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*How US Intelligence obtained  
some remarkable documents.*

## THE CIANO PAPERS: ROSE GARDEN

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Galeazzo Ciano, dei conti di Cortellazzo, was born on 18 March 1903 at Leghorn, the son of Admiral Costanzo Ciano, an Italian hero of World War I and an early supporter of Mussolini. After gaining his degree young Ciano dabbled for a time in journalism and then in 1925 entered the Italian diplomatic service. He served briefly at Rio de Janeiro, Peking, and the Holy See. On 24 April 1930 he married Edda, the daughter of Mussolini. Thereafter his promotions were very rapid indeed. After a brief period serving as Consul General at Shanghai, Ciano was named Minister to China, and in 1932 served as presiding officer of the League of Nations' Commission of Inquiry on the Sino-Japanese conflict. In August 1933, Mussolini named his son-in-law chief of his press office, which in September of the next year was upgraded and renamed the Office of Press and Propaganda with Ciano as its undersecretary. In June of 1935 the Office was transformed into a full-fledged ministry with Ciano at its head.

Ciano volunteered for the Ethiopian War and served in command of a bomber squadron. He was decorated by Marshal Badoglio for military valor in that war. Then on 9 June 1936, at the age of 33, he was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs, an office which he filled until February 1943. Young Ciano was even accorded, retroactively it would seem, that great Fascist honor of having taken part in the "March on Rome" in 1922.<sup>1</sup>

Countess Edda Ciano liked to speak of herself as half-Russian, ascribing her moodiness and weak lungs to her Russian blood. Mussolini's wife dismissed such talk as mere gossip: Edda was born to

<sup>1</sup>At least it is so stated in the *Enciclopedia Italiana*, appendix I, p. 412. See, however: Duilio Susmel, *Vita sbagliata di Galeazzo Ciano* (Milan: Aldo Palazzi, 1962) p. 56.

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us on September 1, 1910, she writes, but Benito and she were not yet regularly married; hence, the stupid insinuation that Angelica Balabanoff was the mother of Edda.<sup>2</sup>

The Cianos had three children: the older son, baptized Fabrizio Benito Costanzo, born 1 October 1931; the daughter, Raimonda, born 21 December 1933; and Marzio, the younger son, born 18 December 1937. But the marriage was not a happy one: it was common knowledge that each spouse had numerous affairs. Edda was headstrong and violent in her feelings, something which seemed to endear her to her father.<sup>3</sup>

Ciano was Minister of Foreign Affairs during the period of the British acceptance of Italy's conquest of Ethiopia, of the Italian intervention in the Spanish Civil War, of Italy's rapprochement and subsequent alliance with Nazi Germany, and of World War II until February 1943. It was in the course of the Italian intervention in the Spanish Civil War that Ciano instigated the murder of the Rosselli brothers, Carlo and Nello, founders of the movement *Giustizia e Libertà*.<sup>4</sup> He met and spoke with practically all of the important European leaders of the time, and kept a diary or diaries during all or most of the period of his ministry. The larger portion of these diaries was first published in English translation in the American edition of January 1946.<sup>5</sup> An earlier portion of the diaries was first published in

<sup>2</sup> Rachele Mussolini, *La mia vita con Benito* (Milan: Arnoldo Mondadori, 1948) p. 31.

<sup>3</sup> Roman Dombrowski, *Mussolini: Twilight and Fall* (New York: Roy Publishers, 1956) p. 114.

Susmel, *Vita sbagliata*, p. 58, relates that when Edda returned from her trip to Germany in 1937, where she had been shown great attention by Hitler and the Nazi bigwigs, Galeazzo asked her directly if she had ever betrayed him. She answered No, and Susmel assures us that this was the truth.

The statements to the contrary are too numerous to be listed.

<sup>4</sup> Charles F. Delzell, *Mussolini's Enemies: The Italian Anti-Fascist Resistance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961) pp. 159-160.

Susmel, *Vita sbagliata*, pp. 74-75.

<sup>5</sup> Massimo Salvadori, *The Labour and the Wounds, A Personal Chronicle of One Man's Fight for Freedom* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1958) pp. 118-119.

<sup>6</sup> *The Ciano Diaries 1939-1943: The Complete, Unabridged Diaries of Count Galeazzo Ciano, Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1936-1943*, Edited by Hugh Gibson, Introduction by Summer Welles (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co. Inc., 1946).

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Italian in 1948. The English translation followed in 1953.<sup>6</sup> These diaries are unquestionably, incomparably, the most interesting and important Italian memoir material regarding World War II.<sup>7</sup>

Closely associated with Ciano's private and often highly subjective notations in the booklets of his diary were the supporting papers. In the American edition of the diaries one encounters such interpolations as these:

12 January 1939 (p. 10): "I shall let Mackensen read yesterday's record."

19 July 1939 (p. 110): "I have set down my impressions of Spain in a notebook."

1 October 1939 (p. 154): "As usual I have summarized in a memorandum in my conference book the official account of my contacts with Hitler and other high officials of the Reich."<sup>8</sup>

In the diaries for 1937-1938 (English edition), one finds such references as these:

5 November 1937: "An extremely interesting conversation. I have summarized it in a minute." (p. 29)

3 January 1938: "Conversation with Perth, of which I have made a minute." (p. 58)

5 January 1938: "The first (conversation of the Duce) of which I have made a minute, was with Count Bethlen." (p. 60)

These supporting papers by Count Ciano, in the form which they had acquired when they reached Washington, came to be known as "The Ciano Papers: Rose Garden." Our primary aim in this essay is to narrate how they got here. But this story cannot be told by itself. To make it intelligible we must at the same time unravel the story of the diaries themselves. But even before the diary and supporting papers begin their movements from Rome, a few things should be noted.

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<sup>6</sup> Galeazzo Ciano, *1937-1938 diario* (Bologna: Cappelli, 1948), *Ciano's Hidden Diary 1937-1938* Translation and notes by Andreas Mayor, With an introduction by Malcolm Muggendge (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1953).

<sup>7</sup> Mario Toccano, *The History of Treaties and International Politics, Vol. I An Introduction to the History of Treaties and International Politics: The Documentary and Memoir Sources* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1966) pp. 454-455.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Lewis Bernstein Namier, *Diplomatic Prelude 1938-1939* (London: Macmillan, 1948) p. 494.

<sup>9</sup> Other such references are to be found on pp. 175, 212, 219, 223, 255, 274, 277, 293, 305, 306, 419, 436, 470, 477, 552, 556.

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The diary was not very secret. Parts of it had been shown or read to Dino Alfieri, Ambassador to Germany, to Filippo Anfuso, Ciano's secretary and later Ambassador to Hungary; and to Zenone Benini, a life-long friend of Ciano's, Undersecretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1939, and Minister of Public Works in Mussolini's last cabinet before the overthrow of July 1943. Benini later told the Americans about the diary. It was known also to Felice Guarneri, Undersecretary in the Ministry for Currency and Foreign Exchange, to Giorgio Nelson Page, and to Orio Vergagni, also friends of many years.<sup>9</sup> Sumner Welles recorded: "He showed it [the diary] to me and read me excerpts from it in my first conversation with him."<sup>10</sup>

Mussolini was thoroughly aware that his son-in-law was keeping a diary; he knew of Ciano's dislike and suspicion of the Germans, and that the diary and selection of supporting papers reflected this attitude. In the entry for 6 July 1941, Ciano noted Mussolini's irritation over German activity in the Alto Adige, or the South Tyrol, as the Austrians call it. "Note it down in your diary," Mussolini said, "that I foresee an unavoidable conflict arising between Italy and Germany." For 6 November 1942, it is recorded: "Mussolini asked me if I was keeping my diary up to date. When I answered affirmatively, he said that it will serve to prove how the Germans, both in military and political fields, have always acted without his knowledge." On 8 February 1943, three days after Mussolini had told Ciano that he was being transferred from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the embassy at the Vatican, the Duce "asked me if I had all my documents in order." Ciano assured him that they were in order, and that he could document all the treacheries perpetrated against Italy by the Germans.<sup>11</sup>

The diary entries were recorded by Ciano in calendar note books issued by the Italian Red Cross, page by page, usually one page for one day. These sheets were about 8 inches by 10 inches. The notations were in longhand in ink. Now and then, when much was recorded for a given day, extra sheets had been pasted in. At other places

<sup>9</sup> Susmel, *Vita sbagliata*, pp. 76-77.

<sup>10</sup> *The Ciano Diaries, 1939-1943*, p. xvii. Cf. p. 212, entry 28 February 1940.

<sup>11</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 374, 539, and 580.

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the handwriting was extremely cramped in order to compress one day's material on one sheet. One booklet was used for each year. The booklets were kept in the little safe in Ciano's office.<sup>12</sup>

The published volume for 1937-1938 at the second entry, that for 23 August 1937, reads: "From today I mean to resume a regular diary."<sup>13</sup> This implies or strongly suggests that there were other, antecedent diary notations. This notation, however, should be read in conjunction with the entry for 22 August: "My writer's vanity makes me beg that, if one day publicity is given to these notes, it will be remembered that they were thrown on to the paper by me, in bits and pieces, between an interview and a telephone call. . . ." <sup>14</sup> The wording may mean that there was at some time some sort of systematic set of notations by Ciano for 1936, a notebook which did not survive the vicissitudes we are about to relate. Susmel insists that the Ciano diaries originally consisted of eight notebooks, one for each of the years 1936 to 1943.<sup>15</sup>

The author has found positive evidence of only seven booklets in the various movements of the diaries from 1943 onward. The notation for 22 August 1937 may merely indicate that Ciano experimented from time to time with diary notations prior to that date, but kept a systematic record only thereafter.

In 1944, when American intelligence officers first picked up the trail of the diaries and papers, Zenone Benini, who seems not to have drawn a clear distinction between the diaries and the papers, mentioned additional people to whom the diaries were known: Blasco Lanza d'Ajeta, Duke Marcello del Drago, and the writer Curzio Malaparte. Benini felt sure that the German Embassy knew of the diaries. According to Benini, Curzio Malaparte stated that as early

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<sup>12</sup> Interview with Mr. Allen Dulles, 17 January 1966, Telegram, Bern to Washington (Dulles to O.S.S.) 11 January 1945, Item 58 L, File "Edda Ciano Diaries," Personal Files of Allen Dulles, Susmel, *Vita sbagliata*, p. 76.

<sup>13</sup> *The Ciano Diaries 1939-1943*, pp. 1, 189, 329, 429, 563 reproduce the covers of the Red Cross notebooks used by Ciano. The 1937-1938 diary, between p. xvii and p. 1, provides a facsimile of the entry for 22 August 1937.

<sup>14</sup> *Ciano's Hidden Diary 1937-1938*, p. 3.

<sup>15</sup> 1937-1938 diary, p. 5; but placed separate in the English edition (*op. cit.*, p. vi) and labeled "Ciano's Foreword."

<sup>16</sup> *Vita sbagliata*, pp. 57, 336, 370.

as May 1942, Ciano had been advised by a friend to resign and seek refuge in some foreign country but had replied: "The publication of my Diary will be sufficient not only to protect me from all political vengeance and persecution, but will rehabilitate me even in the eyes of my adversaries." Ciano stated on several occasions to his friends that he intended to publish this document abroad, perhaps in America or in England."<sup>16</sup>

"Escape" to Germany

Count Ciano, whom Mussolini had relieved of his position as Minister of Foreign Affairs on 5 February 1943, was one of the ring leaders of the revolt against the Duce in the Grand Council of Fascism. In his new position as Ambassador to the Holy See, Ciano worked assiduously for Italy's withdrawal from the war, with Mussolini if possible, without him and even against him if necessary. He cooperated closely with Bottai and Grandi in preparing for the meeting of the Grand Council on 24-25 July and in lining up a majority of the Councilors to vote for Grandi's resolution. Throughout Ciano's speech, Mussolini glowered at him in contempt and indignation. The revolt within the Grand Council gave the King the opportunity to dismiss Mussolini and to appoint Marshal Badoglio as his successor.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Headquarters Peninsular Base Section, Memorandum (by Lt. Col. Henry H. Cumming) for A.C. of S., G-2, A.F.H.Q. 16 August 1944, Subject: Count Ciano's Diary, Enclosure 2, Despatch No. 703, Robert D. Murphy to the Secretary of State, 25 August 1944, Item 63 R, File "Edda Ciano Diaries," Personal Files of Allen Dulles.

<sup>17</sup> There were no stenographic minutes of this last meeting of the Grand Council but some of the participants made their own records: Benito Mussolini, *Il tempo del bastone e della carota: Storia di un anno (ottobre 1942-settembre 1943)* Supplemento del "Corriere della Sera" No. 190 del 9-8-1944 XXII, pp. 16-18. Dino Grandi, "Count Dino Grandi Explains," *Life* (February 26, 1945) pp. 21 ff., Giuseppe Bottai, *Vent'anni e un giorno* (Milan: Garzanti, 1949) pp. 295-318, Dino Alfieri, *Due dittatori di fronte* (Milan: Rizzoli, 1948) pp. 320 ff.

The fullest secondary account in English is that by Frederick W. Deakin, *The Brutal Friendship: Mussolini, Hitler and the Fall of Italian Fascism* (New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, 1962) pp. 438-456. See also Ivone Kirkpatrick, *Mussolini: A Study in Power* (New York: Hawthorne Books, Inc., 1964) pp. 545-567. There are very full accounts in the Italian works, Giorgio Pini and Duilio Susmei, *Mussolini, Uomo e Popera* 4 vols., Vol. IV, *Dall'impero alla repubblica, 1938-1945* (Florence: La Fenice, 1955) pp. 244-255, Ruggiero Zangrandi, *1943: 25 Luglio—8 settembre* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1964) pp. 108-142.

## *The Ciano Papers*

Prior to the meeting of the Grand Council, Ciano seems to have had high hopes that he would play a leading part in the new government, that he and Grandi would steer the Italian ship of state into the harbor of a separate peace with the Western powers. The King's ideas were utterly different. It was the government headed by Badoglio assisted by a cabinet of technicians which took over after Mussolini, a regime which was launched with the slogan that "the war continues." Ciano then reverted to the idea of a withdrawal into private life. He decided to resign as Ambassador to the Vatican, and through Ambrosio whom he had supported as successor to Cavallero as chief of the *Comando Supremo*, Ciano asked for passports so that he and his family might seek exile in Spain.<sup>18</sup> But the days turned into weeks and the passports were not forthcoming. Not only that, but the Badoglio government created a commission to investigate the matter of illicit personal gains by members of the Fascist hierarchy. A press campaign was launched against Ciano charging him with financial corruption. He was placed under house arrest and he began to fear for his personal safety if he remained in Italy.<sup>19</sup>

In these circumstances Edda Ciano got in touch with Eugen Dollman, and through him arrangements were made for the German *Sicherheitsdienst* to transport Galeazzo, Edda, and the three children to Germany. The escape, as Count Ciano and the Countess regarded their departure, went off according to plan on 27 August. Edda and the children in one car eluded the Italian police; Ciano took a different car and a different route. They were each picked up later by a German military truck and taken to Ciampino airfield. There they were put aboard a Junker 52 plane which flew them to Munich, and from there they went by auto to Oberallmannshausen. The man who made these arrangements was Wilhelm Hoettl.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> It is said that Ciano and Serrano Suñer had a pact of mutual assistance that each would help the other in case of need for refuge outside his own country. Ermanno Amicucci, *I 600 giorni di Mussolini* (Rome: Editrice "Faro," 1948) p. 19.

<sup>19</sup> Susmel, *Vita sbagliata*, pp. 289-293.

<sup>20</sup> Susmel, *Vita sbagliata*, pp. 292-293. Later in the year Ciano told his friend Benini that the Germans tricked him and broke a promise to let him get out to Spain. Zenone Benini, *Vigilia a Verona* (Milan: Garzanti, 1949) pp. 44-45. Hoettl denies any such promise at this time. Susmel, *Vita sbagliata*, p. 293.

The pilot of the plane was Captain Erich Priebke, whom Peter Tompkins later met in Rome in rather unusual circumstances. Peter Tompkins, *A Spy in Rome* (New York, Published by arrangement with Simon and Schuster, Inc., 1962) p. 17.

A word may be in order here about the organization and the persons involved in the German security service, the *Sicherheitsdienst*, or SD, in Germany and in Italy in 1943. The head of all the Nazi police forces was Heinrich Himmler. Back in 1929 when the National Socialists were merely a party contending for leadership in the German state, Himmler was simply the head of Hitler's private body guard, the *Schutzstaffel*, or SS, which at that time numbered possibly 300 men. By 1933, this elite corps of the Nazi Party had grown to 52,000.

