

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

785017

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10000/109/1157

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

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10000/109/1157

ILL-TREATMENT OF ITALIANS
JULY 1944 - APR. 1945

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

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22/4 Noted, 2

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

785017

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785017

Ref: 0060/14/10.

23 April 1945.

Dear Doctor Prunas,

I have received your letter of 10 April regarding the island of LACONIA.

I am forwarding a copy to AFHQ, and will inform you of any action they decide to take in the matter.

Very truly yours,

/s/ EMERY W. STONE

EMERY W. STONE
Rear Admiral, USNR
Chief Coordinator

His Excellency Don Renato Prunas
Secretary General
Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Italian Government
Rome.

1214

13

Ref: 8250/13/13.

23 April 1945.

Subject: Island of LAGOSTA

To: G-5 Section,
AFHQ.

12

Enclosed is copy of a letter from the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for any action you may deem appropriate.

FOR THE CHIEF COMMISSIONER:

/s/ E.T.

Brigadier,
Executive Commissioner.

see 14

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Relief

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785017

TranslationMinistry of Foreign Affairs
L/05353/15

Rome, 18 April 1945

APR 23 REC'D

Dear Admiral,

On September 8th, 1943, the island of Lagosta, of the group of the Darsolane islands (Southern part of the Adriatic) was evacuated by our garrison, and the allied who occupied Darsola and Melosa, didn't land there either because of its position, - it is farther from the mainland than the other main Darsolane islands - or because it had never been garrisoned by the Germans.

However, the Yugoslav partisans got hold of Lagosta that they are still occupying and they exercise their authority with great harshness which aroused the hostility of the inhabitants.

For instance, it seems that the partisan command doesn't distribute foodstuffs to the civilian population, the food situation of which is most precarious because of this, and that the Italian soldiers who remained there to avoid the Germans and fight against them together with the partisans, are being considered as prisoners and treated as such.

As it appears that the hostilities in Europe will soon be over, it seems advisable for an end to be put to this state of things, and for this reason, I take the liberty, my dear Admiral, to appeal to your kind courtesy. I shall be most grateful if you will examine whether it is possible to have the Yugoslav garrison removed from Lagosta and substituted by Italian and allied troops, or at least, to have it flanked by Italian and Allied units and commands which would assume the administration of the island.

I remain, my dear Admiral,

Sincerely yours,

A. R. Prunas

Admiral Ellery Stone
Chief Commissioner
Allied Commission
RomeSee 13x14EC DIST - 23 APRACTION: EXEC COMMR.
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c.c.

2 Stone copies held.

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APR 21 1945

Ministero degli Affari Esteri

Roma, li 18 APR 1945

Caro Ammiraglio,

alla data dell'8 settembre 1943 l'isola di Lagosta, del gruppo delle isole Curzolane (Basso Adriatico) venne sgombrata dal nostro presidio e gli alleati, che occuparono Curzola e Meleda, non vi sbarcarono sia in vista della sua posizione - essa è la più esterna delle maggiori isole Curzolane - sia perché non era mai stata presidziata dai tedeschi.

Si impadronirono invece di Lagosta i partigiani jugoslavi che mantengono a tutt'oggi l'occupazione e vi esercitano la loro autorità con notevole durezza attirandosi l'ostilità degli abitanti.

Risulta, per esempio, che il comando partigiano non si occupa di distribuire viveri alla popolazione civile, la cui situazione alimentare è pertanto molto precaria, e che i militari italiani ivi rimasti con lo scopo di sfuggire ai tedeschi e di combattere contro di loro assieme ai partigiani, vengono considerati come prigionieri e come tali trattati.

Nell'aspettata imminenza della conclusione delle ostilità in Europa sembra opportuno che tale stato di cose venga fatto cessare e per questa ragione mi permetto, caro Ammiraglio, di ricorrere alla Sua cortesia. Le sarei grato di voler esaminare la possibilità che il presidio jugoslavo o venga fatto allontanare da Lagosta e sia sostituito da truppe italiane ed alleate, o quanto me-

Caro Ammiraglio,

alla data dell'8 Settembre 1943 l'isola di Lagosta, del gruppo delle isole Curzolane (Basso Adriatico) venne sgombrata dal nostro presidio e gli alleati, che occuparono Curzola e Medea, non vi sbarcarono sia in vista della sua posizione - essa è la più esterna delle maggiori isole Curzolane - sia perché non era mai stata presidiata dai tedeschi.

