

FABIAN SOCIETY.

REPORT

For the year ended March,

1890,

WITH AN

ABSTRACT OF ACCOUNTS

AND A

REPORT OF THE

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

AND

FULL INFORMATION AS TO THE
BASIS, RULES, AND PUBLICATIONS
OF THE SOCIETY.

*"For the right moment you must
"wait, as Fabius did most patiently,
"when warring against Hannibal,
"though many censured his delays;
"but when the time comes you must
"strike hard, as Fabius did, or
"your waiting will be in vain,
"and fruitless."*

FABIAN SOCIETY.

Executive Committee:

1890-1891.

ANNIE BESANT †	MISS ALICE HOATSON §
HUBERT BLAND *	MRS. L. T. MALLET †
WILLIAM CLARKE §	JOS. F. OAKESHOTT §
ROBERT E. DELL †	SYDNEY OLIVIER §
W. S. De MATTOS *	EDWARD R. PEASE *
MISS MARY GROVER *	G. BERNARD SHAW †
STEWART D. HEADLAM *	GRAHAM WALLAS §
SIDNEY WEBB †	

Hon. Treasurer :

HUBERT BLAND,
Bowater Crescent, Woolwich.

General Secretary :

EDWARD R. PEASE,
2, Hyde Park Mansions, London, N.W.

All communications should be addressed to the Secretary.

* General Purposes Sub-Committee.

† Political Sub-Committee.

§ Literature Sub-Committee.

BASIS

OF THE

FABIAN SOCIETY

The FABIAN SOCIETY consists of Socialists.

It therefore aims at the reorganisation of Society by the emancipation of Land and industrial Capital from individual and class ownership, and the vesting of them in the community for the general benefit. In this way only can the natural and acquired advantages of the country be equitably shared by the whole people.

The Society accordingly works for the extinction of private property in land and of the consequent individual appropriation, in the form of Rent, of the price paid for permission to use the earth, as well as for the advantages of superior soils and sites.

The Society, further, works for the transfer to the community of the administration of such industrial Capital as can conveniently be managed socially. For, owing to the monopoly of the means of production in the past, industrial inventions and the transformation of surplus income into Capital have mainly enriched the proprietary class, the worker being now dependent on that class for leave to earn a living.

If these measures be carried out, without compensation (though not without such relief to expropriated individuals as may seem fit to the community), Rent and Interest will be added to the reward of labour, the idle class now living on the labour of others will necessarily disappear, and practical equality of opportunity will be maintained by the spontaneous action of economic forces with much less interference with personal liberty than the present system entails.

For the attainment of these ends the Fabian Society looks to the spread of Socialist opinions, and the social and political changes consequent thereon. It seeks to promote these by the general dissemination of knowledge as to the relation between the individual and Society in its economic, ethical, and political aspects.

The work of the Fabian Society takes, at present, the following forms :—

1. Meetings for the discussion of questions connected with Socialism.
2. The further investigation of economic problems, and the collection of facts contributing to their elucidation.
3. The issue of publications containing information on social questions, arguments relating to Socialism.
4. The promotion of Socialist lectures and debates in other Societies and Clubs.
5. The representation of the Society in public conferences and discussions on social questions.

The members are divided into local groups, are pledged to take part according to their abilities and opportunities in the general work of the Society, especially as regards their own localities, and although there is no compulsory subscription, are expected to contribute annually to the Society's funds. The amount of each member's subscription is known only to the Executive Committee.

The Society seeks recruits from all ranks, believing that not only those who suffer from the present system, but also many who are themselves enriched by it, recognise its evils and would welcome a remedy.

The Society meets for lectures and discussions on the first and third Fridays in the month, at 8 p.m.

RULES.

1. OFFICERS.—At the first meeting in April of each year the Society shall elect an Executive Committee, which shall hold office for one year, unless removed by vote of the Society. The number of the Executive shall not be changed except by a vote of the Society with due notice given. A Secretary and Treasurer shall be appointed at the same meeting.

2. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.—It is the duty of the Executive to conduct the general business of the Society, to prepare pamphlets and tracts, to appoint delegates to represent the Society, and to appoint Committees for special purposes.

3. ELECTION OF COMMITTEES.—Members nominated to serve on the Executive Committee must be proposed at the meeting next preceding that for their election, and the names must be given on the notice convening the meeting.

4. WANT OF CONFIDENCE.—Notice of motion to remove a member from the Executive Committee must be given as provided in Rule 3 for the election of the Committee.

5. BUSINESS.—Any resolution, the subject of which has been notified to the Secretary ten days before any ordinary meeting, shall be announced by him upon the notice convening that meeting, and shall, together with any amendments thereof, take precedence of all other business. Notice of any proposal to issue a pamphlet must be sent to members nineteen days before a vote can be taken.

6. URGENCY.—Any resolution, not affecting the constitution of the Society, may be declared urgent by a majority of three-fourths of the members present, in a meeting of not less than twelve members.

7. FINANCE.—The Treasurer shall, from time to time, apply to the Society for such sums as are required.

8. ELECTIONS.—Candidates must signify acceptance of the basis of the Society, must attend two meetings as visitors, and must be proposed and seconded by members from personal knowledge. The names of candidates shall be sent to all members before each meeting. Candidates shall be elected by an unanimous vote of the Executive Committee. If a candidate be rejected his proposer shall have a right of appeal to the Society, in which case a ballot shall be taken, when one black ball in five shall exclude. The names of members who do not attend any meeting for six months shall be struck off the list at the discretion of the Executive.

9. CORRESPONDING MEMBERS.—Residents in the provinces or abroad may be elected as corresponding members on the proposal of one member, the election proceeding as in the case of town members.

10. BRANCHES.—Branch Societies may be formed in accordance with such regulations as may be made from time to time.

FABIAN SOCIETY.

ESTABLISHED 1883.

SEVENTH ANNUAL REPORT, LAID BEFORE THE SOCIETY AT THE GENERAL MEETING, MARCH 28TH, 1890.

The Executive Committee report that during the past year the Society has taken an active part in promoting the growth of Socialist opinion and action. Owing, amongst other causes, to the progressive policy of the London County Council and the London School Board, and to the prominent part taken by Socialists in the Dockers' Strike, which evoked such general and unexpected sympathy, Socialism, under its own or some other name, has made a marked advance during the year, and its principles are now widely recognised as the inevitable outcome of Democracy.

The usual fortnightly meetings of the Society have been regularly held. The summer series was devoted to lectures on miscellaneous subjects, mostly by members. In the autumn a successful course of six lectures on "A Century of Social Movements" was arranged, and in the spring six lectures were given on subjects cognate to Socialism by James Rowlands, M.P., Bernard Bosanquet, H. Llewellyn Smith, and others.

A social meeting of the members and their friends took place at Bloomsbury Hall in April, 1889, at which there was an attendance of between two and three hundred.

Members residing in or near Birmingham have in contemplation the establishment of a local branch of the Society, which will aim at becoming an active centre of propagandist work.

The Society now numbers 173 members, of whom 34 are resident in the Provinces or abroad. Fifty-seven have been elected during the year, and there have been a few withdrawals.

The finances of the Society are in a satisfactory condition, as is shown by the financial statement appended. The balance in hand, due to donations recently received, and to the rapid return of the outlay on "Fabian Essays," will shortly be expended in the issue of fresh literature.

The Executive work of the Society was further divided in the autumn by the appointment of Sydney Olivier to the new post of Publishing Secretary, and of Edward R. Pease to his place as General Secretary.

In spite, however, of this additional sub-division of the Executive work, and of the willing assistance afforded by various members, the growth of the Secretarial duties has now reached a point at which they cannot be efficiently performed except by the devotion to them of practically the whole time of at least one of the members of the Executive Committee. The extensive demand for the Society's publications, the work caused by new editions and new issues, the Society's increasing political influence, all combine to make necessary some change in the Executive arrangements, and the Committee accordingly propose an advantageous arrangement by which the Society may obtain, not merely the overtime, but virtually the whole time and energy of the General Secretary for the Executive work.

