

~~SECRET~~ ITALY

L.I. - Suroco. Wednesday, July 28, 1943.

Tonight Rome <sup>comes</sup> out officially -- for peace. A Rome radio

broadcast gives us the authoritative statement that the purpose of the Government that overthrew Mussolini is to get Italy out of the war.

Tonight radio Rome was broadcasting a regular evening program, when this was suddenly interrupted, and a statement was put on the air as follows: "For three long years," stated the announcement, "Allied propaganda has asserted that the Allies were fighting, not the Italian people, but Fascism. Now," the broadcast went on, "the Fascist regime has been replaced by a new government, new men, new ideas, and a different political program." ~~By announcement,~~ <sup>"This"</sup> the announcement continued, "was brought about by war, but it has only one goal -- peace. A purely Italian democracy is forming", the statement concluded, "and the people will be free to choose any government they prefer -- so long as it is not Fascist."

So there we have the first official declaration from the new Victor Emanuel-Badoglio Regime -- that its intention is to yield to the Allies.

Just before this broadcast was received, we had a report from Madrid that Marshal ~~Badoglio~~ Badoglio had asked the Vatican to make overtures ~~for~~ for immediate peace, that the Vatican had transmitted this to emissaries of the Allied powers, and that these had already forwarded the message to their own governments -- Washington and London. Algiers has the same sort of word -- ~~that~~ that Badoglio has asked the Vatican to help in bringing about an armistice.

Rumors today connected Archbishop Spellman of New York with peace over<sup>r</sup>tures through the Vatican. The Archbishop has been in South Africa, and today took a plane flying north. His destination was not revealed, but instantly the surmise was raised that he might be on his way to the <sup>V</sup>atican to take part in the negotiations for the surrender of Italy. Late <sup>r</sup>news from Washington, however, tells us that Archbishop Spellman, flying north from South Africa, is not on his way to the Vatican. This denial is made by the State Department, which states that Archbishop Spellman is on his way back to the United States.

London declares that in the ~~black~~ background a dramatic struggle is going on between Italy and Germany, with Badoglio trying to induce the Nazis to pull their troops out of Italy. The London word is that the Germans have no further hope of keeping Italy in the war, but intend to form a defense line of their own in Northern Italy along the River Po. Badoglio is trying to persuade them to get out altogether, evacuate everything -- including the line of the Po. Travelers from Italy report that the Germans are heavily reinforcing their troops in the far Northern Part of Italy, the area just below the strategic Brenner Pass. At the same time, Stockholm <sup>tells of</sup> ~~reports that~~ strong forces of the Italian Army ~~are~~ moving northward from Central Italy -- toward the line of the Po.

It may seem fantastic, but the surmise is suggested -- that there might be a clash between the Italians and Germans. London states that Badoglio in sweeping out the Fascist state has abolished the Fascist Grand Council and the blackshirt secret courts of suppressors, and the ~~Nazi~~ Fascist Party is dissolved. Prominent Fascists are being arrested, and there is a


rumor that Gayda, former Mussolini mouthpiece, has committed suicide. He is said to have shot himself when he was handed a warrant for his arrest."

Switzerland flashes the news that at Milan armed Fascists stood siege in the offices of Mussolini's newspaper. Fighting with automatic rifles, machine guns and hand grenades, the Black Shirts resisted the soldiers of Badoglio, who fired on them from armored cars and tanks. There was a savage battle before the Fascists were subdued.

There are continuing disorders, clashes especially between Fascists and the authorities. At various places Black Shirts barricaded themselves in their homes, and fired on soldiers and crowds outside. There has been violent rioting in the great industrial city of Milan, where ten people are said to have been killed and many wounded. London states that crowds in Milan carried red flags -- Communists.

The whereabouts of Mussolini are a subject for continuing rumors, some of which have even put him in Ireland. But that one is answered by Dublin, which says - no, nothing to it.

The reactions to the fall of Mussolini are of the widest scope. In Bulgaria King Boris is said to have had a violent quarrel on the subject with his Prime Minister. They say that Boris had advance word that the Duce was to be ousted and called the Bulgarian Prime Minister to a conference. The King charged the Prime Minister with getting Bulgaria into the war.



The Prime Minister retorted, that it was ~~fixing~~ the king's fault. And they almost had a fist fight about it. Hungary is supposed to be putting out feelers for peace with advances to Yugoslavia, with Hungary offering to restore Yugoslav territory bestowed upon Hungary by Hitler.

