

POLITICS AND EDUCATION

BY

LEONARD NELSON

*Late Professor of Philosophy at the University
of Göttingen*

TRANSLATED BY

W. LANSDELL

WITH A FOREWORD BY

W. J. ROBERTS

*Professor of Economics at the University of
Cardiff*

LONDON

GEORGE ALLEN & UNWIN LTD.

MUSEUM STREET

First published in 1928
(All rights reserved)

Printed in Great Britain by
Unwin Brothers, Ltd., Woking

FOREWORD

THIS volume is being issued in the hope that readers of the addresses and lectures included in it may be induced to make further acquaintance with the works and thoughts of Leonard Nelson, and to exert themselves actively, in so far as they are persuaded of their validity, in bringing them to bear on the practice of social life. Interests which usually present themselves as detached from one another—philosophical, educational, ethical, political interests, for example—may be expected to be attracted to various parts of the volume and to derive furtherance and enlightenment from it; and to readers who are apt to be absorbed in abstract and austere philosophic argument the fifth section, "The Moral and the Religious View of the World," may be especially commended as suitable to be read first. But the satisfaction of isolated interests is not the aim of the author or of his friends; it is obvious from Nelson's example and from the whole tendency of the volume that he aims at a philosophic system

POLITICS AND EDUCATION

which shall embrace and penetrate all our thought and action.

Nelson makes it, I think, sufficiently clear that the educational problem with which he is here more particularly concerned is a limited one, namely, of training the intellect and will of selected persons for the task of political leadership. His more learned readers will be reminded of Plato's Republic, and Nelson himself finds the resemblance between Plato's design and his own worth mentioning. This emphasis on "leadership" as against democracy may indeed be said to be the main theme of the present collection of addresses, as of Nelson's recent work generally. As readers will see, however, the lectures embody much profound experience and reflection of a more general kind, apt to instruct those who may not yet be persuaded of the claims of the author's main project.

The attack upon democracy, into which Nelson has entered with such vehemence, will probably excite, at the outset at least, much sincere doubt and dissent even among persons disposed to sympathize strongly with Nelson's ideals. It may be hoped that they will recognize the gravity of the causes which have led the author to his con-

FOREWORD

clusions and that they will not prematurely abandon the problem of reconciling authority with liberty to mere aspiration or to fate. One may fairly ascribe much of our devotion to our democratic parties and institutions to our inertia, to our sense of our own actual or potential importance in them or under them, or to our habit of shrinking from personal responsibility; but there are also genuine convictions of the dangers of tyranny and privilege, and of the rightness in themselves of democratic arrangements as recognizing human equality and as conferring full membership in a society. Submission to leadership, even leadership of the self-assertive kind, is a strongly marked feature of contemporary public life; but from this Nelson, as well as his adversaries, could derive much support for his contentions.

British readers will probably be inclined to wish that these ideas had been presented to the public of this country in closer connection with events and situations familiar to us, which Nelson, with all his diligence and earnestness, could only apprehend rather remotely. But such tasks must be reserved, I suppose, for British minds and pens.

W. J. ROBERTS.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
FOREWORD	5
INTRODUCTION	11
SYNOPSIS OF THE LECTURES	20
I. DEMOCRACY AND LEADERSHIP	23
II. EDUCATION FOR LEADERSHIP	67
III. THE EDUCATION OF LEADERS AS THE WAY TO THE POLITICS OF REASON	107
IV. ETHICAL REALISM	147
V. THE MORAL AND THE RELIGIOUS VIEW OF THE WORLD	187
VI. THE INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE OF YOUTH	227
INDEX	247