AGAINST EQUALITY

Readings on Economic and Social Policy

The compilation and publication of this set of readings has been assisted by a grant from the Foundation for Education in Economics, whose Trustees are: Professor Julius Gould, Professor Jack Wiseman and Simon Webley

AGAINST EQUALITY

Readings on Economic and Social
Policy

≠

Edited by

WILLIAM LETWIN

The Macmillan Education
in association with the
Foundation for Education in Economics

M

Selection, editorial matter, introductory chapter 'The Case Against Equality' and concluding chapter 'The Grail of Equality' © Foundation for Education in Economics 1983

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without permission.

First published 1983 by
THE MACMILLAN PRESS LTD
London and Basingstoke
Companies and representatives throughout the world

ISBN 978-0-333-35313-4 ISBN 978-1-349-17175-0 (eBook)
DOI 10.1007/978-1-349-17175-0

Typeset by
WESSEX TYPESETTERS LTD
Frome, Somerset

Contents

<i>List of Contributors</i>	vii
<i>Editor's Preface</i>	ix
1 The Case Against Equality WILLIAM LETWIN (1983)	1
PART ONE: EGALITARIANISM, ITS THEORETICAL WEAKNESSES	
2 Against Equality Again J. R. LUCAS (1977)	73
3 The Idea of Equality as a Substantive Principle of Society JOHN CHARVET (1969)	106
4 The Pursuit of Equality ROBERT NISBET (1974)	124
5 The Procrustean Ideal ANTONY FLEW (1978)	148
PART TWO: EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY AND EQUALITY BEFORE THE LAW	
6 Equality of Opportunity CHARLES FRANKEL (1971)	167
7 Equality of Opportunity and Equality of Results JAMES S. COLEMAN (1973)	189
8 The Idea of Equality Reconsidered ANDREW WARD (1973)	199
9 Equality Under the Law GEOFFREY MARSHALL (1971)	207

vi CONTENTS

PART THREE: ECONOMIC INEQUALITY, ITS EXTENT
AND CAUSES

10	How Unevenly Is Wealth Spread Today?
GEORGE POLANYI & JOHN B. WOOD (1974)	229
11	The Stability of Inequality
KENNETH E. BOULDING (1975)	261
12	Equality and Economic Theory
HARRY G. JOHNSON (1975)	276

PART FOUR: REDISTRIBUTION, ITS AILMENTS

13	The Egalitarian Imperative
RICHARD E. WAGNER (1977)	297
14	Can Inequality Be Cured?
NATHAN KEYFITZ (1973)	313
15	The Charity of the Uncharitable
GORDON TULLOCK (1971)	328
16	Economic Justice and the Economist
RICHARD A. POSNER (1973)	345
17	The Grail of Equality
PETER BAUER (1983)	360

<i>Notes and References</i>	383
-----------------------------	-----

<i>Index of Names</i>	394
-----------------------	-----

<i>Index of Subjects</i>	397
--------------------------	-----

List of contributors

PETER BAUER: Professor of Economics, London School of Economics and Political Science; sometime Fellow of Caius College, Cambridge.

KENNETH E. BOULDING: White Professor at Large, Cornell University.

JOHN CHARVET: Reader in Political Science, London School of Economics.

JAMES S. COLEMAN: Professor of Sociology, University of Chicago.

ANTONY FLEW: Professor of Philosophy, University of Reading.

THE LATE CHARLES FRANKEL: Former President, National Humanities Center, Columbia University.

THE LATE HARRY G. JOHNSON: Former Charles F. Grey Distinguished Service Professor, University of Chicago; former Professor of Economics, London School of Economics.

NATHAN KEYFITZ: Andelot Professor of Sociology and Demography, Harvard University.

WILLIAM LETWIN: Professor of Political Science, London School of Economics.

J. R. LUCAS: Fellow of Merton College, Oxford.

viii LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

GEOFFREY MARSHALL: Fellow of The Queen's College, Oxford.

ROBERT NISBET: Resident Scholar, American Enterprise Institute, Washington, DC.

THE LATE GEORGE POLANYI: Former Research Officer, Institute of Economic Affairs, London.

RICHARD A. POSNER: Professor of Law, University of Chicago.

GORDON TULLOCK: University Distinguished Professor of Economics and Public Choice, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

RICHARD E. WAGNER: Professor of Economics, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

ANDREW WARD: Sometime Senior Member, Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge.

JOHN B. WOOD: Deputy Director, Institute of Economic Affairs, London.

Editor's preface

I have designed this book to challenge and to rebut egalitarianism. My own view of the matter is set out in the introductory essay. I selected the other essays because they illuminate certain issues that arise in scrutinising the egalitarian position. But I should emphasise that the inclusion of an essay in this collection is not to be interpreted as a sign that the author shares either my general opposition to egalitarianism (though many of the authors evidently do) or my particular views on any of the more specific questions which they and I discuss. In short, the essays collected here do not hew to any orthodoxy.

Although the essays are grouped in accordance with certain main topics, most of them are not narrowly confined to one of those topics but bear also on the broader issue.

The question of 'social equality' – which concerns differences of status, class, esteem and the like – receives less attention here than other aspects of equality. Reasons are suggested, nevertheless, for concluding that the claims of egalitarianism in the social sphere are as baseless as in any other and that the prospects for equalisation are more hopeless than elsewhere.

I should like to thank for their help in producing this volume the Foundation for Education in Economics, and particularly Professor Julius Gould and Mr Simon Webley.

My grateful acknowledgement is due to the authors and original publishers of the selected essays for permission to reproduce them here. The source is given at the foot of the opening page of each chapter. The variant usages of British and American English have been retained as in the original printings.

W.L.