Si impadronirono invece di Lagosta i partigiani jugoslavi che mantengono a tutt'oggi l'occupazione e vi esercitano la loro autorità con notevole durezza attirandosi l'ostilità degli abitanti.

Risulta, per esempio, che il comando partigiano non si occupa di distribuire viveri alla popolazione civile, la cui situazione alimentare è pertanto molto precaria, e che i militari italiani ivi rimasti con lo scopo di sfuggire ai tedeschi e di combattere contro di loro assieme ai partigiani, vengono considerati come prigionieri e come tali trattati.

Nell'auspicata imminenza della conclusione delle ostilità in Europa sembra opportuno che tale stato di cose venga fatto cessare e per questa ragione mi permetto, caro Ammiraglio, di ricorrere alla usata Sua cortesia. Le sarei grato di voler esaminare la possibilità che il presidio jugoslavo o venga fatto allontanare da Lagosta e sia sostituito da truppe italiane ^{ed alleate}, o quanto meno sia fiancheggiato da reparti e comandi alleati ed italiani che dovrebbero assumere l'amministrazione dell'isola.

Voglia gradire, caro Ammiraglio, *all'italiana*

Admiral Ellery STONE
Chief Commissioner of the
Allied Commission

R O M A

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R. Rinaldi

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~~307~~ 8260
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(10)

Ref: E/376.1/385

16 December 1944

17 DEC 1944

7A

Dear Doctor Prunas:

In a letter of the 4th October, No. 12/62150/7, the Marchese Visconti Venosta wrote me in regard to allegations of grave ill-treatment of members of the Italian Forces by the French authorities on the Island of Corsica. This matter was referred to Allied Force Headquarters who have now informed this Commission that this matter, together with the similar allegations contained in Sig. Bonas's letter of the 7th of August, are being brought to the attention of the Provisional Government of France, through diplomatic channels.

Very truly yours,

HENRY W. STONE
Commander, USNR
Chief Commissioner

His Excellency Don Renato Prunas
Secretary General
Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Italian Government
Rome

cc. Political Section
C J S
cc. H. files

PA 4/19
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Ref #P/820.311

6 December 1944

DEC 1944

Dear Doctor Prunas:

I have received your letter of 1st December in regard to the detention of certain Italian soldiers on the island of Lissa and adjoining islands. I was recently informed by Allied Force Headquarters that this matter had been referred to the British Military Mission with Yugoslav Headquarters. I have now forwarded a copy of your letter to Allied Force Headquarters with a request that it should be transmitted to the British Mission for such action as may be possible.

Very truly yours

(S) ELLERY W STOWE

ELLERY W. STOWE
Comodoro, USNR
Chief Commissioner

His Excellency Don Renato Prunas
Secretary General of the
Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Rome

PA 411
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8

Ext: 300.

Ref: 8260/8/308

4 December 1944.

SUBJECT: Italians in ALSSA.

TO : Political Section.

BA

1. I forward the original of a letter and copy of translation from the Minister of Foreign Affairs, on the subject of treatment of Italians in the Island of ALSSA.

2. Would you please take the necessary action on this letter, and keep this Office and the Minister of Foreign Affairs informed of the steps which you have taken.

Brigadier,
Chief of Staff.

Encl.

Copy to: SO to CO.

BU

9/12

Noted 9/12

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8/

ROUGH TRANSLATION

8A

MINISTERO DEGLI AFFARI ESTERI
Il Segretario Generale

Rome, 2nd December 44.

Dear Admiral,

With Memorandum No. 5511 of July 5th, 1944, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs drew the attention of the competent Allied Authorities on the distressing situation of the Italian soldiers who, having escaped capture by the Germans and voluntarily joined Marshal Tito's partisans, had been detained by the partisan Command in the Island of Lissa and other nearby islands and there subjected to inhuman treatment. With letter No. 15/1932/123 addressed to you, we requested you, dear Admiral, to interpose your authority in order to obtain that the request forwarded by the Italian General Staff to the Military Allied Authorities tending to obtain the early repatriation of all the Italian soldiers and sailors detained on those islands, should receive favourable consideration. You were so kind as to answer to this letter on October 5th ult. expressing the hope that satisfactory solution of the question could be attained in the near future.

