



**The British Liberal Tradition: From Gladstone
Through to Young Churchill, Asquith, and Lloyd
George - Is Blair Their Heir? (Senator Keith
Davey Lectures)**

Roy Jenkins

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In this wide-ranging lecture, Lord Jenkins tells the story of the rise and fall of the British Liberal party under prime ministers Gladstone, Churchill, Asquith, and Lloyd George and explores the place of current British Prime Minister Tony Blair in this tradition.

Beginning with the Liberal Party's birth in London, 1859, the author addresses the relative success of the Liberal prime ministers in dealing with social issues, such as religion and suffrage, and aspects of government legislation including education, foreign policy, and the military. Lord Jenkins also offers his views on the personalities of these men, recognizing that the character of leaders naturally shapes their leadership. Of William Ewart Gladstone, for example, Lord Jenkins notes that, while he was not necessarily the greatest prime minister, Gladstone was certainly the most remarkable specimen of humanity ever to inhabit 10 Downing Street. Gladstone climbed mountains at the age of seventy-five and read twenty thousand books in his lifetime. Herbert Henry Asquith and Winston Churchill were remarkably different in their oratory skills. While Asquith reveled in the pressure of spontaneous, emotional speeches to large crowds, Churchill excelled in a more literary, meticulous approach to his audience, which explains why the latter prime minister was so respected for his performances on radio broadcasts.

Lord Jenkins' style, seasoned by the experience of having published over sixteen books on politics and politicians, reflects a keen sense of British history and politics and, more generally, of our fascination with the inner workings of political and personal lives.

The British Liberal Tradition, by Lord Roy Jenkins, is the fourth annual Senator Keith Davey Lecture, delivered at Victoria University at the University of Toronto in 2000.

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