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Most Imposing Political Figure

BENITO MUSSOLINI

His Life And Work

By Col. Garibaldi

(ITALIAN CONSUL IN CEYLON)

It is not only with the pride of an Italian, but also with the conviction of an impassionate examiner of facts, that I begin this lecture with the statement that Mussolini is to-day the most imposing political figure of the world. And this because his wonderful work has not been restricted only to his own country, but begins to be felt in the whole international sphere. The echo of the completion of the "Four Powers Pact" is still ringing in political ambients and its worthiness may be judged very soon, since the withdrawal of Germany from the League of Nations may give occasion for the pact to be brought into practical operation. Everybody knows that the main artificer of this pact was Signor Mussolini himself.

But Mussolini's share in international politics is not only the direct work he has already done and is still contributing for bringing about a settlement of European affairs and a secure peace for all the world, but is also, and perhaps to a greater extent, the great influence of his creed and his doctrines in transforming the whole outlook of many European countries, and in awakening the National sentiment of many peoples, who, similarly to the Italian, have suffered and are still suffering from the atrocious effects of the last war.

Creator of Fascism

Mussolini was the creator of Fascism, and while Fascism, till a few years ago was believed to be exclusively an Italian phenomenon, now instead it is spreading in almost every civilised country, and more than one European state has already adopted Mussolini's preachings and is ruled by a Fascist organisation. Nazism and Hitlerism were once identical words with Fascism, and if they are now gradually changing meaning, this is due to the different application of the principle on the part of German people, who naturally, possess a different character and mentality of the Italian people. It remains, however, an unconfuted fact that the Nazi movement had its origin under the impulse and in imitation of the Italian Fascist movement, and that it adopted the principal dogmas of Fascist creed and even the main points of Fascist organisation.

An intimate knowledge of Mussolini's life and character will certainly help to understand how he came to be the first Man of his country and one of the most outstanding figures of the world.

Humble Parentage

It is generally known that Italy's Premier was born of very humble parentage since his father was only a village blacksmith and his mother a village teacher. It happened in Predappio, a small agricultural town in Central Italy, on the 29th July 1883. To increase their very small

income Mussolini's parents kept also a very unpretentious inn on the main road, where they sold drinks and provisions to the wayfarers. But old Signor Mussolini, although only a blacksmith and an innkeeper, was in no way an ordinary and coarse man, on the contrary he possessed, for a man of his station of life, a very good general culture, and he succeeded in becoming one of the most popular and influential men of his town, where eventually he was elected a municipal councillor and once he even occupied the mayoral seat.

From the father Mussolini inherited the fighting spirit and the political faith, which was distinctly socialist and proletarian.

Denied Clerkship

After a primary education imparted at home, where he also learnt the profession of blacksmith, Mussolini was admitted at the Boarding College of the Salesian Fathers in Faenza, and from there he passed to the Training College of Forlimpopoli, where at the age of 18 he gained the diploma of Teacher for primary schools. With this diploma as qualification he applied for a position as a clerk of the Municipality of his home town, but he was refused, and his father is said to have proffered against the then Mayor the following utterance: "You will be ashamed some day to have refused him this position, so as they are ashamed at the town where Francesco Crispi was born, because they refused that great man the position of Secretary to the Municipality". Francesco Crispi had been one of the best of Garibaldi's soldiers, a Premier of Italy, and a celebrated figure also in International politics.

Mussolini's debut as a teacher came soon after, having been appointed schoolmaster of a little township in Emilia. Here he also began his political life, by keeping in strict contact with the socialist and revolutionary heads of that district. But a man of Mussolini's nature could not be kept for long in that narrow kind of life, and as soon as he completed the first term of teaching he decided to emigrate, and he left for Switzerland.

