

July 2021

Facts about Figures

W. F. Lilleston

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.du.edu/dlr>

Recommended Citation

W. F. Lilleston, Facts about Figures, 21 Dicta 1 (1944).

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Denver Law Review at Digital Commons @ DU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Denver Law Review by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ DU. For more information, please contact jennifer.cox@du.edu, dig-commons@du.edu.

DICTA

Vol. XXI

JANUARY, 1944

No. 1

Facts About Figures

BY W. F. LILLESTON*

In these days of government by hobby-lobby and the cross-fire of alphabetical agencies and the blessings of bureaucracy, it is a relief to get away from a law office and to enjoy the Four Freedoms out here in the suburbs of Kansas. I have equally enjoyed this fine introduction by our distinguished toastmaster. As I understand your rules of pleading in Colorado, any *undenied* allegations made by the toastmaster concerning me will be taken as true. Otherwise the burden of proof might be hard to sustain.

It is always refreshing to be among the mountains and the people of your beautiful state, especially at a co-ed banquet with the kitchen cabinet. I began taking my vacations in Colorado many, many years ago, in the good old horse-and-buggy days, before the taxpayer was substituted for the horse. Those were the days when Mae West made famous the curvature of the spine, and her curvilinear attainments troubled old men by creating the illusion of streamlined bifocals. One might infer that this reference to Mae West had something to do with my subject—"Facts About Figures." But it has not. And you must not expect any Mae West *story* from me, because, architecturally speaking, she is mostly *mezzanine*. But tonight I am going to talk about masculine figures.

Someone suggested that at this time it would be appropriate to discuss some phase of international relations. But about all we hear these days is war and controversy, blood and battles. And so tonight, in order to avoid the damnable iteration of depressing things, I am not going to argue or fuss or disagree with anybody about anything. Of course, as a lawyer I was taught to argue; but as a married man, I have been taught not to. Tonight the feminine influence prevails. It could hardly be otherwise tonight because both Wichita and Colorado Springs are in what are called defense areas, with many thousands of defense workers who are women, all of whom seem to be wearing trousers. Everywhere there are fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, uncles

*Of the Wichita, Kansas, bar. Address before the annual banquet of the Colorado Bar Association at Colorado Springs, September 18, 1943.

and aunts in their pants. Indeed, the war has lent its impulse to every department of life, and we live in a new world.

We live in a world in which almost every country is dominated by some one man who "like Cato gives his little senate laws and sits attentive to his own applause." In almost every important country in the world, some vainglorious herald of the millennial dawn, some Delphic oracle of a new order, some pseudo-saviour of the Aryan race or some little Caesar of a fool's paradise, arises to say, like the Grand Monarch of France, "I am the state! I am Sir Oracle, and when I ope my lips, let no dog bark!" This epidemic of "magnificent obsessions," this plague of autocrats, suggested to me the well known fact that biography is the most interesting form of history. Biography is history in the flesh. So today I am going to talk to you about history on the hoof. I am going to talk to you sketchily about the personal lives of some of the world's national leaders, men who are famous and men who are infamous, in other parts of the world. I hope that this discussion will contribute to realistic thinking.

First to come and first to go was that dynamo of sound effects, Benito Mussolini, the megaphone of Fascism, the most intellectual and the most foolish ruler on earth. As old Aunt Jane Madison used to say, back in Kentucky, "He's a smart child, but he ain't got no sense!" He was born in eastern Italy in the little town of Predappio in the lovely old papal province of the Romagna. I remember it well. There, all over the countryside, the trees are shorn of their limbs and branches except for the foliage at the top, and in the early summer great grapevines, heavy with the promise of the coming vintage, swing in luxuriant festoons from tree to tree. There in the busy fields, Poverty in all its pathos is beautiful with patience and musical with hope. If Benito Mussolini had opened the windows of his soul to those blue Italian skies, he might have been a poet. But he chose otherwise.

