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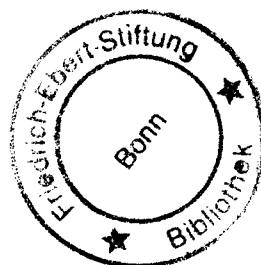
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Trade Unions and the Fate of Europe.

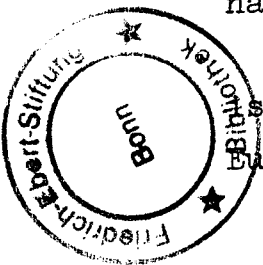
by Heinrich Schliestedt.

Europe, for some years past, has been writhing in convulsions, peoples and countries have been staggering upon the precipice of war which is threatening to swallow up mankind. Into this whirlpool of such events the trade-unions are drawn, too, for they can no longer be separated from the fate of their nations, from the destiny of Europe. The solution of the European confusion decides, with it, the fate of the working-class for a long time to come and, hence, the trade-unions are forced to express their attitude in these matters. They are the representatives of the working-class in their social- economic and cultural demands and the fulfilment of these is connected with the fate of the countries and nations.

The trade-unions, everywhere, in recognizing their international solidarity with the other trade-unions have given allegiance to their people; they make a stand for maintaining and giving security of the State and wherever these were threatened, they were ready to make great sacrifices. But they have not come nearer to the difficulties setting in. In very truth Europe is to-day in such a situation that the trade-unions can no longer fulfil their mission, no progress beyond the present stand is possible before a change in the political and therewith also the economic conditions in Europe is brought about. If the trade-unions were to limit themselves to the improvement of wages and labour conditions for all workmen, the condition of affairs would, nevertheless, compel them to make preparations and carry them through.

Since the establishment of the Hitler dictatorship in Germany as "national socialism", the European development is under this decided influence. Ever more and more is the law of trade prescribed by Hitler for all of the other European countries and nothing more can take place in Europe that has not previously been investigated as to its result, in Hitler Germany. The free and independent decision of matters is snatched by the Hitler regime from the European nations and their governments.

The effect of national-socialism upon the European countries due to the geographical position of Germany it being in Central Europe and bounded directly by 13 countries. By the Baltic Sea,



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having merely the character of an interior sea, Germany borders on 4 other countries without considering the short boundary of Russia on the Baltic. The borders of the North Sea are held by England, and thereby likewise connected with Germany. There are living 240 millions in these countries bordering on Germany and if we count Germany with Austria having in all about 73 millions, we see that the direct impulse issuing from Germany is very great. Only 11 European countries with about 46 millions, among which are Andorra, Monaco, San Marino and the Vatican City have no boundaries toward Germany. Russia and Turkey, being not purely European countries, can remain out of consideration.

All of the impulses issuing from Germany must necessarily affect the bordering countries and implicate them, for the peoples of the European continent are living so closely together, that they wish to live in common. Technical improvements have abolished all distances, the political boundaries are no longer lines of division or zones between the peoples, but they are places of exchange for the economic and mental "wares" along good and bad lines. The boundaries have become more sensitive factors because no nation may longer be cut off from the others without disagreeable matters arising and dangers for co-operative living of all countries and nations. The streams of thought going out from Germany pass on, of course, over and beyond the boundary countries, and this does not demand further proof.

With national socialist Germany, the old-German imperialism has once more arisen, but in a gigantic form. It is threatening to all of the European nations as regards annexation, or in producing the absolute relations of dependence as vassals. National-socialism is peculiarly dangerous in its ideological basic thought as "Perfector of German Unity". The German imperialists base their ideas upon the right of self-stipulation of the nations, which in its entirety, was refused to the German people at the close of the war. Certainly the dictates of peace lie outside of that wisdom, justice, and psychology of nations, for they have come into being out of the psychology of the most terrible of all wars. However, a victory of the central powers would have brought to the other nations a dictatorship of German militarism, which, after the experiences passed through, would certainly not have been better for entire Europe.

National-socialism has laid down the principle: "Everywhere,

where Germans live, is Germany", and Hitler demands in his book, "Mein Kampf", that the most official basis of the national-socialist programme is that all of German-colonized districts in Europe are to come under the political sway of Germany. The political boundaries of Germany are to be pushed out so far as to even include the German-speaking islands in South-eastern Europe. When Hitler, in his addresses of 20th February and 20th March, 1938, declared that the political boundaries cannot always coincide with the boundaries of language, the reason of this being that in perfecting the German unity in Europe, the state and residential districts of other nations have to be included as minorities.

In the words of Hitler there does not lie the recognition of the right of existence of other statestructures with German minorities, the German imperialism always starting from the greatness of the total German people in Europe and over-against this greatness, most of the other nations are only minorities, which are not able to impair the right of Germany. Any other meaning to be put upon Hitler's words is a delusion to oneself.

