

50 **Mario Badoglio** was a diplomat who had served as an ambassador in Africa. After his father had established his government under Allied auspices in Salerno, Mario was in his home in Rome when, in late 1944, he was arrested by the Gestapo. He was then 44-years-old. Dispatched to Mauthausen, he was placed in Cell 2 and given the code-name 'Brausenwetter' or (according to Maršálek, *Geschichte*, 339) 'Brausepulver'. At the same time, the Gestapo in Italy informed Schulz that a member of the Badoglio family was already in the Lager. The prisoner in question was Gino Valenzano, who had been arrested on a Roman street on 20 Nov. 1943 for his resistance activities, and not because his grandmother was the Marshal's sister. Knowing enough about the SS, he took care, on his arrival in Mauthausen in Jan. 1944, both to conceal the fact that he was a university student and to assume a manual skill, claiming falsely that he was a motor mechanic. He was therefore working in the garage Kommando a year later when he was suddenly grabbed by the SS and deposited in the *Arrest*, where Niedermayer threw him into the last cell on the left in the prison's left aisle. Valenzano, one of the few prisoners to come out of the Bunker alive, recalls how each prisoner had his own cell, from which he never emerged to take exercise, and remained in total isolation. For two days and nights Niedermayer softened him up, and he was then dragged to an office outside the main gate where Ziereis and Schulz together interrogated him on his relationship with Marshal Badoglio and his son Mario. Valenzano faced a dilemma: he could admit that he was Mario's cousin and possibly receive the privileges accorded to members of a famous family, or he could play it safe and say that he knew nothing about politics or about the Badoglio side of the family. Valenzano chose the second, though it carried its own risk: his uncle Valenzano was indeed the Marshal's secretary. The outcome, however, came as a relief: he was allowed to return to his Block 15 and to his work in the SS garage. He surmised from the interrogation that his cousin Mario was being held in the Bunker as a hostage, but they were never to meet

in Mauthausen. In April 1945, **Mario Badoglio** was taken by the SS to the Bavarian Alps, and though still alive at the Liberation, he was in a state of such depression that he never recovered his health, dying prematurely in 1958 (Valenzano, interview).