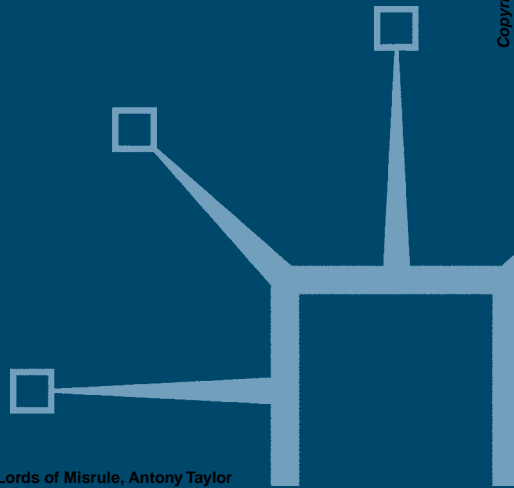# Lords of Misrule

Hostility to Aristocracy in Late Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century Britain

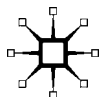### Antony Taylor

Lords of Misrule

Also by Antony Taylor

DOWN WITH THE CROWN: British Anti-Monarchism and Debates
About Royalty since 1790

Lords of Misrule

Hostility to Aristocracy in Late Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century Britain

Antony Taylor

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To Marsha,
For all I owe her

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Acknowledgements

This is a book that did not really begin life as a book at all. A passing interest in Henry George led to a number of conference papers, and an eventual realisation that the issue of anti-aristocracy provided a subject in its own right. Since then I have accrued debts and obligations almost on a daily basis. Thanks first of all, to those who have read parts of the volume. John Baxendale, Michael Bush, Peter Cain, and David Nash all read the chapter on George, and improved it immeasurably with their comments. Many insights have been gleaned in particular from John and Peter over the photocopier, truly the last available space for old style, informal exchange of information and views in the modern university system. Michael Bush has contributed enormously from his inexhaustible fund of references and unique book collection. Thanks too for the commentaries of Matthew Cragoe, Malcolm Chase, and Detlev Mares, none of whom will probably be aware of how much they have unwittingly contributed to this volume over the years. Parts of this book have provided the raw material for conference papers, and my thanks go in particular to my ex-supervisor Iori Prothero, who always uses these occasions to supply additional thoughts and reflections. This book would not look the way it does were it not for the marvellous illustrations supplied by Chetham's Library in Manchester. Thanks go to Fergus Wilde for reproducing them, and for making Chetham's, as it should be, a place of informal scholarship and fun. Thanks too for his friendship over the years. I would also like to thank Nick Weaver for insights into the political economy of Henry George that could only come from a thorough grounding in economics. My thanks go to him for his companionship on the 'Manchester Circuit'. Work on the book could not have been completed without a sabbatical from Sheffield Hallam University in 2003 and without the help of the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, who generously provided a travel grant that enabled me to consult the Henry George papers in New York. In addition, my thanks to Hannan, Liat and Sharon for pointing out to me that the summer really is not for working at all. Finally, this book is not to be confused with *Lord of Misrule*, a biography of Christopher Lee.

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Abbreviations

BUF	British Union of Fascists
CPGB	Communist Party of Great Britain
ILP	Independent Labour Party
LCC	London County Council
MCRL	Manchester Central Reference Library
NYPL	New York Public Library
SDF	Social Democratic Federation

Introduction

> The Right Hon. Sir William Alexander Louis Stephen Douglas-Hamilton, twelfth Duke of Hamilton and ninth Duke of Brandon, Marquis of Douglas and Clydesdale, Earl of Angus, Arran, Lanark and Selkirk, and Lord Hamilton, Avon, Polmont, Machanshire, Innerdale, Abernethy, Jedburgh Forest, Dare, and Shotclough, Baron of Dutton in the County of Chester, Duke of Chatelherault, Hereditary Keeper of Holyrood House, Premier Peer, and Knight Marischal of Scotland is dead. He carried the weary burden of his titles for fifty years, and then quietly laid them down by the shores of the blue Mediterranean.[1]