Shaping the Future

Here he begins a life of disappointments and hardships, which was very instrumental in shaping his whole future character. Having at first found a temporary job as a bricklayer's boy, he was soon dismissed because his general appearance was too gentlemanly. Then he experienced the most cruel stages of unemployment and starvation. He spent many a night under the arched structure of a bridge in Lausanne the only place where he could find free shelter, but one morning a policeman woke him and had him arrested on a charge of vagrancy. It is very notable, the fact that this happened in the year 1902, and exactly 20 years after Mussolini as the Italian Premier, had also in the same city a meeting with Lord Curzon and Monsieur Poincare to discuss European affairs. The three statesmen were assembled in a room of a sumptuous hotel overlooking the bridge where Mussolini had his first experience of being arrested. The Inspector Gene-

DELIMITATION COMMISSION

Mannar—Mullaitivu Seat

PRESENT ELECTORATE TO CONTINUE

The Delimitation Commission consisting of Messrs M. M. Wedderburn, Stanley Obeyesekera and J. C. W. Rock heard evidence on Friday at Mannar. Mr. S. M. Anantham, and Mr. F. J. A. Ponrajah gave evidence.

An additional seat for the Northern Province was suggested by Mr. Ponrajah, while Mr. Anantham would have the division of electorate to remain as at present.

Mr. Wedderburn referred to a memorial from Mullaitivu residents urging for a separate seat for Mullaitivu.

It was agreed that the present arrangement should stand, namely, one seat for Mannar and Mullaitivu as both districts are similar in character and interest.

ral of the Lausanne Police at a certain moment entered the assembly room to see about his service, and addressing Signor Mussolini he asked whether the Italian Premier was satisfied.

"Do You Remember?"

"I am very satisfied," Mussolini replied pointing, from the large window, towards the bridge which could be very well seen. "Do you remember, Inspector? It was there that your men had me arrested twenty years ago!"

"C'est la vie, this is the life, Your Excellency", replied apologetically the confused Inspector General with a very deep bow.

After that arrest the future Premier, having lost his gentlemanly appearance on account of the shabbiness of his attire, could finally find another job, still in the bricklaying line. He was apprentice first, then he became a full bricklayer, and finally he specialised as a decorative cement moulder. During the winter season, when bricklayers were not in demand, he was employed in a wine shop as a messenger boy, earning occasional tips from customers to whom he delivered their purchases at home.

His Education

While the future Statesman, still in his teens, managed in such a way in making a living, he found also time to improve his education in philosophical and political matters, by attending the free lectures at the University, where Vilfredo Parato, a great Italian scientist, was teaching political economy.

Since then Mussolini became acquainted with the principal works of Friedrich Nietzsche, Shopenhauer, George Sorel, and even his present doctrines show the great influence exercised by those great masters. He became also very proficient in many modern languages, and could soon master French, German, English, Russian and Spanish. As a pastime he learned also how to play Violin, and he never ceased to improve his knowledge of music. It is a well known fact that even now, amongst his various duties of Minister with five portfolios, he finds time to devote daily

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HINDUISM IN CEYLON

ANCIENT AND PRE-HISTORIC SHRINES

Interaction Between Hinduism And Buddhism

By Swami Jagadiswarananda

(Continued from our last issue)

THERE is a belief that in Adam's Peak, the second highest peak of Ceylon, about 7500 feet high above the sea level, and the holiest place of pilgrimage for the Buddhists, Buddha came by air and left his foot-prints. The Hindus on the other hand, believe that the foot-prints are those of god Siva and hence make pilgrimages there very frequently. From the peak one can get the most beautiful natural scenery of Ceylon. It is characteristic of Hindu culture to convert beautiful mountain peaks into places of worship. Hence the origination of rock temples at Trichinopoly, Pakshi Tirtha in the South and Amarnath, Kedarnath, Badrinarayana, etc., in the North.