Within the SS, a security service had been organized as early as 1931. In the summer of 1934, the SD under Reinhard Heydrich, Himmler's chief lieutenant, was recognized as the sole intelligence and counterintelligence agency of the Nazi Party. Himmler also managed to take control of the Prussian police away from Goering in 1934. Himmler's lieutenant, Reinhard Heydrich, brought all the police forces together under one central office, the Main Security Office, or *Reichssicherheitshauptamt*, which was generally known by its initials, the RSHA. After Heydrich's assassination he was succeeded by Ernst Kaltenbrunner who bore the title of *Obergruppenfuhrer*, a rank in the SS equivalent to lieutenant general in the regular army. As head of the Main Security Office, Kaltenbrunner was second only to Himmler in the control of the police, in the operation of that principal instrument of terror of the Nazi regime. These were the men who organized the wholesale slaughter of the Jews of Europe. After Germany's defeat and the dawn of the day of reckoning, Himmler committed suicide on 23 May 1945. Kaltenbrunner was tried before the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg, was sentenced to death on 1 October and hanged on 17 October 1946.<sup>21</sup>

The Main Security Office was divided into seven subordinate offices (*Amt*), such as Amt III, which dealt with intelligence work in Germany and the occupied countries; and Amt IV, the old Secret State Police (*Geheime Staats Polizei*, or *Gestapo*), whose task was to ferret out opposition to the State. Amt VI dealt with foreign intelligence. In June 1941 Schellenberg took over Amt VI and reorganized the foreign intelligence service.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> *History of the United Nations War Crimes Commission Development of the Law of War* (London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1948) pp. 520-521.

<sup>22</sup> See the introduction by Alan Bullock to *The Labyrinth Memoirs of Walter Schellenberg* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1956) pp. ix-xiii; or Hildegard v. Kotze, "Hitlers Sicherheitsdienst im Ausland," *Die politische Meinung* (August 1963) pp. 75-80.

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Until the end of 1942, there had been no German secret service in Italy because Hitler had forbidden it, out of deference to Mussolini. The foundations of a very modest service were laid in the early part of 1943, apparently without Hitler's direct knowledge. In February Wilhelm Hoettl was made head of the section of Amt VI which dealt with Italy. In April the security service submitted a report which delineated the growing opposition to Mussolini within Fascist Italy, the physical and psychic decline of the Duce, and something of the moves by Ciano, Grandi, and Bottai. Hitler merely acknowledged the report, and Schellenberg thereupon determined to organize a thorough service in Italy. In a sense it was too late. The Grand Council meeting of 25 July and the King's dismissal and arrest of Mussolini took Hitler quite by surprise.<sup>23</sup>

The German search for Mussolini in the summer of 1943, the enticement of Ciano into Germany, and, as we shall see, the search for Ciano's diaries and papers were the work of the SD and particularly of Hoettl as *Referent* for Italy in Amt VI of the RSHA.

To anticipate the story somewhat, there is one more character whom we should introduce in the SD in Italy: *Gruppenführer* (General) Wilhelm Harster. From 1940 to 1943 Harster had served in the SD in the Netherlands where he was instrumental in rounding up the Dutch Jews and sending them on for others to exterminate. On 9 September 1943 Harster set up his headquarters in Verona. He headed the whole of the SD in Italy, ranking just below Kaltenbrunner.<sup>24</sup>

Throughout the summer of 1943 Hitler had spurred the *Sicherheitsdienst* to the greatest efforts to locate Mussolini. On 12 September,

<sup>23</sup> Wilhelm Hoettl, *The Secret Front: The Story of Nazi Political Espionage* With an introduction by Ian Colvin, Translated by R. H. Stevens (2nd ed., London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1954) pp. 221-223. This English edition is much superior to Hoettl's first account which was published under the pseudonym of Walter Hagen, *Die geheime Front: Organisation, Personen und Aktionen des deutschen Geheimdienst* (2nd ed., Linz and Vienna: Nibelungen Verlag, 1950).

<sup>24</sup> See Allen Dulles, *The Secret Surrender* (New York, Evanston and London: Harper & Row, 1966) pp. 58-59. Harster in 1949 was sentenced by the government of the Netherlands to a term of 12 years for his part in the deportation of some 80,000 Dutch Jews. In January 1967 he was again tried in Munich, and on 24 February was sentenced to imprisonment for complicity in the murder of those Jews whose deportation he had arranged. (*Washington Post*, 25 February 1967.)

four days after the Allied attack at Salerno and the simultaneous announcement of Italy's surrender to the Allies, Hitler was successful. Otto Skorzeny had learned that Mussolini was held in the ski lodge on the Gran Sasso, highest peak in the Apennines. He and a small group of paratroopers made a daring drop on the mountaintop, seized Mussolini, flew him to Rome and then north to Munich. On the next day Edda Ciano met her father. She vigorously defended her husband's actions in the Grand Council meeting. The next day, 14 September, Mussolini was flown to Hitler's headquarters in East Prussia.

Ever since learning of the Grand Council meeting, Hitler had had the plan of restoring Mussolini and of reconstituting the Fascist regime. In his eyes the Grand Councilors who had voted against Mussolini were guilty of treason and he felt it essential that a revived Fascist government punish such traitors with death. But at the meeting with Hitler, Mussolini appears to have defended Ciano's conduct. On 19 September the ex-Duce returned to Bavaria and spoke with his son-in-law. He assured him on this occasion that he had told the Fuhrer "that he would guarantee with his own head the correctness of the attitude of Count Ciano."<sup>25</sup>

Mussolini's attitude toward Ciano, and his lack of desire for vengeance, left the Germans quite puzzled. They began to write Mussolini off, even though they were determined to re-install him as chief of the government of Italy. They thought that Edda's hold on her father was the knowledge that Mussolini himself had had the idea of deserting Germany.<sup>26</sup>

When Ciano realized that he would not be permitted simply to fly out to Madrid, he approached Hoettl with a proposition. In exchange for facilitating his transfer to Spain with Edda and the children, he offered his diaries. Hoettl soon became convinced that these materials were of great political and historical value. He convinced Kaltenbrunner that Ciano's diaries and supporting papers could be used to discredit Ribbentrop, the German Foreign Minister, a man whom Himmler and Kaltenbrunner loathed. It appears that arrangements were practically completed for the Ciano family to fly to Spain.

<sup>25</sup> Giuseppe Silverstri, *Albergo agli Scalzi* (Milan: Garzanti, 1946) p. 77.

<sup>26</sup> *The Goebbels Diaries 1942-1943*, Edited and translated by Louis P. Lochner (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1948) pp. 468-69, 471, 480-481.

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Hoettl had even prepared false passports to take the family to South America. But against Hoettl's advice, Edda insisted on asking the Fuhrer's permission. Hitler would have none of it, and the plan fell through.<sup>27</sup>

Ciano remained in German custody. The diaries and supporting papers remained where Ciano had secreted them in Italy.

We may note in passing that this notion of using Ciano's diaries to discredit the German Foreign Minister was by no means fantastic. Some of the notations by Ciano were used in 1946 to confound and confute Ribbentrop, but not in the fashion and circumstances which Himmler and Kaltenbrunner would in 1943 have imagined, for extracts from the diary were produced in evidence at the Nuremberg trials in refuting Ribbentrop's testimony,<sup>28</sup> the same tribunal which condemned Kaltenbrunner to hanging.

On 27 September Edda Ciano returned to Italy alone on a slow military train. She had come to appreciate, somewhat earlier than did her husband, the extreme dangers which threatened him. First she went to Ponte a Moriano where she met her mother-in-law, Carolina Ciano, who turned over to her the notebooks containing the diaries of Galeazzo. The widow of the Admiral Costanzo Ciano is said to have remarked on this occasion that these documents were worth the life of her son.<sup>29</sup>

It is said that Edda then went to Rocca delle Caminate, Mussolini's one-time summer residence, and now the temporary capital of the neo-Fascist puppet state, the Italian Social Republic, as it came to be called, in which Mussolini was being reinstated in power by

<sup>27</sup> Hoettl, *Secret Front*, pp. 274-275, *The Goebbels Diaries*, pp. 479-481.

Cf. Susmel, *Vita sbagliata*, pp. 296-297.

<sup>28</sup> Extracts from the diary were submitted in evidence as Document 2987-PS (Exhibit U.S.A.-106), *Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal—Nuremberg 14 November 1945—1 October 1946*, English edition, Vol. XXXI, pp. 434-438, comment by Sir David Maxwell-Fyfe, 8 January 1946, Vol. IV, pp. 567-568.

Cf. the Introduction to the French edition by S. Stelling-Michaud, *Comte Galeazzo Ciano, Journal politique 1939-1943* 2 vols (Neuchâtel and Paris, 1948) Vol. I, p. vi; and Eugene Davidson, *The Trial of the Germans* (New York: Macmillan, 1966) pp. 153-154. (The citations here in footnotes 9 and 10 should be to *The Ciano Diaries 1939-1943*.)

<sup>29</sup> Susmel, *Vita sbagliata*, p. 302. Susmel asserts that there were eight booklets of the diary which were transferred, and which constituted the whole. I have not found confirmation of this number. There seem to have been only seven.

Hitler. Whatever function it performed for the Italians, it spared the Germans the burden of having to administer the four-fifths of the Italian peninsula they occupied by means of military government. Here Edda came to realize how much her husband was hated by her countrymen who were loyal to her father. She persisted in defending her husband's actions and integrity. She told Mussolini that Galeazzo wished to return to Italy. He seems to have been persuaded, for a time at least, that he might have a position in the neo-Fascist government.

Edda had been under great strain, and this was apparent to her father who suggested to her that she go to a clinic for rest. This she did, entering the clinic operated by the Melocchi brothers at Ramiola near Parma. Beforehand she made a trip to Rome where she gathered up her wardrobe. It is said that on this occasion she also carefully hid the diary in a secure place there. It was 10 October when she entered the clinic.<sup>20</sup>

The author of the diaries, Count Ciano, remained at Oberallmannshausen as a "guest" of the German Government. Although the first attempt to barter his diaries for his freedom had failed when Hitler refused permission for the Cianos to fly to Spain, Ciano resorted to this scheme. He knew that within the seemingly monolithic structure of the Nazi dictatorship there was an incessant struggle for power among the chieftains surrounding the Führer. He too had an intense dislike for von Ribbentrop, and he knew that this antipathy—perhaps even hatred is not too strong a word—was shared by Himmler and Kaltenbrunner, who as we have remarked, were particularly anxious to get hold of Ciano's diaries and supporting papers in order to use them to discredit von Ribbentrop and bring about his replacement. Ribbentrop, on the other hand, was equally determined to see that Ciano was eliminated for his "treason" to the Axis and that his diaries and papers were suppressed.

<sup>20</sup> Suszneri, *Vita sbagliata*, pp. 302-303, whose account here is apparently based on "Il carnet d'oro della duchessa di Sermoneta" which appeared in 10 installments in *L'Europeo*, 26 June-28 September 1949.

Ciano's diary, that is the seven or eight booklets, may have been hidden at this time, but not in Rome. But the supporting papers, that is the records of Ciano's conversations, were concealed in Rome along with some other materials. These were retrieved on 4 January 1944. See below, p. 20.

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Whether Ciano would be able to trade his diaries for his freedom remained to be seen, but of the German interest in the diaries there can be no doubt. Himmler and Kaltenbrunner would have been quite happy to get the diaries without any bargain, if only they could find them. Doubtless at the urging of his superiors, Hoettl now provided Ciano with an interpreter, whose real task was to find out the location of the diaries and supporting papers. This was the pretty, highly intelligent, sensitive, and sweet-natured woman known as "La Burkhardt," or Frau Beetz, or "Felicitas" Beetz, the wife of an officer in the Luftwaffe.<sup>31</sup> Ciano recognized her for what she was, someone set to spy on him, but nevertheless he found her very attractive, *simpatica*. She was not a professional spy, this was her first assignment as an agent; and she found herself strongly attracted to Count Ciano. Frau Beetz was destined to play an extraordinary role in the final chapter of the Ciano's life and in the rescue of his diary and supporting papers for posterity.<sup>32</sup>

On 17 October Hoettl appeared at Oberallmannshausen and informed Ciano that he was to be returned to Italy. Ciano had meanwhile had an operation on his ear and on returning to the castle learned that his children had been brought to their grandmother, Rachele Mussolini. The children for the time being remained north of the Alps. Ciano was flown back to Italy on 19 October along with Frau Beetz and some SS men. When the plane landed at Verona he was promptly arrested by both German and Italian police.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Frau Beetz, born Hildegard Burkhardt, at Obermissa near Weimar in 1919, finished secondary school in 1938, then attended a private interpreters' school in Leipzig. In 1939 she entered the *Sicherheitsdienst*, served in Weimar until March 1940 when she was transferred to Amt VI of the RSHA and worked as an interpreter and translator of Italian in the Rome and Berlin offices. In Rome during the spring of 1943 she met Hoettl who at the time was *Referent* for Italy and Hungary. She returned to Germany, then was back in Rome in July in the staff of the German Embassy. In August she was evacuated to the Reich along with the other female employees of the Embassy and thus was at hand when Hoettl decided to employ her as an agent. Her husband, Captain (later Major) Gerhardt Beetz, was an acquaintance of the Cianos.

<sup>32</sup> Benini, *Vigilia a Verona* p. 29 records that when he first met her in the Scalzi prison, he wondered if she really were German, for her Italian was almost perfect.

He records further that when he spoke to her shortly before Christmas, she said there was no hope for Ciano, he would be shot. She wept when she said it, and Benini knew that this could not have been pretense (*op. cit.*, p. 93).

<sup>33</sup> Rachele Mussolini, *Vita con Benito* pp. 222-223, Summel, *Vita sbagliata*, pp. 303-304.

Meanwhile, Mussolini had established himself in the Villa Feltrinelli at Cargnano on the shore of Lake Garda. Donna Rachele rejoined him there and the three Ciano children were brought back to Italy by their uncle, Vittorio Mussolini. Edda Ciano demanded the return of her children to her own custody and in this demand she was successful. She now began to see the full extent of her husband's plight and how difficult it might be to save him. As Dombrowski has phrased it: "It was a public secret in Italy that the Ciano couple was not a good match and that their married life was unhappy. They each went their own way, and nobody thought she had any depth of feeling for him. Yet in the face of this threat she determined to make every effort to save him."<sup>24</sup> Edda Ciano's extraordinary effort to save her husband, and when that failed, to revenge him and to vindicate his memory, are crucial parts of the story of his diaries and supporting papers. Apparently it was through Frau Beetz that Edda Ciano learned that her husband had been arrested.<sup>25</sup>

In late October of 1943 the Council of Ministers of the Italian Social Republic set up a court to investigate and try those who had scuttled the Fascist ship by voting against Mussolini in the Grand Council on 25 July. Ciano and those of the other disloyal Grand Councilors who had been caught were transferred to the Verona prison in early November. Frau Beetz had meanwhile presented herself to General Harster, and he had granted her free rein. She had free access to Ciano's cell, but Edda was forbidden to see her husband. Frau Beetz came to serve as intermediary between the two.

Edda had begun to fear that even her children, Mussolini's grandchildren, were not safe under the puppet neo-Fascist regime. Her friends had been legion before 25 July; now she found almost none.

<sup>24</sup> Dombrowski, *Mussolini: Twilight and Fall*, p. 114.

<sup>25</sup> See p. 2 of the report of Pucci to Allen Dulles, 24 May 1945, Item 18 R, File, "Edda Ciano Diaries," Personal Files of Allen Dulles. This item, 17 double-spaced, typewritten folio pages, is cited hereafter simply as *Pucci Report*.

A considerable portion of this report is quoted in the article by Andrea Niccoletti, "The Decline and Fall of Edda Ciano," *Colliers*, 20 April and 27 April 1964. "Fisulein Ilse" is substituted in this printing for the name of Frau Beetz. The article is based on the documents assembled by Mr. Dulles in the file "Edda Ciano Diaries." Further citations to the article will read: Niccoletti, *Colliers*, date and page.

Cf. Susmel, *Vita abeigliata*, p. 305.

## The Ciano Papers

But there was one friend of former days of the Cianos whose loyalties were undiminished, Lieutenant Pucci of the Italian Air Force.<sup>26</sup> With Pucci's help, Edda Ciano managed to get her children across the border into neutral Switzerland, out of reach of Nazi or Fascist vengeance.<sup>27</sup>

About the middle of December the preliminary judicial investigation of the treason trials of Verona began with Ciano himself as the first defendant. Edda now appealed to her father on behalf of her husband. There were strong words and hot tears from each, but Mussolini would not relent. He had a document, he said, that was proof of Ciano's betrayal and he thought that Edda herself would some day appreciate this.<sup>28</sup>

### Operation Conte

On the night before Christmas Eve—Thursday—Ciano came to realize that he would be found guilty and executed. In his cell he wrote out three documents: a preface for his diaries, a letter to King Victor Emmanuel III, and a letter to Prime Minister Churchill. Frau Beetz again served as messenger and delivered these three items to Edda. Each contained Ciano's denial of guilt and a bitter accusation against his father-in-law. The first became the final entry of the

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<sup>26</sup> Emilio Pucci di Barsento was born in Naples on 20 November 1914, scion of an ancient Florentine family, but with some blending of foreign blood, for his paternal great-grandmother was a niece of Catherine II of Russia. A part of Pucci's education occurred in the United States. He studied agriculture at the University of Georgia, and then political science at Reed College under Professor G. Bernard Noble, receiving an M.A. degree in 1937. At Reed he was very popular with students and faculty alike, despite his vigorous defense of the Fascist regime. A man of strong loyalties to his country, to his college, to his friends, Pucci was endowed with superb physical coordination and was an extraordinarily graceful dancer and a natural sportsman. At Reed, Pucci served for a time as a ski instructor and apparently during this period he began designing ski costumes, exhibiting the talent that later won him world acclaim.

