

"Socialistica" of 1800-1850: Rarities and Leading Collections

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"SOCIALISTICA" is a contrived word intended to describe that body of literature which has socialism at its center, and is surrounded by communism, anarchism, labor theory, cooperation and similar concomitant subjects. With respect to such literature, this is a study of rare titles, their prices in the current market, and of leading library collections.

Through use of the sampling technique an attempt is here made to present a generalized picture. As the first step, a list of 34 titles, all first editions, was compiled. Of the 26 authors represented, most are well known, so that from this point of view the titles chosen are assuredly suitable for the purpose of sampling. A few other authors were selected simply because they are little known, much in the manner of the teacher who in his examinations includes a very difficult question in order to distinguish between those students who are good and those who are exceptional.

Once compiled, the list was sent for checking to thirty-seven libraries, all of which responded. Below is the list, arranged in the order of infrequency with which the titles were located. The numeral preceding each author's name indicates the number of copies reported.

- o Blanc, Louis. *Organisation du travail*. Paris, 1839.
- o Weitling, Wilhelm. *Menschheit . . .* Paris, 1838.
- 1 Leroux, Pierre. *De l'égalité*. Boussac, 1838.

- 1 Winkelblech, Karl Georg. (Karl Marlo, pseud.). *Untersuchungen über die Organisation der Arbeit*. Cassel, 1848-59. 3 v.
- 2 Marx, Karl. *Manifest der komm. Partei*. London, 1848.
- 2 Rodbertus, Johann Karl. *Sociale briefe an von Kirchmann*. Berlin, 1850-51.
- 3 Cabet, Etienne. *Voyage en Icarie*. Paris, 1840.
- 3 Hall, Charles. *Effects of Civilization in European States*. London, 1805.
- 3 Pecqueur, Constantin. *De la république de Dieu*. Paris, 1844.
- 3 Proudhon, Pierre J. *Qu'est-ce que la propriété?* Paris, 1840.
- 4 Hodgskin, Thomas. *Labour Defended Against the Claims of Capital*. London, 1825.
- 5 Pecqueur, Constantin. *Théorie nouvelle d'économie sociale . . .* Paris, 1842.
- 5 Saint-Simon, Claude Henri. *Nouveau Christianisme*. Paris, 1825.
- 5 Thunen, Johann Heinrich von. *Isolierte Staat . . .* Hamburg, 1826. Teil I.
- 6 Byllesby, Langdon. *Observations on the Sources and Effects of Unequal Wealth*. N.Y., 1826.
- 6 Gall, Ludwig. *Meine Auswanderung . . .* Trier, 1822.
- 7 Fourier, Francois Marie Charles. *Théorie des quatre mouvements*. Leipzig, 1808.
- 7 Schmidt, Johann Kaspar. *Einzige und sein Eigenthum*. Leipzig, 1845.
- 7 Thompson, William. *Labour Rewarded*. London, 1827.
- 7 Warren, Josiah. *Equitable Commerce*. New Harmony, 1846.
- 8 Gray, John. *Lecture on Human Happiness*. London, 1825.
- 8 Heinzen, Karl. *Preussische Bureaukratie*. Darmstadt, 1845.
- 8 Marx, Karl. *Misère de la philosophie*. Brussels, 1847.
- 8 Weitling, Wilhelm. *Garantien der Harmonie und Freiheit*. Vevey, 1842.
- 9 Heinzen, Karl. *Teutsche Revolution*. Bern, 1847.
- 9 Stein, Lorenz Jacob von. *Socialismus und Communismus . . .* Leipzig, 1842.
- 10 Leroux, Pierre. *De l'humanité*. Paris, 1840. 2 v.

- 11 Engels, Friedrich. *Lage der arbeitenden Klasse in England*. Leipzig, 1845.
- 12 Proudhon, Pierre Joseph. *Système des contradictions économiques*. Paris, 1846.
- 13 Owen, Robert. *New View of Society*. London, 1813-14.
- 14 Bray, John Francis. *Labour's Wrongs and Labour's Remedy*. Leeds, 1839.
- 16 Owen, Robert. *Book of the New Moral World*. London, 1836. pt. 1.
- 17 Skidmore, Thomas. *Rights of Man to Property*. N.Y., 1829.
- 17 Thompson, William. *Inquiry into the Principles . . .* London, 1824.