An Ancient Hindu Shrine

In Trincomalee, one of the most important naval bases in the East, lies another very ancient Hindu shrine, named Swami Rock. The grandeur of the site probably led to its selection as a place of worship even in the pre-Buddhistic age, long before organized Hinduism built a shrine at the spot. St. Nihal Singh in his *Ceylon, New and Old* says, "This temple is half as old as time. Its foundations are lost in the mist of mythology. According to one account it certainly existed 2500 years B. C. The present name is a corruption of Thirukanath Malai derived from 'Konath', the deity to whom the place was originally dedicated. In the vernacular now in use however the god is spoken of as Koneswara Swamy or Siva." The temple in which the image was enshrined was a thousand-pillared magnificent edifice but the Portuguese vandals in their greed of gold destroyed it completely. Worship nevertheless continues. The Portuguese not only took away jewels and wealth but smashed the pillars, threw them into the ocean and used some fragments of the thousand pillars for their buildings. One solitary stern pillar of the early Hindu type still remains. From the precipice downwards to the deep sea there is a cleft in which is carved in relief "Konesh", who is worshipped by streams of pilgrims. There is a tradition that Ravana, king of Lanka, was a daily worshipper of the temple, but as daily attendance to the temple from his place was troublesome to him, he wanted to remove the temple wholesale to his palace but he was miraculously stopped.

One of the Oldest in the World

The pre-historic temple at Muiriswara Siva at Chilaw has a lure for the Hindus and the Buddhists alike. Traditions go to say that it is a Ceylon shrine at which Ramachandra worshipped. Historians cannot say exactly how many centuries back the temple was constructed. However the legend is that it was built by Ramachandra after the defeat of Ravana before returning to India. St.

Nihal Singh opines that it is one of the oldest places of worship in the world. Siva is the presiding deity here and is given the first and foremost chamber in the sacred shrine. But the shrine is particularly sacred to his consort Parvati. It is called the Pithasthan of Bhadra Kali. There are figures of all the deities of Hindu mythology, amongst which the one with six heads and twelve hands representing God Skanda in his martial character was presented to the temple by an ancient king of Malabar coast. A festival is held in commemoration of the meeting of Parvati with Agastya Muni who visiting the island from India led a hermit's life for some years at the shrine.

Shrines at Dondra and Mannar

The ancient Vishnu temple at Dondra was one of the most celebrated in Ceylon. The place has been the retreat of the devotees and pilgrims from the remotest time. There are some Buddhist Digobas but the most important temple is a shrine which in very early times had been erected by the Hindus in honour of God Vishnu. The present temple is 1500 years old, and all the Kings of Ceylon, both Hindu and Buddhist, were devotees of this shrine. The Sri Kedareshwara Siva temple near Mannar is another very, very old temple. The Portuguese vandals repeatedly destroyed both the temples at Dondra and Mannar and plundered their riches. The Mannar temple was said to have been built by the celestial architect Viswakarma, but when it was in ruins Agastya Muni during his visit to Ceylon rebuilt it. Both the Hindus and the Buddhists come here for worship. Sigiriya, a precipitous bald rock on which a Ceylon King built his palace, is very beautiful. There we can see the famous frescos (also a few at the Galu Vihara in Polonnaruwa), the most delicate and beautiful examples of Buddhist art in Ceylon. The old paintings of the Indian caves of Ajanta are just like them. Dr. Earnst Waldsmid, curator of the Indian section of the Prussian State museum, Berlin, who was recently in Ceylon on a study-tour, remarked in a lecture at the Colombo Museum that the frescos of the "Ladies of Sigiriya" in their vivid colours were the wonderful creations of Indian genius and the most valuable treasures of art. The art of Ajanta and Sigiriya was at its height between the 5th and 7th centuries A.D.

Hindu-Buddhist Art

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries South India supplied kings and ambassadors of culture to the Kandyan kingdom. What remains of the palace of Kandy, shorn of all its adornments, has a strange resemblance to the one at Tanjore. It is evident that the last kings at Kandy imitated the courts at Tanjore and Madura a great deal. The last Tamil kings of Ceylon were rather Hindu in culture, but they possessed sufficient tact not

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