

learn more about the Party and its predecessors. The following is a provisional list of titles:

*General Studies:*

- Adelman, Paul, *The Decline of the Liberal Party 1910-31* (1981)  
Adelman, Paul, *Gladstone, Disraeli and Later Victorian Politics* (1970)  
Bogdanor, Vernon (ed), *Liberal Party Politics* (1983)  
Cook, Chris, *A Short History of the Liberal Party 1900-92* (1993)  
Dangerfield, George, *The Strange Death of Liberal England* (1935, reprinted 1983)  
Eccleshall, Robert, *British Liberalism: Liberal Thought from the 1640s to the 1980s* (1986)  
Joyce, Peter, *Towards the Sound of Gunfire* (1993)  
Kilmarnock, Alastair (ed), *The Radical Challenge: The Response of Social Democracy* (1987)  
Searle, Geoffrey, *The Liberal Party: Triumph and Disintegration 1886-1929* (1992)  
Stephenson, Hugh, *Claret and Chips: The Rise of the SDP* (1982)  
Stevenson, John, *Third Party Politics since 1945: Liberals, Alliance and Liberal Democrats* (1993)  
Vincent, John, *The Formation of the British Liberal Party 1857-68* (1972)  
Williams, Geoffrey Lee, & Williams, Alan Lee, *Labour's Decline and the Social Democrats' Fall* (1989)

*Biographies/Autobiographies:*

- Clarke, Peter, *A Question of Leadership* (1992)  
Grimond, Jo, *Memoirs* (1979)  
Jenkins, Roy, *Asquith* (1988)  
Jenkins, Roy, *A Life at the Centre* (1991)  
Matthew, H.C.G., *Gladstone 1809-1874* (1988)  
Owen, David, *Time to Declare* (1991)  
Powell, Enoch, *Joseph Chamberlain* (1977)  
Pugh, Martin, *Lloyd George* (1988)  
Steel, David, *Against Goliath: David Steel's Story* (1989)

The list will eventually be issued with a short description/ summary of each title, to give more information.

If you think that there are any startlingly good books missed off the list above, or that some of those here shouldn't be on, please let **Duncan Brack** know: this will be of great help.

**History Group Publications**

We can be pleased with the fact that we have now helped Liberal Democrat Publications with the production of two titles:

*Learning the Lessons of History: Hung Parliaments and Coalition Governments*, by Lord Jenkins of Hillhead, is the text of the speech he gave, plus the discussion afterwards, to the History Group fringe meeting in 1991. It covers the British experience of such eventualities throughout the twentieth century. Price: £2.95.

*Towards the Sound of Gunfire: A Short History of the Liberal Democrats*, by Peter Joyce, has been printed in the last month, and was written with help from History Group members. A brief history of the Liberal Democrats and their forebears, it costs £2.50.

Both are available from Liberal Democrat Publications, 8 Fordington Green, Dorchester, DT1 1GB (0305 264646). Remember to add 20% P&P.

**Book Review**

*The Liberal Party: Triumph and Disintegration, 1886-1929*, by G.R.Searle. Macmillan, 1992; £30 (hardback), £8.99 (paperback),

Mr Searle is not the first historian to explore this territory. That dubious honour probably belongs to George Dangerfield and his *Strange Death of Liberal England*, a book now widely regarded as an idiosyncratic and unreliable account. Many other historians have followed and there is now a wealth of literature on the topic, so much that it's about time someone wrote a guidebook.

Fortunately, Searle has done just that and what we have here is essentially an historiographical

account. Why did the Liberal Party collapse?  
Searle surveys the rival theories.

Was it the Great War placing an intolerable strain on liberal ideology (for example, by forcing a Liberal Government to introduce conscription) that had the fatal impact? Was it that the growing importance of class divisions helped Labour? Or was the decline caused by individual personalities and quarrels?

Was the collapse of the Liberal Party inevitable or avoidable? Cock-up or conspiracy? Given the complex arguments, this is a very fair survey of the available literature and divergent accounts, with a thorough bibliography. An excellent starting point for anyone delving into the area for the first time, Searle also supplies a useful frame of reference for those who thought they already knew their way around.

One quibble: thirty quid for a small hardback of less than 300 pages? Will publishers stop at nothing to rip off hard-pressed libraries? Buy the paperback or borrow it from your library, assuming they can afford it.

Simon Titley

(The above review first appeared in *Liberator* magazine, and is reprinted by kind permission of Liberator Publications, Flat 1, 24 Alexandra Grove, London N4 2LS.)

## Academics Database

Another project we have in mind is to build up a database of academics researching and writing about Liberal, SDP and Liberal Democrat history - to encourage cross-fertilisation of ideas and to make it easier for students starting off on the topic - and also to give us a pool of people to invite to speaker meetings! Any suggestions for inclusion should go to **Duncan Brack** together with an address: we will then contact them and ask their permission to go on the database.

## Publicity

The History Group clearly needs more publicity to attract members and interest. A standard article is being prepared, and will be sent to the following publications and organisations:

*Liberal Democrat News*

*Liberator*

*The Reformer*

*Free Radical* (youth/student Lib Dem journal)

LINK Bulletin

*History Today*

*Political Studies Association News*

*Historical Journal*

Institute of Contemporary British History

Any suggestions for additional publications would be very welcome: please send them to **Duncan Brack**.

## Endword

We aim to publish this Newsletter once every three to four months, depending on the material available, the Editor's time and the existence of others willing to help. Contributions - letters, articles, and, especially, book reviews - are invited. If they are intended for publication, please type them and, if possible, send them on disc (any programme, but only 3.5" discs, please). The deadline for the next issue is 31 January 1994.

People referred to above can be contacted at:

Newsletter contributions, responses to plans outlined above, suggestions for academics database, publicity: **Duncan Brack**, Flat 9, 6 Hopton Road, Streatham, London SW16 2EQ

Membership (annual membership is £5.00; cheques should be made payable to 'Liberal Democrat History Group'): **Patrick Mitchell**, 6 Palfrey Place, London SW8 1PA.

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