drawn his attention to neglected primary material that was to prove so central to the argument of the book. Before that there had been *Sir Charles Dilke: A Victorian Tragedy* (1958). Sadly, the story of the famous divorce that ruined a promising political career never became the proposed Sam Spiegel film starring Alec Guinness and Julie Christie for which Jenkins was paid a lump sum of £40,000.

Jenkins like Crosland was an inner-circle Gaitskellite in the hey-day of the 'Hampstead Set' that ended so suddenly on 18 January 1963. Unlike Crosland, however, Jenkins managed to establish a good professional relationship with Gaitskell's successor, Harold Wilson, Party Leader from 1963–76, Prime Minister from 1964–70 and 1974–76. Jenkins like Wilson was not from the South; Jenkins like Wilson had reached Oxford from the local grammar school; Jenkins unlike Crosland did not make Wilson feel small; Jenkins unlike Crosland was not believed to be the instigator of plots and leaks. What this meant in practice was that Jenkins secured the recognition for his competence that was denied to other leading figures less able to command Harold Wilson's trust. From 1964–65 he was Minister of Aviation; from 1965–67 (and again from 1974–76) Home Secretary; from 1967–70 Chancellor of the Exchequer. In Opposition he was Deputy Leader of the Labour Party, from 1970–72. He contested the Labour Party Leadership in 1976 but was not successful.

Jenkins had long been a passionate supporter of British involvement in the European Community. He had been a member of the Labour European Committee and the Federal Union; a British delegate to the Council of Europe; the President of the Britain in Europe movement at the time of the decisive referendum in 1975. It was in the circumstances a logical step for him, resigning his Commons seat in 1976, to proceed to Brussels as the President (from 1977–81) of the European Commission.

Witnessing the polarisation of British politics, concerned about the unions and the militants as well as about Mrs. Thatcher and her monetarists, Jenkins took advantage of the 1979 Dimbleby Lecture to call for a radical remoulding of the British political parties. Even in Brussels he had been in touch with British middle-grounders like Ian Gilmour (a Conservative) and David Steel (a Liberal). Returning to Britain, and concerned about Labour's lurch to the left, he was active (with Shirley Williams, David Owen and William Rodgers) in the creation of the new Social Democratic Party that came into being following the Limehouse

Declaration of 25 January 1981. A member of the Party's joint leadership from 1981–2, he became the first Leader of the SDP in 1982. David Owen took over the Leadership in 1983, Jenkins evidently finding the Alliance (with Steel) a difficult craft to manoeuvre.

Jenkins failed to return to the House at the Warrington by-election in 1981. Even so, he was the first-ever SDP Parliamentary candidate (standing 'with Liberal support'). In 1982 he was more successful, reentering the Commons as the SDP Member for Glasgow Hillhead. In 1987, when he lost the seat to Labour, he was made a Life Peer (as Baron Jenkins of Hillhead) and became the Leader in the House of Lords of the Social and Liberal Democratic Peers. Jenkins states in his autobiography that by the early 1970s he had come to regard himself as a 'closet Liberal'. He also states, however, that, no longer describing himself as a socialist, he continued to situate himself to the left not just of Owen but of Callaghan as well. The moderation of the *New Fabian Essays*, the interventionism of the enobled Lord – Jenkins's journey from Centre-Left to Centre-Left may not after all have been the interrupted voyage of a traveller who *en route* decides to alter his course.

Jenkins throughout his political career kept up his stream of articles and analyses. So numerous were his contributions to *Encounter*, *Socialist Commentary*, *The Observer*, *The Daily Telegraph*, that he was once invited to apply for the editorship of *The Economist*. Selections of his occasional pieces have been published as *Essays and Speeches* (1967) (edited by Anthony Lester) and *Partnership of Principle* (1985) (edited by Clive Lindley). William Rees-Mogg commissioned biographical sketches for *The Times* on Halifax, Blum, Stevenson, Gaitskell and others that were later re-published as *Nine Men of Power* (1975). A supplementary collection was *Roy Jenkins' Gallery of Twentieth Century Portraits* (1988). Roy Jenkins has published full-length biographies of *Truman* (1986), *Baldwin* (1987) and *Gladstone* (1995); authored books of memoirs entitled *European Diary 1977–81* (1989) and *A Life at the Centre* (1991); and has written on contemporary politics in *Afternoon on the Potomac?* (1972) and *What Matters Now* (1972). He has contributed chapters to *Britain and the EEC* (1983) (edited by Roy Jenkins in his capacity as President for 1981–82 of the Economics Section of the British Association for the Advancement of Science) and to *Hugh Gaitskell: A Memoir* (1964) (edited by W.T. Rodgers). And, of course, on 'Equality', to the *New Fabian Essays*.