To summarize the above:

- 2 titles were unlocated.
- 12 titles were located in from 1 to 5 libraries.
- 13 titles were located in from 6 to 10 libraries.
- 7 titles were located in from 11 to 17 libraries.

Of the 34 titles, 25% were reported by three or less libraries.

Except for Harvard and Columbia, no library reported as many as half of the thirty-four titles. Leading collections are at Harvard (26), Columbia (24), Michigan (14), New York Public (14), Wisconsin (13), Library of Congress (12), Illinois (11), Yale (11), Boston Public (10), Chicago (10), Johns Hopkins (10), and Northwestern (10).

Do these statistics indicate a lack of interest in the collecting of "socialistica"? On this point there is the evidence of the English collector, H. S. Foxwell. Writing about 1928, Foxwell said: "When I began collecting, books now eagerly competed for at Sotheby's by dealers with commissions from Germany, Holland and America were thrown aside for their value as paper to the book-stall keepers . . . from whom I bought hundreds of valuable volumes at nominal prices."¹

Further evidence of interest in early

¹ Similar evidence is offered in a letter to the author by Mr. Stanley Wheeler of Harding's Bookshop.

"socialistica" can be found in the persistent appearance of doctoral dissertations on the subject, in the publication of articles in learned journals, and finally, in the writing of monographs by well-seasoned scholars.

Rather than lack of interest, it is the absence of plentiful opportunities to purchase which explains why some titles are seldom found. An examination of dealers' catalogs of the past ten years reveals that of the thirty-four titles, 12 were not found a single time, 7 were cataloged but once, and 10 either two or three times. The remaining 5 were cataloged from four to seven times.² In this last group were Owen (both titles), Proudhon (*Système*), Schmidt, and Thompson (*Labour Rewarded*).

Some of these titles, according to such dealers as Leon Kramer and Hugo Streisland, have not been cataloged in the present century. Examples are those by Warren, Thünen, and Weitling (*Menschheit*). Others which perhaps have appeared but once in this century are those by Hodgskin, Hall, Blanc, Winkelblech, and Gall.

Closely related is the question of the number of copies which were printed of these titles. On this point the evidence is understandably scanty. The *Manifesto* was given an edition of 1000 copies. Even smaller were the editions of Thünen (500), and Marx's *Misère* (800). Of Owen's *Book of the New Moral World*, 750 copies were printed. Weitling's *Menschheit*, financed by workers who pawned their possessions, had an edition of 2000. As for Proudhon's famous book on property, the number of copies cannot be stated with certainty; but at least one publisher was willing to risk 2000 copies. Even the second edition of this successful book was given but 3500 copies.³

² Obviously, only the catalogs of specialty dealers were inspected. The reader must also bear in mind that some books are sold by dealers minus the fanfare of a catalog.
³ For the Owen statistic I am indebted to the Co-

To lend greater meaning to these figures, comparison might be made with the size of editions in the early years of English printing. On this subject, one scholar has recently written: "We shall not be far wrong in thinking that very special reasons were required to persuade a printer to print more than 600-700 copies of any ordinary work in the first seventy-five years of printing in England."⁴ To put this matter similarly for "socialistica" of 1800-1850: only unusual circumstances would persuade a publisher to risk more than 1000 copies.

In the past ten years prices of these books have risen considerably. Without question, the most costly item today is the original edition of the *Manifesto* which was cataloged in 1946 at \$475. Of the other titles, Weitling's *Garantien* and Cabet's *Voyage* were priced between \$75 and \$100.⁵ In the \$30 to \$50 group were Pecqueur (both titles), Fourier, Saint-Simon, Thompson (both titles), Skidmore, Owen and Proudhon (*Système*); some of these are titles which are widely held. On the other hand, less commonly met with titles such as those by Heinzen, Leroux (*Humanité*), Schmidt, and Stein have been priced at less than \$30.

Within the general field of "socialistica" a few special collections might be mentioned. Probably the best collections of the works of Robert Owen can be found at Columbia and Vassar. Columbia also possesses unusual strength in the writings of the Chartists. Duke has a collection of about 850 books, pamphlets, periodicals and manuscripts relating to the Fourier movement. Michigan owns the John Francis Bray papers, and within its Labadie Labor Collection there is a wealth of ma-

terial on anarchism.⁶ A number of collections pertaining to the American "communitarian" settlements could be cited, but these would be merely repetitious of the items found in Arthur Bestor's doctoral thesis on Fourierism, and in his recently published *Backwoods Utopias*.