Pucci returned to Italy in 1937 and received his doctorate (*laurea*) at Florence, but his hopes of entering the Italian diplomatic service were frustrated by Italy's entrance into World War II. He joined the Royal Italian Air Force in 1938, served for more than a decade and was decorated for valor. Since the war Pucci has become one of the world's leading fashion designers. In August 1963 he became a deputy in the Italian Parliament, taking his seat with the Liberal group.

<sup>27</sup> Pucci Report, 24 May 1945, p. 2. Niccoletti, *Colliers*, 20 April 1946, p. 12.

<sup>28</sup> The encounter took place on 18 December. Rachele Mussolini, *Vita con Benito*, p. 233.

## The Ciano Papers

diaries as printed in America. It contains not one word acknowledging responsibility for his own iniquities and blames the Germans only, and particularly Ribbentrop, for the war. Damning Mussolini for the death awaiting him, he wrote:

"Within a few days a sham tribunal will make public a sentence which has already been decided by Mussolini under the influence of that circle of prostitutes and white slavers which for some years have reigned Italian political life and brought our country to the brink of the abyss. I accept calmly what is to be my infamous destiny."<sup>49</sup>

Countess Edda apparently sent the letters for the King and for Churchill to her husband's brother-in-law, Massimo Magistrati, Italian Minister in Bern.<sup>50</sup> Victor Emmanuel III received the letter addressed to him and had it authenticated by a notary, believing it would help the cause of the House of Savoy. Ciano mentioned in that letter:

"I have arranged that as soon as possible after my death my diary and some documents will be published which will shed much true light on many facts hitherto unknown."<sup>51</sup>

On Christmas Day 1943 Lieutenant Pucci drove Edda Ciano to Verona, but she was not allowed to see her husband upon orders of Mussolini himself. Through Frau Beetz, Edda and Pucci learned that the trial was now set for 28 December and that the outcome was a foregone conclusion: Ciano would be executed. Edda was terribly distressed on hearing that her father insisted on the execution. Pucci now urged Edda that she escape into Switzerland. During the next day or so Pucci made preparations to get the Countess over the border with the diary in her possession in order to be able to make good Ciano's threats. The booklets containing the diary were carefully hidden in Milan the day after Christmas. Lieutenant Pucci then accompanied Edda back to Ramiola, and made arrangements so that she would be able to make contact with certain people in Como and from there cross the border into Switzerland on 27

<sup>49</sup> *The Ciano Diaries 1939-1943*, pp. 583-584.

<sup>50</sup> Emilio Settemelli, *Edda contro Benito: Indagine sulla personalità del Duce attraverso un memoriale autografo di Edda Ciano Mussolini, qui riprodotto* (Rome: Corso, 1952) pp. 28, 53.

<sup>51</sup> The letter to the king is published in Attilio Tamaro *Due anni di storia, 1943-1945* (Rome: Tosi, 1948-1950) No. 41, pp. 363-364.

Cf. Pini and Susmel, *Mussolini*, Vol. IV, pp. 379-381.

Edda later told Pucci in Switzerland that Churchill made no acknowledgment of the letter addressed to him. (*Pucci Report*, p. 15.)

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December, the day before the scheduled opening of the trial. The plan at this stage was that once safe in Switzerland, Edda would threaten vengeance by publishing her husband's diary if her father would not relent. Pucci would himself come back with the letter threatening revenge against Mussolini. The arrangements were almost finished, and on the morning of 27 December Pucci and Edda drove off from Ramiola, heading for Como by way of Verona where they had arranged to meet Frau Beetz.

The three met at midday. La Burkhardt, this German interpreter, agent, and go-between, now came forward with the scheme that came to be known as "Operation Conte." She told Edda to return to Ramiola, and there she would receive a proposal from the German authorities that Count Ciano would be freed despite the wishes of the neo-Fascist government if Ciano's documents were turned over to the Germans. The proposal by Frau Beetz was confirmed by a letter from Count Ciano himself.<sup>42</sup>

The next day, 28 December, Frau Beetz came to General Harster in his office, greatly disturbed. She explained that it was Ciano's fate to be condemned and shot, but in that case his diary and other documents would be published in America and England. Only if his life were traded for these materials, she indicated, could such publication be prevented. General Harster immediately got in touch with his superior, Kaltenbrunner, who agreed to such an exchange. Kaltenbrunner in turn obtained the consent of Himmler, the leading contender for power in the group immediately surrounding Hitler. These two, as we have noted, were extremely anxious to get hold of Ciano's papers, believing that they would provide the means for

<sup>42</sup> Pucci Report, pp. 3-4.

Cf. Dombrowski, *Twilight and Fall*, p. 118. Dombrowski's whole account at this point, his chapter 6, "To Save One Life," pp. 116-125, is largely based on articles which were written by Pucci for Italian newspapers after the war's end. The Marchese Pucci at this time did not know the fate of Frau Beetz and chivalrously avoided any mention of her name or even precise identification, for she was referred to only as "Mr. X." "When Edda Ciano returned to Italy she was repeatedly asked to reveal the true name of 'Mr. X.' She always replied that as Pucci had kept it secret there must be good reason for it, and she felt bound to follow his example." But Edda did know that the Allies knew the correct name. (Dombrowski, *op. cit.*, p. 125). Pucci's report, which was both closer to the event and not intended for publication, is much the better source than his newspaper accounts. See also Susmel, *Vita sbagliata*, pp. 323-325, and Niccoletti, *Collera*, 20 April 1948, p. 53.

## The Ciano Papers

discrediting von Ribbentrop. They planned to act without informing Hitler in advance, to confront him with an accomplished fact. The scheme was to employ a couple of SS men disguised as Fascists, who would abduct Ciano from his cell and speed him on his way with Edda through Switzerland to Hungary. When she received confirmation of Ciano's release she would be expected to turn over the diaries and the supporting papers.<sup>43</sup>

Kaltenbrunner approved the plan, but wanted a written agreement with Count Ciano regarding the surrender of the diaries and papers, and he summoned General Harster for a discussion at Innsbruck.

On 2 January 1944, in a conference Kaltenbrunner met with Harster, Hoettl and Frau Beetz. The proposed scheme concerning Ciano was now written out in detail in four steps.

*Step 1.* Ciano was to reveal the hiding place of his Foreign Office records in Rome so that the SD could take them over.

*Step 2.* Ciano was to be sprung from his cell, and quickly taken to Switzerland with Edda, the children, and Frau Beetz.<sup>44</sup>

*Step 3.* Ciano, safe in Switzerland, was to turn his diaries over to Frau Beetz.

*Step 4.* She in turn would return to Italy to deliver them to General Harster. Apparently some stipulation was also made to give Ciano some funds so that he could live in Switzerland.<sup>45</sup>

The "springing" of Count Ciano was set for 7 January. His trial was now scheduled for 8 January.

Lieutenant Pucci, who had heard nothing from "La Burkhardt" since 27 December, had meanwhile gone to Florence to be with his family for the New Year holiday. Late in the afternoon of 3 January he returned to Ramiola. Frau Beetz had come there that same day, a few hours before him, with the complete details of "Operation Conte." These were embodied in oral instructions and in two letters which Ciano gave to Frau Beetz for delivery to his wife.

<sup>43</sup> Susmel, *Vita sbagliata*, pp. 328-330. Susmel's account here is based on testimony given him after the war by Harster.

<sup>44</sup> Frau Beetz at this time was aware that the children were already in Switzerland, but made no mention of it.

<sup>45</sup> See Susmel, *Vita sbagliata*, p. 330, who bases his account at this point on post-war statements made to him by General Harster.

Note that the documents (or supporting papers) were to be turned over in advance. The diaries were to be surrendered only after Ciano was free on Swiss soil.

## The Ciano Papers

Edda was to drive to Rome in a car which was to be provided by the Gestapo. There she was to pick up two groups of documents which were to be used as part payment for Galeazzo's life. The two letters elaborated the oral instructions. In the first, which Ciano wrote with the knowledge that it would be read by the Germans, it was explained that Ciano was to be freed if the documents were turned over to German agents. The first group of documents, which have been hitherto referred to as the supporting papers, were the "colloqui," that is the records of conversations to which one finds reference from time to time in the diary. These documents were to be turned over directly to the Germans.

The second group of documents was in a parcel labeled "Germania." In the second letter, intended for Edda's eyes only, Galeazzo directed that the parcel be retrieved in Rome, and taken north. But Edda was to keep it in her possession so that in case the Germans reneged on their promise to release him, she might deliver the parcel to the Allies.<sup>44</sup>

When Frau Beetz explained the plan to Edda, the Countess did not like it. She did not trust the Germans; she thought it all a dirty business. Lieutenant Pucci argued with her into the early morning hours of the next day, 4 January. He finally convinced her that it offered the only chance to save her husband from Nazi-Fascist vengeance at Verona.

But Edda by this time was quite worn out and in no condition to undertake a hurried trip to Rome by automobile. Lieutenant Pucci now volunteered to go in her stead, to retrieve Count Ciano's supporting papers, and to deliver them over to the Germans in fulfillment of the first step of the agreement for "Operation Conte."

At 0330, 4 January, Lieutenant Pucci left Ramiola and at 0400, a few miles out of Parma, he met the car with the Gestapo agents.

<sup>44</sup> Pucci's Report, p. 4.

Susmel, *Vita sbagliata*, p. 330. At this point of his narrative Susmel draws on post-war statements by Harster who incorrectly stated that the diaries as well as the other papers were in Rome. Pucci's knowledge was first hand, Harster's was not. The earlier collaborative work by Susmel is more accurate on this point. Pini and Susmel, *Mussolini*, Vol. IV, p. 382 where the reference is to Silvestri, *Albergo agli Scalzi* pp. 147-149 and to the Italian translation of Walter Hagen's German monograph.

Cf. Niccobetti, *Colliers*, April 20, 1946, p. 53.

They were an odd bunch. There were two Gestapo agents, Pucci records, Frau Beetz, and he himself in place of Edda. One of the Gestapo types was an officer brought from Holland especially for the operation. He had the knack of killing a man with one blow in the face before the victim could utter a sound, and his role would be to deal with the Fascist guards. He was a Dutchman named Johansen, Harster recalled, and the other was SS Lieutenant Johan Thito, a confidential agent of Harster's. The party drove on to Rome for 10 hours without stopping.

In Rome, following directions, Lieutenant Pucci quickly found the five volumes of the conversations, the package marked "Germania," and a third item, the political will of Count Ciano. These had all been carefully concealed in a wall over a doorway. Pucci took the first two items, but left Ciano's political will.<sup>47</sup>

It was some time after midnight (4-5 January) that the foursome started its return trip north. Pucci had the volumes of the conversations in plain view, but he managed to keep the package marked "Germania" concealed under his air force overcoat. Not far from Rome the car got stuck in the snow and the engine conked out completely. Pucci remembered and recorded that he spent the next 18 hours walking knee-deep in snow, trying to get another car for the return trip; that by 5 January they managed to get the car started again, and only on the evening of 6 January did they reach Verona.<sup>48</sup>

But it was probably on the evening of 5 January that they reached Verona, and there certain of the materials which had been recovered at Rome were turned over by Frau Beetz to General Harster. These

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<sup>47</sup> Pucci Report, pp. 4-5, refers to five volumes of the "colloqui" which he was to pick up.

Susmel, *Vita sbagliata*, pp. 331-332, states that Marchese Pucci in Rome retrieved all of the Ciano materials: the diary in 8 volumes, the records of conversations in 16 volumes, the package labeled "Germania"; and the papers regarding Ciano's last mission as Foreign Minister. The primary evidence for Susmel's account here is not clear. In any case the diary was not at Rome. Susmel's various references to the number of volumes constituting the colloqui are not consistent.

Cf. Dombrowski, *Twilight and Fall*, pp. 117-119; Niccoletti, *Colliers*, 20 April 1946, p. 53.

<sup>48</sup> Pucci Report, p. 5; Niccoletti, *Colliers*, 20 April 1946, p. 53.

## The Ciano Papers

were apparently the conversations ("colloqui") or a good part of them.<sup>60</sup> Pucci now returned to Ramiola. The first step in Operation Conte had been completed. Edda Ciano had arranged for the delivery of Count Ciano's papers, or at least a good part of them, to the Germans. And it was Frau Beetz who had brought General Harster into possession of these coveted papers. At this point the story of the diaries diverges from the story of the supporting papers.

On receiving the five or six volumes of records of conversation, General Harster consigned them to a young SS Lieutenant, Walter Segna, a South Tyrolean attached to SD Headquarters in Verona. Segna after the war told Susmel that he remembered these volumes as rather large, each bound in green leather. He remembered also that what he saw related to the whole period, 1938-1943. Some of the documents were typewritten, some were stenciled. At the order of General Harster all the volumes of the conversations were photographed by Segna, assisted by a Lieutenant Fritz von Aufschneiter of Bolzano. The pair also translated a few selected documents into German and prepared a general summary. They worked against time, right through the night, and then returned all the material to General Harster.<sup>61</sup>

Harster locked the photographic copies of the documents and the general summary in his safe. He ordered Lieutenant Segna to take the original papers, that is the five or six volumes of the records of conversations, by air directly to Berlin and to deliver them personally to Kaltenbrunner. On receiving this portion of the Ciano materials, Kaltenbrunner telegraphed Harster to go ahead with "Operation Conte."<sup>62</sup> Harster in turn notified La Burkhardt who was able

<sup>60</sup> At this point the evidence is not clear or consistent. Pucci (*Report*, p. 5) does not mention delivery of the volumes of the "colloqui," but states merely that he later went on to Ramiola, and still had the parcel of documents with him, i.e. the package marked "Germania."

Susmel, *Vita sbagliata*, p. 332, states that six volumes of the conversations were turned over by Frau Beetz to General Harster, and that the remainder were taken to Edda at Ramiola. (If 18 were recovered at Rome, then the remainder should be 10, but Susmel is not consistent with his numbers.)

<sup>61</sup> Susmel, *Vita sbagliata*, p. 332. This would have to be the night of 5-6 January (Wednesday to Thursday).

<sup>62</sup> Susmel, *Vita sbagliata*, p. 332. (The account here reverts to Harster's post-war testimony as its source.)

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to let Edda Ciano know of the next step: She was to be on the road from Verona to Brescia at a point 10 kilometers from Verona at 2100 on 7 January. Edda was asked to bring plenty of money with her, apparently for living expenses once they made their way through Switzerland into Hungary. The expectation was that at the appointed rendezvous Edda would meet her husband, and once over the border she would deliver the diaries, and possibly the remainder of the papers and other materials, as the balance of the payment due for Galeazzo's life.<sup>52</sup>

Everything was going according to plan and everything was set for carrying out Operation Conte. The SS agents, the husky Dutchman Johanssen and his teammate, were on hand. They were prepared to disguise themselves as Fascists, to overpower the guards and liberate Count Ciano. Guards at key points in the prison, whose names were Krutsch and Guck, had been instructed to aid the SS men, but to feign resistance and act as if they had been overcome. Frau Beetz had carried out her assignment beautifully. She had achieved the delivery of Ciano's papers and had arranged that Harster, Kaltenbrunner, and Himmler would get the Count's diaries. At the same time she was aiding Edda to save Galeazzo's life.

At this point the whole plan collapsed. Kaltenbrunner and Himmler had so far kept the plan secret, even from Hitler. Possibly they had hoped to confront him with an accomplished fact, and had reckoned on gaining his approval when they would submit the Ciano documents and diaries to him. Or it may have been that at the last moment they had misgivings and asked for the Führer's approval. In any case Hitler learned of the plan and immediately forbade its execution. General Harster recalled after the war that on the afternoon of 6 January he received a telephone call from Hitler himself who stated peremptorily that Harster would forfeit his own head if Ciano were enabled to save his. Harster immediately countermanded the whole operation. Frau Beetz was bitterly indignant at the role which she had been induced to play, but there was no other course open

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<sup>52</sup> Susmel, *Vita sbagliata*, pp. 332-333, whose narrative at this point is again based on Harster's post-war account.

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to her but to inform Ciano and then Edda and Lieutenant Pucci that her superiors had quashed the operation.<sup>44</sup>

### *Edda Escape:*

It was late in the night of 6 January as Lieutenant Pucci recalled (more probably 5 January) that he made his way back from Verona to Countess Edda at Ramiola. She was much upset by Pucci's delay which she at first attributed to some new German trick. About noon of 7 January the two started off for the rendezvous with Galeazzo. They made a first stop in Milan where they picked up the seven booklets of the diaries which they had hidden the day after Christmas. They put these seven booklets into one suitcase, packed the large parcel "Germania" in a second suitcase, and placed some letters and other papers of Edda in a third. They did not get off for Verona until about six o'clock in the evening.

An hour or so later they were on the Milan-Brescia highway. About half way toward Brescia the two rear tires went flat. They decided that Pucci would stay with the car, and that Edda would go on

<sup>44</sup> Susmel, *Vita sbagliata*, p. 333, whose quoted paragraph is taken directly from Harster's post-war account. It is Harster who gives the date of 6 January for Hitler's veto. If this is correct, then there is an error of one day in Pucci's report of 24 May 1945, and the foursome got back from Rome to Verona on the evening of 5 January rather than on the 6th. Cf. p. 20 and footnote 48.

