



The Dawn of the Cheap Press in Victorian Britain: The End of the 'Taxes on Knowledge', 1849-1869

Martin Hewitt

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The Dawn of the Cheap Press provides the first detailed study of the mid-Victorian campaign for the repeal of the taxes on knowledge for over a hundred years. Using the recently discovered papers of the Association for the Promotion of the Repeal of the Taxes on Knowledge and taking advantage of new forms of research made possible by the digitisation of nineteenth century newspapers, it assesses the impact of the removal of the last surviving legal disabilities on the newspaper industry, the nature of journalism, and the cultures and practices of newspaper reading. The book demonstrates that the campaign against the taxes on knowledge retained broad popular appeal, and played an important role in the politics of mid-Victorian budgets. It not only makes a seminal contribution to the history of the nineteenth century press and print culture, but also illuminates the culture and politics of mid-Victorian Britain, offers an important re-reading of the history of extra-parliamentary pressure group politics and provides new insights into the origins of Gladstonian Liberalism.

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