Manuscript: Mussolini and Italy, Chapter III

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http://hdl.handle.net/10456/37589

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Mussolini of Italy has launched a "Peace Ship". It has been long on the way. Indeed he had no sooner ended the MARCH ON ROME in October of 1922, than he began to collect and put together the materials. It was not, however, until July 1926 that his craft sailed out — himself as Captain.

Mussolini's "Peace Ship" does not concern itself with foreign nations — war to his practical mind begins at home. "Unless the forces of a nation can live in peace", he says bluntly, "there is little hope of their living peacefully with their neighbors; -- they may even welcome war on the outside in order to quell the disturbances on the inside."

A war which Mussolini hopes to end forever in Italy, is that between Capital and Labor. It is a struggle which has pursued him all his life — he was born into it; fought it out on paper; in the books; in his closet as a youth; threw himself into it as a young man; was at it hard when the Great War broke out and he heard a higher call. At bottom it was the industrial struggle which brought him into the field in 1919 at the head of a new party — a party devoted to quelling the industrial riots which had spread over Italy and forcing into orderly action the whole productive machine in order that Italy might have a chance to recuperate from her great war losses; and that men might again have a breathing spell of peace.

If you accept Mussolini's objective as a strong Italy, it is easy to see how essential to him is continuous industrial peace. To have a strong Italy he must have healthy money and his money "is anaemic", as he says; to cure his money he must have a people at work; and to have a people at work, he must have cheerful acceptance of conditions; and it is to bring about that, that he has produced his "Peace Ship". He says himself
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Chapter III

nothing the Fascisti Government has done compares in importance to the cargo that his vessel carries. He believes that in time it will prove that under his new scheme Capital will be so harnessed that while it has a full chance to exercise all its ambitions, it can neither oppress Labor nor gauge the public in so doing. He believes also that he brings to Labor sufficient guarantees for its future powers, by which it will be able to protect itself without the appeal to war. If this be true, no man will deny that Mussolini has made, not alone to Italy but to the whole world, a contribution of inestimable value; if it be true he has made as great a contribution not only to national but international Peace as the world has yet seen.

But what has been Mussolini's own labor experience? Is he qualified to understand the needs of labor? Certainly no man unfamiliar with that life can hope to deal intelligently or sympathetically with it. One great trouble with the multiplied schemes for industrial betterments is that they come from men who have never sweated at a plow; have never fed a machine. They are no more fit for sufficient planning than those who on the other hand have never handled Capital or understood the relation to productive industry of technical skill. Where did Mussolini come from? — what did he know at the start, of labor? In August 1926 I went out to see for myself. The books told me that he was born at Predappio, and my ma told me that Predappio lay in Romagna, that old, old province of Italy between the Apennines and the Adriatic; the home of cities as rich in romance and war as any in Italy — Ravenna, Rimini, Forli! It is a state which runs back for many miles in a flat plain, once a hopeless marsh, now restored and under as splendid cultivation as one will find in all the world!

From the plain rises the mountains, and on one set of crags you find within the borders of this Romangna the smallest state in all the world,
That of San Marino, a state of 12,000 acres supporting 13,000 people. They do it by working the land -- a hill and mountain land, once barren chalk cliffs but now a continuous garden that has meant labor and a thirft unheard of in a country like ours, but a labor which has redeemed the San Marino chalk hills and the marshes of Romagna is the way of the state -- the accepted mode of life, and it was into this rich and laborious land that Mussolini was born, but not in the most fruitful part of Romagna.

The best way to go to his home is to take the old Roman Road which runs straight as a die, southeast from Bologna to the sea; through the famous old town of Faenza and Forli, fifty miles or so, just below Forli you leave the highways and strike into a little valley of Rabbi. Now you are in the foot-hills of the mountains, they are not high, but rough chalky orage, steep gorges. You see at once that you have come into a more meagre land, one which responds niggardly to labor. There are occasional hamlets, many farm houses along the sides of the valley, but here is nothing grandiose, no castles, no monasteries, nothing of the fascinating past or the prospects present have you been able to see in your approach. Fifteen or sixteen miles up the valley you run across a settlement which if you met it in America you would think you had come into a town having a boom and you would ask what it was -- oil? -- coal? -- or an incoming railroad?

A long row of substantial houses is building. "Casa Economiche" (Economic houses) is announced on a long banner strung across the front; they are widening the streets; making a piazza. It is Sunday, and the town is full of people in their good clothes -- a band is playing -- Dova is the name of the town we see, but we are after Predappio, but when we ask for it they point us to a narrow valley.

One of these steep winding mountain roads which makes a motorist hold his breath -- we are there at last and find a tiny town hanging to a crag -- an ancient walled castle dominating it. We make the last lap of
the journey up a steep cobbled alley into a court—old and poor, but somehow gay. There was a little inn at one side where we went to inquire for the birth-place we sought, but when we made our wants known, the proud-eyed young women who had greeted us, broke into laughter, "No, they said, it was not in the town of Predappio, but in the commune of that name that His Excellency was born; it was in Dova down below the town—-from which we had just come, and instantly we understood the "boom".

We turned to go, but were called back "His Excellency" was not born in Predappio, we were told, but in the Bar Room was an uncle of his, would we like to talk with him? Of course, and back we went and met a bronzed, sturdy middle-aged man, a much amused and rather shy—-all we could get out of him was the assurance that Benito was always a clever boy, particularly skilled with his fists, at which they all applauded. Back at our car we found that our chauffeur had discovered a play-mate of the great man—-indeed it looks very much as if the playmates and relatives of His Excellency (by this time we had discovered that strangers in Predappio must not use the name of Mussolini familiarly whatever the inhabitants may do when they are by themselves) have agreed to put themselves at the disposition of pilgrims to Predappio. This particular gentleman was very lively minded and very proud of his association with Mussolini. He assured us that they had all believed "Benito" would do great things for Italy. Mussolini was the pride of the school—-while the rest of them were reading over a piece of poetry, he would commit it; he learned more in playing marbles in the street than all the rest of them learned in school.

Back down the winding road we went to Dova and we promptly were directed to the birth-place we sought. It is a rough little stone house, off the highway on the hill-side, overlooking the town and the valley; there are three floors, and in the lower one, Allessandro Mussolini, His Excellency's father carried on a blacksmith shop. Mounting a steep little stone staircase
you reach the family's sitting room and are shown at once into the little room
where they tell you the boy was born, back in 1885. It is a home of poor people,
you see this at once; though today this room is covered with pictures of
Mussolini, and on one side there is standing a great bronze tablet which the
people of Predappio have had prepared to mark the place. They tell you that
Mussolini does not want it put up -- it may be that (wise man that he is) he
may want to be more sure of the future before a tablet is put on the little
stone house.

