

MUSSOLINI, MASTER OF ITALY AND LEADER OF MILLIONS WAS REARED IN POVERTY, SON OF A SOCIALIST SHOEMAKER

Head of the Fascista Movement an Intense, Fiery, Indefatigable Man, Who Admires Napoleon, Works 18 Hours a Day, Speaks Five Languages and Who Walks and Drives Always at Top Speed

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VER the door of a little cubbyhole office in Milan there is scrawled on a piece of cardboard the following legend:

"He who enters here does me honor; he who does not enter gives me pleasure."

It is the office of Benito Mussolini, who to-day is master of Rome and of Italy. In it he planned the Fascista movement which reached its climax the other day in Rome when the member of Parliament over whose office door the above is written reviewed thousands of his followers as they marched by in the finale of Italy's strange revolution that has left him almost in supreme power in the city of the Caesars.

Europe in its post-war throes unquestionably in Mussolini has produced a man with whom it must reckon as it had to reckon with Lenin. While yesterday this man excited only mild interest in the diplomatic circles outside of Italy to-day every European chancellery is studying his every move just as they studied those of Lenin.

And yet this latest figure lifted by Europe's convulsions is the very antithesis of Lenin in political ideals. He is against everything that Lenin is for. The strangest feature of his whole history is his own conversion. Only a few years ago the leader of the Socialist party in northern Italy and with strong anarchistic tendencies he is now the implacable enemy of all he then advocated. This is the supreme fact that is gripping at this moment every other Government in Europe.

"You hate me because you love me still," Mussolini shouted to the wild and turbulent meeting of Socialists eight years ago in Milan that threw him out of the party because he had defied it and insisted that Italy enter the war. It was at this meeting that he for the first time announced his slogan "A greater, grander Italy." He was then 31 years old.

What does he look like? He is middle sized—say five feet four inches—with the broad shoulders of an athlete. His profile is peculiarly Napoleon-like, with a broad forehead back from which sweeps a mass of black hair. His eyebrows are long and sweeping, giving him almost a hawk-like look when he is angry about any subject. His mouth is clear-cut like that of the average American business man. His eyes are bright and penetrating, and it is always hard to decide whether they are blue, brown or black; in fact, they are a mixture of all three. His complexion is rather pale, probably the result of long hours spent in poring over books.

He is quick of speech and when he is interested his whole face is transformed with enthusiasm, and in this lies much of the secret of his power. He controls crowds by the force of his own enthusiasm and personal conviction. Mussolini is not an orator, but he is always prompt in giving an argument for any problem and frank in answering any query. One of the best known figures in northern Italy because of the unbelievable speed with which he walks through the streets.

Man of Simple Tastes.
Fond of Family Life.
Mussolini—he has not yet been given a nickname by his friends, even his wife calling him by his family name—is a man of the simplest dress and habits. There is no luxury either in his home or office. In a comfortable apartment in the middle class district of Milan he lives with his wife, whom he adores, and their four children. The eldest, a daughter, is 12 years old, the other three are healthy, boisterous boys. His wife comes from a working family and is energetic and intelligent, with the beauty characteristic of the women of northern Italy. The daughter inherits intelligence from both parents, is interested in all sports and is the idol of her father, who keeps a portrait of her on his office desk.

Mussolini himself is a great lover of sports of all kinds, although he has little time to attend games. His favorite sport is automobilism, and he is fond of driving at terrific speed, despite the protests of his family that he will one day meet his death in an accident. Aviation tempts him and frequently he travels to Rome by airplane, admittedly just to get the exhilaration of the air.

Unlike most Italians Mussolini does not sing, but he has exceptional talent for the violin. On this he prefers to play slow, plaintive melodies instead of quick, inspiring marches which usually are dear to the hearts of revolutionaries.

Reared as a Catholic.
Fellowship Now His Creed.
The new leader was brought up in the Catholic Church, but ceased to attend mass during his early life, when he studied anarchist doctrines. Neither his wife nor his children take an interest in religious affairs. Italy is his god and fellowship his creed. He pronounces and practices his creed with constant fidelity.

Generous to a fault, Mussolini has never wanted for money and never has been given to his friends or to the cause. Not caring for clubs or even for the society of friends, his hours at home are spent in reading, chiefly history and philosophy. As in the case of other great leaders of the last century, Napoleon holds a strange fascination for Mussolini and he voraciously reads everything obtainable about the "Little Corporal" whether it is written in French, Spanish, German, Italian or English, all of which languages he mastered by home study and speaks with incredible fluency.

