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A guide to books for socialists

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A GUIDE TO BOOKS FOR SOCIALISTS

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A Guide to Books for Socialists.

DURING recent years the output of Socialist books in this country has been considerable, and the conscientious enquirer who desires to get a thorough knowledge of Socialism as it stands to-day finds himself confronted with a literature of great range and diversity. If he chances to be already a Socialist and in touch with other Socialists of more experience than himself, he may be able to obtain some guidance as to what must be read and what may safely be passed by. But in any case such guidance obtained from individuals is apt to be limited and biased by individual preferences and tastes, and generally will not lead the enquirer to a catholic acquaintance with the subject.

This guide, although it does not claim to be in any way exhaustive, is designed to help enquirers to select the really vital and indispensable books relating to modern Socialism. It has been compiled with the object of representing as far as possible all sides and phases of the Socialist movement, and it may safely be said that the student who reads every book mentioned below will have a thoroughly wide and fairly complete working knowledge of Socialist activities and aspirations.

Socialism is concerned with every branch of human activity, and for this reason there are few books which attempt to cover even the general groundwork of the subject. *Britain for the British*, by Robert Blatchford, is the most popular and the *Fabian Essays* perhaps the most adequate summary in English. *Socialism: its Nature, Strength and Weakness*, by Professor Ely, is an impartial survey by a non-Socialist, and *Socialism and Society*, by J. Ramsay MacDonald, is important as a general account of Socialist theory by a prominent member of the Parliamentary Labor Party. Mr. H. G. Wells is now (February, 1907) engaged upon "a plain account of Socialism," which will appear this year.

Socialism - Bibliography

On the historical side, the *History of Socialism*, by Thomas Kirkup, and an article on "Socialism" by the same author in the ninth edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, give a useful account of the development of Socialist ideas. *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*, by Frederick Engels, is an important work, and the *Communist Manifesto*, issued in 1848 by Marx and Engels, is a document which, although in some respects out of date, no Socialist should fail to read, if only for its literary and historical value.

In the new adherent to Socialism the spirit of propaganda is customarily at its strongest, and at an early stage in his reading he finds himself seeking solutions and answers to the various controversial objections which are raised by the unconverted. He realizes that he is apt to be nonplussed by arguments which are sprung on him suddenly, however trite and worn out they may be, and he feels a need to be familiar with books bearing on

SOCIALISM IN ITS PARTICULAR ASPECTS.

One of the commonest and most obvious forms of attack is that from the so-called **scientific** point of view, in which Socialism is accused of being opposed to the principle of natural selection or to the "survival of the fittest." On this subject Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid* is a classic, while *Socialism and Positive Science*, by Enrico Ferri, is more recent, and fully disposes of all the "scientific" objections that have been raised. Other works of value are *Socialism and Individualism*, by E. Kelly, *Darwinism and Politics*, by D. G. Ritchie, and the essays on Socialism in Karl Pearson's *Ethic of Freethought* and in his *Chances of Death*, vol. 1.

To meet successfully **economic** objections to Socialism the student will need to acquire a wide knowledge of economic facts (and there are unfortunately no adequate works on Descriptive Economics) or else to devote a considerable time to the study of economic theory.

A convenient index of economic theory may be found in *Political Economy Selections*, by W. Bell Robertson, a volume in which the views of the classical economists, on various matters, are placed together under subject headings. The student should not omit to read either *The Principles of Economics*, by A. Marshall, or *The Elements of the Economics of Industry*, a smaller work by the same author. Later systematic works of distinct interest and value are *Political Economy*, by Professor Nicholson, and *Principles of Economics*, by Professor Seligman. Useful books dealing with the economic development of industry are *The Industrial Revolution*, by A. Toynbee, and *The Evolution of Modern Capitalism*, by J. A. Hobson, and the concluding chapters of *Industrial Democracy*, by Sidney and Beatrice Webb.

The philosophic aspect of Socialism is an important one. The Socialist movement as such does not concern itself with **religion**, and it probably includes within its ranks representatives of as many different ethical and metaphysical creeds as does any other political party. The ethical side is well presented in the Fabian Tract *The Moral Aspect of Socialism*, by Sidney Ball, and *Unto this Last*, by John Ruskin; while *The Soul of Man under Socialism*, by Oscar Wilde, is a particularly brilliant defence of Socialism as a means to the higher and freer development of man. *National Life from the Standpoint of Science*, by Karl Pearson, is a rationalist plea for a greater sense of social responsibility. The Christian Socialist movement is gaining some considerable strength in this country. The sympathetic enquirer will do well to read *Christ and Economics*, by Rev. C. W. Stubbs, and he will also find much interesting matter in the Fabian Tracts *Socialism and the Teaching of Christ*, by Dr. J. Clifford, and *Christian Socialism*, by Rev. S. D. Headlam.

The relations of Socialists with the other **political** parties is obviously an important issue, and is particularly discussed in two of the books mentioned in the first section (*Fabian Essays* and *Socialism and Society*).