The War Ministry has now forwarded to this Ministry copy of a letter dated Nov. 1st addressed to the Minister of War by one of the Italian soldiers detained on a Dalmatian island and according to which they are still kept in concentration camps and subjected to ill-treatments. They also complained that "the promise made to them to repatriate them to Italy so that they could fight in the ranks of the Italian Army" has not been maintained.

It is needless for me to repeat to you, dear Admiral, how distressing this state of affairs appears to us and how anxious we are to bring to an end the sufferances of those gallant and loyal soldiers who have overcome great dangers and difficulties in order to realize their desire of fighting against the Germans; the moral injury caused by the injustice of which they are victims appears to be even graver than their material privations.

I take the liberty, my dear Admiral, of resorting again to your good offices in order to obtain the repatriation of the Italian soldiers detained on Dalmatian Islands at the earliest possible opportunity and I beg you to accept with my warmest thanks the expressions of my high consideration.

Cordially yours

1207

Admiral Elery Stone,
Chief Commissioner of the Allied Commission
R O M E

785017

Ext: 300.

4 December 1944

Ref: 82607/003

SUBJECT: Complaints from CURSIO.

TO : Political Section.

1. I forward to you the duplicate of a letter written by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, N. 12/02460/7 dated 4 October, to which he says that he has not had any reply.

2. Will you please take the necessary action on the letter, and inform the Minister for Foreign Affairs of any steps which you are taking.

Brigadier,
Chief of Staff.

Encl.

Copy to: SO to OS.

Ref: 300.

Ref: 82607/CRB

4 December 1944

SUBJECT: Complaints from OREGON.

TO : Political Section.

721b

1. I forward to you the duplicate of a letter written by The Minister for Foreign Affairs, N. 12/02480/7 dated 4 October, to which he says that he has not had any reply.

2. Will you please take the necessary action on the letter, and inform The Minister for Foreign Affairs of any steps which you are taking.

[Signature]

Brigadier,
Chief of Staff.

Encl.

Copy to: 30 to CC.

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[Signature]

785017

ROUGH TRANSLATION

7A

Rome, October 4th, 1944.

Dir. Gen. Aff. Pol. Uff. II
n. 12/02180/7

Dear Admiral,

President Bonomi, with letter dated 7th August, No. 296/I, had occasion to write to you concerning the serious incidents that were constantly occurring in Corsica.

In order to do all that was possible within their means to avoid the repetition of similar incidents, the Italian Government some time ago decided to withdraw the Italian troops from Corsica and subsequently withdrew the Italian units attached to the Group of Companies of specialized workers. Unfortunately, it is not in their power to avoid the deplorable excesses of all kinds which are being continued by the French Administration and Military Commands in Corsica against Italian troops and civilians who are still on the Island.

The civilians are being ruthlessly persecuted: from arbitrary arrest without any minimum legal guarantee, to grievous ill-treatment systematically inflicted by the supervision staff, and to expulsion effected in such circumstances as to imply practically the spoliation of all the assets belonging to the expelled person.

The crews of the Royal naval units, at the orders of the Allied Command, anchored in the ports of the Island, are the object of constant and unjustified attacks and Italian soldiers and partisans who sporadically land in connection with war operations on the mainland, are generally arrested the moment they arrive and detained in prison without any reason for an undetermined period.

I particularly wish to draw your attention on the manner in which Italians detained under arrest or prisoners are treated in Corsica. From numerous reports I have received, it would, in fact, appear that Italian soldiers detained in prison in Corsica are subjected to the most inhumane treatment, from the most painful privations to the gravest humiliations and tortures, and that the Italian troops who, attached to the German formations, have been taken prisoners by the French in Elba and on the mainland, and to whom according to recent agreements the status of prisoners of war should be granted, are being instead treated as if they were common criminals and are herded together in ordinary prisons.