To say that Mussolini ignores his friends, who are legion, would be an exaggeration, but he never shows them preference, unless it be to seek out laborers to obtain their views in regard of the well-to-do members of his party. Even while dining he seems engrossed in thought, eating far too quickly, and apparently paying no attention to the nature of the food set before him. Occasionally he has wine with his meals, but very little, and he rarely smokes a cigarette.

Mussolini's average day consists of

in Lucerne, but friends came to his rescue.

Seven Years in Switzerland.
Expelled by Government.

During the seven years that he stayed in Switzerland Mussolini studied, paying for his food, lodging and books by doing odd jobs that came his way, but constantly becoming more fiery in his socialist beliefs until the Swiss Government expelled him. A few months later the Austrian Government expelled him from the Tyrol, where he had taken refuge, but he was undaunted and finally obtained permission to return to Romagna.

Climbing to power in his own community, Mussolini became a member of the staff of the official socialist organ, the *Avanti!*, which brought him into the limelight as the leader of the party in northern Italy and as an organizer of exceptional ability.

In 1914, when the war broke out, Mussolini at first affirmed the necessity for absolute neutrality, but the very fact of the war entered into his spirit. The idea of a revolt against dogma commenced to grow within him. Slowly he changed his belief into one of vigilant armed neutrality with Italy's interests the focal point for all decisions, and then suddenly he saw the benefits his country would obtain by participation if the Allies were victorious.

Then Mussolini decided in favor of entering the war and the Socialist party expelled him in a fiery session that will go down in the annals of Italian political history. The crowd was tumultuous and plainly showed its hatred, but it did not swear him. He tried to talk, but the only memorable phrase that was heard was this: "You hate me because you love me still."

For a moment the crowd hesitated, so tremendous a grip had the falling leader obtained on their imagination. Then suddenly some one hissed and for an hour a veritable battle of partisans and enemies followed, but none dared touch Mussolini, who, pale and calm, watched the swaying factions.

Mussolini's Alternative.
Was War or Revolution?

From that time on Mussolini used his paper *Popolo d'Italia* to defend his ideas and although the Socialists attacked him bitterly he formed the nucleus of a party favoring entry into

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Mussolini himself was one of the first to volunteer. He became a corporal in the Bersaglieri, fighting at Monte Nero and in the Carso, where he was wounded almost fatally by a shell explosion. The King visited him in the hospital and prayers for his recovery were ordered in all parts of Italy.

When the war was over Mussolini was only convalescent, but he threw himself into the new situations with his old vigor and always with the same slogan—a greater and grander Italy.

The Socialists exploited the country's post-war poverty, and when the Nitti Government came in with almost a Bolshevik program Mussolini challenged their authority to represent the people and publicly denounced the Premier as "Nitti the pig."

Revolution was felt in the air, and suddenly the Piume question began to touch the Italian people profoundly. Hatred for Nitti began to develop almost as rapidly as it did for Woodrow Wilson. From the very first Mussolini supported D'Annunzio, frankly and wholeheartedly and there was born the idea of a nationalism such as Italy had never before known. As a result in 1919, when a revolution seemed inevitable, Mussolini created the national Fasci party as a counter-revolutionary movement, but this was a continuation of the ideas he used in 1914 to make Italy enter the war.

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The party has among its members the most energetic, thoughtful, devoted and ruthless young men of the country. It has a disciplined army of 50,000, a potential and dangerously undisciplined army of 200,000, a million members of its trade unions and at least another million sympathizers. It has perfected an elaborate military organization.

Swear to Consecrate All To the Nation's Welfare.
The rules just adopted for the discipline of the Fascista army begin as follows: "The Fascista party is always a militia. The Fascista militia is at the service of God and the Italian motherland and takes the following vow: 'In the name of God and Italy, in the name of all those fallen for Italy's glory, I swear to consecrate all and forever to the welfare of Italy.'"

According to the rules the Fascista knows only duty. His obedience must be "blind, absolute, respectful." The Fascist sense of honor is described as that of the medieval knight, and is an absolute idealism and larger than printed laws. From all enemies of Italy he must demand an "eye for an eye, burning for burning, wound for wound."