In that essay Jenkins made equality the issue that differentiates the socialist of the Centre-Left from the libertarian on the Right and the

Marxian on the Left. He called for a redistribution of wealth (through higher death duties and a capital gains tax) and true freedom of entry into all occupations (a crusade involving not just equal opportunity for education and training but also a direct assault on nepotism and privilege). He took as his ideal the achievement of a classless society – 'and a classless society can be defined, quite simply, as one in which men will be separated from each other less sharply by variations in wealth and origin than by differences in character'. Like Crosland, in short, Jenkins believed in socialism as social-ism and not as the indispensable corrective of a deficient market order.

Margaret Isabel Cole (6 May 1893 – 7 May 1980) (*née* Postgate) was born in Cambridge. Her father, Fellow in Latin of Trinity, later Professor of Greek at Liverpool, saw to it that she learned her classics at home (frequently conversing with her in Latin) and not just at school. She attended Roedean (on a scholarship) and then, studying classics, Girton College, Cambridge. At Girton she lost her religious faith but (much influenced by the non-deterministic humanitarianism of H.G. Wells and other Fabians) acquired a new creed in socialism. She obtained her First in 1914. In the same year she became a junior classics mistress at St. Paul's Girls' School, London.

In 1916 her brother Raymond Postgate, guildsman and socialist, was imprisoned as a conscientious objector. Raymond was (after the First World War) a founder of the Communist Party of Great Britain and (after the Second) the originator of the *Good Food Guide*. His books include *The Builders' History* (1923), *Robert Emmet* (1931) and (with his Oxford contemporary G.D.H. Cole) *The Common People* (1938). It was his imprisonment in 1916 that drew Margaret into the socialist movement. She became active in the Fabian Research Department, studying data on wages, prices,profits and class. At first the involvement was part-time. In 1917, however, she resigned from her teaching position in order to devote herself full-time to the cause. She became the Acting Secretary of the Department when the Secretary, R. Page Arnot, himself went to prison.

Margaret got to know G.D.H. Cole, handsome and highly intelligent, while she was a researcher in the Fabian Research Department. They were married in 1918, becoming a high-profile Labour couple and (however much they resisted the obvious comparison with the Webbs) an intellectual partnership as well. In the early years (despite their association with the Fabian Society, frequently authoritarian) they were in favour of guild socialism, devolution and decentralisation. Later they became reconciled

with the collectivists and the planners, especially as a result of the Great Depression and in the light of the Soviet experience that Margaret inspected at first-hand (in the company of Fabians such as the Mitchisons, Dalton and Kingsley Martin, but without Douglas, too ill to travel) at the time of the first Five Year Plan in 1932. Her edited volume, *Twelve Studies in Soviet Russia* (1933) contains a chapter in which she gives her impressions of what she saw. She concluded that the truth was being distorted (she was somewhat more critical than the Webbs in that regard) but that rapid industrialisation (without the immorality of profits), improved conditions and good opportunities for the masses, all showed that State socialism had much to recommend it in spite of the Soviets' sad neglect of individual self-determination. A further trip and a further volume – *Democratic Sweden* (1938) (edited with Charles Smith) – gives an insight into the synthesis that she and Douglas were able most strongly to endorse.

