

**FABIAN ESSAYS IN
SOCIALISM. EDITED
BY G. BERNARD SHAW**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649580293

Fabian Essays in Socialism. Edited by G. Bernard Shaw by G. Bernard Shaw & Sidney Webb & William Clarke

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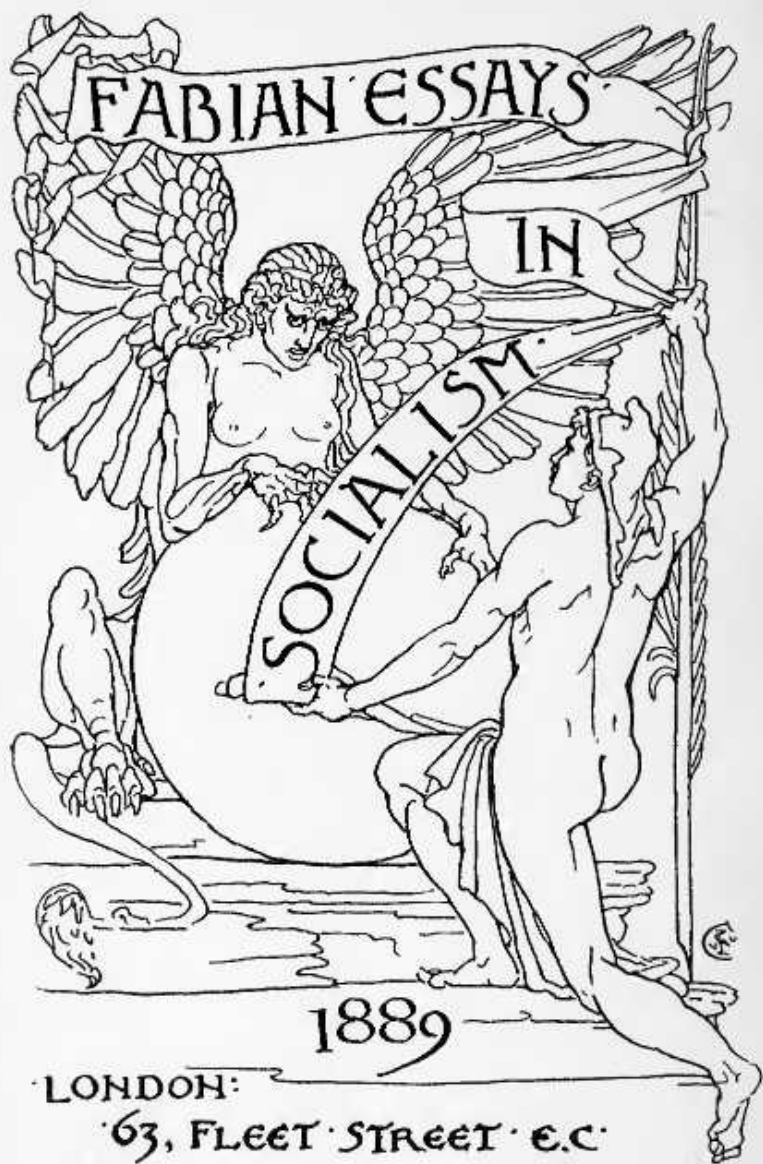
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G. BERNARD SHAW & SIDNEY WEBB & WILLIAM CLARKE

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FABIAN
ESSAYS IN SOCIALISM.

BY

G. BERNARD SHAW.

SIDNEY WEBB.

WILLIAM CLARKE.

SYDNEY OLIVIER.

ANNIE BESANT.

GRAHAM WALLAS.

AND

HUBERT BLAND.

EDITED BY

G. BERNARD SHAW.

LONDON:

THE FABIAN SOCIETY,

63 FLEET STREET AND 180 PORTSDOWN ROAD.

1889.

P R E F A C E .

THE essays in this volume were prepared last year as a course of lectures for delivery before mixed audiences in London and the provinces. They have been revised for publication, but not recast. The matter is put, not as an author would put it to a student, but as a speaker with only an hour at his disposal has to put it to an audience. Country readers may accept the book as a sample of the propaganda carried on by volunteer lecturers in the workmen's clubs and political associations of London.¹ Metropolitan readers will have the advantage of making themselves independent of the press critic by getting face to face with the writers, stripping the veil of print from their personality, cross-examining, criticising, calling them to account amid surroundings which inspire no awe, and before the most patient of audiences. For any Sunday paper which contains a lecture list will shew where some, if not all, of the seven essayists may be heard for nothing; and on all such occasions questions and discussion form part of the procedure.

The projection and co-ordination of these lectures is not the work of any individual. The nominal editor is only the member told off to arrange for the publication of the papers, and see them through the press with whatever editorial ceremony might be necessary. Everything that is usually implied by the authorship and editing of a book has in this

¹ In the year ending April, 1889, the number of lectures delivered by members of the Fabian Society alone was upwards of 700.

case been done by the seven essayists, associated as the Executive Council of the Fabian Society; and not one of the essays could be what it is had the writer been a stranger to his six colleagues and to the Society. But there has been no sacrifice of individuality—no attempt to cut out every phrase and opinion the responsibility for which would not be accepted by every one of the seven. Had the sections been differently allotted, they would have been differently treated, though the net result would probably have been the same. The writers are all Social Democrats, with a common conviction of the necessity of vesting the organization of industry and the material of production in a State identified with the whole people by complete Democracy. But that conviction is peculiar to no individual bias: it is a Capitol to which all roads lead; and at least seven of them are represented in these Fabian Essays; so that the reader need not fear oppression here, any more than in the socialized State of the future, by the ascendancy of one particular cast of mind.

There are at present no authoritative teachers of Socialism. The essayists make no claim to be more than communicative learners.

LONDON.

December, 1889.

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