National-socialism takes to itself not only a protective right over the German citizens in the whole world, but also over the German-speaking citizens of the other independent countries. The declarations of Hitler in February and March, 1938, and stressed by Göring with strong threats of war, point in one direction only. The German government demands over all Germans in other countries, the official control through the official representatives of Germany, and, unfortunately, there are governments which give up their sovereign rights and permit this control. By means of threats as to disadvantages, the Germans, in the country where they are guests, demand the recognition and representation of national-socialism. The dangers for the other countries lying in this system, for the peace among the peoples of the world, are not to be mistaken.

The national-socialist theory takes the language as a decisive characteristic of national membership (naturally not including the youth) and as long as all of the districts in which the German language prevails are not connected with the German Realm, national unity of German-nationality has not become complete. The German and German-speaking population in other countries is characterized as being oppressed in having the self-right of decision for affiliation to Germany withheld from them and hence they have to be "saved". The

annexation of Austria whose independence in the peace-treaty of St-Germain was declared, guaranteed by peoples' rights and League of Nations, assured by the partners in the treaty of peace has been a jump of national-socialist imperialism from theory into practice. Those countries now directly endangered are Czechoslovakia-Republic as a whole, Belgium, by reason of the district Eupen-Malmedy, Denmark, because of the Province Schleswig, Poland, because of Pomerania, West Poland and Upper Silesia, Lithuania, by reason of Memel, France, because of Alsace-Lorraine, Switzerland in the German-speaking portion and Luxembourg. He who is not thoroughly acquainted with Hitler National-socialism, may call attention to his declarations about Alsace-Lorraine and to the one on Poland, but there is no longer any excuse for these wrong constructions, since Hitler, up to the present time, has broken every treaty and every promise just as soon as he pleased. The fate of Austria has shown how an annexation has come about whose independence Hitler himself had recognized in the July agreement of 1936.

National socialism does not remain with the present high-German as a national characteristic but calls all languages of the same family as originally German and only a false development has separated these language areas from Germany. If they were now to be annexed, then merely a historical mistake would be corrected. Hence the Flemish people, the Dutch and the Danes, further the Scandinavians belong to the Germans which are to be "freed", to be "annexed" "to make equal" or to be conquered. Baltikum also belongs to the lost German property and the claim to this Courland is based upon colonialization of the middle ages by the German Orders of the Knights.

These far-reaching imperialist aims of Hitler-Germany are designated as being a natural right, in order to establish German unity in Europe. This right is only opposed by the malevolence and arrogance of the other countries and is suppressed by force. Hence Germany can only maintain and assure its right with force and the unparalleled armament carried on since 1933/34 in Germany is merely the preliminary measure to put aside injustice and historical failure in development. By means of this ideological basis and by undermining methods, the power of material weapons is brought to its highest working capacity.

National-socialism has set up the independence of Germany as

an economic aim, especially for reasons along defensive-economic lines. Stressing the fact of economic co-operation with other nations from time to time is done merely from its forced position, just as long as autarcy, (self-sufficiency) has not been reached. National-socialism, it is true, does not want autarcy in the classical sense of self-sufficiency, but rather it consists of a programme of conquest. National-socialist autarcy has been achieved when Germany has a sufficient basis for food and raw materials upon its own soil. The all-German conquest aims which the world-war did not fulfil, were again taken up by Hitler upon another basis. Hitler has not yet expressly named the ore-basin of Briey and Longwy, but instead the overthrow of France as aim and with this, the Belgian coal-mines, the Lorraine-Luxemburg Minette would fall to him, necessarily. Meanwhile, the Austrian ores magnesite and wood supplies will be incorporated. The advance forward of Hitler-Germany to South-eastern Europe shows distinctly the all-German aims: the Roumanian oil-fields, the possession of which is covered by liberating the Germans in "Siebenbürgen" and in Banat, in South Slavonia, the iron and copper attract and in Hungary, the grain. When the all-Germans, during the war, demanded the conquest of further stretches of land in the East in order to safeguard nourishment to Germany, Hitler, in his book "Mein Kampf" demands for the superfluous German population in the East new colonialization territory, at the expense of Russia. It is the same thing only another reason is given. Thus, the all-German programme of conquest forms the basis of national-socialist imperialism and the autarcy aimed at is no modest contentment in the space at hand, but it all means an announcement of the right to gain possibilities for self-provision. If this cannot be done in Germany, as it is at present, then the boundaries will have to be extended into the realms of other peoples and countries.

