

Ex. 3583

EXCERPTS FROM GIANO DIARYJanuary 1, 1939

The duce returned to home yesterday evening and we had a long conversation. He is very dissatisfied with the situation in East Africa and severely criticizes the work of the Duke of "osta. It must be admitted that Amara is still in a state of complete revolt and the sixty-five battalions stationed there are forced to live in small forts. Mezzetti has not done well. The Duce blames his appointment on Teruzzi who acted for personal reasons. In political appointments one must be willing even to "step on one's own Mother's body".

He speaks of the situation between us and the Holy See. In the work done by Catholic Action he sees an attempt to create a real political party which, foreseeing the difficulties facing Fascism, wants to be on the spot to take its place. He defends Starace: whatever he does, he does on the explicit orders of the Duce. He refuses to accept the proposals of the Nuncio who suggests that something be done to celebrate the Decennial of the Lateran agreements.

Finally, he informs me about his decision to accept Ribbentrop's proposal to transform the anti-Comintern pact into an alliance. He wishes the alliance to be signed during the last third of January. He considers that a clash with the western democracies is becoming increasingly inevitable and, therefore, wants to be prepared to meet it. During this month he intends to prepare public opinion, "about which he doesn't give a damn". I write Ribbentrop the letter in which I inform him of our acceptance of his proposal (inserted in the body of the documents).

January 2, 1940 (sec)

The letter for Ribbentrop has been approved. Tomorrow I will transmit it to Attolice, together with some instructions concerning what he is to say to the Germans in connection with the Alto Adige and the commercial relations between our two countries. Concerning the Alto Adige, it would fall in with Hitler's plans to permit the departure of those Germans who want to leave. I telephone Ribbentrop to inform him briefly of this decision. The connection was bad and it was difficult to understand each others. We were not able to say much. But he was satisfied and confirmed that by the end of the month everything will be ready, even on the Japanese side.

**FILE COPY**  
RETURN TO ROOM 361

Corrected Copy of

Def. Doc. No. 55b

Ciano Diary - cont.

January 2 - cont.

Conversation Duce-Pignatti. The Duce told the Ambassador to inform the Vatican that he is dissatisfied with the policy of the Holy See, especially with matters concerning Catholic Action. He also spoke of the Clergy's opposition to Axis policy and the racial policy. The Clergy must not have any illusions about the possible domination of Italy by the Church. The ecclesiastical forces are imposing, but greater still is the force of the State, especially of one such as the Fascist State. We want no clash; but we are ready to withstand it, and will, if it comes to a showdown, awaken all the dormant anti-clerical rancor in the nation. The Pope must remember that Italy is Ghibelline. Pignatti conducted himself well. He said that many errors have been made by the Vatican, but that the pope acts in good faith and that, more than the feeling of any other prelate, his feelings are those of an Italian. I instructed him to act with much tact. Despite Starace, I want to avoid a clash with the Vatican. It is my opinion that such a clash would be most harmful.

January 3, 1939

I give Attolico instructions on his mission to Ribbentrop; he is leaving this evening. While before I always found him to be rather hostile to the idea of an alliance with Germany, this morning he was openly in favor of it. He said that his sojourn in Italy has convinced him that nothing would be more popular here than a war with France. (In the afternoon I also inform von Mackensen who, returning from a trip to Berlin, came to pay me a visit.) The Polish Ambassador informs me of a trip Beck is soon to make to Germany and this will be followed by a trip to Poland by Ribbentrop. This will pave the way for my trip to Warsaw which is planned to take place, approximately, at the end of February.

I was at the Duce's with the American Ambassador who transmitted a message from Roosevelt and some proposals concerning the welfare of Jewish emigres. Roosevelt proposed a part of Ethiopia and the neighboring colonies. The Duce refused to consider this possibility and declared that only Russia, the United States and Brazil were in a position to solve the Jewish question by the surrender of a piece of their territory. He declared himself in favor of the creation of an independent Jewish State and promised his general support.

Corrected Copy of  
Def. Doc. No. 556

Ciano Diary - cont.

January 3 - cont.

In Spain the CTV has resumed the offensive and seemingly with success.

January 4, 1939

Conversation with Grandi. He has returned from a rather long leave of absence in Sicily and, therefore, does not have much to tell me. I make a rather vague allusion to the future alliance with Germany and observe his reactions. He declares himself in favor of the project and does not believe that it will have any too serious repercussions in the British world. This has already been taken into account. And the memory of the triple alliance, which for thirty years did not prevent the continuance of cordial relations between Italy and Great Britain, is still alive.

