NOTES ON SYNDICALISM

One gets the impression that Mussolini and his followers have felt as a physician must when he gets hold of a human body in which the muscles are atrophied, where there are lesions which must be broken up if there is to be free circulation of the blood. The Italian body politic had various institutions which had become, one may say, set so that they were not permitting altogether free circulation. The labor unions, strong bodies which undoubtedly had done much service in one way or another for their members, had become strongly socialistic, and in the years just following the war, out and out communist. The Fascists seemed to feel that they must find some other form of labor organization, get a new name, in order to break up the old organization which, to their point of view, was interfering with law and order. It was one of their leaders, a man by the name of Rossoni, that suggested that a form of the Middle-Age Guild, to be called a Syndicate, be substituted for the Trades Unions. There had been considerable talk about the possibility of organizing all productive agencies into syndicates. It had been talked of ever since D'Annunzio took hold of Fiume. He divided his population into syndicates, so the idea was in the air. Even before the march on Rome the Fascist syndicate was beginning to take hold and it was said that by the end of 1922 there were at least a million factory and farm laborers in this form[illegible]zation. But the Fascists went farther. They said from the start that the problem of peaceful industry was [illegible] the elements in it should recognize one another as [illegible] Capitalists big and little were essenti[illegible]ential;

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supervisors or managers, engineers, were all as necessary as the laborers, and that where the trade union in its later radical form fell down was in denying that these other factors in production were essential. The communists saw them of course as out and out parasites. Moreover, the Fascists with he the idea that has persisted in industry for many years now, and that was the laborers and those over them, no matter what their function, whether it was directing, financing, marketing, were essentially enemies. The Fascists said no, they could not be that since they were all essential to achieving the one end of industry, which was production, a way had got to be found in which all these essential elements could work together. What they proposed was to bring the representatives of these elements in each industry in each locality into syndicates; that is, there would be a managers' syndicate, an engineers' syndicate, a workers' syndicate; and these local syndicates should be joined into federations, so as to have each element properly recognized by all the elements co-ordinated and co-operative.

They set down among the first things they proposed their system should fight that there should be no privileges to any one of the classes represented, no privileges to capital, but no privileges to labor, and this right away cut out a large number of subsidies and financial attentions that certain socialistic groups had received. For instance, the agricultural co-operative socities had been receiving very large sums. The Fascists said no, that that was a privilege. They must stand on their own feet. No parasites of any kind were to be recognized. The person who did not work was an outcast practically, according

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to the system. They were very severe in the comments on speculators of all sorts, particularly the speculators in money. They declared that war materials should be manufactured by the Nation in order that there might be no attempt by individuals to foster war, no speculation in war materials as there had been.

An interesting idea that they had from the start was that all these productive agencies--the technical, financial, managerial, labor--should be tied up with the political agencies, represented with them. There was to be full encouragement of class co-operation. There were to be labor contracts, obligatory arbitration, and all sorts of legislation for the protection of the rights of labor, and they proposed, too, that somehow they must create what they called a well disciplined collective industrial conscience.

This very interesting program was forst published about four months after the march on Rome. There was a frank admission that it was more or less inchoate, but there was also a determined announcement that they proposed to work it out. Only a few days after the march on Rome the Fascist syndicates held their first conference and laid down their program. This conference affirmed what the Fascists had been talking about during the preceding months and that was that the dynamic law of civil history does not consist of warfare between classes, and it went on to say that the real law which pushes society ahead is what it called the "struggle of capacities"; that there should be an organization which would permit a lower group which would acquire the capacity to do something better than it was doing, that is, to get into a higher class, to have the chance, but in no case should the lower class in struggling upward attempt to pull the upper class downward, which

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of course was a knock at Russia and the general revolutionary program of getting up by throwing some one or other out of the place which you wanted. Your advancement should depend entirely upon your proved capacity. You should never go up unless you had proved you were fit to go up, which really seems to be a very sound and sensible doctrine. But how was it to be put into laws & into organizations which would work & how were the people trained to class warfare. (M. himself being been one of their teachers.) trained in spoke to rule by nature to be brought to understand &

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