Wavering from the strict path laid down will be judged by a military tribunal. Disloyal members will be expelled, disobedient ones punished and probably expelled, and traitors visited with the most extreme punishments.

But to the prestige of this supposed victory the Fascisti added another timely stroke by emphasizing nationalism and national glory at a time when Italy was just feeling her strength as a nation. The disaster of Caporetto

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WOULD RESTORE ITALY'S POWER



DR. BENITO MUSSOLINI

(not specified) before expulsion from the party.

An important clause states that the Benito Mussolini, the Fascista chief, put the policy of his party succinctly in a recent interview given to the correspondent of the *Neue Freie Presse* of Vienna.

"The Fascisti aim to govern Italy by legal means, if possible, but with violence if necessary," he said. "It is an error to regard the Fascisti as a party of revolution only. We are ready to construct also, assuming the responsibilities that Government implies, and we are convinced that the day is not far distant when the Italian State will realize our ideals."

The leader also talked more frankly about the monarchist question than he had in public a few weeks before. "The monarchy has a very solid base in Italy, and for the present we don't want to change it. Naturally we will be republicans the moment the monarchy forgets its duty to the nation. Our republic will be an aristocratic, not a demagogic, one, kept under the severest discipline."

No International Aim.
Declares Its Chief Aim.
Mussolini denied any contact between the Italian party and the so-called Fascista movements of Germany and Hungary, and laughed at the idea of a Fascista International. He said that just as Bolshevism was a movement peculiar to Russia the Fascista movement was a peculiarly Italian institution, which it would be absurd to try to duplicate.

The Fascista political program, adopted in December, 1921, still stands. It enunciates the principles of individualism and nationalism, with everything, even individualism, secondary to the welfare of the State.

The nation, not humanity, is the highest unit of society, says the program. The State is sovereign, but it should allow the fullest liberty to industry and private corporations and to the church.

As for labor problems, the Fascisti believe in the eight hour day, social legislation to provide for the sick, injured and old, a limited representation of labor in industry and even the management of some public services and industries by specially trained and trustworthy workers, and the encouragement of small proprietors in certain districts.

The internal policy of Fascismo Theater, a building which deserves its name, for there is no greater theater, I think, in the world save La Scala, at Milan. The Bolshoi Theater accommodates 3,500 people, and has five tiers of galleries rising one above the other. Everything is in good repair, and, in fact, the whole theater was recently renovated, which reminds me that the Moscow University and several other public buildings are now being renovated.

The great central box was formerly allotted to the Czar and was always guarded, even when empty, as it generally was, by two armed soldiers, who had a busy time saluting the innumerable military officers who walked in the great aisle between the acts. This guard has now, of course, been withdrawn, but the imperial crest in richly gilt wood still remains over the Czar's box, as well as over the two side boxes appropriated for the use of the Grand Dukes. All three crests are covered, however, with red cloth.

The audience was enormous, numbering probably more than 3,000, and it was on the whole a well dressed bourgeois audience, dressed to a large extent in black and wearing the white shirts and collars of civilization. I had purposely left my own dress clothes behind in London, as I thought that, judging from my last experience in Russia, the wearing of dress clothes would be regarded as a crime; but I now find that my omission to bring my "joy rags" exposes me to the danger of ostracism.

For certainly the aspect of the theater audience has changed enormously since April, 1920, when I visited the Bolshoi Theater and found it filled with workmen, who watched the efforts of the dispirited performers very much as cows in a pasture might watch a passing train. The audience

when it controls the State is declared to be one which will restore the prestige and authority of the State among its citizens. The freedom of the individual is not only limited socially, it should also be limited in accordance with the needs of the State.

The chief point in the foreign policy is the accomplishment of Italy's complete "geographical and historical unity," as the establishment as the bulwark of Latin civilization on the Mediterranean and her complete political mastery of her present provinces. The Fascisti "have no faith in the vitality of the principle of the League of Nations, because not all nations are represented in the League, and those that are are of unequal status. Cordial relations with the peoples of the Near East are recommended. An imposing army and navy are on the program.