Harster (Susmel, *loc. cit.*) was, of course, in Verona at the time, and did not witness what happened in Berlin. He records that he heard later the version which circulated among the German high military: that Ribbentrop was tipped off by someone, and immediately appealed to Hitler who all along had opposed any compromise with Ciano. Hitler promptly summoned Hummler and Kaltenbrunner and gave them a tongue lashing.

Hoettl, *Secret Front*, pp. 276-277, gives a somewhat different version. He states that Hummler and Kaltenbrunner got cold feet at the last moment, and asked Hitler's permission for the operation which was refused. He confirms that Hitler threatened to punish anyone who aided Ciano, but he does not mention a phone call, gives no precise date, and suggests that Hitler rather believed that Mussolini would not permit the father of his own grandchildren to be put to death.

Deakin, *Brutal Friendship*, p. 637, footnote f, states that Rudolf Rahn, the German Ambassador to the Republic of Salò, told him after the war that at this time, just before Ciano's execution, he flew to Hitler's headquarters and urged that Ciano be allowed to escape into Switzerland. Hitler refused. It is recorded, and reiterated that the Germans must regard the Verona trials as exclusively the affair of Mussolini.

Giovanni Dolfin's diary, entry for 7 January, confirms that Rahn was at Berlin at this time. *Con Mussolini nella tragedia. Diario del Capo della Segreteria Particolare del Duce 1943-1944* (Milan: Garzanti, 1949) p. 188.

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alone as best she could, taking the diaries with her. Edda managed to thumb a ride as far as Brescia, and from there she walked and ran, and even rode a stretch with a man on a bicycle, straining every nerve to reach the rendezvous point by 2100. She arrived an hour late. She waited and waited in the bitter cold night. But her husband did not appear.

At about 0500 the next morning, 8 January, Edda hailed a ride in a truck and made it into Verona, dragging the suitcase containing the diaries. She sought out Beetz and together they went to General Harster, who merely remarked that the Germans had changed their minds. Frau Beetz apparently recognized what was in the suitcase but said not a word, and Harster did not have Edda searched. Frau Beetz managed to snatch an opportunity to urge Edda to flee to Switzerland, and to explain that General Harster had been made personally responsible for Count Ciano. She also managed to slip secretly into Edda's hands a letter in which Galeazzo recorded his last wishes.<sup>64</sup>

Ciano's trial began on the same day, 8 January. The night before (7-8 January) there had been a rather strange intervention on the part of the Germans. Ambassador Rahn had gone to Berlin. He telephoned from there to Chargé d'Affaires Von Reichert urging that Ciano's trial be postponed for a few days. Von Reichert in turn got in touch with Pavolini, Secretary of the Fascist Party, who brought the proposal to Mussolini. The Duce declared bluntly: "That the Republican Government, given the publicity already made regarding the matter, could not consider it opportune to postpone the opening of the trial by even one day." But this curious intervention of the Germans at the last moment left Mussolini rather perplexed. He felt certain, however, that the German action did not come from Hitler. He then turned to his personal secretary, Dolfin, and declared:

"No intervention now can halt the course of events! For me, Ciano is already dead. He will not be able now to maneuver around in Italy, to let himself be seen, to have a name. Whoever voted for Grandi's order of the day will be condemned for it."<sup>65</sup>

<sup>64</sup> Pucci Report, pp. 5-6; Cf. Dombrowski, *Twilight and Fall*, pp. 120-121; Susmel, *Vita sbagliata*, pp. 334-335.

<sup>65</sup> Dolfin, *Con Mussolini nella tragedia*, pp. 188-189. Cf. footnote 53.

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Lieutenant Pucci, who had stayed with the car while Edda went on, hoping to meet her husband, managed to get the tires repaired and reached Verona about noon. When he got to Edda she looked so distressed and worn out that he scarcely recognized her. They were not able to say very much for they were under constant surveillance by Gestapo agents. They started back for Ramiola, escorted this time by 14 German police in three automobiles. When they got to the clinic the place was under guard both by the Germans and by neo-Fascist police.

Not till she got to her own room did Edda read the letter from her husband which Pucci recalled ran something as follows:

"Darling, —meanwhile you are still living in the wonderful illusion that in a few hours we are going to be together again and free, for me agony has already started . . . bless the children and bring them up to respect and worship what is right and honorable in life . . ."

Edda now broke down in utter helplessness and frustration, knowing that her husband soon would be shot. The doctors worked over her for some time and after midnight she managed to pull herself together sufficiently to think about her next step. At Pucci's urging she decided to escape into Switzerland with Pucci's help, taking the diaries with her, and threaten its publication if Count Ciano were not released. There were the problems of carrying the documents, of eluding the guards, of getting across the Swiss frontier.

It was quite out of the question for Edda to carry all the diaries and the remaining documents as well. Pucci selected the five booklets of the diaries which covered the war years, wrapped them in a cloth which Edda then wound round her middle as a belt. Pucci had a flair with women's costumes! The first two booklets of the diary, the parcel of documents on "Germania," some personal papers of Edda, and some of her jewels were carefully wrapped up and the package was sealed with wax. Lieutenant Pucci then turned the package over to Dr. Melocchi, one of the two brothers directing the clinic, who assured Pucci that he would hide it where no one could find it, near the electric plant where there was danger of electrocution. The doctor was already initiated in the matter, and furthermore, had connections with the partisans. Dr. Melocchi swore that if Edda

## The Ciano Papers

and Pucci should be caught and executed, he would turn the documents over to the Allies when they reached Ramiola.<sup>46</sup>

Pucci, in his air force uniform, approached the guards and showed them an appointment which he had at the air force medical institute in Ferrara where he was due for a physical examination following his illness. He was granted permission by the German police to go. At about noon, when there were fewer guards about the clinic than at other times, Edda went out through the basement and across the fields. It is said that she had pinned a "Do not disturb" card to the door of her room. Pucci and Edda made a clean get-away; they followed the back roads and made for Como where they stopped with friends.<sup>47</sup>

Late in the night of 8 January Pucci and Edda Ciano reached Viggiù (or Cantello-Ligurno) on the frontier of Switzerland. They stayed overnight at the Hotel Madonnina and there Pucci helped her to write out three letters.

<sup>46</sup> This is Pucci's own first hand account, *Report*, pp. 7-8. Cf. Dombrowski, *Twilight and Fall*, pp. 121-122.

On May 16-17, 1945 Allen Dulles visited the clinic at Ramiola and recorded: "At the time of her flight on or about 5 January 1944 (Dr. Elvezio Melocchi thought it was Friday or Saturday) Edda Ciano entrusted to Dr. Elvezio Melocchi her husband's diary for 1937-1938, one package containing a file which bore the mention in Italian 'Ministry of Foreign Affairs—German—Italian relations'; two packages of phonograph records of Bruno Mussolini's voice; one case of jewels and many personal belongings including a quantity of furs. Edda took with her several other of her husband's diaries, concealing them on her own person, which made her look very bulky and gave rise to the rumors in Switzerland that she was to have a child. The documents and the diary left in Dr. Elvezio Melocchi's care represented the surplus which she was unable to carry with her." Memorandum for Files, 18 May 1945, "Ciano Diaries for 1937 and 1938, as well as other important documents left by his wife in Italy at the time of her flight to Switzerland in 1944," Item 12 R, File "Edda Ciano Diaries," Personal Files of Allen Dulles.

Susmel, *Vita sbagliata*, pp. 335-336, mentions the sealed package given to Dr. Melocchi with the volume on "Germania," and Edda's personal papers and jewels. He states further that the package contained 12 volumes of the conversations. If 16 volumes of the conversations were recovered at Rome (*op. cit.* p. 331), and if 8 were delivered to Harster (*op. cit.* p. 332) the remainder should have been 10, not 12.

Susmel also states that Edda took with her 8 booklets of the diaries.

<sup>47</sup> Pucci *Report*, p. 8; Dombrowski, *Twilight and Fall*, pp. 122-123. According to Susmel, *Vita sbagliata*, p. 336, three booklets of the diaries, those for the years 1936, 1937, and 1938 were left at Como in the house of the Pessina family.

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To General Harster she wrote:

"[January 10, 1944]

General. For the second time I have entrusted myself to the word of the Germans with the outcome which you know. Now it is enough. If that is not done which was promised me I shall release against the Axis the most fearful campaign; and thereby I shall make use of all the materials which I have and of all that I know. My conditions are: that within three days from the moment at which these letters will be transferred to Frau B(eetz) my husband must be at the Bern railway station, accompanied only by Frau B. between 10:00 and 15:00 hours. If this should be carried out in a completely loyal way, we will retire into private life and let nothing more be heard from us. The diaries will be turned over to Frau B. by my husband on that same day. I enclose two letters on this same subject, the one to the Führer, the other to the Duce. Turn these over immediately together with a copy of this letter itself.

(signed) Edda Ciano."

To Hitler she dictated:

"January 10, 1944.

Führer: For the second time I believed your word and for the second time I have been betrayed. It is only the fact of the soldiers who fell together on the battlefields that restrains me from going over to the foe. In case my husband is not freed in accordance with conditions which I have specified to your general no considerations will restrain me any longer. For some time the documents have been in the hands of persons who are authorized to use them in case anything should happen to my husband, to my children, or to my family. If, however, as I hope and believe, my conditions are accepted and we are left in peace now and in the future, one will hear nothing from us. I am distressed to be forced to act in this fashion, but you will understand

(signed) Edda."

To her father Edda wrote:

"January 10, 1944

Duce: I have waited until today for you to show me the slightest feelings of humanity and justice. Now it is enough. If Galeazzo is not in Switzerland within three days in accordance with the conditions which I have made known to the Germans, then everything which I have at hand in the way of proofs will be used without pity. If, on the other hand, we are left in peace and security against everything from pulmonary consumption to auto-accident, then you will hear nothing further from us.

(signed) Edda Ciano."

<sup>20</sup> Deakin, *Brutal Friendship*, pp. 642-643, gives the texts of these letters in English translation in his summary of Kaltenbrunner's telegraphic report of 12 January 1944. I have translated the letter to Harster from the German of Kaltenbrunner's report, the original of which is in the file, Handakten Brobrick, in the Politische Archiv of the Auswärtiges Amt at Bonn. The microfilm is in the collection, Microcopy T-120, Serial 738, frames 257681-686, in the National Archives.

In a written report of 13 January 1944 addressed to Ribbentrop, Kaltenbrunner forwarded photostats of the original letters in Italian which were sent to Hitler and to Mussolini (738/257674-880). These originals each bore the date, 10 January 1944. The facsimile of Edda's letter to Mussolini, and the typed text were first published by the Milanese edition of *L'Unità*, 23 June 1945, p. 1.

The next day, Sunday, 9 January, Pucci took Edda up to the frontier. They stopped a few hundred yards from the line. He gave her a revolver to use—on either German or Italian guards if necessary, or on herself if they caught her. Pucci waited for an hour or so to make sure that she was across the frontier and then turned back.<sup>59</sup>

Pucci records that he got back to Verona at about 0100. This must have been the night of 9-10 January. After some difficulty he was let into the hotel where the German agents lived, and he found Frau Beetz. The hotel is identified as the "Gabbia d'Oro" by Susmel. He assured her that Countess Ciano had reached Switzerland with the diaries. He added that she could let Ciano know of this, and he gave her the letters, urging her to hand them over as quickly as possible. Frau Beetz mentioned that the trial had not yet finished; and said she would wait until 0800 or so to turn over the letters. This delay would give Lieutenant Pucci a head start in getting into Switzerland himself.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Pucci's own account, *Report*, p. 8, indicates that they left Ramiola on 9 January, that they stayed overnight 9-10 January in the Hotel Madonnina, and that on the next day, 10 January he took Edda to the frontier at 1700. He then turned back and reached Verona about 0100 which would be on 11 January. Here again Pucci's chronology is off by one day. It does not leave sufficient time for his subsequent actions and the developments at Verona.

The German police report of the frontier crossing, which was made a short time after the event, states: "On Saturday, 8 January 1944 at 2230 hours there arrived at the Hotel Madonnina in Cantello-Ligurno (the proprietors Rustini), 3 or 4 kilometers eastwards of Varese, a woman with two men. The woman was recognized from a snap shot without a doubt as Frau R. The three stayed there overnight. On Sunday, January 9, 1944 at about 1:30 one of the men and the woman went toward the border. At about 1730 hours the man returned alone. A short time later both men drove away. The woman gave her name as Emilie Santos of Rome." Kaltenbrunner to Ribbentrop; 13 January 1944, German Foreign Office Archives, Inland II geheim: "Gebeime Reichssachen" 1944, Vol. XV. (box 3). I have used the film, Microcopy T-120, National Archives, Serial 712/262452-453.

Susmel, *Vita abagliata*, p. 336 correctly dates the frontier crossing as the evening of 9 January.

<sup>60</sup> *Pucci Report*, pp. 8-9. The trial lasted for three days, 8, 9, and 10 January. The remark by Frau Beetz that the trial was not yet finished could not have been made during the early hours of 11 January. Pucci must have reached Verona on the night of 9-10 January, rather than one night later as he records.

## *The Ciano Papers*

The letters which Edda Ciano wrote, and deliberately misdated, were delivered before Ciano's execution, which occurred at about 0900 on Tuesday, 11 January. According to Susmel, Frau Beetz on the evening of 10 January, before making her usual visit to the Scalzi prison to see Ciano, went first to General Harster's office and delivered the envelope with the three letters, stating that they had been brought to her at the Hotel "Cabbia d'Oro" by Lieutenant Pucci. She added that she had also learned from Pucci that Ciano's wife had fled into Switzerland. General Harster forwarded the letter addressed to Mussolini by a special courier. He transmitted the text of the letter to Hitler by a telephone call to the Main Security Office in Berlin, and from there the text is said to have been retransmitted by telephone to Hitler's headquarters.<sup>81</sup>

Over at Gargnano, Mussolini had been following the course of the trial and the actions of the accused with great interest. At about 0100 on 11 January he telephoned to his personal secretary, Dolfin, who did not at first recognize his voice. Mussolini asked if Dolfin had had any news of Edda. He had had none, he said, and he had no particular news from Verona.

Mussolini summoned Dolfin the next morning at 0800, a good half hour earlier than usual. The Duce was very upset and extremely tired. "Last night," he said, "a letter was delivered to me from Edda, who has fled. In case Ciano is not set free within three days, she threatens to publish a complete documentary account of our relations with the Germans. I had known for some time that Ciano kept a diary on the events of these last few years, and a dossier which documented it, point for point. Ciano was clearly anti-German. His personal relations with Ribbentrop were never good, and toward the end they hated each other. The publication of this diary which aims to show the continuous German treachery toward us, even during the period of full alliance, could at this time provoke irreparable consequences!" With great bitterness Mussolini went on: "It is peculiarly my destiny to be betrayed by everyone, even by my own daughter. She has probably escaped into Switzerland."<sup>82</sup>

<sup>81</sup> Susmel, *Vita sbagliata*, p. 346. The account here is apparently based on Harster's post-war testimony to Susmel.

<sup>82</sup> Dolfin, *Con Mussolini nella tragedia*, pp. 200-201.

Back in Verona within the walls of the Scalzi prison, at the close of Monday, 10 January, the news soon spread that all of the Grand Councilors were condemned to death except Cianetti who was sentenced to 30 years imprisonment. Zenone Benini, Ciano's lifetime friend, was able to have a few words with him during the early part of that long night.<sup>43</sup> The Germans had at first refused even to permit him to take communion and to confess. The brunette lady, as Benini called Frau Beetz, was trying to get such permission. The permission was later granted and Don Chiot, the prison chaplain, was able to offer Count Ciano the last comforts of his faith.<sup>44</sup>

About midnight the Chief of the Province appeared to make an inspection. He said that since the beginning of the trial he had had to report continuously to Mussolini. Ciano, Benini records, was now free for a time from his German guardian angel, and the two friends walked the corridor of the prison, arm in arm. Ciano told Benini: "Forget about the plea for mercy: Let us speak of serious things. When you return among men, and this cursed war will have finished (and it will finish soon) do not abandon my children and my wife: they are the only things that I still have. Edda has conducted herself admirably toward me."—Then he was silent; he wiped a tear with the back of his hand, murmured some words which I was unable to understand. Then he resumed. Now she is in flight and is trying to reach Switzerland, where the children have preceded her. She has with her my diary and other important documents, some of which I have written here. The transfer of these papers, the preparation and execution of all of this is mainly due to that noble creature whom the Germans set to spy on me. To her I have entrusted my political testament and other correspondence of great importance. I have also written to my friends letters of no political import, and she has left these with the Director so that they would be delivered through the appropriate authorities and that thus there would be no suspicion of a clandestine correspondence.

<sup>43</sup> Benini was not a member of the Grand Council of Fascism, but in the period before 25 July, while Minister of Public Works, he was active in the movement to oust Mussolini. After the formation of the Republic of Salò, Benini gave himself up to avoid reprisals against his family, and he was promptly thrown into the Scalzi prison where he had the opportunity to talk to Ciano. He was released on 29 January 1944. *Vigilia a Verona*, pp. 2101, 82, 168-169.

<sup>44</sup> Benini, *Vigilia a Verona*, pp. 115-125.