His mother was a school teacher and his father was a blacksmith. His father was also a revolutionary socialistic agitator. Mussolini was christened Benito after the Mexican revolutionist Benito Juarez. In 1937, when we were motoring from Padua to Ravenna, we stopped at a little wide place in the road to get some petrol (gasoline). I said to the Italian chauffeur, "What place is this?" I thought he would explode. "Why," he said, "this is Predappio, the birthplace of Il Duce," and he thrust his hand out in a Fascist salute. This didn't surprise me much because whenever Americans are around, most Italians have their hands out for a handout. But he reverently pointed to a house nearby which is now a memorial to the origin of his hero. Up there in that memorial tourists were shown a room, one corner of which was still covered with straw bedding such as Mussolini had to sleep on when a child. In those days of Benito's infancy no one would have imagined that there on that

straw were the nest and the Nestor of Fascism. When I was a boy back in Kentucky we used to go out to the barn in the winter-time and scatter straw in the stalls as bedding for a similar kind of livestock, noted for their vocal attainments; but none of them ever brayed more lustily than Mussolini.

Benito received a good education. He attended a religious school, like Stalin and Mustapha Kemal, and afterwards graduated from the University of Lausanne, in Switzerland. He was early drawn to Switzerland as the refuge of political fugitives from other lands. In his school days he also worked as a bricklayer and occasionally stole food from the picnic baskets of English tourists in Swiss parks. He had more luck in stealing from the English in those days than he has had recently.

In Switzerland he made the acquaintance of Lenin, the great Russian Communist, and of a Madame Balabanov, a Russian exile who had some money. Driven back and forth between Italy and Switzerland by the secret police, he was in jail on eleven different occasions. Afterwards young Mussolini went back to Italy and represented the Communist party in its agitations. During this period he always carried in his pocket a little medallion of Karl Marx, the patron saint of socialism. Naturally he was estranged from the church of his youth.

In the meantime there appeared a beautiful young Italian girl who had been a waitress in Forli and who afterwards came up to Predappio to work for the Mussolinis. Young Benito fell in love with her and they were married. She is the present wife of Mussolini.

In those early days Benito ran a little newspaper in Forli, called *The Class War*. Later on he became the editor of the great radical newspaper called *Avanti* in Milan. Somehow he had fallen out with the Communists, and Lenin afterwards said that they had lost the ablest of their Italian associates.

When the first World War came on Mussolini, unlike most Socialists, wanted Italy to join the Allies, possibly because his newspaper, then *Popolo d' Italia*, was supported with French money, and after Italy declared war, Mussolini went into the Italian army and was grievously wounded in battle. He emerged from the war a mere corporal. Then he happened to remember that Napoleon too was an Italian and a little corporal, the original Mr. Five-by-Five. But finally he became convinced that he, Mussolini, was the reincarnation of Julius Caesar, failing to distinguish between the transmigration of *souls* and the transmigration of *heels*.

Mussolini will be remembered as the man who established Fascism in Italy. What is Fascism? It is "the baseless fabric of a vision" to restore the Roman empire. Its emblem is the old Roman fasces, a bundle of rods with the blade of a battle ax projecting from one end. In ancient

times it was carried before high Roman officials as an emblem of authority. If you will reach in your pockets you can see the fasces on one side of an American dime. Fascism was, first, Mussolini and, second, a peculiar form of economic administration known as the corporative industries of Italy. All of the productive and commercial activities of Italy were divided into twenty-two units, all rigidly regulated by the government. For instance, there would be one unit for mining, one for transportation, one for hotels and restaurants, one for the wine industry, and so forth—somewhat after the fashion of our old N. R. A. which died a-bornin'. Now instead of the lawmakers being elected from territorial districts as congressmen are elected in this country, the Italian lawmakers were chosen by these economic units, including both employers and employees. But of course the fear of the Lord was the beginning of wisdom, and somehow only Fascists were elected. Undoubtedly in the beginning the conservative elements of Italy chose Fascism because they thought it preferable to Communism. But Fascism preserved the shadow without the substance of private capitalism and in substituting Mussolini for the King as the actual ruler of the country, Italy simply traded a stuffed shirt for an empty barrel.

