



Last Asquithian

Joint letter to the *New Statesman*

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Letter (with Rose Macaulay, Raymond Mortimer and Harold Nicolson), *New Statesman and Nation* 49 (January–June 1955), 8 January, 45



SIR, – Sad bewilderment has been spread by your article¹ on Lady Violet Bonham Carter, which seems to be based on the dimmest hearsay. We cannot believe that anyone who knows her has ever called her Lady Vi or detected in her any trace of aristocratic

¹ The *New Statesman* had published a profile of Violet Bonham Carter, complete with cartoon by Vicky, in which VBC (referred to as ‘Lady Vi’) was gently mocked as a ‘fully conscious member of the ruling class – without anyone to rule’, who, ‘exiled from her promised land, has remained indomitably determined to do good to those who do not know what is good for them’ (‘Last Asquithian’, *New Statesman and Nation*, 11 December 1954, 781). See also IB to VBC, 16 December 1954, E 464–5.

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condescension. We are told that ‘she has been prominent in all the best causes supported by all the best people’. Here the implicit sneer depends on an ambiguity of phrase. The ‘best people’ supporting the same causes have not been the rich and powerful. They have been the devotees of liberty. More often than not, Sir, they have included yourselves.

Raymond Mortimer
Harold Nicolson

Isaiah Berlin
Rose Macaulay

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