

TO : CO, SCI, Germany

SUBJECT: The RSHA and Edda CIANO in Switzerland

(Source: The Interrogation of Frau Burkhardt BEETZ)

1. Count Ciano was executed at 9:00 AM on the morning of January 11, 1944. Three days before, on January 8th, his wife (Edda Mussolini) had reached safety across the Swiss border, where the Ciano children were waiting for her.

2. Edda's traveling companion on her flight was a lieutenant in the Italian Air Force named Emilio Pucci. From the border she sent Pucci back to Verona with letters to Hitler and Mussolini, begging them to spare Ciano's life.

3. Pucci was arrested the morning of Ciano's death and taken to the office of Gen. Harster, BdS northern Italy. He was interrogated there and in jail about the whereabouts of Edda Mussolini: on Jan 17 he was seen by Subject in jail in Milan. He then had a fractured skull as a result of "questioning" by a certain (Standartenführer) Rauff, SD chief in Milan.

4. The execution of Ciano by the puppet Italian government left the RSHA with much unfinished business. By means of a bargain (which was not kept) they had persuaded him to reveal to Frau BEETZ the whereabouts of the Italian Foreign Office records. Ciano's diaries, however, and some other important personal papers had not been recovered.

5. According to Frau BEETZ, she had reported to the RSHA (at Ciano's suggestion) that the diaries were locked in the safe of a friend of Ciano's in Switzerland. Actually, as Frau BEETZ knew, the diaries had been buried in Italy until they were taken to Switzerland, strapped around Edda Mussolini's waist, during the night of Jan 7th to Jan 8th.

6. Immediately after Ciano's execution, Dr. Höttl, head of Amt VI B 1 (which had now become Amt VI E 1) and as such Frau BEETZ's chief, left Berlin to visit Verona. He arrived on Jan 14th and at once proposed to Frau BEETZ that she go to Switzerland and endeavor to establish contact with Edda Mussolini. The purpose of the mission was two-fold: primarily, to persuade Edda not to make any publicity about the way the RSHA had allowed her husband's execution although he had kept his part of the bargain; secondarily, to attempt to discover the hiding place of the remaining Ciano papers. According to Subject, however, Dr. Höttl had little hope of the success of the second part of the mission.

7. Subject states that she had little liking for the mission and accepted it only on condition that she could take Lt. Pucci with her, with the object (she says) of saving

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Pucci's life. Dr. Höttl agreed that Pucci, because of his intimate relationship with Edda Mussolini, would be a useful assistant in the project and therefore agreed to the change.

8. On Jan 15th, the day after Höttl's arrival, a cover position in Switzerland was arranged for Frau BEETZ. With the consent of Von Neurath, German consul in Lugano, and of Scholz, German vice-consul in Milan, she was to pose as a secretarial employee of the Milan consulate who was going to Lugano for six weeks to replace a secretary who was sick. On this basis, and at the request of Scholz, the Swiss consul in Milan granted a visa immediately.

9. The night of Jan 18th and 19th Pucci was smuggled across the border by boat. On the afternoon of the 19th Frau BEETZ took a taxi to the border and then a train to Lugano. She met Pucci the same day at a pre-arranged rendezvous.

10. Subject had instructions to send her reports and communications by means of a Swiss or German merchant Prager. This man had an office in Chiasso and combined his business affairs with the running of a regular courier service between Lugano and Como for the Germans.

11. Owing to the injuries Pucci had sustained in prison, difficulties arose almost immediately. On Jan 23rd Pucci was compelled to go to the hospital at Bellinzona for treatment, and found himself interned by the Swiss authorities. For Pucci, interned in a sisters' hospital at Bellinzona, to contact Edda, interned in a nunnery at Ingegohl (the other side of the St. Gothard Pass), was obviously no easy matter.

12. Subject attempted on Jan 26th to raise the necessary deposit of caution money (she believes 14,000 Swiss francs were required) in order to free Pucci from internment. For this purpose she paid a visit to the Italian industrialist, Bianchi, in Zurich: but Bianchi (who, Subject states, is a Fascist) would have nothing to do with the project. Three weeks later, on Feb. 21, Subject made another similar attempt, this time contacting Signor Agnelli, a friend of Pucci's and grand-daughter of another Italian industrialist. This girl, a student at the University of Lausanne, was supposed to have enough influential friends to free Pucci without the deposit of money: but Subject's visit to her was also without result.

Subject contacted Agnelli's daughter for help in securing release of Pucci.

13. Pucci, meanwhile, was continually attempting to contact Edda by letter -- both on his own behalf and in order to assist Subject, for whom his feelings of gratitude for his safety was rapidly changing to a feeling of affection and love. Subject drew up and gave to Pucci a statement of what were supposed to be Ciano's last thoughts and messages for Edda. This statement still exists, and it is plain that the thoughts -- whether actual or not -- were nicely calculated to keep Edda silent, as the RSNA desired. Pucci's letter embodying this statement reached Edda in April.

arrival in Lugano. De Garston was said to be the representative of the British Secret Service in Lugano; and in a somewhat obscure deal Pucci tried to interest him in buying Ciano's diaries from Edda, which De Garston refused to do.

15. According to Subject, the motive for this deal (which she endeavored to forward by the delivery of the letter) was to secure money for Edda, so that she and the children could continue to live in Switzerland; there was also the hope that the British would publish the diaries, and so smear Ribbentrop in the way that one section of the RSHA desired.

16. On Feb 20th Subject took a train from Lugano to Schwyz and went from there on foot to Ingebohl, to see under what kind of security Edda and the Ciano children were interned. She was unable to see any of the Ciano family, even from a distance. Subject then continued her journey to Lausanne to see Suni Agnelli (see paragraph 12). During her visit she states that she asked Signorina Agnelli, who was studying chemistry, for a bottle of poison. This was mailed to her in Lugano, and she received it on Feb. 23rd.