Correspondence which has hitherto been sent to the Political, Lecture, or Publishing Secretaries, or to the Treasurer, should henceforth be addressed to the General Secretary.

PUBLICATIONS.

At the beginning of last year the Society had stock of the unmentioned Fabian Tracts, namely :—

No. 1.	"Why are the Many Poor?"	890 Copies.
„ 5.	"Facts for Socialists."	4374 „
„ 6.	"The True Radical Programme."	3215 „
„ 7.	"Capital and Land."	835 „

Tracts Nos. 2, 3, and 4, are not now on sale. Tracts Nos. 1 and 7, were sold out during the year. A revised Edition of the former has been issued as a leaflet (price one shilling per hundred), and has been largely used for distribution.

In August a new Tract, No. 8, "Facts for Londoners," was published, price sixpence, containing an exhaustive collection of statistics and other facts relating to London, with suggestions for reform on Socialistic principles. In November was issued Tract No. 9, "An Eight Hours Bill, in the form of an amendment of "the Factory Acts, with further provisions for the improvement of "the conditions of Labour."

Altogether nearly 14,000 tracts have been distributed during the year, including 2250 "Facts for Londoners," with a return to the Society, by sales, of £49 16 9., of which £21 9 9 has been received for Tracts Nos. 1, 5, 6, and 7, and £28 10 0 for No. 8. The Society has spent £61 5 0 on the printing of Tracts, and has now in hand 3941 Tract No. 1, 792 No. 5, 1929 No. 6, 2750 No. 8, and 1066 No. 9, which are valued (at half prices) at £32 2 5.

New editions of Tracts Nos. 6 and 7, and a leaflet summarising "Facts for Londoners," have been prepared for publication.

In the course of the spring a circular was issued inviting subscriptions towards the publication of the course of lectures on the Basis and Prospects of Socialism, which had been delivered before the Society during the previous Autumn. Upwards of three hundred copies being subscribed for, it was decided to proceed; and G. Bernard Shaw was appointed editor. After one negotiation with the publishing trade, which fell through in consequence of the publisher applied to refusing to have the book printed by a "fair house," it was determined that the intervention of a publisher should be dispensed with. The lectures, with the addition of a second paper by G. B. Shaw, were printed for the authors by Mr. A. Bonner, and published in December 1889, as "Fabian Essays in Socialism," with frontispiece and decorated cover designed by Walter Crane and May Morris, and a full index, the labour of checking which was undertaken by Geraldine Spooner.

The first thousand copies were disposed of within a month of the book's appearance, five hundred to the bookselling trade and five hundred through the Publishing Secretary to subscribers and others. A substantial profit was realised on this issue; and a second thousand, revised, was published at the beginning of March, 1890. The copyright and all interests in the book, valued at about £200, have been made over by the contributors to the Society.

The Society's gross receipts from its publishing operations of the year were £230 19 5; its expenditure on the same £231 5 3, and the net estimated value of its total stock now in hand amounts to upwards of £150.

LONDON GROUPS AND LOCAL WORK.

Except in a few cases, the organisation of the Society's London members into local groups has not, as yet, proved at all effective. Most of the Secretaries have failed to work up any sort of organisation, whilst members do not seem to have usually taken the trouble to enter into communication with their respective Secretaries. From the Central, South-Eastern, North-Western, and Hampstead groups Reports have been received of numerous lectures delivered, resolutions at Ward meetings passed, literature distributed, and so forth. In nearly all other cases, however, work of this nature would have gone on just as well, had there been no pretence at Group Organisation.

The Executive are still hopeful that members residing in the various districts of London will consult together for the purpose of combined action in local matters. A single Socialist on a Vestry, a Board of Guardians, a Caucus, or even in a local Parliament, is often a great power for good. By meeting

together, getting to know each other well, and planning work in common, members in the various districts of London, or in the provinces, can make their exertions much more effective than at present.

