

# **STUDIES IN SOCIALISM**

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Studies in socialism by Jean Jaurès

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**JEAN JAURÈS**

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SOCIALISM**



# Studies in Socialism

By

Jean Jaurès

Translated, with an Introduction, by

Mildred Minturn

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*Authorised English Version*

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## TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

L.S. M.S. 120-1021

THE following essays were first published in a Socialist daily paper in Paris, and are therefore addressed to a public not only well versed in the main theories of Socialism, but in the various questions that have arisen since Socialist ideas have ceased to be merely theories and have become crystallised into party programmes. In America, however, we cannot take for granted, as M. Jaurès does, a familiarity with these ideas, and it has therefore seemed best to prefix to a translation of his essays a summary of the fundamental Socialist theories and of the various methods advocated.

Although Socialists differ upon many points, they all agree on the following main definition:

Socialism is the doctrine that the means of production (that is, capital, land, and raw materials, or in other words, all wealth which is used for the creation of more wealth) should not be owned by individuals, but by society.

In order to understand the process of thought by which Socialists have arrived at this formula, we may imagine an unprejudiced observer of a philosophic turn of mind who has set himself to

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consider the spectacle offered by modern societies, and to judge it according to two standards, the standard of abstract justice and the standard of social expediency.

### I

The first thing that will strike such an observer is the extraordinary difference in the amount of material comfort enjoyed by different members of the same political group, a difference so great that the community may be almost said to represent two civilisations; and the next thing will probably be the difference in social standing, which practically divides the community into groups of masters and servants.

As he looks about him he sees some men beginning to work at sordid and unpleasant labour at seven o'clock in the morning and keeping on till six at night, and at the end of such a day going home to a two-room tenement; he sees that they and their wives and children are undernourished, that their clothing is insufficient, and that all the conditions of their lives are unsanitary and uncivilised.<sup>1</sup> And he sees some men whose

<sup>1</sup> "In this community, the saddest in which I have ever lived, fully fifty thousand men, women, and children were all the time in poverty, or on the verge of poverty. It would not be possible to describe how they worked and starved and ached to rise out of it. They broke their health down; the men acquired in this particular trade a painful and disabling rheumatism, and consumption

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work is far lighter and more agreeable, or who do not work at all, and yet whose lives are made up of every material satisfaction their imaginations can conceive. Although between these two extremes there exist an almost infinite number of degrees of wealth, statistics will tell him that in both England and America "nine tenths of all the realised property to-day belongs to a class that comprises only one tenth of the population—that ninety per cent. of the citizens, the great mass of the people, share among them, even including their little homes and furniture, and all their much-vaunted hoards, the ownership of not more than ten per cent. of the capital wealth."<sup>1</sup> It is for this upper tenth of the population that all the luxuries and most of the comforts of life are

was very common. The girls and boys followed in the paths of their parents. The wages were so low that the men alone often could not support their families, and mothers with babies toiled in order to add to the income. They gave up all thought of joyful living, probably in the hope that by tremendous exertion they could overcome their poverty; but they gained while at work only enough to keep their bodies alive. There was a sort of treadmill existence, with no prospect of anything else in life but more treadmill. . . . There are probably in fairly prosperous years no less than ten million persons in poverty; that is to say, underfed, underclothed, and poorly housed. . . . Nearly half of the families in the country are propertyless."—Robert Hunter, *Poverty*, pp. 324, 325, and 337.

<sup>1</sup> See Introduction to 1902 edition of *Problems of Modern Industry*, by Sidney and Beatrice Webb, p. viii.