17. Subject gives the following reason for wanting poison: - She had received a letter from Berlin saying that a priest named Pancino, who was Edda's confessor, had succeeded in visiting Edda in her internment at Ingebohl; and that Pancino was working for Amt VI. Subject was afraid that Edda would tell Pancino how she had been warned by Subject to flee to Switzerland on Jan 7th, taking Ciano's diaries; and that the RSHA would arrest Subject for this treachery.

18. On March 29th Subject's Swiss visa (already renewed from March 1st) expired for the second time. She returned to Italy and went to stay at a country house maintained by the SD at Cornobbio, near Como. Host at this house was a banker named Karnatz, who was permitted by the SD to make his home there. Subject worked for one week in the office of Vöittel, chief of the SD in Como, and then took a four week's leave because her husband, with Kaltenbrunner's assistance, had arrived at the Karnatz house on leave.

19. This vacation ended on May 4th and Subject then went to Berlin. On May 6th she saw Kaltenbrunner in his office in Prinz Albrechtstrasse and then reported to the Amt VI office in 32 Berkaerstrasse. Kaltenbrunner told her to return to Como and make contact with Father Pancino (cover name Nikolaus). Through Pancino she was to endeavor once more to contact Edda. Ciano's papers and diaries were not mentioned, according to Subject. Her mission was only to give Edda money and to tell her of Ciano's alleged last wish that she keep quiet in order not to endanger her position in Switzerland.

20. Subject contact Pancino, as arranged, on June 7th: but her actual mission to Switzerland came to nothing because of the Swiss authorities' failure to grant a visa. At this time she was earning 230 marks a month, plus a living allowance (while out of Germany) equivalent to 3,000 lire a month. On June 8th came a letter from Kaltenbrunner announcing that a bonus of 10,000 marks had been paid to her in Berlin, as a reward for her good work in obtaining the secret of where Ciano had hidden the Foreign Office records in Rome.

31. Early in June Subject heard from Berlin that Pancino had again been in contact with Edda, who had told him that Ciano's personal papers (not his diaries) existed in septuplicate and were hidden in seven different places in Italy. Pancino, according to Subject, reported that he believed Edda would at a later time tell him exactly where they were hidden.

22. Subject now tells the following curious story. She says that she heard from Fucci some time before April some records had been entrusted by Edda to her personal physician, Dr. NELOCCHI, at the sanatorium in Ramiola, Italy. Subject had done nothing to unearth these, because she was still upset at the RSHA allowing Ciano to die after having given up the Foreign Office records as part of a bargain for life.

23. Now, however,-- according to Subject -- she was afraid that Pancino would hear from Edda of the hiding place of the documents in Ramiola: in the course of the investigation, it would be discovered that the physician who was hiding them was in fact a physician for the Italian partisans. Therefore, says Subject, who decided to pick up the documents herself, rather than have it done on information provided by Pancino.

24. This, however, could not be done on information that Subject had concealed for three months. Therefore it had to be made to 'look difficult'. Accordingly Subject took off on June 22 for a preliminary investigation with a petty Italian agent named Radice. She afterwards saw Harster, the BdS, on June 24 and 26: and on June 30 (after an abortive journey on the 27th) she went with Dr. Sagna, aide to Harster, and received the documents from the physician at Ramiola in return for a promise of immunity.

25. By whatever method it was in fact done, Subject obtained the papers and took them to Zossen (cover name Zeppelin), Amt VI's first evacuation point from Berlin. Here she made a summary of the papers for Dr. Seimle, chief of Amt VI B, and was instructed by him to return to her home in Weimar and make a complete translation of the entire collection.

26. This work lasted until August 24, the documents being placed each night in the safe of the Weimar Gestapo for security reasons. Subject, however, made an extra carbon for herself (with the object, she says, of eventually asking Edda Mussolini's permission to use the documents in a book. On the arrival of American troops, Subject buried the set of carbons in her garden, whence they were recovered by the

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undersigned with the help of Lt. Stewart French, SCI, Third Army. The documents consist of Ciano's personal Foreign Office records from 1938 to 1943, including letters exchanged by Hitler and Mussolini during the period. (They were forwarded by air immediately to Twelfth Army Group.)

27. On August 28 Subject returned to Berlin and worked as translator for Sturmbannführer Wolf, the new head of Amt VI B 1 (in succession to Dr. Rott). She took part in the evacuation of Amt VI to a camp (cover name Waldburg) in the region of Storkow, S.E. of Berlin, on Sept. 20, 1944. Three weeks later, on Oct 10, she received permission to return home to Weimar to work on another lengthy translation.

28. The work this time was to translate a Foreign Office volume on Albania that was among those revealed by Ciano in January (the other seven volumes -- one for each year of Ciano's tenure of office -- had already been translated by someone else). This work lasted until January 12, when she transmitted the complete work through SD channels to Berlin, no carbon copy was kept by Subject. A letter to Dr. Steimle requesting more work remaining answered, Subject did nothing more for the RSMA after that date.

29. Regarding Ciano's papers, Subject believes, that the Foreign Office volumes disclosed by Ciano are still in Berlin, in the AMT VI office at 32 Bernauerstrasse, and that the diaries are still in the possession of Edda Mussolini. She has given the addresses of two other hiding places in Italy made known to her by Pucci. As for the documents in septuplicate, reported by Pancini (see Para. 21), she does not know whether these are something completely different - or whether they will prove to be the same as those found by her in Ramiola and already unearthed by SCI in Subject's garden.

/s/ L. E. de NEUVILLE
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