In Bagdad there have been great demonstrations against our mass emigration into Libya. They believe that this nucleus of Italians will destroy the continuity of the Arab world in the Mediterranean. And this is true; this is our objective. But the Duce wished me to reassure the Minister from Iraq. And, as he was annoyed at the publicity Balbo had received as a result of this undertaking, he gave orders that the next departures were to take place on the qt. The pretext was useful to Mussolini. I inform Mackensen of yesterday's American demarche. He smiled and made some sharp comments on the American lack of political sense.

In Spain matters are progressing at full steam. Gamara has made a very brilliant maneuver; he freed himself of the threat of a flank attack by attacking the Reds on the flank, thereby causing a great upset.

January 5, 1939

After a first conversation with Ribbentrop, Attolico reports that Ribbentrop proposes the 28 of January as the date for the conclusion of the alliance.

Excellent news from Spain. The only danger consists in a possible mass intervention by French forces by way of the Pyrenees. We have already had intelligence to this effect. To counteract this threat I have already notified London and Berlin that, if the French make a move, the policy of non-intervention will blow up. Then, we too, will send divisions of regular troops. This means that we will go to war against Franco on Spanish soil. I have asked the Germans to publish a note of the diplomatic correspondence favoring our thesis.

Corrected Copy of  
Def. Doc. No. 556

Ciano Diary - cont.

January 5 - cont.

[Il Duce has told me that he has informed the King of the coming military alliance with Germany. He showed himself satisfied.] The King does not like the Germans, but detests and despises the French. He believes them capable of striking a blow at us and, therefore, regards the assurance of German military support with satisfaction.

Furthermore, with the passing of time, many things are developing. The anti-Italian manifestations in France and Tunis, Daladier's move to cut our throats with a Corsican dagger, and the insults of the French press have created an atmosphere of hatred for France especially among the people. I have instructed Cianetti to give a "social" tenor to his anti-French propaganda among the workers: France is a bourgeois state, the defender of bourgeois privileges. This is very effective propaganda. This morning even Alberto Pirelli, the shady, untrustworthy, sceptical Pirelli, declared to me his loyalty to the Axis policy and his aversion to the western democracies.

January 6, 1939

Standstill in Spain. Gambara plans to gather his forces and resume the offensive tomorrow. This evening I spoke with Senior unos, the head of the Spanish economic mission which has arrived in Rome for the commercial treaty. He is a very talkative man, a little frivolous and very fatuous. He is a Catalan and, therefore, he at least knows the geography of his territory. He considers the victory of the past few days as very important, and, perhaps, decisive for the liquidation of Catalonia and, therefore, the whole war.

The Duce is worried about the border incidents between Czechs and Magyars; this time, it would seem that these incidents are on a larger scale than usual. However, until now there has been no direct news from the legation. The Duce wished to have information from Grandi on the coming of Chamberlain, and the latter's feelings and intentions. But Grandi has not been in London for twenty days and is enjoying himself in Sicily and in the mountains. When the Duce learned this, he was very incensed. He said, "There is a man, whose goose is cooked. After Chamberlain's visit, you will send him packing." But I am sure that, as usual, Mussolini will save him at the last minute. Basically he will be right, because, despite all his faults, Grandi is a good ambassador, and it would not be easy to find a successor better than he, as, at present, our diplomats are not too brilliant.

Corrected Copy of  
Def's Doc. No. 556

Ciano Diary - cont.

April 2, 1939

Muti has arrived in Rome and I prepare to send him to Tirana, with a small group of men like him to cause the Thursday evening incidents if the King has not had the courtesy meanwhile to capitulate. I gave him freedom of action, with a definite order to respect the queen and the baby, if it has already been born. They are to arouse terror during the night and at dawn to conceal themselves in the woods and await the arrival of our troops, seeking if possible to prevent Zog from retreating toward Mati, where he might attempt a slight resistance. I authorize Bombelles to make contact with Pavelic in a very secret manner. As far as propaganda is concerned, I decide to make a decision later, although the Fuce has authorized the arrangement of a subsidy to the Croats.

I receive von Mackensen, whom I tell about in the Duce's letter answering Chamberlain. I receive also Shiratori, who brings the Japanese answer on the tripartite alliance; on the whole it is favorable. However, they make two reservations: 1) that London, Paris and Washington be informed that in Japan's view the alliance is directed against Moscow; 2) that a declaration be added that in case of War in Europe, Japanese aid would be limited. Nothing against the second; with respect to the first, on the other hand, it seems to me necessary to make very clear what actual meaning the reservation is intended to have; this might alter the real value of the Pact itself.

See: Anal. Doct. Evidence  
Def. Doc. Series A  
Anal. # 28