

# Foreword

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I very much welcome the publication of this book. It explores an important strand of Labour's intellectual history, no less relevant today despite the fact that the huge controversies surrounding the views of the authors now appear far distant.

The strength of the Labour Party has always been its values – simple truths that hold party members together and bind them to the people of Britain. The story of Labour over the last generation is the story of a party that has returned to its roots. We have re-discovered the ideals of community, equality and solidarity that are the foundation of our party, applying them in new ways to the massively changed world in which we live.

In setting out the case for change and renewal, the party has struck a chord with the British people. They never deserted Labour values, but sometimes doubted that the party could ever implement them. Our project would never have been possible without hard and rigorous thinking, and a willingness to challenge conventional assumptions and sentimental attachments. Goodwill and a warm heart would not have been enough. That is why through the generations, the contribution of the Labour intellectuals celebrated in this book has been of outstanding and irreplaceable value.

I am proud of the way that New Labour has taken the best of the party's values, and restated them afresh for a new generation and a new world. We owed it to the people of this country to establish ourselves as a modern party of government.

I hope that this book will be read by everyone who wants to know something about Labour and its history, and about the improvements that it has brought to Britain in the past.

But it also urges us to look forward. We must not allow ourselves to run out of steam. Neither must we wait for a return to opposition before we tackle the challenge of renewal. Learning from the past will ensure that we prepare rigorously for the future.

The editor and publishers have done us a great service by bringing this collection together.

*Rt. Hon. Tony Blair MP*  
*May 2004*