

Da "Time", 6 settembre 1943

ITALY: Five Fascists

Fascismo's onetime bosses did not give up easily. Around five of them swirled report and rumor: Dead Fascist. Handsome, bemedaled Ettore Muti had been the "incarnation of Fascismo's warlike spirit," according to *Notizie di Roma*. Lieutenant colonel and "ace" of the air force, he had served in Ethiopia, Spain, Albania, Greece. He had been Party secretary when Italy entered World War II. Now the Badoglio Government, pressing its purge of blackshirts, charged him with graft. Reported the Rome radio: Ettore Muti, whipping out a revolver, resisted arrest by the carabinieri. In a wood on Rome's outskirts a fusillade crackled. Ettore Muti fell dead.

Die-Hard Fascist. Swarthy, vituperative Roberto Farinacci had been Fascismo's hellion. He had ranted against the democracies, baited Israel and the Church, flayed Fascist weaklings. Ex-Party secretary and ex-minister of state, he had escaped to Germany after Benito Mussolini's fall. Now, in exile, he was apparently building a Fascist Iron Guard. A Swiss rumor said that Roberto Farinacci had clandestine Nazi help, that he plotted a coup to restore blackshirt power, that he would become pezzo grosso (big shot) of northern Italy once the Germans openly took hold of the Po Valley.

Craven Fascist. Tough, demagogic Carlo Scorza had been Fascismo's No. 1 purger. Up & down his Tuscan territory, his ghenga (corruption of "gang") had bullied and blackmailed. He had amassed wealth, yet had denounced the wartime "fat and rich." Now, said a Bern report, Carlo Scorza wrote from prison to Vittorio Emanuele, offering his services to the crown.

Turncoat Fascist. Suave, calculating Count Dino Grandi had been Fascismo's favorite son. In the castor-oil days he had been the Duce's trusted lieutenant. His ample reward: the Ambassadorship to Britain, the Foreign Ministry, the Ministry of Justice, a title and knighthood. When Benito Mussolini fell, Dino Grandi stood. Rumor said that the Count had led Party rebels against the Duce. Now, rumor continued, Dino Grandi was in Lisbon, ready to help a Badoglio Government mission negotiate with the Allies.

Refugee Fascist. Sensual, flabby Count Galeazzo Ciano had been Fascismo's playboy. Son-in-law of Benito Mussolini, he had once been the Duce's heir-apparent. As Foreign Minister he helped to forge the Axis and helped himself to a fortune, supposedly salted away in foreign banks. Now German sources reported that Count Ciano and wife Edda had escaped from house arrest in Rome and slipped into Germany.

Da "Time", 13 settembre 1943

THE BALKANS, ITALY: Behind the Ramparts

(...)

The Badoglio dictatorship was still mum on Benito Mussolini's whereabouts. But now it urged the controlled Italian press to talk volubly on Benito Mussolini's love life. Practically every paper added details to a tale familiar to gossips: Quite by chance in a Roman swimming pool, Benito Mussolini met voluptuous curly haired Claretta Petacci, daughter of an obscure but ambitious Roman family. His Latin fancy was fired. Swiftly he put aside his other mistresses,* enthroned Claretta in a resident villa linked by private phone to the Palazzo Venezia. The new favorite flaunted her power. She managed the Duce's fan mail, dragged him on shopping tours, hired & fired officeholders in what *Corriere della Sera* called the manner of a "second-rate Maintenon," responsible for the "intellectual degradation of her passionate friend."

Infatuated Benito Mussolini often followed Claretta's counsel on foreign policy. During the Spanish Civil War General Francisco Franco petitioned Rome for two more divisions. "What shall I do?" the Duce asked his paramour. "Bimbo," she replied, "do send the divisions. General Franco is so simpatico." When the time came to attack Greece, Claretta approved because the Greek Ambassador had snubbed her at diplomatic receptions.

The Petacci family prospered, moved to a palace on Monte Mario. Claretta's physician brother became well-to-do. Claretta's mother became unofficial autocrat of Italian movies. Her sister Maria pleased the Duce, too. She became a radio and film star.

Epilogue. The Italian press reported that the carabinieri, pressing the Badoglio dictatorship's drive against blackshirts, had now arrested the sisters Petacci. Commented the Swiss *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*: the deliberate blackening of Benito Mussolini's grey reputation is a rebuff to the Nazis, who still pretend that the ex-Duce is a great man; it is also a shift in political attitude that "may point to coming events."

