

APPENDIX B

THE FINZI MEMORANDUM

§ 1: *The Resignation of Finzi*

Giorgio Schiff-Giorgini, one of the witnesses interrogated by the Examining Judge on July 4, 1924, and by the Senate Commission of Inquiry in December, 1924,¹ made the following deposition, which was fully confirmed by Carlo Silvestri and Guglielmo Emanuel:

'After the murder of Matteotti, I went [on the afternoon of Saturday, June 14] to see Finzi. He had resigned his post as Under-Secretary in the Home Office and was suspected and accused by public opinion and by many newspapers of being responsible for the crime.

'Finzi told me that on Friday or Saturday,² Signor Acerbo [Under-Secretary in the Prime Minister's department] had come early to his house, saying that he was commissioned by the Prime Minister to obtain from him (Finzi) his signature to a letter of resignation already written. In this manner, Finzi was to prove his immense devotion to the Prime Minister by allowing the country to hold him responsible, although innocent, for what had occurred. Thus he would enable the Prime Minister to regain control of the shaken situation, by offering himself as a scapegoat. The Prime Minister, Acerbo had said, believed that in a short time he would regain absolute control of the situation, and promised to reward Finzi's devotion by reinstating him, and even appointing him to no less a post than that of Home Secretary. Finzi had replied to Acerbo that so grave a request must be made personally by Mussolini. This the latter actually did, confirming what Acerbo had said, and appealing to the brotherly³ friendship which Finzi had always shown towards him. Finzi, in his unlimited faith and loyalty to the Prime Minister, had agreed to sacrifice himself temporarily, but it was quite clear between him

¹ See above, p. 124, n. 2.

² The date was certainly Saturday, June 14: see Acerbo's deposition August 4, 1924. The chronology in this deposition is somewhat confused.

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and Mussolini that if, after forty-eight hours had passed, Mussolini had not fulfilled his promises of reinstatement and promotion, he, Finzi, should consider himself free to take whatever action might seem to him best in the defence of his honour. On this understanding the resignation was written.

But twenty-four hours had already passed¹ and Finzi was going through extreme anxiety while waiting to hear from the Prime Minister. He began to doubt whether the promises would be kept. He was also afraid of some act of violence, and was torn between projects of revolt and hopes of amicable settlement. Mussolini, he declared, could not do otherwise than keep faith, for he, Finzi, had it in his power to disclose things which would blow up Italy (*fare saltare l'Italia*).

The following day, Sunday morning, I returned to see Finzi again. The forty-eight hours having now nearly passed,² he was certain he had been betrayed. He had become quite calm. He said he considered it his duty to make known to the Italian people his innocence, and at the same time to indicate those really responsible. He was counting on me, as a member of the Opposition, to inform the most important personages of the Opposition about the contents of a "memorandum-letter" which he had written to his brother Gino. He said he had made several copies of this letter and had entrusted them to persons in whom he had complete confidence, with instructions that they were to be made public in the event of violence being used against him. He had warned Senator De Bono and Acerbo of the step he had taken.

From a case, which lay on his writing-table, he handed to me an envelope, on which was written: "To my brother Gino." The latter was staying with him at the time. In the envelope was a

¹ The witness, misled by the erroneous idea that Finzi had resigned on Friday, June 13, thought that on the Saturday when he went to see Finzi, twenty-four hours had elapsed since the resignation.

² The forty-eight hours were up, not on the Sunday, June 15, but on Monday, 16. Emanuel and Silvestri both agree in placing the Schiff-Giorgini and Amendola interview on Monday. Schiff-Giorgini went often during these days to see Finzi, and he mixed up conversations of different dates.

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sheet of four pages, all covered with Finzi's writing. He said that he had had other copies typed; some he had given to trusted friends, and others he had deposited in a safe, in the Bank of Novara. This letter, which I had in my hands for about half an hour, I read and re-read with much care. Finzi asked me to go and see Signor Amendola and Senator Albertini to make known to them the contents of the letter, and to beg them to arrange a meeting with him. Exasperated with the position in which he found himself, he intended to place himself entirely at their disposal.

'I pointed out to Finzi the extreme gravity of the commission with which he entrusted me. But he seemed unshakable in his decision, and persisted in his request.

'I made known these facts to Signor Amendola, who told me that he would probably be lunching at the Grand Hotel with Senator Albertini.

