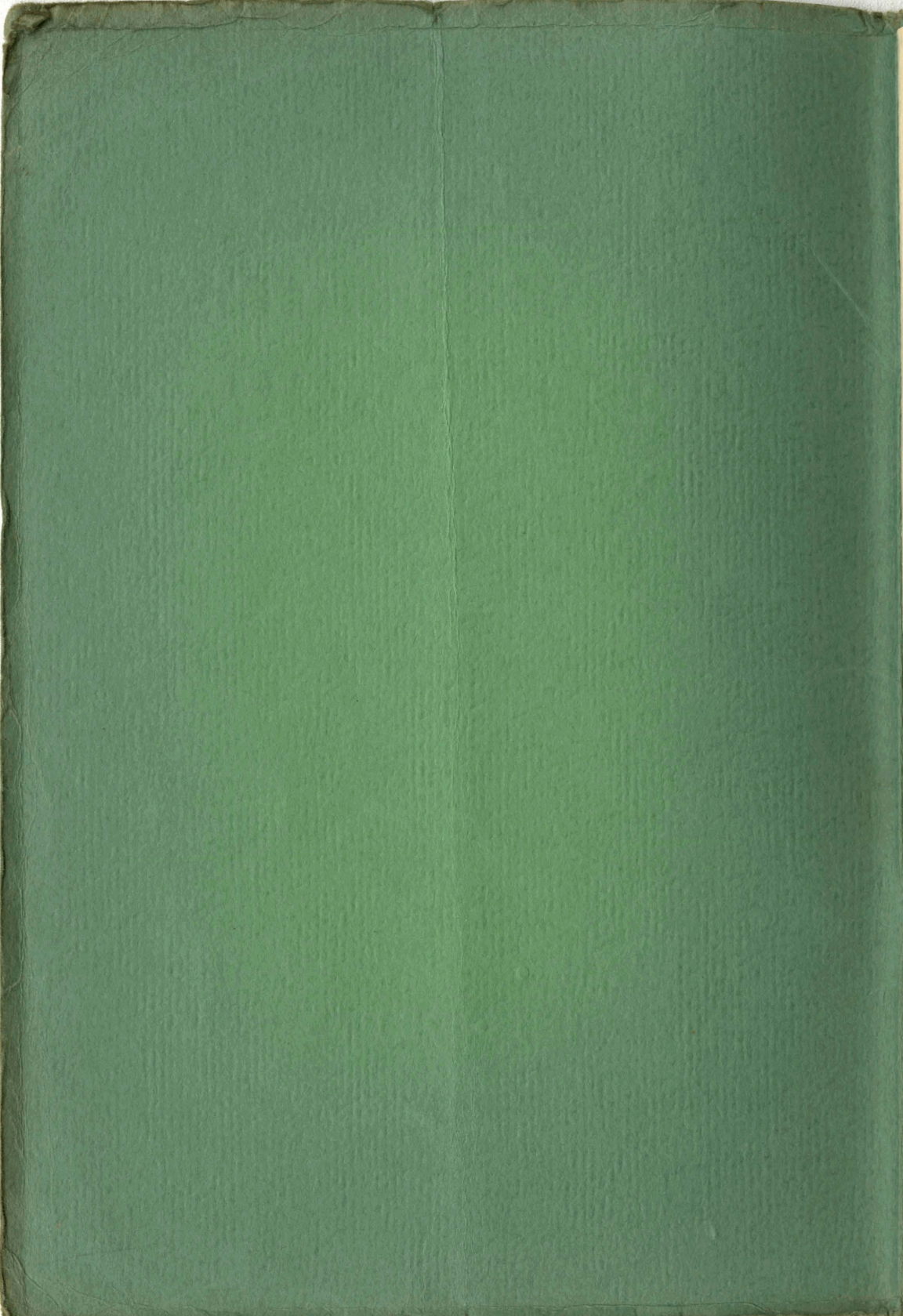


**THE FATE OF  
TRADE UNIONS  
UNDER FASCISM**

**GORMAN • GOLDSCHMIDT  
SALVEMINI • DE PALENCIA**



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OF TRADE UNIONS  
UNDER FASCISM

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*Foreword by*

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**PUBLISHED BY**  
**ANTI-FASCIST LITERATURE COMMITTEE**

ANTI-FASCIST LITERATURE COMMITTEE  
1457 Broadway, New York, N. Y.

April, 1937

 209

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# WHAT THE CIVIL WAR MAY MEAN TO SPANISH TRADE UNIONS

*Foreword by*  
ISABEL DE PALENCIA

THE General Union of Workers in Spain—the U.G.T., as it is commonly called—is probably one of the best organized and most disciplined and, politically, one of the most alert organizations in the world. It came into existence over fifty years ago under the leadership of Pablo Iglesias, founder of the Spanish Socialist Party. The first union was that of the printers, which now comprises all the press workers, from the humblest newspaper vendor to the best known editors.

The U.G.T. has, as its political organ, the Socialist Party, which has at all times given a high example of leadership.

When the military rebellion broke out, the U.G.T. had over 1,000,000 members. The agricultural workers alone numbered 400,000. It must be borne in mind that all the labor legislation which had been achieved in Spain was due to the efforts of the U.G.T. At the moment of the rebellion, the Builders' Union had obtained the forty-hour week, and this benefit was about to be extended to other unions.

Naturally the progress in labor legislation, although considerable, left much to be desired. The wages of Spanish workers in all trades are decidedly lower than those prevailing in many other countries. Yet even these low wages had provoked great opposition among the employers. Were anyone to doubt this, he need only look over the decrees issued by the Department of Labor during the two and a half years when the Department and the fate of the Spanish workers were alike in the hands of a member of Lerroux's party, and afterwards of

Senor Salmon (the *alter ego* of Gil Robles, leader of the Jesuit Fascist Party and ardent supporter of Franco). Wages came down with a rush to pre-republican standards. Protective laws for women and children were reduced or ignored. The mixed Boards of Trade that had helped to solve so many conflicts were done away with and replaced by courts under the chairmanship of magistrates.

It was useless to present claims, for workers got no proper hearing. Finally the strike of October, 1934, gave an excellent excuse for the dismissal of thousands of men and women from their jobs, particularly those who formed part of the executive committees of their respective unions.

The misery in the agricultural zones became so great as a result—since all members of the unions were refused work—that in 1935 people in some villages were reduced to eating grass alone for very hunger.

These recent occurrences give us an excellent indication of the fate that would overtake all workers' organizations were Franco to win. His attitude toward the unions has already been made evident by the fact that in all those towns and villages where his forces hold control not only are members of the executive committees of the unions shot down, but also all workers carrying a mere membership card in a union.

In the first manifestoes issued by him, where he speaks of the necessity of establishing a military dictatorship in Spain as the only means of ensuring order, Franco also speaks of dissolving Parliament and all workers' organizations.

Lately, because of the country's resistance to his dictatorial attempts, he has published another manifesto in which he addresses the Spanish workers and calls upon them to separate from what he calls their traitorous leaders and to join him. Were not the moment so tragic, Spanish humor would find occasion for the exercise of irony in commenting on this appeal.

There is not a worker in all Spain who does not know that the triumph of Franco would be the end of all social advances,



the protective laws, the liberty of association, and even the personal freedom of every Spaniard. The Spanish capitalists and employers have the feudal doctrines and beliefs too deeply ingrained in their systems not to take advantage of such a victory to reduce the working class to absolute slavery.

Fortunately such will not be the case. Rather face extermination than a fascist dictatorship! One must remember that Franco is not a man of intelligence or vision. He has never been interested in any problem affecting the vital interests of the country; and the men who are giving him their support, notably Gil Robles, instead of taking the labor problems into consideration, have done nothing but increase the tension between workers and employers and irritate the masses with their unjust measures.

It must be remembered that, except in the Basque Provinces, where the Catholic Party has understood how to plan and carry out social reforms, the Catholics have nowhere managed to form a labor party or even a workers' organization. The small group they claimed to have formed is non-existent.

