

PREFACE

THE only Socialism of interest to practical persons is the Socialism of the organized Socialist movement. Yet the public cannot be expected to believe what an organization says about its own character or aims. It is to be rightly understood only *through its acts*. Fortunately the Socialists' acts are articulate; every party decision of practical importance has been reached after long and earnest discussion in party congresses and press. And wherever the party's position has become of practical import to those outside the movement, it has been subjected to a destructive criticism that has forced Socialists from explanations that were sometimes imaginary or theoretical to a clear recognition and frank statement of their true position. To know and understand Socialism as it is, we must lay aside both the claims of Socialists and the attacks of their opponents and confine ourselves to the concrete activities of Socialist organizations, the grounds on which their decisions have been reached, and the reasons by which they are ultimately defended.

Writers on Socialism, as a rule, have either left their statements of the Socialist position unsupported, or have based them exclusively on Socialist authorities, Marx, Engels, and Lasalle, whose chief writings are now half a century old. The existence to-day of a well-developed movement, many-sided and world-wide, makes it possible for a writer to rely neither on his personal experience and opinion nor on the old and familiar, if still little understood, theories. I have based my account either on the acts of Socialist organizations and of parties and governments with which they are in conflict, or on those responsible declarations of representative statesmen, economists, writers, and editors which are not mere theories, but the actual material of present-day politics,—though among these living forces, it must be said, are to be found also some of the teachings of the great Socialists of the past.