Aristocracy remains at the heart of British society. The view that the English 'love a lord' is in a long tradition. Writing in 1881, the visiting American scholar Richard Grant White wrote: 'In the history of England, one fact is remarkable in regard to its social aspect; there has never been that hatred of the nobles by the common people which has so often been manifested in other countries, and which in other countries has been the cause of so much political disturbance.'[2] Such views found their justification in the mid-Victorian state's benign view of itself as the guarantor of English liberties, and the exporter of the 'love of liberty' to the empire, and more benighted states. Central to this vision is the work of historians who see the British state as experiencing a tranquil, and relatively untroubled transition to popular democratic rule. In contrast to her near European neighbours, Britain was (and is) extolled for her exceptionalism, manifested in the values of restraint, a non-partisan sense of history, and a pragmatic politics rooted in a conception of the possible. For Jonathan Clark, Britain remains an *Ancien Regime* state in all but name, politically resilient and resistant to the ferment on the

Continent in the aftermath of the French Revolution.[3] In the grand narrative of the nineteenth century, aristocracy provided a social solvent, symbolising the English verities of continuity, stability, and selfless dedication to public service. In counties like Lancashire, where the great families were extinct or had declined, their passing was mourned, and the great manor houses became objects of pilgrimage, reverence, and local historical memory preserved intact by curators of antiquarian interest.[4]

Even the fiercest critics of aristocracy were indulgent of its foibles. The progressives, J.L. and Barbara Hammond, relating the history of the dispossession of the English peasantry, exonerated the gentry class of the charge of 'decadence' and were moved to list the virtuous aspects of British aristocratic rule. Noting landed society's involvement in local government, their rejection of the 'role of loungers and courtiers' at court, their role in warding off a French invasion in the Napoleonic Wars, and the strength of the Whig tradition, they saw the aristocracy as the custodians of classical ideas of political liberty, and as the architects of broader Liberal values:

> Foreign policy, the treatment of Ireland, of India, of slaves, are beyond the scope of this book, but in glancing at a class whose treatment of the English poor has been the subject of our study, it is only just to record that in other regions of thought and conduct they bequeathed a great inheritance of moral and liberal ideas: a passion for justice between peoples, a sense for national freedom, a great body of principles by which to check, refine and discipline the gross appetites of national ambition.[5]

On occasion, aristocratic 'die-hard' defenders of hereditary privilege were accorded a grudging respect for their bearing, candour, and platform presence. The obituary of the Tory reactionary, Lord Willoughby de Broke recorded of his last public appearance that 'the wavers of the Red Flag gave him cheers when he left the hall' and 'working men obviously imbued with advanced socialist or communist ideas actually listened without scoffing to his defence of heredity'.[6]

Central to such viewpoints was an acceptance of the aristocratic legacy in government, which was prized for its pragmatism and its acceptance of the necessity for change. For historians of the constitution, the role of aristocracy was pivotal in dictating the trajectory of nineteenth-century politics, and in expunging the narrow, sectional interests of unrepentant 'die-hard' elements. A traditional view of nineteenth-century politics sees aristocracy reconciled to the current of reformism

