

One Vast National Trade-Union—Germany

By Forcing All Workers to Join One Great Organization, Hitler Has Mobilized Not Only Labor, But Capital, Including Owners and Managers, Behind His Industrial Program



An army with shovels "presents arms"

A **SOCIALIST** Workers' Government has achieved a workers' revolution in Germany without resorting to, tho in some respects it approximates, Communism. Adolf Hitler has done it by wiping out all class privileges and class distinction, but the economic foundation of property rights and private capital has been left almost intact—for the present, at least.

Within a year Hitler has virtually won the unanimous support of that group which to-day is shaking and threatening the foundations of almost every other older form of government in our industrialized civilization—the organized working class.

The Reich, under Hitler, has wiped out corporate trade-unionism by forcing all workers to join one great government union, the National Socialist Union of Employers and Workers. The name is significant in that it is compulsory for employers, as well as workers, to belong to the same group. With 20,000,000 members, it is the largest trade-union in the world.

Together with its family associate members, it claims an actual paid membership of 30,000,000. Where formerly there were 1,600 separate unions, there now is a single organization divided into eighteen elementary groups such as chemistry, coal, iron, etc. According to official figures, fees paid by workers have been reduced 60 per cent., while benefits accrued by worker-members have increased 200 per cent.

Virtually every plant, factory, shop, or establishment is run by the workers who appoint their own spokesmen to meet with the owners or their representatives and discuss operation, hygiene, safety, welfare, and complaints. Wider measures governing wages and the welfare of labor are determined in the higher councils with

Socialist Workers

representatives from capital, labor, and the Government sitting in.

In this new workers' world in Germany almost all the emphasis has been laid on the social status and welfare of the worker: the business of eradicating the old lines which formerly divided capital and labor socially. The battle of wage-fixing has not been the paramount issue in Germany. Wages seem appallingly low in the Reich compared with those in America, but while I have talked with scores of German workers, no complaint has been uttered concerning the low wages. "If we all pull together," I was told, "higher wages will come." At present they average from \$1 to \$2 a day.

Before the Hitler Reich, the center of labor unrest and Communistic agitation in Germany was in the industrial regions of the Ruhr: Bochum, Dortmund, Essen, Solingen-Hagen.

I visited many plants in these districts where violence and terror reigned right up to the time Hitler was elected Chancellor in 1933. Had any of these workers been



The banner of the official state labor service



Coming up to sunlight after a day in the Ruhr coal-mines

Socialist Workers

Communists? I asked. Yes, one of them had. Why had he become converted to National Socialism? Because Hitler had given him everything Communism had promised: now he could speak to the boss when he liked, and the boss always spoke to him. He was no longer considered the underdog.

It wasn't until I had attended some of the great get-together meetings of owners, bosses, workers, and their families that I realized the significance of labor under Hitler. These gatherings are held regularly. At one of them 4,500 steel-workers and their families filled the once-palatial *festhalle* of the Park Pavilion in Bochum. I sat in the great room containing the stage with 800 workers and their families. Everyone was served with beer and wine, and entertainment was provided by talent drawn from nearly every branch of the great steel-works. After the variety show was over, the boss got up and read his address of welcome, which amounted to a call to arms to rally around the Fatherland. The inevitable "Heil, Hitler!" rang out with tremendous enthusiasm.

This sort of meeting is representative of others that are being held in every industry throughout Germany. They do not emphasize that the workers are the bosses as in Communism, but that the bosses also are workers.

Secret meetings, universal suspicion, and bloody battles have died out in the mines. Bosses no longer are hated. The miners get about \$1.50 a day, and apparently are happy to get it.

How was Hitler ever able to get this indisputable hold over the major forces of the German people in such a short time and on the eve of what threatened to be a civil war?

It was one of the great coups of opportunity. It is explained in the love of the Fatherland above all other things. The lack of unity in Germany for the last decade was Hitler's chance. It was his promises, and his clever way of presenting his program of National Socialist unity that made the majority hail him as a leader who would give them a united Germany.

The whole thing has become to them an almost religious movement akin to the bands of tub-thumpers and Mad Mullahs of a New Religion. Everywhere are to be found the marching, singing armies, ranging from tots of six to limping old men, flaunting their brown shirts, forever reiterating "All for the worker," and "Heil, Hitler"