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"Now if Edda succeeds in crossing the frontier with all the documentary material which she has, she will be in position at the appropriate moment to demonstrate to the world how things really were, and to reveal the principal secrets and the behind-the-scenes moves which led to the alliance with Germany and to the war. It will be something of the greatest interest."<sup>45</sup>

Some time later during that long night, the prison director, Dr. Olas, passed on to Benini the latest news from the Prefecture. The Countess, it appeared, had eluded both the Italian and the German police, who had been searching for her for days. The last word of her was that she was at the Swiss frontier. Toward dawn Benini went back to Ciano's cell. The German lady again was there. Ciano's face radiated satisfaction when he got that news.<sup>46</sup>

### *The Pursuit*

Although Countess Edda had got over the border and into Switzerland, her troubles were by no means over. On 15 January she was able to reach her children and tell them the horrible truth: papa had been shot because grandpa insisted on it. Mussolini himself was embittered by his daughter's attitude and thoroughly alarmed by her threat to publish the diaries. Both he and the Nazi leaders during the year 1944 tried by one means or another to learn of Edda's whereabouts, to make contact with her, and to gain possession of the diaries.

On 11 January Vittorio Mussolini, at his father's instigation, tried to follow his sister's trail in order to get the diaries, or at least to try to persuade her not to have them published. He got to Como and there at the house of the Pessinas learned that Edda had crossed into Switzerland.<sup>47</sup> He could follow the trail no further.

Later that same month Mussolini arranged to have Don Giusto Pancino visit him at Gargnano. This priest had been a childhood friend of Edda's; later he had been a chaplain in Albania when Edda served there as a Red Cross nurse. Don Giusto had not seen Mussolini since March of 1942 and he was shocked when he was ushered into the private study of the Duce on 27 January.

<sup>45</sup> Benini, *Vigilia a Verona*, pp. 128-129.

<sup>46</sup> Benini, *Vigilia a Verona*, pp. 137-140.

<sup>47</sup> Sammel, *Vita sbagliata*, p. 359.

Mussolini appeared emaciated, dispirited, worn out. Their interview lasted for more than half an hour. Mussolini explained how Edda had been pursued by the SS which was intent on getting possession of the diaries at any cost. Mussolini tended somewhat to play down the importance of the diaries in speaking to the priest. He mentioned that he himself had from time to time advised Ciano to record the events of the day. The main thing, he suggested, was to prevent the Germans from getting them. He urged the priest to go to the Vatican for help in getting into Switzerland to find Edda Ciano.

Don Pancino reached Rome on 2 February, spoke to Monsignor Tardini, Deputy Cardinal Secretary of State, and received from him a letter of introduction to Monsignor Bernardini, Apostolic Nuncio in Bern. On 5 February Don Pancino again met with the Duce who directed him to say to Edda that her father's house would be open to her if she wished to return to it. After a second trip to Rome to secure a Swiss visa, Don Pancino was able to reach Bern on 4 March.<sup>42</sup>

According to Don Pancino's testimony at the trial of Graziani, the Germans in Italy got wind of the discussions with Mussolini and of the intended mission into Switzerland in search of the diaries. Mussolini, the priest stated, was at the time nothing more than a prisoner of the Germans who completely dominated the situation and knew his every move. Rahn and Wolff took pains to assure Don Pancino that this was the situation. When he got into Switzerland, German agents approached him with the offer of 100 million lire if he would deliver the diaries to them.<sup>43</sup>

Edda Ciano was now practically a prisoner of the Swiss government which maintained a most careful watch over her. Only with difficulty was Monsignor Bernardini able to learn of her whereabouts from Pillet Golaz, head of the Political Department in Bern. When Don Pancino arrived at Ingenbohl, Edda was astonished to see him; she wondered how he had been able to find her. But she refused to hear anything from her father. She told the priest that Mussolini would be redeemed

<sup>42</sup> Don Giusto Pancino, "Tentati di riconciliare Edda Ciano e Mussolini," *Oggi*, 22 September 1954.

Cf. Susmel, *Vita sbagliata*, pp. 365-366.

<sup>43</sup> Testimony of Don Pancino at the session of January 21, 1949, Rodolfo Graziani, *Processo*, 3 vols. 1948-1950, vol. III (Rome: Ruffolo editore, 1950), p. 1108.

Cf. Deakin, *Brutal Friendship*, p. 777, note c.

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in her eyes only if he fled or if he killed himself. On returning to Italy, Don Pancino first sought the advice of Cardinal Schuster before reporting such negative results to Mussolini.

It was not easy for Don Pancino to tell Mussolini, on 29 March what Edda had said. During the course of the discussion Mussolini learned that Hitler had a copy of his own diary of the summer of 1943, which contained comments anything but flattering to Hitler.<sup>69</sup> This only increased Mussolini's concern lest the Germans gain possession of Ciano's diaries as well.

In April Mussolini for the second time summoned Don Giusto and persuaded him to go to Switzerland again to see Edda. This time the priest carried a letter from father to daughter. He had some success, and was able to make new arrangements for the manuscript of the Ciano diaries. Edda had but little money because most of Ciano's wealth had been confiscated by the Badoglio regime. She was in miserable health. She feared for the fate of her three children in case of her death. The booklets of the diaries were now delivered over to Don Pancino who placed them in a strong box at the Credit Suisse bank of Bern under his name and that of Emilia Conte Marchi, a pseudonym chosen by Edda. In case of Edda's death, Don Pancino agreed to arrange for publication of the diaries with the proceeds to go to support of the children.<sup>70</sup>

In March 1945 Don Pancino undertook a final mission to Switzerland at the behest of Mussolini who now was hoping to make some contact with the Allies. The priest again saw Edda, quite secretly, for the Swiss authorities had refused him permission to visit her. She had left Ingenbohl and now was living in a clinic near Montreux.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>69</sup> Don Giusto Pancino, *op. cit.*  
Cf. Hoettl, *The Secret Front*, pp. 232-233.

<sup>70</sup> Don Giusto Pancino, *op. cit.*  
Cf. Susmel, *Vita sbagliata*, p. 370.

<sup>71</sup> Don Giusto Pancino, *op. cit.*  
Edda later mentioned something of this visit to Allen Dulles whose file has this undated notation:

"Giusto Pancino—old friend of Musso—brought letters from Musso to Edda & Nuncio—Told Edda that Himmler wished Nuncio to advise Vatican that Germans wished peace & would let Am. & B's in, didn't want Russians—

"Told Musso re Himmler's plan & said the fools—should have done this 2 yrs ago —" Item 23R, File "Edda Ciano Diaries."

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The next month came the triumph of the Allied armies in Italy, the rising of the partisans in the North, and the end of the Republic of Salò. Edda had just turned her radio to the wave-length of the Milan station on 28 April when she heard the announcement that a great crowd had gathered at the Piazza Loreto to see her father's corpse.<sup>13</sup>

### *The Germans Pursue*

The Countess Ciano and the Marchese Pucci had neatly given the German guards the slip when they left Ramiola for the Swiss border on 8 January. But when the guards discovered the empty room behind the "Do Not Disturb" sign, there was a quick call for reinforcements. The SD arrived in force and interrogated the Melocchi brothers. But they learned very little and they did not, at this time, carefully search the clinic. The diaries for 1937-1938, the portion of the supporting documents, and the other possessions of Edda Ciano which had been entrusted to Dr. Melocchi, remained safe.<sup>14</sup>

Meanwhile, other German agents had picked up Pucci. After delivering Edda's letters to Frau Beetz by whom they were passed on to General Harster, Lieutenant Pucci had hoped to make his own escape to Switzerland over the route through Sondrio. But he was ill to begin with, had over-taxed himself, and had had very little sleep for several nights running. He pulled off by the side of the road and slept for several hours. When he tried to move on, the starter of his car failed to operate, and he went to a peasant's house for help. On his return, another car drew up on the road, full of Germans. They asked for his papers, and on learning his identity shouted with gleeful rage. Their first question was, "Where is the Countess?"<sup>15</sup>

Pucci was first taken back to Verona for interrogation, and then on to Ramiola where there was further questioning in the presence

<sup>13</sup> *Il Giornale del Mattino* (Rome) 21 September 1945, Jader Jacobelli, "Sono stato a Lipari e ho parlato con Edda."

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Anita Pensotti, "Edda Ciano parla per la prima volta," *Oggi*, 25 September 1959.

<sup>15</sup> "Memorandum for Files. Subject: Ciano Diaries for 1937 and 1938, as well as other important Documents left by his wife in Italy, at the time of her flight to Switzerland in 1944," 18 May 1945, Item 12R, File "Edda Ciano Diaries," Personal Files of Allen W. Dulles.

<sup>16</sup> Pucci Report, p. 9.

Cf. Niccoletta, *Colliers*, 27 April 1946, p. 24.

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of Dr. Melocchi. The doctor, it appeared, had told the Germans that Pucci was violently anti-Fascist and anti-German, but he explained to Pucci that he had said this to make the Germans believe he was on their side. After a few hours a German officer ordered Pucci to change from his uniform into civilian clothes, and to be taken to Gestapo headquarters in the Hotel Regina. Here the Germans produced the hotel keeper of Viggiù who identified Pucci as the man who had helped Edda Ciano over the frontier. The Germans questioned Pucci from all angles regarding Edda, the diaries, the documents, and the children, and beat him unmercifully when he refused to talk.

After some hours of torture, Pucci was thrown into a cell in San Vittore prison with another prisoner who appears to have been an *agent provocateur*. Next day Pucci was brought back to the torture chamber and beaten so severely that his skull was fractured in several places. Fearing that he might betray his trust Pucci tried to commit suicide with a razor blade which he had managed to conceal on his person at Ramiola. But he was handcuffed, the attempt failed, and the net result was that he was further weakened by loss of blood.<sup>75</sup>

The next day the beatings and questionings began again, but suddenly ceased. The Germans moved Pucci back to his cell, and treated him with decency. Frau Beetz appeared. What had happened? It seems that on 14 January Hoettl arrived back in Italy with a new mission for "La Burkhardt." She was to go to Switzerland, make contact with Countess Edda, and learn from her the hiding place of the remaining diaries and papers. She herself made the suggestion that the SD also make use of the services of Pucci, who, because of his relationship with Countess Edda, might be able to persuade her not to use the diaries against the Germans. La Burkhardt burst into tears at the sight of Pucci covered with blood after his torturing. Furthermore, her conscience bothered her. She felt that her own haste in turning over Edda's letters to General Harster had been responsible for Pucci's quick capture. By her tears and pleadings Pucci was persuaded to agree to tell Edda that both she and the children would be killed if she did anything against the Germans.<sup>76</sup>

The SD had little difficulty in getting Frau Beetz into Switzerland. Her cover was that of temporary replacement for a clerical secretary

<sup>75</sup> Pucci Report, pp. 9-11.

Cf. Andrea Niccoletti, *Colliers*, 27 April 1946, p. 24.

<sup>76</sup> Pucci Report, p. 12; Cf. Niccoletti, *Colliers*, 27 April 1946, p. 74.

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in the German Consulate in Lugano, and as such she was promptly issued a Swiss visa. With Pucci it was different. He had no proper papers. The SD smuggled him across the border by boat during the night, and once across he met Frau Beetz at a prearranged rendezvous.

As soon as he was in Switzerland, Lieutenant Pucci made very strenuous efforts to interest the British authorities, through the Vice Consul in Lugano, Mr. Lancelot de Garston, in the Ciano documents. Perhaps he also asked about the possibility of asylum for Edda and her children in England. The British attitude was completely negative. The one thing that Pucci accomplished here was to give Mr. de Garston a note which he hoped would be delivered to Edda Ciano.

All this time Pucci had been simply going on his nerves. Now he suddenly collapsed. He got to a doctor who felt sure that his skull had been fractured, and thus it was that Lieutenant Pucci felt obliged to report to the Swiss police. He then entered a hospital in Bellinzona under the care of a Dr. Bettellini. Not until the end of March was the Italian Air Force Lieutenant released from the hospital and sent to Estavayer-le-Lac. For the rest of his stay in Switzerland he was under close supervision by the Swiss police.<sup>11</sup>

Pucci under internment was of no use to Frau Beetz and the Germans in their efforts to reach Countess Edda and to head off any attempt at publication of the diaries. Frau Beetz then tried unsuccessfully to raise the bail money required by the Swiss authorities in such cases as Pucci's. Possibly Pucci was able to learn Edda's address, and to write to her, urging her not to undertake any action against the Germans.

Frau Beetz also learned where Edda was staying, and made a trip to Ingenbohl, but without being able to see the Countess. About this time she got some alarming news from her superiors. It appeared that a priest named Pancino had been able to visit Edda in her internment at Ingenbohl, and Frau Beetz suspected that Father Pancino was working for the Germans as well as for Mussolini. It should be remembered that it was through Frau Beetz that General Harster and the SD had got hold of Ciano's supporting papers which had been sent to Berlin in January. She had been a most useful and skillful

<sup>11</sup> *Pucci Report*, pp. 12-14.

*Cf. Niccoletta, Colliers*, 27 April 1946, p. 74.

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agent. Now Frau Beetz was greatly afraid that Edda would tell the priest of the part which she had played in helping Edda to escape and to get the diaries into Switzerland. If her masters were to learn of her true role, she feared they would arrest her and torture her. She resolved to cover her tracks by taking the initiative for the recovery of the remaining Ciano materials which she knew were at Ramiola.

After her second Swiss visa expired, Frau Beetz returned to Italy. There she enjoyed a couple of weeks vacation with her husband, whose military leave had been arranged by Kaltenbrunner. She was now directed to make contact with Father Pancino and with his aid to reach Edda and urge her to keep quiet. This second mission into Switzerland did not materialize because the Swiss Government refused to issue a new visa.

In the summer of 1944, either through the direct participation of Frau Beetz, or at her instigation, the *Sicherheitsdienst* was able to get its hands on all of the materials which Edda and Lieutenant Pucci had left at Ramiola in January. There are two or three different versions of this episode varying in credibility and differing as to the precise time and who took part. But there is agreement that it occurred during the summer of 1944 and that a fabricated letter played a big role.

The most convincing version comes from the Melocchi brothers. At war's end, as we will note, Allen Dulles hastened over the border of Switzerland into Italy, equipped with precise directions for getting to Ramiola, and with a genuine letter addressed to Dr. Walter Melocchi by Edda Ciano, asking that he turn over to the American her husband's diaries, certain other documents, and the case of her jewels. Here are the exact words of Allen Dulles' report:

"1. On May 16th and 17th I called on the brothers Elvezio and Walter Melocchi, doctors of medicine, who have a sanitarium ("casa di cura—Ramiola") at Ramiola, Prov. of Parma. Countess Edda gave me a letter addressed to Dr. Walter Melocchi in which she requested him to turn over to me certain documents, parts of her husband's diary and a case of her jewels which she left with him for safekeeping at the time of her flight to Switzerland in January 1944.

"2. The doctors stated that all the documents and the box with Edda Ciano's jewels were taken away by the Germans after Edda's departure. Dr. Walter Melocchi, to whom Edda's letter which I brought was addressed, answered this letter in writing."

[Here follows an account of the searches in January 1944.]

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7. During this first interrogation, no questions were asked about any documents and the brothers did not volunteer any information about them. As a side remark Dr. Elvezio Melocchi mentioned that he had concealed the two diaries behind the books on the shelves of his office. The interrogation by the Germans took place in that room and they looked over some of the books without discovering the diaries. The remaining documents, phonograph records and the jewel case, Dr. Elvezio kept in his own room. None of these were taken away by the Germans at that time.

8. Shortly afterwards the Italian police appeared at the Sanitarium, wanted to arrest the two brothers and to close the establishment because of its being connected with the Countess's escape. The brothers were convinced that there was an Italian spy among the establishment's personnel, who was reporting to the Italian police, often exaggerating the happenings in order to give himself more importance.

9. It was not until some time in August that the next development took place. At that time there came to the Sanitarium a man who claimed to be a nephew of Professor Fossati, a well-known gynecologist from Milan. This man stated that he came from Switzerland as emissary for Edda Ciano to obtain the documents left behind by her. Elvezio Melocchi was caught off his guard and asked for the written instructions from the Countess, as it had been arranged between her and the doctors that the things left behind would only be delivered upon written orders from her. The man left but returned two days later bringing a letter purported to have come from the Countess. It was an obvious falsification and the doctors decided not to hand over the things, pretending that they were no longer at Ramiola, which was not a safe place for them, but that they had been taken away and hidden somewhere in Florence. The pseudo-messenger left again. Dr. Walter Melocchi noticed that the car in which he had come had a German license identified as coming from Trieste.

