



The Outcast's Outcast: Lord Longford

Peter Stanford

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With his noble cranium and mad scientist's tonsure, Lord Longford was a universally recognisable figure in Britain in the latter part of the twentieth century. He was associated in the public mind with two causes in particular - his anti-pornography crusade which saw him labelled Lord Porn and his campaign to have the Moors murderer, Myra Hindley, freed on parole, which won him a place as Lord Wrongford in the tabloid rogues' gallery.

Yet to focus simply on these high-profile battles is, Peter Stanford argues, to ignore the extraordinary life lived at the centre of the British political establishment. Frank Longford was first and foremost a skilled parliamentarian and far-sighted social reformer who served in Labour governments as they shaped post-war policy and whose legacy includes a free and democratic German state, the British parole system and a plethora of UK organisations working for the rehabilitation of prisoners.

He was a convert many times over - from the Conservative, Protestant heritage of his Anglo-Irish aristocratic family to socialism, Catholicism and a passionate Irish nationalism. His connection with penal reform stretched back to 1930 and his unreported visits to many thousands of individual prisoners in need continued almost until his death in 2001. As a politician his period as Deputy Foreign Secretary in charge of the British zone in post-war Germany was acclaimed by many colleagues as his finest hour, though he later was a member of Harold Wilson's turbulent cabinets.

Peter Stanford's new biography follows his 1994 authorised life of Lord Longford. *The Outcasts' Outcast* is a full and final account of one of the most fascinating, colourful and controversial figures of recent times. It is based on a wealth of previously unpublished papers and diaries, left by Longford and his wife Elizabeth to be studied after their deaths. These provide substantial new insights into both his public contests and his home life with his large and prodigiously talented family.

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