In London (and, no doubt, elsewhere) useful work can be done in connection with the Board Schools. Members willing to act as school managers, or to assist in the administration of free meals, are requested to send their names to the Secretary. Elections for Poor Law Guardians (in April), and for Vestries (May for London, Easter elsewhere), should not be forgotten. An active group could, in many localities, easily secure the election of a Socialist.

GENERAL POLITICAL WORK.

Notwithstanding the comparative failure of the attempt at group organisation in London, the political force of the Society has rapidly grown during the year. In August, 1889, a circular was issued to the members, pointing out the numerous opportunities for political work in a Socialist direction afforded by the local Vestries, Boards of Guardians, School Boards, Town and County Councils, as well as by the ordinary Parliamentary organisations and political clubs. Since then the proportion of individual members who recognise their opportunities in these respects has considerably increased; but both the immediate efficiency and the ultimate result of such work would be enormously greater if more of the members would form the habit of communicating their own action to the Secretary, from time to time, and of learning from him the experience and suggestions of others. Moreover, the effect of the very large amount of work now done by individual members is lost to Socialism wherever it is not systematically undertaken in avowed connection with the propaganda of the Society.

Shortly after the issue of the last Report many members of the Society took part in the elections of Boards of Guardians. A programme of Poor Law Reform, prepared by a member for the Political Committee of the Eleusis Club, was reprinted and circulated. Copies may still be obtained from the Secretary.

It is already certain that similar proposals will very shortly form the programme of one, if not both of the two great political parties.

In the Metropolitan Vestry elections in May, members of the Society took an active part, especially in Paddington and the Strand, where members were candidates. H. H. Barrs was elected in the Strand; and Sydney Olivier failed in Paddington by only one vote. At the election of the Bristol Town

Council, H. H. Gore, already a member of the School Board, obtained nearly three times as many votes as the other candidates shared between them. In Chelsea a manifesto, drafted by a member of the Society, for the Liberal Association and the Eleusis Club, was accepted by all Progressive candidates.

During the summer considerable influence was exerted by members of the Society in the revision of the programme of the Liberal party. As ultimately adopted at Manchester, the programme shows evident traces of Socialist criticism. With a view to maintaining this pressure on the Liberal Party, the Executive has revised for re-issue a Tract ("The True Radical Programme"), with a series of questions to be used in heckling Parliamentary candidates.

At the same time it is noticeable that owing to the Radical success at the London County Council election, to the policy originally adopted by the "Star," and other causes, of which the work of the Fabian Society is certainly not the least important, London Radicalism has, within the last twelve months, assumed a definite and independent attitude. The Metropolitan Radical Association sent a delegate to the International Socialist Conference held during the summer in Paris. The London Liberal and Radical Union passed resolutions in favour of the Eight Hours movement, and of other advanced measures of social reform, whilst all Liberal candidates for London constituencies have been forced to accept a programme which is notoriously distasteful to their official leaders. Nowhere have the new ideas made themselves more strongly felt in London than on the School Board. In spite of a nominal reactionary majority, the Board has passed a strong resolution in favour of "free" education, and, still more significantly, has begun to assist and superintend the formation of an organised system of feeding the poorer children in accordance with the proposals of Annie Besant and Stewart Headlam.

The remarkable success of the Socialists at the German elections, and the development of the Labour movement in the English manufacturing districts, show that the progress of the new ideas during the past year is not peculiar to London or to England. The new policy grows of itself; and the main task of the Fabian Society must be to assist in giving further definiteness and coherence to working class aspirations. With this view a series of well-attended meetings of the Political Committee resulted in the drawing up of an Eight Hours Bill which, with the exception of Mr. Cunninghame Graham's Bill for Miners, remains the only attempt to deal with the question in a legislative form.

