



Attlee's Great Contemporaries: The Politics of Character

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In 1946, Clement Attlee came to power as Labour Prime Minister with a huge landslide majority. Under his leadership, some of the greatest reforms were initiated, not least the founding of The National Health Service. Attlee had a firm vision of a more just and equitable society, which the nation wanted. This firm vision is something that attracts Frank Field. To Field, Attlee is a hero. After retirement, Clement Attlee wrote a masterly series of profiles of his great contemporaries, many published at the time in The Observer. These are now collected together in a book for the first time. They are of extraordinary historical interest and will command an audience in their own right. In them we see how Attlee emphasised the importance of character for successful politics. To Field they epitomise the intellect and humanity of a hero of 20th Century politics, a man with profound qualities that are so poorly represented in today's politics. In a brilliant and most controversial introduction, Frank Field argues just how radical Attlee was, wishing, for example, to realign British foreign and defence policy. In his epilogue, Professor Peter Hennessy, shows the importance of Attlee in full historical perspective.

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