

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910160759003321
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Titolo	Christina Stead and the Socialist Heritage
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Amherst : , : Cambria Press, , 2016 ©2016
ISBN	1-62499-957-3
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (262 pages)
Collana	Cambria Australian Literature
Disciplina	823.914
Soggetti	Political and social views Right and left (Political science) in literature Stead, Christina, 1902-1983
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Nota di contenuto	Cover -- Title -- Dedication -- Copyright -- Table of Contents -- Acknowledgements -- Chapter 1: Prologue -- Chapter 2: A Socialist Awakening -- Chapter 3: Seven Poor Men Of Sydney and the Proletarian Novel -- Chapter 4: The Politics of Stead's Early Fiction -- Chapter 5: Finance Capitalism and House of All Nations -- Chapter 6: The Allure And Meaning of America -- Chapter 7: The New Deal and The Man Who Loved Children -- Chapter 8: Epilogue -- Works Cited -- Index.
Sommario/riassunto	Christina Stead (1902-1983) was an Australian novelist and short-story writer acclaimed for her satirical wit and penetrating psychological characterizations. Stead enjoyed an international reputation in the 1930s and beyond, then went out of favor as a communist-affiliated writer, until she was rediscovered by feminist critics. Her standing is considerable, and in Australia she vies with Patrick White for the laurel of finest Australian novelist. In this book, author Michael Ackland argues that the single most important influence on Stead's life, socialism, has been seriously neglected in studies of her life and work. Ackland delves into Stead's political formation prior to her departure for London in 1928, arguing that considerable insights can be added to the known record by reviewing these years within a specifically political context, as well as by interrogating Stead's own accounts of key persons and events. He examines her novels, from Seven Poor Men of

Sydney to *I'm Dying Laughing* and *The Man Who Loved Children*, and focuses on Stead's conception of history, of capitalist finance, and on the significance of the key historical moments that frame her works. In tracing the trajectory of her work, Ackland illuminates how Stead was, as a well-informed Marxist critic underscored, a product of thirties. Steeped in socialist literature and steeled to withstand ideological adversity, Stead emerged at the end of the decade a strongly committed novelist, whose intellectual idealism and convictions could, as coming decades would show, long withstand privation, heartbreaks and the unwelcome lessons of history. This is an important book for collections in Australian literature, comparative literature, world literature, and women's studies.