With Douglas she was involved in 1931 in setting up both the Society for Socialist Inquiry and Propaganda and the New Fabian Research Bureau. That being the year in which his diabetes was diagnosed, she also took on the responsibility (already reassuring him and restoring his confidence) of regulating his diet and looking after his health. With Douglas she collaborated on 29 detective-novels (published between 1923 and 1942) and on analyses of current affairs such as *The Intelligent Man's Guide Through World Chaos* (1932) ('Cole's Chaos'), *The Intelligent Man's Review of Europe To-day* (1933), *A Guide to Modern Politics* (1934), *The Condition of Britain* (1937). In her own right she was the author of a large number of book-reviews, articles, pamphlets and tracts. Margaret Cole wrote books such as *The New Economic Revolution* (1937). As with her collaborative volumes, it was a missionary's attempt to popularise and to educate rather than an academic's effort to make an innovative contribution. She wrote *Women of To-day* (1938) and *Marriage: Past and Present* (1938). Always a feminist with a commitment to opportunities and rights, she was not, however, a militant suffragette or a member of what she criticised as 'the shrieking sisterhood'.

Margaret paid her personal tribute to the historical figure she had married in her *The Life of G.D.H. Cole* (1971). It was published mid-way between his death in 1959 and her own in 1980. Her biography of Douglas had already been complemented by two volumes of personal reminiscences: *Growing Up Into Revolution* (1949) and *Servant of the Country* (1956). Margaret was a trustee of the Webbs' estate (Beatrice died in 1943, Sidney in 1947). She became the editor of *Beatrice Webb's Diaries 1912–*

24 (1952), a volume which Beatrice had intended as a sequel to *My Apprenticeship* but had never completed. Margaret wrote the influential biography *Beatrice Webb* (1945) and edited a commemorative collection entitled *The Webbs and their Work* (1949). A widely-read historian of the British Left, Margaret Cole wrote *Makers of the Labour Movement* (1948), *Robert Owen of New Lanark* (1953) and – amplifying and extending the original account of 1916 by Edward Pease, the Society's first Secretary – *The Story of Fabian Socialism* (1961). Margaret Cole became the President of the Fabian Society in 1962. She was made a CBE in 1965 and a DBE in 1970.

Convinced from an early age that education and emancipation go hand in hand, Margaret was a tutor for the Workers' Educational Association (in economics and history) from 1925 to 1944. She also addressed local Fabian meetings throughout Britain and participated in Summer Schools such as those at Frensham Heights, Surrey and Dartington Hall, Devon. In the War she was co-opted on to the Education Committee of the London County Council. She chaired the Council's Further Education Committee from 1950–60 and 1961–65. Later, from 1965–67, she was a member of the Inner London Education Authority. She was a Governor of Holloway School (at the time when it went comprehensive), the Camden Girls' School, the Battersea College of Domestic Science; and was also on the Council of Bedford College, University of London and of the Sidney Webb Training College, set up to allow mature students the opportunity to re-train as teachers.

Education was central to Margaret Cole's vision of democratic socialism. The 1944 Education Act had made secondary education free but had segregated children, by means of an aptitude test taken at age eleven-plus, into technical, grammar and secondary modern schools. In the essay on 'Education and Social Democracy' which she contributed to the *New Fabian Essays* Margaret Cole demanded the suppression of divisive selection, the integration of children with the full range of potential into institutions essentially representative of the wider community. Equality of respect would be encouraged by the 'comprehensive high school'. Future leaders would get to know the future rank-and-file in the local 'common school'. The result would be a worthwhile gain in fellowship and cohesion despite the survival of the private sector of education to which Margaret Cole, liberal as well as socialist, had in the end no choice but to turn a blind eye.

Austen Albu (21 September 1903 – 23 November 1993) was educated at Tonbridge School and the City and Guilds College (the embryo of Imperial

College, University of London), where he took his B.Sc. (Eng.) degree. He was employed in engineering in the Midlands and the North; studied production methods in the United States; and became the manager of a factory in London.

In 1946 he was summoned to Berlin to be the Deputy President of the Governmental Sub-Commission of the Control Commission. He had the equivalent status of a major-general, and was given responsibility for the co-ordination of political and administrative policy. He was also involved in proposing constitutional reforms for the territory that was to become West Germany.

