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**THE CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT
IN ITALY**

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THE CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT IN ITALY

WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO
AGRICULTURE, LABOUR AND
PRODUCTION

A SHORT STUDY
BY
E. A. LLOYD, B.A.

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TO
MY FATHER

PREFACE

THE investigation of which most of the results are embodied in this little book was undertaken at the suggestion of Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb, who, in their work on the *Consumers' Co-operative Movement* (1921, p. 477), had indicated the need for scientific exploration of some of the forms of co-operative organisation which had attained considerable development in other countries, but were little known to English students of the movement. I hope that the present account of some of the more characteristic sides of the Co-operative movement in Italy will therefore be of interest, and if it is found to fill, at least in some measure, the gap in our literature on this subject, my efforts will have been amply rewarded.

The book is almost entirely descriptive. It has been my aim to record as faithfully and as clearly as possible facts gleaned from many sources, and by the aid of many kind friends in England and abroad. In the following pages these facts speak for themselves.

Although I realise the impossibility of thanking adequately all those who by their interest and assistance have made possible the preparation of this study, I feel that I must place on record my sense of obligation first to Mr. and Mrs. Webb and then to my friend and tutor, Dr. Hugh Dalton, M.P. My task was made easy and pleasant by introductions kindly supplied by Prof. H. J.

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Laski, Mr. H. J. May (Secretary of the International Co-operative Alliance), Mr. Leonard Woolf and Mr. Albert Ball.

At Easter 1923 I spent some weeks at the International Labour Office, Geneva, where, by the courtesy of M. Albert Thomas, Director, and Dr. Fauquet, Head of the Co-operation Department, I was given access to the valuable material on Italian Co-operation collected by the Office. I desire to express my sincere thanks to all the officials of that great organisation, and especially to Captain W. S. Sanders and to Mr. E. J. Phelan, Chief of the Diplomatic Division. I am under a special obligation to Dr. Aillaud, who generously supplied me with a copy of the results of his own investigation into the History of Agricultural Co-operation in Italy, on which, with his kind consent, I have drawn largely.

As I had resided in Italy for two years immediately after the War, this investigation afforded me the occasion for the renewal of many valued friendships. During the tour I made in that country, extending over some eight weeks in the summer of 1923, I was so fortunate as to receive the expert assistance of many new friends—of all parties. I am especially indebted to Signor Antonio Vergnanini, President of the Lega Nazionale delle Co-operative, and to his staff, to Ing. Del Bufalo, Director of the National Federation of Productive and Labour Co-operative Societies, to Avvocato Terruzzi, Director of the Istituto Nazionale di Credito per le Co-operative, and to the leaders and officials of the Co-operative movement in all parts of Italy who, without distinction of party, received me with the utmost kindness and spared no pains to ensure that I obtained an exact view of the organisations for which they were responsible.

I have made much use of the recent book entitled *Il Fatto Cooperativo in Italia*, by the ex-Minister Meuccio Ruini. For permission to do this I am grateful to Signor Ruini himself and to his publisher, Signor Nicola Zanichelli of Bologna, in whose series on the "Questioni del Lavoro" the book is No. 2 (lire 8.50, March 1922). I would particularly refer students to this book for an impartial and careful study of the whole movement. I have indicated at the end of this volume a few only of the works in English wherein they will find other references to the subject.

If this modest book has any merits they are due to the kindly help of those I have mentioned above and of many whom I have not mentioned at all. If it contains any errors, whether of observation or of deduction, I alone am responsible.

Finally, I wish to record my gratitude to the Fabian Society, and in particular to the Trustees of the Atkinson Fund, who munificently supplied the financial assistance without which the investigation could not have been undertaken, and which alone has made possible the publication of its results in the present form.

EDWARD ARCHIBALD LLOYD.

December 1924.

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