'I went thither to confer with them both [Monday, 16]. Senator Albertini, already in some measure made aware of the facts by Signor Amendola, expressed his approval of Finzi's attitude, but did not consider it prudent for Finzi at the moment to have an interview with himself and Signor Amendola. He proposed that Finzi should confer with one of his trusted envoys (*fiduciari*); Carlo Silvestri or Guglielmo Emanuel.

'Finzi, understanding perfectly the attitude taken up by Signor Amendola and Senator Albertini, declared himself ready to receive their envoys. Silvestri consequently went to see him for the first time that afternoon [Monday, June 16] towards 5 p.m., and returned there again with me towards midnight. Emanuel had a meeting with Finzi's brother at the house of common friends towards 6 p.m. Aldo Finzi related to Silvestri, and Gino Finzi to Emanuel, all the facts and the contents of the memorandum letter.

'But from that moment¹ I had the impression that Finzi had

¹ 'From that moment' means from midnight on Monday, 16, as is shown by the subsequent paragraph beginning with the same words: 'From that moment.' It must be borne in mind that the Schiff-Giorgini deposition was not written by himself in the calm and leisure of the study. It is the record of what he said before the Senate Commission of Inquiry. A

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lost the self-confidence and boldness of the morning, because he asked me to beg Signor Amendola and Senator Albertini not to make public the revelations made by him, as he wished to wait another twenty-four hours.

'Towards midnight on Monday, Finzi was summoned¹ by the Prime Minister to his house in the Via Kasella and I waited for him at his home. He returned after about half-an-hour, extremely agitated and pale. Mussolini, he said, had declared that, thanks to the breathing-space that the Opposition parties had given him during the past few days, he was now, once more, master of the situation; but not to the extent of being able to reinstate Finzi; his first task would be to reform and reinforce the "Cheka," which was the most essential organ of government in Italy. He then said: "Good-bye, Aldo now we understand one another."

'From that moment, I felt that Finzi had repented his step of making known to the Opposition leaders the contents of his Memorandum. I had the impression of a man utterly terrorized. He urged me to declare to Amendola and Albertini that I had not spoken on his instigation. He spoke of taking refuge in his native district of Polesine and of organizing and arming there his followers. The words: "we understand one another" had completely thrown him off his balance.

'The same evening,² towards six o'clock, I returned to Finzi's house. His brother Gino came to the door, but did not unbolt it. Aldo then appeared, and both, in much agitation, declared that their lives were in serious danger. I came away immediately and made no further efforts to get into touch with him.'³

document of this kind cannot but show traces of untidiness, the result of interruptions, cross-questioning, and all the distractions of a court of law.

¹ Finzi was not summoned. He himself asked for the interview through Senator Morello and went to it not towards midnight but at 10 p.m. (See above, pp. 353-7.)

² 'The same evening' must mean some evening subsequent to the Monday night on which the interview between Mussolini and Finzi took place. Silvestri gives the afternoon of Thursday, June 19, as the date of the decisive change in Finzi's attitude.

³ The Santoro Proposals, and depositions of Silvestri, September 30, 1924, and Emanuel, October 2, 1924.

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As the Finzi Memorandum began to be mentioned in the Press a few days later, Finzi, in his deposition of July 4, 1924, denied having written or communicated to anyone 'a supposed Memorandum said to contain revelations regarding the Matteotti case.' But on October 2 and October 24, 1924, two witnesses appeared, who confirmed the existence of the document. They were the journalists Francesco Maratea and Gildo Cioli, who said Finzi invited them to his house on the night of June 15, and communicated to them the same facts as he made known to Schiff-Giorgini, Silvestri, and Emanuel (see above, page 354). Maratea said:

'Finzi took Cioli into another room. . . . When we were in the street, Cioli told me that Finzi had shown him letters addressed to friends, asking them, in case, as he feared, he was suddenly put out of the way, to go to the Courts and declare that he, Finzi, was in no way responsible for the death of Matteotti.'

The other witness, Cioli, admitted that Finzi had taken him aside and made him read a letter to his brother Gino.

Subsequently, before the Senate Commission of Inquiry, two other witnesses, the Fascist Senator Morello and the Fascist deputy, Signor Grandi, both called by Finzi himself, confirmed the evidence of Schiff-Giorgini and Silvestri as to the existence of the Memorandum and the reasons which Finzi had for writing it (see above, pp. 355-6). Even General Piccio, another of the witnesses called by Finzi, though denying having read the document, did not deny its existence and added that 'Signor Finzi had seemed to him for no apparent reason to be alarmed about the possibility of being put out of the way.'¹

Finzi himself on November 15, 1924, before the Inquiring Judge, had to admit that he had written a 'short letter' to his brother, giving him 'precise instructions as to what to tell the judges in the event of any violence being used against him.' He re-affirmed having written the document before the Senate Commission of Inquiry also. In consequence even the Attorney-

¹ The Santoro Proposals.

