

WASHINGTON MERRY-GO-ROUND

Hesitation Marks Badoglio As
Puppet, Not a Master, of Fate

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(The Brass Ring—plastic for the duration—good for one free ride on the Washington Merry-Go-Round, is awarded today to the new premier of Italy.)

WASHINGTON. — Pietro Badoglio, the man who tried to pick up the broken pieces of Italy where Mussolini dropped them, will go down in history for his blind devotion to his king and for his inability to make up his mind when the fate of his country hung in the balance.

Twice in two decades, Badoglio could have changed the entire course of his country and perhaps the world. But

Fascist leanings sufficiently to become chief of all the armies.

Army Unprepared

As such he was supposed to prepare for war, which any one could see from the rantings of Italy's Axis partner in Berlin, was just around the corner. But the Italian army lapsed into such a state of unpreparedness and poor morale that when Mussolini finally did decide to stab France in the back, Italian troops made only minor gains against an already defeated French army.

Badoglio has been both blamed and exonerated for the Italian fiasco in Greece. The truth is that he did not want to undertake this campaign,

country and perhaps the world. But each time he hesitated and failed.

The first was when he was chief of staff in 1922 and Mussolini staged his march on Rome. Weeks before that march, Mussolini's Fascists had been getting arms and ammunition from the Italian army right under Badoglio's nose. He must have known about it, unless he was asleep, and he does not sleep soundly.

Even retired army officers, still answerable to **Badoglio**, were enlisting in the Fascist cause. He could have check-reined them easily.

March on Rome

When the march on Rome finally was consummated, and Benito Mussolini stepped out of his special sleeping car (after his Blackshirts had made it safe for him to enter the capital) Badoglio sent word to the king that he could easily drive them out of Rome with two regiments.

But the king hesitated, and Badoglio hesitated with him. A few days later it was too late.

Badoglio's second tragic moment of hesitation came last week. He and the king at last had the courage to oust the man who had cowed Italy, who had led the Italian people to destruction.

But having taken that one bold step, the new premier of Italy united. True

want to undertake this campaign, warned Mussolini that the army was not ready. By this time, also Badoglio's latent hatred of fascism, deluged under all his Fascist honors, had come to the fore again.

Friends say that he resented both the French stab in the back and the attack on Greece. But he did not protest publicly. Finally he was yanked back from the Greek campaign, discharged by Mussolini, and for a time friends feared for his life. It was then that his old friend the king held out a sheltering wing and invited him to live in the imperial palace.

A Timid Statesman

What transpired between these two close friends during the three years that followed may never be known unless some palace chronicler writes the story. But it leaked out and was published in this column that Badoglio seethed with hatred against Mussolini, even hoped to lead the regular Italian army against him.

Two weeks ago, the time finally came. Badoglio and the king, to whom he had always been so loyal, struck their first independent, courageous blow for Italy. But Badoglio, a good soldier, but a timid statesman, struck out.

But having taken that one bold step, the new premier of Italy waited. True, he faced a tragically complicated situation. German troops in the north could make a battleground of Italian soil. But also he knew that the invincible might of Allied air power could make mince-meat of Italian cities and that the Allied armies, already in their stride, were sure to overrun Italy.

That moment of hesitation may mean Italy will be an even bloodier battleground and that the surge of Allied victory may be slowed.

But Badoglio has spent his life as a professional soldier and caution is his watchword, even when empires are at stake.

Human 'Bombs'

Just as Mussolini was always sticking out his chin, Badoglio has always pulled his in. As governor of Libya in 1929, he stood by while Marshal Graziani, the rabid Fascist, subdued Arab natives by taking rebel chieftains up in an airplane and tossing them out on the desert below.

By this time Badoglio had swallowed his early revulsion against fascism, and, following his king, had accepted Musso-

statesman, struck out. Snipping one-sixteenth to one-quarter of an inch off each match manufactured in the United States in 1943 will save seven million board feet of lumber.

Respect Your American Flag

United States war department issues a circular explaining how you should show respect for your American flag. Certain points of respect are outstanding. Look at your flag. Are you showing proper respect?

The flag should be displayed only from sunrise to sunset.

It should be hoisted briskly and lowered slowly.

When displayed vertically, the blue field is to the left of

By this time Badoglio had swallowed his early revulsion against fascism, and, following his king, had accepted Mussolini's tempting offer of field marshal of the Italian army.

Inside the Italian army there has always been jealousy between the political Blackshirts and the non-Fascist regulars. So when Mussolini launched his armada of tanks and airplanes against defenseless Ethiopia he placed one of his Blackshirts, General De Bono, in command.

De Bono was a complete flop and Badoglio, from the regular army, was called to the rescue. In the field of battle, Badoglio does not hesitate. He is an A-1 technical soldier. He cleaned up the Ethiopian war in short order—and he did not hesitate to use gas to do it.

Afterward Badoglio was quite willing to receive from the hands of il duce the title of Duke of Addis Ababa with the lush salary that went with it. Badoglio also swallowed his pride and his anti-

When displayed vertically, the blue field is to the left of the observer.

The American flag should not be permitted to touch the ground.

It should not be trailed in the water.

The flag should not be used as a drapery or decoration.

A faded or torn American flag should not be displayed.

When the flag is faded or torn and is no longer a fit emblem for display, it should be privately burned.

Look at your own American flag. Show your respect!