



# The Poet and the Dictator: Lauro de Bosis Resists Fascism in Italy and America

*Jean Mudge*

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## **The Poet and the Dictator: Lauro de Bosis Resists Fascism in Italy and America** Jean Mudge

This vivid biography is a study of the life and times of the Italian poet-activist, Lauro de Bosis. Remarkably productive as a poet, cultural diplomat, and political subversive, de Bosis founded and lead an underground resistance group, the National Alliance for Liberty. His actions culminated in a dramatic solo flight over Rome in October 1931, showering the city with protest leaflets against the Fascist dictatorship before plunging to his death. This feat brought world attention to the existence of anti-Fascism, much to Mussolini's chagrin and rage.

De Bosis's story, told against the backdrop of Rome's politics in the 1920s, is at once personal, national, and international. World figures ?- from Mussolini, Croce, Ezra Pound, to Walter Lippmann, Thornton Wilder, and his lover, the actress Ruth Draper ?- were all within de Bosis's compass. Gifted, quirky, original, and impulsive but principled to the point of giving up both personal love and family for his cause, his life shows how Mussolini's regime systematically cleared out the cream of Italy's young liberal intellectuals. Based on previously untapped archival resources, this is the first biography of a young, gifted Italian poet who dared to challenge the power of a totalitarian state with his practical idealism and fierce determination to protect Italy's fragile democracy from il Duce.

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