One sees at once from all the surroundings of the little place that
in all these early hours Mussolini could have known nothing but labor and
poverty. It was the life of his town and his valley. It was hard to force a
livelihood from these chalky slopes and crags and the boy grew up familiar with
the tragedy of bad seasons and poor crops and accidents and death to ox, cow
and horse -- almost more tragic than the death of one of the family!

I take it that most people in the Valley of the Rabbi accepted their
lives resignedly; but it was not so in the household of Mussolini -- it was
a home that sizzled with revolutionary ideas! His father had grasped the
principles of Socialism which was spreading so rapidly and had come down the
valley of the Rabbi from Forlì, always a city of radicalism. Allessandro
Mussolini became an ardent advocate of the doctrines of the Comune of Predappio,
and for his boldness was sentenced for several months in an ancient prison at
Forlì, but it did not cure him and at the time his first son was born in 1885
his rought little house had become an asylum for Socialist and Republican
refugees from various parts of the Romagna. By this time also he was carrying
on a brisk correspondence with leading men of his way of thinking; writing
articles for Radical journals; and most practically building up a cooperative
association in his neighborhood.

It was in quite harmony with his ideas that when his son came,
he should have named him for a revolutionist whose name filled the world at that
time, Benito Juarez. The boy grew up in a tumult of discussion carried on around his father's anvil, life as he came to view it was a brutal struggle in which the great mass did the work, that a few might enjoy ease and beauty! His soul was in hot revolt but luckily for him there was an antidote for the father's fierce teachings, in his Mother. They tell you in Predappio that she was an old-fashioned woman at least I take it that this is what they mean when they call her "Una Donna Antichetta".

She first came among them as a teacher in their poor little school house, a much better teacher I take it than they had ever before had, for she was a graduate of the Normal school at Forli and besides a young woman of good looks, fine manners, unvarying kindness and exalted piety; it was not long before she married the blacksmith, but for years she kept up her school. She soon saw that she had in her son an unusual mind, and the father soon found out that his ambition to make his son a blacksmith was hopeless and so they decided to give him what education they could. At nine years of age young Benito was sent out of the valley, up the highway, twentyfive or thirty miles away to Faenza, the town we know in America as the home of Majola Pottery. The school was one kept by the Salician Fathers. It is already become like the little house at Deva, a place of pilgrimage so that when you find your way to Faenza and ask for the school, you are promptly and smilingly directed, and here as in Forli, if you inadvertently said the "School of Mussolini", the rejoinder correcting your informality (for this puzzled me for seconds) is "that the school of his Excellency is in such and such a place". It is a far larger plant, this school of the Salician Fathers, than I had expected to see. The dignified facade conceals ample quarters for two hundred and fifty boys, the number young Benito found there. They show you a long mess hall, school rooms, all fronting long arched galleries, which open upon pleasant courts and look beyond on to a garden, and still beyond to a wonderful and uplifting panorama of mountains stretching in a great semi-circle -- "which is a view which can never be cut off".
the Father who shows you about tells you, for we stand on a knoll, the highest
in Faenza, — That is the school to which young Mussolini was taken and those
two features which the Fathers of the Church seemed to think essential in
education — a garden and the everlasting hills to which to lift up your eyes.

Benito was two years here. Traditions of him are told with humor —
his passion to command; his ready use of his fists; his quick mastery of his
lessons, but they are proudest of the fact that he never forgets them and that
he always sends a message to the Annual Reunion of the old boys and that in
many ways since he has been in power, he has favored the educational undertakings
of the Saliclan Fathers.

Mussolini was eleven years of age when he left the school, and as
there still seemed no hope of making a blacksmith of him he was sent to a normal
school near home in a little town of Formapoli, close to Forli. Here too legends
of him are building up; here as elsewhere he is "His Excellency", and above
the entrance door of the present normal school building you read the legend:

"BENITO MUSSOLINI RESTORER OF OUR ITALY WAS GRADUATED FROM THIS
NORMAL SCHOOL ON THE EIGHTH DAY OF JULY 1901".

Here to they have their traditions of him; his old teachers are unanimous in
declaring him hard to control, studious, used to following his own will as to
what he studied, contemptuous of mere memorizing, fertile and inconvenient
questions and a tremendous reader (at Forli, up the highway was a public
library where he would spend hour after hour completely unconscious of time).

Mussolini was eighteen years old when he left the normal school
at Forli, a certificate entitling him to teach in primary schools in his pocket.
The next ten years of his life was spent in a hard and insistent struggle to
find satisfactory outlets for his energies, — a way to serve usefully the cause
of the poor which was now his. He was acutely conscious of his inexperience;
he wanted to see the world; to study with great teachers; to meet the revolutionary
youths of all countries. He had no money, but after a short experience as a
teacher, he determined to risk it; — made his way into Switzerland, where after
living by odd jobs, he learned the masons' trade as something useful wherever he would go. He claims to have been a good mason and his intimates tell of his interest in the trade today. "That is what I call work", he will say interestingly as he watches men raise a wall or chimney. His days were spent in labor, his nights in study and talk and he followed various courses in Universities, joined one after another of the different groups in the revolutionary cities - for Switzerland was full of radical refugees from different parts of Europe. More than once his activities and his associations causes his arrestes. (Mussolini claims to have served eleven terms in jail!) More than once he was put over the Swiss border as an undesirable. However it all contributed to his desire to see Europe -- to learn more of life.

After five years of this wandering and irregular existence, he went back to throw himself fully and violently into the socialist struggle. He first got his hands on to a kind of work for which he was entirely fitted when he became editor in Forli in 1910 of a little paper called "Class Struggle". There is much in that journal which is excessively violent, bombastic. That is his tempestuous and unsatisfied nature reflected itself all too frankly in his columns. But there is also a basis of reason, understanding and good sense that reveal what was in the mind which in time and experience might come out, many things which he might write today, -- He meant to keep his journal free he said, from that "sectarian, fanatical, Jacobean spirit" that characterized radical Socialism. He meant to keep it free also he said, from the materialism of Socialism. "Socialism", he wrote once, "is not a matter of merchandise or politics; it is not a romance or a sport; -- but a force for the moral and spiritual elevation of men and women." It sounds like some of his efforts today to define Fascism!

There are many other things to be gleaned from the little paper which belong to today. His continual appeals to men to act, not to calculate; but above all, not to leave out of their calculation the human element; not to
believe overmuch in the power of mere principles. "I prefer quality to quantity", he told his socialist followers one day. "We have a great organization, well disciplined, but we are poor in intelligence and superficial in culture"! His plain speaking; his rages; his hard criticisms soon had turned against him all of the radical element of the party; but he found followers; -- his voice began to be listened to beyond the confines of Forli. The whole of Romagna was interested, but the majority disapproved -- he was a heretic!

