

Obituary

MARSHAL PIETRO  
BADOGLIO

COOPERATION WITH  
THE ALLIES

Marshal Pietro Badoglio, Duke of Addis Ababa, Marquis of Sabotino, Marshal of Italy, Cavalier of the Santissima Annunziata, and for nearly a year Prime Minister of Italy after the fall of Mussolini, died on Wednesday at Grazzano in north-west Italy at the age of 85.

Born of yeoman stock in 1871 in the Piedmontese village of Grazzano Monferrato, he first saw active service in 1896 in the disastrous war against the Abyssinians and he served in the Tripoli war. At the outbreak of war in 1914 he was a lieutenant-colonel, and in 1916 he was promoted colonel. His share in the capture of Monte Sabotino, one of the keys to Gorizia, established his military reputation, won him promotion to the rank of general, and many years later brought him his marquisate. In the final battles on the Piave and at Vittorio Veneto, Badoglio was at the side of General Diaz, Cadorna's successor, as his Chief of Staff, and to Badoglio fell the honour of heading the commission which on November 4, 1919, concluded the armistice with the Austrians at Villa Giusti.

After the 1914-18 War Badoglio was created a senator, and he went as special envoy to Rumania and later to the United States. At the time of the march on Rome (October 28, 1922) Badoglio was said to have told the King of Italy that with a handful of troops and a whiff of grapeshot he would sweep the Fascists away. Anyhow Badoglio was known not to favour Fascism, and, since he was far too popular in the Army and the country to be dismissed, he was temporarily side-tracked by being appointed Ambassador to Brazil in 1924-25. In June, 1925, he was made Marshal of

Italy, and later in the same year he resumed the post of Chief of the General Staff of the Army which he had already held soon after the conclusion of the 1914-18 War but had given up in 1921. He also took up in 1925 the appointment of Chief of the General Staff, a post quite distinct from that of Chief of the General Staff of the Army. Between 1928 and 1933 Badoglio held the post of Governor of Libya and carried on campaigns to pacify the rebellious tribes of Tripoli and Cyrenaica. Two years later Badoglio was back in Africa. In November, 1935, shortly after he had returned from an inspection of the Tigre front and made a report to Mussolini, he was sent out to take the place of the Fascist De Bono as commander-in-chief against the Abyssinians, whom Mussolini had attacked in the face of the League of Nations.

INVASION OF ETHIOPIA

Badoglio was criticized for devoting many weeks to reorganization, but when once he had launched his offensive he carried it to a swift conclusion and entered Addis Ababa in the early summer of 1936. He conducted his campaign with ruthlessness, seeking the "complete annihilation of the enemy" in battle, according to a book he wrote, and he is generally credited with having used poison gas in some form, though the circumstances have remained somewhat obscure. For a short time he acted as Viceroy of Abyssinia, and then returned to Rome, where he was given a triumphal welcome. The King created him a Duke and the Fascist Party insisted upon making him an honorary member.

From that time until the outbreak of the 1939-45 War little was heard of Badoglio. He was thought to have disapproved of the signature of the alliance with Germany in 1939, but nevertheless he was reconfirmed in his post as Chief of the General Staff in the following November, although he had reached the age limit of 68. At the close of the following year, however, he resigned soon after the opening of Mussolini's attack upon Greece, which he was believed to have opposed.

This episode marked Badoglio's final rupture with Fascism, and made him the man

increasingly mentioned as a successor to Mussolini. When therefore after a stormy meeting of the Fascist Grand Council Mussolini was driven to resign on July 25, 1943, Badoglio's appointment was widely expected. His task, especially for one who had held aloof from politics, was extremely difficult. He had to manoeuvre on three fronts. Having declared in his first proclamation that "the war continues," he had to face the victorious allied forces, though convinced that Italy was irreparably beaten. He had to face his German allies, who doubted his intention to carry on the fighting. He had to face the Italian nation, very many of whom were clamouring for peace.

LOYALTY TO THE KING

The allies did their best to facilitate Badoglio's task, especially after the declaration of war on Germany on October 13, by accepting Italy as co-belligerent. But Badoglio's call to the people to unite in ejecting the Germans, in spite of his pledge to widen his Government as soon as possible by the inclusion of representatives of every political party and his promise that the people should be free after the war to choose their own form of democratic government, continued to find a serious stumbling-block in the King. Badoglio's devotion to whom was deep and unswerving. While some of the parties were prepared to cooperate on this basis, anti-Fascist leaders such as Count Sforza and Benedetto Croce refused to join his Cabinet unless the King abdicated.

Throughout the winter of 1943-44, in spite of another reconstruction of the Cabinet, the bickerings went on. But on February 22, 1944, Mr. Churchill made it clear that, at least till Rome was reached, the allies would support Badoglio. On April 12 the King finally consented to announce his "definite and irrevocable" decision to withdraw from public life and to appoint Prince Umberto Lieutenant of the Realm on the day the allies reached Rome.

All these developments greatly strengthened Badoglio's arm, as it appeared, and after he had formally resigned he formed a new Cabinet on April 21 which contained representatives of the six leading parties, and included as Ministers without portfolios such men as Croce, Sforza, Togliatti, and Rodino. But on the occupation of Rome by the allies the opposition to the Marshal, so clearly manifested in Naples, was reinforced by the uncompromising attitude of the Rome politicians. A resolution was passed on June 8, 1944, by the united representatives of the parties against acceptance of office under him in his endeavour to form the wider Cabinet to which he was pledged. He immediately tendered his resignation to the Crown Prince, who sent for the former Prime Minister, Bonomi. In 1946 Badoglio published his history of Italy during the 1939-45 War, in which he set out to answer some of the attacks of his many critics. Then, nearly 75 years of age, he slipped quietly and uncomplainingly into retirement.