*There were many, including a pink-&-blonde German, of whom the Paris gossip-sheet, *Aux Ecoutes*, reported: "The new favorite discharges her delicate mission all to well...The doctors are said to have limited the daily...conversations with the Duce to three. The medical profession is rather lenient to a man of 56."

Da "Time", 20 settembre 1943

FOREIGN NEWS, ITALY: Axis (1936-1943)

Over the North African radio came a Texas soldier's voice:

This is General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Commander in Chief of the Allied Forces.

The Italian Government has surrendered its armed forces unconditionally. . . . I have granted a military armistice, the terms of which have been approved by the Governments of the United Kingdom, the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. . . . The armistice . . . becomes effective this instant.

The "instant" was 6:30 p.m., Sept. 8, 1943. All that day the wave lengths down the Mediterranean from Rome had be rated the Allies, promised a big battle against their invasion armies. Now General Eisenhower and his staff listened for a proclamation of surrender from the Italian Government. The minutes slipped away to 7:30 p.m. Then spoke the Piedmont soldier's voice of Premier Marshal Pietro Badoglio:

The Italian Government . . . with the object of avoiding further and more grievous harm to the nation, has requested an armistice from General Eisenhower. . . . This request has been granted. The Italian forces will therefore cease all acts of hostility against the Anglo-U.S. forces. . . . They will, however, oppose attack from any other quarter.

Thus death came to the Rome-Berlin Axis—six years, ten months, 14 days after it had been born. For Italy's 45,000,000 people, surrender came as a national shriving, a chance for national redemption. For the United Nations, Italian surrender brought an hour as high as the hour of French surrender at Compiègne had been low. They had ripped the southern rampart of a Festung crumbling in the east, flung the certainty of defeat at Adolf Hitler and his panicky satellites, put themselves a long stride toward the heart of Europe and final victory.

Parleys, Part I. The Badoglio regime made a first cautious approach for terms at the beginning of August, shortly after Benito Mussolini's downfall. In Lisbon five Italian envoys gave Allied representatives this message: Italy was "desperate"; the time had come to discuss "possible" armistice conditions. The Allied answer: "unconditional surrender."

The issues then rested, while Italy stewed. There were reports of comings & goings between the Quirinal and the Vatican, where the U.S. had Harold Tittmann, a foreign service veteran, and Britain had Francis D'Arcy Godolphin Osborne, heir presumptive to the Duchy of Leeds. Papal Envoy Enrico Galeazzi showed up in Lisbon, said he was bound for the U.S. to buy supplies for the Vatican. Financier Giovanni Fummi registered at London's Claridge's; presumably he was executing a mission for the Vatican.

Parleys, Part II. In mid-August an Italian officer, presumably General Castellano, aide to Marshal Badoglio, dropped in at Madrid, ostensibly on a mission that had nothing to do with surrender. Secretly he called on British Ambassador Sir Samuel Hoare. Next day the Italian officer appeared in Lisbon, called on British Ambassador Sir Ronald Hugh Campbell.

To Sir Samuel and Sir Ronald, General Castellano tendered a message from Marshal Badoglio: "When the Allies land in Italy, the Italian Government is prepared to join them against Germany." London and Washington accepted this as a "serious proposal." Moscow was kept posted. A few days later the Allied armistice terms reached Lisbon. In the British Embassy, with U.S. Charge d'Affaires George Kennan present, the terms were given to General Castellano. Not long afterward several high officers flew up from North Africa, talked long and earnestly to Marshal Badoglio's colleague at a dinner that coursed through a whole night and into the dawn.

General Castellano set off for Rome by a devious route. But the Badoglio Government, worried over his failure to report promptly, had sent out another mission to Lisbon. Again an Italian general was chosen, but now, as evidence of good faith, a captured British officer accompanied him. The officer was red-faced, one-armed, one-eyed Major General Adrian Carton de Wiart, one of the Empire's famed warriors, who had been captured by the Italians in 1941. London's Express called General de Wiart a "real-life, elusive Pimpernel." Not obliged to return to Italy, he turned up in London, while his Italian traveling companion went on to General Eisenhower's headquarters in Algiers.

Parleys, Part III. General Castellano, meanwhile, had reached Rome. He quickly left again, this time for Sicily, where he met General Eisenhower's staff and the second general sent out by Marshal Badoglio. Presumably in Palermo, the parleys entered their final phase. In that city, on Aug. 29, American ack-ack gunners received startling orders. A Savoia-Marchetti bomber headed for the airfield was not to be fired on. The big plane slid down, and two Italian officers stepped out. On the 30th it took off again, escorted by three U.S. Lightnings. On the 31st it was back again and the same officers deplaned.

