

MUSSOLINI, ITALY'S REBEL, FOUGHT TO FREE KING FROM FETTERS OF BOLSHEVIK CLIQUE

New Premier Braves Bugaboo of Statesmen and Hopes to Reconcile Vatican and Quirinal After Long Breach

REVOLUTIONISTS of history have always fought to break the iron grip of a hated monarch. Revolutionary leaders of history have always fought to dethrone a despotic power.

But the world today witnesses the rare spectacle of a rebel leader fighting to save his King and break—not the monarchical rule, but the fetters which were crushing that rule.

Benito Mussolini, once rebel leader of the Fascisti, is now Premier of Italy in the name of his King.

Mussolini and his hosts of Fascisti have freed their monarch from the control of stay-at-home radicals, who, shirking the duties and the hardships of war, seized the reins of Government and tried to tie to the tail of the Bolshevist kite of Messrs. Lenin, Trotsky & Co.

Mussolini and the Fascisti have won. Radicalism, communism, syndicalism, Bolshevism—all are driven to cover. The King has thanked the rebel-insurrectionist and they have exchanged pledges of mutual admiration and loyalty.

And now this startling Mussolini is attacking another tradition which has been a part of Italian Government policy since 1870.

Rebel May Reconcile Vatican and Quirinal

He wants to bring about a reconciliation between the Pope and the King—between the Vatican and the Quirinal.

Since 1870 every leading politician sedulously has avoided this dangerous question. It is loaded with dynamite. Any definite attempt to settle it was regarded as a quick method of political suicide.

But Mussolini seems to thrive on unprecedented actions that would be suicidal to most men. He has done that all his short life.

He was a Socialist first—a rabid, radical Socialist and the editor of one of the reddest of Socialist newspapers.

Then the war came and with it the refusal of his Socialist brethren to rally to their country's defense. That disgusted Mussolini. He was, first and foremost, a patriot; he loved his country with an all-embracing devotion that knew no party and no creeds in her hour of peril. His socialism, he thought, was for his country's good. But when war revealed it in all its lack of patriotism, he turned against the doctrine, flouted all radicals who refused to fight and himself went into the army as a private.

And he fought as rabidly for Italy and civilization as he had fought for socialism. He has a hundred scars on his body today to bear testimony that he had no arm-chair job in the army.

And, after the war, came revolution that might have meant imprisonment and execution for any other man. But for Mussolini—the premiership!

And now he dares tackle the explosive proposition of restoring the influence of the Vatican in the affairs of the Quirinal. Truly, there seems nothing that Mussolini is afraid to face.

Mussolini's attitude toward the Roman Catholic Church is well known in Italy. About a year ago, speaking in the Chamber, he said:

"The problem demanding most urgent solution is the problem of relations between the Church and State. For twenty years we have become imbued with the idea that the Vatican is a kind of old, blood-thirsty wolf, but all this, though perhaps brilliant in literature, ap-

and the American Red Cross. These women have no national organization nor have they adopted any formal name. They are simply known by a title which might correspond to "Feminine Fascisti."

Since the first uprising of the Fascisti these women have been even more tireless than the men in combating the forces of socialism and bolshevism. They do not take part in the actual armed fighting, but they are equally valuable in the work they have done in spreading among the wives and families of the Italian laboring classes the theory that socialism is unpatriotic and that the destiny of their country requires a return to government along more conservative lines.

When Mussolini first entered Naples, he was surprised to find the warm welcome that awaited him. He had gone to Naples with the intention of converting it to the doctrines of the Fascisti. He found it already converted and enthusiastic.



Benito Mussolini, chief of the Fascisti and head of the new Italian Ministry

Rebel that he is, Mussolini may be able to bring about this great change in Italian sentiment just as he has brought about the overthrow of the irresponsible Socialists and Reds who were bent on wrecking the whole structure of their modern civilization.

The Fascisti are in some respects an Italian counterpart of the American Legion. There are all young men and their youth is one of the boasts of Mussolini whenever he speaks of them.