So much for the domestic policy of Fascism. In foreign policy Mussolini was not so successful.

After the first World War, Mussolini, like most Italians, turned against the Allies because Italy had not received all they thought she had been promised in the secret Treaty of London in April, 1915, and so he jumped from the frying pan of the Allies into the fire of the Axis, and the Roman eagle became the stool-pigeon of Hitler.

The greatest triumph of insignificance on earth is Adolph Hitler. He was humbly born, a frail little weakling; he passed from cheerless childhood through a baffled youth into a neurotic manhood; he did not even have a grade school education; he emerged from a great war a mere corporal. And yet he has made the German staff and the German army a mere tail in his kite, and he has overrun more territory by conquest than any other white man that ever lived.

Who is Adolph Hitler? To answer that question we must examine a most peculiar family tree. Well, back in 1837 an itinerant mill-hand by the name of Johann Hiedler wandered over to the Austrian village of Strones, where he met a girl named Marie Schickelgruber, by whom he had a son. As a result of this un-Christian union, this son was christened "Alois." Five years after the birth of their son, the romance between Johann Hiedler and Marie Schickelgruber ripened into marriage. Forty-one years after the birth of this son, by some sort of *nunc pro tunc* order, the boy was legitimized according to law. However, during the period covered by this speech, he remained what the lawyers call *filius nullius*, which is the Latin for a woods colt. On account of the infor-

mality of his origin, Alois took his mother's name, Schickelgruber, but upon being legitimized, he afterwards became known as Alois Hitler. Tonight he will be known as Alois Schickelgruber.

Upon growing up to man's estate, Alois became rather a connoisseur of feminine antiques and married a woman many years older than he was. But she had some money. After they were married and Mrs. Hitler had time to analyze her investment and appraise the qualities of the man she had thus invited to her bed and board, the thing that most impressed her about Alois was his ignorance. It was unique. So she actually sent her husband to school. But the teachers found that the ignorance of Alois was not only unique, it was progressive. He was absolutely allergic to knowledge. So the teachers as tactfully as they could told Mrs. Hitler that her husband had never had a lucid interval in his life and needed a change. So the old woman bought Alois a place in the Austrian civil service where he became a minor customs official. He soon learned to get drunk, and when he got drunk he thought he was *somebody*. Then they knew his ignorance was incurable.

Now Alois had a cousin, a young peasant girl by the name of Klara Poelzl, who came into the Hitler household as a house-maid. She was a pensive and pretty young lady with large and wistful brown eyes, full of dreams and visions. The little outcast was in a wretched situation. There was only one bright spot in her life and that was when old Alois Schickelgruber came home *lit up*. She finally summoned up enough courage to leave, and when she stopped going she found herself in the most civilized city in the world, Vienna. There she remained ten years, but nothing is known of her simple story in the big city except that no suspicion of impropriety ever clung to her name. Apparently at the end of a decade she had drained her cup of bitterness and, still forlorn and friendless, she turned to her only refuge—home and homeless in the Austrian mountains, where she continued her life of penury and frustration. She, Klara Poelzl, was the only woman that Adolph Hitler ever loved.

Old Alois was married three times. His elderly wife died in 1883. Six weeks later old Alois married again. This second wife died a year later. Again Alois' broken heart was soon mended and the blear-eyed old reprobate began to reconnoiter for a more *durable mate*. Within three months he had married the helpless and unresisting Klara Poelzl, who became the mother of Adolph Hitler. Thus Adolph Hitler was the result of inbreeding, his father having married a second cousin.

