



1938

American Democratic Government, 1938

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AMERICAN DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT

Just as it is unwise and unfair to condemn offhand the foreign socialist dictatorship systems and to ignore the good and see only the evil in them, so it is stupid to claim anything like perfection for democracy and the American system as we have allowed them to develop. The fact that under the current American practice of democratic government it has been possible for a political faction like the New Deal to keep so long in its present



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poverty-stricken state a nation as naturally wealthy as our's is proof enough of great weaknesses in our political system.

The government of the United States was designed to be *that of a republic, a constitutional representative government; not at all* ~~one of representative, not direct~~ democracy. Every move, made in the name of "progress", away from representative and towards direct democracy, has made good government in this country more difficult. Direct nominations and elections, plus suffrage unlimited by qualifications, plus an electorate largely ill-informed, *or* credulous or self-seeking, plus bad and demagogic leadership, equal ruin. It is almost as exact as a mathematical formula. How can a busy people be expected to understand every intricate governmental question? Why do they pay representatives, unless to understand and deal with difficult questions for them?

The only escape from ruin under our political system is for the people to elect to congress men who will tell them the truth, and protect them from their own gullibility and shortsightedness; who will represent them with conscience, courage and ability, instead of reflecting and catering to their prejudices, cupidities or ignorances; who will serve the people, instead of taking orders from a president, ~~or~~ a party boss, *or a president*

Presidents, senators and representatives are chosen, paid, and sent to Washington to govern and legislate for the good of the people, according to their own conscience and intelligence. That is representative democracy. If, instead, the servants of the people advocate or vote for foolish, ruinous laws because they think by doing so they can deceive, cajole or bribe an

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uninformed majority, and thereby get or hold their own official jobs, then we have neither direct democracy nor representative democracy. We have a betrayal of public trust as shabby as any known racket.

If the whole electorate could be truthfully informed of real issues, then direct legislation by plebescite would be more likely to be sound than the present sorry spectacle of measures and votes contrived to hold power and to hold office, regardless of the damage to the nation. Since real direct democracy is impracticable unless, perhaps, in the very smallest communities, democracy must be representative. And unless the voters choose honest and able representatives, who will resist, for the good of all, the unreasonable demands of pressure groups, and who put their country above their own personal ambitions and interests, then democracy degenerates into demagoguery, and ruin follows.

For its success and for its evolution towards better government, democracy requires a ~~very~~ fine quality of citizenship and a wise and high-minded type of leaders and representatives. If it fails, it is for the lack of these. Local self-government and local responsibility are also of the essence of the American political system, like the division of governmental powers and the independence of the courts. All these fundamentals the New Deal has greatly undermined. And ~~perhaps~~ worst of all, it has sought to destroy that spirit of friendly cooperation among citizens of a classless country that has been the glory, the key-stone and the hope of America.

In seeking to gain or to hold dictatorial power, leaders often find it ~~a~~ ^{ful} help to foster hate of one section of the population by another. In Russia those who had stood high under the previous government, and the well-to-do farmers, and the merchants and middle classes, were singled out to be hated; in Germany, the Jews and Communists. The New Deal, with the same familiar technique, has tried to turn hatred upon, "economic royalists," "feudalists," "selfish interests" ^{"Tories"} and so forth. ^{and then "copperheads"}

Hatred has also been directed against those who stood high in the previous government. Indeed the class of ~~bad~~ people that ^{have, from time to time been} we ^{are} advised to hate seems ^{almost} comprehensive enough to include all who oppose the New Deal!

When there appears in a democracy a self-glorifying leadership, seeking domination, and exploiting the prejudices, cupidity and ignorances of the people to that end, then democracy has become demagogy; and, unless the people beware, the end, dictatorship, is near. We already have such leadership here, as in any full-fledged dictatorship. Only here we detect in it no consistent and avowed aim or policy; nothing but the will to power. Unless we Americans want socialist dictatorship by default, we must weed out the New Dealers at ~~the~~ coming primaries and elections. The lists of those who voted against court-packing, the reorganization bill, and other indefensible measures shows pretty accurately ^{at that time, were} who ^{are} real representatives, worthy of office, and who ^{are} rubber-stamps, unworthy of a part in ~~real~~ representative government.