The Rise and Rise of Meritocracy. Political Quarterly Monograph Series

Description: It is now fifty years since Michael Young wrote
The Rise of the Meritocracy—a sociological fantasy set in the twenty-first century and portraying a sinister,
highly stratified society organised around intelligence testing and educational selection. After some difficulty
getting published, it was an immediate success and became very widely read. But it does not seem to have
had the influence that Michael most wanted for it, over Labour Party thinking. The story was intended to
help turn Labour away from meritocracy, by reminding it of the importance of communitarian values.
Curiously, though, half a century later we have a Labour Government declaring the promotion of
meritocracy as one of its primary objectives.

So what is going on? This book offers a variety of opinions. Building on a conference held to mark the
half-centenary of Michael Young’s Institute of Community Studies, it contains commentaries by a selection
of academics, journalists and politicians, from Asa Briggs to David Willetts, on the origin, meaning and future
of meritocracy.

Contents: Acknowledgements.

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A tract for the times: Paul Barker.

We sat down at the table of privilege and complained about the food: Hilary Land.

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The future of meritocracy: David Willetts.

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