His energy; his ardor; his endless ambition made him dissatisfied with everything inside as well as outside his party -- the Socialists were too smug, he said, too content with their formulae; they talked too much--their interests seemed only in material things, wages, hours, -- Man did not live by Bread alone!! He counted education, cultivation; and to get it they must fight. The higher kind of life came only through struggle; -- if you resigned yourself, it meant torpor -- intellectual and spiritual death! The socialists lacked culture; did not understand Science; counted too much on principles -- he berated them incessantly with this talk, which shocked their vanity.

However by 1912 he found a chance for his fight, for he carried into the Annual National Socialist Congress his criticism and his idealism. He split the party at that Congress and came out on top! "A wonderful young man", one of those present wrote of him. "Spare of figure, fiery, most original, with occasional burst of eloquence -- a man with a future before him!" Which is about what the discerning in Predappio used to say of the boy.

Mussolini's victory at the Congress brought him to Milan where he was soon editing the leading paper of his party, "L'Avante" (The Future). He put a force into that sheet that soon brought its circulation up from forty thousand to one hundred thousand, and soon had the authorities of Milan about his ears so violent were his counsels! But his efforts at revolution although on a larger scale, succeeded in fact only a little better than that which he had attempted at Forli.

The most ambitious and the most wide-spread was the revolutionary attempt, which largely through Mussolini's efforts took place in June 1914.
It was an out and out attempt to overthrow the Government. In the revolutionary sense of Mussolini's own country, there was considerable of what is called direct action, seizures of town halls; destruction of town properties; but in most of the large cities the revolution went no further than a long continued general strike, a strike which gradually disintegrated.

Mussolini was learning the truth of what he had preached before, that it takes more than principles to carry on any kind of continuous action in the present world. I doubt if he really believed at this time that his revolution was to be a thorough and sweeping affair! Rather that the effort justified itself; that strikes and threats and violence were the only methods of stirring the lethargy of the Italians; these outbreaks would wake them up — put everybody on his mettle, struggle was healthy! If he could keep them fighting he was willing to accept defeat, and then came the Great War! Mussolini's involuntary cry to his newspaper when the news came was, "Down with War" — it was the theory of his party, but it is significant to note that while he taught neutrality, it was neutrality only in regard to the Central Powers! This is the way he put it, "Neither friends nor accomplices of Austria or Germany!"

If the Italian Government back them, then declared Mussolini, the proletariat must rise. That is he preached an attack from the rear on the Army of Italy if he went into the War on Germany's side. The terrible events of the first weeks of the War shook him! Whatever theories he may hold at a given moment, Mussolini never shirks facts — moreover he is clairvoyant in reading their meaning! What would happen to Italy if Austria, her ancient enemy was victorious? He was soon saying that he might be in favor of War if France, England and Belgium were in real danger! The party began to hoot him down. "War never", they said, "it is against our principles." "That may be", he told them, "but you are dealing today with facts."

He went through the fierce struggle for weeks, evidently weighing every possible phase of the situation. When Paris was finally threatened
he recapitulated, "Italy is in danger"! He told his readers, "We must support
the Allies!" Mussolini had found Principles, to his own surprise — that it was
his Country and not his Party that was the deepest passion of his heart. He
resigned his editorship of "L'Avante" and very promptly started a paper he called
the "People of Italy" (Il Popolo D'Italia)— its theme was intervention. He had
no money; but friends and fervent young followers, particularly these latter,
came flocking to him, and served him without pay. Seeing their ardor, Mussolini
formed in January 1915 (note that this is four years before he organized the
present Fascisti Party) what he called the "Fasci", a group committed to inter-
vention.

Italy did go into the War and a year after she entered, Mussolini's
class was called and he went to the front as a private. (A month later he was
shot to pieces by a bursting cannon causing forty-two wounds). He lived through
it but it made him unfit for further service in the ranks, so he attempted aviation
only to fall and become unfitted for that kind of service; and in 1919 he came
back to his paper. Mussolini would have been glad to have rejoined his party
at this time, but they would have nothing to do with him. He had been a traitor
to their doctrines they said; he countenanced War — even became a Soldier! But
it was this party which rejected him that now gave to him what proved to be the
fight of his life up to this point, at least gave him the opportunity to make
a revolution, if not exactly the revolution of what he had talked. The Socialists
had not only opposed the War but they had carried out the threat that Mussolini
made at the start, that is, that if Italy went into the War "That Italy would
kindle a back fire", but as we have seen, Mussolini had made a proviso for that
threat — if she went in on the side of Germany! Italy had not done that, she
had joined the Allies, but this made no difference to the Party — they were against
secretly
War as war and made no distinctions in wares; so promptly they began their attack/
on the Italian Army, — a cowardly kind of attack it was too, undermining the morale
of the ranks and openly that of the market place; and, as we know, because of their
efforts Italy was all but defeated in the War.
The War over, they kept up their hostilities which it would be hard to duplicate, even approach, in any country at any time after a War. What took place in Italy after the Army came back:—insolence and violence to officers and men; attacks on their homes and places of business; shutting them out of factories; estrangement of their families. A soldier, particularly a soldier with an Honor stripe was scarcely safe on the streets in many Italian towns. A considerable Communist element had joined the Party at this time, and considerable sums of money were said to be coming to it from Russia, to support an attempt to overthrow the Italian Government and Constitution and to substitute the Soviet Government.

It is interesting to speculate what Mussolini would have done if he had been taken back into the Party, under these conditions. We can be certain that he would have fought the attempt to dishonor the Army and its Victory. His experience in the ranks had made him a soldier heart and soul. Moreover, we would have been sure that he would have now fought the attack on Capital, although the viciousness of capital had been long one of his precious Doctrines. He had learned something in the War,—one thing was that without the co-operation given the Government by Capital, the War could not have been won. He had also come to understand the absolute need of discipline,—self-control, if men are to accomplish any difficult thing in the World. He must have realized by this time, only too well, that the revolutions he had fostered had failed largely because of the lack of proper discipline and leadership. He believed now that the revolution the Socialists were trying to force would fail. If there could be opposed to it a strong, united, well-lead front! So he set out to create that front! To arouse the country to resent actively, with guns and fists if necessary, the treatment the soldiers were receiving; to insist that returned officers and soldiers be given preference in factories and shops; that interference with industry and agriculture be ended; that there be no more fights; that class stop fighting class; that Italy come to order and go to work. To compel the things that were to be his long-talked-of
Revolution. A revolution which destroyed nothing which contributed to Italian production and which put an end to everything that disturbed it.