by the 1840s, and its acceptance within the political system as dependant on the marginalisation of 'Refuseniks' within landed society. Norman Gash depicts the debates around the early and late nineteenth-century reform bills as setting the tone for a realist aristocratic outlook, in which the aristocratic Tory rump was saved from extinction and from themselves, by Peel's rapprochement with reform opinion.[7] Peel saw a potential weakening of the authority of the state and of landed society in Tory attempts to resist or stifle the impetus towards reform. According to Gash, his final years in office were devoted to the exclusion of irreconcilable Tory landed opinion, implacably opposed to the repeal of the Corn Laws, from his government. For critics of reform, the 1832, 1867, and 1884 Reform Acts were an assault on the citadel of privilege, that might have been successfully opposed by a more intractable and united landed interest organised around core landed values on the model of the Prussian *Junker* class. Instead, the hallmark of the British aristocracy was its willingness to give ground. During the Reform Bill crises of 1832 and 1884, the Upper Chamber recognised the threat to their position, and embraced a moderate reform outlook as the best defence against more outspoken radical opinion. In 1867 and 1884 the sweeping away of the old 'pocket' and 'closed' boroughs by the creation of new, regularised mass constituencies where landed influence and control became increasingly diluted, led to a diminution in aristocratic influences over electors. Both the 1832 and 1884 Reform Acts excised the worst excesses of the unreformed system, whilst enabling a defence of the purified constitution to be mounted by aristocratically attuned Conservatives. Here, the balance and harmony of the reformed parliament favoured a persistence of aristocracy who yielded sufficient power and position to ensure their continuation within a mixed and balanced constitution, whilst maintaining their status and position within the executive and the dignified part of the constitution. Thereafter, the image of the benign, moderate, and reform-minded aristocrat exercising a strong sense of *noblesse oblige*, yet learning to bend with the political wind, became a cliché in accounts of nineteenth-century politics.[8]

Following an apparent acceptance of the nineteenth-century view of aristocracy as great conciliators, the social history of landed society was entirely disregarded. Until relatively recently it was a subject that was both neglected and under-researched. The role of the great aristocratic dynasties was simply acknowledged, rather than analysed. In the 1960s a welter of studies of working-class and middle-class culture had consigned aristocracy to the margins. In contrast to the eighteenth century, where the context of connection, placemen, and patrician values was

understood, in the nineteenth century the aristocracy was presumed to have declined in importance, and ultimately to have disappeared.[9] During these years, F.M.L. Thompson's study of the great landowning dynasties with its plea for further micro-level studies of the county aristocracy stood alone.[10] This neglect was grounded in the work of nineteenth-century Liberal historians like J.R. Green, who in his landmark 1874 *Short History of the British Isles* made his subject the victory of the common man: 'Not "English kings" or "English Conquest" but "the English people" were the matter of his writings' he declared.[11] In recent years, however, there has been a marked increase in interest in the role and position of the great titled families of the UK. This interest has been fuelled by reaction against an over-emphasis on those lower down the social scale, at the expense of the culture-formers and society leaders who shaped the social and political milieu of nineteenth-century society.

Not until the 1990s did the aristocracy find a cultural chronicler comparable with E.P. Thompson's epic study of the working class, or Lawrence Stone's analysis of the ascending middle orders. Through the researches of David Cannadine there has emerged a much fuller appreciation of political networks, aristocracy's role within party politics, and of the changed legal and cultural context of the aristocracy on the eve and in the aftermath of the Great War.[12] In line with a reappraisal of continental aristocracy, the British aristocracy was found to have a greater longevity and a more resistant and flexible social position than usually supposed.[13] Cannadine's books have fostered a plethora of new research that demonstrates a renewed interest in the activities and continuing political influence of aristocracy. The recent historiography of Victorian Britain has returned aristocracy to the heart of the economy, government, and cultural activity of Victorian towns. The years of relative neglect created a growth industry in studies of the aristocracy attuned to patterns of landownership, aristocracy's changed political role, and the 'society' connections that preserved their influence intact. It encompassed such divergent issues as their role as patrons, urban landowners, as court bohemians, and analysed their position both at the height of their power, and in the period of waning political influence. During these years the stories of individual society families were recovered, and excavated for meaning about the broader dynamics of political change from the 1860s to the 1920s. In recent work, David Cannadine, Peter Mandler, and others have explored the function of aristocratic connection, the culture of the stately home, and the political landscape that enabled Britain's aristocratic families to retain their position at the

apex of the social hierarchy.[14] Such work has restored something of the glamour and vibrancy of aristocratic salon culture which was apparent to contemporaries, but has been neglected altogether by the historians of formal high politics.