These reasons alone are enough to make all Spaniards sacrifice everything rather than allow Franco to win. Remember the slogan: "Rather die standing up than spend the rest of our lives on our knees!"



# FASCISM AND THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

By FRANCIS J. GORMAN

FIRST of all, in analyzing the special fate of trade unions under a fascist dictatorship, we should know what the meaning of fascism is. Fascism is a form of government, and is not the same as a democratic government, or a republic. Fascism is not a *system*, though, nor is it an economic theory. For the same economic theory operates under fascism that operates in our so-called democracies—that is, in countries like America, Great Britain, Canada and so forth.

Fascism, then, has certain special political features which differentiate it from other governments. Fascism is, first, the complete disfranchisement of the people, and the complete abolition of constitutional government. The second characteristic is the supremacy of the military. Fascism is, in short, a military dictatorship. Under fascism there can be no opposition at the polls to the dictatorship, even though mock elections are held. Concentration camps lie in wait for those who dare protest the loss of their liberties and their constitutional guarantees. It makes no difference to the fascist war-lords whether you be a Democrat, a Republican, a Socialist or a Communist. If you dare protest—even though you be a *fascist*—you are promptly put in jail and subjected to what are reported to be incredible tortures.

Why is this? Why is it necessary to use this brute force in order to run a government and control a people? What is it that fascism is trying to protect that it must crush the people under an iron military heel? It must, of course, be protecting

something the people do not approve of, otherwise force would not be necessary.

We think it is a tottering, decaying economic system that fascism is trying to protect. We think that when those who hold the purse strings of a nation (and therefore control the flow of everyday necessities, through their control of the means of producing these necessities) discover that the system which makes their continued control possible is about to fall away from them, they seize any means in their power to hold on. We think that when a whole nation is plunged into starvation, unemployment and degradation, and the people see no hope of real prosperity again, then these people begin to rise in protest. This is when the lords of industry and finance get frightened, and seek a puppet politician, such as Hitler, to be the hero-dictator, and impose on a whole nation the forced dictatorship of a very few individuals.

The fascist form of government, then, has its roots in the economic system. It is for this reason that the danger of fascism is so important to the workers and to the trade union movement.

The most obvious threat to the continued exploitation of labor is, of course, the trade union movement. When the wheels of industry get hopelessly clogged, and wages become lower and lower, and productivity per worker rises higher and higher, the workers, where they are organized, protest in a body and demand redress.

It is against the trade union movement, then, that the first blow is leveled under fascism. The means by which the workers can protest in a whole mass must be removed first, otherwise it will be impossible for the ruling few to force their will on the people. So, the trade union movement is declared illegal, and a gigantic system of company unionism is installed. This is not fancy; it is fact. In both Nazi Germany and fascist Italy the free trade unions have been wiped out, and organizations under the direct control of the government have been put in

their place. Needless to say, the government representative sees to it that no effective economic action is possible for the workers.

When the workers' means of mass protest is removed, the fascists then feel free to do anything they like with working conditions. Since the reason for a fascist dictatorship lies in the fact that industry aims at maintaining and increasing its profits by further lowering the standards of living of the working people, the first thing which happens is that wages are either directly cut, or they are indirectly cut through speed-up and stretchout. Sometimes, indeed many times, both things happen. The growing challenge of the unemployed as a result of fascist dictatorship is throttled by placing the unemployed in labor camps that take on the character of a reserve army, because the fascists need all the man-power they can lay their hands on to continue to force their fascist dictatorship on the people. They need it, also, to carry on their foreign wars for colonial possessions.

Wars for colonial possessions are necessary to fascism. Why? Because at home industry has become so crippled that it cannot support the people, and it is necessary for the fascists to expand into other countries in order to find material for exploitation. Here, again, this is not fancy theory, for all the events of the past few years have proved this to be true. Take Italy, for instance. When Mussolini had reached the end of his rope in his own country, and when, despite the terror of protest, groups of workers were going on strike for enough money to buy bread for their children, Il Duce had to seek farther and find new territory and a war to take the people's minds off their poverty and misery. He chose Ethiopia as a likely field for aggression.

Who fought this war for Mussolini and for the industrialists who support and control Mussolini? Young men who had never had a chance to earn their living. Boys who could not go to school because their parents didn't even have enough money

for food, let alone the enormous tax burden imposed by the fascist government. The unemployed fought the war—boys who had never been gainfully employed, and men who had been shoved out of industry because it could no longer function properly and maintain them. In other words, the workers fought the war. What will they get out of it—those who were lucky enough to come back? More taxes, more unemployment, more starvation in order that the military exploits in Ethiopia may be paid for.

Germany is doing the same thing. Germany is taking her young men and forcing them to bear arms in defense of a government they cannot believe in. Germany is forcing unemployed workers into the army on pain of starvation and concentration camps if they do not fight. Why? Germany, like Italy, cannot stand up under the strain at home. Her industry cannot absorb the nation's available man-power any more than Italy's could. Therefore, Germany is playing for high stakes in Spain, hoping to get some colonial concessions out of Franco if the rebels win, and hoping to defeat the loyalist government which will constitute a threat to fascism if it is allowed to survive. Who are forced to fight these foreign wars for Hitler? The workers. And the German workers will get no more out of Hitler's exploits than the Italian workers, because there is nothing for them to gain!

In the United States the workers still have a chance to save themselves from the barbarous horrors of fascism. The trade union movement still has a chance to survive, and grow stronger and stronger. We do not have fascism here yet. But we have the elements of fascism here. Remember, its roots are in the economic system, and we ourselves can see that our economic system is not much different from that of Germany or Italy. Do we not have millions of unemployed? Do we not have terrible speed-up and stretchout? Has the workers' income risen with the enormous upward leap of profits? No. We are headed for the same thing if we don't watch out.

In the textile industry, for instance, hundreds of manufacturers recently announced "wage increases." Upon investigation, we discovered that these "increases" were decreases because simultaneously the workload was increased, and workers were laid off. Actually, the mill-owners saved money by their "wage increases." Why did they do this? Because the threat of organization is becoming more pressing. Because the workers are becoming aroused at their continued exploitation in the face of exorbitant profits, and are beginning again to want the union for protection.

The same thing occurred in the steel and automobile industries.

These manufacturers, in addition to trying to fool the workers into thinking they got *increases* when actually they got *decreases* and men were laid off, are preparing for days to come when these workers will rise up and demand *real* increases through their union. They are laying in stocks of tear gas, machine guns, billies and other weapons of modern warfare to use against the workers when they strike for their rights. They are hiring spies and stool-pigeons to tell them what the workers are saying, and what the plans of the union are. In these ominous facts we can see the forerunner of fascism in the United States. *There is, however, one important difference.* The workers still have recourse to the courts; they still have the constitutional right to fight for higher wages, shorter hours and less workload. *Trade unions are still legal in the United States.*

It is this fundamental, democratic right which we must all protect and extend. If we wait until our unions are smashed we will have a fascist dictatorship before we can do anything to stop it. We must, therefore, not only protect what membership we now have, but extend that membership to the millions now unorganized.

In France and in Spain the workers realized before it was too late that they must take steps to safeguard their constitu-

tional guarantees. They realized that their unions alone were not enough to protect their economic interests. They formed a People's Front. In the United States we will call it a Labor Party, probably. But it is essentially the same thing.

In Spain the reactionaries, desperately struggling against the inevitable collapse of their complete control over the political and economic processes of the country, rose up in insurrection against the legal government. They made war on the government which the Spanish people had voted for at the polls. This shows us that we are in no mean struggle in this fight to preserve democracy. Those who want to destroy it will stop at nothing.

Another terrible thing comes out in the Spanish conflict which is of vital importance to American workers. This is the fact that it is no longer just a fight between Spanish liberals and Spanish reactionaries. It is a fight between democracy and fascism. It is an international fight for supremacy. This means that we, too, are involved, even though our country may be formally out of it, because we, too, are believers in democracy and are against the forces of fascist reaction.