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General, Santoro, could not but admit that the 'Finzi Memorandum undoubtedly existed and possibly still exists.'¹

The evidence of Schiff-Giorgini, Silvestri and Emanuel, with regard to the pressure by which Mussolini obtained Finzi's resignation, is confirmed by Signor Acerbo himself in the following deposition made on August 4, 1924:

'On the Saturday morning, towards eight o'clock, I was rung up by the Prime Minister, from his house. He told me to find Finzi and Rossi immediately, and to request them to tender their resignations: Finzi because he was the object of attacks on moral grounds, though independently of the Matteotti crime, and Rossi because all Rome was crying out that he had been on intimate terms with Dumini. The Prime Minister dictated to me in detail the exact formula of the letter which Finzi was to sign. Signor Finzi, although disconcerted, declared that he would obey. But about an hour later, at the Palazzo Chigi, he begged the Prime Minister not to insist on his resignation, as he was entirely unconnected with the case. But the Prime Minister repeated that his resignation was absolutely necessary to satisfy public opinion, although he admitted, in fact explicitly affirmed, that Finzi had been entirely innocent of the whole affair.'

Is it possible that Finzi's resignation, obtained at this particular moment, could serve any other purpose than that of side-tracking

¹ Signor Villari asserted in a letter to the *Review of Reviews*, March or April, 1926, that the Finzi Memorandum 'is known of only by hearsay, the persons who declare they have seen it having been proved absolutely unreliable as witnesses by the examining magistrates. The very existence of this document is, in fact, extremely doubtful.' In his *Fascist Experiment*, p. 70, he writes: 'Reports were spread about concerning a memorandum which Finzi was said to have written containing a series of charges against various Fascist leaders, including Mussolini himself, but it was never produced, and no one even had actually seen it, except a certain absolutely unreliable witness (Schiff-Giorgini), who had been formerly a friend of Nitti, and had since become an ardent Fascist. As not one of the many statements he made proved on judicial inquiry to be based on facts, no much credence was attached to his account of the Finzi Memorandum, the existence of which even Finzi himself denied.' *Et voilà comment on écrit l'histoire.*

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public excitement towards Finzi? If any shadow of doubt remained, it is dissipated by Finzi's letter of resignation, which, as Acerbo stated, was prepared by Mussolini, and by Mussolini's answer (see above, pp. 349-50). In addition there is a letter written on June 15, from Finzi to Acerbo, in which we find the following:

'I am calmly and resolutely keeping to all that I yesterday promised Signor Mussolini. I am proud that my gesture has succeeded and that I am proving an excellent target, drawing the fire on to myself in these most difficult circumstances . . . I am awaiting instructions, and hope that you are keeping your head as well as I am.'

§ 2: *The Contents of the Finzi Memorandum*

What were the contents of the Finzi Memorandum?

In his deposition of September 30, 1924, before the judge charged with the preliminary inquiry into the Matteotti case, Carlo Silvestri, who had taken notes of his conversations with Finzi, reported the contents of the Memorandum as follows:

'(A) He (Finzi) attributed the disappearance of Matteotti to a secret organization which had arisen inside the Fascist Party, in close contact with the Government and which he called the "Cheka." This organization had existed in embryo when Fascism first came to power. It received definite shape at a secret meeting of a Committee of Public Safety held on January 10, 1924, at Mussolini's initiative. Besides the Prime Minister, there were present Giunta, De Bono, Forges-Davanzati, Cesare Rossi and Giovanni Marinelli. Although Italo Balbo, in his capacity of Generalissimo of the Militia, was a member of the Committee, he was not present. The Committee resolved definitely to organize the Cheka under the command of Cesare Rossi and Marinelli, the latter of whom was to have charge of the finances. These were to be supplied from the secret funds of the Premier's department of the Home Office, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Fascist Party. The organization was to be directly responsible to the Prime Minister, and its task was to defend his person, the Government and the Fascist Revolution.'

