

## The Importance of the General Confederation of Labour Before and During the Advent of Fascism

**Sheyla Moroni**

Assistant Professor, University of Florence, Italy

### **Abstract:**

The Confederazione Generale del Lavoro, an organisation founded in Milan in 1906 by trade unionists with a reformist orientation. Its early years were marked by clashes with elements of revolutionary syndicalism that created the Unione Sindacale Italiana (USI) in 1912. After the First World War, on the wave of strong social demands, the CGdL grew to around 2 million members. However, the uncertain and contradictory attitude during the 'red two-year period' (1919-20) and in the face of fascist violence led to a deepening crisis in the Union, which was dissolved by the same leaders in 1927. Communist trade unionists and anarchists formed an underground CGdL that operated in Italy during the fascist period and in France founded a similar confederation. In 1936, communists and socialists decided on the unification of the two organisations. In the face of this history, some leaders such as Rinaldo Rigola nevertheless remained inclined to separate trade union action from political action, suffering the allure of corporatist propaganda after the war. In 1922 was initially opposed to Fascism. After the dissolution of the CGdL he founded the national association Problemi del lavoro (1927-40) in Milan. Created to critically analyse corporatism, the association ended up supporting it and losing its autonomy.