The only course for American trade unionists to follow, we feel, is the immediate building of a broad, all-inclusive anti-fascist People's Front movement, the building, in other words, of the Labor Party. We may have to fight for this Labor Party, as the Spanish workers are doing. We may not, on the other hand. But if we are determined enough, it is not the fascists but ourselves who will decide whether or not progress is allowed a free course.

It will do us no good to say: "Maybe if we don't form a People's Front, or a Labor Party, we can hold off fascism." The German and Italian workers had no People's Front and no Labor Party, and they got fascism just the same. The Spanish workers at least have a good fighting chance of winning. Without a People's Front or a Labor Party, we will not even have a fighting chance.



We know the terrible consequences to the working class of a fascist dictatorship. We know, also, the means by which we can fight and defeat reaction if we begin soon enough. We have two courses, then, to pursue: first, building and strengthening our trade union movement until the millions of workers in mass production industries are organized; and second, building and strengthening our Labor Party until we have a solid People's Front against the power of industry and wealth which would keep us in subjugation at the point of a bayonet and make us starve without a word of protest.

# THE LABOR PROBLEM IN GERMANY

By ALFONS GOLDSCHMIDT

BEFORE the Hitler regime, Germany was the classic country of labor organization. Not only from the point of view of numbers, but of form and methods, the workers' organizations served as models for workers' movements in other countries. Organization into labor unions as well as into labor parties was, with some interruption, growing steadily for decades, and reached an enormous volume after the war. The members of the general German league of unions increased from a little more than 2,000,000 in 1914, to almost 8,000,000 five years after the war. The drawing up of trade union agreements between the workers and employers became so common in Germany that the number of those contracts grew from 7,819 for 107,503 factories with 1,120,000 men in 1918, to 10,768 contracts for 890,237 enterprises, with about 14,500,000 employees. In the last years before Hitler no important industrial undertaking was made outside of these agreements. The solution by arbitration of differences between employers and employees played a decisive role in the policy of both sides. Strikes, lock-outs, and all the principal problems of labor were settled in this manner.

But this was not a quiet development. The struggle for unions and union rights was very difficult, and the way toward a strong position of the unions was paved with thousands of victims. That the influence of the union system did not cover the demands and necessities of Germany's labor became more evident during the war, when the growth of unions ceased, due

to military economic centralization, and after the war when a system of labor councils in the factories was established by law to give the workers a more direct influence in and control of industrial conditions. Of course, these labor councils never became an effective instrument of the labor movement, nor a strong complement to the unions, but were utilized by the unions to organize workers within the plant.

The old theoretical struggle within the unions and the Social-Democratic Party of Germany about the necessity and the opportunity of a general strike was not solved before the war; but after the war during the "Kapp Putsch." Then the main question at issue in this struggle, namely, whether the unions should merely be a weapon for the improvement of the economic conditions of the German workers or, ultimately, a political weapon too, was answered by the fact that the workers' parties and the unions faced the danger of being entirely destroyed. Therefore immediately after the beginning of the reactionary "putsch" the general strike was proclaimed and served effectively. Thus the first reactionary uprising after the war was broken down.

But the economic crisis of Germany, especially the increase of unemployment after 1929 to about 9,000,000 out of work and the millions working only some few hours during the day, became so threatening that the opposition within the unions and parties and from outside of the unions grew against the union policy of the reformist leaders. The re-establishment of the political and administrative power of the Social-Democratic Party in 1928, backed by union leaders and some lower functionaries, proved to be a hindrance to a more decisive course of labor against the rapidly organizing forces of reaction, and especially the Hitler movement. I believe for my part that the various offers by the Communist Party of Germany to the leaders of the Social-Democratic Party to act in common were rejected by the Social-Democrats especially because of the restrictive influence of hundreds of thousands

of Social-Democrats holding positions in public and semi-public administrations. The more gigantic the volume of the Socialist unions and Party became, the weaker became the will of the reformist leaders and officeholders.

In this atmosphere, the reactionary pre-Hitler German government could plan to stabilize Germany's capitalism on the basis of the unions; to make the unions, so to speak, a firm ground for profit calculation even after this calculation had been shattered by the crisis. It was no longer possible for any industrial enterprise in Germany to plan its business for more than some weeks or months ahead. Although the calculation-destroying inflation was over, the period of deflation did not bring the slightest security to German capitalism. No balance existed any more.

Under such conditions the pre-Hitler government was ready to work together with the unions, that is, to grant the workers a certain degree of social security on the basis of reduced wages, hoping to stabilize profits through long-term trade union agreements. This is one way for capitalism to avoid an entire collapse temporarily.

Under the Bruening government a law was passed which cut wages by 10 to 25 per cent. All the reformist union leaders agreed with the measure and fought in the unions to maintain it. This was their first step in aiding fascism and helping finance-capital in Germany to overcome the crisis.

It is characteristic that one of the most important members of the Nazi party, Gregor Strasser, who was murdered by his former friends in June, 1934, was in favor of an alliance of Germany's reaction with the unions. Those hesitations, the conservatism of many Socialists in secure administrative positions, the weakening of the will of the leaders by discussions of possible unification with the Hindenburg government, etc., cleared the way for Hitler.

I should like to relate here a characteristic discussion which I had in Berlin with the Socialist Premier of Prussia, and

other high government officials and union leaders, about two weeks after Hitler came to power. Then the unions were not yet destroyed, and the Socialist government in Prussia, ousted some days later, had at its disposal many millions of unified workers, the Prussian police and, not least, the Communist Party, which was ready to help: that is, to fight with the Socialist Party in this day of terrible emergency.

In the course of this discussion I asked the Prussian Premier if the Socialist Party would not immediately act. "It is already five minutes after twelve," I remarked to him. But he turned furiously against me, crying: "We are Democrats and Social-Democrats and we acknowledge the right and duty of President Hindenburg to entrust the greatest party with the organization of the government. But the greatest party is actually the Nazi party, whose representative is Hitler. This is our Constitution and we shall be constitutional to the end." I objected, saying that Hitler had nothing to do with the Constitution, and that it was his trick to misuse the Constitution with the aim of violating the Constitution "legally" after coming to power. I then asked the union leader if the unions would not do something at once. He replied: "We stand ready-armed and we need only press the button to have the general strike effective within one hour." I asked him when he would press the button. Then this man, who was to be Premier of Prussia for two days longer, jumped to his feet shouting: "We will proclaim the general strike at the moment Hitler dares to violate one paragraph of the Constitution." This is clear enough. I left the meeting horribly depressed and saw the entire labor movement of Germany breaking down.

The Communist press was already suppressed, the persecution of political opponents had already begun, Berlin was covered with a pestilence of Nazi espionage. In short, the Constitution had already disappeared and the unions remained passive with their weapons at their feet, until they were entirely destroyed. The button was not pressed; but the Social-

ist Party and all the German labor organizations, economic and political, a proud army of direct members and sympathizers of approximately 12,000,000 in the last elections, disappeared.

The Constitution was so extremely well interpreted and executed in the end that it not only became a scrap of paper, but an instrument to be falsified and violated to such an extent that it turned into a direct and deadly instrument against the labor movement in Germany with all its glorious tradition. There were sacrifices of blood, money, and enthusiasm, together with destruction of thousands of buildings, papers and reviews, textbooks and schools. Members were killed or incarcerated in concentration camps and prisons.

In 1932 Hitler addressed a large crowd of coal and iron industrialists at the town hall in Duesseldorf in Rhenania. This group was headed by Fritz Thyssen, a son of one of the most successful expansionists in Germany's heavy industry. The address was not published, but one of the participants told me on the occasion of a speech which I delivered against Hitler at the same place two weeks later: "None of us believe in this nonsense on economics, but what shall we do? Through Hitler we can get rid of the unions. This is our aim because the unions, with their policy on wage scales and working conditions, deprive us of every opportunity to make a reasonable profit."