Returning to Britain in 1947, Albu became Deputy Director of the British Institute of Management, set up by Stafford Cripps in order to improve the standard of business practice. When Evan Durbin died in 1948, Albu secured the nomination (supported by the National Executive Committee) for the safe Labour seat of Edmonton. The by-election attracted considerable publicity, partly because of Durbin's standing and potential, partly because anti-semitism was blamed for pushing down the Labour majority from 19,000 to only 3000. Entering Parliament in 1948, Albu continued to represent Edmonton until serious illness (from which he subsequently made a full recovery) forced him to hand on the constituency to Ted Graham in March 1974.

Unusual among politicians, Albu had an engineering background and industrial experience. His potential was recognised even in the 1940s; and he was expected to be given a ministerial appointment once Labour was returned to office. Harold Wilson, however, had mixed feelings about him. In 1964 he was passed over. In 1965 he was made Minister of State in George Brown's Department of Economic Affairs. In 1967 he was sacked. His comment on his two-year career in high places was this: 'At least Harold has at last lived up to one trade union principle: "Last in, first out."' By the end of the 1964–70 Government he was publicly calling for Wilson's resignation.

A decade later the personal bitterness at the relative lack of ministerial success was compounded by a growing anxiety at the increasing power of the militant Left. Albu left the Labour Party and joined the Social Democrats. Campaigning in Edmonton in the 1983 election, he recommended to his former constituents that they should desert Ted Graham and support the Alliance candidate instead. Labour lost the seat.

Albu's chapter in the *New Fabian Essays* was headed 'The Organisation of Industry'. The subject of the chapter was the democratic distribution of business authority, the conclusion reached that participation and

consultation would greatly increase the felt attachment of the employee to the common purpose of the firm. Recognising that private-sector executives, managerial bureaucrats as well as profit-hungry capitalists, can behave in a manner that is perceived to be abusive and totalitarian, Albu recommended not the nationalisation of the large organisations so much as worker-representation on the board of directors. Political democracy, Albu reasoned, had to be accompanied by a tolerable measure of economic democracy. Neither in the one case nor in the other, however, was the buying out of the capital-owning class the necessary condition for an adequate degree of grass-roots involvement.

Ian Mikardo (9 July 1908–6 May 1993) was born in Portsmouth. The child of first-generation immigrants very much like the Bangladeshis and the Sikhs whom he was later to represent, his first language was Yiddish. His father was a tailor, so poorly paid that Ian's mother at one point pawned her wedding-ring to buy food for the family.

Mikardo attended Aria College (a Jewish school) and contemplated a career as a rabbi. He remained a Zionist throughout his life. Impressed in particular by Tawney's *Acquisitive Society* (and, coincidentally, by the original set of *Fabian Essays*), he joined the Labour Party and its Jewish affiliate, the Paole Zion.

Mikardo left formal education without advanced qualifications. Taking low-level jobs in distribution and sales, he at least was able to make his work his university. The next step was to run a laundry. After that came a consultancy of his own, advising firms on the cost-reductions that could be secured through the careful planning of collections and deliveries. Still later he was to be a highly successful businessman, specialising in East-West trade. He also joined a union, the Association of Supervisory Staffs and Engineering Technicians (ASSET).

In 1944 he was adopted as the prospective Labour candidate for Reading, then a safe Tory seat. He immediately became a national figure when, at the Labour Party Conference in autumn of that year, he moved (the press called it 'the Reading resolution') that Labour commit itself to the wholesale nationalisation of the capitalistic base in its first peacetime Government. To the great embarrassment of the moderate leadership, Mikardo's resolution was carried. Herbert Morrison, distressed by the result, said to him: 'Young man, that was a good speech – but you realise, don't you, that you've lost us the general election.' Morrison's fears proved unfounded. The Labour victory of July 1945 was a landslide – so much so

that Mikardo himself gained Reading. He was to retain the seat for Labour until the election of 1959.

