

Italians Completely Discredit Mussolini

By Clark Lee, Representing the Combined American Press—
Distributed by the Associated Press—At an advanced Allied
Command Post in the Mediterranean Area, Sept. 18—Benito
Mussolini is a very sick man, completely discredited in the eyes
of the Italians, it was stated today by Italians who at the same
time revealed the complete story of the former Italian dictator's
overthrow and arrest.

"Mussolini is more of a liability
than an asset. Even the Fascists
renounced him," said Italians who
have reached north Africa. "The
Germans are welcome to him but
we doubt if he will be of much use
to them."

Gestapo and German military and
diplomatic officials have been led
on a merry wild goose chase in their
efforts to locate Mussolini since he
was arrested on the streets of Rome
on the evening of July 25 and
forced, despite his protests, into an
ambulance with frosted glass win-
dows in which he was spirited to a
safe hiding place.

Mussolini was made fairly com-
fortable in his place of captivity
but during the first few days his
reactions were said to have been
violent at times. Gradually, how-
ever, he began to adjust himself to
the situation and his emotional out-
bursts became fewer, although his
attitude never became one of phil-
osophical resignation.

The former duce asked for writ-
ing materials and spent most of his
time writing a long defense of
fascism and his own actions.

Thin and Drawn

Drive to Collect Playing Cards Set

Playing cards for men of the U.
S. armed forces overseas are be-
ing collected here in a drive spon-
sored by Voiture No. 1217. Forty
and Eight, it was announced today.

New and used cards are wanted.
The cards will be shipped overseas
immediately after collection.

Barrels are being placed in con-
venient downtown locations where
contributions may be made.

leave the book and message they
would try to make delivery.

At the time, the Germans were
greatly confused by the develop-
ments in Italy. Their reinforce-
ments had not yet been brought in
and they hesitated to apply too
much pressure. So Hitler's envoy
departed without carrying out his
mission.

The Germans were so worried
they even distrusted their own
diplomatic personnel in Rome and
hurriedly replaced embassy offi-
cials with others who had no con-
tact with the Italians.

Thin and Drawn

Mussolini, suffering from stomach trouble, is very thin and drawn.

(The German radio said in a broadcast heard by The Associated Press that Berlin newspapers today were publishing a photograph of Mussolini, described as showing him after his liberation by the Germans. The picture was said to show a smiling duce surrounded by German SS men and parachute troops.

(The Nazi-controlled Rome radio said last night in a broadcast recorded by the U. S. foreign broadcast intelligence service that Mussolini, who has not made any public statements since his arrest and subsequent liberation, would "soon let his voice be heard.")

Some days after Mussolini's arrest his girl friend was taken into custody at the luxurious villa he had given her since he began keeping her about a year ago. She was released after a few hours following a search of the villa for documents and questioning.

As soon as the Germans recovered from the shock of Mussolini's disappearance, the Italian refugees said, the Nazis began a frantic hunt, using threats, wiles and bribery in an unsuccessful effort to find him. Hitler himself even took a hand in the case.

The fuhrer sent a high ranking officer to Rome with a book and a message for Mussolini. The book was by Nietzsche and carried an inscription praising Mussolini for having followed Nietzsche's philosophy to "live dangerously."

Hitler Demand Rejected

hurriedly replaced embassy officials with others who had no contact with the Italians.

As it turned out this was a costly mistake since the new Germans were lacking pipelines into Italian high quarters and on orders from Berlin were not fraternizing with the Italians and so failed to get information when armistice negotiations opened and were completely in the dark about the Badoglio government's plans.

As soon as feasible Badoglio's government opened armistice negotiations which were successfully concluded Sept. 3 with the signing by Gen. Giuseppe Castellano whose interpreter, Franco Montanari, was a graduate of Harvard in 1927 and whose American mother lives with a brother and sister at Stowe, Vt. Montanari is ex-Italian consul at Honolulu.

The situation in Italy today is that Italy is an occupied country, partly by the Germans and partly by us. There is no civil government as far as is known behind the German lines. We recognize Marshal Badoglio as the head of the government fully competent to carry out negotiations which are now in progress for the economic, financial and political phases of the armistice.

Badoglio succeeded in fleeing through the German lines around Rome and now is said to be in Italy behind our lines.

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