A last-minute misgiving by the Badoglio Government almost snagged the parleys. The Marshal wanted no announcement of the armistice until after the main Allied landing in Italy. General Eisenhower replied with a 24-hour ultimatum: the Allies must fix the timing of the announcement, or Italy would suffer the full shock of Allied air power. The Marshal bowed. On Sept. 3, while Generals Eisenhower and Sir Harold R. L. G. Alexander looked on, the Armistice was signed by U.S. Major General Walter B. Smith for the Allies, by General Castellano for Italy.

Terms. The full text of the armistice of Sicily embraced many thousand words. An official summary showed that the Italian capitulation was as sweeping as the German surrender of 1918. The Badoglio regime agreed to:

- > Cease all hostile activity.
- > Withdraw its armed forces from France and the Balkans.
- > Turn over all Italian territory and French Corsica for Allied military purposes.

- > Deny to the Germans the use of facilities that might be turned against the United Nations.
- > Grant to the Allies the use of airfields and harbors.
- > Hand over all warships, merchant marine and planes.
- > Return all Allied prisoners of war or internees.
- > Accept political, economic and financial conditions to be imposed at Allied discretion.

The People's Role. In the agony of revolution, in the process of becoming a battlefield, a battered and buffeted nation might be finding its soul. It might be reaching back across the years to pick up again the democratic thread woven in a history of foreign oppression and domestic tyranny. Before Magna Charta and King John, Italy's northern cities had won self-rule from the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa. Florence and Venice had once borne the title of republic. But the trend had been beaten down through the centuries when the peninsula served as the cockpit of Guelph and Ghibelline, despot and noble, rival Spaniard, Frenchman and German. In Milan, in 1805, Napoleon Bonaparte had crowned himself with the iron crown of Lombardy. In Milan, in 1848, the Habsburg General Count Joseph Radetzky had smashed the people's barricades. But the day of Italy's Risorgimento (resurrection) came. In 1870 the poor, frugal, industrious country of Mazzini, Garibaldi and Cavour ceased to be a geographical expression, attained nationhood under Vittorio Emanuele II, Rè Galantuomo (the Honest King). It was the shame of the Savoy dynasty that Vittorio Emanuele III helped Fascismo destroy the democratic constitution his grandfather had upheld.

When the test of World War II came, the little people of Italy helped Allied arms destroy Fascismo. They refused to fight for a corrupt regime, to love the German ally. Their revolt, at first passive, then open, sapped Benito Mussolini's edifice, forced Badoglio to surrender.

Now, as best they could in a confused and disorganized hour, the people of Italy declared war on the Germans. In Milan they mounted machine guns on rooftops, sniped from windows. In Turin they held out after the rest of northern Italy had fallen to the Germans. Up & down the peninsula they heeded the Allied calls to sabotage Nazi movements. Along the coast they turned on lights at night to beckon British and U.S. landing parties. But by week's end the occupying Germans seemed to hold a firm upper hand over wide areas. Field Marshal Erwin Rommel proclaimed himself master of all Italy above the Spezia-Rimini line, imposed a "state of war," decreed death for "giving aid or assistance" to the Allies.

The Palace's Voice. Marshal Badoglio defended himself and his regime against the German cry of "betrayal." To Hitler he sent a telegram of justification:

"The war . . . has cost Italy—apart from loss of her colonial empire—destruction of her towns, annihilation of her industries, of her merchant navy, of her railway network and, lastly, invasion of her own soil. One cannot ask the people to continue to fight when all legitimate hope—I do not say of victory, but even of resistance—has vanished."

The Führer replied with verbal abuse and with the shelling and occupation of Rome. Italian troops fought back in the suburbs of the capital. But Nazi jackboots pounded into the eternal city, up to the gates of the Vatican. In Rome, the Germans held the traffic junction between north and south Italy. They had the best site to set up a puppet Fascist government and to promote civil war among Italians. But by putting the Vatican under their "protection"* they had now, more than ever, arrayed against them Catholicism's power.

Marshal Badoglio and his King escaped the Nazi net. At week's end, from refuge somewhere in the countryside, the Marshal and the King belatedly called upon their countrymen to resist the Germans.

The Allies' Hand. Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill addressed a joint message to Premier Badoglio and the people of Italy:

"Now is the time for every Italian to strike his blow. The liberating armies of the Western World are coming to your rescue. . . . The German terror in Italy will not last long. . . . You, by helping in this great surge of liberation, will place yourselves once more among the true and long-proved friends of your country, from whom you have been so wrongfully estranged."