Another excellent book dealing with the same subject is *Studies in Socialism*, by Jean Jaurès, the French Socialist leader; and while on the subject of politics and political science it may be well to mention J. S. Mill's *Representative Government*.

The question of the economic and social status of **women** is one which has always attracted a great deal of attention among Socialists, and perhaps the best general books on the subject are *Woman*, by A. Bebel, and *Women and Economics*, by C. P. Stetson (Mrs. Gilman). The economics of women's wages find treatment in *The Distribution of Income*, by Prof. W. Smart, and *Women's Work and Wages* (in Birmingham), by Cadbury, Matheson and Shann, is full of valuable data. Bernard Shaw's play *Mrs. Warren's Profession* is a very direct appeal for economic independence.

Thus far the books mentioned have dealt almost exclusively with the general theories and aims of Socialism, and the neophyte will now wish to become more closely acquainted with

PARTICULAR IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS

of social reorganization.

The practical steps in the transition from individualism to collectivism can conveniently be classed under four main headings.

A. **The gradual transference of land and capital from individual to collective ownership.** Under this head arise the questions of Land Nationalization and State and Municipal Trading with the allied problems of Agricultural Depopulation and Urban and Rural Housing.

On these subjects should be read *Land Nationalization*, by Alfred R. Wallace, and *Should our Railways be Nationalized?* by W. Cunningham. *Progress and Poverty*, by Henry George, is a book which, although it is not professedly Socialist and contains many inaccuracies due to the author's limited economic outlook, must yet be recommended, if only on the strength of the wide

and successful appeal it has made in the past; and the second essay in Karl Kautsky's *Social Revolution* is an illuminating discussion of the problems of construction which would confront a Socialist party in power.

On the movement towards an integration of industry, see *The Trust Problem*, by Professor Jenks; and *The Trust Movement in British Industry*, by H. W. Macrosty, is exhaustive in its department. Bernard Shaw's *Common Sense of Municipal Trading*, *Mind your own Business*, by R. B. Suthers, and *The Case for Municipal Drink Trade*, by E. R. Pease, are the best books on municipal ownership. The last named is valuable for its examination and rejection of "local veto" and "prohibition" proposals.

B. The collective regulation of industry. This is often regarded by Socialists as merely a policy of opportunism, and as a mitigation of the evils of the present industrial system. But it is important in view of the enforcement of a National Minimum and the protection of the Standard of Life of particular sections; and, moreover, as being the department in which collectivist principles have been and are being most effectively applied.

Under this section come such problems as are presented by strikes, unemployment and sweating, and they are perhaps most completely dealt with in Mr. and Mrs. Webb's books, *History of Trade Unionism*, *Industrial Democracy*, *Problems of Modern Industry*, and *The Case for the Factory Acts*. In addition to these, *The Eight Hours Day*, by S. Webb and H. Cox, and the Fabian Tract, *Case for a Legal Minimum Wage*, deal with two of the most important proposals for immediate State intervention.

C. Absorption by State of unearned income, derived from individual ownership and control of the means of production. This brings up all the problems of taxation, which are discussed with great lucidity and wealth of information in *Riches and Poverty*, by L. G. Chiozza Money; whilst the theory of taxation is discussed in *Public Finance*, by C. F. Bastable.

D. Provision for needs of particular sections of the community. The most convenient sources on old age pensions and poor law, etc., are the various tracts issued by the Fabian Society, and *Old Age Pensions*, by Rogers and Millar, can also be recommended. *Mankind in the Making*, by H. G. Wells, contains many valuable proposals for the organization of education generally. On the protection and training of children Sir John Gorst's book, *The Children of the State*, is an extremely suggestive work.

The Political Labor Movement. The appearance of a Labor Party in the political arena is an event of supreme importance to Socialists. *The Labor Party*, by Conrad Noel, supplies the most salient information in regard to the past history and present position of the political proletarian movement. In addition to these may be mentioned *The Political Reorganization of the People*, by W. S. Sanders, and the Fabian Tract, *A Policy for the Labor Party*.

UTOPIAN DESCRIPTIONS OF THE SOCIETY OF THE FUTURE

have always assumed a position of considerable importance in Socialistic literature. They perform a most valuable function both inside and outside the movement, stimulating the imagination of the worker with a picture of his aims materialized and at the same time throwing into relief the false ideals and sordid misery of present-day life. But it must always be remembered that they are nothing more than the speculative dreams of certain individuals and as practical systems of society are inevitably incomplete, and to some extent misleading. The task of choosing between the many Utopias that have been published is rendered difficult by the fact that their value is dependent on the imaginative sympathies of the particular reader. But the following are perhaps the most attractive that have appeared in recent years. *News from Nowhere*, by William Morris, which is a classic; *Looking Backward*, with its sequel *Equality*, by Edward

Bellamy; and *A Modern Utopia*, by H. G. Wells. This last was published in 1905, and may be said to present a practically up to date picture of a World State embodying many Socialist ideals.

Before bringing this pamphlet to an end it may be worth while to mention a few books which can only be classed as

GENERAL PROPAGANDIST LITERATURE.

