

2229

Declassified E.O. 12356 Section 3.3/NND No.

785016

ACC

10000/143/1715

JUNE,
JUNE

22901

Declassified E.O. 12356 Section 3.3/NND No.

785016

10000/143/1715

JUNE, MEMORANDUM, SANTORO, ROSALBINO
JUNE 1944

TRANSLATION

June 16th, 1944.

MEMORANDUM

TO : Chief Public Safety Sub-Com. Rear HQ. ACC.

Only a few days ago the people of Campania have come to know the persons who constitute the Naples Commission for Epurification appointed by The Regional Commissioner, Col. Poletti.

The creation of said Commission was not favorably accepted by the public and in many places has caused strong indignation.

The most open criticism is directed against President ROSALINO SANTORO fu Nicola e di Balito Anna, born in Cosenza on the 22, Jan. 1894. Given an honorary degree in Jurisprudence, admitted in Via Caracciolo 17, Naples.

Said Santoro is not accepted very highly (by the public) because of his past life and also because he is considered an opportunist.

It has been shown that up to 1923 he never manifested any hostile sentiment against the Fascist movement, and many, who were considered his friends, stated that he always had in his possession the Party Registration Card. In 1924, he announced his candidacy as a deputy (member of the house) but was defeated by Att. MAIA MOLELLA had was not placed on the election list and the demonstration by 400 War Veterans which was initiated by him against the then Prefect D'Adamo, bore no results.

The disappointment brought about by his defeat caused Santoro to abandon Fascist Party but for only a short time because he tried to reenter the ranks without any success.

In 1925 a great scandal arose in connection with the protection and assistance to disabled war veterans involving Rosalino Santoro, its Chief Advisor. Following an investigation ordered from Rome, it was discovered that the records containing the materials supplied to disabled war veterans were falsified and fraudulently charged to the State in the sum of 1,300,000 lire. The records contain Santoro's signature but he justified it on the ground that his interest on political questions was at high level which did not permit him to exercise his control over all the papers which his employees presented to him for signature.

The trial brought before the Tribunal of Naples, against 2 of his employees, Giuseppe DE CORNELIIS and Pietro DE PINO, friends and direct collaborators, was an effect an accusation against Santoro, and even though he succeeded in acquitting himself of all Criminal responsibility, he failed to **2048** the sentence of public opinion.

Another great scandal, even though it was quashed in the very beginning, nevertheless it became the concern of the people of Naples, involved Santoro in his capacity as Regional adviser of the "War Invalids" when it came to be known that countless number of money orders drawn by the Ministry of the Navy for the total sum of 60,000 lire, to order of disabled sailors had never reached the interested parties. It is to be noted that even on said occasion Santoro's collaborator was a/m De Cornelis and that between the two there still exist ties of friendship up to this day.

When said facts came to light, Santoro resigned, but it was not accepted in Rome and was instead removed from his office and replaced by Feliciano Lepore.

The disappointment brought about by his defeat caused Santoro to abandon Fascist Party but for only a short time because he tried to reenter the ranks without any success.

In 1925 a great scandal arose in connection with the protection and assistance to disabled war veterans involving Rosalbino Santoro, its Chief Adviser. Following an investigation ordered from Rome, it was discovered that the records containing the materials supplied to disabled war veterans were falsified and fraudulently charged to the State in the sum of 1,300,000 lire. The records contain Santoro's signature but he justified it on the ground that his interest on political questions was at high level which did not permit him to exercise his control over all the papers which his employees presented to him for signature.

The trial brought before the Tribunal of Naples, against 2 of his employees, Giuseppe DE CORNELIIS and Pietro DE PUO, friends and direct collaborators, was in effect an accusation against Santoro, and even though he succeeded in acquitting himself of all Criminal responsibility, he failed to 2048 the sentence of public opinion.

Another great scandal, even though it was quashed in the very beginning, nevertheless it became the concern of the people of Naples, involved Santoro in his capacity as Regional advisor of the "War Invalids" when it came to be known that a countless number of money orders drawn by the Ministry of the Navy for the total sum of 50,000 lire, to order of disabled sailors had never reached the interested parties. It is to be noted that even on said occasion Santoro's collaborator was a/m De Cornelis and that between the two there still exist ties of friendship up to this day.

