

# The *Dictionary of Liberal Quotations*

Duncan Brack and Robert Ingham introduce the Liberal Democrat History Group's latest publication.

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Who said that 'Liberals are to be the oxen to drag the Labour wain over the rough roads of Parliament ... and ... when there is no further use for them, they are to be slaughtered. That is the Labour idea of cooperation'? Simon Hughes, campaigning to become leader of the Liberal Democrats? John Prescott, welcoming Charles Kennedy's election? In fact, this was David Lloyd George's description of the role of the Liberal Party during the 1923 Parliament, when Asquith's Liberals helped prop up the minority Labour administration. This is just one example of how the key themes of British politics recur from one generation to the next, drawn from the pages of a new publication — the *Dictionary of Liberal Quotations*.

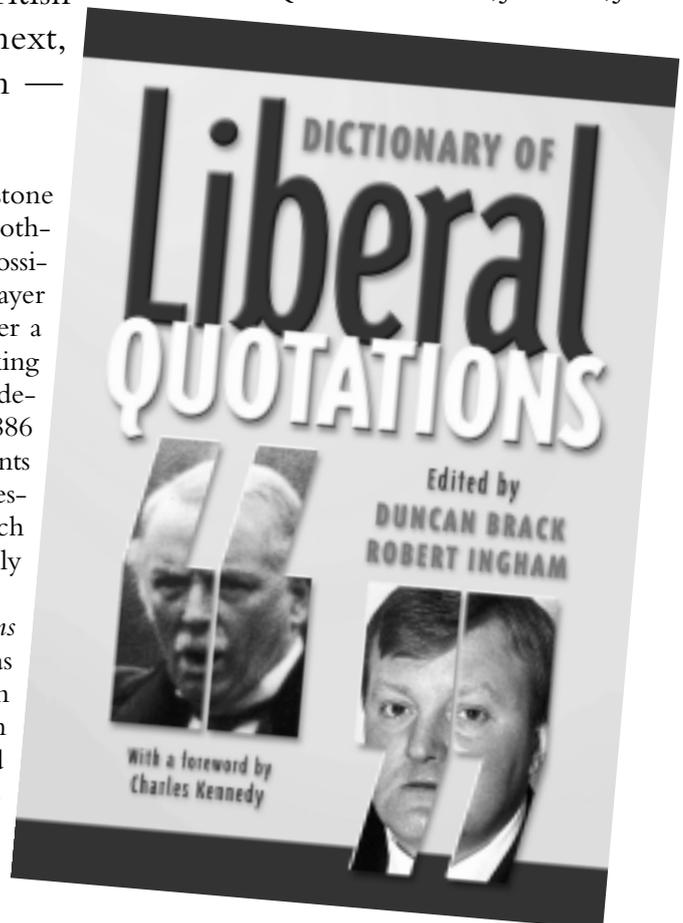
To give another example, when Gladstone wrote in 1887: 'one prayer absorbs all others: Ireland, Ireland, Ireland,' could he possibly have envisaged that the same prayer would be on the lips of politicians over a century later? How right he was, looking back, to declare when winding up the debate on the Home Rule Bill in June 1886 that this was 'one of those golden moments in our history' to resolve the Irish question, 'one of those opportunities which may come and may go, but which rarely returns'.

The *Dictionary of Liberal Quotations* also illustrates how political debate has changed over the years. William Harcourt, leader of the Liberal Party in the closing years of the last century, said in response to the increased emphasis being placed on social policy: 'we are all socialists now', words on which many members of the present govern-

ment might choke. And surely Charles Kennedy will not echo the appeal for recruits launched by a predecessor, Clement Davies: 'I have nothing to offer materially, no position, no career, and certainly not safety. I can only offer faith, and with that faith I demand a sacrifice'.

As well as including the most memorable quotes from Liberal Democrat, Liberal, Social Democrat and Whig politicians, from Charles Kennedy to Charles James Fox, William Gladstone to Shirley Williams, the *Dictionary of Liberal Quotations* will be an important source of reference on the development of liberal and social democratic thought.

Quotes from Paine, Jefferson, J. S.



I am for peace,  
retrenchment and  
reform, the watchword  
of the great Liberal  
Party thirty years ago.  
*John Bright*

You know what they  
say: if God had been  
a Liberal, we wouldn't  
have had the ten  
commandments. We'd  
have had the ten  
suggestions.  
*Christopher Bigsby  
and Malcolm  
Bradbury*

All the world over, I  
will back the masses  
against the classes.  
*W. E. Gladstone*

Faith, hope and  
canvassing — and  
the greatest of these  
is canvassing.  
*Frank Worman*

In 1929 the wise, far-  
seeing electors of my  
native Hereford sent  
me to Westminster  
and, two years later,  
the lousy bastards  
kicked me out.  
*Frank Owen*

Mill, Hobhouse, Keynes, Beveridge, Locke, Green, Tawney and Dahrendorf feature extensively. Many quotations from opponents of the Liberal Democrats and its predecessor parties have been included. While the writings of Lishman and Greaves and Hain explain the theoretical underpinnings of community politics, quotations from Peter Tatchell and Alan Clark show what opponents of the Liberal Democrats think of the strategy in practice. Everyone knows that the SDP aimed to 'break the mould' of British politics: the *Dictionary of Liberal Quotations* explains the origin of the phrase, and includes Margaret Thatcher's uncharacteristically witty response.

Over 200 pages of quotations from over 600 politicians, thinkers, academics, writers and others are included in the *Dictionary of Liberal Quotations*, which has been put together by members of the Liberal Democrat History Group. Charles Kennedy and Robert Maclennan have written forewords and, like last year's *Dictionary of Liberal Biography*, the *Dictionary of Liberal Quotations* is published in hardback by Politico's Publications and will be available from September, priced £18 plus £2.60 postage and packing. Subscribers to the *Journal* benefit from a special offer price of £14.40; an order form is enclosed with this issue.

The two companion volumes, the *Dictionary of Labour Quotations* and the *Dictionary of Conservative Quotations*, will be published at the same time, and will also be available for £18 each (£45 for all three bought together). *Journal* readers will of course be pleased to hear that the *Dictionary of Liberal Quotations* contains the largest number of quotes! This important source of reference is sure to be popular with Liberal Democrats, and also with those with a general interest in the history of the party, its predecessors and with liberal and social democrat thought, for many years to come.

*Duncan Brack and Robert Ingham are the editors of the Dictionary of Liberal Quotations.*

Go back to your  
constituencies and  
prepare for  
government!  
*David Steel*

The only part of the  
conduct of anyone for  
which he is amenable  
to society is that which  
concerns others. In the  
part which merely  
concerns himself, his  
independence is, of  
right, absolute. Over  
himself, over his own  
body and mind, the  
individual is sovereign.  
*John Stuart Mill*

As usual the Liberals  
offer a mixture of  
sound and original  
ideas. Unfortunately  
none of the sound  
ideas is original and  
none of the original  
ideas is sound.  
*Harold Macmillan*

Some men see things  
as they are and ask  
themselves: 'why?' I  
dream of things that  
never have been and  
ask myself: 'why not?'  
*Aeschylus*