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'(B) It was the Cheka, both before and after January 10, 1924, which had carried out the outrages on Amendola, Nitti and Forni. Dumini had been in Paris as its agent. For the expenses of the journey to Paris, Finzi was ordered to hand over 30,000 lire to the Deputy Signor Bastianini. According to Finzi, the acts of violence which had caused the most scandal had been organized by the following: Italo Balbo arranged the bludgeoning of the Member of Parliament Misuri; De Bono that of Amendola; Giunta and Rossi that of Forni; and Polverelli and Igliori the looting of Signor Nitti's house.

'(C) During the days when the debate on the Speech from the Throne was taking place (June 3 to 7, 1924) Mussolini gave orders to the Chiefs of the Cheka that the most prominent leaders of the Opposition, beginning with Matteotti, should be put out of the way, secretly and for good.

'(D) Finzi hinted at a discussion which had taken place in the room reserved for Ministers at Montecitorio (the House of Parliament), in the course of which Rossi had opposed the arrest of Dumini which had been decided on by the Prime Minister. Rossi had maintained that, if the arrest was carried out, the responsibility of those in the highest places could no longer be concealed.'

This version given by Silvestri corresponds almost exactly with that given by Schiff-Giorgini in his deposition of July 16, 1924, except that in the latter the facts referred to under (D) are lacking.¹ Guglielmo Emanuel also, in his deposition of October 2, 1924, briefly but entirely confirmed what Silvestri had said of the Cheka, simply saying as to the rest of the Memorandum, that Finzi's brother confirmed its contents in the 'very words of Schiff.'

When forced to admit the existence of his Memorandum,

¹ It is possible that this particular was told Silvestri by Finzi in the verbal explanations which accompanied the reading of the Memorandum or in the conversations of the days between Monday and Thursday. By a slip of memory, Silvestri may have believed it to be part of the written memorandum. Had the story been a concoction of Schiff-Giorgini and Silvestri, their accounts would have coincided in a much more marked degree.

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Finzi shifted his position; he repudiated the evidence of Silvestri, Schiff-Giorgini, and Emanuel, not only as to the reason of his resignation and his threat to Mussolini, but even as to the contents of the Memorandum.

The Attorney-General, Santoro, accepted Finzi's denials, and refused credence entirely to the evidence of the three witnesses, declaring their depositions to be sheer invention. The evidence of Maratea, Cioli, Morello, Grandi, Acerbo, as to the motives of Finzi's resignation and as to his threat against Mussolini, all counts for nothing. Finzi's own admissions count for nothing. Even Finzi's letter to Acerbo of June 15, 1924, counts for nothing: on the contrary Santoro takes it as a proof that Mussolini had made no promises to Finzi! Yet he reproduces, without in any way casting doubt upon its veracity, the statement by Finzi:

'I wrote the letter to my brother Gino before the forty-eight hours were over within which the Prime Minister had assured me that I should be fully rehabilitated and entirely acquitted of any suspicion of responsibility for the disappearance of Matteotti.'

The Finzi Memorandum must have contained accusations capable of causing Mussolini serious embarrassment if made public; had it been otherwise, the threat to publish it would have had no reason. To this point also Santoro was wilfully blind.

He was blind even to the following facts which would have opened the eyes of anybody else.

(A) Section A of the Finzi Memorandum, according to the witnesses to whom Santoro denied all credence, referred to a 'Cheka,' that is, a 'secret organization which had arisen within the Fascist Party, and in close touch with the Government.'

Finzi himself supplied the best confirmation of this fact, by bringing forward as witnesses Signor Morello and Signor Grandi, who having read the Memorandum, were to corroborate his denials. But on the contrary Morello deposed that in the document read by him, Finzi 'declared as solemnly as in a last will and testament that he was absolutely without knowledge of the Mat-

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tootti crime, and that *the Prime Minister might know more about this Cheka than he, Finzi, did,*¹ and Grandi admitted that in the document there was 'some mention of a Cheka of which Rossi and Marinelli were members.'

The journalist Maratea also deposed that Finzi spoke to him and to Cioli of the Cheka:

'The Cheka was an organization recognized by the Government and directed by Cesare Rossi. When Dumini was arrested, Rossi went to De Bono and said that the arrest was a great mistake.'

Cioli, the other witness of this nocturnal conversation, corroborated that 'Finzi spoke of an organization which existed at the Viminale and which was above the law and the civil service and outside the ordinary rules of morality.'²

Still further evidence is available to prove the existence of a gang of cut-throats which in the high quarters of the Fascist Party was known as the Cheka. This gang had no definite organization with official leaders and regular salaries, but Dumini was its pivot, and it worked under the orders of Mussolini.