As regards particularly the republican troops made prisoners, the interest taken in order to obtain that the Geneva Convention be applied to

- 2 -

them is also based on the fact that it would be advisable not to furnish to the Germans any pretext for reprisals towards the troops of the Italian Army that are by them taken prisoners on the Italian front.

In consideration of the necessity to put a stop to such a situation, I find myself obliged to have recourse to your courtesy and to ask you kindly to examine the possibility of obtaining that the Italian troops detained under arrest or as prisoners by the French in Corsica be, without exception, handed over to the Allied Authorities.

f.to G. VISCONTI VENOSTA

Admiral Ellery W. Stone, U.S.N.R.
Acting Chief Commissioner,
Allied Commission - ROME

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SIGNAL MESSAGE CENTER No. 102/8
FROM: ATRQ SIGNED SACHED
CLASSIFICATION:
PRECEDENCE: NONE 10 OCT Recd
REFERENCE No: F36037
DATE AND TIME OF ORIGIN: OCT 08 17 46A
OFFICE OF ORIGIN: CITE PHCES

CONFIDENTIAL. REUR S-351 of 6 Oct. Replies to inquiries insti-
tuted from this Hq following on receipt of your 2718 of 4 Sept are
still awaited. Matter being pressed and you will be informed of
result soonest.

Dist

Action - C o S Sect (3)
Info - A/DD
Pol Sec
File



1203

P/A

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

DATE and Time of RECEIPT: OCT 09 1938A

Distribution:

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AFHQ

HQ ACC

S-351

6
OCT

RESTRICTED

PRIORITY

OFFICE OF A/CC

8 OCT Recd

RESTRICTED PD URGENTLY REQUEST REPLY PAPER TO AFHQ FOR CDR JIM FIVE FOR ACTION
AND UNITED STATES POLITICAL ADVISOR AND BRITISH RESIDENT MINISTER FOR INFO
FROM HQ ACC FROM STONE PAPER TO MY TWO SEVEN ONE EIGHT OF SEPTEMBER FOUR

278

AUTHENTICATED:

JA Q.

J. A. QUAYLE
Major, R. A.
Chief Staff Officer

cc: Political Section

CofS

11 431

Hq ACC	Soc'y Gen.
DISPATCHED	
Date Time	1430
Via	Signal
Signal	CH

RESTRICTED

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WMS/hjp

A/CC 091

5 October 1944

My dear Marchese Visconti Venosta:

This is to acknowledge your letter C1932/123 of 25 September 1944 dealing with the distressing situation of the Italian troops in the Island of Lissa and in the neighboring islands. I shall do my utmost in the matter, and hope to be able to send you a satisfactory answer very shortly.

Yours very truly,

ELBERT W. STONE
Captain, USNA
Acting Chief Commissioner

His Excellency Marchese G. Visconti Venosta
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Italian Government

cc: Political Section

CofS

Hq. ACC Sec. Con.	
DISPATCH - OCT 1944	
Date - Time	
Via	RK 1430
Initials	1201

785017

HQ ACC, APO 324
349 Sec. Gen.
Rec'd 2319-1445
by DFE

ROUGH TRANSLATION

Rome, 11 25 Sept 1944.

Dear Admiral,

On the 5th July ult., this Ministry, with Memorandum n. 5511, called the attention of the competent Allied Authorities on the distressing situation of the Italian troops detained in the Island of Lissa and particularly in the nearby Islands. In informing of the inhumane treatment to which Italian soldiers were being subjected it was pointed out that this treatment was considered all the more inadmissible, inasmuch as the said troops were loyal soldiers who, having escaped from German hands had reached, after running serious risks and overcoming great difficulties, Marshal Tito's Partisans Formations.

From reliable information, recently received, it is regretfully learnt that the situation is still unchanged. At Lissa, where Italians wounded in the fight against the Germans arrive from Jugoslavia, the Partisans Command is overbearing towards our soldiers, treating them as prisoners of war and subjecting them to extremely hard work, mishandling and ill-treatment of all kinds. Particularly distressing is the situation of the Technical Battalion (IV. Company) in the Island of Vis. Any attempt on the part of the Italian troops to contact the British Authorities is frustrated with the utmost care and any transgression is severely punished.