The following are specially calculated to appeal to the unconverted by bringing home more forcibly and realistically than any statistics the terrible actualities of modern civilization. *No. 5 John Street*, by R. Whiteing; *The Dream of John Ball*, which contains what is perhaps the finest exposition of Socialist ethics in the language, and *Signs of Change*, by William Morris; *In the Days of the Comet*, by H. G. Wells; *England's Ideal*, by Edward Carpenter; *The Island*, by R. Whiteing; *Yeast* and *Alton Locke*, by Charles Kingsley; *The Jungle*, by Upton Sinclair; and *Slavery*, by Bart Kennedy.

This practically completes our account of the general literature of and connected with Socialism. Beyond this one may go on to the serious and sustained study of particular applications of the principle, when it is no longer a question of selecting particular books but a comprehensive mastery of all that has been written on the point under examination.

A fairly complete bibliography on social and economic subjects will be found in *What to Read* (Fabian Tract No. 29) and the appendix thereto, *More Books to Read*.

Before concluding it is necessary to explain certain omissions. For example, Fabian Tracts have received comparatively little attention. Certain specific ones have been mentioned, where they are the only or pre-eminently the best publications on a subject; but it is needless to say that the enquirer will find them all well worth studying, embodying as they do the results of much careful sociological and economic research. Again, all the works of Marx, with the exception of

the famous *Communist Manifesto*, have been omitted. This has been done, not from any failure to appreciate the enormous value of these works in their day, but because of the effectual accomplishment of their aim. Lapse of time has already rendered *Das Kapital* obsolete in many respects, and its economic theories are fast becoming superseded by more accurate generalizations. Hence its inclusion here would necessitate also the inclusion of a whole new class of Socialist literature criticizing Marxian methods and Marxian economics. And so, while this work still retains, and always will retain, a unique position as the classic *par excellence* of Socialism, yet its most permanent and valuable ideas are best conveyed to the modern reader through the works of later writers who have absorbed its teaching and gained their inspiration from its pages.

INDEX OF BOOKS.

WITH NAMES OF PUBLISHERS AND PRICES.

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- BELLAMY, ED. *Equality.* 2s. W. Heinemann. 1902.
- *Looking Backward.* 6d. paper, 1s. cloth. W. Reeves. 1890.
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- CARPENTER, ED. *England's Ideal.* 2s. 6d. Sonnenschein. 1901.
- CUNNINGHAM, W. *Should our Railways be Nationalized?* 2s. 6d. Dunfermline. 1906. Sold by the Fabian Society.
- ELY, PROF. *Socialism; its Strength and Weakness.* 6s. Sonnenschein. 1894.
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- FERRI, ENRICO. Socialism and Positive Science. 1s. net paper, 1s. 6d. net cloth. I. L. P. 1905.
- GEORGE, HENRY. Progress and Poverty. 1s. W. Reeves. 1884.
- GORST, SIR JOHN. The Children of the Nation. 7s. 6d. net. Methuen & Co. 1906.
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- JAURÈS, JEAN. Studies in Socialism. 1s. net paper, 1s. 6d. net cloth. I. L. P. 1906.
- JENKS, PROF. The Trust Problem. 5s. net. Putnams. 1901.
- KAUTSKY, KARL. Social Revolution. 6d. S. D. F. Twentieth Century Press.
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- KINGSLEY, REV. CHAS. Alton Locke. 6d. paper, 3s. 6d. cloth. Macmillan & Co. 1905.
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- NICHOLSON, PROF. Political Economy. 7s. 6d. net. A. & C. Black. 1904.
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- PEASE, E. R. The Case for Municipal Drink Trade. 2s. 6d. net. P. S. King. 1904.
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- ROGERS AND MILLAR. Old Age Pensions. 2s. 6d. net. Isbister. 1903.
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- SANDERS, W. S. The Political Reorganization of the People. 1s. 6d. net. Sonnenschein. 1902.
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- SINCLAIR, UPTON. The Jungle. 6s. Heinemann. 1906.
- SMART, PROF. The Distribution of Income. 5s. net. Macmillan & Co. 1899.
- STETSON, C. P. Women and Economics. 6s. Putnams. 1899.
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- Problems of Modern Industry. 5s. net. Longmans & Co. 1902.
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- WEBB, MRS. The Case for the Factory Acts. 2s. 6d. G. Richards. 1901.
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- In the Days of the Comet. 6s. Macmillan & Co. 1906.
- A Modern Utopia. 7s. 6d. Chapman & Hall. 1905.
- WHITEING, R. No. 5, John Street. Paper 6d., cloth 3s. 6d. G. Richards. 1902.
- The Island. 1s. G. Richards. 1902.

NOTE.—All the above mentioned books may be obtained direct from—

R. W. GRAHAM,

The Bookshops,

9, College Crescent,

Swiss Cottage,

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127. Socialism and Labor Policy. 116. Fabianism and the Fiscal Question: an alternative policy. 108. Twentieth Century Politics. By SIDNEY WEBB. 70. Report on Fabian Policy. 41. The Fabian Society: its Early History. By BERNARD SHAW.

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