

**THE CAUSES OF  
SOCIAL  
REVOLT; A LECTURE**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649442218

The Causes of Social Revolt; A Lecture by Frederick Augustus Maxse

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**FREDERICK AUGUSTUS MAXSE**

**THE CAUSES OF  
SOCIAL  
REVOLT; A LECTURE**



*The*  
*Causes of Social Revolt*

A LECTURE,

DELIVERED IN LONDON, PORTSMOUTH, BRADFORD, NOTTINGHAM,  
DERBY, AND GREENWICH.

BY

CAPTAIN MAXSE, R.N.

" Propose anything good ; the answer is at hand—  
wild, visionary, theoretical, utopian, impracticable, dangerous,  
destructive, ruinous, anarchical, subversive of all Governments—  
there you have it."—BENTHAM.

" It is possible to play the part of a demagogue to a  
ruling as well as to a subject class, and he who demands that  
the voice of the poor should be heard in the councils of the  
State, is not so dangerous to the public peace as he who attacks  
the insolence of wealth, and bids it maintain a system which  
secures its own ascendancy."—JAMES BRYCE.



London:

LONGMANS, GREEN, READER, & DYER,  
PATERNOSTER ROW.

1872.

232. g. 183.



"The chiefest authors of revolutions have been not the chimerical and intemperate friends of progress, but the blind obstructors of progress; those who, in defiance of nature, struggle to avert the inevitable future, to recall the irrevocable past; who chafe to fury, by damming up its course, the river, which would otherwise flow calmly between its banks, which has ever flowed, and which, do what they will, must flow for ever."—*Goldwin Smith.*

"The English have thus become, in a certain sense, of all people the most inaccessible to ideas, and the most impatient of them. . . . There has followed from hence, in this country, somewhat of a general depression of pure intelligence. Philistia has come to be thought by us as the true Land of Promise, and it is anything but that; the born lover of ideas, the born hater of commonplaces, must feel in this country that the sky over his head is of brass and iron."—*Essays in Criticism.* By *Matthew Arnold.*

"Ce n'est pas l'erreur qui s'oppose aux progrès de la vérité. Ce sont la mollesse, l'entêtement, l'esprit de routine, tout ce qui porte à l'inaction."—*Turgot.*

"For my own part, I can only say, that I have had occasion to read many thousand letters written by diplomatists and politicians, and I have hardly ever found an instance of one of them who understood the spirit and tendency of the age in which he lived."—*Buckle.*





## INTRODUCTORY.

---

BEFORE I commence I desire to anticipate a criticism which will, in all probability, be made during the course of my lecture. I shall be found constantly referring in it to the different classes of society: and I may appear to some as the exclusive advocate of one class. You must, however, take into consideration the subject of my address. The meaning of Social Revolt is the revolt, active or passive, of one class of the community against another. The lecture must therefore be founded upon a recognition of Class divisions. I take society as I find it—an aggregate of classes. It seems to me mere hypocrisy to pretend to ignore that society is made up of classes. Who made classes? It is certain that working men did not voluntarily constitute themselves into a

class, the common characteristics of which are hard work and hard living. They find themselves, whether they like it or not, surrounded by adverse circumstances. It is easy enough for people whose position secures them abundance to deprecate class allusions. They forget that the enormous labour class<sup>1</sup> is condemned, generation after generation, to an incessant struggle for mere existence. And so long as this struggle continues, a cry must come up, increasing in volume as intelligence spreads, for a less hazardous state. *This class has as yet to inherit civilization.* If all nations which have attained eminence hitherto have fallen, it is because they have none of them developed a civilization worth preservation. Their civilization has only been a partial one; the result of a compromise between various conflicting articulate interests, in which the manual labour class interest has wanted expression—and may be said to have remained inarticulate. No civilization is worth preserving unless it be—or is likely to become—the property of the many. Nature only cares to preserve the good. The imperfect and the abortive invariably perish.

---

<sup>1</sup> A class so large that Auguste Comte has said: "The working class is not, properly speaking, a class at all, but constitutes the body of society. From it proceed the various classes, which we may regard as organs necessary for that body."



---

I am not the advocate of one class. I speak in the interest of all classes. An enlightened and humane mind will readily perceive that what is good for working-men is good for the whole community. Civilization stops, falters, and threatens to recoil, until they acquire that position of physical and moral welfare, as well as legitimate influence, which accord with our highest conceptions of justice. I am not here to flatter working-men by assuring them that they are better than the men of other classes: in my opinion, the good, the indifferent, and the bad are distributed with tolerable impartiality throughout all sections of society. I do not tell them they have more wisdom than is to be found elsewhere. If I appeal to them especially, it is because, fortunately for humanity, they have (irrespective of their generous aspirations) a direct interest in human progress which belongs to no other class. But the appeal I make is one I am anxious to address to all classes: and I sincerely hope that there are some of all classes present.





## *The Causes of Social Revolt.*



I propose in this lecture to offer some observations upon the causes which lead to Social Revolt. Last year we witnessed a terrible instance of this in a country which is reputed to be one of the most civilized in the world. The only consolation we can derive from so vast a misfortune is to appreciate the lesson it offers. In my opinion the true lesson of the Paris Revolt has so far been completely misunderstood. As, however, the circumstances which produced, or rather precipitated the Paris insurrection, were exceptional, I shall not confine myself to the consideration of the causes of this particular revolt; but propose to call your attention to those general causes of Social Revolt which are common to all countries that have attained a certain precarious stage of progress, and especially to the shape which they assume in our own country.