(a) Filippo Filippelli declared in his Memorandum of June 14, and in his examination of June 18 and July 26, 1924, that Amerigo Dumini had confided to him that he belonged to a 'special organization founded by the Quadrumvirate (Central Committee of the Party) and directed by Rossi and Marinelli'; and that Rossi and Marinelli had admitted the existence of 'a branch of the secret police,' to which was entrusted the taking of 'energetic measures against the more uncompromising opponents.'

(b) Cesare Rossi repeatedly maintained that the Cheka existed, but declared that it had never received a definite form, although Mussolini himself had several times insisted that it should be properly organized.³

¹ Morello makes no further references to the contents of the Memorandum, or at all events the Santoro Proposals quote no more of his evidence on this subject. But the Memorandum obviously must have contained more than this one fact.

² Deposition October 24, 1924.

³ Examination, July 29 and December 17, 1924; Memorandum of February 11, 1925: see above, pp. 406-7.

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In his Unpublished Notes of August, 1927, Rossi adds the following particulars:

'The Directorate of the Party dealt with this proposal, in a meeting, held if I remember right, in January, 1924. The proposal had been insistently brought forward by the Duce again and again. Signor Giunta, who was then General Political Secretary of the Party, also warmly maintained that 'the Party needed its own Tcheka to protect the regime and carry out its vendettas.' The motion was passed unanimously. It did not even seem necessary to specify the objects and boundary lines of these illegal activities, which the Fascist regime was ready to carry out by means of special funds and men. As Mussolini had discussed this matter in particular with the General Administrative Secretary of the Party, Marinelli, the latter was entrusted with the task of organizing the Tcheka, in agreement with the Duce, and of directing its normal functioning. Signor Maraviglia, who took part in the sessions of the Directorate in his capacity of Head of the Propaganda Bureau, commented on the task entrusted to Marinelli, saying that he had become the Lord High Executioner of the enemies of Fascism.'

Rossi denies having ever been charged with the leadership of the Tcheka, in collaboration with Marinelli:

'I never took the constitution of the Tcheka seriously' - he writes - 'just as I did not take seriously so many other of Mussolini's dangerous schemes. The old Directorate, whose chairman was Signor Giunta, and the new "Quadrumvirate" appointed in April, 1924, were never informed either by Marinelli, Mussolini, or anyone else, of what Marinelli was doing in the carrying out of his instructions. But from time to time, where any manifestation hostile to the regime took place, there was an outbreak of fury on the part of the Duce, who deplored the weakness and insensibility of the Party. He often repeated: "When the devil is this Tcheka going to get to work?"'

Laying aside all discussion as to Rossi's personal responsibility,

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one fact emerges from these disclosures: that Schiff-Giorgini, Silvestri and Emanuel were not telling fairy-tales when they spoke of a session of the Directorate of the Fascist Party held in January, 1924, at which the instruction of a Tcheka was adopted. Only a high Fascist personality could have given them exact information of so secret a nature.

Their source of information could be nobody but Finzi.¹

(P) Section B of the Finzi Memorandum, according to Schiff-Giorgini and Silvestri, accused Mussolini of ordering all the acts of violence which had caused the greatest scandal during the preceding two years.

Cesare Rossi, in his Memorandum of June 15, 1924, and February 11, 1925, raised the same accusations.² The reader will find, in Chapter IV, section IV, of the present book, the documents

¹ In his speech of January 3, 1925, Mussolini declared: 'It is said that I have founded a Cheka. Where? When? How? Nobody can say. The Italian Cheka has never existed. Had I founded it, I would have done so according to other standards. Violence cannot be excluded from History. But if violence is to be conclusive, it must be surgical, intelligent, and chivalrous. On the contrary, the exploits of this so-called Cheka have been always unintelligent, orderless, and stupid.' If all criminals could be acquitted on the grounds that their crimes were unintelligent and orderless, very few of them would be sentenced! The propagandist of the Fascist Government in England (*Fascist Experiment*, p. 84) writes that there has never existed 'a scrap of evidence of the Tcheka.' He was more prudent in a letter published in the *Review of Reviews* (March to April, 1926), in saying that the 'Accusing Section proved the non-existence of the famous Cheka, the secret Fascist Committee alleged to have organized many criminal actions, about which the Opposition Press waxed eloquent.' Considering the methods used in the Matteotti case, even if the Accusing Section had pronounced against the existence of the Cheka, the pronouncement would have carried no moral weight. But the facts are these: (1) The Attorney-General, Santoro, denied the existence of the Cheka; (2) The Senate Commission of Inquiry made no explicit pronouncement on the question, confining itself to the declaration that De Bono had not belonged to any form of Cheka; (3) The Public Prosecutor of the Accusing Section at Rome (Farinacci's brother-in-law) lied in his proposal in affirming that the Senate Committee of Inquiry had denied the existence of the Cheka; (4) The Accusing Section, at Rome, made no pronouncement of any sort as to the existence of the Cheka.