This was indeed the main idea of Thyssen in particular, who was more or less weakened by the crisis. The idea was so to change the workers' organizations as to attempt to make of the unions a real instrument for fascist policies.

Hitler was from the start financed by these magnates like Thyssen, and with brief interruptions when he did not seem as successful as he should, his private army was fed and nourished out of the industrial funds, with the aid especially of the big landowners in Pomerania and Eastern Prussia. So

the organizations of workers of Germany were entirely changed into what Hitler called the "Labor Front."

Hitler had hoped to enter upon a period of world prosperity, with Germany sharing in it so that he could get the glory of one who had supposedly saved the German people from its unemployment and misery.

One could realize from the start of the Hitler regime, however, that Germany would not become prosperous, even if international capital should enjoy a period of seeming prosperity. The only way for the Hitler regime was the increase of armament and of all the so-called heroisms and sacrifices, cancellation of the Treaty of Versailles, reoccupation of the Rhineland zone, aid for the fascists in Spain, etc. All the violations of treaties, the great words in bad German, were and are merely smokescreens for the main and real purpose of the Hitler regime, namely, to give back to capitalists one hundred-fold and more of what Hitler had received. For some time the method looked successful to those who do not understand the process of the creation of value and least of all the danger of a fast development of constant capital. Hitler had promised to eliminate unemployment. So began the famous labor struggles, and indeed millions of unemployed thus became "employed" in a sense. But the question is, what is employment?

The so-called "just" wages of the Nazis are today ten to fourteen marks per week. This is less than the relief paid by the republic before Hitler came to power. Labor becomes more and more compulsory, and consequently the remuneration lower and lower. Nazi industry and administration exhaust any and every opportunity to "squeeze out" the labor force of the German workers. They profit even from a fund created for workers' vacations. The land laborers are even worse off than the industrial workers. To illustrate: A land laborer receives, with a family of nine children on a large farm not far from Berlin, in form of kind 465 marks, and in

form of cash 315 marks yearly, or 11 pfennigs per hour. There are, as always in such situations, some categories of skilled workers, especially armament workers, who are better paid, but the average level of real wages is sinking rapidly. According to my calculation, the decrease of the average real wages since the end of January, 1933, has been between 25 and 30 per cent. If we identify this decrease with the lowering of purchasing power (purchasing power being power equal to the market), then we have a reduction of the entire purchasing power of Germany of from one quarter to one third, inclining more toward the latter than to the former figure.

Now let us turn to the problem of German territory. "A people without space"—this was and is the slogan of German reaction. Not a people without means, and real means, to use their labor power; but without space. What is space? There is a geographical and an economic space. They are not identical. If these two places could be identified, then Brazil and Africa, for instance, would be the wealthiest territories of the world. The economic space depends directly upon the conditions of labor power. The better those conditions, the larger the economic space. As the conditions of German labor power, under Nazi rule, are becoming worse and worse, Germany's economic space logically becomes more and more limited. That means that Germany under another rule, not preparing for war, and not confusing the armament race (that is, falsified employment), with real employment, would have sufficient space for at least twice its present population. It is necessary to change our idea of territorial space because of the fundamental mistakes made in Nazi Germany and elsewhere. With the idea of space, we must change the idea of employment and unemployment. I have devoted many years to the study of this central problem and have come to the conclusion that the identification of territorial space and economic space is one of the main causes of the dangerous theory of expansion which infects millions of minds and enables the expansionists in



capitalist countries to go on with their destructive policy of competition for the acquisition of colonies.

The slogan of self-sufficiency or "autarchy" is the same as the slogan "people without space." It is a kind of neo-mercantilism, that means, monopolization of labor force in favor of the sale of this cheap labor force on the world market, the conquest of new colonies, conclusion of treaties with the same tendency, the pressure for loans, raw materials, etc., by war menaces, etc. This autarchy means a gigantic military camp or fortress exploiting the labor force of the working man in order to produce cheaply, and to increase the armament and finally to replace their own sinking purchasing power or value by victimizing millions on the battlefields. It is not by chance that a general, namely, Goering, became the leader of this process, with Dr. Schacht, a man without understanding of economic laws, behind him.

Since the proclamation of the so-called new "Social Constitution," formulated in a law of January 20, 1934, "regulating national labor," labor conditions have gone down. Through this Constitution all the old rights of the workers in the factory, permitting them to elect labor councils, were abolished. Instead the Nazi government, under the cover of a so-called election, actually appointed "trustees" of the Labor Front (called *Vertrauensleute*). Under this new law the principle of leadership in the interests of the factory owners was carried through. All strikes were forbidden and any differences as to working conditions, wages, etc., were left in the hands of Nazi district functionaries. The old independent force of organized labor was wiped out. What had previously been a Nazi policy since May 22, 1933, now became a law.

With the intensification of the armament industry, the capitalist market became a state market without the disappearance of capitalistic private property. This means that a regular circulation no longer exists. Although under such conditions German money value became more or less "empty," it was

until now possible to maintain an apparent money stability inside of Germany. Outside of Germany, that is, in the sphere of a relatively regular circulation, the German mark has no more purchasing power. Therefore the necessity of obtaining foreign money by an increase of exports. Here we have the cycle which it is impossible to avoid, and the danger of the explosion of sinking labor power.

To continue this destructive and unproductive policy of capitalist monopolization, Germany needs goods which it has to import and pay for with foreign money. Here is a list published by Dr. Schacht showing the percentage of foreign goods already consumed in Germany in 1934:

	Imports 1934 Per 1000 Tons	Participation of Foreign Markets in Total Consumption in %
<i>(a) Food</i>		
Fruit .....	998	20
Vegetables .....	318	10
Leguminous Plants .....	214	50
Fats .....	2139	50
Eggs .....	76	20
Fish .....	209	40
Tobacco .....	86	70
<i>(b) Raw Materials and Unfinished Products</i>		
Cotton .....	400	100
Wool .....	180	90
Timber .....	5710	25
Iron Ore .....	8265	70
Manganese Ore .....	225	50
Copper Ore .....	325	90
Zinc Ore .....	127	30
Mineral Oil .....	3094	70
Skins .....	169	50
India Rubber .....	72	100
Industrial Fats .....	503	90

At present Germany is suffering from a terrible lack of iron ore, which can only partially be supplied from within Germany. In 1936 the import of iron was about 19,000,000 tons, against 3,400,000 tons in 1932. Here we have one of the main causes of the Spanish "adventure" of Nazi Germany. Here we also have one of the main causes of Germany's war drive against France and of the Swedish fear of German attacks. It is not a case of a crusade for the maintenance of heroic Nazism, but for very concrete objectives.

The import of textile raw materials is also sinking rapidly, and so it is and must be, much more than before, with all products (especially food) which Germany cannot raise in sufficient quantities for herself. The destruction of labor power cannot remain unpunished. The regime has already spent about 25,000,000,000 marks for armament, and by the end of the current year it will have spent, more or less, 40,000,000,000 marks. This horrible burden is carried by 15,000,000 workers, millions of them not paid at all, or no better than beggars. Therefore the Nazi government feverishly makes propaganda for the consumption of cabbage, carrots, forestry products, etc. The production of "Ersatzstoffe," that is, substituted raw material and food, only accelerates the process of decline because of the enormous cost.

Although the dictator-general of Germany's economy, Goering, menaces farmers and dealers for price speculation with the severest punishment, the prices go their natural way, that is, upwards. The rulers will soon realize, as did Germany's imperialists during the war, that there is no possibility of stopping this process. In 1932, at the lowest point of Germany's food consumption, the nourishment of the German people, especially of the German workers, was better than now. Even at that time they had more butter than cannon.

