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UTILITARIANISM AND THE NEW LIBERALISM

In this groundbreaking study, David Weinstein argues that nineteenth-century English New Liberalism was considerably more indebted to classical English utilitarianism than the received view holds. T. H. Green, L. T. Hobhouse, D. G. Ritchie and J. A. Hobson were liberal consequentialists who followed J. S. Mill in trying to accommodate robust, liberal moral rights with the normative goal of promoting self-realization. Through careful interpretation of each, Weinstein shows how these theorists brought together themes from idealism, perfectionism and especially utilitarianism to create the new liberalism. Like Mill, they were committed to liberalizing consequentialism and systematizing liberalism. Because they were no less consequentialists than they were liberals, they constitute a greatly undervalued resource, Mill notwithstanding, for contemporary moral philosophers who remain dedicated to defending a coherent form of liberal consequentialism. The New Liberals had already travelled much of the philosophical ground that contemporary liberal consequentialists are unknowingly retravelling.

DAVID WEINSTEIN is professor of political science at Wake Forest University, North Carolina. His previous publications include *Equal Freedom and Utility* (Cambridge, 1998) and *The New Liberalism* (co-edited with Avital Simhony, Cambridge, 2001).

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The books in this series will discuss the emergence of intellectual traditions and of related new disciplines. The procedures, aims and vocabularies that were generated will be set in the context of the alternatives available within the contemporary frameworks of ideas and institutions. Through detailed studies of the evolution of such traditions, and their modification by different audiences, it is hoped that a new picture will form of the development of ideas in their concrete contexts. By this means, artificial distinctions between the history of philosophy, of the various sciences, of society and politics, and of literature may be seen to dissolve.

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For Kiddo

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Preface

I would like to thank Gale Sigal, Peter Nicholson, Michael Freedon, Fred Rosen, Avital Simhony, Jerry Gaus, Robert Audi, Roger Crisp, Bart Schultz, David Brink, Avihu Zakai, Leah Hochman, Win-Chiat Lee, Lee Overton, Tom Brooks and Colin Tyler for their willingness to comment on parts of this manuscript over recent years.

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Parts of this book have been published in *Political Studies*, *The Journal of the History of Ideas* and *Utilitas*. Segments have also been presented at international conferences of The International Society for Utilitarian Studies; annual meetings of the American Political Science Association; the 2003 Idealism Today conference, Manchester College, Oxford University and the Centre for the Study of Political Ideologies, Oxford University. I am grateful to the participants and commentators for their queries, criticisms and suggestions about how to make my account of the new liberals more compelling.

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Preface

I have always viewed writing as a collective enterprise in which authors depend upon their critics to assist them in refining and clarifying what they are trying to say. Without sympathetic critics, and even unsympathetic ones, the practice of philosophy and intellectual history might produce better or worse results but it would certainly be lonelier and thus much less gratifying. Reading is equally collective rewriting. My text now begins life on its own.