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REPORTS, POLITICAL  
FEB. 1945 - SEPT. 1946

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Chief Commissioner.

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Attached is submitted for your ~~signature~~ <sup>approval</sup> information

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6503  
THE QUARTERS ALLIED COMMISSION  
Political Section

APC 394

11 February 1945

POLITICAL SECTION REPORT  
JANUARY 1945  
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FEB 12 1945

The Italian Government began the new year with a continuation of its efforts to solve the problem of reconstruction. On January 5 the Council of Ministers set aside three billion lire for repairs to public buildings and two billion lire to be used to provide adequate housing for civilians. The Government emphasized that the funds were to be spent on urgent repairs rather than on new construction which must wait for a more fitting time for nation-wide planning. Special committees have been formed in the local communes for the purpose of providing immediate shelter, thus making certain that the problem will be approached from a local as well as a national point of view. At the same time the Council of Ministers approved measures which will raise the food allowance and double the cigarette ration of all fighting soldiers.

During the early part of the month, Air Minister Scialoja announced that he was obliged to resign his post for reasons of ill health. He was succeeded by Signor Luigi Gasparotto who recently returned to Italy from Switzerland. Signor Gasparotto does not belong to any party and although he is 72 he is an extremely vigorous and forceful personality.

On January 11 the Rome press carried an Order of the Day published by the Central Committee of National Liberation urging the Government to constitute a national army. The press, particularly the left-wing press, came out strongly in support and the Committee of National Liberation thereafter sent copies of it to the United States, Soviet and British Embassies. It was the contention of the Committee that the failure of the Allied authorities to respond to the desires of the Italian people for greater participation in the re-conquest of national independence and in the common war for democracy had resulted in an unfortunate depression of morale.

The agitation in the Rome press for more active Italian participation in the war was in sharp contrast to the disturbances which have continued in Sicily throughout the month in protest against the call-up of the 1914 to 1924 classes. The initial difficulties took place in Catania during the latter part of December. They were easily quelled and the situation appeared to be returning to normal. However, toward the end of the first week of January much more serious disorders broke out in Ragusa Province. Armed crowds disarmed Carabinieri and later the troops that were sent in support in the town of Comiso. Subsequently the disturbances reached such proportions as to cause the Italian Government to use reconnaissance planes and to send two Italian cruisers to Sicilian waters to protect harbor installations at Palermo and Catania and to show the flag. 300 Italian troops entered Vittoria during the morning of January 10th and Comiso at noon on the following day, apparently against little opposition. By the fourteenth of the month Ragusa Province was reported to be returned to normal and operations were in progress against the rioters who had taken to the country. In the meantime small disorders broke out in Agrigento Province but were quelled by January 15th. By the end of the month Sicily was again quiet. It seems clear that the disorders in Sicily were on a far larger scale than

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those of December. As regards the reason for these later disturbances the causes seem to be the same as before, namely, a genuine desire to avoid conscription at this stage of the war, the unpopularity of grain amassing and the closing of the flour mills. In addition, more evidence has been obtained of the activities of separatist and fascist elements working under German direction.

On the basis of their experience in Sicily, the Italian authorities have taken precautions in Sardinia where it is proposed in the next two months to call up the same 1914 to 1924 classes. There was, however, an anti-call-up demonstration in Cagliari, Sardinia on January 18th as a result of which one person was killed and eleven injured. Fortunately, no additional disturbances were reported.

In the field of international affairs, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has announced the resumption of relations between Italy and Norway and that relations are also being re-activated between Italy on the one hand and Rumania and Bulgaria on the other. Actually, diplomatic relations between these two countries and Italy were never broken off but were merely suspended as a result of force majeure. The present developments are, therefore, claimed to be nothing more than the re-activation of existing relations. The Minister of Foreign Affairs also announced the formal recognition by Italy of the Chungking Government and declared null and void the Fascist Vienna Award of 1940, replacing it by a declaration of the "necessity of free co-operation between Italy and the Balkan/Danubian Nations". At the same time the appointment of Signor Alberto Tarchiani as Ambassador to the United States. Signor Tarchiani is a real Anti-Fascist. He was once Editor of the "Corriere della Sera" in Milan and went into exile in 1926. He is a member of the Action Party and served in the last Badoglio Government as Minister of Public Works.

At its January 30th meeting the Council of Ministers also examined relations between Italy and France. The Minister of Foreign Affairs set out the conditions on which both diplomatic and consular relations and more general relations between the two countries might be normalized. The Council expressed its ardent wish to re-establish as quickly as possible the traditional friendship between the two countries and remarked that General de Gaulle seemed to share the opinion.

Signor Boeri who has lately returned from exile in Switzerland has been named Secretary of the High Commission for Sanction against Fascism, thereby relieving the President of the Council of Ministers from his responsibilities of presiding over the four assistant commissioners which he has been doing since the resignation of Count Sforza.

The Council of Ministers have decided to place the Chief of Army Staff under the Ministry of War and General Ronco has been appointed to this post.

After much speculation in the press as to whether or not it would be held, the trial of General Roatta and Signori Suvich and Jacomi opened on January 23rd. The preliminary investigations indicated that military matters and questions of high policy are involved. However, at the end of January there had been no developments of particular note.

At his press conference held toward the end of January, Signor Scoccimarro, the new Minister for Occupied Italy, called on journalists to co-operate in "mobilising public opinion in favor of the partisans of north Italy" and he announced that the 18th of February would be observed as a "day of national solidarity" dedicated to patriots, soldiers, sailors and airmen. He concluded his conference by stating that



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his Ministry was above party politics and claimed that he and his Liberal Under Secretary, Signor Tornaquinci, worked together as if they belonged to the same party. Along the same line, it has been reported that the enlistment of partisans in the regular Italian forces has been progressing rapidly in recent weeks. In all probability this is due to improvements that have been made in receiving and caring for the partisans as they come through the line and to the feeling that the Italian Army now is represented in the fighting line and is giving a good account of itself.

Signor Bergami, the new Commissioner of the Food Commissariat gave a press conference in which he announced that the two separate divisions of alimentation and rationing would be replaced by one directorate general. He promised to facilitate the organization of co-operatives and group kitchens and to encourage exchanges between the regions and co-operation with UNRRA.

On January 15th private news agencies were allowed to resume activities in Rome as a result of instructions from the Supreme Allied Commander. This means that world news agencies such as the Associated Press, the International News Service, Reuters and the United Press are free to sell news to any individual Italian newspaper and newspapers are in turn free to buy any world or domestic news service they wish. This step toward the democratization of Italy was hailed with enthusiasm in the Rome press which rejoiced at the end of their long servitude. Gradually private news agencies will be admitted to the rest of Italian Government Italy as soon as the technical difficulties can be overcome. The Supreme Allied Commander's instructions also envisaged the early return to Italian control of radio broadcasting within the territory under Italian jurisdiction.

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