

POLITICAL POLICE BRIEFING FOR THE ATTENTION OF
THE LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT [of Italy]

Rome, 6 December 1929

5 November - Berneri writes to the anarchist Emidio Recchioni in London, asking him to make a financial contribution towards a significant operation he has been preparing. He writes to one Attilio Copetti in Faconnier à La Lavas, Vienne (Isère department) to the same end, asking him to tell Max that he needs to speak to him as a matter of urgency. Seeking money and asking for a meeting, he also writes, still in connection with the matter referred to above, to Raniero Cecili at 35bis Rue Venoillat, Ville Juif (Seine), to Castagnoli at 110, Rue Philippe-Auguste, Paris XX, to Ferdinando Sartori at the Restaurant du Gaumert, Rue de la République, Bellegarde (Oise), to M.A. Chiodini at 3, Boulevard de la Corderie, Marseilles, enclosing a second envelope on which is written 'For Fern.', and to Tarchiani at 15 Rue Olivier, Paris XV.

At the same time Berneri writes to the well known anarchist Amilcare Barsanti in Brussels, telling him that, on the initiative of some friends whom he is not at liberty to name, they are in need of young volunteers ready for anything, any danger and he asks Barsanti if he is prepared to get involved and if he could come up with at least five comrade volunteers.

Beneri adds that this is a collective operation to be mounted outside of Italy and France for antifascist purposes but on the world stage; he adds further that that operation, whilst useful, does not mean that he rules out well-timed individual deeds either abroad or within Italy and so the volunteers should be recruited from among those who have no other commitments. (A photograph of the letter in question resides in our files).

From subsequent confidential inquiries and other documents that have come into our possession, it has been established that the ventures into which Berneri is at present putting all his zealous efforts are two in number. 1. - A hundred young Italians are to be dispatched to Austria in anticipation of armed conflict between nationalists and socialists in Austria. The brains behind this scheme are Montasini, Facchinetti, Pistocchi and other republicans: Berneri is merely in charge of recruitment. 2. - A dynamite attack is being organised that is to be mounted by Cianca and Rosselli in Geneva against the League of Nations headquarters at the forthcoming session on 18 January. The documents (of which a photograph has been procured) show that Berneri has already secured the explosives needed for this criminal attack and that said explosives have been delivered to Tarchiani and Cianca, whom Berneri - having taken advice from a 'practitioner' - has left with instructions regarding their use and the precautions to be taken with their storage and eventual use.

Beneri is on the look-out for additional personnel to carry out his evil plans and has specifically approached one Emilio, thus far unidentified, who has met in Fernando Sartori's home in Bellegarde with the known anarchist Chiodini, the Paris-based anarchist Felice Vezzani, the Marseilles-based anarchist Castagnoli, and the Marseilles-based republican Fernando Schiavetti.

Recently, Berneri visited Geneva to confer with the anarchists Luigi Bertoni and Ludovici who are based there and to make final on-the-spot adjustments to the plan of action, as well as to inspect the headquarters of the League of Nations so as to have an exact picture of the lay-out and establish how the Italian delegates can be got at. Both Bertoni and Ludovici have promised him their unconditional assistance, especially on learning that Rosselli, Cianca and Tarchiani are behind the plan. Berneri was able also to make a minute inspection of the League of Nations hall, having been given a guided tour by a League employee to whom he was introduced by Tarchiani. At the same time, Berneri, abetted by Cianca, has been trying so to remove some of his assets to a house under construction in Paris so that they cannot be impounded, should he be arrested and

convicted. That way he will have made provision for his children and his wife, should he be captured in the execution of the plan, or be convicted in connection with it.

We have material and specific proof of all of this (originals of letters dispatched by Berneri to his various friends and photographs of several letters of his addressed to Tarchiani, Rosselli, Cianca, Barsanti, etc.)

This General Directorate is now in a position, barring unforeseen eventualities, to monitor step by step anything that Berneri is doing with regard to the implementation and organisation of his evil scheme. But since the material evidence of such organising has now been collected and is unmistakable, in view of possible unforeseen developments that our informants may uncover, or suspicions which might prompt Berneri to become suspicious of them, and thereby shun our contact, we have seen fit to make provision through able and trusted personnel to have him arrested for the use of false documents, in that he carries a Swiss passport made out in the name Aldo Rossini. The contention is that Berneri's arrest would undo the criminal schemes devised by Rosselli and his comrades, who would, with the removal of Berneri, lose the personnel they require, whereupon their evil conspiracy would undergo, at the very least, a long-lasting set-back.

But, this reasonable assumption notwithstanding, it seems that preventive measures and steps designed to thwart the planned offence from being carried out, or even attempted, are essential. It is therefore advisable to brief the governments of Switzerland and France on what Rosselli and the other exiles named above have been plotting, so that they can take the requisite steps to render these renegades harmless.

[On the briefing there is a handwritten comment 'Brief Swiss government. Leader of government informed.']

From: Camillo Berneri, *Epistolario Inedito* (Archivio Famiglia Berneri, Pistoia 1984) pp. 256-258, Appendix II, Document No. 1 (original held in the Central State Archives, Italy). Trans PS