One of the things that the conservative forces of the country dread most about the Fascisti in foreign policy is their opposition to the Treaty of Rapallo and their activities on the Dalmatian coast, which have already been almost provocative of war with Jugoslavia. It has been stated that the Fascisti have 30,000 troops ready to occupy Zara, the "third zone of dispute" between Italy and Jugoslavia, the moment Italy withdraws her troops in conformity with the Protocol of Santa Margherita. The Fiume disorders of last March were the direct work of the Fascisti, and to those leaders of Italy sincerely desirous of sealing peace with Jugoslavia, the point of view of the Fascisti seems mischievous in the extreme.

Italy Was Embarrassed.
By Trentino Incidents.
Italy also was seriously embarrassed in her attempts to share in the rehabilitation of Austria by the recent "Trentino incidents," where a roaring

Fascista army, first in Bolzano, and then in Trento, inflamed the misis of the bilingual population and provoked serious repercussions in Austria itself. The Trent incident shocked the public at large more than any recent act on the part of the insurgents because it exaggerated race hatred between the countries just at the moment when mutual trust was most desirable. At the same time, however, the occupation of the public buildings and the ultimatum demanding the resignation of the Governor of the province, Ceredaro, it defied directly State authority.

To cap the climax Mussolini, after the occupation, addressed a telegram to Schanzer asking that Italy refuse to send Austria the second half of her loan "because of the anti-Italian comments in the Austrian press."

Another feature of the Fascista foreign policy is great hatred of England. These super-nationalists condemn the British policy in the Near East and Egypt and declare that the Mediterranean should be the exclusive policy of "the people of the Near East." Mussolini said in a late number of the party organ *Popolo d'Italia*: "It is not to Italy's interest to help preserve a British navy; on the contrary, it is Italy's business to help destroy it."

Comments on the party in the European press have become more and more chilly. The London *Times* deplores the recent actions of the Fascisti, and the Paris *Temps* says in a recent editorial: "The trouble with the Fascisti is that they have copied their tactics from the worst revolutionary elements and are opposing established authority with incredible audacity. A reactionary coup de force is as bad in its effect as a revolutionary one."

ACTION AND MODERATION, LEADER'S ATTRIBUTES

After Fighting Bravely Mussolini Urged Prudence in the Hour of Victory

Friend's Book Describes New Premier's Appearance

One of his intimate friends has written a book on the new Premier in which he gives an account of his appearance and of which the following is a free translation: "He faces those who speak to him like a block of assurance, of courage and of energy. His Roman forehead is built for thought. His eyes are made for command. His square jaws complete with a harmony a face that no one can describe."

The year 1914 and the outbreak of the great war found Dr. Mussolini at the age of 20 editor of the leading socialist paper in Italy, the *Avanti!*. No one at that time could have predicted that he would emerge in 1922 as Premier on a platform of "law and order" as his cardinal domestic principle.

He had had the usual training of a high grade newspaperman, namely, high school and university. He was already known as a matting speaker, besides being an able editor. No sooner was war declared in 1914 than Dr. Mussolini urged Italian entrance into it. The Socialists throughout Italy were astounded at such counsel from the editor of the leading socialist paper. He lost his job as editor, but immediately organized a new organ for himself, namely, the *Popolo d'Italia*, which immediately became one of the real moulders of public opinion.

When Italy finally entered the war the advocate of war on the Central Powers immediately enlisted, but was rejected on account of a physical ailment. Later on, however, he was accepted as a private soldier and during the rest of the war he wore the plume of the Bersaglieri, the shock troops of Italy.

He was decorated for bravery and because of his influence as a speaker who could instill the doctrine of patriotism among the troops his fame spread and the returned soldiers, peasants and middle class remembered him after the last gun had been fired. This memory served him well when the time to organize the Fascisti as an offset to communistic agitation came.

Urged Prudence After Victory Was Gained.
On the close of the war he went back to his newspaper and urged that the fruits of victory be not squandered. In the autumn of 1920, when the workers invaded the factories and the tide of communism was running strong, he organized the first nucleus of Fascisti, through which he sought to mobilize peasants and middle classes against the radicalism of the workers. From that time on the development of the Fascisti, the political and defense weapon forged by Mussolini, was the principal Italian political phenomenon. The climax came in July and August, 1922, when the writing on the wall began to foretell what was coming. A general strike was called, but the Fascisti ended it within twenty-four hours.

Turning again to the book recently written on him, the following description will be found: "He rehabilitates the usefulness of eloquence as an orator. He gives a vital significance to the spoken word. He hates speaking, but when he does speak it is out of internal necessity. His addresses are always straightforward, logical and clear-cut. There is no flourish, no rhetoric or emphasis. He speaks as if engaged in a gigantic conversation. He is, one the other, a 1,000 or 10,000, simply because he has the faculty and assurance of talking to a crowd as if it were a single individual."