In every section of Italy where there is a branch of the Fascisti there is also an organization of women who are a sort of cross between the Ladies' Auxiliary of the American Legion posts

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Dina Bernabei, leader among the women aides to the Fascisti



Mussolini as he appeared in Rome after triumphal entry

parallels among statesmen of the day. As has been said Mussolini ran a violent anti-government paper before the war. Then came Italy's entrance into the conflict against her old foe Austria, and Mussolini, an ardent patriot at heart, called upon his Socialist comrades to forget their political doctrines and to take up arms for the glory of the Fatherland.

But Italy's fighting men went to the front in 1915 and the Socialists availed themselves of the opportunity to dig themselves in and strengthen their organization at home.

Mussolini was disgusted with them. In violent protest, he quit his paper, denounced Socialists and socialism, joined the army and went to the front.

When the Austrians reduced a mountain position by concentrated artillery fire, these Arditi upset the work of consolidation of positions. They would crawl forward under the shadow of night, hurl their bombs into the Austrian trenches and when their grenades were gone they would jump into the dugouts with a knife in each hand to finish whatever work their bombs had failed to accomplish. They took the heart out of the Austrian advance and made a fine school of patriotism and self-sacrifice for the training of the man who is today Premier of Italy.

Mussolini's body bears the scars of over 100 wounds picked up in this reckless style of hand-to-hand fighting. Like all Italian patriots, he glories in these scars and points to them as the guarantee of his good intention and the bravery he has done for his country.

When the war was over and Mussolini returned to Italy,



Leaders of the Black Hosts which marched into Rome. The women Fascisti wore black uniforms from cap to shoes, except a white front to their silk caps.

Improved the opportunity and had entrenched themselves in political everywhere.

It was a dangerous situation, especially in the northern part of Italy, around Bologna, Mantua, Milan and Ferrara. The "Red" labor unions not only controlled the factory workers, but they also controlled the agricultural laborers. In that part of the country there are many large estates. The Socialist unions undertook to put the large land-owners out of business by declaring strikes. Crops were lost for want of gathering. In some districts, chateaux were seized by the Communists and the owners driven out. Socialist unions staked out claims on private property, marking the boundaries with the red flag and proceeded to cultivate the land for their own profit on a co-operative plan.

A similar Communist movement took place among the unions of factory workers in various parts of Italy. Workmen invaded the plants and appropriated them for their own uses. The red flag was much in evidence everywhere, and sometimes it bore the Bolshevist symbol of the "Sword and Hammer." Socialist deputations were sent to Moscow to consult with Lenin, who gave them his blessing and advice.

red shirt set the House of Savoy on the throne of a united Italy and banished Austria to the other side of the Italian Alps. It was the flag of triumph and the shirt of the patriot.

The Fascisti adopted the black shirt by way of contrast. Italians, it may be said, fight their internal battles in their shirt sleeves. Clad in their black shirts, the Fascisti gathered strength. The Communists began to talk louder. They chanted their slogans of revolt on the sidewalks. The leaning tower of Pisa was marked up one night with chalky mottoes, none of which stood for art, home or country.

Disgusted, the people of Italy turned with a sigh of relief to the call sent out by Benito.

"The Government is damned," he said, or words to that effect. "I will be the Government and save it." The Fascisti came into the game to stay.

They have one of the most remarkable patriots at their head the world has yet gazed upon. He is almost six feet tall. He stands above the heads of his followers, shakes his broad and capable shoulders, squares his heavy, intolerant jaw, blows impatiently through his full, purposeful lips and he orders. "Friends, Romans, countrymen, stand up for liberty!" Stuff like that means nothing to him. It's "Do this and do it now. Do that and shake a leg."

Those who have seen him address his followers say the most impressive sight of the ages of Roman history is to watch the thousands hail him with arms raised to arrest, right hand open, right arm raised to applaud.

Pretty "Queen of the Black Shirts" Had Great Part in Final Victory for Bloodless Fascisti

factories and proceeded to undo what little good the war had done.