Spain too figures in the story of reverberations, in a dispatch stating that the fall of Mussolini has led to an increase of agitation by the monarchists, who demand that Franco restore the crown and bring in a king.

And even Japan is mentioned -- with the Chinese giving us a story that the collapse of Italian Fascism is likely to bring about a shake-up of the cabinet in Tokyo. This account states that Tojo's position has become shaky, because of the way Japan's axis partners are cracking.

London today flashes the news of a bet, relating to the end of the war. Even money was wagered that the conflict in Europe would be over by the ~~end~~ end of the year. However, London hastens to inform us that this was mere private betting and does not represent prevalent odds that are being laid.

And here's something startling in the latest news dispatch just off the wire. It states:- "Reports from the Italian frontier said that Germans in northern Italy were already encountering hostile acts from both Italian civilians and soldiers. In the hills of northern Italy, opposition to German occupation was reported by Italian guerrillas and light advance units of the Italian army." So states the news dispatch. Also, word has just come from Spain that two Italian army corps have been ordered by Badoglio to march toward Brenner Pass to oppose the further movement of German troops into Italy.

## SICILY

The battle of Sicily goes on with undiminished stubbornness. American troops have pushed forward fifteen miles and are now up against the main line of Nazi fortifications -- from Catania, past Mt. Etna, to the North Coast. The Germans are fighting as fiercely as ever -- in spite of the news from Rome, which must be mighty disturbing to them. They are putting no trust, apparently in their Italian Allies. Dispatches from Allied headquarters declare that the German command is sending Italian troops to the rear, and is manning the defenses with Germans.



## MUSSOLINI INTERVIEW

The news about Italy and the fall of Mussolini has now quieted down to a point where I feel I can afford the luxury of a personal reminiscence.

In nineteen thirty-seven I went to Europe to cover the Coronation in London, and took the opportunity to make quick trips to Paris and Rome to interview the heads of the French and Italian Governments--the French Premier, and in Rome the man who wanted to be the modern Caesar. I got to Rome just as the Fascists were preparing for a big celebration, which they called "Empire Day" -- the anniversary of their conquest of Ethiopia. They were on the outs with the British, and were cutting the coronation. Not even mentioning it.

In the Venezia palace I had the experience familiar to newsmen--

the long walk across a great room to a desk where Mussolini sat in solitary grandeur -- only one chair in the whole place, the visitor not to ~~sit~~ sit down.

The Duce was quite affable, always a hound for publicity, and I was about ~~x~~ to ask him for the extra pass to admit my colleague outside. But everything went wrong. I made one of the blunders of a lifetime.

Mussolini said cordially in his broken English: "I am glad that you have come for our Empire Day Celebration. You will find it interesting."

To which I responded ~~with the bluntness~~ <sup>ph</sup> "I am sorry," I ~~said~~ <sup>he</sup> "But I can't stay for your Empire Day, I've got to ~~hurry~~ <sup>be</sup> ~~back~~ <sup>in</sup> London for the coronation!" "Whereupon

~~the Duce suddenly~~ <sup>he</sup> froze, and I didn't have the nerve to ~~ask for the extra pass for my pal in the automobile outside.~~

~~Mussolini~~ <sup>he</sup> Following his usual practice, <sup>There</sup> led me to a window looking out on the street. <sup>^</sup> He stood on the step at the base of the window -- to make himself appear taller. He was short and squat, much more so than I had expected him to be.

The impression I got of him was one of peasant coarseness, not at all favorable. I noticed in particular a large and unsightly wen on the top of his naked bald head -- rather repellent,

In later pictures I failed to see the wen -- he must have had it

removed. *But then he usually was photographed ~~with~~ wearing a striking headgear of some sort.*

The interview was a frost. I had looked forward to getting international headlines. Nothing of the sort, I tried to make conversation, but got nowhere. Mussolini coldly confined himself to a couple of remarks about how he was improving buildings and streets in Rome.

That was all, and out I went -- worried about my colleague waiting in the car. He must be burning to participate in the historic interview, biting his nails with impatience.

When I got to the automobile, ready with apologies and explanation, I looked in and saw him -- sound asleep. We had an excellent luncheon, *Roman* ~~of season and red wine, something to make~~ *which would make anyone* a fellow drowsy, and now he had slept through the interview with Mussolini.

*At any rate I was not impressed by the Duce.*

## AIR WAR

Last night the greatest air raid of the war was launched - says London. And once again the target was

Hamburg. That great German port was hit by twenty-three hundred tons of bombs. It was the sixth raid that Hamburg has endured in seventy-two hours, during which time fifty-three hundred tons of bombs had been dropped on the blasted, blazing city.