A few rare periodicals should also be mentioned. The *Rheinische Zeitung*, edited by Marx, could not be located. Another Marxian-edited journal, the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, can be found in complete state only at Illinois. The *Urwaehler*, a rare journal edited by Weitling, of which only five issues appeared, is located only at Wisconsin. Its successor, the *Urwaehler-Zeitung* is owned by Harvard. Other periodicals, of which no more than two or three complete files can be found in this country are the *Producteur*, edited by Saint-Simon; the *Revue du progrès politique*, edited by Blanc; the *Revue indépendante*, edited by Leroux; and the *Salut du peuple*, edited by Pecqueur.

Examples can also be cited of periodicals of which no complete file can be found. This is true of the Saint-Simonian journal, the *Organisateur*, and of the *Globe, journal philosophique et littéraire*, edited by Leroux. Another example is the *Workingman's Advocate*, a newspaper edited by George H. Evans. Even more illustrative of the rarity of some newspapers is the *Deutsche Schnellpost*, a Heinzen paper which Carl Wittke, Heinzen's biographer, could not find in this country.

Obviously, a good deal of "socialistica" must be put down either as rare or scarce. Fortunately for librarians, from the viewpoint of prices, this is a field in which private collectors are infrequently found. Furthermore, the number of librarian-

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operative Union of Manchester, England. All others were found in published sources.

⁴ Bennett, H. S., *English Books and Readers, 1475-1557*. Cambridge, 1952. p. 228.

⁵ With the exception of the Pecqueur and Fourier items which fell into the hands of a "carriage trade" dealer.

⁶ The famous collections of manuscript material at the New York Public and at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin are pertinent to the period after 1850.

catalog prove impossible, the material collected shall be given to the Trustees of the National Central Library, for use in such a way as will best supplement their records of periodicals in English libraries." However, every effort is being made to insure its publication.

The British have great feeling for their national treasures and are doing a fine job of keeping and preserving them. The Friends of the National Libraries, which assists the national, university, and municipal libraries, is enthusiastically supported. Of course the U.S. is too large a nation to organize a "Friends" group for the entire country as has been done in Great Britain, and probably should continue to concentrate on Friends of individual libraries. However, we might well take a suggestion from the British and organize state groups in order to help keep within state borders the literary and historical heritage of each state.

Future contemplated activities of BNB include analytical entries for articles in periodicals prepared perhaps with the aid of university, special and reference libraries of the country; a British index of subject headings; directions for classified cataloging; a national bibliography of music; and possibly a card service for those libraries having card catalogs.

Some of the libraries in America already subscribing to the *English Catalog of Books* and/or *Whitaker's Cumulative Book List* may feel that they cannot afford BNB as well. BNB has several advantages over

these two publications—it has a classified subject arrangement, a wider scope, a much fuller entry, and a more up-to-the-minute list of books being published in England thus giving American libraries a better opportunity to obtain copies before they go out of print—a disappointment experienced by so many in recent years. It is possible and desirable when placing orders with book dealers in London to order by the serial number given in the BNB just as LC cards are now ordered by the LC number.

It would appear that libraries in the U.S. buying books published in Great Britain should do more of their ordering direct from English dealers. The English dealers are prepared to give quicker service and should be able to allow the purchasing library a greater discount than can be received from agents in America. By using the BNB serial number a large book order could be sent by air mail for only 10¢ and at the same time reduce the amount of paper work necessary when using author, title, etc.

I would point out Mr. W. J. McEldowney's article in the *New Zealand Libraries* for July 1951 to those libraries who may feel that the *Cumulative Book Index* will meet their need for English books. Mr. McEldowney states that in comparing an issue of the BNB with the CBI—"there are 335 items listed in this issue of the BNB, of which fewer than half had made the CBI by nearly nine months later."

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collectors is still small, perhaps less than two dozen. But also few in number are the dealers who specialize in "socialistica," so that the supply by no means equals the demand. All in all, this is a subject which

can be recommended to most librarians. There is competition enough to challenge the combative, and opportunity enough to sustain those who require occasional encouragement.