Of course this new kind of revolution required clever manipulation of his old teachings. How was this long time Foe, Capitalism to understand his present defense of it? This is what he said; "I do not intend to defend Capitalism or thing capitalists", he wrote. "They, like every human, have their defects. I only say that if their possibilities of usefulness are not yet ended. Capitalism has borne the monstrous burden of War, and still has the strength to shoulder the burdens of Peace today. It is not simply and solely an accumulation of wealth; it is an elaboration, a selection; a co-ordination of values which is the work of centuries. Many think, and I am one of them, that Capitalism is scarcely at the beginning of its story. Immense tracts of Asia, Africa, even America and Australia are still undeveloped. Capitalism, spreading from Europe, will cover the whole Earth. The Shoulders of the Proletariat are not yet strong enough to bear the terrific burden of civilizing such areas.

He supported his position by quoting what had happened in Russia.

"Truly Socialism has a history full of paradoxes. The first communized revolution - that of Russia - first proves its impotence, and then turns Society back on Capitalism." Still he did not leave the Proletariat without hopes. "The Proletariat", he said, "must follow in the wake of capitalists and in the given moment come to terms with them, dividing the spoils with them and sweeping aside the parasites, both right and left, who live on the margin of production"; which no doubt is what will happen unless Mussolini has something in that Peace Ship of his, which is going to be able to bring about gradually a proper division in all "spoils", but of honest earnings.

His old party on which he had declared War was more strongly entrenched in Italy than the outside World realized. There was considerable radical element in the Italian Socialist Party when the War broke out, after the Russian Revolution there was a strong Bolshevik addition bringing with it, it is believed,
their Soviet methods and a large sum of money. They were able to swing the Party to declare that its real object was a Soviet Government. By 1920 they had 156 representatives in Parliament and controlled nearly 2,000 municipalities, among them several big cities - Milan, Bologna, Palma. Where they were not in office they often terrified those who were, into submission. The Confederation of Labor was almost solidly Socialist, including many of the powerful agriculturalists' Cooperative Associations, particularly in Amelia and Romagna.

There was much violence in their activities, strikes were incessant, factories were seized; there were beatings and murders on every hand and the Government seemed incapable of any effective action in the interest of order. The Fascist attack on the Locards' students which begun in 1919 was bold, harsh, frequently brutal; they seized town halls throughout the Socialist Government. As all the Labor Headquarters beat and sometimes killed their opponents, so in several sections, their favorite Fascist punishment was giving great doses of Castor Oil which did not actually kill, it did worse, it made the victims permanently ridiculous to both friends and foes. Even today I have been told, let a man who has undergone this treatment rise in an assembly to make a speech, and there will be danger that some one will cry out "Castor Oil" - and it is all over with him! It has been said that the health of some of the victims was ruined by this sadistic method, but an able Doctor, and not a Fascist, living in a center where this punishment was common, assured me that this was not true. ("It was terrible while it lasted, and humiliating for life, but probably the health of all was improved, and I doubt if any were injured." This strange Civil War went on for two years. There are few towns in Italy that do not bear the marks of it. You come upon them in most unexpected places. Sight-seeing in Ravenna, I asked my cabby about a picturesque ruined tower. "All that is left of Byron's house", he told me, sorrowfully. "The Fascisti destroyed it!"
"And what", I asked, "had the Fascisti against Byron?"

"Nothing, Madame, but a Socialist Deputy lived there!"

The injuries and destruction in the towns can be traced, but it
is not so easy to take account of the destruction of life - the victims have
never been counted, probably never will be! The Fascists claim that they
lost two thousand of their numbers in less than two and one-half years! They
are held responsible for one thousand deaths, but nobody knows the truth! It
was a Mediaeval Warfare in which the victims counted little.

During all this period Mussolini was giving serious attention to
the labor problem. If they were successful, and he expected nothing else,
with what should they replace the Labor Unions? One comes continually on evidences
of the planning that was going on. Certain State Labor Laws were promised, an
eight hour day, a minimum wage, a share in management; better laws regarding
sickness and death insurance; - things that had long been talked of but never
quite realized. Mussolini, himself, made frequent speeches; the jist of these
was that there be a new order of things in Italy; that Class Warfare (remember
that the first paper that Mussolini edited was called "The Class Warfare") was
to cease. It was not the Fascisti belief that Society was improved by class
struggle; they had come to the conclusion that it was by what they called a
struggle of capacities that men moved upward. They were not going to countenance
any longer in Italy the attempts of the lower class to pull down those that were
higher. It was to work the other way. The lower were to struggle to climb up
and their advancement was to depend upon their ability. This sounds very like
our Democracy talk: - give every man a chance; let him compete freely with his
kind; let the best man win! All of Mussolini's labor speeches at this time
were punctured with blunt preachments against privilege, whether the talk was
to employers or employed, to capitalists or workers, it was the same. He assured
them that there was to be no favored class in the new regime. His talks to working
men sounds particularly harsh.
"I do not tell you, oh People, that you are as Gods" he said one day in Florence. "As I love you truly, so I should say to you that you are dirty; you must arise and cleanse yourselves, you are ignorant; therefore set yourselves to gain instruction. -- Horn hands are not enough to prove a man capable of guiding the State -- You can make a revolution in twenty-four hours; but you cannot in that time create a new Social Order for a nation which is part of the World Order".

While Mussolini and his colleagues were talking, they were organizing, -- organizing syndicates and Fascisti Labor Unions. By the time the Government in Rome was operating, there were probably one million laborers in the Fascisti Unions, many of them former Socialists.

Mussolini left them in no doubt as to what this new association meant; it made them part of the Nation; a cooperating supporting part; he put it to them without any words they could not fail to understand.

"The workers", he told them, "have thought they could keep outside of the life of the nation." "That is a great mistake. The workmen are a live and integral part of the nation. They must be respected, defended, and helped. But my Government is very strong and has no need to beg for your support from all sides. It does not seek for such support, but, on the other hand, it does not refuse it. If the workmen offer their support, we will accept it; but there must be a clear understanding to avoid delusions in the future.

"I speak to you at this moment not as the head of the State, but as a man who understands you well and whom you understand -- a man who weighs you accurately and who knows what you can do and what you must not be allowed to do."

"I do not descend from illustrious and aristocratic forefathers. My ancestors were peasants who worked the land. My father was a blacksmith who bent red hot iron on the forge, and I, as a little boy, had to help him in his hard and humble work. Now I have a harder task, to bend the souls of
men. I have been a navvy and a stonemason. I tell you this, not to win your sympathy, but to show you that I am not and cannot be an enemy of the people who work."