When said facts came to light, Santoro resigned, but it was not accepted in Rome and was instead removed from his office and replaced by Feliciano Ignore.

It is believed that during the time that Santanelli - Gianturco was a high political leader, he tried to approach him for the purpose of entering the political ranks, but his application was not accepted not because he was considered an enemy of the regime but because of his corrupt past life.

At the beginning of the "uno il Duce" - "una le discipline" movement, lead by Balestri-Traversa-Callucci, it is said that he gave his backing, thereby initiating a new political life.

It is said: Mussolini, in fact a short time later, declared that there were many who were not members of the Party who deserve more consideration because of their meritorious deeds than those who were actually members.

Rosalbino Santoro was considered the most important member of this class it was not very long before his deeds were publicly recognized.

In 1928, while Prof. Rocco was Minister of Grace and Justice, the Honorary Degree in Jurisprudence was conferred upon Santoro by Naples University.

As a result of the conferring of said honorary degree it is said that he displayed devoted sentiments toward the Regime and when then Federal Secretary, Ho. Sansanelli was asked his opinion in his regards he said: "He is an individual with favorable sentiments toward the Regime and even though he is not a member of the party and notwithstanding his good intentions, he has never sought political relief."

A law prepared by H.F. Rosso, gave to those who received an honorary degree the right to practice the profession. In the years that followed, Santoro tried repeatedly to obtain the party membership card and it also seems that he tried to bribe some of the party leaders for said purpose but failed.

In 1935 he offered clear proof of his faith in the destiny of Fascism. It seems that in his letter to Mussolini, he requested the honor to go as a volunteer in Africa but his Fascistic inclination, which forced him to live outside the Fascist rank, was once again disappointed. It is still said "he believed to have finally accomplished his desired result when on the proposal of Miti, Mussolini issued a decree which entitled war veterans to enter the party. He was among the first to apply and many of his friends remember until this very day the trembling voice of Rosalbino Santoro when he said: "I have finally succeeded and from now on, I, too, am a member". His joy was premature, however, because the disciplinary Commission which was the body which examined the papers, rejected his application because of his corrupt life and he could not do anything else but express his deep disappointment to his friends.

The war having broken out against the Allied Nations, Santoro gave conclusive proof of his attachment toward Mussolini's policy requesting to be called to arms to serve the "just cause".

This time he was satisfied by being drafted into the service as a Lt/Colonel and assigned to the Naples Military Zone. However, he was discharged much to his regret and he would have his friends believe that this measure was taken against him from the fact that his wife is an American citizen.

It is also stated that during those days which followed the Armistice Santoro was appointed on the Anti-Fascist Committee by Gen. Del Tetto, his friend, and was the bearer of the note in which the General stated that he could not deliver the arms to the Patriotic Units which the Anti-fascist committee had formed.

Today, Rosalbino Santoro - it is believed - he would like to create the impression that he was a Fascist victim, that he suffered a life of anguish, persecution and abuses and that he was a strong opponent of the Regime but public opinion has not forgotten and his recent appointment as president of the "Purification Committee" has been severely criticized by all the citizen.

This time he was satisfied by being drafted into the service as a Lt/Colonel and assigned to the Naples Military Zone. However, he was discharged much to his regret and he would have his friends believe that this measure was taken against him from the fact that his wife is an American citizen.

It is also stated that during these days which followed the Armistice Santoro was appointed on the Anti-Fascist Committee by Gen. Del Tetto, his friend, and was the bearer of the note in which the General stated that he could not deliver the arms to the Patriotic Units which the Anti-fascist committee had formed.

Today, Rosalbino Santoro - it is believed - he would like to create the impression that he was a Fascist victim, that he suffered a life of anguish, persecution and abuses and that he was a strong opponent of the Regime but public opinion has not forgotten and his recent appointment as president of the "Purification Committee" has been severely criticized by all the citizen.

2017

li 18 giugno 1944

P R O M E M O R I A per il Capo della Sottocommissione
per la F.S.