The King attended heavy state dinners and received American tourists and unofficial observers from Washington. He even took a vacation and went in bathing assisting in the rescue of a grounded boatload of fishermen. The Premier wrung his hands. He sat on a boiling pot of coalition, which as in England, showed signs of no longer withstanding coals. From Milan to Palermo business lipped, politics seethed and sedition spotted from every street corner. The world was turned upside down.

Then came Benito and turned it right side up again. For a while after the war Mussolini was content to remain at the head of the Italian equivalent of the American Legion. He did not hesitate to try his hands at politics.

D'Annunzio—Gabriele the poet, soldier, patriot and filibuster—was amusing the world and dumfounding the Treaty of Versailles and its proud parents by occupying Fiume. That little bonfire of national burnings and yearnings lighted another flickering flame back on the soil of Italy. Benito had a great vision.

He had his organization. It was only 800,000 in numbers but a whole nation in aspirations. They adopted the sign of the fasces, those bundles of rods, tied together about the ax of their office, and carried by the victors as they preceded the chief magistrates when Rome was the mistress of the world. They stood for law and order. Hence, the Fascisti.

Black Shirt Succeeds Red as Real Symbol

Until after the war, the red shirt meant much in the history of Italy. It was worn by Garibaldi, who conducted his red-shirted guerrillas up and down the old Italian provinces, welding together the unquestionable spirit of the gathering. In some districts, chateaux were seized by the Communists and the owners driven out.

At first the Italian Cabinet sought to stem the invading tide of revolt. It held meetings and talked at length, but found no solution. It was no secret that the Treasury was in the throes of starvation. Premier Facta admitted to his colleagues that the march back to normalcy had found the nation out of step. Minister of the Treasury Facta talked of tying up the Treasury, but his throat was hollow and so very empty.

Fully armed, 1,000,000 strong, the Fascisti marched on Rome with only one slogan: "We want action."

Florence, Pisa and Cremona hailed them with open arms. The Communist Party officially withdrew from the scene, released its partisans from their oaths and even their Deputies resigned. "Do likewise," cried the populace, and the King said nothing.

Then the evening meeting of the King and Mussolini. His Majesty publicly embraced Deputy Di Vecchi, leading member of the Fascisti in Parliament and a military authority of considerable

standing in the community of interest Italian affairs. This was followed by Benito's arrival in Rome and his summons to the Quirinal.

There he promptly accepted the King's unhesitating invitation to form a Ministry. Benito offered and accepted three portfolios, the premiership and Ministries of Internal and Foreign Affairs.

Diaz, Hero of War, Took Cabinet Place

That his enemies and doubting Thomases might have something to say about while he organized his Government, Benito lost no time in persuading General Diaz, hero of Italy's recapture of the war, to become Minister of War and Admiral Thaon di Rea, the idol of the fleet, to accept the finance post. This was an army that no opposition in Italian politics could withstand—Benito at the head of his military veterans, near million trade unionists, the d'Annunzio partisans and the heads of the army and the navy. They threw up the sponge and asked to be allowed a rest on the hand wagon.

Italy's war legion had taken control of the Government. As Cavour sat in his study and issued wordily but otherwise harmless manifestos against Garibaldi in the good old days of the red shirt, so did Victor Emmanuel III go on a vacation on the eve of the uprising in the days of the black. And the fact that neither displayed the slightest intention of sending the aging leaders of authority after the uprising leaders shows that Italy's King learned a great lesson from the life of Italy's great statesman and patriot. The Italian hand of tradition is not always manipulated by a drenched De Medici. It has its beneficent deeds to perform as well.

To Americans the Fascisti may seem like a case of out of the trying pen into the fire—away from radicalism and into the limbo of hidebound reaction. That is not so.

And so, conservative forces have taken the first successful and startlingly revolutionary step for direct action. They stole a page from the book of the Communist's enemies. All ask is that Italy be permitted to perform its part.

He has a high forehead heightened by the receding line of hair, which he always wears carefully barbered. He is lithe about it. A shot of gray runs through that, covering the young man he is, otherwise he looks the young man he is. He is now in his forties. His eyebrows are beautifully curved into a compelling, breathing, aquiline. His eyes were resting in anger, slightly protruding, making his gaze seem to pierce.

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