These figures ~~show~~ dwarf the great Nazi blitz on London, when in ninety days and nights seventy-five hundred tons of bombs were dropped. Now fifty-three hundred tons in seventy-two hours -- in the all-out continuous assault which is intended to knock Hamburg out of the war.

RUSSIA

Moscow reports that the Germans are withdrawing from Orel -- to avoid another Stalingrad. Their retreat is being made under the greatest of difficulties, with Red Army gunfire controlling their most important highway for escape. The Soviet forces are smashing hard, and today scored a gain of seven miles -- capturing a town only eleven miles southeast of Orel. Moscow gives us the ~~same~~ comment that the German command has a perfect understanding of the significance of the Red Army advances from the South - and that's why they ~~are~~ have started the evacuation of Orel.

PACIFIC

Another <sup>n</sup><sub>^</sub> bombing of Wake Island -- the second in four days.

And this leads to the supposition that air attack may be preparing the way for an attempt to capture from the Japs the island scene of heroism by the marines early in the war. In the latest assault against Wake, our bombers shot down seventeen zeros, broke through, and hit their targets.

And Kiska has been bombed again. American warplanes are smashing continually at that Jap base in the Aleutians, and this is taken as a sign that we are preparing to invade Kiska.

~~Note: cut the middle section of Parliament story if necessary~~

M.P.S.

Outside of the London House of Commons today, two members of Parliament got into a fist fight -- my word!

It was all because of a debate in the Commons, where Captain Alec Stratford Cunningham-Reid raised a question about Prince Paul, the former regent of Jugoslavia. Prince Paul tried to turn Jugoslavia over to the Nazis, but the Jugoslavs rebelled. He was made a prisoner of war and taken to Africa, but recently the rumor has been that he has been allowed to go elsewhere for reasons of health. How come? That was the question which, in more stately parliamentary language, was asked by Captain Alec Stratford Cunningham-Reid.

Where upon Commander Oliver Locker-Lampson spoke up and asked: "From what medical disability was Captain Cunningham-Reid suffering when he left England in the blitz?"

That referred to the fact that during the time of the bombing of London, *the unpopular and much panned* Captain Alec Stratford Cunningham-Reid was in Hawaii as guest of Doris Duke Cromwell, the American heiress. He says he was there to talk over plans for evacuating British children from bombed areas, ~~But that~~ explanation has failed to please his critics.

Captain Alec Stratford Cunningham-Reid has been a stormy figure in Parliament for some time. Not so long ago he attacked the United States, saying that Americans do not sufficiently value Britain's part in the war, and <sup>that</sup> some Americans want to take Canada, and also <sup>that we want to</sup> seize the airways of the world.

Captain Alec Stratford Cunningham-Reid has been disowned by his own party, the conservatives, and on two occasions ~~even~~ <sup>the</sup> constituents who elected him asked him to resign. In each case he refused.

Moreover, he has had some headline domestic difficulties. A few years ago he sued his wife -- demanding that she give him half of her income, which amounted to four hundred thousand dollars a year. Captain Alec Stratford Cunningham-Reid in his petition to the court argued that any decent rich woman should make proper financial provision for what he called -- "The man who lives with her." <sup>And</sup> He didn't do so badly. He failed to get half of the four hundred thousand a year; but <sup>he</sup> was awarded somewhere between twenty-five and fifty thousand a year.

In the House of Commons today, upon being taunted about his trip to Honolulu while the blitz <sup>is</sup> was on in London, Captain



Alec Stratford Cunningham-Reid retorted: "Is it not a fact that the characteristic of the cuckoo is that it makes a nuisance of itself in other people's nests? And," he added, "is not Commander Locker-Lampson a cuckoo?"

Outside of Parliament shortly afterward, Captain Alec Stratford Cunningham-Reid happened to meet Commander Oliver Locker-Lampson, and the Captain said to the Commander -- "You nasty old man." Whereupon the punches started to fly. The two M.P.'s. socked each other in the most unparliamentary way, and Commander Oliver Locker-Lampson was knocked down. Some other M.P.'s. hastened to ~~separate~~ separate the battlers, but the unseemly thing had occurred --

*two hyphenated*  
a fist fight between ~~two~~ members of Parliament - Capt. Alec Stratford Cunningham - Reid, and Commander Oliver Locker - Lampson. And now Hugh James.