"He is an aggressive orator. He faces the public as if it were a single opponent. He gets at it. He shakes it, he looks into its heart and enlightens it. The crowd which prefers a master to a follower is gripped by his talk, as his personal magnetism is enormous. One of his principal assets is action, the other is moderation. He of himself never takes advantage of his enemies."

'DOWN WITH SOCIALISTS AND ALL FOR ITALY'

Fascisti Super-Nationalists Have Program of Unity and Political Dominance

Special Correspondence to THE NEW YORK HERALD. New York Herald Bureau, Rome, Oct. 2.

THE Fascista movement now definitely dominates the Government, the laboring masses, the youth of the country. It has made inroads in the army, whose officers are with few exceptions its sympathizers, and with its daring and picturesque exploits it has captured the imagination of thousands whose intellectual horizons were dulled by the strains of war.

The Fascista movement swept like a flame through Italy, swept immediately into public favor because of the belief that it was the Fascisti who prevented a "Red" revolution in this country. As a matter of fact, a "Red" revolution could never have occurred here, and Socialism was already defeated by the truth which had leaked out about the Socialist paradise, Russia.

But to the prestige of this supposed victory the Fascisti added another timely stroke by emphasizing nationalism and national glory at a time when Italy was just feeling her strength as a nation. The disaster of Caporetto

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heated reference to "the war waged on the workers and peasant republic for three years by all the forces of capitalist Europe." Then something about the harmonious cooperation of the peasants and the workers, the latter making agriculture profitable for the former, and the former supplying the latter with bread. Then a little about the Red flag, the futile plots of the Russian monarchists in Poland and the N. E. P., the latter being spoken of with bated breath, as if it were a magic formula.

As a relief from economics I hurried off to the Little Theater, where I had been invited to attend a remarkable function in honor of Yuzhin, one of Russia's greatest actors and playwrights, and now a man more than 60 years of age. Yuzhin, who is a prince and whose real name is Sumbatov, occupies a remarkable position in the Russian theater, a position somewhat similar to that which the late Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree occupied in the English theater. He is the director of the Little Theater in Moscow, but he is also himself indefatigable and successful, not only as an actor but also as a dramatic writer.

The function which took place in his honor last Sunday at the Little Theater was one of those things which one only sees in Russia. When the curtain rose at 1 P. M. a dense mass of about one hundred people were discovered to be seated on the stage. They included actors, actresses, literary critics, professors and editors. All in evening dress, they suggested nothing of Bolshevism, and the spectator might have fancied himself back in the Russia of ten years ago.

How they all came to be on the stage needs a few words of explanation. As last Sunday was the fortieth anniversary of Yuzhin's first appearance as an actor, a committee had formed itself to commemorate the event in Yuzhin's own theater. In

America or England the commemoration would have taken the shape of a dinner, followed by the presentation of an address and a number of light and witty speeches, but what took place on Sunday was a series of heavy party agricultural machinery for the former, and the former supplying the latter with bread. Then a little about the Red flag, the futile plots of the Russian monarchists in Poland and the N. E. P., the latter being spoken of with bated breath, as if it were a magic formula.

Meanwhile the theater was packed with a well dressed audience, who listened attentively for four hours to speeches which an American audience would not have tolerated for the same length of time even if their greatest literary or artistic figure were the object of them.

When the speeches came to an end Yuzhin himself appeared on the stage amid wild applause. He is a man of great height and imposing presence. His black morning coat fitted perfectly and all the rest of his attire was in harmony with it. Finally, his appearance was stage managed with perfect skill. Overcome by emotion, he pressed his hand to his heart and bowed repeatedly to the audience. Then he clasped to his breast a bayonet, a veteran actor apparently over 30 years of age, who had acted as chairman of the committee, and afterward kissing the hand of an aged actress who at the same time kissed him on the forehead.

Finally Yuzhin made an extremely appropriate speech of thanks, and the curtain went down. He was daintily carrying pocket handkerchiefs, whose appearance was probably meant to suggest tears and emotion. The proceedings closed with an excellent musical program, which made it clear to me that, heavily as artistic Russia has suffered by the emigration of her