The promise that the workers should share the profits of capital has not been fulfilled. To submit to the individual leadership of the factory owners does not at all mean partici-

pation in their dividends or, if it does, then this participation is a fake, the so-called dividend-sharing amounting to no more than three, seven or ten marks per year. This curious type of "common-sense" economy becomes visible in the enormous rise of war industry profits and in the income of Nazi leaders. Goering receives 86,000 marks as president of the impotent Reichstag, while every deputy receives 17,400 marks per year for doing nothing except saying "yes" to Hitler once or twice during the year. Schacht, the President of the Reichsbank, who praises the sense for thrift, receives more than 300,000 marks per year, and so it is with hundreds and thousands of Nazi leaders, and this after the promise by Hitler to end the administrative corruption and the increase of "overhead" expenses. All this has to be paid by the workers.

The Hitler regime some time ago began its fifth year of social-economic destruction. A survey of the labor conditions in the four years of Hitlerism reveals on one side an increase of the employed workers from 12,500,000 in 1932 to 16,000,000 in 1936. But the total wages at the end of 1935 were only 31,700,000,000 marks, in comparison with 26,000,000,000 marks in 1932. This means that while the number of employed increased 25 per cent, more or less, the total income increased only 20 per cent. So state the official statistics. In reality, however, the income decreased from the insurance of unemployed about 1,900,000,000 per year. Furthermore, an enormous increase of taxes, money for social insurance, and so-called voluntary contributions, must be added to this loss, aside from the increase in prices of between 12½ and 15 per cent. Using official statistics we find labor power in Germany 25 per cent weaker than at the beginning of the Hitler regime. In reality I believe that 30 per cent would be nearer the truth. This process of decline is now going on faster than before, because of the enormous amount of expenditure for armaments. In 1937 the volume of new constant capital of this entirely unproductive type will be 12,000,-

000,000 marks, that is, a little less than one-half of the total real wages in 1932, and a good deal more than one third of the total real wages in 1935.

In some industries, especially the armament industry, the real wages are higher than, for instance, in the textile industry. In the textile industry the weekly income of a male worker was in June, 1936, no more than 22.72 marks. If we subtract taxes, so-called voluntary contributions, and so forth, as well as the increase in prices, the weekly real income of this type of worker cannot be more than eighteen marks, or a little more than \$7 weekly. That is much less than the average relief allotment in the United States. A worker's family of four persons receives less than \$2 per head. Food, clothing and expenses for shelter are the main expenses of the German workers. One can now imagine the misery already existing in Germany and growing every day. It is true that the number of armament workers increased enormously, but millions and millions have a lower standard of living than ever before. Their situation is worse than the situation of the unemployed before the Hitler regime.

On the other hand the labor time increased from 6.9 hours in 1932, to 7.5 hours in 1935. The total labor volume was, at the end of 1935, 46 per cent higher than in 1932. While the German workers had to work 46 per cent hours more than in 1932, and at present even more (some of them are working 100 hours per week), the real income sank destructively. The productivity per labor hour has increased so that the worker expends now much more energy per hour for much less real income.

Here we have another picture of the real economic condition of Germany today. It is the tragedy of capitalism of this time in general, and especially in the fascist countries, where unproductive constant capital is built with a tempo never seen before. Under such conditions we cannot speak at all of even the slightest stability of labor power, if we under-

stand this to mean the daily restoration of labor's own power by at least the necessary quantity and quality of food and shelter. The houses of workers are to a large extent in a miserable condition. Today 1,500,000 Germans do not live in their own apartments, and are obliged to live in a small and unhealthy part of the homes of others. Most of these Germans are workers. Millions live in stables, concentration camps, forced labor camps, and so forth.

The consequence of this entire situation in Germany is the cry for exports, credit, colonies, raw material, and food from outside. The participation of Nazi Germany in the Spanish war is an instance of such violent "business," paid for with the strength and blood of the German workers and soldiers. How long can a country go on under such conditions?

The answer must be: not long. The reckoning is at hand. In spite of Nazi repression and destruction, the old fighting force of labor is again beginning to assert itself. We can see already the coming regime of a free Germany, which is now being shaped in the People's Front.

# ITALIAN TRADE UNIONS UNDER FASCISM

By GAETANO SALVEMINI

A NEW economic and political machinery has been invented in Italy by Mussolini. It has been imitated by Hitler in Germany. It has been introduced into Austria after the suppression of the Socialists. In December, 1934, the *New York Times* announced that former King Alfonso of Spain and the Duke of Alba, "scion of one of Spain's most distinguished lines," had declared themselves in favor of the corporative state. In England Sir Oswald Mosley assures his countrymen that they will reach the heights of felicity when they adopt the corporative state. In this country Bishop Joseph Schrembs of Cleveland, an admirer of Father Coughlin, holds up the protection that Mussolini has given to labor as an example to American capitalism (*New York Herald Tribune*, August 6, 1936).

What are the essential features of the Italian corporative state?

## I. *The Organizations*

Italy is divided into provinces. In each province a single organization may enjoy legal recognition for each group of employers, employees, or professional classes. The law admits the existence of *de facto* organizations outside the legal ones. But no one has yet dared to form any such *de facto* organization. Such an attempt would be regarded as a subversion of the national order and would be severely penalized.

Nobody may join the official fascist organization of his

trade if the secretary does not admit him, and the secretary may expel any members who, in his opinion, are "undesirable." But everybody must contribute annual dues to the organization for his trade whether he belongs to it or not.

The fascist organizations are grouped into nine National Confederations: four for the employers, four for the employees, and one for the professional classes.

The presidents of the National Confederations are appointed by Mussolini. The officials of the subordinate organizations are designated by the presidents of the Confederations after consulting the leaders of the Fascist Party. They can be removed by the government if they fail to manifest a sufficient degree of "undoubted national [that is, fascist] loyalty."

Thus, the officials are not "elected" by the members, but are "appointed" from above. They are accountable not to the membership of their organizations, but to the leaders of the party in power.

In 1927, a few fascists timidly requested that the system of free election for officials be adopted, affirming that there was no longer any danger that men antagonistic to the party in power might gain control of the unions. The Secretary General of the party rejected the proposal, proclaiming that "the system of appointing officials from above, a system fundamentally fascist, had given excellent results, such as that of suppressing every survival of democratic mentality. We are an army of believers, not a mass of organized members." The request for elective directors was renewed at the beginning of 1930. But the Fascist Grand Council, which is the highest governing body in the regime, denied the request, declaring that "no modification should take place in the system of designating directors, a system which embodies the spirit of fascist legislation."

## II. *Who Is Master of the Machine?*

So far there would seem to be no difference between the associations of the employers, on the one hand, and the unions



of employers or the organizations of the professional classes, on the other. All have their officials appointed from above.

But the conditions actually obtaining in the different classes are not the same.

Among the employers there is a sharp division between the big industrialists, landowners, and bankers, and the small fellows. When an official is to be appointed in an association of employers, the big business men—few in number—gather at their business or social meetings, choose their man of confidence, ring up some of the leaders of the party in power, give the name of the best man, and the best man is appointed. For instance, the President of the Confederation of the Industrial Employers today is Count Volpi, who may be called the Italian Rockefeller. It cannot be doubted that he represents perfectly Italian big business.

The small industrial employer, the small shopkeeper, the small farmer, do not take part in this game. They have no voice in the appointment of the officials of their own associations. The directors of the associations of employers are the representatives of those big business men who control the associations of each group—and not of the little fellows.

As regards the workers, there is no difference among them of most powerful and less powerful, of big and small. All are small, all are powerless. They are too numerous. And they are not allowed to meet and discuss their business. They cannot ring up the leaders of the party in power and lay before them their own nominees. The directors of their organizations do not represent anybody: they are merely the men of confidence of the party in power which control their unions.

This holds good for the professional classes also.

In the fascist corporative state big business is an active factor and runs the associations of employers. The classes of the small employers and of the employees and the professional classes are passive elements, subject to whatever their officials think fit. Small employers, workers, and professional classes

have in the fascist organizations no greater authority than have the animals in a society for the rescue of animals.

