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CAPITAL AND LABOR UNDER  
FASCISM

BY  
CARMEN HAIDER, M. A.

*318 in the "Studies in History, Economics  
and Public Law" of Columbia University.*

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**Curavi humanas actiones non ridere, non lugere, neque detestari  
sed intelligere.**

**SPINOZA.**

## PREFACE

THE term "fascism" is more and more frequently used to denote a political movement, which came originally as a reaction from the chaos which in almost all the belligerent countries followed the World War. Of these various movements that of Italy is said to be the most typical as it certainly has become the most fully developed. Although the motives or the exterior forms of the post-war movements in the different countries may resemble one another, I believe it incorrect to consider them as completely equivalent since they are differentiated by special characteristics, which result from the particular national mentalities and situations. Therefore it has seemed to me that the Italian syndicate experiment should be studied by itself as an outcome of the Italian conditions. Accordingly I have devoted attention to syndicalism outside of Italy only when it has had an influence on the Italian situation. Also, I have attempted in this study to interpret fascism from the Italian point of view, being guided by considerations coming from within the national life, and not by objections which persons of other intellectual backgrounds make to the system.

Likewise I have considered it necessary, in order really to understand the phenomenon, to approach it without any prejudice based upon a personal political conviction. Desiring to interpret the Italian fascist movement in its own frame, to sense its spirit and to understand the fascination Mussolini has exercised over large masses of the Italian population, I have approached the problem not as a sceptical observer, but in a sympathetic attitude. This has been all the more easy to me, as my great sympathy for the Italian people has led

me really to take the questions to heart. Nevertheless I have tried not to be blinded by sentiment but to keep an open mind.

The study, presented in the following pages, is the result of a theoretical examination of the documents and of the publications on fascism, of observations on the spot and of actual contact with the leading personalities of the fascist and the anti-fascist movements. Although I have reached my own conclusions on the subject, I have tried to remain impartial, to show the problem in its complexity and interconnections and to let the facts speak for themselves. As a result, detailed description of the syndicate structure and definite statements at times convey the impression that the plan is in full operation, while at other points in the discussion only a vague impression can be gained as to the actual working of the system. This is due to the fact that the laws are quite specific and often regulate even minor details, while in actual practice it again and again has been deemed advisable to suspend these provisions and to experiment. This makes it extremely difficult to be certain at a given period what provisions of a law are in actual operation.

For an adequate investigation I thought it necessary to approach the problem from the two sides, that of capital and that of labor, and to explain the attitude of the different groups by quoting their own arguments. As a result, I hope that the reader himself may gain an impression of the various forces which react upon one another, so that he may have the sensation of observing the phenomenon personally. This seems to me the prerequisite of an impartial study.

To present the problem in its proper light, I have written a short introduction, sketching the Italian situation in the immediate post-war years as it appeared to the average Italian citizen, little interested in political movements, and little informed on the forces that worked under the surface. Of

course, I recognize that that period would merit a more exhaustive study, if it were to be rendered in its entire complexity, but such an undertaking would have surpassed the limits of my study.

On the other hand, I believed that to do justice to fascism it was necessary to explain its theoretical conceptions. Not only does fascism declare that it cannot discuss its policies with liberal or socialist elements because they view the problem from a different angle, but there are certain characteristics of fascism which decidedly distinguish it from all other political conceptions, and which are of practical importance in Italy today. This, of course, does not prevent my recognizing that the fascist theory is not a preconceived doctrine, but rather an outcome of a state of facts, the intellectual explanation and sometimes justification of certain actions.

