Contemporary British Politics

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Contemporary British Politics

4th edition

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Lynton Robins
and
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This book is dedicated to the
memory of Bill Coxall

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Preface to the fourth edition

This edition of *Contemporary British Politics* has required more or less complete rewriting to take account of the dramatic changes in British politics since publication of the third edition just one year into New Labour's first term in office.

Most importantly the whole British system of government has been radically overhauled, largely as a consequence of New Labour's constitutional reform programme. Thus in this new edition we have had to not only incorporate extensive new material, but also rethink the analysis of British government in the light of developments which challenge long established constitutional principles and raise fundamental questions about the whole future of the British state.

The international context in which British politics takes place has been transformed by the events of 11 September 2001, the Afghanistan war and the crisis over Iraq. The introduction of the euro in most of the other EU member states and the agreement over enlargement have marked a step change in the development of the European Union, and posed new policy dilemmas for the British government. There have been significant changes in the process and content of British politics, with major developments in almost every field of policy.

The chapter structure of this edition has been modified to take account of the implications of devolution and the increasing significance of the EU, with analysis of the more familiar British government in Whitehall and Westminster in Part III complemented by an assessment of new patterns of multi-level governance in Part IV. The design and layout of the book has been reconsidered to make this edition as user-friendly as possible. Throughout we have tried to ensure that the illustrative material effectively complements the

text. We have kept some of the tried and tested features, such as the definition boxes and other illustrative boxed material, although here have tried to make the boxes shorter and crisper. We have added 'comparative' boxes to illuminate our analysis of British politics by setting it in an international context. We have added more graphs and charts and tried to simplify the presentation of tables. However, to keep the overall length and cost of the book in reasonable proportions, and to avoid undue interference with the flow of the text, we decided to transfer some very useful features included in the old third edition to the new companion website.

New to this edition is a companion www site which can be found at <<http://www.palgrave.com/politics/coxall>> and performs a number of functions. One is obviously to provide regular updates on all the topics covered in the book as a result of on-going political events and developments, together with the latest scholarly analysis. We have also transferred to the website some of the features incorporated in previous editions, including additional teaching material, revision summaries, questions and assignments, which we have expanded and plan to continue to develop in future.

Bill Coxall, who wrote the first three editions of *Contemporary British Politics* with Lynton Robins, died in March 1999 shortly after publication of the third edition. This edition is dedicated to Bill, without whom it would not exist, and from whom it has inherited many of its most learned and fluent passages. He has been sadly missed in the preparation of this edition, for which the extensive new material has been written by Lynton Robins with Robert Leach, who has also taken over Bill Coxall's previous coordinating role.

Lynton Robins
Robert Leach

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in this work but if any have been inadvertently overlooked the publishers will be pleased to make the necessary arrangements at the first opportunity.

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List of abbreviations

ACEA	Association of European Automobile Companies	DHSS	Department of Health and Social Security
ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers	DID	Department of International Development
AI	Amnesty International	DMU	directly managed unit
ALF	Animal Liberation Front	DOE	Department of the Environment (now part of DEFRA)
AM	additional member system	DSC	departmental select committee
APNI	Alliance Party of Northern Ireland	DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
ASH	Action on Smoking and Health	DUP	Democratic Unionist Party
AV	alternative vote	EAPC	Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (replaced by NATO-RC)
AWM	Advantage West Midlands (development agency)	ECAS	European Citizen Action Service
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation	ECHR	European Court of Human Rights
BEUC	European Bureau of Consumers' Associations	ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
BMA	British Medical Association	EDM	Early Day Motion
BMD	ballistic missile defence shield	EEA	European Economic Area
BNP	British National Party	EEB	European Environmental Bureau
BPFS	British Political Participation Survey	EEC	European Economic Community
BSA	British Social Attitudes	EEDA	East of England Development Agency
BSE	bovine spongiform encephalitis ('mad cow' disease)	EFTA	European Free Trade Association
BUF	British Union of Fascists	EGO	extra-governmental organisation
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy	EMDA	East Midlands Development Agency
CBI	Confederation of British Industry	EMS	European Monetary System
CCT	compulsory competitive tendering	EMU	economic and monetary union
CEPIC	European Chemistry Industry Council	EP	European Parliament
CEMR	Council of European Municipalities and Regions	ERM	Exchange Rate Mechanism of the EMS
CLEAR	Campaign for Lead-Free Air	ESC	Economic and Social Committee
CLP	Constituency Labour Party	ETUC	European Trade Union Confederation
CND	Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament	EU	European Union
COPA	Committee of Professional Agricultural Organisations (EU)	EUROBIT	European Association of Manufacturers of Business Machines and Information Technology
COREPER	Committee of Permanent Representatives (EU)	FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
CPAG	Child Poverty Action Group	FPTP	first-past-the post
CPGB	Communist Party of Great Britain	FSA	Financial Services Authority
CPRE	Council for the Protection of Rural England	GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
CRE	Commission for Racial Equality	GCHQ	Government Communications Headquarters
DEFRA	Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs		
DHA	District Health Authority		

