

## 6. Burgtheater



place Ring des 12. November 2, I Innere Stadt<sup>67</sup>  
time May 13, 1933, 7:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m.

II.5 While Fritz Lang's *The Testament of Dr. Mabuse* is showing at the **UFA Ton Kino** and adherents of National Socialism are holding a "Turks Deliverance Celebration" (*Türkenbefreiungsfeier*) in the **Engelmann Arena**, the Vienna Burgtheater stages the play *Hundert Tage* (*Hundred Days*) on Saturday evening, May 13, 1933, starting at 7:30 p.m.<sup>68</sup> Its original Italian version, under the title of *Campo di maggio*, was written by Giovacchino Forzano based on instructions from Italian Prime Minister Benito Mussolini and translated into German by Géza Herczeg. Following the world premiere in Rome on December 30, 1930, the **Burgtheater production** opened on April 22, 1933, with

Fig. 24, p. 65



Fig. 24: Review of the premiere of the play *Hundred Days* (*Campo di maggio*), written by Giovacchino Forzano and Benito Mussolini, at the Burgtheater in Vienna on April 22, 1933, published in *Das interessante Blatt* (Vienna), 52/17 (April 27, 1933), p. 16. In the photos: among others, Werner Krauss as Napoleon (on the left and top right) and Fred Hennings as Joseph Fouché (bottom right). Source: Austrian National Library, 389792-D.

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68 See "Theater," in: *Neue Freie Presse* (Vienna), May 13, 1933 (morning edition), p. 16.

Werner Krauss as Napoleon. The third act was broadcast internationally on the radio.<sup>69</sup>

The drama deals with Napoleon's hundred-day rule in 1815, between his exiles on the islands of Elba and Saint Helena. Concerning the original title, the German edition published 1933 by Zsolnay in Vienna notes:

*“Campo di Maggio” (Campus Madius), Mayfield, was originally called “Campus Martius” (Champ de Mars) and was a popular assembly, military parade, war congress held once a year in March by the Merovingians. Pepin the Short postponed it to May. Charlemagne also held the “Mayfield” in June or August, just as the Napoleonic “Mayfield” likewise took place in the month of June.*<sup>70</sup>

The play begins in the night before this national assembly on the Champ de Mars in Paris, **where Napoleon approves a constitution**.

Fig. 64, p. 158

III.1.2

A grave mistake, as the later plot implies, for when the constitutional monarch returns from his defeat at Waterloo the parliament denies him its support to defend his fatherland. Napoleon is forced to flee and France must accept a humiliating peace. Almost all reviews of the performance at the Burgtheater published in the Vienna press emphasized Mussolini's message as being that Napoleon did not fail as a statesman because of his military defeat, but because he had become entangled with democracy. “One man, one only, but this right man in the right place,” the theater critic of the Christian Social *Reichspost* summarized the drama's lesson, “can bring salvation at the most dangerous of moments.”<sup>71</sup>

With regard to the play's political tendency, David Josef Bach criticized in the Social Democratic *Arbeiter-Zeitung* that the Vienna production undertook “alterations, exaggerations,

69 See “Radio-Wochenprogramm vom 22. bis 30. April,” in: *Neue Freie Presse* (Vienna), April 22, 1933 (evening edition), p. 4.

70 Benito Mussolini and Giovacchino Forzano: *Hundert Tage (Campo di maggio). Drei Akte in neun Bildern. Autorisierte Übersetzung von Géza Herczeg*, Vienna: Zsolnay 1933 [Italian 1931], p. 8 [our trans].

71 Hans Brecka: “Hundert Tage,” in: *Reichspost* (Vienna), April 23, 1933, pp. 2–3, here p. 3 [our trans.]. For an overview of contemporary reviews of the Vienna production of *Hundred Days*, see Robert Pyrah: *The Burgtheater and Austrian Identity. Theatre and Cultural Politics in Vienna, 1918–38*, London: Legenda 2007, pp. 188–190.

falsifications” of the published script.<sup>72</sup> The stage version by the Austrian journalist and playwright Hanns Sässmann, which Burgtheater Manager Hermann Röbbeling directed himself, did in fact differ from Herczeg’s translation. For instance, the key scene, in which Napoleon speaks before the Paris council of ministers after the Battle of Waterloo, reads as follows in the published German edition:

*Gentlemen! I have returned to encourage the nation to soar to a noble sacrifice, so that France may rise again and the enemy be destroyed. All is lost if we lose time now on speeches instead of taking action. The enemy is encamped in France. Extraordinary measures are necessary. I require special authority in order to save the fatherland. I demand dictatorship for a specified period. For the sake of the people, I could easily take possession of it. Yet in the interest of the nation’s prestige, I consider it more dignified and, in the face of the enemy, cleverer if the dictatorship is offered to me by the chamber.<sup>73</sup>*

Alongside minor changes, the passage in the Burgtheater promptbook contains the following additional sentence: “I could abolish the constitution, for a constitution disproves itself if it disrupts the actions of those governing.”<sup>74</sup> This standpoint echoed the argumentation of Austrian Federal Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss, who had been ruling the country by emergency decree since March 1933. With the support of Mussolini, himself the *Duce del fascismo* in Italy, the Christian Social politician wanted to reshape the democratic republic into an authoritarian “corporative state” (*Ständestaat*) under his command. Like Napoleon in *Hundred Days*, the Austrian government emphasized that their special rights were necessary to defend the sovereignty of the fatherland. In the play,

III.1.4 &  
Fig. 65, p. 161

72 David Josef Bach: “Das Ende einer Diktatur,” in: *Arbeiter-Zeitung* (Vienna), April 23, 1933, p. 7 [our trans.].

73 Mussolini and Forzano: *Hundert Tage*, p. 91 [our trans].

74 Promptbook *Hundert Tage*, Vienna: Georg Marton 1933, p. 53 [our trans.], source: Archive of the Burgtheater in Vienna, 609 R. See also Margret Dietrich: “Burgtheaterpublikum und Öffentlichkeit in der Ersten Republik,” in: Margret Dietrich (ed.): *Das Burgtheater und sein Publikum*, vol. I, Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften 1976, pp. 479–707, here pp. 687–688.

Minister of Police Joseph Fouché embodies the type of the unscrupulous official, supposed to work for the country but only pursuing his own interests. His antithesis is Napoleon as a sensible leader, acting in the people's best interests—a role that Dollfuss imagined for himself.

*Hundred Days* was an exceptional success with Viennese audiences. “The Caesarean efforts of all those involved were greeted by truly Napoleonic applause,” wrote the theater critic

II.9 Raoul Auernheimer in the bourgeois ***Neue Freie Presse*** after the premiere.<sup>75</sup> Up to the end of June 1933, the play was staged a further thirty-five times and seen by some 54,000 theater-goers.<sup>76</sup> Declared a German National Theater by Emperor Joseph II in 1776, the **Burgtheater** has been located opposite Vienna City Hall on the Ringstrasse since 1888.

Fig. 59, p. 152

## 7. Engelmann Arena



place Jörgerstrasse 24, XVII Hernals  
time May 13, 1933, 8:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

A National Socialist “Turks Deliverance Celebration” (*Türkenbefreiungsfeier*) takes place in the Vienna Engelmann Arena at Jörgerstrasse 24—an ice rink that was also used for political rallies—from 8:30 to 10:00 p.m. on Saturday, May 13, 1933. The speeches are relayed via loudspeaker in the neighboring restaurant Stalehner.<sup>77</sup> The German Nazi politicians, having

II.1 landed at **Aspern airfield** that afternoon and proceeded to the  
II.4 **Adolf Hitler House** in a motorcade, march to the grandstand to the sound of the “Prinz Eugene March.”<sup>78</sup>

75 Raoul Auernheimer: “Mussolinis Napoleon,” in: *Neue Freie Presse* (Vienna), April 23, 1933 (morning edition), pp. 1–3, here p. 3 [our trans.].

76 See Dietrich: “Burgtheaterpublikum und Öffentlichkeit in der Ersten Republik,” pp. 684 and 692.

77 See “Lärmender Empfang der nationalsozialistischen Minister,” in: *Neue Freie Presse* (Vienna), May 14, 1933 (morning edition), p. 7.

78 See a report by the Federal Police Headquarters in Vienna from May 14, 1933, in the Austrian State Archives (ÖStA/AdR, BKA-I, 148.459/33).