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# Fifty Years of Political Assassinations

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Some Americans have become much perturbed over the subject of political assassinations in recent months. The principal cause has been the vast publicity given to the efforts of the Senate Committee headed by Frank Church of Idaho which has been investigating the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). We have been treated to Sen. Church's tremulous and breathless expostulations on radio and TV, the latter accompanied by nervous finger exercises, mainly over the possibility that the deep cover activities of the USA's massively financed and globally dispersed super-spy agency during the regency of Pres. John F. Kennedy involved plots to assassinate Soviet Russia's political harlequin diversion in the Western Hemisphere, Fidel Castro of Cuba. Sen. Church has shown no accompanying concern over the subsequent assassination of Pres. Kennedy himself. The presumption may be that the entire story is in the record with respect to the latter.

To round things out, ex-governor of California Ronald Reagan, in one of his radio spots, charged that Adolf Hitler introduced political assassination to the modern world scene. Whatever the quality of Mr. Reagan's performance, this primarily indicated that those preparing his material have little knowledge of or use for history, even that of recent times. The record shows that the Hitler regime engaged in no assassination enterprise at all, but was itself the object of a number, both before and during World War II, including the botched attempt on Hitler himself, on July 20, 1944.

What ex-Gov. Reagan's researchers might have done for him, in view of his

pedigree as a "conservative," was to have provided him with chapter and verse on the scores of assassinations carried out by various agencies of Communist Russia, the state which long ago brought political assassination to the level of a science. Included in this has been the repeated charges of contriving of sensational "suicides," usually involving falls from windows of high buildings or alleged self-inflicted gunshot wounds. Another ploy has been kidnappings and the subsequent permanent disappearance of the victims, a somewhat less sensational but just as effective means of removing obstreperous or "non-cooperative" anti-Communist public figures of one sort or another, including defectors.

Matteotti and Villari

Leftist "anti-fascists" of all stripes, especially Soviet fellow travelers, for several decades managed to make much political hay out of two political assassinations which they charged to their hated adversaries, Benito Mussolini and Adolf Hitler. In neither case does the evidence support them, but their fanciful yarns have long been entrenched nevertheless. The first involves the kidnapping and subsequent death of Giacomo Matteotti in Rome, June 10, 1924. Matteotti, a Socialist member of the Chamber of Deputies, known as a sympathizer with Italy's enemies in World War One, was also a wealthy landowner, not a proletarian toiler, as his political affiliations suggested.

Luigi Villari points out in his *Italian Foreign Policy Under Mussolini* (New York: Devin-Adair, 1956), that Matteotti's

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