Following a purely scientific examination of the inner consistency of the conception, I have given special attention to the actual application of the syndicate system. I have thought it necessary, for a complete survey, to include the fascist parliamentary reform and to describe the situation in which the non-fascist elements find themselves. In the course of the examination I have taken occasion to illustrate the achievements of fascism, but also to show the difficulties which stand in the way of its complete application, and the unfavorable effects which the system has brought about. That these unfavorable results are not lacking is also recognized by the fascists, but they put their trust in forces which may in time succeed in overcoming them. Again, I have called attention to the various undercurrents which may shape the future policies of fascism, and I have tried to forecast the possibilities of the future, and the factors which will probably have the most decisive influence on the ultimate success or failure of the entire movement. In this examination and interpretation some persons will perhaps find that I could

have omitted the one or the other point which sheds a favorable or unfavorable light on the situation, but I would have regarded such action as insincere, and as seriously diminishing the value of a critical study, in which an attitude of absolute honesty and impartiality is the foremost duty.

Fascism, like any other human phenomenon, is not a perfect or completely harmonious movement, as some writers who exalt the Italian Government would like to make us believe, but neither is everything completely to be rejected, as some violent and bitter opponents of the regime proclaim. Still, both points of view are understandable and indeed—paradoxical as this may seem—are the outcome of the same situation, are based on the same facts. It has been my endeavor in this work to describe the Italian situation in such a way that the reader will realize that the two convictions naturally flow out of the given conditions, and may see the interconnection between the opposing points of view, and judge according to his own intelligence. If this study should succeed in serving as such a connecting link, and of illustrating the phenomenon of fascism and of “integral syndicalism” in Italy to the foreign reader so that some of the problems of the Italian people may be more justly evaluated and understood abroad, I shall have fulfilled my task.

Success in my undertaking will not be to my credit alone, for at every step I have been assisted in the most obliging way by all Italians that I have had occasion to approach, whether they were representative persons or simple laborers. Nor should there be made any distinction between fascists and anti-fascists in this case. Extreme courtesy and the readiness to help are above all Italian characteristics, which no political struggle can efface. If in this preface, I abstain from expressing my gratitude personally to each one of the opponents of the fascist regime whom I have met in Italy, this is not because I am less obliged and less thankful to them



Among the fascists who received me, I cannot but express my thanks above all to the leader of the movement, the head of the Italian Government, his Exc. Benito Mussolini, who very kindly discussed some points with me. This privilege was rendered possible to me by his Exc. Giuseppe Bottai, Undersecretary of State at the Corporation-Ministry, who also gave me all the information I desired, and furnished some recent statistical data.

Upon the introduction of Professor Corrado Gini, president of the Central Institute of Statistics, I met his Exc. Bottai and other eminent representatives of the fascist regime, such as his Exc. Augusto Turati, Secretary General of the fascist party, his Exc. Alfredo Rocco, and his Exc. Edmondo Rossoni. Professor Gini also tried to assist me in every other possible way, and it is with great pleasure that I take this opportunity to express my sincere and cordial gratitude to him.

His Exc. Alfredo Rocco, Minister of Justice, is well known abroad for his interpretation of fascism, and it was indeed interesting to me to meet him. I was also fortunate in having the opportunity to discuss the general fascist policy with his Exc. Senator Giovanni Gentile, as well as the special work of the Commission of Eighteen of which he had been president

The conversations which I had with his Exc. Edmondo Rossoni were of great interest to me, not only because his Exc. Rossoni is the founder of fascist syndicalism and so able to give me valuable material on various phases of the movement, but also because they took place at the time of the dissolution of the Confederation of Fascist Syndicates. I also talked with the presidents of the new laborers' confederations, notably Hon. Iginio Magrini, president of the Confederation of the Sea and Air Workers, who had an outline of the social and economic activities of his organiza-

tion especially prepared for me, and who also arranged for my visit to the Seamen's Home in Genoa. Hon. Luigi Razza, president of the Confederation of Agriculture, also discussed special aspects of the agricultural labor problem with me and put the entire collection of the fascist agricultural newspapers at my disposal.

I learned the point of view of the Confederation of Agriculturalists in particular from its director general, Comm. Marozzi. At the Confederation headquarters I also received special data, and introductions were given me to the various provincial federations. The special problem of the "battle of the grain" was described to me by Professor Mario Ferragutti, who is secretary general of the Committee for the Battle of the Grain.