10. A few days later two agents of the SD from Parma appeared at the Sanitarium accompanied by an SS officer whom they recognized as one of those who conducted the original interrogation in January. Elvezio and Walter Melocchi were both taken to Parma, to via Carlo Alberto XIII (Stradone). A number of the German military were lined up on their entering the building and generally a show of importance was put on, presumably to intimidate the brothers. By that time both of them were quite nervous and unwilling to take any chances on behalf of the Countess. Therefore when they were told that they would be taken to Florence to produce the documents left behind by Edda, they admitted without further difficulties that there was no point of going there as the documents were kept in the Sanitarium at Ramiola. They were taken back and turned over to the German SD officials everything they had for the Countess, including a handbag mentioned by them now, for the first time during this narrative. Elvezio Melocchi stated that the Countess had shown him the contents of this handbag which contained a number of letters from Mussolini to her. The Countess qualified these letters as being 'important for future developments.' When asked whether they had read those letters after Edda's departure the brothers answered in the negative, saying that they never were interested in politics. I then asked them whether they had read the con-

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tents of the Italian Foreign Office dossier left with them Elvezio Melocchi said that they had not, inasmuch as, to avoid any complications, he wrapped and sealed with his own seal, those documents, in the presence of Edda. They admitted, however, having read some parts of the diary which dealt with the Spanish war events. One of the brothers said that they found the reading nauseating and after a few pages did not read any more. I then remarked that the diary concerning the Munich events was in these volumes, to which one of the brothers promptly reacted by saying that the relative sheets, perhaps 10 or 15 in number were cut out. The brothers then admitted that they had looked for that particular topic as one they thought would be interesting! Both brothers stated that they made no copies of anything at all nor did they make any photostats. . . ."

"Memorandum for Files, Subject: Ciano Diaries for 1937 and 1938, as well as other important Documents left by his wife in Italy, at the time of her flight to Switzerland in 1944, 18 May 1945, Item 12R, File "Edda Ciano Diaries."

A letter of Walter Melocchi to Countess Edda Ciano, dated 16 May 1945, related substantially the same facts regarding the two booklets of the diary and other materials and it repeats the statement of the arrest of the brothers by the SD in October of 1944, Walter for five days and Elvezio for 53 Item 20R, File "Edda Ciano Diaries"

Cf. Niccoletti, *Colliers*, 27 April 1946, p. 76.

Frau Beetz, at the end of the war in Europe and after she fell into Allied hands, seems to have explained that she twice visited Ramiola in June 1944 and then with the aid of Dr Segna regained all of the materials. She herself then took the documents to Zossen where she prepared a summary of them for Hoettl, Chief of Amt VI B. It is not excluded that Dr. Segna is the same person as was described by Dr. Melocchi to Allen Dulles.

Susmel, *Vita sbagliata*, pp. 369-370, gives an account which is apparently based on post-war testimony to him by Harster, as follows. Segna remained convinced, despite the failure to discover anything in January, that Edda Ciano must have left important materials at Ramiola. He therefore fabricated a letter purporting to be from Countess Ciano in Switzerland to Dr. Melocchi asking that the materials be turned over for delivery to her. Thereupon Dr. Melocchi surrendered the 12 volumes of the "colloqui", the file "Germania"; the documents regarding Ciano's last mission to Hitler's headquarters in December 1942, Edda's diary as a Red Cross nurse, and her correspondence with her father. The Ciano materials were sent on to Berlin, the others were held at Verona. Susmel's account is not so credible as that of the Melochis. What Harster learned was second hand, not what he himself saw or did.

Susmel makes no mention in this connection (pp. 369-370) of the diaries before 1939. He states, however, that after the recovery of the materials at Ramiola, Frau Beetz and Segna went on to Como and there picked up the three booklets of the diary, that is for 1936, 1937, and 1938.

I find no mention anywhere in Edda Ciano's correspondence with Allen Dulles of a diary for 1938. Edda Ciano in that correspondence frequently referred to the two notebooks for 1937 and 1938 respectively, and stated consistently that she had left them at Ramiola.

The *Sicherheitsdienst*, chiefly through the operations of Frau Beetz, now had the five or six volumes of records of conversations which General Harster had received in January 1944 and had sent on to Berlin; the two diary volumes for the years 1937 and 1938, and the bound volume labeled 'Germania' which had been taken from Ramiola in August. The two volumes of the diaries were quite like the other five calendar notebooks.<sup>19</sup> The volumes of the 'colloqui' or memoranda of conversation must have been the copies which Ciano personally made or set aside while other official copies went into the *Archivio di Gabinetto* and have survived in microfilm form.<sup>20</sup> The volume, 'Germania' must have been a kind of personal copy retained by Ciano.

Frau Beetz made a summary of the new materials seized at Ramiola in the summer of 1944, and then was directed to return to her home in Weimar to make a full translation of the whole collection. This work was done under careful security precautions. Each night after the day's work the original documents were placed in the safe of the Gestapo in Weimar. In the last month of the Nazi regime, that is in April 1945, Hitler ordered these Italian documents and the translations to be destroyed. Without the knowledge of her superiors, however, Frau Beetz had made an extra carbon copy of her translations. It has been suggested that she thought of using these in a book in case Countess Ciano would grant permission. Just before the end came, she buried these copies of her translations in her garden, which some said was a rose garden.

#### *Enter US Intelligence*

On 4 June 1944 the Allied armies entered Rome. In the next month *l'Unità*, organ of the Communist Party in Italy, published a little note which was immediately echoed in the *New York Times* of the following day, 30 July 1944:

"Interested parties are deliberately holding back the publication of the late Count Ciano's diary, the Communist newspaper *Unità*, charged today.

<sup>19</sup> See above, p. 4-5.

<sup>20</sup> In the microfilm collection at the National Archives called the Lisbon Papers, Microcopy T-816.

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"The diary, which Ciano kept from the beginning of the war until his arrest last summer, is said to be one of the most important historic documents of the Second World War. It was believed that his wife had taken the only copy with her when she fled to Switzerland, pursued by the orders from her father, Benito Mussolini, to get her, dead or alive. However, *Unità* said that the diary was in Italy and had been hidden or suppressed by some who feared its revelations."

This note in *l'Unità* was apparently the first real alert American intelligence agencies received about the Ciano diaries.<sup>40</sup>

A bit later, that is about mid-August of 1944, American counter-intelligence agents picked up Zenone Benini. Ciano had poured out his heart to Benini on that last long night before his execution, and almost his last words were of his hope that his widow would be able to publish his diaries and notes and thus vindicate his memory.<sup>41</sup> Benini was able to give considerable information about the diaries, information which was embodied in a 15-page memorandum by Lt. Col. Henry H. Cumming, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, Peninsular Base Section and dated 16 August.<sup>42</sup>

Benini mentioned that the diaries were known to quite a number of people, and that Ciano on several occasions had mentioned his intention to have these documents published abroad, perhaps in England or America. Benini also stated that the diaries included:

- a. Records of personal conversations between Hitler and Mussolini.
- b. Terms of the so-called Pact of Steel.
- c. Accounts of the Munich Conference.

<sup>40</sup> Interview with Mr. Allen W. Dulles, 7 January 1966. Mr. Dulles had learned of Edda Ciano's arrival in Switzerland in the winter of 1943-44, he had made inquiries with Magistrati, Italian Minister in Bern and who had married Ciano's deceased sister, but had got no clue that she had the diaries with her (Message Dulles to OSS, Washington, 19 January 1945 (paragraph 5), Item 44, File "Edda Ciano Diaries").

Sumner Welles knew of the existence of the diaries, but he did not publicly mention this fact until he wrote the introduction for the American edition of the diaries which was issued in January 1946.

German intelligence agents, as noted, had been on the trail of the diaries for some time. It is not excluded that there was a Communist penetration of the SD which enabled *l'Unità* to publish its note.

<sup>41</sup> See above, pp. 30-31.

<sup>42</sup> Enclosure No. 2, Despatch 703, Robert D. Murphy, United States Political Adviser, AFHO. Top Secret, File "Edda Ciano Diaries," Item 65R.

d. Copies of all personal secret documents of Mussolini concerning the most important problems of foreign policy, particularly those bearing on Italo-German relations. (Ciano is understood to have copied these documents personally, in long-hand, trusting no one.)"<sup>23</sup>

Benini declared categorically that Ciano had told him: "They (The Germans and Republican Fascists) have stripped me of my possessions. I am poor now. But there is one treasure they have not taken which is of more value to me than all the rest: my Diary, now in the hands of my wife."

"Benini is convinced that, as life-long friend of Ciano and as financial manager of both Galeazzo and Edda, he can persuade the latter to make the document available to Allied authorities. He is equally convinced that Edda Ciano, now reported in Switzerland, has not turned the Diary over to the Germans, since she regards it as an instrument of eventual security for herself and children after the collapse of Germany and the Italian Republican Fascist government."

To assist the American authorities (and incidentally thereby to help his own cause as a former Fascist) and at the same time to fulfill the promise to Galeazzo, Benini on 15 August addressed a letter to Edda, entrusting its delivery to the Americans.

"I was in the Verona prison," Benini wrote, "from the 30th of November to the 30th of January and I was able to get in touch with Galeazzo in spite of the strict guard kept. I spent the last tragic night of January second [sic] with him, and I am burning with the desire to bring you his last wishes, his last words, and his advices." Somewhat cryptically Benini mentioned that "He praised all that you had done for him, upon you he placed the certainty that some day he will be truly understood as to his thoughts and actions in Italy and abroad. He has counted on you so that the world might have an irrefutable revelation of so many capital truths."<sup>24</sup>

Ambassador Kirk was consulted and suggested that the matter of securing the diary was of sufficient importance to warrant its being taken up through the War Department with a view to possible diplomatic action in Switzerland.

<sup>23</sup> Note that Benini, in speaking to Colonel Cumming, drew no distinction between the diary and the supporting papers.

<sup>24</sup> The letter to Edda is enclosure No. 1 to Despatch No. 703, 25 August 1944.

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Between the arrival in Washington of Mr. Murphy's despatch No. 703 to the State Department, the arrival of whatever messages regarding Ciano's diary went to the War Department through its channels, and the next step, there was quite a lapse of time. But on 22 October the US Minister in Bern<sup>64</sup> received an instruction stating that the Department of State had reliable information that Count Ciano's diaries were in the possession of his widow in Switzerland. The Minister was directed to try to get the diaries or a microfilm copy, and it was suggested that he might wish to make use of OSS help.<sup>65</sup>

The head of the Office of Strategic Services network in Switzerland was Allen W. Dulles. He operated in direct contact with the Legation and was able to use its communications facilities for reporting to home base in Washington. He had managed to get into the bastion of neutral Switzerland just as the portcullis was being lowered following the Allied landings in North Africa and the German overrunning of unoccupied (Vichy) France.<sup>67</sup>

After discussing the problem with Minister Harrison, Mr. Dulles began, or rather renewed his search for Edda Ciano and the diaries. Bellia, the Italian Consul in Lausanne,<sup>68</sup> had served in Ciano's personal office; he knew Edda well; and from him Dulles gained the impression that Edda probably had the diaries with her. Mr. Dulles enlisted the services of a few people, a team, so to speak, in the quest for Edda and the diary. These were Cordelia Dodson, Mme. Louis de Chollet, an American woman married to a Swiss, and Paul Ghali, correspondent of the *Chicago Daily News*.<sup>69</sup>

Meanwhile, Lieutenant Pucci, who had been released from the hospital at the end of March with the fractures of his skull healed, had been sent to Estavayer-le-Lac, and then to Fribourg. There he met Mme. de Chollet in the early autumn. Pucci abruptly turned down

<sup>64</sup> Leland Harrison (1883-1951); Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Switzerland since July 13, 1937.

<sup>65</sup> Copy of telegram as received, item 00R, File, "Edda Ciano Diaries."

<sup>66</sup> See Allen W. Dulles' own delightful account of his adventurous arrival in Switzerland: *The Secret Surrender* (New York, Evanston, and London: Harper and Row, 1966) pp. 12 ff.

<sup>67</sup> Franco Bellia, entered the Italian foreign service in 1933, in 1941 headed the "Ufficio della Segreteria" in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

<sup>68</sup> Interview with Allen Dulles, January 17, 1966.

Mme. de Chollet's suggestion that he capitalize on his friendship with the Countess Ciano by writing some newspaper articles about her, but he gained the clear impression that the Americans were much interested in Ciano's widow.

At the end of October, Pucci, who had moved back to Estavayer, managed to see Edda in Lausanne. They talked at length about the diary and documents. Pucci asked her if he should contact the Americans and she agreed. Finally on 8 December Pucci managed to get permission to go to Fribourg along with a school group which made the excursion to see the procession of St. Nicholas. Although Pucci was not able to see Mme. de Chollet, he talked to her on the phone indicating that he wished to see her and had something of importance to say. But he did not wish to run the risk of directly mentioning the diary on the telephone.

A couple of days after this phone call, Mme. de Chollet arrived in Estavayer accompanied by Paul Ghali, and the two met with Pucci. At just about this time there had been newspaper stories of a marriage of Countess Ciano and Marchese Pucci. Ghali wanted to know about this. Pucci denied the rumor, but he brought up the subject of the diaries and indicated that Edda might be willing to let them out.<sup>20</sup>

The next step was the delivery to Edda Ciano of a copy of the letter which Zenone Benini had entrusted to the American authorities in Rome in August. To Mme. de Chollet, who served as messenger, Mr. Dulles wrote on 15 December:

"I do not know whether the original letter was sent to Washington or directly to the Countess by other channels. If she has not already received it, I feel sure she would desire to read it, and, of course, she may keep this copy, if she so desires.

"From Rome I learn that Signor Benini is with the American military forces in the neighborhood of Rome and has given these authorities all information in his possession with regard to the importance of the Diaries, and of his willingness, in the interest of his friend and of the cause, to do what he can to help toward making them available, so that photographic copies can be made under conditions that would preserve to the rightful owners all rights of eventual publication.

"I am sure that you will express to your friend my sincere conviction that it is important that the material we discussed be made immediately available under safeguards which will be scrupulously observed, and which will reserve to your friend and her children all rights of publication."

<sup>20</sup> Pucci Report, pp. 14-15.

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In conclusion Mr. Dulles mentioned that he had to leave for Paris next day, but hoped to see Mme. de Chollet on his return which would be on December 20th.<sup>11</sup>

We can well imagine Edda Ciano's feelings from the reply to Benini which she drafted on 16 December:

"Dear Zenone: Only today I have received a copy (in English) of the letter you wrote me on August 15th. It is useless, and I cannot tell you all I went through—a real hell—always with the thought that I was not able to do (for reasons beyond my control) what Galeazzo had written me to do

Your letter, although late, arrives to the point. For that reason, before arranging anything, I would like to see you as soon as possible. It is very important I beg you to be careful because if the Swiss (for reasons of quiet living) or above all the Germans knew of the dirty trick I am about to pull on them, my life (but that would not have any importance—I am so tired of everything) and that of my children would be seriously endangered

"But it is certain that even if I would have to die, I want first to avenge Galeazzo and to succeed in making him known such as he was.

I will be waiting for you. I embrace you affectionately.

(signed)

Edda"

After this reply by Edda, which was read and analyzed all the way from Bern to Caserta to Rome, the initial thought of the American intelligence authorities was to try to elicit another letter from Benini, in which he would specifically direct Edda Ciano to the next step. This time, however, Benini refused. Edda Ciano wanted Benini to come to Switzerland so that she could consult him directly. But Benini was under a blanket indictment for his Fascist activities, and the American intelligence officers did not wish to go so far as to move him into neutral Switzerland.<sup>12</sup>

Mr. Dulles in Switzerland had believed, after receiving the reports from Mme. de Chollet and Paul Ghali, that the situation was now ripe for filming the diaries. He made out a certificate that Daniel Schachter was officially authorized "to make photographic reproduc-

<sup>11</sup> Copy of the letter, Bern, 15 December 1944, Item 57R File "Edda Ciano Diaries."

<sup>12</sup> The Italian holograph, marked 'not sent,' is in the File "Edda Ciano Diaries" Item 8R. A copy in English translation, Item 53R, another such copy, Item 44R, Exhibit A.

<sup>13</sup> Telegram, Caserta to Bern (for Dulles) 29 December 1944, Item 61 L; Telegram, Bern to Caserta (for American Political Adviser) 31 December 1944, Item 60 L; Telegram 837, Caserta to Bern (for Dulles) 11 January 1945, Item 57 L, File "Edda Ciano Diaries."

tions of documents, records and reports desired to complete the official documentation of United States Government Offices. Any documents so photographed by him are for official uses only."<sup>84</sup> Armed with this certificate, Schachter was sent to Countess Ciano to make photographs of the diaries, but she refused. She stated that she was willing to go through with the matter of making the diary available to the United States Government, but she insisted first on talking directly with Mr. Dulles.<sup>85</sup>

Countess Ciano got the same message to Mr. Dulles through another channel. In a letter sent 20 December to Mme. de Chollet she wrote . . . "when your 'important friend' comes I should like to talk with him because, though I am willing with all my heart to carry through the deal the whole thing is too important for me (and I am not thinking of money) to take wild chances blindfolded. . . . Your important friend could come with his car and take me for a ride (not in the American sense of it I mean to say)."<sup>86</sup>

In these circumstances, and despite the risk which was involved of a refusal by Countess Ciano to cooperate, or to spin the negotiations out and exploit a connection with Mr. Dulles, he determined to speak to her directly. He brought Magistrati into the picture at the time, and that influence probably was helpful. Magistrati was no longer Minister in Bern. His prominent Fascist past might require investigation in anti-Fascist Italy. Dulles believed that Magistrati had worked conscientiously for the Allies since the Armistice, and promised to put in a good word for him at Rome if he would help to get the diaries.<sup>87</sup>

#### *Dulles Gets the Diaries*

On 7 January 1945 Allen Dulles motored to Monthey, in the Valais, accompanied by Mme. de Chollet, who had arranged for a meeting

<sup>84</sup> Copy of the certificate, item 58 R, File "Edda Ciano Diaries," Personal Files of Allen Dulles.

