

They made the condition that the King must abdicate, but Count Sforza in a Press conference on September 2, expressed complete faith in Marshal Badoglio, who, he said, would make an "ideal Regent" for the young Prince of Naples, the King's grandson.

#### ABDICATION OF THE KING

On April 21, 1944, King Victor Emmanuel III announced: "I have decided to withdraw from public affairs, appointing my son, the Prince of Piedmont, to be Lieutenant-General of the Realm. This appointment will become effective by the formal transfer of power on the day on which the Allied troops enter Rome."

This statement satisfied the leaders of the resurrected political parties. They entered the Government of Badoglio, who held the positions of Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Count Sforza being appointed Minister without Portfolio.

On June 4, 1944, the Allies entered Rome. Badoglio then presented his resignation to Prince Humbert, the Lieutenant-General of the Realm, who commissioned him to form a new Government. On June 6, the political leaders unanimously voted a refusal to serve under Badoglio, on the ground of his association with Fascism. This accords most curiously with Sforza's declaration that Badoglio would make an "ideal Regent," and his proposal to Badoglio that he should be Regent, which Sforza recalled in a statement he issued on December 11, 1944.

In view of the refusal to serve under Badoglio a Government was now formed by Ivonne Bonomi, the same who had served as War Minister under Giolitti in the period when the Fascists obtained arms from the arsenals of the Italian State. In Bonomi's administration Count Sforza served also as Minister without Portfolio.

On November 26, 1944, Bonomi's Government resigned. After two days negotiation, it was announced that Bonomi would form a new Government, with Count Sforza as Foreign Minister, but a notification was received from the British Minister in Rome that Count Sforza's appointment to that post would be unacceptable to the British Government.

Mr. Eden, in the House of Commons, on December 1, 1944, said: "In view of Italy's unconditional surrender, and her shameful record under Mussolini, His Majesty's Government were perfectly entitled to express their views about the appointment of any particular Italian statesman, especially in regard to the post of Foreign Minister. The Government does not feel that Count Sforza would be a particularly happy choice for that post. Before he returned to Italy, he told His Majesty's Government that he would pursue a certain course. Nevertheless, "he worked against the Italian Government and continued to work against the Bonomi Government, Count Sforza's record is not one that gives us confidence; that is the Government's view, and that is my view."

Mr. Churchill, on December 8, said: "We have not attempted to put our veto on the appointment of Count Sforza; all that we have to say about it is that we do not trust the man. We do not think he is a true and trustworthy man; nor do we put the slightest confidence in a government of which he is a dominating member. We are not averse to becoming deeply involved in the politics of the conquered or liberated countries; all that we require from them is a government which will guarantee us the necessary protection and facilities for the lines of communication from Naples to Ravenna and the north." He asked: "What is the Government's reason for objecting to Count Sforza? Why is it that we, and I particularly, have no trust in him? That we do not think he would be the sort of man we would like to do business with round the table?" Mr. Churchill then read passages from Count Sforza's letter to Mr. Berle, and explained how he, in the presence of Mr. Law and Sir Alexander Cadogan, had particularly questioned Count Sforza in relation to this letter, and had obtained from him the assurance that it represented his "profound conviction"; yet, said Mr. Churchill, "no sooner had he got back to Italy than he began that long series of intrigues which ended in the expulsion of Marshal Badoglio from office. Many may be glad of this, but that is not the point I am considering. The point is whether he did not most completely, and without explanation, depart at a very early day from the solemn undertaking he gave." It was not Mr. Churchill's intention to defend Marshal Badoglio, though "we got from him the Italian fleet, which came over intact, except for the loss of one ship, and 17,000 men, and there was no moment in his tenure of office when he did not do his utmost to carry out his bond and help to drive the Germans from Italy. Presently, he fell a victim to Count Sforza's intrigues, and a Six Party Government was formed under Signor Bonomi. Six parties were in the Government, but none had the slightest electoral foundation. We did our best to help this new Government. I travelled to Italy and interviewed Signor Bonomi and others, and took the greatest trouble to draw up a series of mitigations in the treatment of Italy by the victorious Allies. Now Signor Bonomi has fallen, and I understand that he has formed another Government of four out of the previous six parties. We wish him well. We have no objection at all to his forming a Government of four parties." Count Sforza issued a statement on December 11 asserting that he had not written but only signed the letter to Mr. Berle, and that he had fulfilled all the engagements contained therein, a statement which seems hardly consistent with the facts.

The result of the British intervention, above recorded, was that Count Sforza was dropped from Bonomi's new Government, and obliged to remain outside the Italian administration until June 22, 1947, when he entered the Ministry of Signor Alcide De Gasperi as Minister of Foreign Affairs.