GDP	Gross Domestic Product	Ofgem	Office of Gas and Electricity Markets
GLA	Greater London Authority		
GNP	Gross National Product	Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
GOR	government offices for the regions	OFT	Office of Fair Trading
HAT	Housing Action Trust	Ofel	Office of Telecommunications
IMF	International Monetary Fund	Ofwat	Office of Water Services
IMRO	Investment Management Regulatory Organisation	OMOV	one man (person) one vote
		ONE	One North East (development agency)
INLA	Irish National Liberation Army		
IPPR	Institute for Public Policy Research	OPEC	Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries
IRA	Irish Republican Army	ORR	Office of the Rail Regulator
IRC	Industrial Reorganisation Corporation	PAC	Public Accounts Committee
		PC	Plaid Cymru
ITA	Independent Television Authority	PESC	Public Expenditure Survey Committee
LA	local authority		
LSE	London School of Economics	PFI	private finance initiative
LMS	local management of schools	PfP	Partnership for Peace (for former Warsaw Pact members, now replaced by EAPC)
MAD	mutually assured destruction		
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (now subsumed into DEFRA)	PLP	Parliamentary Labour Party
		PM	Prime Minister
MEP	member of the European Parliament	PMQT	Prime Minister's Question Time
		PPP	public-private partnerships
MINIS	Management Information System for Ministers	PPS	Parliamentary Private Secretary
		PR	proportional representation
MLR	Minimum Lending Rate	PSAs	public service agreements
MoD	Ministry of Defence	PSBR	Public Sector Borrowing Requirement
MP	Member of Parliament		
MSP	Member of the Scottish Parliament	PUP	Progressive Unionist Party
MWA	Member of the Welsh Assembly	QAA	Qualifications and Assessments Authority
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation	QMV	qualified majority voting
		qualgo	quasi-autonomous local government organisation
NATO-RC	NATO-Russia Council		
NDO	non-departmental body	quango	quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisation
NDPB	non-departmental public body		
NEB	National Enterprise Board	RDA	regional development agency
NEC	National Executive Committee (of the Labour Party)	RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
NEDC	National Economic Development Council (now defunct)	RSPCA	Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
NF	National Front		
NFU	National Farmers' Union	SCS	Senior Civil Service
NHS	National Health Service	SDLP	Social Democratic and Labour Party
NIA	Northern Ireland Assembly	SDP	Social Democratic Party (now subsumed into Liberal Democratic Party)
NNDR	national non-domestic rates		
NWDA	Northwest Development Agency		
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development	SDR	strategic defence review
		SEA	Single European Act

SEEDA	South East England Development Agency	UKIP	UK Independence Party
SF	Sinn Fein	UKUP	United Kingdom Unionist Party
SNP	Scottish National Party	UN	United Nations
SOLACE	Society of Local Authority Chief Executives	UNICE	Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederations of Europe
SSP	Scottish Socialist Party	USA	United States of America
STV	single transferable vote	UUP	Ulster Unionist Party
SWERDA	South West of England Regional Development Agency	UVF	Ulster Volunteer Force
SWP	Socialist Workers' Party	VAT	value added tax
TGWU	Transport and General Workers Union	vCJD	variant Creutzfeld-Jacob disease (the human variant of 'mad cow' disease)
TUC	Trades Union Congress	WA	Welsh Assembly
UDA	Ulster Defence Association	WRP	Workers' Revolutionary Party
UDC	Urban Development Corporation	WTO	World Trade Organisation
UDP	Ulster Democratic Party	YF	Yorkshire Forward (development agency)
UK	United Kingdom		