² See above, pp. 287-8, and Appendix A.

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which bear out the affirmations of Finzi and Rossi, and the contents of this part of the Finzi Memorandum.

(C) Section C of the Finzi Memorandum, according to Silvestri and Schiff-Giorgini, stated that Mussolini gave orders that Matteotti should be put out of the way. According to Silvestri, the order was given between June 3 and 7, 1924; according to Schiff-Giorgini, the order was given 'during the final sittings of the Chamber' (June 7). In Chapter V, sections II and III of the present book, the reader will find the proofs that this part of the Memorandum cannot have been invented by Schiff-Giorgini, Silvestri, and Emanuel. De Bono, and Finzi himself, admitted that Rossi and Marinelli had both attributed the order to Mussolini.

(D) Finally, Carlo Silvestri told the judges that Finzi related how Cesare Rossi tried to prevent the arrest of Dumini, for fear that he might reveal Mussolini's responsibility.¹ This discussion between Cesare Rossi, Marinelli, De Bono, and Finzi, concerning the arrest of Dumini is attested by De Bono, Rossi, and Finzi. We have already reproduced the testimony of De Bono and of Finzi. (See Chap. V, section II.) Rossi's account of the meeting is as follows:

'On the night of June 12 (Wednesday), I had an interview at the Viminale with Marinelli, De Bono and Finzi. Marinelli and I

- (1) reviewed the responsibility in the matter of illegality of the Prime Minister and consequently of all of us who were in power;
- (2) recalled that Dumini, Volpi, and others (particularly Volpi in matters more closely concerning Mussolini) had been employed on other previous acts of violence;

¹ Silvestri said the discussion took place in the Parliament building, during the afternoon, and not at night in the office of the Home Secretary. This is doubtless a slip of memory in making notes some hours after the conversation. Those who are experienced in weighing evidence know how frequently mistakes of this kind occur, even with the most intelligent and conscientious witnesses.

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- (3) recalled that the Prime Minister had urged that a 'Fascist Police' must definitely be organized and set to work;
- (4) pointed out that Dumini's name had been accepted with special readiness by the Prime Minister as one of the chief members of this body;
- (5) added that the kidnapping of Matteotti, the consequences of which were so grave, would best be treated as an untimely and arbitrary enterprise undertaken without the knowledge of any of us, Marinelli having been away from Rome, and I myself having, some days previously, broken off all relations with Dumini;
- (6) concluded that, since it would be difficult to escape from a common indirect responsibility, it would be well to proceed with extreme caution in the matter of arrests and judicial investigation. The party ought not to allow the event to be exploited by the Opposition.

'I remember Marinelli saying that undoubtedly the great blunder had been committed by Dumini and his companions, but investigations must be suppressed, since the methods of illegality and the persecution of opponents which had led to the present crime, were part of the plan of defence of the Fascist régime. The régime must (as the Duce threatened from time to time) set its firing squads to work, since its opponents did not come out into the streets to attack it, but confined themselves to Press and Parliamentary criticism.

'I also remember saying to De Bono with reference to the Amendola affair: "It was you who organized that assault, by the Prime Minister's order. This affair will also be exposed, and the Paris affair, and the Forni and Misuri affairs, and other acts of violence committed under orders from the Prime Minister."

'All this was perfectly well known to De Bono and Finzi, as they were in constant touch with the Prime Minister, and knew his temperament, and the methods used in the Fascist struggle. We noticed no sign of surprise on their part. De Bono even assured me, as we were leaving, that he was going to telephone at once to Milan to suspend the arrest of Putato, and that, as

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regards Filippelli's car and the chauffeurs, he had already taken the necessary steps.¹

Let us now conclude.

On June 16, Schiff-Giorgini, Silvestri and Emanuel communicated the contents of the Memorandum to the Senator Albertini and Sforza, the Deputies Amendola and Turati, and to Signor Torrigiani, the Grand Master of the Freemasons; on July 16, Schiff-Giorgini repeated his statement in his deposition before the Examining Judge.