<sup>85</sup> Dulles' report to OSS, Washington, Bern, 19 January 1945, item 44R, File "Edda Ciano Diaries." (This report is of basic importance and summarizes a great deal of Dulles' moves with respect to the diary.)

<sup>86</sup> Holograph letter, undated but with envelope post-marked Monthey, 20 XII 44, item 7 R, File "Edda Ciano Diaries."

<sup>87</sup> Interview with Mr. Dulles, 17 January 1966, Message of Dulles, 30 December 1944, item 52 R, File "Edda Ciano Diaries."

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there with Edda Ciano. It was almost a year since Countess Ciano, with the help of Lieutenant Pucci, had been able to escape into Switzerland with the 5 booklets of Count Ciano's diaries. This meeting in Monthey was secret. The war was still going on, and Countess Ciano was under rather close surveillance by the Swiss. The three spent a good part of the afternoon discussing the delivery of the diaries to the United States Government.

On the one hand Edda wished to make the diaries available in accordance with what she now believed to have been her husband's last wishes. On the other she hated to give up her last assets. She wished to bargain, yet she wished at the same time to give the impression of a generous act toward America. She was anxious to get out of Switzerland and beyond the reach of the *Sicherheitsdienst*. She wanted to talk directly with Benini before coming to a decision. She needed clear assurances regarding her rights for commercial publication, and she was very anxious that her husband's political reputation be vindicated.

Mr. Dulles was chiefly anxious to move quickly. He took the position that the diaries were losing value to the US Government every day; that this was Edda's last real chance to make a generous act; that the US Government was not interested in a bargain or in paying out money. He gave full assurances that her rights for commercial publication would not be impaired, but he could not state when, with the war still on, the diaries could be published. He was careful to explain that the US Government might conceivably wish to publish parts of the diaries if it would help in the war.

In the end Edda agreed and arrangements were made for a team of photographers to make the reproductions. Dulles was impressed by Edda's great resentment at her father for failing to heed her intercession for Ciano's life, and by her fear and hatred of the Germans, above all of Ribbentrop. In his report of the discussion, Dulles suggested that if the US government were to publish any part of the diary, there should be consideration of her protection. But no such assurance was requested or given in the discussion of 17 January.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>66</sup> Dulles' report to OSS, Washington, Bern, 10 January 1945 (paragraph 7), Item 44 R, File "Edda Ciano Diaries".

Interview with Allen Dulles, 17 January 1966,  
Cf. Niccoletti, *Colliers*, 27 April 1946, p. 74.

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Next day Mr. Dulles sent his team. Captain Tracy Barnes, a trained lawyer, supervised. Schachter did the actual photographing. These reproductions were regular photos, not microfilms. The men worked secretly in Countess Edda's room in the sanitarium in Valais where she was confined. They worked in great haste lest they be discovered by the Swiss authorities. The whole job was completed that day: some 1200 pages were photographed of the five notebooks.<sup>99</sup>

Countess Ciano was not completely satisfied with Mr. Dulles' oral assurances, although she felt that his word as a gentleman would be honored. Early next day (at 0500 according to her account), she wrote to Mr. Dulles asking for certain specific guarantees:

- 1) A formal acknowledgement from the Government of the United States that she donated the diaries,
- 2) A written engagement from the American Government that the materials be used only for political and military purposes, secretly, and that nothing be published without her consent,
- 3) For assistance in commercial publication of the diaries in the United States as soon as the Government had gone over the material.<sup>100</sup>

At the secret meeting with Allen Dulles, Edda Ciano had mentioned that there were additional documentary materials of Count Ciano which were still in Italy, the "chocolates" as she liked to call them. She referred to these additional documents in her letter of 8 January: "Another thing, the rest. The complement of the diaries are still in Italy—if you take me out of here, I am willing to go and fetch them, only Pucci and I know where they are. Pucci does not know that I know."<sup>101</sup>

There was no problem in understanding Countess Edda's motives. In his telegraphic report of 11 January, Dulles recorded that "Today Hitler, Ribbentrop and her father are the chief objects of her hatred." But the guarantees which she asked were a different matter. Dulles stated:

"In prior conversation I never accepted such conditions but told her I would give her personal letter of acknowledgement after diaries photographed and

<sup>99</sup> Telegram Dulles to Washington, 11 January 1945, item 58 L, File "Edda Ciano Diaries";

Interview with Allen Dulles, 17 January 1966

<sup>100</sup> Letter, Edda Ciano to Allen Dulles, 8 January 1945, the holograph, item 5 R, a typed copy, item 44 R, exhibit B, File "Edda Ciano Diaries."

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

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that in giving us copy, such rights as she might have regarding publication would be undisturbed I specifically stated our Govt might wish to publish certain extracts."

On 13 January through Mme. de Chollet, Dulles sent the acknowledgement over his signature with the concluding sentence:

"This will further acknowledge that the photographic copies of the diaries will be forwarded to Washington for the information of the government, together with a copy of the Countess Ciano's letter of January 8th, that the material in the photographic copies will be used for official purposes only, and that the giving of these photographic copies will not affect any rights which Countess Ciano may have with regard to the eventual commercial publication of the diaries."<sup>103</sup>

Edda Ciano had not stressed financial considerations, and Count Ciano had insisted that she not accept payment from the American government. But in Switzerland she was living on a very limited budget. The Swiss authorities saw to it that she did not get sufficient funds to move around easily in their neutral country. Mr. Dulles gave her an advance of 3500 Swiss francs against future possible royalties.<sup>103</sup>

In reporting his success in gaining the Ciano diaries, Dulles acknowledged that he had no independent basis of judgment of their contents, but he felt completely sure of the authenticity of the materials. The 1,200 pages covered the period 1 January 1939 through 8 February 1943, and Edda included Galeazzo's note of 23 December 1943 from his cell in Verona. Mr. Dulles noted, however, that there were some pages which were missing or had been cut, particularly those between 25 January and 24 April 1941, regarding the Greek war.<sup>104</sup>

<sup>103</sup> Item 48 R, File "Edda Ciano Diaries"

<sup>104</sup> Telegram, Dulles to Washington, 11 January 1945, as cited.

<sup>105</sup> At a subsequent stage the late Professor Gaetano Salvemini was able to examine the photographs of the diary, page by page. He noted that the sheet with the entries for 27 and 28 October 1940 had been removed and substituted. Susmel suggests that when Ciano was Ambassador to the Holy See, he was able to make interpolations and mutilations in the day to day entries which he had made earlier. (Susmel, *Vita sbagliata*, p. 78 and footnote 1.)

Allen Dulles rather suspected that Edda Ciano herself might have excised certain passages which she considered might have been offensive to the Anglo-Americans (Interview with Allen Dulles, 13 January 1966).

Toscano, *The History of Treaties and International Politics*, Vol. I, p. 455 suggests that the French edition, published directly from the original manuscript notebooks, is the more accurate. *Le Journal Politique, 1939-1943* (Neuchâtel: La Découverte, 1946). See below, note 117.

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The work of photographing the diaries had been done in secrecy and in great haste. It was feared that some of the filmed pages would prove to be illegible, that there would be double exposures, and that quite a few of the pages of the original notebooks would have to be retaken. At Allied Force Headquarters, they still had Benini on the book. At Allen Dulles' suggestion they kept him there in case his intervention should be considered necessary to gain Edda Ciano's consent for the making of re-takes. She was extremely worried throughout this time lest the Swiss authorities learn of her activities and expel her as an undesirable alien, or that the *Sicherheitsdienst* might learn of her disposition of the diaries and kill her.<sup>105</sup>

On 16 January, however, Dulles was able to report that the rephotographing had been carried out successfully and that he had good, clear films of all elements of Count Ciano's diaries which Edda had admitted to having with her in Switzerland. There was now no need for any call on the services of Benini, and Dulles arranged for a copy of his report to be sent to Caserta, lest any complications arise from Ciano's friend who was anxious to clear up his Fascist past.<sup>106</sup>

On 15 January, Captain Barnes had sent his chief a full report regarding the work of rephotographing. It listed all of the entries of which retakes were necessary. It listed the missing dates as follows:

1939	17-18 February
1940	13-18 April
1941	26-31 January
	February—entire
	March—entire
	1-23 April
	23-31 July
	August—entire
	1-21 September
1942	10-19 July
	17-24 August
	12-21 September

The only explanation given for the significant omissions in 1941 was that during the period 26 January through 23 April Ciano was a flight officer with the Italian Air Service. The Countess stated that she knew of no reason why

<sup>105</sup> Telegram, Bern to Washington, 13 January 1945, item 56 L, File "Edda Ciano Diaries."

<sup>106</sup> Telegram, Bern to the American Political Adviser (AMPOLAD), Caserta, 16 January 1945, item 54 L; Telegram, Bern to Washington, 16 January 1945, item 53 L, File "Edda Ciano Diaries."

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the second big period was left out in 1941 nor for the shorter omissions occurring in other years."

There was another rather puzzling matter about the original diaries. There was a series of initials, in red pencil, and in capital letters, at the right hand top corner of many pages. "The Countess examined these rather carefully but said, and I believe truthfully, that she knew no explanation for them."<sup>107</sup> When Allen Dulles and his team were able to study these initials at leisure, it appeared that they corresponded with the initials of some of Galeazzo's lady friends, and apparently had been recorded for the appropriate days.<sup>108</sup> These markings argue rather strongly that the diary was genuine, and that there was but little retouching of the original entries by Count Ciano.

In his comprehensive report of 19 January, Allen Dulles informed the OSS central office in Washington that the reproduction of the diaries would be despatched the next day, hand-carried in the form of two sets of microfilm.<sup>109</sup> Apparently there was a reduction to microfilm after the initial photographing sessions by Captain Tracy Barnes and Daniel Schachter. The two aluminum containers of the sets of film were designated respectively "A" and "B". Container "A" held the negatives of the initial filming done on 8 January; container "B" the negative for the subsequent refilming.<sup>110</sup> Mr. Dulles further reported that he was keeping one complete set of prints of each of the two films and was arranging to have them translated under the editorial guidance of Royall Tyler.<sup>111</sup>

These translations went forward rather rapidly with covering notes of 19 February, 1 March, and 3 March 1945.<sup>112</sup> The Washington central office of OSS, in accordance with Mr. Dulles' suggestion, promptly forwarded a print of the microfilm of the diaries to the Department of

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<sup>107</sup> Report of Captain Tracy Barnes to Mr. Dulles, 15 January 1945, Item 45 R, File "Edda Ciano Diaries."

<sup>108</sup> Interview with Allen Dulles, 17 January 1966.

<sup>109</sup> Item 46 R, File "Edda Ciano Diaries."

<sup>110</sup> Item 44 R, Exhibit E, File "Edda Ciano Diaries."

<sup>111</sup> Report of 19 January 1945, as cited.

<sup>112</sup> Respectively Items 37 R, 34 R, and 33 R, File "Edda Ciano Diaries."

State.<sup>113</sup> As the translations reached Washington from Bern, OSS promptly forwarded copies to the Department of State. The series was completed on 12 April 1945, only a short time before the end of the war in Europe.<sup>114</sup>

Shortly after VE day, and as quickly as the border of Switzerland and Italy was opened up, Mr. Dulles hastened to Ramiola, in search of the supplementary materials of which Edda had told him. At her request, Mr. Dulles supplied her with a film of the photographs of the diary, and promised that she would receive film copies of whatever additional materials he would be able to retrieve in Italy.<sup>115</sup> When he reached the clinic of the Melocchi brothers, he learned that the Germans had got there first. The "chocolates" had been gobbled up.<sup>116</sup>

*Publication of the Diaries.*

Paul Ghali, correspondent of the *Chicago Daily News*, had been of real service to Allen Dulles in making contact with Edda Ciano and in inducing her to make the diaries available to the United States Government. Dulles felt under obligation for these services and, within the limits permitted by his official position, he assisted Ghali in getting first rights of publication. There were some difficulties for Ghali in making a bid. Use of commercial cable from Switzerland in describing the materials would promptly alert the authorities and jeopardize the status of Countess Ciano as a political refugee. If Ghali were to cross the border and telegraph from Paris his message might not get through the Allied censorship. Yet if he did not act there was the risk that Edda would become impatient and approach some other publisher. Toward the end of January Dulles reported to the OSS in Washington that he felt obliged to let Ghali go ahead in

<sup>113</sup> Covering letter, Charles S. Cheston, Acting Director, OSS, to James C. Dunn, Assistant Secretary of State, 6 February 1945, Top Secret, 103.918/2-645, Central Files, Department of State.

The author, at this period, was serving in the Division of Southern European Affairs, and thus learned for the first time about the diary but had but little time to study it. The film, so far as I recall, was carefully guarded and kept in the safe in Mr. Dunn's office.

<sup>114</sup> Under cover of hand-carried letters, 16 March, 15 April and 12 April, Secret File, 885.01/3-1645, 885.01/4-345, and 885.01/4-1245, Central Files, Department of State.

<sup>115</sup> Edda Ciano to Mr. Dulles, 3 May 1945, item 25 R, receipt by Edda Ciano, 6 May 1945, item 24 R, File "Edda Ciano Diaries."

<sup>116</sup> See above, p. 48.

## The Ciano Papers

contacting his publisher. At the same time Dulles pointed out that any aid with communications would enable the OSS to keep control over the whole matter. Edda agreed orally to give the *Chicago Daily News* preference. She asked for \$25,000 for the newspaper rights and for an additional offer for publication of the diaries in book form, but leaving Mme. de Chollet free to negotiate for a French edition to be published in Switzerland and France.<sup>117</sup>

The *Chicago Daily News* readily agreed to accept censorship of such materials in the diaries as might be judged necessary by the Department of State—since the war was still on in Europe—but without seeing the material the newspaper felt able to offer only \$3,500 for exclusive first publishing rights, leaving publication in book form to await inspection of the manuscript.<sup>118</sup>

By mid-March some of the staff in Chicago had been able to read a portion of the diary in translation. (At this time only the OSS and State Department had the text of the whole manuscript.) After a second trip to Paris, Ghali returned to Switzerland at the end of March with full authorization to offer \$25,000 for the exclusive first publication rights for newspapers and periodicals throughout the world, excepting only Switzerland and France.<sup>119</sup>

On 7 April Edda Ciano, acting for herself and for her three children, and Paul Ghali representing John Knight (*Chicago Daily News*) signed at Monthey, Switzerland, the formal contract for publication. The *News* agreed to pay \$25,000 for the rights of serial publication of the five booklets of the diaries of Count Galeazzo Ciano. Edda agreed to deliver to the firm a photocopy of the manuscript, and she formally guaranteed its authenticity. The *News* further agreed to act as Edda Ciano's representative in arranging for publication of the manuscript in book form. She retained the right to accept, to reject, or to discuss such offers as would ensue. Switzerland and France were excepted.

<sup>117</sup> Telegram Bern (Dulles) to Washington, 17 January 1945, item 52 L; Telegram, Bern to Washington, 25 January 1945, item 42 R; undated message, by Ghali for John Knight, item 31 R, File "Edda Ciano Diaries."

<sup>118</sup> Telegram, OSS to Bern (via Department of State) 14 February 1945, item 36 L; copy of letter, Paul Ghali to Edda Ciano, 5 March 1945, item 28 R, File, "Edda Ciano Diaries."

<sup>119</sup> Telegram, OSS to Bern, 20 March 1945, item 28 L; Telegram, Bern to OSS, 31 March 1945, item 23 L; File, "Edda Ciano Diaries."

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Article 3 of the contract stated:

"There are references in the manuscript to certain documents which are not at the present time in the possession of Countess Ciano.

"If they should be retrieved, it is understood that she will send photocopies to the *Chicago Daily News* of such of those documents as clearly have the character of supplements or appendices to the manuscript."<sup>10</sup>

After VE day Lieutenant Pucci decided to return to Italy and applied for permission of the Swiss police to travel to Bern in order to put himself at the disposal of the Italian authorities. The Swiss police promptly granted the request but at the same time notified him politely but very clearly that he was expected to leave Switzerland by the end of the month, May. On 15 May Pucci called on Ghilia, the Italian Air Attaché in Bern. Whatever may have been the chivalry of Pucci's aid to Countess Ciano in her escaping into Switzerland, or however admirable his courage under German torture, there was the basic fact that he was an officer of the Italian Air Force, and he had been absent without leave.

Pucci identified himself to Ghilia, for he had a distinguished war record, but the Attaché indicated that Pucci's actions had made him a political figure. He suggested that Pucci write out a complete account of his actions since September 1943. Pucci did not feel free to do this although he declared that he was willing to submit to an investigation or judgment by the Italian authorities. The suggestion was then brought forward that Pucci indicate that he had been aiding the Allies, and that he submit his case to the Allied authorities in Bern. Lieutenant Pucci explained the matter to Miss Dodson who was able to assure him that some favorable solution would be found:

A few days later Pucci again spoke to the Attaché who indicated that the members of the Italian Legation were quite pessimistic regarding his chances of returning to Italy. Ghilia thought there were only two possibilities: a statement by some Allied authority that Pucci was working for them; or an Allied declaration that he was a supporter of the Allies and that his return to Italy would be useful to them.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Copy of the contract (in French) Item 29 R, File "Edda Ciano Diaries."