Several members of the Society have taken part in founding, and are now issuing the "People's Press," a weekly paper

which has been adopted as the official organ of the General Railway Workers' and Gas Workers' Unions, and others of the large associations of hitherto uncombined workers, whose growth has been so remarkable a feature of the last twelve months.

LECTURES.

Forty-five members have lectured during the year. Throughout the autumn and winter the demand for their services was incessant. From returns made by 37 of them, it appears that at least 1012 lectures were delivered in the past 12 months.

Most of the lecture work is still done in London; but members of the Society have also lectured this year in Oxford, Cambridge, Reading, Tunbridge Wells, Chatham, Leicester, Nottingham, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Bath, Bristol, Barnet, Liverpool, Birmingham, Derby, Poole, Windsor, Bromley, and other provincial towns.

Provincial members are strongly urged to endeavour to extend this branch of the Society's work.

Special courses of three, four, or six lectures on "Socialism and Practical Politics," "The Basis of Socialism," etc., have been given in 41 places in London and elsewhere.

Four courses of lectures on Political Economy, comprising about 40 lectures, and 2 courses of 10 lectures each, on "The History of the Working Classes" have been given by two members. It has again been found that connected courses are much more effective than isolated lectures.

During the year several public discussions have been arranged at Clubs, Co-operative Societies, &c. This form of propaganda is specially useful. Several Drawing-room meetings have been addressed, and some progress has been made in pushing the Society's work among Church and Chapel Institutes, Young Men's Societies, &c. Successful lectures have been given, too, before Liberal Associations, Women's Liberal Associations and Trades Unions. Various small gatherings of ministers of religion have also been addressed. Members are requested to endeavour to open up further channels for the Society's lectures in these directions.

It may be noticed that two members are at present residing in the United States, one of whom is engaged in lecturing largely on Socialism and kindred topics.

UNIVERSITIES COMMITTEE.

The work of the Committee has been mainly directed towards the distribution of literature at Oxford and Cambridge; and various debates on Socialistic subjects have been promoted or aided.

At Oxford, through the co-operation of the Society's resident members, two lectures have been given in St. John's College, to audiences specially invited.

At Cambridge, a member was specially invited to lecture to the Ethical Society, in reply to Professor R. Wallace.

ANNIE BESANT.

HUBERT BLAND.

WILLIAM CLARKE.

SYDNEY OLIVIER.

G. BERNARD SHAW.

GRAHAM WALLAS.

SIDNEY WEBB.

Executive Committee, 1889-90.

EDWARD R. PEASE, *General Secretary*,
2, Hyde Park Mansions, London, N.W.

ABSTRACT OF PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

ANNUAL MEETING

On March 28th, 1890.

The draft report was read, together with the statement of accounts, and both were ordered to be printed.

The following resolutions were carried:—

That the Executive for the ensuing year be fifteen in number.

That a salary as proposed be payable to the General Secretary.

That the Executive be instructed to make arrangements for holding once a quarter a Social Meeting for the members.

Resolutions amending the Rules, appointing the Executive Committee and Officers, and authorising the issue of Literature were also passed.

Receipts & Payments Account for year ending March 31st, 1890.

INCOME.		EXPENDITURE.	
1889.	£ s. d.	1890.	£ s. d.
April 1		Mar. 31	
To balance in hand ...	6 12 6	By Balance of last year's Printing account, paid this year ...	4 2 9
Mar. 31		" Postage ...	22 5 6
Subscriptions ...	85 19 8	" Printing and Stationery ...	10 13 3
" Donations ...	40 16 0	" Hire of Halls ...	21 15 0
" Sale of Tracts ...	49 19 9	" Printing and Advertising ...	61 5 0
" Sale of "Fabian Essays" ...	180 19 8	Tracts ...	
		" Printing and Binding ...	170 0 3
		" "Fabian Essays" ...	
		Balance in Hands of Treasurer ...	19 13 7
		Balance owing by Free-thought Publishing Co. ...	54 12 3
		and others ...	
	<u>£364 7 7</u>		<u>£364 7 7</u>

Audited and found correct,

NOËL L. GRIFFITH,
HELEN CLEGG.