Klara Poelzl having been to the beautiful city, proposed to her son, first, to go to Vienna and, second, to *be somebody*. He *compromised* with her, and just went to Vienna. He was glad to because he hated his father, old Alois. Evidently Adolph has tried to be everything his father was not. Old Alois made a specialty of women. Adolph cares nothing

about them. Old Alois loved strong drink. Adolph Hitler cares nothing about it. Adolph turned his back upon his native land and became a citizen of Germany. He fought in between forty and fifty battles in the first World War, received the Iron Cross and other symbols of a brave and obedient soldier, but his idiosyncrasies were such that he came out of the war just a corporal. Showing none of the qualities of leadership in war, he is now known as the Fuehrer, that is to say the leader, of seventy million Germans and the scourge of Europe. No other man of such low and disgraceful antecedents ever went so far in the attainment of power until he was stopped by the genius of another dictator.

Probably the ablest ruler in the world today is Joseph Stalin of Russia. Certainly Russia under his leadership has rendered immortal service to the cause of the Allies. His life is a thrilling story of adventure in good and evil, in crime and courage. He is not a European at all. He prides himself on being an Asiatic. When he met his first Japanese interviewer, he said, "I too am an Asiatic." Stalin's native tongue was not Russian. It was the language of the Caucasus mountains. He still speaks Russian with the native accent of his origin. You see, Russian and Georgian are not only different languages, but they have different alphabets. Stalin was born near Tiflis in Asiatic Transcaucasia where the people eat horse-meat on festive occasions and where the Germans eat crow. His mother must have had some suspicions about Joe's propensities because she somehow arranged to have him entered as a student, of all things, in a theological seminary. I can imagine her saying to her son, "Joe, you worry me. Maybe if you would become a priest it would keep you out of mischief." But at the end of four years in a theological seminary Joseph Stalin came out an atheist and a Socialist. Those of the Ten Commandments which are at the foundation of private property: thou shall not covet and thou shalt not steal, seemed unduly to limit his peculiar talents, or as we say, to cramp his style. It was time for him to adopt some gainful occupation and he did; he became a revolutionist and a robber. Once when he dynamited a safe or blew up a train, the stolen securities were smuggled away to Paris to Litvinov, who was later the Russian Ambassador to Washington. Litvinov was selling the stolen goods in Paris when the French police got after him and ran him out of the country into England. Finally Joe's enthusiasm got the better of him and he grew careless; he threw a bomb at a train and killed twenty or thirty people. Then it was that Lenin wrote him a letter, saying in substance, "Joe, you must restrain your hilarity or you will become unpopular." Lenin also had Stalin temporarily expelled from the Communist party. Joe did become unpopular and served five terms in prison or in exile. He was like Mussolini; when he was in jail he was at home. He was in exile above the Arctic Circle when the Russian revolution broke out in 1917. It was the revolution that liberated him.

I forgot to tell you that Stalin is not Stalin at all. His real name is Yosif Visarionovitch Dzhughashvili. Stalin means "steel," a metal, not "steal." And Litvinov's name is not Litvinov at all, his real name is Vallakh. And Lenin was not Lenin at all. His real name was Ulanov Vladimir Ilyitch. And Molotov, the foreign Minister of Russia, is not Molotov at all. His real name is Akriabin. Molotov is a Russian word meaning "the hammer." And Trotsky's real name was not Trotsky, his real name was Bronstein.

What is this thing called Russian Communism? Well, it certainly does not mean the free access of the people to a community of goods. It means quite the contrary. The letters "U.S.S.R.," so frequently seen on maps of Russia, simply mean "The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics." The Russian scheme of economics and government is pure Marxist Socialism; that is to say, the government ownership and operation of the instruments of production, manufacture and distribution. Russian Communism connotes, not the redistribution, but the abolition of private property. It also teaches atheism. The government itself maintains museums of atheism in all the big cities. I have been in them myself in Leningrad and Moscow.

Being an atheist, Stalin is just the antithesis of our Chinese ally, Chiang Kai Shek. Chiang Kai Shek has two religions. In fact, he joined our church, the Methodist church, provoking Francis Gunther to say, "There is Methodism in his madness." At the same time Chiang Kai Shek also continues to conform to the Chinese ritual. In other words, in anticipation of the after-life, he has two forms of fire insurance. Stalin has none.

