



Lord Brougham and the Whig Party

A. Aspinall

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'The magistrates there (in Manchester) and all over Lancashire I have long known for the worst in England, the most bigotted, violent and active. I am quite indignant at this Manchester business.' Such was Henry Brougham's typically outspoken summary of the main cause of the 'Peterloo Massacre' of 1819. Such scorn for the ruling classes and concern for the 'lower orders' was out of synch with prevailing attitudes among his peers, something which provides a motif for the life of Henry Brougham, a man who counted other leading Radicals such as William Hazlitt, Charles Lamb and Lord Byron among his many friends. After entering Parliament, following a brief but spectacular career as a lawyer, Brougham soon established himself as one of the leading Radicals in Parliament. Advocating social reform, he spoke out against many of the leading social evils of his time and advocated a state-funded education system years before anyone else. Appointed Lord Chancellor in 1830, he was instrumental in helping pass the Reform Act of 1832, the Anti-Slavery Act of 1833, and the Municipal Reform Act of 1835. This book chronicles the life of one of the great figures of nineteenth-century politics, from his early years, where he showed such precocious intelligence that he was accepted at Edinburgh University aged just fourteen years, through his years as a formidable lawyer, to his distinguished Parliamentary career. A fine example of political biography, it should grace the shelf of anyone interested in the great men of British politics.



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