Scrutiny of landownership has also provided an avenue by which to explore aristocratic society and its social influences. Aristocracy, and the gradations of landed proprietors who make up the 'squirearchy', are defined by their relationship to the land. In the 1880s the social investigator John Bateman impishly coined the name 'acreocracy' to describe the hierarchy of land-owning in the shires. In places, the great land-owning dynasts were depicted, like the Derbys of Lancashire, as 'little kings' who controlled county government, sat as JPs, and were at the apex of a network of county families with long-standing ancestral links.[15] As late as the 1930s the Conservative MP and *bon viveur* Chips Channon could remark: 'It is the aristocracy which still rules England although nobody seems to believe it.'[16] Some of the large Scottish families exerted near feudal control over their tenantry in extensive areas of the Highlands and on the Borders of Scotland. The former Owenite reformer, Dr John Watts commented at a meeting in the Town Hall in Manchester in 1876: 'Sir George Campbell, who ought to know, said that there was no prince in India who was at all equal to the Duke of Argyll in Great Britain.'[17] Traditionally the decline of aristocratic networks in the nineteenth century is charted by analysis of its diminished importance on the land. From a situation of rural affluence in which they exercised near total control over the county government of the shires, they moved to a position of relative unimportance in the inter-war years. For most historians the agricultural depression of the 1870s was a watershed. After the collapse in the prices of arable yield in particular, depression set in, and land-owning became un-economic. Most successful families engaged in a diffusion of property-owning to buttress their declining fortunes.[18] For most scholars, this process marks the decline of the landed aristocracy proper. Analysis of the phenomenon suggests a move away from the aristocracy's traditional obligations on the land, to a new preoccupation with the realisation of the profits of the City investments and urban financial yield through ground rent and property speculation.[19]

In recent historiography, the centrality of aristocracy has been confirmed by a broader cultural reading of its impact and importance for nineteenth-century society. In the work of Martin Weiner and others, the failings of aristocracy have been held up as a warning, and an inspiration to the socially mobile. Historians like F.M.L. Thompson and Martin Weiner have constructed a societal vision around the model of

a porous aristocracy that absorbed an *arriviste*, mobile, upper middle class into landed society. In this reading, aristocracy was prized for its leisured and cultivated manners, as opposed to the rough untutored ways of the self-made man. Weiner's work in particular created a social interpretation of the changes within British society that derived from the traditional role of aristocracy.[20] According to his interpretation, aristocracy took the lion's share of the blame for the decline of Britain's manufacturing base. He views industry and enterprise as retarded by the migration of businessmen into the ranks of the landed gentry, where disdain for the unglamorous nature of manufacturing and contempt for the rough, unmannered attributes of business, encouraged a migration of capital into unproductive landownership and conspicuous leisured consumption. Here aristocracy was criticised for its backward-looking impotence that served to hinder attempts to diversify, or refine the economic wealth emerging from the Industrial Revolution. Weiner's thesis was adopted by those who highlighted the endemic problems occurring within British industry and manufacture in the 1980s, and became conflated with broader debates about the lack of emphasis placed on technical education in schools and universities. It provided a stereotypical view of aristocracy, that linked the work of Clark on Britain as an *Ancien Regime* state, with concerns about a lack of competitiveness within British manufacturing, and notions of 'Englishness' as a sentimental outlook that impeded social and political progress.

