THE FUTURE OF DEMOCRACY

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649590520

The Future of Democracy by H. M. Hyndman

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

www.triestepublishing.com

H. M. HYNDMAN

THE FUTURE OF DEMOCRACY

Trieste

THE FUTURE OF DEMOCRACY

BY

H. M. HYNDMAN

AUTHOR OF

"ENGLAND FOR ALL," "THE BANKRUPTCY OF INDIA," "THE ECONOMICS OF SOCIALISM," "THE COMMERCIAL CRISIS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY," "THE RECORD OF AN ADVENTUROUS LIFE," ETC., ETC.

NEW YORK

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

597-599 FIFTH AVENUE

1916

PREFACE

I AM indebted to the courtesy of the proprietors of the *Fortnightly Review* and the *English Review* for permission to reprint five of the essays in this volume. The essay which appears as Chapter I, I wrote for the *English Review* in collaboration with my old friend Ernest Belfort Bax. I have removed the controversial portion of the article which appears as Chapter VII, inasmuch as Mr. Austin Harrison's paper in the *English Review*, to which it was a reply, is not reprinted.

H.M.H.

9 QUEEN ANNE'S GATE,
ST. JAMES' PARK, LONDON, S.W.
October 1915.

CONTENTS

THE FUTURE OF DEMOCRACY

INTRODUCTION

WHEN very great changes take place suddenly, especially if they are forced upon a nation from above, there is always a probability that the people at large, for sheer lack of understanding, will resent and resist the alterations. This may easily happen, even when what has been done is advantageous to the community and is in consonance with the general course of national development. The danger of vigorous assault upon accomplished facts is the more serious when the population, whose political, economic, and social forms have thus been interfered with, is ill-educated, insufficiently organized, poorly trained, badly disciplined, and for the most part, crowded into large towns. In this case, I say, the likelihood of trouble arising increases, and the possibility of making an effective appeal to reason as against bitter prejudice, or well-meaning sentiment, is

lessened. Any economic strain, such as high prices of the necessaries of life, which mean starvation for the very poor, will carry matters still farther towards something more vehement than the ordinary antagonism between capitalists and wage-earners, between the possessing and the disinherited class. The unprecedented war for national existence, involving unparalleled loss of life and unheard-of expenditure of wealth, will bring us face to face with problems more threatening to social peace than the war itself.

These are general considerations, the soundness of which would not be disputed if they dealt with affairs in the abstract. Only when they deal with a specific instance do contentions arise. Few among us can look at the present situation in Great Britain from a detached point of view. We are all so closely mixed up with and influenced by the national policy, in the course of our daily lives, that cool and careful reflection upon what is taking place is very rare. We are rubbing along in apathetic fashion as our fathers have done before us, and imagine that if we can manage our business and handle our disputes, misdemeanours, and crimes without anything in the shape of a codified law, we can equally well conduct our polity without anything approaching to a

Constitution. We are quite content to drift alike in calm and in storm. Those who are wise enough or fidgety enough to ask for a compass and to request that we should set a definite course are regarded, until the crash comes, as mere wiseacres and meddlers who would do better to attend to their own matters alone.

In this respect we had, so far, forgotten nothing and learnt nothing up to the beginning, or even well on into the middle, of the greatest war of all time. Then a Government of old Whigs and new Radicals suddenly discovered that even their favourite new plan of a nominated and highly paid bureaucracy could not successfully encounter the urgent necessities of a struggle to the death with a modern Empire whose entire peaceful as well as military life was organized and disciplined for the purposes of conquest in war. The tremendous scheme of Frederick the Great, devised and carried out in such wise that education, science, art, history, philosophy, and every department of intellectual and moral training should be cultivated, not for their own sake or for the uplifting of individuals and the community, but to increase the power of the State, under the control of his family and the militarist caste which it had created, and by which it was