

**CO-OPERATION
IN
CHANGING ITALY**

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KARL WALTER

WHAT has happened to the
Co-operative Societies of
Italy under the Fascist regime?
This question is answered, for the
first time since the March on
Rome, by an English investigator
familiar for many years with the
social movements of Italy. He
visited 30 federations and 100
societies in order to describe the
movement, and some of his in-
formation regarding its role in
the changing economic structure
of Italy is surprising.

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IN CHANGING ITALY

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(Incorporated 1926)

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CO-OPERATION IN CHANGING ITALY

A SURVEY

BY

KARL WALTER

(THE HORACE PLUNKETT FOUNDATION)

LONDON

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FOREWORD

THE following account of Co-operation as it is practised today in a country whose language and social movements have been familiar to the writer for thirty-five years, is based on a survey of every form of Co-operation to be observed in a dozen provinces which were chosen as being typical of the social and economic life of a much changed and still changing Italy. The itinerary may be indicated by the better-known centres of Naples, Rome, Pisa, Florence, Bologna, Venice, Udine, Milan, though very little time was spent in the cities, excepting Rome, compared with the visiting of small country towns, villages and farms. A week in Rome was devoted to getting some understanding of the composition and functions of various national bodies, and of what was found to be a very fluid state of opinion on economic and labour matters affecting the Co-operative movement or likely to influence its future. In the first and last chapters will be found some indication of the general information obtained, and the conclusions to which it led after the tour, when facts and impressions had been checked up.

The enquiry was carried out in greater detail than can appear in the space of this Report, and it is impossible to mention individually the many organisations which so cordially seconded every wish of the enquirer. Some 30 regional and national federations and more than 100 local societies were visited; the unfailing comradeship and frankness of their officers and members in discussing past and present controversies is deeply appreciated. Special acknowledgement has been made to the President of the Co-operative Union on behalf of the Horace Plunkett Foundation, and a personal indebtedness is gratefully recorded to Dr. Rosario Labadessa, whom one would call

its leader if the movement had not been so virtuously *spersonalizzato*, and to his enthusiastic colleagues at Headquarters and at the Provincial secretariates of the Union, for the sacrifices of time and comfort made in the interest of an accurate knowledge of the ideals and actualities of the united movement to which they are giving their lives.

London, May, 1934

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- Vita Cooperativa.* E.N.F.C. Roma (monthly).

STATISTICAL SUMMARY OF ITALIAN CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES (1933)

Categories of Societies.	Total Number of Societies. ¹	Societies Affiliated to the Union.	Members. ²	Capital. ³ £	Turnover. ⁴ £
Consumers	(3,800)	3,338	742,260	2,315,422	19,619,825
Farm Requirements	540	(288)	500,000 ⁵	2,500,000 ⁶	20,000,000 ⁶
Dairies.	4,188 ⁴	(459)	237,349	—	(gals. 181,306,400)
Silk	128 ⁴	(18)	80,000 ⁴	300,000	(lbs. 10,150,800)
Wine	158 ⁴	(34)	15,869	(gals. 27,108,080 capacity)	(gals. 14,524,240)
Olives	30 ⁴	(5)	5,000 ⁴	—	—
Farming	(399) ⁴	314	46,724	504,701	2,219,815
Fishing	(74)	65	35,000	29,260	750,000
Labour and Industry	(1,251)	1,204	68,628	542,180	9,166,600
Transport	(281)	265	15,105	102,660	500,000
Building	(1,830)	764	72,666	900,746	29,695,495 ⁷
Electricity	57	—	11,034	108,104	64,000
Superphosphate Factories	18 ⁴	—	—	(8,000,000 cwts. capacity)	(cwts. 3,831,820)
Mutual Aid	(4,249)	2,119	1,200,000 ⁴	2,752,878	100,830
Agricultural Insurance	1,630	(195)	372,000	—	—
Credit (1930) :					
Casse Rurali	1,660	—	151,516	778,906	Loans: 10,607,824 Deposits: 16,820,736
Banche Popolari	589	—	400,000 ⁴	11,073,000	Loans: 61,676,660 Deposits: 90,538,330
	20,882	9,068	3,953,151	—	—

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¹ Additional figures are from Departmental sources in respect of Societies not affiliated to the Union.
² Figures in the last three columns refer to unbracketed figures in the first two. ³ Estimated for all Societies.
⁴ Farmers Union Report (Dieci Anni di Attività Sindacale). ⁵ Including Societies with plant in course of construction.
⁶ Cultivating 253,750 acres. ⁷ Buildings completed or in course of construction.

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