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BRITISH POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES

Second edition

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PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION

This book provides a simple introduction to the extremely complex and controversial subject of British political ideologies. It is intended primarily for both undergraduates and A level students, although hopefully it will also interest any intelligent layperson who desires to know more about liberalism, socialism, conservatism and other political creeds.

The scope and breadth of the book inevitably requires a somewhat brief and perhaps over-simplified treatment of great themes and complex ideas. Moreover, although I have tried to be as dispassionate and detached as possible in discussing a wide range of sharply opposed viewpoints, it is only too likely that my interpretation of some ideologies will be seen as partial or narrow. I can only repeat that this book is intended as an introductory text. Those who seek further illumination are advised to delve more deeply into the extensive literature on political ideas, some of which is indicated in the bibliography.

I would like to thank John Benyon, the series editor, and Clare Grist of Philip Allan for their help and advice. Several colleagues at Leeds Polytechnic have read part of the manuscript, and I would like to thank in particular Brendan Sheehan and Janie Percy-Smith for their detailed and constructive advice. I also owe a debt to my students, particularly on the BA Economics and Public Policy degree, for sharpening my ideas.

I would also like to acknowledge a few longer-term debts – to my late mother, and my father, for the support they gave to my education,

and my shifting, eccentric academic pursuits, and to my old history teacher, Michael Cherniavsky, who first stimulated my interest in political ideas and much else besides. My greatest debt is, however, to my wife, Judith, without whose constant encouragement and support this book would certainly never have been written.

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION

A commission for a second edition is gratifying to an author's pride, but carries little additional academic kudos. Had I realised how much work would be involved I might not have agreed to it so readily. Those familiar with the original book will notice several changes. There are three completely new separate chapters on nationalism, feminism and the Greens, various other additional sections and diagrams, as well as some necessary updating to take account of developments in the last few years. I have also taken the opportunity to undertake some restructuring of material, for example on the chapter on labourism and socialism. As a result it is now a considerably bigger book; whether it is a better book I leave my readers to decide. The debts I acknowledged in the preface to the first edition still apply, although sadly Michael Cherniavsky has since died. For this revised version I owe particular thanks to my colleague Janie Percy-Smith, who gave valuable advice for the material on feminism (although convention requires that I acquit her of any blame for the final result), the anonymous reviewer of an early draft of my chapters on the Greens, and all at Prentice Hall, including Clare Grist (who inveigled me into undertaking the revision), Ruth Pratten, and Ian MacQuarrie. My greatest debt is, however, once more to my wife, Judith.