At the headquarters of the Confederation of Industry I had the opportunity of meeting Hon. Gino Olivetti, and while there also discussed the problem from the employers' standpoint with Professor Giovanni Balella. In Milan, I saw the president of the Confederation of Industry, Hon. A. S. Benni, and Gr. Uff. Carlo Tarlarini, president of the Industrial Union in Milan, and in Genoa Gr. Uff. Bartolomeo Moresco, president of the Industrial Union of that province.

With regard to the attitude of the laborers' syndicates, I investigated also in the provincial districts. Signor Luigi Begnotti, who then was at the head of the provincial syndicate in Brescia, was especially kind to me, describing the work of the organization in minute detail. In addition to these points of view, I had occasion to discuss the fascist attempt at a solution of the capital-labor problem with industrialists and with laborers, of whom some were enrolled in the fascist syndicates, and others were opposed to the present Government.

Gr. Uff. Giacomo di Giacomo, president of the Confedera-

tion of Intellectuals, gave me some material on the syndicate movement of the professional class in Italy, and later I had an opportunity to discuss this extremely interesting problem with the head of the Italian Government, his Exc. Mussolini himself. Hon. G. Bruni in Milan also gave me his impression on the functioning of the system.

Professor Sergio Panunzio and Professor Carlo Costamagna, who are both students of the corporate state, likewise talked over with me the fascist attempt to harmonize the interests of capital and labor. Comm. Cacciola, central director of the *Dopolavoro*,<sup>1</sup> furnished me with all the material I desired, and whatever points still remained obscure to me were elucidated by his Exc. Augusto Turati, who, besides being Secretary General of the fascist party, is special commissioner of the *Dopolavoro*. About the work pursued by the Institute of Maternity and Infancy, I was informed by its director general, Comm. B. Graziani.

Whenever possible I have tried to view the problem of capital and labor in its wider frame of fascism and to interpret it in the light of related problems. I was grateful to his Exc. Alberto de Stefani, former Finance Minister of Italy, who at present directs the fascist policy of land reclamation. He discussed economic problems with me and described the attempts of the Government for land reclamation and ruralization. His Exc. Senator Count Giuseppe Volpi de Misurata, former Finance Minister, also talked to me about the financial situation, and especially about the questions relating to the revaluation of the lira.

I had an opportunity of seeing his Exc. Luigi Federzoni, then Colonial Minister; his Exc. Admiral Sirianni, Under-

<sup>1</sup> The *Dopolavoro* is an organization aiming to provide cultural and physical recreational facilities for the workers. For fuller account see Chapter VII. Since there is no word in English, which would adequately describe the *dopolavoro* movement, the Italian word will be used throughout the book.

secretary of State at the Naval Ministry; and the Marshal of Italy, his Exc Pietro Badoglio, then head of the armed forces in Italy. I also talked to Senator Count Antonio Cippico and his sister, Signora Pezzoli, who was formerly at the head of the feminine fascist organization in Rome. Signora Pezzoli had the kindness to introduce me to the directress of the Edmondo de Amicis school in Rome, Signorina Ida Bouché Panicelli, whereby I was able to obtain a first-hand impression of the fascist educational reform, which I had already discussed with his Exc Senator Giovanni Gentile, who had introduced it in Italy while Minister of Public Instruction.

On the activities pursued by the *Azione Cattolica Italiana*, I was informed by Rev Father Giovanni Balduzzi, who is at the head of the assistance section (social welfare of workers) and by Doctor Ludovico Montoni.

Not less courteously and kindly than in Italy was I received by the anti-fascists in Paris, who tried in every way to assist me in my work. Hon Filippo Turati and Hon. Claudio Treves, both eminent leaders of reformatory socialism in Italy, have several times discussed the general situation in Italy and particular aspects of it with me. I was shown exceptional courtesy by Hon Bruno Buozzi, secretary of the Italian Confederation of Labor, and as he is a specialist on the subject and follows the fascist syndicate movement with great attention, my conversations with him were interesting and instructive, and the material that he put at my disposal was very useful to me.