Hitler, in his book "Mein Kampf" declines the demand for colonies, as long as the "national union" of all Germans and German races has not been reached in Europe. Now Hitler has also recognized colonial imperialism, and has therewith taken upon himself the all-German world plans of power. The demand for colonies is likewise represented ideologically as the making good of injustice toward the German people, but in reality it is the recognition that the autarcy cannot be attained without colonial raw materials. The attempted national-socialist autarcy expands thus for its provision

of self to all European and colonial goods, within its own scope, as if this were a right of the German people.

This magnificent national-socialist imperialistic total programme may be realized only at expense of other nations and Hitler is perfectly clear as to this. The injustice against other nations is set aside with the non-moral basic-principle contrary to all legal peoples' rights, viz.- "Right is whatever is useful to the German People." This is a proclamation of the law of the right of the stronger, dating back to the middle ages. The world must come to an understanding concerning the essence, sense and aim of national-socialism. There can be no thought of a change in national socialism for the powers and impulses unchained by it would otherwise turn against itself: there is no turning back, but it can only be conquered.

The danger of a new war which has hovered over Europe for some years is coming ever nearer and the union between Germany and Italy is already the beginning of the catastrophe. Through Hitler, has the Italian fascism come to be an acute European danger, a fact that does not need to be more closely proved here. It is sufficient to point to Spain which has been sacrificed by the democratic governments of Europe. Peace in Europe is not to be obtained in that all countries avoid war, and in this way give the peace-breakers full freedom of action so that the general war may be all the better prepared by them. Peace may be gained and assured only in being ready to fight with all means against national socialism. Even a declared readiness and the use of all means for peace can give again freedom of action to the democratic peoples. It is only by the re-establishment of democracy in all countries of Europe that peace may be assured and it becomes a matter of attaining this goal before the out-break of the great catastrophe.

National-socialism has rushed all of the European nations into a competition in armament such as has never been experienced in the world. Arising from fear of the war-fury aroused by Hitler all material and ideal powers of humanity are being utilized for the war or for defense. This preparation for war makes it necessary for all nations to sacrifice social-welfare institutions and even life. Everybody in Europe knows that the only blame lies in Hitler-Germany! its armament is aggressive, for from no side does it fear attack. In order to see the war-spirit of Hitler we merely have to

look at Spain and to the annexation of Austria, likewise the attack against the Czechoslovakian Republic, prevented at the last moment. However, war has not, as yet, been conquered, peace has not been gained, and still less assured. Therefore competition in armament goes on further at a higher rate of speed and whatever might serve the progress of humanity, provision for mankind and his culture is transmuted into cannon and warships.

The German armament has been and will be carried on by the deliveries of all other countries in failing raw materials: ores of all kinds, oil, rubber, wood, etc. without reflecting that these deliveries represent threatening aspects for the countries sending goods: by means of money manipulations to swindle foreign creditors; by an inner indebtedness of Germany and by terrible exploitation of German workmen. Thereby, up to this time, the economic collapse has been prevented. A blockade in delivery for those raw-stuffs serving directly or indirectly preparations for war, respectively, inland raw-stuffs therefore being made free, would be a safeguard against war. Rejection of every kind of financial fraud through currency manipulation or dumping, might, at least, diminish the war danger and these two measures might mean such a powerful economic force that a change in Germany's attitude might be hoped for. The social conditions in Germany re-act strongest upon the working-class of the other countries.

Entire German economic life is employed, above all, in the service of war-preparation. The necessary means thereto cannot be obtained only from loans and short-period debts. Therefore, the administration has fixed the original costs at the lowest possible figure. For years past, in spite of armament juncture, no wage-increases have been made: they are forbidden by legal measures. The increase in costs of living which could not be prevented, therefore, resulted in a diminution of real wages. The working capacity of the social institutions, such as sick and invalid insurance has been restricted so that this money saved may be used for armament loans. Hence, along all social lines, in Germany, has not only a stand still set in, but there has been absolute recession. Every bit of influence upon the construction of social conditions, upon wage and labour conditions, has been taken away. Whereas, in all other countries, every effort is made to reduce working hours, in Germany working time has been extended. In all of the direct and indirect

armament industry, to which also belongs the building trade, the 60-hour working week is, at present, the rule. Shorter hours are worked only when there is a shortage of material. Over-hours are worked even over these; in part, demanded by the employers and in part voluntarily worked, for with such low wages and no expectation of a rise the earnings of over-hours are a necessity for livelihood. Hence, working hours, in so far as material and machines allow, increase up to 80 hours in the week and even more. This social development in Germany cannot be disconnected from the national-socialist regime and its expectations in Europe.

The tasks of the trade-unions are to-day at high tension and are not restricted, alone to safeguarding the wage and labour conditions. The trade-unions are the elements of a coming human order of affairs along the line of economy, and hence the duties of the trade-unions have not to do only with the present but point to the future. In order that their powers may freely develop, the trade-unions need possibilities of free development. But, however, the possibilities of work of the trade-unions of one country are not independent of the conditions in other countries. The social conditions, the wage and labour conditions in one country affect, in part, directly, and, in part, indirectly prices of wares in trade agreements, in customs duties rates, in other import and export matters, etc. all other countries and the working-class of these countries. The work of the trade unions can no longer be mastered by the national organisations, alone, but it can be accomplished only in considering European conditions as a whole.

