

## ***The Blight of Blairism***

**Francis Bennion**

**Lester Publishing, Oxford, £15.95**

Those who lack enthusiasm for the present government and its relentless policy of changing everything apparently for the sake of change, and without any serious consideration of whether change is actually necessary or what form it should take in order to achieve some useful result, will surely warm to a book entitled *The Blight of Blairism*.

Francis Bennion is a professional lawyer, and was for many years one of the Parliamentary Counsel responsible for the drafting of legislation, so he is well-qualified to write on the workings of government. He has written a number of academic legal texts, including a standard work on statutory interpretation, the 'Statutes' volume of the current edition of *Halsbury's Laws of England*, and a manual on the Consumer Credit Act 1974, for whose drafting he was principally responsible. His name also appears frequently in the Letters columns of *The Times*. Those who shrink instinctively from weighty legal works and self-important lawyers will, however, be relieved that *The Blight of Blairism* is light in tone and not a book likely to be recommended by academic lawyers to their students, except (by this academic lawyer at least) as a tool for encouraging students to *think*. It is a collection of short articles written from 1997 onwards as political sketches for a national magazine and deals in delightfully politically incorrect fashion with many of the sacred cows of our age, not least matters linked with sex discrimination (Mr Bennion was largely responsible for the Sex Discrimination Act 1975), such as women-only shortlists and section 28. It is a book to be dipped into and enjoyed, preferably over a glass of wine or gin and tonic, but at the same time it carries a serious message. Recommended not only to anti-Blairites, but also to those Blairites (alas, they seem to be thin on the ground), who might be persuaded to think again.

**Ann Lyon**