Stalin has a fine villa, or datcha, out in the country from Moscow. This place was built in the old days by a Russian millionaire and has a wall completely surrounding the estate. Stalin has his servants, his books and his automobiles, but no great enthusiasm for luxury or self-indulgence. He smokes a pipe incessantly, likes strong drink and holds his liquor well. This is somewhat shocking to a man like me, because in prohibition Kansas our state song is "Drink to Me Only with Thine Eyes." Of course, in Kansas, we are not all *musical*, and occasionally you will find, even there, a *communing* Christian who has read in the Bible that the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak, only to find that in prohibition Kansas the flesh is willing but the *spirits* are weak. However, I am not holding up Stalin's fondness for strong drink as an example to Americans, because once when I was in Leningrad I had a purely intellectual curiosity to drink some Russian vodka myself, and I did. It tasted like an incendiary bomb. Russian vodka will burn off anything it touches in transit. It is the quickest tonsillectomy known to man. I had tasted French absinthe and Swedish punch and I had been kicked by a mule; but I was not prepared for the high voltage of the native

vodka. If some Russian general would go out to the German lines with an adequate supply of Russian vodka and simply say, "Gentlemen, the drinks are on me" the war would be over.

In spite of his rather busy revolutionary career, Stalin found time to run a radical paper at Baku on the Caspian Sea. It was published in the Georgian language. Later he actually became an editor of the great Communist paper *Pravda*, still published in Moscow.

In his checkered life he has had three wives. I do not know that he was married three times, because in Communist Russia marriage is a custom more honored in the breach than in the observance. In the United States we say, "Blest Be the Tie that Binds." In Russia they say, "Blest Be the Tie that Does *Not* Bind." In the United States marriage is a sacrament, a religious institution; in Russia they do not believe in religion. In consequence, the daughters of the Russian Revolution find the family tree a very complicated thing. It makes me think of the rich man who gave a thousand dollars to have his family tree *looked up*, and then gave ten thousand dollars to have it *hushed up*.

When I was in Moscow I heard a story that I think is pertinent. An old man was walking along the street, and a kid came running out of a house into the arms of the old man. The old man said, "Where do you think you are going?" "Well," the kid said, "they are fighting." "Who is fighting?" "Pa and ma." "Well," the old man said, "who is your pa?" "Why," said the kid, "that's what they are fighting about!"

Joseph Stalin led the most dangerous life and is the bravest of all the dictators. For twenty years before the Russian revolution, while other Communists lived safely and comfortably in Switzerland and France, Joseph Stalin stuck to Russia, a homeless fugitive moving stealthily and anonymously in the twilight zone of the underworld and mingling his shadow with the castaways of both sexes. In the mastery of his will and the cunning of his mind, he is one of the great leaders of all time. Certain it is that no army ever wrote a brighter chapter in the history of mankind than the heroic Russian Army of your day and mine.

Stalin represents a national government and an international ideology. The difficulty of his task even in time of peace cannot be overestimated because Russia is a compound of many Russias. Its blood stream is fed by the tributary arteries of one hundred different races, speaking one hundred and sixty different dialects, all scattered over one-sixth of the area of the earth, in Asia and Europe, and all seething with that conflict between their eastern instincts and their western aspirations. Such a polyglot and mongrel confusion of races, tongues, beliefs, customs and passions could not be assimilated or unified. But it could be destroyed and displaced by another social order. This the Communists

did. With one stroke they destroyed the past. In my opinion, in another generation, the compulsory integration of Russia in Europe and Asia, in the development of Communism, and the voluntary disintegration of the British Empire, in the development of democracy, will result in Russia being the strongest power on earth.

