

**AN INTRODUCTION  
TO POLITICAL  
PHILOSOPHY**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649125913

An introduction to political philosophy by H. P. Farrell

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Cover @ 2017

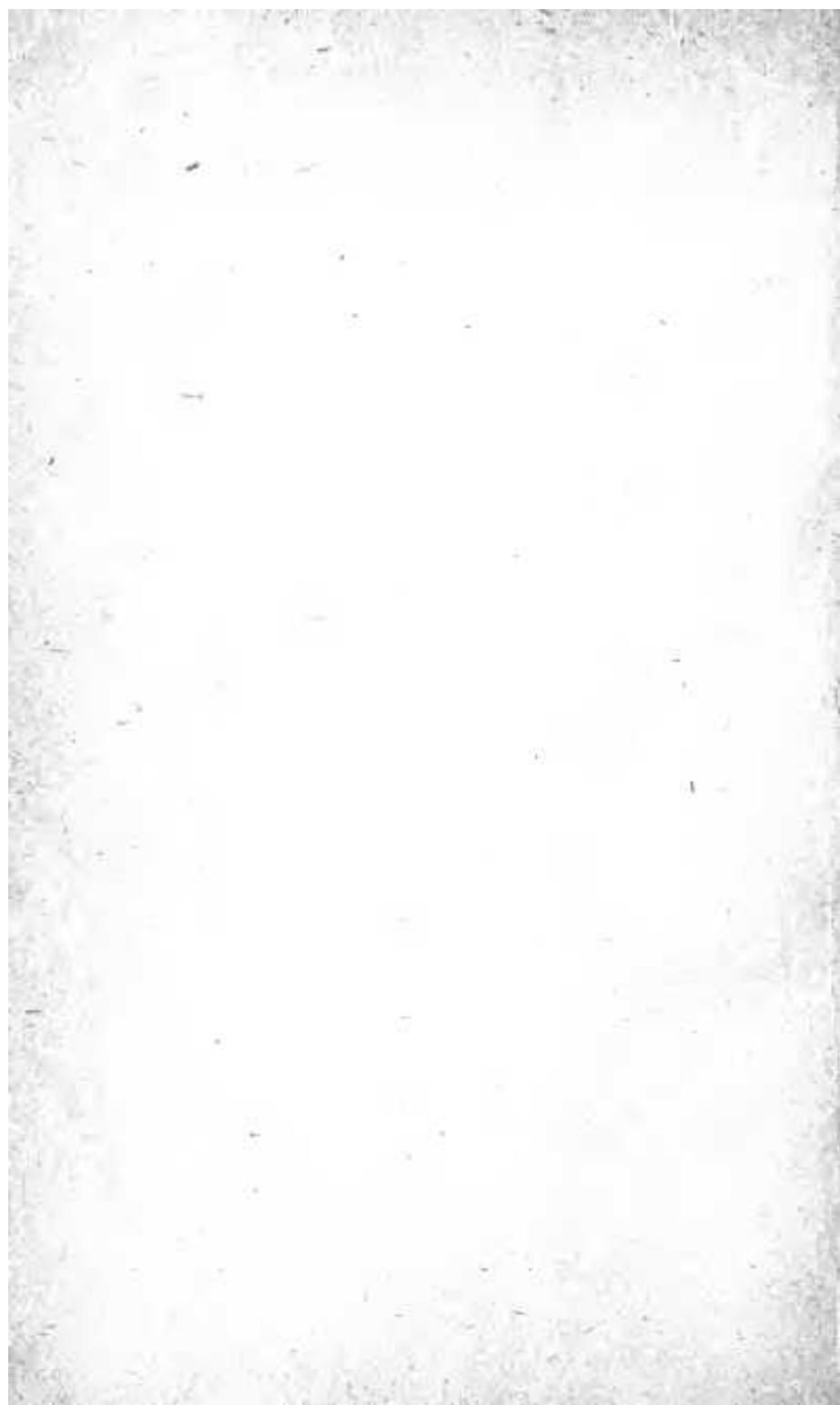
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**H. P. FARRELL**

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# AN ·INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY·

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LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.

39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON

FOURTH AVENUE & 30th STREET, NEW YORK

BOMBAY, CALCUTTA, AND MADRAS

1917

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## PREFACE

POLITICAL philosophy cannot be learnt from text-books. If it be true—

“That nature always does contrive  
That every boy and every gal  
That's born into the world alive  
Is either a little Liberal,  
Or else a little Conservative,”

then the most interesting problems of political philosophy must remain matters of controversy. It is perhaps for this reason that students are generally asked to approach the subject by way of the study of the writings of certain political philosophers that are generally regarded as classical. Or it may be because, as Aristotle said—

“It would probably be right to suppose that not only these but all other political discoveries have been made repeatedly, or rather an infinite number of times in the lapse of ages. . . . It is our duty then while we avail ourselves adequately of the discoveries of the past, to endeavour to fill up the deficiencies that remain” (*Politics*, Bk. IV. chap. 10).

Now it has been the writer's experience both in England and in India that many students go up to the universities and commence to read political philosophy for an honours examination in history without any preliminary ideas upon the subject, or indeed any knowledge that such a subject exists



until it is met with in the syllabus of the examination. An endeavour has therefore been made in this book to explain what the subject is, and then to lead the student gently on to the study of the classical writers by presenting to him an epitome of their ideas with such explanatory comments and criticisms as are deemed necessary. The book is not meant to provide a complete history of the literature of political philosophy, so that only those writers have been presented with whose ideas the undergraduate is generally expected to be familiar. Clearness and conciseness rather than fullness have been the aims throughout. As it is hoped that the book may prove of use to Indian as well as English students, references to the original of Plato, Aristotle, and Rousseau have been avoided, and quotations in all cases are from editions and translations that are most likely to be accessible to students.

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