"I am, however, the enemy of those who, in the name of false and grotesque doctrines, try to mystify the working men and drag him down to ruin."

"My Government is not a mere bureaucratic administration. It will act in the interests of the workers when those interests are just."

"In all its actions the Government will keep in mind these fundamental principles."

"The nation exists, even if one tries to destroy it, because it is an imperishable reality."

"Production must be stimulated. To produce much and well is the interest of the workman as well as of the capitalist; if production ceases, and if our products do not find a place in the markets of the world."

"All the just interest of the working classes must be safeguarded."

"Deeds count more than words. You will have the means of verifying what I have said."

A program was soon put out. It was based on the ideas they had been laying down; every form of production recognized; cooperation between all classes; no privileges; no recognition of persons who were not making a useful contribution to the State; down with speculators, particularly the speculators in money. It took four years of persistent work to complete the structure on which they were aiming, so that you could find your way about in it; and even now, I must confess, that when I go up and down Mussolini's Peace Ship, trying to understand its plan and how it is to run, I frequently find myself bewildered, sometimes lost, as I do when I go over a great ocean liner.

But the scheme is all down on paper and one can, by a little imagination, see what it proposes. To make it clear, apply the plan to our
own country. Under Mussolini's scheme what would happen to us? We would no longer be recognized by the National Government as now; as merely political units - voters. We would be recognized primarily for the contribution we made to the Nation's prosperity. We would all automatically and immediately be divided into groups according to our occupations, and if we did not have an occupation we would be outcast. There would be thirteen classes of us recognized; --the manufacturers one, their employees another, agriculturists one, their employees another, the merchants one, their clerks and accountants another, Sea and Air transportation one, Sailors and Aviators and all connected with them another, land and inland water transportation one, their employees another, bankers one, their workers another. This makes twelve and the thirteenth and last of the recognized groups that we would have in American life would be that of professional people and artists, lumped together.

But this division into categories is only the beginning of the organization. In each of these allied groups, manufacturing, for instance, Guilds are formed, made up of representatives of all branches of the industry, manual, technical, managerial, financial. These Guilds have a legal status, and are supposed to make labor contracts to look after the interests of everybody connection with the industry; they may be local, State-wide, National. All those Guilds, whether in the manufacturers', the Bankers', the Railway men's or the Artists' World, are accepted but these unite into a federation, and these federations in turn form confederations. After the confederations, come the head of the pyramid, which was put in only last August. That is the Department of Ministry of Corporations in the Government; the Chief is Mussolini himself.

The new Bureau has been exceedingly busy since it was formed. All over Italy people have been knitting their brown over the plan trying to find their particular berth. What they must do as productive units to be recognized by the Government, have its protection. Guilds and Federations
and Confederations have been forming rapidly, and as all of them must stand 
the examination as to their fitness and patriotism by some higher Power, before 
they are recognized, there has been as much hectic activity in Italy's occupa-
tional circles as in ours, when the Government sends its agents to find out how 
we are running our business.

As the scheme is working out, it is apparent that your importance 
as a citizen will depend in Italy upon what you produce, not on your vote. The 
Fascists hold that an increase in wheat is more valuable than an election won, 
a good manufacturer more desirable as a citizen than the most acute politician, 
a skilled mechanic higher than a town boss.

The real test of Mussolini's corporate state depends upon what it 
does in the factory and the field. There is where the war between socialist 
and fascist centered. Can it bring order and peace there? The Fascisti began 
to organize labor before the MARCH ON ROME. Mussolini is not depending however 
on mere organization securing peace between labor and capital. He has provided 
laws -- drastic laws -- They were passed in the Spring of 1926, and are now, 
six months later, in full swing. They are applied within the frame of Guilds 
and Federations and Confederations, which I have described, but the application 
is at least partially local, for an excellent feature of the Corporate State 
is that it aims to give full play to localities in labor matters. It recognizes 
that the conditions under which an industry is carried on in one place are 
different from those in another and that an attempt by the Corporate State to lay 
down regulations, fix wages, and prices and hours for all Italy as National 
Trade Unions do, would ruin more than one industry, give unfair advantage to 
another. So they give latitude to the local associations which the employer 
and employee must form if they are to have a legal place in the new State. 
The Law provides that the manufacturers of a locality who employ up to 1/10 
of the labor in an industry, can form an association which, if the Government 
is satisfied as to the ability, honesty and patriotism of its leaders, will
be the recognized representative of the industry in that Section — 1/10 of the laborers can also form an association to be recognized on the same terms. What these associations agree upon, the whole industry of the territory must accept. Their decisions take the form of contracts with all the legal safeguards and enforcements of contracts; i.e., nothing is left at loose ends in the agreement made. The law requires them to collaborate in fixing wages, hours, and conditions, if they cannot agree, they must appeal to the Guilds over them for help, or ask for the arbitration which existing laws provide. If they fall into dispute, the matter is referred to a Labor Court. For the new laws have created within the Court of Appeal a Labor Section made up of three magistrates and two industrial experts, which is expected to take care of all disputes and infractions of the Law brought before it.

The right to appeal to force has been taken away from both employer and employed; the strike and the lock-out are out-lawed in Mussolini's new State. If there or more laborers combine to force changes by quitting work or in any way disturbing the regularity of production, they can be fined from one hundred to one thousand lire and imprisoned for from one to two years. If an employer shut down to force acceptance of changes in wages, hours or conditions, he can be fined from ten thousand to one hundred thousand lire and also imprisoned for from one to two years. The decisions of the Labor Courts must be accepted, else there are fines and imprisonments for the recalcitrant.

There are other things that these organizations are required to do by Law. Employers must consider the health and well-being of the workers. They must carefully cooperate with various laws — excellent ones concerning maternity and infancy, that have been recently passed; provide opportunities for recreation, education, training.

Now this of course makes a very large machine when carried from the bottom up, and such a machine costs money. This is provided for by the ruling that every worker may contribute annually to his syndicate, not more than one day's pay. This is withheld from his wages, paid over by the
employer -- that is, it is the "check off" which our miners fight for and we generally regard as un-Democratic. The Law requires also that every employer shall contribute annually not more than a day's wage scale; -- that is, if this were in Detroit, each of Mr. Ford's workers could be obliged to put down Five Dollars or more a year, and Mr. Ford a day's wage for each of his Seventy-five or One Hundred Thousand workers! You can see that when this collection is made from the whole industry of a country, the Corporate State is going to have a very large working fund! However, there are regulations, concerning expenditures of these funds intended to prevent graft and abuse, the of which might be using the money for political and not industrial purposes.

