



PRESS RELEASE

SIMON & SCHUSTER 1st FLOOR 222 GRAY'S INN ROAD WC1X 8HB

Hannah Corbett – Publicity Director

hannah.corbett@simonandschuster.co.uk 020 7316 1942

The Life and Death of DEMOCRACY

John Keane

Publication date: 8th June 2009

Price: £30 Hardback

A sweeping, magisterial one-volume history of a much misunderstood, maligned and sometimes abused ideal: democracy.

- A grand, epic story spanning thousands of years of human history -- and the first major assessment of democracy for well over a century
- The author is a worldwide authority on democracy and this book represents the fruit of 25 years' thinking, writing and research
- Polemic as well as history: John Keane argues that, far from witnessing the 'triumph' of democracy, the 21st century will actually see it mutate into myriad different forms and be challenged by new opponents
- In the bestselling tradition of books like *Guns, Germs and Steel* and *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations*

John Keane's **The Life and Death of Democracy** will inspire and shock its readers. Presenting the first grand history of democracy for well over a century, it poses along the way some tough and timely questions: can we really be sure that democracy had its origins in ancient Greece? How did democratic ideals and institutions come to have the shape they do today? Given all the recent fanfare about democracy promotion, why are many people now gripped by the feeling that a bad moon is rising over all the world's democracies? Do they indeed have a future? Or is perhaps democracy fated to melt away, along with our polar ice caps?

The work of one of Britain's leading political writers, this is no mere antiquarian history. Stylishly written, this superb book confronts its readers with an entirely fresh and irreverent look at the past, present and future of democracy. It unearths the beginnings of such precious institutions and ideals as government by public assembly, votes for women, the secret ballot, trial by jury and press freedom. It tracks the changing, hotly disputed meanings of democracy and describes quite a few of the extraordinary characters, many of them long forgotten, who dedicated their lives to building or defending democracy. And it explains why democracy is still potentially the best form of government on earth -- and why democracies everywhere are sleepwalking their way into deep trouble.

More details of the book are to be found at: www.thelifeanddeathofdemocracy.org

John Keane is Professor of Politics at the University of Westminster and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts. Founder of the Centre for the Study of Democracy, his books include *Global Civil Society* (2004), *Vaclav Havel: A Political Tragedy in Six Acts* (1999) and the prize-winning *Tom Paine: A Political Life* (1995; 2009). Born in Australia, he now lives in London.