- COMMISSIONE ALLEATA DI CONTROLLO -

S A L E R N O

Soltanto da pochi giorni la popolazione della Campania è venuta a conoscenza delle persone designate dal commissario regionale, Colonnello americano Poletti, a comporre la commissione di Napoli per l'epurazione.

La formazione di tale commissione non è stata favorevolmente accolta dall'opinione pubblica ed in molti ambienti ha destato una vera e propria indignazione.

Le critiche più aperte vengono mosse in modo particolare a carico del presidente Rosalbino Santoro fu Nicola e di Salito Anna, nato a Cosenza il 22 gennaio 1894, laureato "ad honorem" in giurisprudenza, domiciliato a Napoli, in via Caracciolo n.17.

Il Santoro è tenuto in poca buona considerazione, per il suo passato morale e perchè è ritenuto opportunista.

Si afferma che sino al 1923, egli non manifestò alcun sentimento di ostilità al movimento fascista; si aggiunge anzi da molti, che in quel periodo lo ebbero amico, che fosse regolarmente munito della tessera del partito. Nel 1924 pose la sua candidatura a deputato, ma subì la scon-

./...

- 2 -

filia ad opera dell'avv. Mammiella e non venne iscritto nelle liste di elezione, a nulla essendo valsa la dimostrazione da lui inscenata alla testa di 400 combattenti e mutilati davanti alla Prefettura, in segno di protesta contro l'allora Prefetto D'Adamo.

La delusione della sconfitta elettorale fece sì che il Santoro si allontanasse dal partito fascista, ma per breve tempo, poichè tentò ben presto di rientrare nei ranghi, senza tuttavia riuscirci.

Nel 1925 un grave scandalo, scoppiato in seno all'opera nazionale per la protezione e l'assistenza ai mutilati, investì Rosalbino Santoro in qualità di consigliere delegato. A seguito di inchiesta ordinata da Roma, si venne a scoprire che con false schede di forniture di arti ai mutilati, era stata truffata in varie riprese, l'amministrazione dello Stato, per la somma accertata di oltre un milione e trecento mila lire. Le schede false portano la firma del Santoro, ma egli volse a sé sia giustificato, affermando che il suo interessamento per questioni di "alta politica", non gli aveva permesso di esercitare il dovuto controllo su tutte le carte che i suoi impiegati gli presentavano alla firma.

Il processo scussosi davanti al Tribunale di Napoli, a carico dei due suoi impiegati, amici e diretti collaboratori, Giuseppe DE CORNELIIS e Pietro DE PINO, fu tutta un'accusa contro il Santoro, il quale se riuscì a schivare responsabilità penali, non riuscì però ad evitare il giudizio di condanna dell'opinione pubblica.

Altro grave scandalo che, sebbene soffocato sul nascere, divenne di dominio pubblico in Napoli, investì la figura del Santoro nella sua qualità di delegato regionale dell'associazione mutilati, allorquando si venne a conoscenza

- 3 -

che un numero imprecisato di vaglia inviati dal Ministero della Marina, per una somma totale di 80 mila lire circa e diretti a marinai mutilati, non erano stati mai consegnati agli interessati. Si fa rimarcare che anche in tale occasione stretto collaboratore del Santoro era il già citato De Corneliis, e che tra i due esistono ancora oggi legami di amicizia.

Quando vennero alla luce tali fatti il Santoro rassegnò le dimissioni, che a Roma non furono però accettate ed egli venne invece destituito d'autorità dalla carica e sostituito con Feliciano Legore.

Si sostiene che al momento in cui aveva grande importanza politica il binomio Sansanelli-Gianturco, egli tentasse di avvicinarsi ad essi e di entrare nelle file del partito, ma la sua domanda d'iscrizione non sarebbe stata accolta non già perchè si conoscesse in lui l'uomo contrario al regime, ma per i suoi precedenti morali.

Al sorgere del movimento "uno il Duce", "una la disciplina", capeggiato dal trio Ballistreri-Traversa-Sallucci, si vuole che egli desse la sua adesione, iniziando così una nuova politica.