March 31st, 1890.

FABIAN SOCIETY.

(ESTABLISHED 1883.)

THE FABIAN SOCIETY consists of Socialists. A statement of its Principles, Rules, Conditions of Membership, etc., can be obtained from the Secretary, at 21 Hyde Park Mansions, London, N.W. Also the following publications :—

"FABIAN ESSAYS IN SOCIALISM."

(22nd Thousand.)

A full exposition of modern English Socialism in its latest and maturest phase. The book consists of eight monographs by G. BERNARD SHAW, SYDNEY OLIVIER, SIDNEY WEBB, WILLIAM CLARKE, HUBERT BLAND, GRAHAM WALLAS, and ANNIE BESANT. The frontispiece is by WALTER CRANE.

Library Edition, 6s. ; *direct from the Secretary for Cash*, 4/6 (*postage 4½d.*)

Cheap Edition, Paper cover (published by Walter Scott, 24 Warwick Lane, London), 1s. ; ditto, plain cloth, 2s. At all booksellers, or post free from the Secretary for 1s. and 2s. respectively.

FABIAN TRACTS.

To be obtained from the Publisher, JOHN HEYWOOD, Deansgate and Ridgefield, Manchester, and 1 Paternoster Buildings, London ; or from the Secretary at above address.

No. 1.—Why are the Many Poor? 25th thousand. Price 6 for 1d., 1s. per 100.

No. 5.—Facts for Socialists. A comprehensive survey of the distribution of income and the condition of classes in England, gathered from official returns, and from the works of well-known economists and statisticians. Authorities given for all the figures. 25th thousand, 16 pp., 1d., or 9d. per doz.

No. 7.—Capital and Land. A similar survey of the distribution of property, with a criticism of the distinction sometimes set up between Land and Capital as instruments of production. 10th thousand. 16 pp., 1d. ; or 9d. per doz.

No. 8.—Facts for Londoners. An exhaustive collection of statistical and other information relating to the County and City of London, with suggestions for Municipal Reform on Socialist principles. 5th thousand. 56 pp., 6d. ; or 4/6 doz.

No. 9.—An Eight Hours Bill in the form of an amendment of the Factory Acts, with further provisions for the improvement of the conditions of Labor. Very full notes explain the Trade Option clause and the principles and precedents on which the Bill is founded. A list of literature dealing with the question of the limitation of the hours of labor is appended. 20th thousand, 16 pp., 1d. ; or 9d. doz.

No. 10.—Figures for Londoners. (a short abstract of No. 8). 10th thousand. 4 pp., 6 for 1d. ; 1s. per 100.

No. 11.—The Workers' Political Programme fully explains the politics of to-day from the working class point of view, and gives questions to put to Parliamentary candidates, with reasons for asking them. 10th thousand. 20 pp., 1d. ; or 9d. per doz.

No. 12.—Practicable Land Nationalization. A brief statement of practical proposals for immediate reform. 20th thousand. 4 pp., 6 for 1d. ; or 1s. per 100.

No. 13.—What Socialism Is. A short exposition of the aim of Socialists. 30th thousand. 4 pp., 6 for 1d. ; or 1s. per 100.

No. 14.—The New Reform Bill. A draft Act of Parliament providing for Adult Suffrage, Payment of Members and their election expenses, Second Ballot, and a thorough system of Registration, with full notes and precedents. 10th thousand. 20 pp., 1d. ; or 9d. per doz.

No. 15.—English Progress towards Social Democracy. An account of the evolution of English Society, with explanation of Socialism. 16 pp., 1d. ; 9d. per doz.

No. 16.—A Plea for the Eight Hours Bill. A brief answer to objectors. 8 pp., 6 for 1d. ; 1s. per 100.

The LECTURE LIST, containing the names of sixty lecturers, who offer their services gratuitously, may be obtained on application to the Secretary. Upwards of 1,000 lectures were delivered by members during the year ended in March, 1890.