A brave and so far as one can see from the surface, a cheerful attempt is being made in Italy to make the Corporate State a success. It is to the great industrial centers that one should go if he is to see how the provisions for the relations of the employer and the employed are working out. Genoa, Turin, Milan, are the towns in which the results are the most significant; not only because they are the greatest of Italy's industrial towns, but also because they are the most modern. At every turn in them, one is reminded of America and her industrial activities. There are the same crowded streets, the same sense of big business in the last, the same noise. Then too, these cities give the best chance to compare the industrial situation of five or six years ago with that which has resulted from the Fascisti regime.

Ancient Genoa, a great ship-building and trading port, six years ago was in a state of complete demoralization. Nothing went in or in an orderly fashion. Strikes were incessant; transportation irregular; the port was losing its hold. It was one of the points at which the Fascisti early asserted themselves. Business men in Genoa tell you stories of going to their offices in those days, to find the corridors full of guards of one side or the other; they point out the marks of bullets on the walls; it was the usual state of
The only labor group in Genoa that went through the period without disturbance of mind and activity seems to be that remarkable organization, the "Caravanas" of the bonded warehouse or porte franc. The Caravanas, so far as I know, is the oldest labor organization in the world; the only one that for 700 years, (it was founded in 1540) has never left its duties.

Its origin is obscure. Some say that it came into being when there was a general strike in Genoa, and certain men from the town of Bergamo went ahead with their duties. After the trouble was over, Genoa gave them as a reward a monopoly of the work in the bonded warehouse, or porte franc, and very important it was at that time, she being one of the greatest ports of the World.

Another more appealing explanation is that when in the 14th Century, Genoa was striken with cholera, and people lay dying in the streets, and the dead were unburied in the streets, certain men of Bergamo heard of her plight came over the mountain and for weeks devoted themselves to her care. When it was over Genoa passed an ordnance saying that henceforth the work of the porte franc should be given only to men born in Bergamo and they turned out to be most trustworthy of workers.

Of course the merchandise which was in their care was of immense value, coming as it did from Oriental ports to be transferred to Northern cities. The Caravanas, as the men came to be called, took an oath of honesty and fidelity, which they say has rarely been broken by one of them in all these 700 years. If a Genoese wishes to emphasize his belief in a man's honesty, he can do it in no better way than to call him a Caravana.

Such was the honor that came to be attached to the position, that the wives of the members of the Caravana are said frequently to have crossed the mountains on foot that their sons should come into the world.

In 1848 the first break was made in the native born Bergamese monopoly of the order; the Council of Genoa passing an ordnance opening the position to
Genevese, but it is generally the Bergamese born in Genoa who
into the old monopoly.

Of course time has changed many things in the government of the
bonded warehouse. For instance, one of the oldest laws is that no woman,
priest or soldier shall pass its doors; but in August a request from the
United States Consul took me into the secret precincts. But the Caravana
remains the same. They wear today, as 700 years ago, a short plaited kilt
skirt over their trousers, the distinguishing mark of which they are very
proud. They keep a record of their activities dating back to the 14th
Century, the earlier ones bound in vellum, and frequently illuminated by
these of their members who possessed artistic ability. They treasure their
privileged place in all civic festivals. But best of all, they keep their
character, and these men who have always kept aloof from politics are now
the most loyal and outspoken of Fascisti; indeed no one in Genoa uses the
Fascist salute more constantly. They seem to see in Fascism preachings of
discipline, order and labor something akin to their own notions of the
fidelity a man should give to his task.

There would be little danger of the new laws governing the employers
and employed not succeeding in Genoa, if the spirit and loyalty of the
Caravana went into their administration. The question is whether the spirit
of fascism will be as effective. So far it has been. The industries of the
city are fully organized, as the laws provided they have chosen their leaders;
they have taken up their problems as they came, working them out together. They
must work them out, or submit to the higher authorities for settlement, since
they can no longer try to force one another by a strike or lockout. So far
I was assured, there had been no breaks; no acute situations, though it had
taken weeks of hard work in all the industries for the two sides to adjust all
the various points of difference so that they were acceptable, but they worked
through it.
Turin, which went through some of the most tragic industrial experiences in the period from 1810 to 1922, is also thoroughly organized. The town is important in Italy's economic war, for here you find brilliant exhibits of her attempt to strengthen certain points in which she is poorly equipped for the industrial struggle. Take the matter of coal. Twenty-five or thirty years ago, Italy wakened up to the fact that if she had no black coal, it might be possible that she could replace it by what she calls "white coal," that is, that she could get electric power from the inexhaustible supplies of water which fall continuously from the high Alps on her Northern border, as well as from pouring down the Apennines at certain times of the year. Since that time hydro-electric plants have one after another been established in various parts, particularly of the North.

In the last few years these plants in the north have been rapidly consolidating into what is very like an American trust -- the SIP it is called (Societa Idroelettrica Piemonte). The SIP is made up of three groups, these producing and distributing electricity; the telephone group; and a third manufacturing electric and telephone supplies. It is capitalized at 600,000,000 Lires, and such is the confidence in the management that it has been able recently to secure a large loan in the United States. SIP is ambitious to furnish all the electric power used in Northern and Central Italy and a look at a map of the scattered power-producing plants, gives one the conviction that it will in time do it. They gather the water that pours down a score or more valleys from the eternal snows of the Alps, from Piedmonte in the West to the Trentine in the East. The most important group of plants is that of Piedmont, with its center at Turin, and the most interesting and most recent of its many picturesque installations is that on Mount Genis. Just below the border between France and Italy on the road over Mount Genis, the most famous of all mountain roads, a great lake has been built to store water. Its surface lies 6400 feet above the level of the sea and its content is 1,050,000,000 cubic feet. Four thousand
Six hundred and fifty feet below this lake in the Valley of Susa, the first big plant for using the Mount Genis water was opened four years ago. A quart of water falling from the lake, through the great steel tubes that run down almost perpendicularly will produce eight kilowatts of the power. They care for it on Mount Genis as we care for coal. The lake's overflow is used at relay plants on its way down - at one point overflow water caught in a small manufactured lake is pumped up the mountains - the power obtained by the extra fall paying several times over the cost of the operation.

The principal station of the plant is one of the prides of S.I.P. Everything about the place is amazing in its size. Its turbines, transformers and alternators are the greatest in Europe, so the young enthusiastic engineer, who shows you about tell you, and he adds that all were made in Italy, and to prove it points to the Milanese trademarks. The only thing that I could see that came from America was the oil for the baths, in which all this huge machinery must operate - there are amazing quantities of it! A transformer does its work in a bath of 18 tons of oil, they told me.