Si argomenta: Mussolini infatti poco tempo dopo, dichiarava che vi erano dei non iscritti al partito che avevano diritto per i loro riconosciutissimi meriti, a maggiori considerazioni di molti iscritti.

Rosalbino Santoro era tra questi, primo fra i primi, e non dovette attendere a lungo, perchè i suoi meriti personali fossero pubblicamente ed ampiamente riconosciuti. Nel 1928, essendo Ministro di Grazia e Giustizia, il giureconsulto prof. Rocco, venne conferita al Santoro, dalla R. Università di Napoli, la laurea in giurisprudenza "ad

- 4 -

honorem".

Per la concessione di tale beneficio si affermò che fu dimostrato che egli serbava sentimenti di devozione per il regime fascista e fu richiesto il parere dell'allora segretario federale on. Sansanelli, che così si sarebbe espresso nei suoi confronti: "E' individuo di sentimenti favorevoli al regime e pur non essendo iscritto al partito, malgrado la sua buona volontà, non ha mai dato luogo a rilievi politici sul suo conto".

Si dichiara che il professionismo e l'opinione pubblica del tempo fu scandalizzata dalla concessione al Santoro dell'onorificenza, e la cosa trovò una spiegazione naturale, solo quando si fecero induzioni invero poco lusinghiere sui rapporti che lo legavano alla signora Rocco.

Una legge, preparata da S.E. Rocco diede in seguito, agli insigniti da laurea ad honorem la possibilità di esercitare la professione. Negli anni che seguirono, il Santoro avrebbe tentato ripetutamente di ottenere la tessera del partito, si vuole cercando di corrompere anche con denaro i gerarchi in carica, senza però riuscirci.

Nel 1935, avrebbe offerto una nuova chiarissima prova, della sua fede nei destini del fascismo. Con lettera personale a Mussolini "avrebbe chiesto l'onore di andare volontario in Africa", ma il suo spirito di fascista costretto a vivere ai margini del fascismo, sarebbe stato ancora una volta deluso. Si argomenta ancora: "Credette finalmente di raggiungere l'agognata meta allorché, su proposta di Muti, Mussolini promulgò il decreto che dava la possibilità agli ex combattenti di entrare nel partito. Egli fu tra i primi a

./...

- 5 -

presentare domanda, e molti sono i suoi amici che ricordano ancora oggi la voce tremante di Rosalbino Santoro che, tradendo l'intera commozione diceva "Ecco finalmente sono riuscito, e da ora sono anch'io un tesserato". La sua gioia era però prematura, poichè la commissione di disciplina incaricata di vagliare la sua domanda, allorquando dalle memorie del passato vennero fuori i suoi precedenti morali appose il suo veto, ed egli non poté far altro che manifestare agli amici il suo profondo rammarico.

Scoppiata la guerra contro le Nazioni Unite, Rosalbino Santoro avrebbe dato una nuova inconfutabile prova della sua adesione alla politica di Mussolini, sollecitando l'onore di essere richiamato alle armi, per servire "la giusta causa".

Questa volta fu soddisfatto, e richiamato con il grado di ten. colonnello a prestare servizio presso il comando della zona militare di Napoli. Fu però ricollocato in congedo con suo profondo dolore, ed egli avrebbe confidato agli amici che il provvedimento era stato provocato dal fatto che la moglie ha la cittadinanza americana.

A suo carico viene ancora aggiunto: "Nei giorni che seguirono l'armistizio, il Santoro fu imposto al Comitato antifascista dal Generale Del Tetto, di cui era intimo amico, e fu il latore della dichiarazione scritta, con la quale il generale, affermava, di non poter mantenere fede all'impegno assunto di consegnare le armi alle squadre di patrioti che il Comitato Antifascista aveva formato".

Oggi, Rosalbino Santoro -si commenta- si atteggia ad invendicata vittima del fascismo, prospettando un passato di angherie, persecuzioni e soprusi ai suoi patiti, per-

- 6 -

che irriducibile avversario del regime, la l'opinione pubblica non ha dimenticato e la sua recente nomina a presidente della commissione dell'epurazione è stata aspramente criticata in tutti gli ambienti cittadini.

2301