

Conversations with the Fuehrer on 19 August 1943

\*\*\*\*\*

3. Conferences with Ambassador von Mackensen:

Mackensen expresses his views concerning conditions in Italy. There is dissatisfaction in Fascist circles and confidence in the Duce's direction of the war has vanished. The Fascist Council voted without realizing the consequences. Not even the Duce was aware of conditions. It remained for the King to make the Duce aware of the state of affairs that even his Fascist Party had lost faith in him. Following this the Duce offered his resignation and asked for a guarantee of safety for himself and his family. The King agreed and the Duce then was allegedly placed in protective custody. Mackensen believes that Badoglio had no previous knowledge of the entire affair. He says that the longing for peace is wide-spread among the Italian people but that the present Government is willing to continue the fight because the impossibility of obtaining peace without making all of Italy a battlefield is realized. Mackensen states that present conditions do not warrant a pessimistic attitude; that the Fuehrer was seeing matters in a more pessimistic manner than, in his opinion, was justified. He could of course offer no proof that he was right and the Fuehrer wrong.

(Pages 127-8)