Recent historiographical debates have also emphasized the importance of aristocracy for the cult of 'Englishness' and emerging national identity from the middle years of the nineteenth century.[21] As David Cannadine has pointed out, aristocracy not only provided society's cultural-opinion formers, it also safeguarded its position within the political establishment, and in its Celtic and English variants acted as a truly national institution, refracting the different identities of the United Kingdom and of Ireland.[22] Oswald Mosley wrote about his bloodline: 'The Irish blood came through my father's mother, who was the daughter of Sir Thomas White, sometime Mayor of Cork. Thus I can claim to be British as well as English, and through Saxon and European blood, also European; the island freeze-up is really quite a recent invention.'[23] Moreover, aristocracy shaped the topography of the fields and estates that became emblematic of England. In the field of public history, aristocracy and Englishness are inextricably linked. Stately homes, lovingly contoured gardens, and enclosed pastures conveyed the vision of a timeless hierarchy of order and harmony.[24] As Robert Colls has noted, aristocracy, whilst fading in terms of power and position, set the

standard for a form of refined, cultivated, and aloof, 'Englishness' that aped and preserved intact some of the manners and values of aristocracy after it had disintegrated as a closed caste.[25] David Cannadine too has written about a 'Gothicisation' not only of England, but also of the empire, where the values of aristocracy were transplanted into a broader imperial domain.[26] In White Settler dominions like Canada, Australia and New Zealand, the aristocracy stamped their imprint on the surroundings. In such colonies the landscape was interpreted through a veil of English pastoralism as the habitat of a rural elite, defined by Anglicanism, a system of imperial honours, baronial architecture, and hunting. Here aristocratic incomers sought to replicate the English class system. Elsewhere in India they detected the trace elements of a feudalism similar in nature to the English structured hierarchy on the land, and much admired by those who saw Indian society as a mirror image of the values aristocratic governors and imperial bureaucrats sought to encourage in the imperial domains.[27]

Following the emergence of the Weiner thesis in the 1980s the study of aristocracy has reached an impasse. Since the early 1990s, most studies of the aristocratic state have concentrated on the economic and social circumstances of the patrician class. Nevertheless, dating the phenomenon of aristocratic decline remains problematic. Much of this new research is presented in biographical form. Charting the changing fortunes of aristocracy is complicated by a dependence on individual histories, and an over-emphasis on flamboyant case studies which necessarily dominate the biographical form. In addition, its timing and chronology remains vague, conveying a sense of uncertainty about the later changes in aristocracy in the twentieth century, where there is less available work on the nature of social mobility, and the evolving political role of aristocracy. Some of this material privileges heritage and nostalgia over a structural analysis of the role of aristocracy itself. Most histories have followed David Cannadine's view that aristocracy is best understood from the top down. Books like his *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy* simply take on trust the views that aristocrats articulated about themselves. More recent treatments of land-holding have taken a regional focus, or confined their assessment of the political implications of landownership to the internal debates within the political parties.[28] Again aristocracy's fate is explored as part of the machinations and intrigues of high politics, rather than as a legitimate phenomenon in its own right. Other recent works are too indulgent of aristocracy's foibles and examine only their surface veneer, and opulent style, whilst ignoring the politics of country-house ownership.[29] In short, no recent books

have attempted to bring together aristocracy, politics, and popular culture in a way that conceptualises the nineteenth-century view of aristocracy as a cultural force that expressed the tensions between the powerful and the powerless. In the nineteenth century, despite their depleted position, the aristocracy still held enormous sway and influence, and persisted as enormously powerful opinion-formers into the post-1945 period.