Among the Italian socialist leaders, I also met his Exc. Arturo Labriola, former Minister of Labor, when he came from Brussels. Notwithstanding his short stay in France, he discussed the fascist phenomenon\* with me very thoroughly. Signor Alceste de Ambris, labor leader of the revolutionary syndicalists in Italy and the originator of the

Constitution of the Free State of Fiume in its conceptional aspect, has given me his opinion of the fascist syndicate movement.

His Exc. Francesco Nitti, former Prime Minister of Italy discussed the Italian situation with me, and the point of view of the Italian democrats was also elucidated for me by Doctor Alberto Cianca, former director of the newspaper *Il Mondo* in Rome. Doctor Giuseppe Donati, former member of the Italian Parliament, expressed the attitude of the exiled catholics; his Exc Eugenio Chiesa, former Minister of Aeronautics and leader of the republicans, explained the stand of his party, and Hon Francesco Buffoni has especially described for me the period of communistic agitations in Italy and the fascist reaction against them. Doctor Angelica Balabanoff, the Russian socialist who for years has been a member of the Italian socialist party, and as such was the collaborator of his Exc. Mussolini at the time when he was editor of the *Avanti*, informed me as to the Italian situation at the outbreak of the World War, the expulsion of Mussolini from the socialist party, and his subsequent foundation of the *Popolo d'Italia*.

To all these persons I wish to express my sincere and hearty thanks. Their collaboration has rendered my work interesting and the subject with which I dealt extremely vivid.

It would be unjust and indeed ungrateful to close this preface, which is an eloquent illustration of the rare kindness of all Italians I have met, without mentioning the way in which my professors at Columbia University in New York, especially Professor Edwin R. A. Seligman and Professor Henry R. Seager, have helped me throughout the years of this study, and I am glad to have this opportunity of expressing my sincere and lasting gratitude to them.

CARMEN HAIDER

PARIS, JUNE 15, 1929.

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<sup>1</sup> The *Becco Giallo* is printed on very thin paper and is smuggled every fortnight into Italy to the number of about 7,500 copies. It is estimated that every copy is read on the average by 100 people, which is all the more remarkable, since it is dangerous to be seen or known reading an anti-fascist publication. The only other means the opponents of the Government outside of Italy use to get into contact with large masses of the population, are the so-called *Mamfestos*. These are extracts from their newspapers or resolutions, similarly printed on thin sheets and smuggled into Italy in the same manner as the *Becco Giallo*.

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## VITA

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THE author was born on August 28, 1906, in Berlin, Germany. At an early age she went to the United States, but returned to Germany before the age of six and in 1912 entered the *Cecilienschule* in Berlin. In 1919 she entered the *Städtische Studienanstalt*, also in Berlin. In the spring of 1924 she obtained a leave of absence for six months. She spent this time partly in Lausanne, Switzerland, where she attended classes at the *Ecole Supérieure et Gymnase*, and partly in Paris, where she attended the courses of the *Alliance Française*. In the fall of the same year she returned to her school in Berlin and there passed her final examination (*Abitur*) in March, 1925. She then left Germany for Paris, where she was enrolled in the Summer Session at the Sorbonne in 1925. In the fall of 1925 she attended courses at Columbia University as a non-matriculated student and, after having credit equivalent to a A. B. degree, pursued her studies for the A. M., which she obtained in February, 1927. Shortly thereafter she decided on the topic for her dissertation and immediately started to work on it, attending courses at the same time. In the spring of 1927 she obtained the scholarship for graduate women for 1927-28. In April, 1928, she passed her general examination for the Ph.D. in Economics and submitted a first draft of her dissertation to Professors Edwin R. A. Seligman and Henry R. Seager. In August of the same year she sailed for Europe and spent the winter in Italy, investigating the fascist attempt to solve the problem of capital and labor. In the spring of 1929 she went to Paris to meet the anti-fascist leaders. While in Paris she completed the second draft of this dissertation. She also attended lectures at the *École Libre des Sciences Politiques*. In June, 1929, she returned to New York and completed the third and final draft of the dissertation now submitted.