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Developments in British Politics 5

Edited by

Patrick Dunleavy

Andrew Gamble

Ian Holliday

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Preface

For this fifth *Developments in British Politics* volume the editorial teams remains unchanged from *Developments 4*, but as ever our list of authors is entirely new.

The task we set contributors this time was to analyse the challenges facing Britain's first Labour government for nearly two decades in the context both of the Conservative legacy and of the main theories and models developed by political scientists to explain British politics. All chapters are thus focused squarely on the late 1990s, and on the emerging political agenda of the twenty-first century.

Our Introduction (Chapter 1) examines the key contemporary approaches to understanding British politics, and our Chapter 2 explains Britain's place both in Europe and in the wider global order. The book then divides into three main parts. Part I analyzes constituent elements of British political behaviour. Part II investigates the key institutions of the British state. Part III examines central aspects of British public policy. Our final chapter (Chapter 18) considers the political agenda Britain will face in the twenty-first century. This structure is somewhat different from that employed in previous editions, chiefly because it integrates shorter issues chapters into the main parts of the book. New topics covered in this edition include political participation, crime and public order, and a special case study of BSE and the politics of food.

The timing of the 1997 general election made what is in any event a tight publishing schedule almost unmanageable. We are grateful to our contributors for meeting our very demanding deadlines. We are also grateful to David Butler and Nigel Allington for advice at a late stage in the process. Our greatest thanks go, however, to our publisher Steven Kennedy, who on top of his customary efficiency and enthusiasm was critical in keeping the book on schedule when it seemed all too likely to fall behind.

It is no exaggeration to say that this book would not have been published on time without the hard work put in by Steven and his team at Macmillan. We are more than usually grateful to him.

Comments, suggestions and criticism are always helpful and would be greatly welcomed by us. We are currently planning a *Developments in British Politics* web site for 1998. When ready, this will be accessible through the Macmillan web site: <http://www.macmillan-press.co.uk>.

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