This is a book that takes a different view of the British aristocracy. In part it constitutes an exercise in reclamation. In addition it provides a scrutiny of the intellectual roots of anti-aristocratic ideas. It surveys the historiography of anti-aristocratic sentiment, analyses its centrality to the radical platform, and summarises the main intellectual currents of opposition to aristocracy. Viewing the notion of aristocracy in historical terms, it seeks to re-appraise contemporary arguments against privilege. Drawing together themes from intellectual history, popular politics and the historiography of British reformism, it considers the arguments against aristocracy, and scrutinises the occasions when the dislike of hereditary rule became the cornerstone of radical rhetoric. Despite the importance of this subject it has barely been explored in any systematic way. This book makes no claims for anti-aristocratic sentiment as a majoritarian movement within British political thought. Many of those who instinctively opposed the immorality, affluence, and indolence of aristocratic rulers in the nineteenth century are commonly regarded as outsiders inhabiting the fringes of politics. Nevertheless, it does explore terrain common to radicalism, Liberalism, and Labourism. Against the opulent backdrop of the royal state and a strong popular loyalism, those who oppose aristocracy have been forced to shout loudly about the misdeeds of tainted rulers. What opponents of aristocracy lacked in ideological weight they traditionally made up for in pungent prose. This is a 'raucous' tradition within popular politics that expresses the frustrations of those excluded from the glittering social world of nobility, and seemingly alienated by its excesses. Through an analysis of the political and literary opponents of aristocracy this book demonstrates the existence of a 'people's canon' that until now has barely been explored, and recalls anti-aristocratic spleen from some important sources.[30]

Historians of aristocracy have tended to overlook the critics of nobility. Despite this neglect, it is apparent that the history of aristocracy is one that was largely uncovered by its opponents. There is a lengthy historiography here that charts the evolution of British parliamentary institutions in attempts to usurp and supplant the influence of aristocracy. In its origins, the radical critique of aristocracy dates back to the seventeenth

and eighteenth centuries. It draws in particular on the role of thinkers like Tom Paine, Adam Smith and James Harrington who popularised criticisms of aristocratic influence.[31] Such notions locate the origins of anti-aristocratic belief in key historical events claimed by radicals as part of a reform pedigree, amongst them the English Civil War and the Glorious Revolution of 1688. Grounded in the events of 1688, 1832, 1867, and 1884, this structural analysis of British constitutional development analyses the role of reformers who arrayed themselves against entrenched aristocratic interests within the British state. These familiar resting places of British history form part of a narrative of liberty and reform that succeeded in curbing the politics of faction, patronage, and vested interests that grew out of aristocratic concerns. They constitute a radical meridian, that heralded the mass enfranchisement of the British electorate, marked a rejection of attempts to manage and retard the political nation by the forces of privilege, and demonstrate the changing social and cultural balance between land and industry, town and countryside. Here, the decline of aristocracy unloosed the fetters of the political system. Campaigning in the aristocratic and clerically-dominated minister town of Beverley in Yorkshire in 1868, Anthony Trollope discovered that voters were interested in only two things, the secret ballot and temperance.[32] The Ballot Act of 1872, and the Corrupt and Illegal Practices Act of 1883 sounded the death knell for a system that for centuries had been mired in 'Old Corruption'. After 1884, the small corrupt 'pocket' and 'closed' boroughs that had been havens of aristocratic influence were consigned to the past. In the great urban centres the current of municipal reform was, in part, inspired by the idea of purging the old aristocratic ground-rent proprietors from the municipal heartland. Parliamentary reform then, purified the system of politics, expelled aristocratic influences, and professionalized political parties. Alongside the loss of rural property came a diminished military role following the Cardwell reforms of the 1870s, and the ebbing of aristocratic power and position in the shires in the wake of the County Councils Bill of 1888. Historians of party forms have analysed the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in very similar terms. The changing complexion of Toryism from a movement of landed proprietors, to a movement of business and urban working men, and of Liberalism from a party of land and trade to an orphaned agitation of adventurers and urban 'faddists' with few links to the land, is again seen as proof of a decline in aristocracy, and of an accommodation with increasingly urban-centred concerns. Again, the dynamic of politics is explicable in terms of a decline in the interests and privilege of this narrow sectionalised landed elite.

