

Telegram to German Foreign Office Referring to Mussolini's Policy Regarding the Italian Jews , March 1943

Stamp: Top Secret

Copy

Of a Copy

Telegram received from Rome on March 18 1943.

Assignment at the Duce carried out tonight.

He read with attention the memorandum and the note and described the latter as of much interest to him. Only with regard to sub-paragraph 1 he commented that this information did not quite agree with the facts since he had, on principle, forbidden the acceptance of donations from abroad, as for example only recently a collection from the Ticino intended for children.

Thereupon I presented the arguments to the Duce as ordered, closely following the instruction of the above telegraphic order. He did not interrupt me in my very slowly expounded ideas, only emphasized some passages with lively, affirmative gestures, particularly the remark (sub. Para. 1 of the possibilities for a solution) that we cannot understand why the Italian commands had stopped the French police, as they should have been pleased with the fact that the French had taken it upon themselves to carry out energetically the necessary cleaning up.

When I had finished, he requested me to give his thanks to the Reich Foreign Minister for letting him have the documentation, on which he places great value and then he discussed the matter in question going into all details, which might be summarized as follows: Our fundamental position concerning the absolute necessity of taking sweeping measure against the Jews and the British and American persons still in the occupied territory are absolutely clear and indicated beyond any doubt. If his general had made difficulties then this had happened because their mode of thinking, centered upon other things, prevented them from comprehending the scope of all these measures. This should not be taken as an expression of their bad intentions, but simply the

logical consequence of their mode of thinking. In fact, matters were such that we had all reasons for being satisfied that a French Government were in power willing to carry out these police measure. It would be absurd to stop them. Evidently his general had forgotten the fact that their mission in France was not that of an occupying power, but that they had come in order to help. The control of the French police is altogether outside of their competence. When the French pursued a rigorous course against the Jews, it should, in effect, be considered the same as if they proceeded against criminal elements, where the military would never think of interfering. The conduct of his generals is not only the result of the above-mentioned lack of understanding of the significance of the measures, but also the result of silly sentimental conceptions of human ideals, which no longer fit into our harsh times. He would – that I could tell to the Reich Foreign Minister – give orders this very day to Generaloberst Ambrosio to this effect that, in the future, the French police will not be interfered with in this affair.

Upon my remarks, that Generaloberst Ambrosio would certainly object to this on the grounds than an order of the Duce to this effect would be impossible in view of the fact that it would leave the Italian military authorities in an awkward position against the French, the Duce shrugged his shoulders with a smile and a gesture which only could be interpreted to mean: “There is only one man in command here and that’s me”, which gesture I interpreted in this way without any opposition on his part.

From the foregoing I had come to the conclusion, that the Duce had decided for a solution in accordance with our proposal No. 1.

The reaction of the Italian press will be observed on the spot. If, in the future, cases still occur in which the unequivocal will of the Duce is being sabotaged by local military authorities, then, by virtue of today’s conversation, I would be in position to appeal to the Duce at anytime. His attitude was absolutely unequivocal and again disclosed the fact that his ideas move, on too high a plane to allow the measures he once considers appropriate be frustrated for prestige reasons.

(signed) Mackensen

Certified true copy



(Signature) Stueeckelberger

SS-Oberscharfuehrer

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