

Rome Conference

There was a time in the dim past when all roads led to Rome. In recent years it has been the ambition of Premier Benito Mussolini to make the old axiom a reality today. His methods have been roundly criticized and the measure of his success often questioned, but he has succeeded in keeping the eyes of the world, and especially the eyes of Europe, on Rome.

The past fortnight those eyes were again focused on the Eternal City. The reason was the visit of Col. Gen. Hermann Wilhelm Goering, Hitler's second in command, Minister of Air and Commissar of the German Four-Year Plan. There, the dazzlingly-uniformed and bemedaled Colonel Gener-



All Eyes Were on Goering and Rome

al was welcomed amid the fanfare usually reserved for the heads of states.

Spending more than a week in Rome and other parts of Italy, Hitler's right-hand man had numerous conversations with Il Duce and Il Duce's son-in-law, Foreign Minister Count Galeazzo Ciano. Mussolini entertained him at a state banquet, took him to the Royal Opera House to hear Gluck's "Alceste," and accompanied him on an inspection tour of Italy's vast Guidonia experimental aviation plant. Later Il Duce demonstrated to the visitor his prowess as a swordsman by crossing blades with the fencing master of a physical culture academy.

In between his round of receptions, conferences and inspections, Goering found time to predict an eventual showdown in the conflict between Europe's Fascists and Communists. He went on a shooting trip with King Victor Emmanuel. He also paid a visit to Crown Prince Humbert in Naples, and enjoyed with Mrs. Goering a short holiday on the island of Capri.

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Goering and Mussolini were supposed to have talked Italo-German friendship and cooperation in European affairs. Their conversations were said to have dealt with, among other things, ways of reconciling German and Italian sympathy for the Spanish Fascists with the international non-intervention agreement in the Spanish civil war. Great significance was attached to their talks. What they actually agreed upon, however, probably will never be known in full, but the effects of their decisions will in all likelihood soon be visible.

While Hitler's chief aide and Il Duce talked and Europe wondered what would follow their meeting, there were abundant rumors and hints. One of these was the possible negotiation of a new four-power pact against Communism. Designed to bring about a general European settlement, it would include Italy, Germany, Britain and France, but would isolate Russia from the big Western European powers. Such a pact, it was indicated in Fascist circles, would be a likely forerunner to Italian and German return to the League of Nations.

Goering and his party returned to Berlin last week to report on accomplishments. At the same time there were extraordinary movements of diplomats all over Europe. These movements and the resulting attention directed to Rome, London, Berlin, Paris and Moscow overshadowed the start of a new League session at Geneva.

In London, while German and Italian replies to the latest British note on non-intervention were expected momentarily, the Non-Intervention Committee met and went through the motions of rededicating itself to the almost hopeless task of keeping foreign hands off the Spanish conflict. The committee was reported to be considering a revised plan to blockade the war-torn peninsula.

Great Britain, meanwhile, had put in force a firm ban on volunteers to Spain. France and Russia, in replies to the British note, agreed in principle to do likewise, but declined to act until joined by Germany and Italy.

Action of the Spanish Burgos (Rebel) and Valencia (Loyalist) governments rejecting the proposal to control munitions shipments to both sides in their war met this gloomy response in England: "Everything is now up to Germany and Italy, depending on whether they shut off the flow of volunteers." Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden told the House of Commons that "Germany holds the key to the future of troubled Europe."