This is a basic point if one wants to understand fascist trade unionism. But the admirers of fascism take good care never to give any concrete information about this phase of fascist trade unionism. If you read a lecture on *The Aims and Policies of the Fascist Regime in Italy*, which was delivered at the Institute of Public Affairs of the University of Virginia in 1934, and which President Butler of Columbia University prefaced in the monthly publication of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, you will learn that "each member of an organization casts a ballot in the election which creates its directive body." Read the recent book of Professor Schneider of Columbia University, *The Fascist Government of Italy*, p. 81, and you will learn that the trade organizations in Italy are "self-governing," and they practically afford the only example in Italy "of electionism or of office coming from below instead of from above." Both of these statements ignore the basic fact: the complete suppression of freedom of activity of rank-and-file members in fascist trade unions.

### III. Labor Agreements and Labor Court

When one has formed a clear idea of the legal organizations and their officials, one can fully grasp what is meant when one hears that all contracts concerning wages, hours of work, etc., are drawn up by the organizations of employers and employees and that these contracts are binding on all the employers and workers, whether they are members of the organizations or not. Those contracts are drawn up by men in the confidence of the big employers and by officials who have been appointed from above to control the unions of the employees. The membership of the unions has no say in such matters. If anyone is not satisfied and ventures to grumble, the secretary of his union turns him out of the union, and so

all the members who remain within the union become satisfied and contented.

Strikes are forbidden and punished by a severe and progressive scale of penalties, the maximum being seven years' imprisonment.

In July, 1926, about 1,400 workers, most of them women, went on strike at a factory in Carosia, near Genoa. "Since the fascists have had the upper hand," said some of these women, "we are isolated and leaderless. The employers have seized the opportunity of reducing our wages by nearly 40 per cent."

Some of the women, suspected of being leaders of the strike, were sentenced to six months' imprisonment.

Lockouts are forbidden as well as strikes. Thus, the fascists claim that capital is put on the same level as labor. But where strikes cannot take place, lockouts become unnecessary. Moreover, the law, while forcing workmen to labor under threat of imprisonment, cannot force an employer to give work if he declares that he can no longer maintain the old wages. The stoppage of work is then not a lockout, but a closing down induced by a "justified motive."

When the representatives of the employers and the officials who run the workers' unions do not agree, their dispute is to be decided by the Labor Court, either regarding contracts in course of execution or those in process of formation. The court consists of a judge and two experts, and all experts must be university graduates. In this way the workers are automatically excluded from the court.

The fascists justify the abolition of the right to strike by the following theorem:

"The state is no longer the state, *i.e.*, is no longer sovereign, if it is not able to deal out justice in conflicts between social classes and categories, forbidding them to exercise private justice, just as this is forbidden to individuals and families."

But in labor disputes who is the state? In the "corporative

state" we find on the bottom rung the men of confidence of the big employers and the officials appointed from above to run the unions of the employees, and on the upper rung we find the judges and experts of the labor courts. On neither of these two rungs have the working people any real representation. Therefore the "state" turns out to be the employing class.

#### IV. *"Brothers in the Fascist Family"*

Under the fascist corporative system you are the owner of your land, of your factory, of your sheep, of your shoes, but you are not the owner of your manual work. If your labor is all that you possess, that labor does not belong to you. Officials, whose deeds you may not criticize and whom you may not dismiss, dictate to you as to how many hours a day you shall work, what wages you shall be content with, and what fine you must pay to your employer if you are not industrious enough.

A socialist state would nationalize capital as a means of redeeming the worker from the slavery of wages. The fascist state nationalizes labor and hires it out to private capital at the price which the state itself—that is to say, the officials of the unions appointed by the leaders of the party in power and the judges of the labor court—deems expedient.

A national confederation of fascist unions is what in the United States would be regarded as a colossal company union comprising all the workers in a given trade all over the country.

In Germany the Nazis have devised a slightly different trick for the enslaving of labor. In Nazi Germany there is among the workers in each factory a Nazi group—a "cell," as they call it. The employer, who is no longer called employer but "leader," nominates from among the members of the cell the representatives of the workers. These representatives are called "trustees." The workers of the factory have the right to accept or to reject the "trustees" so nominated, but they have no

right to vote on a different list. All that they are allowed to vote on is whether they shall or shall not swallow the list of persons nominated by the employer. If the majority rejects the list, the Nazi party takes the matter into its own hands and the "trustees" are appointed by the leaders of the party. Wages are fixed by the employer. If the "trustees" designated by the employer or by the leaders of the party find that wages are too low, the matter is settled by the labor court, which is analogous to the Italian court of the same name.

Actually, what the Nazis have done is to combine the Italian system, which puts the unions under the control of the fascist party, with the American system known as the company union, which puts the unions under the control of the employers.

There is, however, a difference between Italian and German unions and the American company unions. In Italy and Germany the official unions have been made compulsory by law, while in the United States, the workers are not legally obliged to join the company unions but may even, if they so wish, oppose them. If they join the company unions and are not satisfied with the results, they have only themselves to blame.

The three systems have this in common: that the aim of the employers, whether in fascist Italy, in Nazi Germany, or in democratic America, is to destroy the independent unions.

In February, 1928, Mussolini described the working of his system in the following words: "I declare that henceforth capital and labor shall have equal rights and duties as brothers in the fascist family."

#### *V. National "Elections"*

When a new Chamber of Representatives is to be formed, the provincial and national officials of each Confederation meet in Rome and draw up a list of their own nominees. The procedure of nomination is as follows: The president of the Confederation, who receives his appointment from Mussolini,

in accord with the national leaders of the fascist party, who are likewise appointed by Mussolini, prepares the list of nominees, reads it out to the meeting of the officials, and the latter approve it *en bloc* by acclamation. The confederations are allotted 800 nominees.

Two hundred more candidates are nominated by bodies of a cultural or charitable nature designated by the government. The method of nomination is the same for these privileged bodies as for the confederations: the President of the body, who has been appointed by the Secretary General of the fascist party, who in his turn has been appointed by Mussolini, announces the names and the meeting accepts them by acclamation. "Authority comes from above."

The names of the thousand nominees are then "presented" to the Grand Council of Fascism, which is a body of about thirty high fascist personages chosen by Mussolini. The Grand Council draws up the list of the 400 future representatives. But it is not restricted to the thousand nominees. It may also choose persons who are not on the list. Such unlimited discretion makes the "presentation" of the preliminary list a mere farce.

After the Grand Council has "designated" the 400 representatives, the names go to the electorate for "ratification." For this purpose the whole country forms a single electoral unit. The voter is asked to declare whether he approves or not of the whole list of 400 names. He is at liberty to answer only "yes" or "no" for the whole list.

In other words, the task of nominating the candidates does not belong to political parties, but to the presidents of the confederations and other privileged bodies, who directly or indirectly are appointed by Mussolini. The right to elect the deputies belongs not to the electorate but to the Grand Council of Fascism, whose members are likewise appointed by Mussolini. And the electorate is left with the sole task of saying "yes" or "no."

When it has to say "yes" or "no," there is no opposition

press, no opposition party organization, no possibility of campaigning against the official list, and no opposition candidates. Whoever refuses to go to the polls reveals himself as an opponent of Mussolini and becomes an outlaw.

On coming into the polling station, the voter receives two ballot papers, a tricolor one with the word "yes" and a white one with the word "no." The tricolor ballot is printed on paper so thin and transparent that even when folded it can easily be distinguished from the white one. The voter, however, is allowed to retire into an enclosed space and there, in the most absolute secrecy, to put one of the two ballots—the one which he does not wish to utilize—into a box. When he leaves the enclosed space, he must hand over the other ballot, the good one, to the recording officer. The "election" of 1929 resulted in 8,500,000 "yeses" and 136,000 "noes," while the "election" of 1934 resulted in 10,000,000 "yeses" and only 10,000 "noes."