In the '20s, spokesmen of the democracies had lauded Fascismo and thereby helped to prop it up. Financier Otto Kahn had said: "Mussolini is far too wise and right-minded to lead his people into hazardous foreign adventures." Pedagogue Nicholas Murray Butler had noted "the stupendous improvement which Fascism has brought." Cardinal O'Connell had observed: "Mussolini is a genius." Former U.S. Ambassador to Rome Richard Washburn Child had edited the Duce's My Autobiography. Later, Industrialist Myron Taylor had admired "the successes of Premier Mussolini in disciplining the nation." In 1938 Winston Churchill observed: "Had there been no war, . . . Mussolini would still have been great."

That had been a great mistake, and the leaders of democracy had come to know it. Now Italy's liberals and democrats, dispersed and long underground, cried for encouragement. In time, they hoped, the Italian people would freely choose their own rulers, and Italy would have what Gaetano Salvemini called "the dawn of a second Risorgimento."

* In the turbulent Middle Ages many a Pope was imprisoned or murdered by temporal powers. In 1527 the army of Emperor Charles V jailed Pope Clement VII for seven months in the castle of St. Angelo. In 1809 Emperor Napoleon kidnapped Pius VII, brought him to Fontainebleau, held him in custody until the Empire's fall.

Da "Time", 20 settembre 1943

GERMANY: Facing the Facts

An hour and a half after the people of the United Nations began celebrating Italy's surrender, Radio Berlin was still soothing its listeners with a musical program called Let Us Go On Dreaming. After sufficient time had passed for hard-pressed Dr. Paul Joseph Goebbels to concoct his explanations, the German radio let out the big, bad news by quoting Allied announcements, adding: "Marshal Badoglio, in the meantime, confirmed the capitulation in a broadcast from Rome, although the King of Italy on Sept. 8 rejected as slander the suggestion that Italy was thinking of capitulation."

Later reactions:

Broadcasts: An Anglo-U.S. "plot" overthrew Mussolini's Fascist regime; Italy's action was "the shameless betrayal of an ally whose deeds of valor in Italy's defense were recognized by the enemy themselves"; Badoglio acted "not only to maneuver Italy out of the war but to allow the Italian forces . . . to administer a stab in the back to the German troops on Italian soil."

From the Nazi press: "Mussolini was too great a person for a nation like that."

Dr. Paul Schmidt, German Foreign Office spokesman: "Yes, one tire has blown out on the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo tricycle."

Dr. Goebbels: "With regard to the present time and its sufferings, there is only one deadly sin and that is cowardice. . . . In critical situations one must keep one's heart in one's hand and jump over the threatening precipice."

Now, after half a year's silence—a half year strewn with retreats, defeats and disasters—Führer Adolf Hitler had to speak. It was the speech of a man caught in a net of facts:

"Freed from the heavy burden of expectation weighing on us for a long time, I now consider that the moment has come again to address myself to the German people without having to resort to lies, either to myself or to the public. . . .

"Without [the German soldiers'] intervention, North Africa would have been lost to Italy as long ago as the winter of 1940-41. . . .

"When the Reich decided in the spring of 1941 to help Italy in the Balkans, this was done not to achieve personal aims but to assist an ally. . . .

"The withdrawal of Italy means little in a military sense because the struggle in that country has for months been sustained and carried on mainly by German forces. We will now continue the struggle free of all burdensome encumbrances."

Friend Mussolini. "One of the most outstanding men of modern times was at the head of Italy, the greatest son of Italian soil since the collapse of the ancient empire. His bearing was so loyal that

conditions existed for success of the common alliance. His fall and the disgraceful insults to which he was subjected will be felt with the deepest shame by future generations of the Italian people. . . .

"I personally was seized with understandable sorrow at the unique historic injustice inflicted on this man, at the shameful treatment meted out to a man who for 20 years lived only for his people and who is now treated as a common criminal. I was, and still am, happy to describe this great and loyal man as my friend."

I, Adolf. "Personal life for myself has in any case long ceased to exist. I work from recognition and a sense of duty to make my contribution in safeguarding the life of my nation for future generations. My right to believe unconditionally in success is founded not only on my own life but also on the destiny of our people.

". . . Hope of finding traitors here rests on complete ignorance of the character of the National Socialist State; a belief that they can bring about a July 25 in Germany rests on a fundamental illusion as to my personal position as well as about the attitude of my political collaborators and my field marshals, admirals and generals. More than ever before, the German leadership opposes these intentions as a fanatical unit. Any emergency will only fortify us in our determination."