Rossi's Memorandum of June 15 was not known to the leaders of the Opposition until early in August; Filippelli's Memorandum of June 14 became known to them towards the end of July,² two weeks after Schiff-Giorgini had referred to the contents of the Memorandum before the Examining Judge. Giunta's circular ordering the assault on Forthi only became known in November, 1924. Vico Perrone's letter confessing that he had organized the assault on Amendola under orders from Mussolini, De Bono and Candelori, became known in January, 1925. As Schiff-Giorgini's deposition before the Examining Judge is of July 16, 1924, it is clear that none of the above documents can have served him as sources of information. Hence the facts which he asserted to have been contained in Sections A, B, and C of the Finzi Memorandum, and which the above documents confirm, could not have come to his knowledge except through the Finzi Memorandum.

Silvestri's first deposition, which is of September 30, 1924, might have drawn upon not only that of Schiff-Giorgini but even the Memoranda of Rossi and Filippelli, which by then were undoubtedly known to him. But Silvestri affirms that there was in the Finzi Memorandum a Section D, of which not a word is mentioned either in the deposition of Schiff-Giorgini or in the Memoranda of Rossi and Filippelli. Yet the contents

¹ Rossi's examination July 23 and December 17, and Memorandum, December 28, 1924.

² Letter from Amendola in the *Review of Reviews*, February-March, 1926.

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of this Section D were overwhelmingly corroborated by De Bono, Rossi, and Finzi, whose accounts only began to be known through the Santoro Report in the spring of 1925, and were completely disclosed only at the end of 1925, when the records of the Preliminary Inquiry into the Matteotti case were no longer a secret. Therefore this section also is not an invention of Silvestri.

If Schiff-Giorgini, Silvestri, and Emanuel had themselves invented the contents of the document, how did it happen that their testimony was subsequently confirmed by evidence of which all were in ignorance when the alleged invention was made?

§ 3: *A Legal Farce*

With the Attorney-General, Santoro, and the Senate Commission of Inquiry¹ all these proofs counted for nothing. There is none so blind as he who will not see.

To give some idea of the care with which the Commission closed its eyes, let us take two instances.

(1) The Commission admitted as an undisputed fact that General De Bono had removed papers and other articles belonging to Dumini, which should have been laid before the judges as evidence. Having made this admission, they acquitted De Bono of this charge on the grounds of 'want of evidence.'

(2) General De Bono was charged with having ordered the assault on Amendola on December 26, 1923. Vico Perrone's letter

¹ The propagandist of the Fascist Government in England (*Fascist Experiment*, p. 74) writes that 'the Senate Commission was composed of seven Senators the majority of whom were anti-Fascists, including the Chairman.' - No! On June 26, 1924, immediately after the Matteotti murder all the seven members of the Commission (Zupelli, D'Andrea, Grosoli, Calisse, Castiglioni, Gioppi, Sinibaldi) voted in the Senate in favour of a resolution of confidence in the Government. In a similar resolution of December 6, 1924, four of them voted for the Government (D'Andrea, Grosoli, Calisse, Gioppi), two abstained (Castiglioni, Sinibaldi), only one (General Zupelli) voted against. The reason of his vote is that, *at that moment* (December, 1924) the high military authorities were in disagreement with Mussolini over the Militia and the organization of the Army.

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was cited in support of this accusation.¹ It was obviously the duty of the Commission to inquire into the authenticity of this document, which was in the possession of a certain Major Vagliasindi. When the latter was examined by the Commission he stated that copies of this and other documents had been seized by the police in a raid made on his house on the night of December 30, 1924, and added:

'I propose to produce the original documents when I have definite assurance that the law will take its course, and that the reprisals to which I have been subjected for a long time will be stopped. Finally, I should like to observe that it would be much to the point if the High Court were to call for all the documents which were taken from me, as amongst them, others might be found of very great interest.'²

If the judges who heard this evidence had wished to get to the bottom of the matter, what steps would they have taken? Obviously, they would first have ordered Vagliasindi to produce the original documents; and secondly, they would have demanded the production of all those papers which the police had seized from him.³ Instead of taking this obvious step, the Commission, offended at Vagliasindi's scepticism as to the law taking its proper course, went no farther in the matter. They thus turned in safety a dangerous corner.