In speaking of fascist "elections," Mussolini's propaganda agents state that in Italy today voting is no longer done in territorial but in occupational constituencies, and they take great pains to explain that man's major interest is not residence but occupation, and that the citizen should vote for his own representative within his own class and not according to the chance of his residence. This political doctrine would be debatable, if in fascist Italy the representatives really were elected by the membership of each confederation. As a matter of fact, the nomination is made by the presidents of the confederations and other privileged bodies and the choice is made by the members of the Grand Council of Fascism. All these gentlemen are Mussolini's appointees. Their operations have nothing to do either with territorial or with occupational constituencies. When the moment comes for the voter to answer "yes" or "no," he gives his answer not in an occupational but in a national, *i.e.*, a huge territorial, constituency, and he must answer "yes" if he does not wish to find himself in jail.

As far as the 400 representatives are concerned, they represent no one and nothing. No bond unites them to any electorate. Those who are constrained to say "yes" enjoy no means for either approving or disapproving them. The so-called representatives are under the military discipline of the fascist party and both in the House and outside must obey Mussolini's orders.

## VI. *The "Corporations"*

Above the organizations of employers and employees we find in Italy the twenty-two so-called "corporations."

What are these corporations?

They are bodies, each one of which deals with a given category of industry, agriculture or commerce. For instance, one deals with textiles, another with the production and commerce in wheat, another with the steel industry, and so on.

The members forming these corporations fall into four classes: (1) cabinet ministers and high officials, who are appointed by Mussolini; (2) experts, who are appointed by Mussolini; (3) members of the Fascist Party, who are appointed by the Secretary General of the party, who is in his turn appointed by Mussolini; and (4) so-called representatives of the employers and employees, who are designated by the presidents of the confederations, who are appointed by Mussolini, and who do not have to render any account of their acts to the membership of the organizations, as you would expect in an "army of believers." Of course, the employers are represented by big business men, while the employees are represented by bureaucrats.

Mussolini is the president of all these councils and designates their vice-presidents. He is entitled to change the composition of the councils whenever he thinks fit and to rid himself of councillors who have become "indiscreet." If the opinions of the councils do not fall in with Mussolini's opinion, he is empowered to reject them, and he can even prevent those opinions



from being published in the press. The councils are convoked at Mussolini's pleasure. If he never convoked them, nobody would object and things would go on just the same.

The twenty-two corporations were inaugurated on November 10, 1934, and first began to function in January, 1935. Until now all they have done is to give advisory opinions on minor technicalities; as, for example, what names are to be given to the different types of cheese, so that one may not be confused with another; whether it is possible to use silk produced in Italy instead of cotton imported from abroad, etc. Yet they began to perform miracles many years before they came into the world. If you doubt my words, consult the 1929 edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, and you will find that the corporations are there described as if they were already functioning in reality.

How shall we explain this fact? Nothing is easier. Towards the end of 1926, Mussolini christened the Italian fascist dictatorship as the corporative state. Dictatorship did not enjoy a high reputation in the records of history. Mussolini did not relish the idea of passing down to history as a mere imitator of old discredited experiments. He therefore clothed himself in a brand-new mantle, the mantle of the corporative state, the institutions of which had to supersede the outmoded institutions of democracy. And behold! As soon as Mussolini spoke of the corporative state, all the fascist propaganda agents outside Italy began to describe the corporations, which did not yet exist, and to extol the miracles which they were allegedly performing.

In many countries today there are, side by side with the Ministers of Labor, advisory councils, partly elected by economic groups of the population, partly appointed by the government. They can exercise a remarkable influence on the policies of the governments, since their advice is published by the press, is publicly discussed, and cannot be ignored by the Ministers. If one said that there are today in Italy "advisory

councils" on economic questions, that the members of such councils are all in the hollow of Mussolini's hand, and that such councils are powerless if Mussolini does not agree with them, everybody would at once understand that such institutions are the most futile, bureaucratic bodies that the world has ever seen. Fascist propaganda agents take good care never to explain the mode of recruitment of the corporations and their powers and procedure. Read Professor Schneider's book (pp. 97-100), for instance, and you will know just as much about the characteristic features of the Italian corporations as you know about the corporations on the planet Mars.

### *VII. Class Cooperation*

That the officials of the fascist unions and the corporations are not "elected" from below, but are "appointed" from above, that the members have no say in the choice of the officials and in the conduct of their unions, that the officials concoct the labor agreements, and that labor disputes are ruled on in the last resort by a Labor Court in which the workers are not represented—these facts alone do not justify us in drawing the conclusion that the workers' interests are not protected. In a society for the welfare of animals the animals do not elect the officials, nor do they participate in the meetings at which the society's affairs are discussed. Yet who can harbor doubts as to the good will of the society's officials and the efficacy of their work for animal welfare?

Thus, before passing a definite judgment on the fascist corporative state, one must first inquire into its results as revealed in the conditions of the working classes. The tree is judged by its fruits. What are the fruits of the fascist corporative state?

Let me give one instance of how the system works.

In March, 1927, the representatives of the rice cultivators and the officials who run the rice weeders' unions signed a contract to the effect that wages should be cut by 10 per cent. Fifteen days before the beginning of the harvest, the employers

announced that they could not pay the wages agreed upon, because after the signing of the contract the price of rice had sunk 25 per cent. They asked for a further cut of 20 per cent. The union officials then offered a further reduction of 2.5 per cent. This was judged insufficient by the employers. When the question was brought before the Labor Court, it authorized only the cut of 2.5 per cent to which the officials had kindly consented, and made the workers give back to the employers what they had already received in excess. Then, after wages had been cut by 12.5 per cent, the daily papers announced that the Labor Court had defeated the employers.

In 1928, the government decided that a fresh cut of 7.5 per cent should take place. During 1929 the price of rice went up 20 per cent, and the growers offered the workers an increase of 1.5 per cent, which the officials of the unions accepted with gratitude. But in 1930 the price fell again and the officials generously accepted a further reduction of 17.5 per cent.

In 1931, the employers requested another cut of 35 per cent. The officials hastened to offer a cut of 20 per cent. The Labor Court granted a cut of 24 per cent. In 1933 and 1934 wages were again reduced. Thus, between 1927 and 1934, the wages of 200,000 workers, mostly women, were cut by from 55 to 61 per cent, according to the different groups of the weeders.

Every time a cut took place, the papers praised to the skies the spirit of "class cooperation" which fascism is fostering between employers and employees. Prince Metternich was wont to say that nothing was more advisable than cooperation between the man and his mount, but one should be the man and not the mount. Under fascist class cooperation the employer is the man and the employee the mount.

### *VIII. The Standard of Living*

The average wages of industrial workers at the end of 1934 were one-half of what they were in 1926, when the cor-

porative state was in its initial stage. The wages of agricultural workers were even less than one-half of what they had been. Meanwhile, the cost of living did not change until the end of 1929. From 1930 to 1934 it did fall, but only by 25 per cent. Thus, in the course of eight years the Italian people lost more than 25 per cent of their real wages. If one adds the losses caused by increased unemployment to the drop in real wages, one realizes the deterioration which has taken place in the standard of living of the Italian working class under the fascist corporative state.

In June, 1931, Professor Bizozzero, an agricultural expert and a one hundred per cent fascist, advised the Italian peasantry to eat little bread and hardly any meat and to return to maize as a staple food, if they wanted to find a way out of their present troubles. "Maize," as the Cabinet Minister, Signor Acerbo, explained in September of 1932, "serves to feed not only human beings, but also cattle and especially pigs." The stiff mush made of maize, when it is not varied with bread and meat and not sufficiently salted, produces a horrible disease—pellagra. A fascist professor writes: "Among animals only the herbivorous have need of salt, not the carnivorous. For the carnivorous rich salt is a luxury. For the herbivorous proletariat of Italy it is a necessity." Lest they should put too much salt in their stiff mush, the price of salt, which in Italy is a state monopoly, was raised in September, 1928, from two and a half cents a pound to six cents a pound. Pellagra was slowly disappearing from Italy during the fifty years of the pre-fascist regime. In 1930, an authority on hygiene, who is also a one hundred per cent fascist, Professor Messedaglia, drew attention to the fact that a case of pellagra had occurred in a zone from which the disease had disappeared, and raised a cry of alarm at the steady fall in the standard of living among the rural population of his district.