The Threat. "Only from the air is [the enemy] able to terrorize the German homeland, but in this respect also technical and administrative conditions for finally breaking his terroristic attacks are coming into existence, as well as those for retaliation by other and more efficient means.

"Tactical necessity may compel us once and again to give up something on some front in this gigantic fateful struggle, and to avoid some particular threat, but it will never break the ring of steel that, forged by the homeland and maintained through the heroism of our front, protects the German Reich. . . .

"The measures decreed for the protection of German interests in the face of events in Italy are very hard. . . . [But] we all know that, in this merciless fight, according to the intentions of our enemies, the vanquished will be destroyed to afford the victor the possibility of living. . . .

"The fate of Italy . . . may serve as a lesson to us all, in the hours of gravest crisis and most dire distress, never to forsake the commandment of national honor but to stand loyally by our allies and loyally by our hearts—full of faith, to do what duty demands."

God Willing. "To a people that passes successfully through these trials ordained by Providence, the Almighty will give in the end the laurel wreath of victory and, thus, the prize of life. Come what may, this people must and will be Germany."

Once before, 25 years ago, a tired, bitter little corporal had shuffled along the grey road back. Now, the same beaten road stretched ahead, and Adolf Hitler saw it. Even the arrogant intuition could not feel victory: the Führer paid his lip service, but he was not really offering victory. Like Goebbels, Hitler could only tell the German people that, for honor's sake, they must clutch their hearts, march on in faithful discipline toward the precipice.

Da "Time", 27 settembre 1943

World Battlefronts: BATTLE OF ITALY: Out of the Darkness

The battle waged by German and Allied soldiers on the invaded mainland of Italy was only one part of a developing campaign for southern Europe. For the Germans, that campaign was already a nightmare of uncertainties, hidden threats, blows in the dark.

The Italians won Sardinia for the Allies. Authorized accounts, revealing that Marshal Badoglio was working with the Allies behind their lines in Italy, said that on his orders two Italian divisions had pushed the Germans out of Sardinia. An Algiers communique called the German departure an "evacuation." The Nazis had given up an island naval and air base from which torpedo boats and bombers could hinder Allied shipping; a base which, in Allied hands, will bring German positions in southern France and northern Italy within easier bombing range. French Commandos, Corsicans, Italians harried the Germans in Corsica, where Allied fighters would also be within range.

Of Italian activities and sympathies elsewhere there was almost no authentic news. In the occupied south the Italians generally were friendly. Swiss reports said that in the north, where Field Marshal Erwin Rommel is preparing his defenses, Italian bands seized a section of railway from the Germans, otherwise harried and fought them. A roundabout report from Cyprus, Britain's island in the eastern Mediterranean, said that Italian refugees told of fighting in the Dodecanese Islands between German and Italian soldiers. A German communique reported the seizure of an Italian troopship, gave the impression that the Germans regarded the Italians as enemies.

At Rommel's Back. From Yugoslavia came a story of a victory for the Allies. The respected Swiss weekly *Weltwoche* and other sources in Bern heard that Yugoslavia's indomitable Partisan guerrillas had leaped from hiding in Croatia, seized seven of nine useful ports on the Dalmatian coast of the Adriatic, taken Fiume in preparation for Allied landings. According to these reports, the ports held by the Partisans included Split (Spalato), which the Germans immediately devastated by air attack but failed to wrest from the Partisans. Serbian General Draja Mihailovich's secret radio YTG claimed credit for his forces, but most reports from Europe agreed that the Partisans did the work.

If the Dalmatian coast is indeed in friendly hands, and can be held, the Allies have an open door at Rommel's back. But London, Washington and Cairo, as usual, received the stories of Partisan success with cold doubt, indicated that the Allies still assume that they must fight for entry into Yugoslavia. At the most, these sources preferred to await their own reports.*

Step to the Balkans? Something was cooking in the eastern Mediterranean. Ankara heard that Allied troops had landed on the Dodecanese isles of Leros and Kos, on the Greek island of Samos in the Aegean. If so, Allied forces had sneaked behind Scarpanto and Rhodes, the principal islands guarding the eastern entrance to the Aegean, and, at Leros, had managed to seize a base complete with an airfield and two U-boat bases. Both Ankara and Stockholm heard that Britain's Ninth Army had actually sailed from Syria, was presumably headed toward the southeastern Balkans. Even if these reports were premature, they were augurs of more trouble for the troubled Germans.

-A Nazi-controlled newspaper in Yugoslavia referred to "Allied officers who are now at the headquarters of Yugoslav patriot forces."