As long as democratic administrations existed in all countries and under them, free trade-unions, assimilation and equalization in their endeavours were to be sought and found in mutual work. Since, however, the Hitler regime has degraded the workmen to be unfree men, has taken away from the workmen their own right of co-operation in the way of wage and labour conditions, of social conditions of life, where the workmen are no longer free in the choice of working-place, but, along such lines, are obliged to subserve state authority, the trade-unions in the other countries are faced by new tasks, especially so as regards international representation. All work of the trade-unions is decidedly affected by conditions in Germany, as well as are all countries. There are no longer any independent inner or social policies, since in Germany

everything has become sub-serving to the endeavours toward foreign political power. When, in Germany, for over 70 millions in the total metal and building industry the 60-hour week has been adopted, to bring armament up to the highest peak, when, in addition, over-hours are worked to every number thought of, then it will be impossible for France to introduce and keep up the 40-hour week. France would have to lose its life in the competition. Likewise England and all of the other countries forced into this competition in armament will be obliged to increase working-time after they have used up their reserves, if they do not desire to be overcome. The trade-unions are not in a position to stop this way, but they will have to affiliate themselves, as a protective factor, in the European forced position. The actual money questions, such as working wages, etc. are dependent only upon the financial working capacity of the countries, which falls to the same degree as the unproductive armament expenses rise. If the boundaries of working-capacity have been reached then concessions must be made as regards wages when the very existence of the countries is at stake. Thus, one country after another will be forced to return to social politics, and not merely to remain standing. Under existing circumstances in Europe the trade-unions are ever less and less in a condition to accomplish their natural tasks, not even in the long run, is the assurance and improvement of wage and labour conditions possible, still less the formation of the economic and social future of the working class. National-socialism has compelled the trade-unions to fight for liberty in all of the countries, and this conflict can be carried through only along international lines. The individual trade-unions of each country, the national central organisations and the internationals must take their places in this conflict, they have to take leadership upon themselves and concentrate all powers upon the decisive question, viz: conquest of national-socialism.

The economic difficulties which have remained unsolved since the last war can less and less be solved by the individual countries. These difficulties shattered Germany to its very foundations from 1930 to 1932 so that national-socialism was able to take over state-power, and the logical conclusions have been drawn: mastership over all Europe, at present, as allied with Italian fascism; the oppression of all other nations in order that the dominating people may be free from all distress. This new reconstruction of Europe, clothed

in the words of Mussolini "Entire Europe will be fascist, or it will not be", is the national-socialist-fascist conception of Europe. To this end, every factor is set to work; in all countries unexampled propaganda is unfolded, the countries are politically shaken by so-called parties, inspired and kept up by national-socialism. Propaganda-men are sent into the organisations and corporations of other countries. No country is longer free from advocates of national-socialism. Each country, itself, has to manage these matters, also deal with those who are members of the trade-unions. In each country there are living Germans who are forced by the German government to carry on work everywhere along lines of national-socialism. Only those may avoid this compulsion who never expect to return to Germany, and the families of such, will not be persecuted for not bringing pressure to bear upon the foreign Germans. In so far as these Germans recognize themselves as believers in national-socialism, they become a menace for the country where they are guests, and when members of a trade-union they are a danger to this trade-union. The trade-unions are placed before the decision as to whether they can permit within their ranks declared German national-socialists, as out-posts of national-socialist propaganda and disintegration. Since each individual federation has to decide this matter, the question is the same for all countries. If the possibility of work in the country where the German is a guest is dependent upon membership in a trade-union, then there is established the same situation as in Germany, where, also, nobody can work who does not belong to the German labour-front. When national-socialism is seeking a new re-construction of Europe in its own interests, it, at least, has some definite idea of these purposes, even if such leads into barbarism; unfortunately, on the other hand, the nations have no definite idea regarding the European difficulties. It becomes necessary, however, to place before national-socialist-fascist Europe the idea of a new construction of this continent, a new one in which all nations may be able to live safely in freedom and peace in a solidarity of all nations. With this, the basis would be gained upon which the solution of economic questions might be taken successfully in hand.

The fate of Europe, of all mankind, has been placed in jeopardy by national-socialism. Therewith is the fate of the trade-unions and their internationals interwoven, and they are called upon

to act in the decision pending. It is a matter concerning not Germany alone, but one for Europe, for the European working-class, the representatives of which are the trade-unions. The historical moment demands recognition and action!

June, 1938.