The Wiener thesis provides an overwhelmingly negative view of the attributes of aristocracy and coincided with a political agenda that sought to expunge 'Old Etonians' and other public school values from the corridors of power. It was adopted, and was in part inspired, by Thatcherite political agendas that sought a 'classless Britain'. Its popularity provided the perverse paradox of a populist reassessment of aristocracy rooted in a broader project to regenerate society along non-elite lines in which the impetus to a meritocratic Britain drew on populist and 'New Right' analyses of the failings of British industry and commerce. It was accompanied by a renewed interest in all things middle class as an antidote to the apparent dominance of the aristocratic salon. The aristocracy, judged alongside the vigour and vitality of the Georgian and Victorian middle class, was found wanting, and in its failure symbolised the worst of Britain. The virtues of thrift, industry and financial rectitude symbolised the middle orders, whereas extravagance, wilful debt, and insolvency were defects of the hereditary aristocracy (see Appendix 1). There is surely much merit in the historical view that the middle class was defined, and in part created, by opposition to the aristocracy, and re-constituted its public character and social ethos defiantly in opposition to its failings.[33]

Far less attention, however, has been devoted to plebeian readings of the aristocracy. Most studies of aristocracy are rooted in the verdicts of their peers, rather than in the opinions of those from below. The most vivid and arresting nineteenth-century images of the aristocracy derive from the underground ballad literature, street songs, and anti-hereditary principle street-literature. In such work aristocrats were depicted as 'moral transgressors'. This book uncovers a demi-world of anti-aristocratic sentiment that, whilst acknowledged by historians, has never really been explored in any detail. Expressed through hostility to institutions like the House of Lords, and the social phenomenon of landownership, opposition to aristocracy suffused the pages of radical reform journals, and featured strongly in the culture of the popular platform.[34] Such material circulated widely within the reform constituency. In the eyes of most reformers, landed society came to symbolise unrestrained, non-accountable, aristocratic dominance. Many reformers came to reform through exposure to this prevailing anti-aristocratic ethos. The radical and apostate freethinker Joseph Barker recalled:

> I had suffered grievously in my early days. I had been subjected to all the hardships and miseries of extreme poverty. And all these sufferings I believed to have been caused by the corn and provision

laws, enacted and maintained by the selfishness of the aristocracy. I regarded the aristocracy, therefore, and all who took their part, as my personal enemies; as men who had robbed me of my daily bread, and all but sent me to an untimely grave. I regarded them as the greatest of criminals, the enemies of the human race. I considered them answerable for the horrors of the first great French Revolution, and for the miseries of the Irish Famine. I gave them credit for nothing good.[35]

Building on plebeian readings of the aristocracy, this book pays close attention to the concerns of the critics of the aristocratic state. It defines hostility to the aristocracy in the broadest terms throughout, and takes a long view of radicalism that locates some of the trace elements of the anti-aristocratic posture in the legacy of eighteenth century debates about the purity of the constitution. Moreover, it analyses the rhetoric of anti-aristocracy in relation to the context of the time, and is attuned to the deficiencies in the personal conduct of the nation's titled rulers that were ruthlessly exploited in the radical press.

Examination of aristocracy has been unaccountably absent from the literature on the continuities in popular politics between the hiatus of the post-Chartist years and the emergence of independent labour in the decade before the Great War.[36] The issue of mobilising a platform of political opposition to aristocracy was central to the effectiveness of those political groupings that hoped to establish a national image and reclaim the country from titled and immoral aristocrats and their underlings. Aristocrats were a special interest group comprising political transgressors who subverted the will of the people in government. This book seeks to bring together recent scholarship on aristocracy, and the new interpretations of popular reformism available since the emergence of 'continuity' studies in the early 1990s. Informed by an awareness of the nature of popular politics after 1848, the relationship between plebeian and middle-class radicalism in bringing about the 1867 Reform Act, and the course that relationship took within the expanded political nation, this study refines the relationship between Liberalism and underground radicalism, and discusses ways in which the course of reform was influenced by hostility to aristocracy following the 1867 and 1884 Reform Acts. This book covers all aspects of the anti-aristocratic political platform. It probes the rhetorical spectrum, and demonstrates the ways in which politicians adapted both their methods of organisation, and their platform presence to the exceptional circumstances of combating unaccountable hierarchy, and non-elected

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