

Radicals and Reformers in Britain

**THE PAPERS OF
JOHN CAM HOBHOUSE
1786-1869**

**From the British Library,
London**

Harvester Microform

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RADICALS AND REFORMES IN BRITAIN

Series Three: The Papers of John Cam Hobhouse

1786 - 1869, from the British Library, London

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Harvester Microform is proud to publish Series Three in its major programme devoted to Radicals and Reformers in Britain. This makes available the diaries of John Cam Hobhouse, Baron Broughton, 1786-1869 from the British Library, London.

This microform publication consists of the detailed diaries of John Cam Hobhouse for the years 1809-1865. They are a quite remarkable commentary on the political, literary and social movements of his era, reflecting not only his own fluctuating interests, views and allegiances, but also those of his contemporaries.

Hobhouse represented Westminster from 1820-1833. In his early years he was a leading parliamentary Radical, zealously harassing the Tory government at every opportunity. A committed campaigner for progress and justice, supported revolutionary movements abroad. He was deeply involved in a number of other issues including state regulation of factory labour, religious equality, non-denominational education and the economic advancement of the working classes. His diaries reflect the versatility and depth of his involvement in these broad range of issues central to 19th century radicalism. Perhaps his most notable achievement was in the field of political and fiscal reform. He collaborated with Francis Place over the Select Vestry Act of 1831, also known as the "Hobhouse Act", which gave ratepayers control over the level of poor relief and was a major step towards the establishment of representative local government. (The Place Papers are also available from Harvester Microform: Radical Politics and the Working Man in England - Series One: The Francis Place Papers in the British Library Department of Manuscripts, Series Two: The Francis Place Collection in the British Library Department of Printed Books.)

Hobhouse's radicalism was an attitude or an approach to things, rather than a programme. He refused in 1819 to profess his faith in the radical panacea of universal suffrage, annual parliaments and equal electoral districts. Similarly, he rejected Place's radical programme of 1832. He spoke of radicalism in the literal sense of reaching an understanding of vital principles in order to "strike at the root" of specific abuses.

The passage of time and the responsibility of governmental office mellowed Hobhouse's radical inclinations. In many ways the passing of the great Reform Bill was a watershed, and Hobhouse later became very much the archetypal conservative Whig minister. His government posts included Secretary of War in Lord Grey's government, 1832-3, and Chief Secretary of Ireland, 1833-4.

This substantial set of diaries provides a revealing source of information on radicalism, Whig politics, British Imperial policy and Liberal movements on the continent. Thus it is an important source for those researching into the political, social and economic history of Britain in the 19th century.

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