

Mussolini Wild Radical 15 Years Ago-Now "King"

Rise of Sternest Dictator Rapid—Violence Major Item in His Social Program

ROME, July 14. (NEA Special)—Fifteen years ago the authorities of northern Italy were greatly exercised over the activities of a wild young socialist agitator.

He had a great following and feared nothing. He was a radical of the "reddest" type. Violence was a major item on his program of social reform.

The Italian police were not the only ones who were aware of his existence. Police in Switzerland and France knew him, too; had arrested him, indeed, for ultra-radical activities.

All in all, it was quite agreed that this young man, by name Benito Mussolini, was a dangerous revolutionary.

Leader of Autocracy. That was fifteen years ago. Today Mussolini stands as chief protagonist of the forces of autocracy, leader of the forces of liberalism—dictator of the Italians, spiritual successor of the first of the Caesars, put there by the force of his own indomitable will.

The wild radical of pre-war days has mounted to the seats of the mighty. In the rise, his cloak of radicalism has been sloughed off like an outworn garment.

He is the most picturesque character in the world today.

And there is drama in the story of Mussolini.

He was born in 1883 in the mountainous district of Romagna. His father was a blacksmith, and a wild-eyed, radical one, to boot; his mother had been a school teacher. The family lived in poverty.

Getting an Education. Through sacrifices on the part of his parents, young Mussolini attended such schools as were available, getting about what would be equivalent in this country to a high school education. Then he hung himself into the socialist cause.

But before he could settle down in his home town he must satisfy the restless urge that demanded that he travel.

So, early in 1902, he borrowed a small sum from a friend and set out on his travels. He reached the Swiss border the money was gone. He went on foot, sleeping where he could and getting odd jobs here and there to keep from starving.

He stayed two months in Switzerland, studying and using his eyes, gripping his youthful theories of social upheaval and reform more and more closely. He led laborers in strikes and riots, for it was impossible for Mussolini to believe a thing without acting on it; accordingly, he soon landed in jail, and on his release he found himself constantly shadowed by detectives.

Beaten by poverty, unable to get work, he drifted back home. There he subsisted for a time on odds and ends of literary work, translating the works of the German Heine, for example, for some five dollars or so, trying unsuccessfully to secure a town clerkship, teaching school for a time in a country town—and always taking an active part in the doings of the socialists of his neighborhood.

The police dogged his footsteps continually. Disgusted, he went to France. There, too, he gained notoriety as a radical agitator. He led strikes, participated in riots, felt the hands of the police on his shoulders, and eventually was deported. He took refuge in Switzerland.

He stayed in Switzerland for seven years. He studied constantly, doing odd jobs to pay for his books and lodgings, and always dipping into the activities of the radical element. At length his fiery advocacy of socialism got him into trouble again, and the Swiss deported him. Again he went back to Romagna.

Twice now he had left home to seek his fortune, and each time he had come back penniless and in bad repute. An inauspicious start, perhaps? It may have seemed so at the time, particularly to his rough-cut father, who wanted him to content himself with a blacksmith's life.

Mussolini entered newspaper work, rising at last to the editorship of the official socialist organ, Avanti. And then, the war broke out.

Mussolini for War. Here came Mussolini's break with the socialists. The socialist party was all for neutrality. Mussolini cried loudly for entrance in the war, on the side of the allies. He was expelled from the socialist party; he continued to shout, this time through the columns of the Milan paper, Popolo d'Italia, of which he became editor. Italy finally entered the war. Mussolini's agitation had helped. And when war was declared Mussolini was one of the first to volunteer.

He saw active service with the Bersagliers, being wounded twice and scoring a safe behind-the-lines job that a politician offered him. He was decorated for bravery.

After the war he went back to his newspaper. Gone were his socialistic leanings. The tide of communism began to run high among Italian workers. Mussolini sawed. Ten years previously he would have cheered.

Strikes became almost daily events. The government seemed powerless. Industry was paralyzed. And Mussolini banded together a few dozen friends, sturdy young war veterans, into a black-shirted organization that was to become known throughout the world—the Fascist.

Gaining Power. The Fascist slowly gained strength. They drilled. They became a compact unit, welded together by perfect discipline and by a unanimous regard for Mussolini, the leader. Their moves at first were sporadic—directed against a small-town strike here, a minor radical weekly newspaper there. As always, Mussolini preferred action to words, so the Fascist used clubs and revolvers, rather than pamphlets.

The reaction of the war-born radicalism that had swept Italy was setting in. More and more people flocked to the Fascist. The body became stronger and ever stronger.

Then came the climax. A nation-wide strike was called in the summer of 1922. While the government stood powerless, Mussolini and his Fascist put it down. Then in triumph, the black-shirts moved to Rome, "captured" it, turned statesmen out of office—and Mussolini became premier.

From then on the tale is familiar. Hit by hit Mussolini gathered power, such as no ordinary premier ever held, into his hands. One by one the constitutional limitations were swept away. The Fascist, nominally "state police" and

responsibility of France. It only gave her the right in certain circumstances to ask for review. The British right to open the case remained.

A transfer clause providing for a delay within certain limits in making payments on account of exchange difficulties, had been agreed upon, he said.

Germany's Channel Entry. COLOGNE, July 14. (AP)—Germany's most promising entry in this year's race to swim the English channel is Ernst Vierkoetter of Cologne.

As a preliminary, Vierkoetter swam forty-nine miles in the turbulent Rhine from Andernach to Cologne, a distance two and one-half times greater than the channel crossing. The temperature of the water was 44 degrees F. No accurate record of his time was taken.

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RUB-A-DUB-DUB



FRENCH DEBT IS SETTLED
LONDON, July 13 (AP)—The settlement signed in London yesterday by Finance Minister Caillaux covers not only the French war debt but virtually all the outstanding accounts between Great Britain and France. Announcement to this effect was made in the house of commons today by the chancellor of the exchequer, Winston Churchill.

PROMISE PERSONALS
PROMISE, Ore. (Special)—The Promise country has been having hot weather, the mercury reaching 100 above last Tuesday.

FAKE CURES SUSPECTED
WASHINGTON—Steps to prevent shipment of hair tonics and cure-alls, falsely advertised as having valuable radium properties, are to be taken by the department of agriculture.

With Barnes' Circus
The A. G. Barnes big 4-ring circus is coming to La Grande, July 13, with "Forerunners at the Court of Queen Anne," including three tribes of Indians.

Hot Lake Sanatorium
DR. W. T. PHY, Owner and Director.

CHICKEN DINNERS
--fried in southern style, home raised spring chicken is now on the menu. Vegetables from the Phymere gardens are served with it.

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"The Cowboy and The Countess"

Starting THURSDAY TOM MIX
—In—
"My Own Pal"

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