Owing to this painful situation, I should be particularly grateful if you would kindly support the request submitted some time ago by the Italian General Staff to the competent Allied Military Authorities, intended to obtain the speedy repatriation of all Italian troops and sailors still detained at Lissa and nearby Islands.

Thanking you in advance for your authoritative interest in the matter

Yours sincerely,

/s/ VISCONTI VENOSTA

(*) Political Section, ACC.

Admiral Ellery W. Stone, U.S.N.R.
Acting Chief Commissioner,
Allied Control Commission.

R. MINISTERO
DEGLI
AFFARI ESTERI

01932/123

Dear Admiral,

On the 5th July ult., this Ministry, with Memorandum n. 5511, called the attention of the competent Allied Authorities on the distressing situation of Italian troops detained in the Island of Lissa and particularly in the nearby Islands. In informing of the inhumane treatment to which Italian soldiers were being subjected it was pointed out that this treatment was considered all the more inadmissible, inasmuch as the said troops were loyal soldiers who, having escaped from German hands had reached, after running serious risks and overcoming great difficulties, Marshal Tito's Partisans Formations.

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Yours sincerely,

/s/ VISCONTI VENOSTA

(*) Political Section, ACC.

Admiral Elery W. Stone, U.S.N.R.
Acting Chief Commissioner,
Allied Control Commission.
R O M E .

AFHQ FOR C-5 FOR ACTION AND US POLITICAL ADVISER AND BRITISH RESMIN FOR INFO

ACC HQ

2716

~~SECRET~~
ROUTINE

POLITICAL

SEPT 4

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2/9

REUR FOX NINE ONE ZERO SIX EIGHT OF SEPTEMBER TWO PAREN TO AFHQ FOR GEORGE DASH FIVE FOR
ACTION AND US POLITICAL ADVISER AND BRITISH RESMIN FOR INFO FROM ACC HQ SIGNED STONE PARE
REPEAT OF OUR THREE FIVE ZERO OF ONE ZERO JULY/ FOLLOWS CIN ITALIAN FOREIGN OFFICE INFORMS
COMMISSION THAT OVER ONE ZERO ZERO MEN BELONGING TO ITALIAN ARMED FORCES WHO EITHER ESCAPED
FROM GERMAN HANDS OR WHO BELONG TO CREWS OF ITALIAN VESSELS REQUISITIONED BY THE ALLIED OR
YUGOSLAV FORCES ARE BEING DETAINED AT PRESENT ON THE ISLAND OF LISSA AND OTHER NEARBY
ISLANDS PD ACCORDING TO REPORTS RECEIVED BY ITALIAN GOVERNMENT YUGOSLAV PARTISAN AUTHORI-
TIES ARE RELUCTANT TO RELEASE THESE MEN AND ARE TREATING THEM IN AN INHUMANE FASHION PD
ITALIAN GOVERNMENT WOULD BE GRATEFUL IF ALLIED AUTHORITIES COULD ASSIST IN SECURING THEIR
REPATRIATION.

POLITICAL SECTION

MINISTERO DEGLI AFFARI ESTERI
No. 5511

C O P Y

M E M O R A N D U M

The Allied Authorities are aware that over one hundred men belonging to the Italian armed Forces, are detained at present in the island of Lissa and other nearby islands.

Some of these men formerly belonged to Italian Units in the Balkans; they were captured by the Germans after the Armistice, but succeeded in escaping and joining Marshal Tito's Forces. They were then taken to Lissa and from there dislocated to the various nearby islands, in order not to call the attention of the Allied Command on their situation.

The other men also detained in the above islands by Marshal Tito's men, belonged to the crews of Italian motor-vessels which have been requisitioned either by the Allied Authorities or by the Yugoslav forces.

According to reliable reports received, these men are treated in an utterly inhuman manner; they are practically without clothes; there are no sanitary arrangements whatsoever, and are subjected to corporal punishment.

It is understood that the Italian Supreme Command have already approached the competent Allied Authorities with a view to arranging the repatriation of these men.

SALERNO. 5 Luglio 1944.

| 3 4 8 |