But there remained Vico Perrone, the writer of the letter which the Commission took such pains not to discover. Perrone had sought refuge in France, and on March 25, 1925, he wrote from Nice to both Mussolini and De Bono asking to be absolved from any responsibility for the assault on Amendola, on the grounds that he had simply carried out their orders. On April 15, he wrote from Nice to the President of the Senate Commission declaring that the letter in Vagliasindi's possession was authentic, and that he had presented himself at the Italian Consulate in Nice at 1.30 p.m. on March 30, to place himself at the disposition of the

¹ See above, p. 289.

² The Santoro Proposal's.

³ Among these papers the Commission would have discovered the letter from Guido Narbona of November 24, 1924. See above, p. 295.

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Commission. He sent him a copy of the same letter from Milan on May 2, 1925.

The Commission was as little eager to inquire into Perrone's statements as into those of Vagliasindi. It confined itself to asking the Italian Consul at Nice to forward information about Perrone. The Consul of course replied that he had never heard of Perrone, and the Commission, conscientiously noting this reply, let the matter drop.

When De Bono was acquitted, Perrone protested in a letter dated September, 1925, which the Italian papers were not allowed to publish, but which was circulated by the clandestine Press. In this letter he repeated that he had visited the Consulate on March 30; the Consul could not deny all knowledge of him, since he (the Consul) had visaed his passport on December 5, 1924, and could have obtained his address from the French authorities who had issued his identity card. 'If the Consul did not find me,' he wrote, 'it is simply because he did not look, and did not wish to look for me.' ¹

The essential evidence having thus been eliminated, General De Bono was forthwith acquitted of having ordered the beating of Amendola, on the grounds of 'want of evidence.' ²

¹ *Amendola: fatti e documenti*, pp. 27, 36-7.

² Signor Villari wrote in the *Review of Reviews* of March to April, 1926: "The Senate Commission acquitted De Bono on all the graver charges for "inesistenza di reato" (non-existence of the crime) or "per non aver commesso il fatto attribuitogli" (for not having committed the action in question); it acquitted him for insufficient evidence on three minor charges only, and these are: De Bono's insufficient activity in arresting the persons accused of the assault on Amendola; in having the luggage of Dumini, after his arrest, brought to his own office for examination; and of having, two years previously, issued a passport to Dumini under another name. The truth is that the Commission acquitted De Bono for want of evidence on the following heads: (a) Complicity in the bludgeoning of Amendola; (b) Undue favour shown to the man who bludgeoned Signor Misuri; (c) Undue favour shown to Dumini in the Matteotti case; (d) issuing of passports under false names and dates. These, for the propagandist, are minor charges against a Chief of Police! In his book, *The Fascist Experiment*, p. 75, speaking of the journalist Donati, who had brought forward the denunciation against De Bono to the Senate, the propagandist writes

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If the Commission was so careful not to get to the bottom of the question of Perrone's letter, it is not surprising that it refused credence to the testimony of Silvestri, Sciuff-Giorgini, and Emanuel as to the contents of the Finzi Memorandum.

Whatever manœuvring and jobbery took place behind the scenes in order to extract from the Commission the verdict it gave, will probably never be known. But something can be guessed from the following fact.

On March 17, 1925, a denunciation was brought forward against seven men for complicity in the loss of the 'Leonardo da Vinci,' a dreadnought which sank during the war on the night of August 2, 1916, in the harbour of Taranto. Amongst the seven accused was Cesare Santoro (*Corriere della Sera*, March 19, 1926, and *Avanti*, March 20, 1925), brother of Senator Santoro. In other words, while Senator Santoro was acting as Attorney-General in a case on which the fate of the Fascist régime depended, his brother was under a charge of treachery. After the first news of the denunciation against Cesare Santoro, nothing further was ever allowed to appear in the Press about the case up till November 3, 1925, when the papers announced that all the accused had been acquitted. The very next day, the so-called discovery of Zaniboni's attempt on Mussolini's life took place, and in the crisis consequent on this event (see above, pp. 186 ff.) the acquittal passed unperceived.

that Donati took refuge in France, fearing 'that he might be prosecuted for libel.' Every one knows that a prosecution for libel would have obliged the judges to re-try publicly the whole case, and De Bono knew better than to face such a danger. Donati left Italy because he was threatened with death, and because a Christian-Democrat Member of Parliament, Signor Anile, who later passed over to the Fascist Party told the leaders of the Christian-Democrat Party that the Home Secretary could not guarantee Donati's life.