In 1935 a fresh increase in the cost of living of from 15 to 20 per cent occurred, but wages remained unchanged. During

the spring and summer of 1936 a new increase in the cost of living became apparent. Last September (1936), the American commercial attaché in Rome estimated that living costs had increased from 10 to 15 per cent during the preceding twelve months.

The distress became so unbearable that the government had to order an increase in wages which amounted to from 5 to 10 per cent, according to the different groups of working people. These increases have been heralded as a proof that Mussolini has at heart the welfare of his beloved subjects. The truth is that these increases did not meet the increase in the cost of living which had taken place during the first half of the year.

### *Conclusion*

I hope the reader now understands why Hitler was eager to introduce Mussolini's corporative state into Germany, why the Austrian clerico-fascists aped it in Austria, why the Duke of Alba and former King Alfonso are enthusiastic about it, and why the Catholic Bishop of Cleveland admires not only Father Coughlin's radio sermons but also Mussolini's corporative state. This is no doubt also the reason why Mr. Myron C. Taylor, chairman of the United States Steel Corporation, speaking in November, 1936, at a dinner of welcome for Mussolini's newly appointed ambassador, assured the latter that all the world is forced to admire Mussolini's success in disciplining the nation. By "nation" Mr. Taylor did not mean big business. Big business does not like to be disciplined. By "nation" he meant the trade union leaders, writers, workers, journalists and college professors who do not worship big business. These people need to be "disciplined" in the United States too.

Mr. Taylor is no more disturbed than the European admirers of Mussolini by the latter's syndicalist fireworks and the

"revolutionary" institutions of his corporative state. They all know quite well that the fascist corporative state is merely the old capitalist state in its most despotic form, marked by the ruthless suppression of personal rights and political liberties, notably the liberty of the trade unions.\*

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\* For a more detailed account of fascist trade unionism, with evidence substantiating statements made, see the author's *Under the Axe of Fascism*, (New York, The Viking Press, 1936).

## CONCLUSION

THE picture of conditions in Germany and Italy as presented by those who have experienced its terrors, is sufficiently challenging to arouse progressive, thinking Americans, whether organized or unorganized, whether they work with hand or brain. Here we have a picture of the catastrophe which would overtake the American people, if a system like Mussolini's fascist corporative state, or Hitler's coordinated dictatorship, were ever permitted a footing in this country. Here we have precise information concerning the fall in living standards, the actual starvation, bad housing, low wages, heavy taxes, burdensome armaments, imperialist ventures in colonial aggression threatening new foreign wars, the total suppression of civil liberties and persecution of racial minorities which result when fascism is permitted to ride the saddle. Fascism solves no economic crisis. It does mislead well-intentioned people into believing that it can do so, when all it actually does is to increase the burden on the shoulders of the working population for the benefit of financiers and industrialists. Under the colossal swindle of fascism, the workers' trade unions stand to lose their organizations, built up through decades of struggle, almost over night. The violent suppression of all workers' organizations is a foundation stone of fascism.

In this period, American labor is on the march. We have seen this in the splendid spirit of resistance manifested during the sit-down strikes, first in the fortress of anti-unionism (General Motors in Detroit), then spreading in rapid succession from one industry to another across the country. It is important to point out that even under fascist terror, labor is making itself felt. In Italy, for example, reference has been made to a recent wage increase. Some anti-fascists see in this a ma-

never on the part of fascist leaders, in order to knife the workers' movement in the back. The fascists, of course, would have us believe that this increase is due to the benevolence of Mussolini. Actually, however, the wage increase is due to the workers' agitation within the ranks of the fascist unions. A joint statement, issued by the (illegal) Socialist and Communist Parties of Italy immediately thereafter, claimed this as a significant result of union pressure. Gherardo Casini, a fascist functionary, has stated in *Lavoro Fascista* that the problem is no longer one of "bringing wages up to the level of the cost of living," but of "examining the very trade union structure and activities."

Even in the terrorized fascist organizations, therefore, the workers are becoming more outspoken than ever before. They are raising issues of wages, living conditions and trade union life, thus using the fascist corporations themselves to break through fascist suppression and legality, and in fact even forcing some of the fascist leaders to take up their grievances and debate them in the press. In this way, the workers in fascist countries are beginning to use the corporations as unions, since none other is available to them now. This is important, for it indicates the possibility of a general revival of the labor movement in these countries, while at the same time constituting a serious threat to the whole fabric of fascist legality—a matter of prime importance.

In Germany there are even more signs of ferment and change. Here as elsewhere the aim of the Nazi party was to crush the workers under the lowest living standards ever known in Germany. To do this, Hitler found it necessary to try to stamp out any signs of labor struggles for better conditions. But the situation in Germany shows that Hitler's plans have not been entirely realized. In the fascist Labor Front, there is a broad opposition movement formed by the workers despite the terror—a struggle to bring back the old independent fighting force of labor.



Labor must and will defend itself against destruction. The Hitler regime has reduced Germany to beggary. Inside the country, however, there is the beginning of a People's Front of working people, the middle classes, and peasants, to fight against the brutality of the fascist dictatorship. In the last few weeks there have been cases of passive resistance and even of open strikes in many industries. In the peasant districts, there are dissatisfaction and ferment expressed in refusal to pay taxes or yield products to the government. Very recently we have read of open resistance to the sending of workers' sons to fight for fascism in Spain. Especially in the domain of religion, there is continued opposition which forces Hitler to capitulate and grant free elections for church self-government. All these factors taken together indicate that the forces of the People's Front are growing and maturing towards a free and democratic Germany.

We in the United States can learn, and must learn, from these examples. It is not necessary for us to pass over the bloody road of fascism. An open fascist party has not yet crystallized in the United States. We have the power in our hands to resist, indeed to crush the fascist elements now apparent on the American scene. For those who still doubt that such forces exist, there is the adventurer Gerald L. K. Smith, successor to the mantle of Huey Long's Louisiana dictatorship. The press of March 2 announced that Smith had just started a venture to form "A Committee of One Million," with himself in the capacity of "Fuehrer," because "his friends wanted him to form it." On January 27, Chairman Dickstein of the Immigration Committee told the House that "German spies and Consuls and representatives in this country" were training 200,000 men in German uniforms chiefly in Illinois, Pennsylvania, New York and Michigan. Black Legionism in Detroit shocked the American public. It has by no means been wiped out. Its sinister possibilities, whether in the shape of a Gerald L. K. Smith, the Ku Klux Klan, the Vigilantes, the

anti-Semitic activities of Henry Ford, or the paid agents of Hitler in America, are menacing forces, ready allies of the Liberty Leaguers who proved themselves such conspicuous enemies of democracy in the last elections. It will be recalled that these forces were held in leash by an aroused people, who preferred to take no chances with fascism here. The people are again on the move to reform the Supreme Court against the unrestricted power to thwart progressive legislation.

France has demonstrated through its Popular Front how to deal with the fascist menace. The Spanish People's Front has shown the world how magnificent and invincible is the fighting spirit of the people in defense of democracy, against the forces of international fascism and its mercenary armies!

The need of the hour in America is to build this bulwark in opposition to fascism, through the instrument of the Farmer-Labor Party, uniting all those who are opposed to fascism, cementing all those who are for democracy and peace. For the People's Front against fascism and war which it breeds, no single group is more important than the trade unions. Their strength will be second to none in the People's Front in this country, organized to fight reaction and safeguard democracy. The wave of sit-down strikes under the leadership of the Committee for Industrial Organization (C.I.O.) is an indication of the fighting capacity of the American labor movement, and of its determination to organize effective, powerful instruments to win some measure of economic security *now*. With one-third of this great nation still "ill-fed, ill-clothed, ill-housed," it is imperative that forward looking people join hands with labor *now* in organizing the Farmer-Labor Party to combat all fascist influences threatening our hard-won democratic rights.

To help vanquish fascism, we dedicate this pamphlet, in the belief that those who read will act to forge the People's Front against fascism and war.



