



# Odd Couples: The Great Political Pairings of Modern Britain

By Giles Radice

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## Odd Couples: The Great Political Pairings of Modern Britain By Giles Radice

At crucial moments in modern British history, it has been the actions of pairs of politicians that have changed the course of government. In this original account, acclaimed political biographer Giles Radice shows how combinations of politicians, often with contrasting though complementary talents, have at key 'crossroad moments' worked together to shape events. Despite clashing ambitions, sometimes conflicting, and always strong egos, these leaders were able to overlook their differences in pursuit of a common cause, proving that cooperation can exist between political rivals. As Radice argues, successful pairings usually require an alliance between initiators (such as Churchill, Thatcher, Macmillan and Blair) and facilitators (Attlee, Whitelaw, Butler and Brown). Gordon Brown's eventual inability to accept the power relationship between himself and Tony Blair was the key to the ultimate failure of New Labour and was in contrast to Attlee's loyalty to Churchill or Butler's continuous support for Macmillan. Radice narrates the stories of some of the greatest political players of post-war British politics, showing how their relationships determined the great successes and sometimes the greatest downfalls of their careers.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

'Giles Radice has a quartet of special gifts. He is a skilful practicing politician, a top-flight political historian who naturally blends his analysis with a sensitive feel for the biographical and an acute eye for revealing combinations that make the rest of us think again about what we thought we knew. That is why this book is a treat.' - Peter Hennessy, Attlee Professor of Contemporary History 'Giles Radice has had the original idea of pairing leading politicians who influenced their era. The result is not only a fascinating and enjoyable read but also a stimulating one, as he distinguishes between initiators and facilitators, both necessary and often complimentary in successful governments.' - Peter Riddell, Director of the Institute for Government

#### About the Author

Lord Radice was Labour MP for Durham North and Chairman of the powerful Treasury Committee until he was appointed a Life Peer in 2001. His previous books include *Trio: Inside the Blair, Brown, Mandelson Project; Offshore: Britain and the European Idea* (both I.B.Tauris); *Friends and Rivals: Crosland, Jenkins and Healey* ('the best political book of the year'?Independent on Sunday); *Diaries: 1980–2001* (shortlisted for Channel 4 Political Book of the Year in 2004) and *The Tortoise and the Hares: Attlee, Bevin, Cripps, Dalton, Morrison. Southern Discomfort* (Fabian Society, 1992) is regarded as one of the most influential political analyses of recent years. He brings to his works the skills of a historian and the insights of a politician.

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