<sup>11</sup> Memorandum by Pucci, undated, but written some time between 15 May and 24 May 1945, Item 16 R, File, "Edda Ciano Diaries."

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It was Allen Dulles who represented the Allied authorities as far as Pucci was concerned and it was Cordelia Dodson who, on 24 May got from him his most interesting account regarding his help to Edda Ciano and in preserving Galeazzo Ciano's diaries.<sup>122</sup> Apparently the intervention of Allen Dulles was promptly forthcoming and effective. Not long afterwards Pucci returned to Italy and he himself published the first accounts of his key role in saving the Ciano diaries.

Edda Ciano also returned to Italy not long after Pucci. In June there was some press agitation in Switzerland against her presence, and her name was linked with others whose Fascist political activities had been notorious: Alfieri, Volpi, Bastianini. But the Swiss, despite the wars of their neighbors, have preserved a humane tradition. They did not wish to force Edda Ciano across the border into Italy if such action would result in her maltreatment or death. They asked if the Americans would accept delivery and assure her safety. Some sort of assurances seem to have been offered, and at the end of August Countess Edda was consigned to Allied authorities by the Swiss guards at the frontier. The *Risorgimento Liberale* (Rome) of 31 August told something of her life in Switzerland, "including her alleged marriage to an Italian diplomat named Pucci and her confinement in Swiss sanitarium. Story concludes with report of Italian semi-official communiqué which has announced she might return to Italy safely and had nothing to fear from Italian or Allied authorities."<sup>123</sup>

For almost a year Edda was confined on Lipari Island, but without serious suffering or even real hardship. It was a very different kind of imprisonment from that which her father had inflicted on the anti-Fascists whom he confined on that island. On 20 and 21 September 1945 she gave some interviews to two Italian and three American journalists. She mentioned that she was reading the "Memoriale Pucci" which was being published in the *Giornale di Sicilia*, and on being questioned she declared that Pucci's published account was

<sup>122</sup> Covering memo by Cordelia Dodson to Mr. Dulles, 24 May 1945, item 15 R; Covering letter, Pucci to Mr. Dulles, Bern, 24 May 1945, item 17 R, File, "Edda Ciano Diaries."

<sup>123</sup> Bern telegram No. 3203, 16 June 1945 (740.0011EW/6-1645 Top Secret); Departmental telegram to Bern, No. 2127, 28 June 1945 (740.0011EW/6-1645 Top Secret); Caserta telegram No. 3369, 24 August 1945 (740.0011EW/8-2445 Secret); Rome press telegram No. 2527, 31 August 1945 (865.00/8-3145 Plain), Central Files, Department of State.

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stored to Edda Ciano prior to their publication in 1948. We read in the introduction:

"Of the seven notebooks . . . , Edda Ciano . . . was able to bring with her only five, and precisely those of 1939, 1940, 1941, 1942, and 1943, which were edited two years ago by Rizzoli of Milan. Having learned that only those notebooks had been taken into Switzerland, to a secure place, and that the other two, which were of exceptional importance, had been left at the clinic where Edda had rested, the SS were charged to find them. The doctor of the clinic, to whom these notebooks had been entrusted, consigned them under threat of death, to the Reich police who demanded them. From that time on, until a year ago, there was no word of these diaries of the years 1937 and 1938, and it was thought that they had disappeared for good. Instead, they were in the hands of a third party, and their fortunate recovery permits us today to make them known to the public in their entirety."<sup>11</sup>

### *The "Rose Garden" Papers in Washington*

Allen Dulles' trip to Ramiola at war's end was a complete disappointment as far as concerned "the chocolates." The *Sicherheitsdienst* had got there first. They had picked up the diaries for 1937-1938, the bound volume marked "Germania," and the jewels and personal belongings of Countess Edda. But this was not the last round.

In May 1945 came the Wehrmacht's total defeat and unconditional surrender. Germany as a state ceased for a time to exist. Teams of Allied experts swarmed over the country searching for government archives, intelligence agents ferreted out Nazi leaders and got accounts of their activities which could be used in the war criminal trials at Nuremberg. Special Counterintelligence (SCI) groups sought out the members of the *Sicherheitsdienst* and of the RSHA. On 30 June Mr. Dulles received word via London that the SCI detachment in Germany<sup>12</sup> had picked up Frau Beetz, who had mentioned some-

<sup>11</sup> Ciano, *1937-38 Diario*, p. xvi.

<sup>12</sup> The SCI detachments were OSS elements. In Germany they were under command of the then Lt. Col. Andrew H. Berding, who was immediately under Allen Dulles. Lawrence E. de Neufville, who picked up Frau Beetz, was a civilian in Berding's Berlin detachment.

The author interviewed Mr. Berding on 28 November 1967, but he was able to add nothing about Frau Beetz. He had refrained from keeping any personal records, he did not remember her; there was such a press of work that only with difficulty could they keep up the day's tasks. He commented that as the flood of reports and intelligence swept in, they hoped and imagined that some fine day some one in Washington would carefully sort the material out. I said that I was trying to do just that for a small fraction of the materials with which I was familiar, but was encountering difficulties.

thing about having Ciano's diaries for his tenure of office. The message did not seem clear. In reply it was explained that the diaries for 1939 to 1943 had been obtained some months earlier, but that the diary for 1937-1938 and the memoranda which Ciano prepared for Mussolini had been seized by the SD; if Frau Beetz could give any clue regarding these missing documents it would be of great interest. Four days later, on 6 July, the report reached Allen Dulles that his detachment in Germany had obtained from Frau Beetz in German translation the memoranda of Ciano as Foreign Minister. The detachment had sent them on to the Documents Center of 12th Army Group Headquarters.<sup>122</sup>

It was almost a year later that the Department of State received official information about Ciano's supporting papers. In May 1946 Ambassador Murphy<sup>123</sup> informed the Secretary of State:

"I have the honor to report the information that complete copies of Ciano's records of conferences of Hitler, Mussolini and Ribbentrop, and all telegraphic and letter correspondence between Hitler and Mussolini were discovered by SCI detachment in May 1945. They were obtained from Hildegarde Beetz, a German SD agent assigned to Ciano while he was in jail in Verona. The documents in question were sent to the document center, 12th Army Group and then transmitted to War Department. I understand that in one of the file indexes is the name of Beetz.

"Further information concerning these documents can be obtained from Lawrence E. De Neufville who originally obtained the documents from Frau Beetz. . . ."

The author first heard of this collection on 13 January 1947, being at the time the head of the Mediterranean Section, Historical Office of the War Department (since redesignated Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, or OCMH). At lunch on that day Professor Raymond J. Sontag, then on leave from Berkeley and serving as Editor-in-Chief of the *Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918-1945*, mentioned that he had learned of this most interest-

<sup>122</sup> Telegram London to Bern, 29 June 1945, Item 7 L; Telegram to London, 2 July 1945, Item 6 L; Telegram London to Bern, Item 4 L; File "Edda Ciano Diaries."

<sup>123</sup> The various teams of experts which gathered up the German Foreign Office archives and began their microfilming operated as members of the staff of Robert Murphy.

<sup>124</sup> Despatch No. 3614, Berlin, 21 May 1946, 840.414/5-2146 Secret, Central Files, Department of State.

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ing find, possibly from the report, possibly from Ambassador Murphy directly.<sup>133</sup>

The next day I first telephoned and then sent a memorandum to Major Seeley, War Department General Staff, describing the papers on the basis of what I had been told by Professor Sontag, and asking that they be transferred to the Historical Office. My memorandum mentioned that

"Ciano also kept certain materials, reports and memoranda in addition to the diary—materials which constitute a kind of appendix for the diary as published. The materials were seized by the Germans during their occupation of Rome and were translated from Italian into German by a woman employed by the German Foreign Office. While making this translation this woman made an extra copy of the translation for herself which she buried in a rose garden. . . ."<sup>134</sup>

Major Seeley promptly sent the material but I was not able, at that time, to learn much more about its acquisition than I had been told by Professor Sontag.

The papers consisted of a couple of bundles of loose sheets of carbon copies in German, without an index or table of contents. Because of the method of their acquisition there was a presumption of authenticity of the documents. After examining the materials the author became convinced that they were genuine, chiefly for two reasons: many of the accounts of conversations comprised in the collection tallied precisely with references in the published Ciano diaries to full records kept elsewhere, and scattered among the sheets of German carbon copies were a few stray items of Italian originals.<sup>135</sup>

<sup>133</sup> I wrote to Professor Sontag on 10 August 1964, asking if he could tell me how he first learned of this collection. In his reply of 21 August 1964 he stated that he could no longer remember the circumstances of his learning of these papers. (Personal Files).

<sup>134</sup> Memorandum for Major Rudolph C. Seeley, WDGS, 14 January 1947, copy in Personal Files.

<sup>135</sup> "Verbale del colloquio a Palazzo Venezia tra il Duce, von Ribbentrop e il ministro Ciano," Roma 28 ottobre 1938-XVII, item 2, 1938, revised paging 007-010; "Appunto, Salisburgo, 12 agosto [1939] XVII, item 11, 1939, revised paging 044-046.

"Verbale del colloquio del Duce con von Ribbentrop presenti Eccellenze Ciano, Alberi e Muckensen," 19 settembre 1940-XVIII, not listed as a separate item, initial paging pp. 196-199.

"Colloquio Ribbentrop-Ciano, Schönhol," 4 novembre '40, not listed as a separate item, initial paging 223-224.

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I arranged the papers in chronological order, and numbered the pages with a stamping machine. I then prepared an index or table of contents of the papers initially sent to me which comprised:

4 items for 1939 (pp. 1-31);  
56 items for 1940 (pp. 32-254);  
32 items for 1941 (pp. 261-393);  
19 items for 1942 (pp. 394-469);  
6 items for 1943 (pp. 470-490).

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In the Historical Office, War Department, we wondered what to call this collection. I had understood from Professor Sontag that it was dug up out of a rose garden and we dubbed it the "Ciano Papers: Rose Garden." The name stuck. This is the designation usually used in the citations to this material in the Historical Office, now Office of the Chief of Military History.<sup>138</sup>

Having put the materials in shape for our use we then received a bunch of additional sheets: some material for 1938, and a great deal for 1939. The integration of this additional material required a re-numbering of the pages and the preparation of a revised index which now showed:

4 items for 1938 (pp. 1-13);  
106 items for 1939 (pp. 14-290);  
56 items for 1940 (pp. 297-519);  
32 items for 1941 (pp. 520-652);  
19 items for 1942 (pp. 653-728);  
6 items for 1943 (pp. 729-749).

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The index for the revised paging lists two of the Italian original texts as separate items. Hence the total number of documents is 223.<sup>139</sup>

Professor Sontag in the spring of 1947 arranged for the State Department to borrow the material from the War Department and to have it microfilmed.<sup>140</sup>

<sup>138</sup> See Albert N. Garland and Howard McGaw Smyth, *Sicily and the Surrender of Italy* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1965), p. 34, note 21.

George F. Howe, *Northwest Africa: Seizing the Initiative in the West* (Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1957), p. 4, footnote 5.

<sup>139</sup> Cf. footnote 137 above.

<sup>140</sup> Assistant Secretary of State J. H. Hildring to Howard C. Peterson, Assistant Secretary of War, 8 April 1947, copy in files of the Historical Office, Department of State.

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Thus the "Ciano Papers: Rose Garden" was assimilated into the collection of microfilms of the German War Documents Branch of the Historical Office, Department of State. A copy of the microfilm was sent to J. W. Wheeler-Bennett who at the time was British Editor-in-Chief of the *Documents on German Foreign Policy* and thus a copy of the "Ciano Papers: Rose Garden" became available at the Public Record Office.

The carbon copies of the German translations made by Frau Beetz with the few, stray Italian originals were held in the Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army for 22 years. In January 1969 they were turned over to the National Archives which had assumed the succession to the German Military Documents Section.<sup>146</sup>

These carbon sheets bear the revised page numbers 1-749. The crossed out page numbers reflect the revision which I made when the additional items were received at OCMH. The microfilm is held in the National Archives, listed as Reel No. 4597 in the great series of films made by the German War Documents Project, the series designated Microcopy T-120. The film is complete and gives the 223 documents. But I have no way of proving whether or not the collection comprises all of the supporting papers which Count Ciano originally set aside in his office in Rome.

One or two more descriptive comments. Throughout most of the materials there is merely the notation at the end of each document: "übersetzt." For the last two items of the collection, items 5 and 6 for the year 1943, on pages 742 and 749 respectively, is to be found the typewritten note "übersetzt" followed by the signature "Beetz."

The handwritten, arabic numbers enclosed in circles are in my writing, added when I listed the documents by year. The other series of numbers and letters, such as "7-y" (p. 007) or "7-x" (p. 004) were on the papers when they reached OCMH and apparently were notations made by Frau Beetz. It appears that she made some retouches on the materials on turning them over to the Americans. We find such

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<sup>146</sup> By letter of transmittal dated January 16, 1969, Col. H.A. Schmidt, Chief, Historical Services Division, OCMH, to the Archivist of the United States. (Memorandum for the Record, National Archives, February 25, 1969).

GMSD was initially succeeded by the Captured Records Section of the Departmental Records Branch, TAGO, which in turn became the World War II Records Division of the National Archives and later evolved into the Modern Military Records Division, NA.

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notations as the following and in English: p. 196, "This is separated from the sheet that should go with it. Translator," p. 223, "Italian version," p. 245, "List of necessary raw materials," p. 484, "Separated from the sheets that belong with it. Translator."

Most of the letters and memoranda of conversations which are recorded in German translation in the "Ciano Papers: Rose Garden" appeared in the Italian original in the book, *L'Europa verso la catastrofe*. This work was published in Italy in January 1946 by the firm Arnoldo Mondadori, and was promptly translated into French and English.<sup>1496</sup> But there was not one word in the Italian work or in the French or English translations regarding the provenance of these documents.

Beyond all shadow of a doubt, these Italian texts came from the collection of documents known as the Lisbon Papers. These had been sent out of Rome by plane by the Foreign Minister Raffaele Guariglia and hidden in the safe of the Italian Legation in Lisbon in the summer of 1943. In 1946 these papers were demanded by the United States Government under terms of the Armistice. They were delivered to Washington and microfilmed, and the originals were restored to the Italian Government in May 1946.<sup>1497</sup> Only the Italian Government itself would have been able to arrange this publication. These original Italian texts confirm overwhelmingly the authenticity of the "Ciano Papers: Rose Garden."

But the collections are not identical. There are at least a couple of cases, however, of texts which are to be found in the "Ciano Papers: Rose Garden" which do not appear in the Italian Cabinet Archives or in the published version of *Ciano's Diplomatic Papers*. Thus we have given the draft of the secret protocol dated Hendaye, 23 October 1940, but which clearly is Ciano's modified version which he had on 3-4

<sup>1496</sup> *Les archives secrètes du comte Ciano 1938-1942*, Traduction de Maunce Vauzouril (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1948); *Ciano's Diplomatic Papers*, Edited by Malcolm Muggeridge (Long Acre, London: Odhoms Press, Ltd., 1948).

<sup>1497</sup> Cf. p. 73, footnote 79a.

<sup>1498</sup> *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, Series D, vol. XI (Washington, 1960) Editors' Note pp. 466-467.

The German text was initially published by Donald S. Detwiler, *Hitler, Franco und Gibraltar: Die Frage des spanischen Eintritts in den zweiten Weltkriege* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1962) pp. 118-119 and is now available in *Akten zur Deutschen Auswärtigen Politik 1918-1945, Serie D, Band XI, 1* (Bonn: Gebr. Hermes, 1964) pp. 394-395.

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November 1940 at Schönhof.<sup>141</sup> What we printed in Washington is an English translation from an enlargement ("blow-up") of a microfilm made from a carbon copy of a German translation of an Italian document, the original of which had disappeared.<sup>142</sup> We also printed Ciano's minute of 8 December 1940 which is not found elsewhere.<sup>143</sup>

We can now summarize the relationship between the Italian cabinet archive—the so-called "Lisbon Papers," the printed selections published under the title *L'Europa verso la catastrofe*, and the "Ciano Papers: Rose Garden." We can have no doubt of the authenticity of the Lisbon Papers because of our precise knowledge of their origin, travels, filming and restitution. They are in fact the Cabinet archives, and are by far the largest of these collections. The printed book presents only a portion of the Lisbon Papers, and in a few cases the complete texts have not been reproduced. The duplication of many of the same documents in the "Ciano Papers: Rose Garden" only clinches the argument for their authenticity. They survive in translation only. The original Italian copies were destroyed in Germany. Probably the collection is not complete. They are, however, the genuine "Ciano's Diplomatic Papers." They are what he himself set aside to accompany his diaries.

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<sup>141</sup> But surely this is as close to the vanished original as is the reconstructed text, for example, of the "Defensor Pacis" to that missing original manuscript, as edited by Richard Scholz, *Marsilius von Padua Defensor Pacis* (Hanover: Hansche Buchhandlung, 1932-33). See particularly the Introduction, pp. v-lxx.

<sup>142</sup> *Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918-1945, Series D.*, vol. XI, documents No. 477, footnote 7, p. 823. (German text, *op. cit.*, Band XI, 2, 686).

See also *Series D*, Vol. XII No. 17, footnote 7 (p. 30).