Now the last dictator I am going to discuss is in a *certain part* of the Western Hemisphere. I hope that in mentioning him I shall not transcend the bounds of good taste. After all, this is a free country. You are all familiar with the habitat of this dictator, and I make bold to call him by name. Of course, he is none other than President Getulio Vargas of Brazil. Vargas in his youth was a gaucho, a cowboy, in the plains of Brazil. Not caring much about food or money, he studied law. He became President of Brazil as a result of a revolutionary coup and having become president he determined to save civilization and preserve the democratic way of life. So he abolished parliamentary government and decided that there should not be any more presidential elections, and there haven't been any. Of course, different dictators have different techniques.

So we have on our side two dictators, Stalin of Russia and Vargas of Brazil. If any more want to join and help our side, I am in favor of opening the doors of the church, singing the hymn of invitation, and extending the right hand of fellowship. Of course, our enemies have had on their side two dictators, Hitler and Mussolini. We have on our side the Empire of Great Britain. Our enemies have on their side the Empire of Japan. We have on our side the Republic of the United States and our enemies have on their side the Republic of Finland. Obviously, the first remedy for autocracy on both sides is a democratic form of government under which the masses of mankind may choose their own rulers.

But if there are democracies and dictators on both sides, what are we fighting for? We are fighting because we have been ruthlessly attacked by a yellow horde of Asiatic barbarians. We are fighting for our very existence. We are fighting the usurpations of autocrats. We are fighting for the personal liberty of self-commanding men, the castle that is our home, the shrine that is our fireside, the privacy of private property and private enterprise. We are fighting for that *fifth* freedom—the freedom of every man to be *unequal* according to his merits.

We are fighting to the end that our country may be a land without a master and without a slave. We are fighting for the right of every decent American to pursue the destiny of his own choice upon the wings of his own desire.

DICTA

Published monthly by the Denver and Colorado Bar Associations.

20 cents a copy

\$1.75 a year

BOARD OF EDITORS

GEORGE A. TROUT.....*Editor-in-Chief*

CECIL M. DRAPER

BERTON T. GOBBLE

HUBERT D. HENRY

CHARLES H. HAINES, JR.

ROYAL C. RUBRIGHT

BARBARA LEE GORDON

SYDNEY H. GROSSMAN, *Business Manager*

Address all communications concerning:

Editorial matters of the Denver Bar Association, to Dicta, George A. Trout, Editor-in-Chief, 214 State Capitol, Denver 2, Colo.

Editorial matters of the Colorado Bar Association to Hubert D. Henry, 505 E. 8 C. Bldg., Denver 2, Colo.

Advertising, to Dicta, Sydney H. Grossman, Business Manager, 617 Symes Bldg., Denver 2, Colo.

Subscriptions, to Dicta, Fred E. Neef, Secretary, Denver Bar Association, 902 Midland Savings Bldg., Denver 2, Colo.

HONOR ROLL

Members of the Denver Bar Association Who Have Lost
Their Lives in the Service of the United Nations

Alvin Rosenbaum, First Lieutenant, United States Army Air
Forces, August 2, 1943.

Ten Applications for Mid-winter Bar Exams

Despite the war ten applications were received by the law and bar committees of the Colorado Supreme Court for permission to take the mid-winter bar examinations in Denver, January 5, 6, 7 and 8, 1944. The names and addresses of the applicants are:

David G. Atkinson, 930 West Mountain St., Fort Collins; W. E. Bondurant, Jr., 1144 Thirteenth St., Boulder; Jay Gould Colby, Jr., 1626 Logan St., Denver; Arnold Reeve Gilbert, 2632 Wolff St., Denver; Lela Siebert Gilbert, 2632 Wolff St., Denver; Ruth Gottlieb, 211 Beech St., Trinidad; Donald Lyon Lorenz, 1301 High St., Denver; William Rann Newcomb, Olin Hotel, Denver; Toussaint L'Ouverture Sigler, 2800 Glenarm Place, Denver, and Taul Watanabe, 2181 South Columbine St., Denver.