The importance of this tremendous power development is appreciated if you go into Turin's great automobile factory, the Fiat. In the making of that famous automobile, and also in the multitude of allied products, railroad supplies, metal work of all sorts; tanks; tractors; Diesel engines, and even aeroplanes, the only power used is that generated by these waters which fall from the top of Mt. Genis. Not a pound of black coal, only white. The ambition of Turin is that she should never have to use coal in any form, and in her great artificial silk works, the greatest of their kind in the world, it is I think, a real trial that you should see in their yards, heaps of coals marked "Ruhr" "Sarre","Inghilterra". To keep the moisture necessary for the spinning of the silk, nothing but steam will do, but the hydro-electric people tell you hopefully that the day will come when Italy will have enough electricity to use for heat.
There are other interesting exhibits in Turin of the attempt to escape from the Industrial limitations nature has put on Italy. She has no iron or at least not enough to count in her needs, if she is to use iron as other nations are using it. It has become accepted that modern factory buildings should have iron frames. The new factories in Turin, and I have never seen finer ones anywhere, have no iron in them. They are solid concrete structures. The great Fiat automobile factory over 600 feet long, and something like 500 wide, is a solid concrete building. It is very interesting to see how the Italian factory builders never fail to put on these structures original distinguishing touches. Many of them have introduced hitherto unthought of devices for carrying out more perfectly the requirements of the business. The Fiat factory has a feature which is just as interesting as the leaning tower of Pisa. I use that comparison because I came to it from looking for the first time at the famous tower, and I found the Fiat undertaking much more exciting.

On the top of this great five-story building, they have laid out a tract for testing cars, which is about 3500 feet in length, and about 150 in width. This track makes at the end a turn which is at a startling angle, giving a chance for testing both the climbing and descending capacity of the car. To reach the tract you are sent up a winding corkscrew staircase, fully half a mile in length. Every car turned out from the factory make make a run of 25 times round this amazing track. We have nothing that approaches this in America; nothing so daring, so original; and nothing I must say, so hair-raising. No automobile race could be more fast and furious than some of the driving on this aerial test track, looking out over the great plains of Piedmont, and on the distant Alps.

Now these great industrial undertakings are all working under Mussolini’s new syndical system. They have come into this complicated, and hard and fast order after exciting experience in the loosest industrial organization — disorganization is a better word — that Italy ever say. Turin workers
of 1919 were as a body socialist, and in their number there were enough communist leaders to persuade the mass of men that it was possible for them to take over the industrial plants of the town and run them.

All of the concerns which I have mentioned, the hydro-electric, the silk industry, the Fiat, were taken with more or less violence, depending upon the resistance of the owners which indeed was not great; not having any help from the local authorities, which were largely in sympathy with the workers, or from the Government which was impotent in the situation, they surrendered the plants. The men went in seemingly with the idea that it would be a simple matter for them, the men and women who did the heavy labor, the fetching and carrying, the tending of machines, to conduct the whole. They took over the artificial silk industry, a mysterious operation where sheets of paper pulp turned into a liquid by a succession of chemical treatments, baths, pressings, filtrations, coagulates, upon the application of an acid blowen into it, into tiny silken threads. It is magical to see these glistening threads rising out of the water. Of course the process depends upon the most careful application of chemical formula, and these formula are secret.

At the end of two days the workers came in acbody to the owners of the plant confessing that there was something there which they did not understand, and would they please take back the plant. From that date to this, the industry has run with little trouble, and today it is fully organized under the new system, and apparently everybody is satisfied.

Probably nowhere in Italy was there a more spectacular seizure, or one so long continued as that of the Fiat works. One hears different tales of this episode. It seems to be a fact that the men were prepared to take the factory by violence, and to hold it by violence. There is no question that large numbers of them believed that when they took over the works they would take over large sums of money. It is not possible that all of their
leaders, among whom were many intelligent socialists could have shared this view. The capital of the Fiat was at that time something like Two hundred million lire, and the money would be at their command, the workers said. I have been told that one of their first operations was to open the safes of the Fiat offices where to their disappointment, there was no money. They shared the notion, so common among uneducated workers, that capital is money, money in the safe or the bank. They never visualize it as buildings, machinery, stock, supplies.

As long as the materials on hand lasted, the works were run, and a few cars were turned out, but they could not sell them, purchasers fearing suit by the owners. Soon they found themselves without supplies, and no money to buy them, no money to pay one another. They issued tickets to the workers, with which to buy breast, but finally their credit was exhausted. After a certain length of time, and here my informers differ, two weeks, a month, the leaders sent work to the former directors of the concern that they would like to meet them. They had taken the factory by violence, but according to the take that was told me by one who was closely related to the enterprise they returned it in calm dignity. The owners and board appeared in the Board Room by appointment. In the chair of the President sat the leader of the workers; "We find," he said to them, "that we are not yet ready to carry on these works, we return them in as good order as we took them over, but remember, we shall come back." and he left the room.

When the astonished board came to look about, they found it was true; the factory was in perfect order, perfectly clean; the only change that they had introduced was in the Board Room. Where formerly there had hung the picture of the King of Italy, there now was hanging a picture of Lenin.

It is only five years since this episode and scores similar to it in various industrial towns; not only in northern and central Italy, but sporadically as far south as Naples; yet today as you go about, you see no signs of disorder, discontent or rebellion. To be sure, the communist leaders, so far as they are known, have been imprisoned or deported. To be sure, strong Fascisti groups exist
in all the factories and outside there is a Fascisti Government, a Fascisti Army ready to act on the moment. Moreover the difficulty in citing to rebellion would be great, for no workmen's publications are allowed that do not support the new order; no gatherings are allowed that criticize the new order; it is unwise, at least, to talk revolutionary doctrines to your best friend. That is, all the machinery which formerly kept the workman on edge, has been suppressed.

What is he getting in return for his suppression of free communication and for the taking away of his power to strike when he is dissatisfied? He is getting something at least, of that for which he formerly struck; he has an eight hour day; - true, the Law has been modified to permit nine hours when the employer can show that his industry requires it, - and the employer must satisfy the representative of the workers that this is true. He has a spokesman to protect his interests at all points, and this spokesman has a standing before his employer as the old labor leader did not. The employers' representative is obliged to recognize him; listen to him; bargain with him. The law plays no favorites in this representation, and if the representatives cannot agree, the worker, like his employer has the Labor Court to which to appeal.

