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Developments in British Politics 3

Edited by
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Andrew Gamble
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Preface

This is the third *Developments in British Politics* volume. Like its predecessors, it aims to provide a rigorous analysis of contemporary events and recent changes in the British political scene. As with previous volumes, all the chapters included here are wholly new and, with the exception of the editors, a completely different set of authors has been recruited for this project. These authors represent a range of viewpoints and, while all have been asked to combine sensitivity to theoretical issues with their discussion of empirical issues, there has been no attempt to impose uniformity on the treatment of individual themes.

Readers familiar with the format of *Developments in British Politics* will notice that we have made a number of substantial changes in this volume. Firstly, the interpretative overview written by Patrick Dunleavy with which previous volumes concluded has now been removed and extended into a separate book, *Analysing British Politics* (Dunleavy, forthcoming). Because analytic themes and debates change more slowly than political processes themselves, there seemed little justification for reprinting essentially similar material in each new volume of *Developments in British Politics* especially given the frequency with which we revise and update our material. Instead, we have included in this edition a short introduction which considers some of the major avenues for change in the British political scene open in the 1990s and a concluding chapter which looks at some overarching themes raised by the detailed topic chapters. We hope that this rearrangement of the book, which brings it into line with the companion volumes on German, French, Soviet and American politics which have grown out of our original conception, will make it more accessible and useful for students and teachers.

Secondly, we have given more prominence to the European dimension of British politics. A new Part One chapter focuses

on Britain's relations with the European Community. But in addition we asked all our contributors to consider the ways in which British involvement in the European Community has affected their subject area. In most cases substantial new sections of individual chapters have resulted and in all chapters this previously somewhat hidden topic is now explicitly considered. Our focus is still firmly on British politics, but the politics of a Britain increasingly integrated with its European neighbours rather than the freestanding polity beloved of many traditional textbooks.

Thirdly, we have been able to expand our coverage of empirical changes into new areas. Most notably we have responded to the rapid growth of environmental issues and politics by including a new Part Two policy chapter to complement those on social, economic and foreign policy which have appeared in previous editions. In our judgement, increased environmental awareness and the politicisation of 'green' issues is likely to be a permanent feature of the British political scene in the 1990s.

Fourthly, our selection of current issues for coverage in Part Three includes chapters on education (where the government's reforms have been particularly extensive) and the nexus of issues surrounding privatisation and deregulation.

Any contributed volume depends to a large extent for its success on the cooperation of individual authors and their willingness to submit to deadlines and requests for last-minute revisions and changes. We have been fortunate once again in our team. Despite heavy teaching and writing commitments and in some cases the complications of extensive travel, all our authors kept their part of the collective academic bargain.

A special acknowledgement is due to Henry Drucker who left the editorial team after his appointment as Director of Development at the University of Oxford. Henry conceived the idea of *Developments in British Politics*, and was general editor for the first two volumes. We greatly missed his editorial skills this time, and for our part and on behalf of the publishers would like to record our thanks for all he has contributed. We should also like to thank Bruno Bargery, John Barnes, Brendan O'Leary, and Seamus Tucker, all of whom gave special assistance with the production of the book.

As in previous volumes we owe a heavy debt to our publisher Steven Kennedy without whose intellectual input and practical advice the project would be much the poorer.

Finally we thank the many students, teachers, academics, and general readers who have pointed out neglected issues or topics not explored in *Developments in British Politics 2*. We are keen to have as much feedback as possible, and welcome comments on this edition, and suggestions for the future.

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