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C. W. Guillebaud

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THE WORKS COUNCIL

*A GERMAN EXPERIMENT IN
INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY*

By

C. W. GUILLEBAUD

FELLOW OF ST JOHN'S COLLEGE
CAMBRIDGE



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P R E F A C E

The present volume is the result of a number of years' close study of the German Works Councils. I have spent a portion of each year since 1919 in Germany investigating at first hand the operation of the Works Councils Act. I am glad to have this opportunity of thanking the many Government officials, employers, members of Works Councils, Trade Union officials and others with whom I have discussed this problem, for the unfailing courtesy with which I have been received and for the time that they have sacrificed in assisting me in my researches.

There is a certain danger that the writer of a monograph on a particular institution may, without realising it, come to identify himself too closely with the fortunes of the institution which he is studying, and may thereby be led to adopt an uncritical attitude towards it. I have endeavoured throughout to guard against this danger and to treat the efforts and achievements of the Works Councils impartially, though with that measure of sympathy which is necessary if the workings of an essentially human institution are to be understood and appreciated.

The writing of this book was completed in December 1926, at a time when the Reports of the German Factory Inspectors were not available for 1926. The detailed study of the Works Councils has therefore not been carried beyond the middle of that year. But the Reports of the Factory Inspectors, which were published in 1927, and other information that I have been able to procure, show that the Works Councils were functioning throughout 1926 in very much the same way as in the preceding year, while the general economic environment remained substantially unaltered.

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PREFACE

It was originally my intention to make a comprehensive survey of the Shop Steward movement, Whitley Committees, and voluntary Works Councils in England, in order to make a detailed comparison of conditions and tendencies in the two countries. I collected a good deal of material for this purpose, but found subsequently that the time at my disposal was insufficient to enable me to carry out this plan, and I have been compelled to confine myself to Germany. I hope, however, that it will be found that the history of the German experience with statutory Works Councils will provide material of value for those who are concerned with this side of the labour movement in England.

I wish to express my gratitude to Mr I. L. Evans for helping me with the proofs, and to my aunt, Mrs Alfred Marshall, for reading the whole of the manuscript and for providing the index.

C. W. GUILLEBAUD

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