A left-winger favourable to the State, a former consultant who knew that even private-sector companies were obliged to plan, Mikardo made himself the champion of controls and the critic of *laissez-faire* in a series of widely-read pamphlets that shadow the rise and fall of the Attlee administration – *Centralised Control of Industry* (1944), *Frontiers in the Air* (1946), *The Second Five Years* (1948), *The Problems of Nationalisation* (1948), *The Labour Case* (1950) and, most influential of all, *Keep Left* (1947), written with Richard Crossman and Michael Foot. Mikardo's publications appealed strongly to G.D.H. Cole, then directing the research into post-war adjustment of the Fabian Society's Industrial Group. Mikardo joined the Group and (because of his wartime experience in aircraft factories) was made the chairman of its sub-committee on civil aviation. He became a member of the Fabian Society, attending Fabian summer-schools and giving lectures on behalf of the Society. Later he was to resign, claiming that Hugh Gaitskell as Party Leader had made the Society subservient to his own weak-willed compromise, reactive where it ought to be idealistic. At a time of Buscot, however, Mikardo was at the height of his involvement in the movement. Even a year or two might have made a difference to the kind of paper he wrote for the *New Fabian Essays*. Mikardo had been active in the Keep Left Group that had been founded in the wake of the 1947 pamphlet. In 1951 the resignation of Aneurin Bevan from the Cabinet was to lead to the formation of an even more powerful coalition on the Left. Mikardo was a founder-member of the Bevanite faction. Its manifesto, *One Way Only* (1951) sold 100,000 copies in the year that separated the final Buscot meeting from the publication of the papers.

Mikardo in 1959 published his pamphlet *Socialism or Slump*. The high summer of 'You've never had it so good' was not a propitious time for him to recall, with a warning, the mass unemployment of his formative years. So pro-capitalist had Britain become that Mikardo in the general election of the same year actually lost his Reading seat to the Conservatives. He also failed to win election to the National Executive Committee, of which he had been a member since 1950 and on which he was again to serve from 1960–78. The loss of his NEC status (to another left-winger, Tony Benn) meant that he could not proceed as arranged to the Chairmanship of the Party. He was later to become the Labour Chairman, for 1970–1. In 1974, between the March and the October elections, he was (briefly) Chairman of the Parliamentary Labour Party.

In 1964 Mikardo re-entered the House of Commons for the safe seat of Poplar. In 1974 the constituency (marginally re-districted) was re-named Tower Hamlets, Bethnal Green and Bow; in 1983 Bow and Poplar. The constituency contained the synagogue (by then converted into a Sikh temple) in which in 1932 he had been married. Unlike Richard Crossman, Barbara Castle and other left-wingers, he was never offered a ministerial appointment: the title of his autobiography, *Back-Bencher* (1988), published the year after he retired from the House in 1987, pointedly refers to his resentment at having been ignored in his prime by Harold Wilson. Callaghan was less resented. Mikardo was almost 68 when Callaghan became Prime Minister and younger left-wingers were coming up. It was, interestingly, the young Neil Kinnock who in 1978 was to take Mikardo's place on the NEC. Even then, however, Mikardo was to have a final victory. In 1980 he was Michael Foot's campaign manager in the leadership contest of that year that ended in the defeat (by 10 votes) of Denis Healey.

Never offered a Government post, Mikardo was able nonetheless to find an outlet for his abilities as Chairman of the Select Committee on Nationalised Industries from 1966 to 1970. It was in his time that the Committee recommended the hiving-off of telecommunications from mail delivery within the Post Office (a decision which had the unintended consequence of making possible the subsequent privatisation); it proposed that the Post Office manufacture for itself the equipment it was then buying in from the capitalist sector; and it objected that the Bank of England was parroting the City's view to the Treasury when it ought to be telling the City what the Government believed to be in the *national* interest. Mikardo simultaneously was an unofficial leader of the *Tribune* group that was harrying the Wilson Government from within. The Left opposed front-bench support to the Americans in Vietnam; it defended free collective bargaining against the claims of prices and incomes policies; and it secured the defeat of the proposals for trade-union reform that were set out in the White Paper *In Place of Strife*. Mikardo was himself a union-sponsored Member. His seat at Poplar was subsidised by the Transport and General Workers' Union (the TGWU).

Unions were the subject of Mikardo's contribution to the *New Fabian Essays*. In his paper 'Trade Unions in a Full Employment Economy' Mikardo advised that old-style aggressiveness was no longer needed in a more cooperative capitalism where salaried managers were prepared to be conciliatory out of the profits of the absentee shareholders and where the democratic State was able and willing to regulate into oblivion the traditional evils of market anarchy and involuntary unemployment. Mikardo