If he cannot strike to bring the employer to his terms, the employer cannot close down to bring him to his terms. The punishment in case either breaks the law is fitted to their relative power to pay; the employers being one hundred times as large as the workers. He cannot be dismissed without reason, but if there is reason he must go. One large factory I visited found itself last summer with four thousand more men on its rolls than it could supply with work. The situation was presented to the workers and they left without a murmur, the country was calling for harvesters and they easily found places. But the point is, they were shown why the factory had not the work and they were not sent off without explanations, as is so often the case. Wages have improved everywhere under this system. This is due no little to Mussolini's insistence.
If you are not fair the Government will act, -- industry will be protected, but so shall the workers be; -- you must divide justly. But even with the improvement, the wage is so low that one wonders how they manage with the increase of living! They could not do it, if the Italians as a race had not carried the art of living decently on a pittance to a point which I doubt if any other nation has reached, -- certainly none has excelled it! One of the constant comments that I heard from tourists in Italy when the question of the poverty of the nation, or the low wage came up, was that they cannot be so poor and manage to dress so well! But you have here part of the art, Italian woman as a rule are skillful with their needle, they make out of scraps that we in America would throw into our ragbag, garments that have at least the merit of tidiness. Motor through the little country hamlets north and south, where people are crowded into one or two low dark rooms, and you will find that, difficult though it is, by the afternoon things have been made tidy, the children have been made clean and the women are sitting outside with the embroidery, sewing or knitting, because particularly all of them combine with their other labors, some form of handicraft, -- and very beautiful it is sometimes! -- dear enough in price when it gets to us! For it these girls and women are glad to receive a few cents.

One healthy and natural effect of this fuller collaboration of employing and employed classes is that it has aroused in many of the former a growing concern about living conditions. You find them reckoning how a man can live on what they are paying. "We pay our houseman thirty lire a day," a serious young lawyer told me in one place, and my wife and I have been trying to figure out how it is possible for him and his family of four to live on that amount. We are very much worried about it, and we have to figure ourselves so closely that we do not see how we can pay more." This kind of scrutiny of living conditions is much more common in Italy I am convinced than it has been ever before, -- and it has been made so by the new scheme!
The worker is going to enjoy too, greatly improved working conditions. The law requires employers to provide opportunity for recreation, for education, for safety, insurance, better housing. How all of these things have been long talked of in Italy. The big employers like Pirelli in Milano have long been doing much in these directions, but it is only big and enlightened ones that have made modern working conditions a part of their labor policy. Now everybody is forced to look after these matters and you see some very interesting things going on, -- lunch rooms where from eight to twelve cents you get what outside would cost you fifty, fine tennis courts, reading rooms, creche for the little ones while the mother is working, schools for the children and apprentices, all sorts of clubs, among them Alpine clubs with quarters provided for week end. There seems to be large latitude, the activities following the particular needs of the group of workers. One worth-while gain to the worker in this closer association is a certain amount of economic education. If he ever again takes over the factories, he will not break open the safe expecting to find the capital within in dollars and cents; that is, gradually under this system he will get a more or less clear idea of the functioning of the capitalistic system of the real meaning of the words capital and profits, an education, which if the employer were as wise as he thinks himself to be, he would long ago have given the worker.

It is not to be expected that these thousands of men and women who are going ahead with their tasks so peacefully are all convinced that they are getting a fair deal under the Fascisti order. One wonders as he tramps up and down the factories, just what is going on behind their tired faces. It is not reasonable to suppose that they have all been converted to Fascism because Fascism is in power. That a large number of them have been, is certain. There are many enthusiastic labor supporters of the new order but there are also not a few who accept it, but tell you sometimes "I am still a Socialist". But steady work, with better wages and under better conditions than they have had
for years, quiet after the horrors of War and the up-roar that followed War, is a welcome and quiet change for all but the most violent. They are getting a chance they have not had for a long time, — to go safely up and down the streets, to take their beer peacefully on the side-walks after the day's work, to enjoy their Sunday excursions and picnics — after all, life is more than politics.

And how about the employers? I found no enthusiasm for Mussolini's Peace Ship among them, but everywhere an apparently sincere declaration that they intended to do their utmost to make it a success. Some of them tell you it is costing them much more to run their works. One big concern estimates it is increased at 35%. "Of course", my informer said, "this means in the long run, cutting dividends and increases in prices to the consumer.

Some of them complain of not being able to dismiss summarily an unsatisfactory workman. "It is bad for the shop", they tell you, "to know that a man can shirk and still keep his place." But they generally admit it is better to err on that side than have men at the mercy of irritable or unjust managers.

They rejoice in the steady production, that comes from outlawing the strike. It is giving them a chance to regain what they lost in the years of disturbance, to again pay dividends, but they feel their restrictions. "The men have more power than we have," one employer told me ruefully, "But I think it is just that they should have", he added.

The fairness of the employers attitude toward the workers, their seemingly honest attempt to make the Corporate State a success is one of the hopeful features of the Great Experiment. For an experiment it is, — this Peace Ship of Mussolini, — and so everybody admits it to be. Always in talking with those interested in it, this word is used, and you are told repeatedly "We do not know whether we can make it work or not, but we are going to do our best." This is what you hear from those at the top in Rome, engaged in handl-
ing the undertaking. They sometimes seem to me to be a little puzzled as to the
meaning of their own work.

But the hopeful thing is that they are quite frank in telling you
that they probably will make many mistakes, but that they hope to catch them as
soon as they are made, and to correct them? That they are quite willing to
change, and change until their creation does function properly.

In this they are following Mussolini himself who of all men is the
quickest to change an opinion or a method if he sees he is wrong. His critics
charge him with inconstancy. "You said so and so in 1914, so and so last week,
you do not know what you do think." He is quite imperturbably under these
charges. "I am a very different man from what I was in 1914, I have progressed,
I have been experiencing Life, studying men, I know more, try to know more every
day, and I change my views as often as I find it necessary in order to fit them to
my larger knowledge." This is about the gist of his answers.

Nothing argues better for the final success of the Peach Ship than
just this willingness to treat it as a builder would, taking time to plan (they
took four years before they made their final announcement of their Corporate
State) subjecting each part to the test of experience, correcting carefully,
supervising eternally. If the Fascisti Government were treating their Corporate
State as a finished product, something perfect that could not be criticized or
be modified, there would be good reason to /more skeptical about its future, but so
long as Mussolini insists that it be treated as a new experiment, something new
in the World, and therefore something to be handled carefully, there is hope
for it. And if it succeeds? What then? Why then the present monopolistic
power of politicians is cut under. It will be divided with the productive
forces of the Nation may possibly replace them entirely in Italy; though if
that should happen, the Corporate State in the long run would probably turn
out to be no better than the political State has proved itself to be.
Can Mussolini handle what he has undertaken? Of course he is allowed to live out his natural life, something which his communist enemies seem determined he shall not do. What are his qualifications for the task he has put his hand to? So far we have seen him as a revolutionist; a revolutionist of immense force -- energy, but to bring this Peac Ship of his into port is going to take something more, -- endless patience, attention to detail, faith! Has Mussolini these qualities.