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MONTHLY REPORTS

1-BLU

NOV. - DEC. 1945

(91
196)

Subject: - Intelligence Report

CONFIDENTIAL

To: - HQ Land Forces Sub Com AC (LHIA)
ROME

2 B L U

Herewith Intelligence Report for Dec 45.

1. POLITICAL

(a) The political scene is dominated by the activities of the CLM, whose leaders are working to maintain the authority they hold. They assumed their positions in the days immediately following the liberation of the territory, when mob law prevailed. To maintain their authority they seek to keep their hold on the masses, and any incident which can be used to turn the workers into a mob serves their purpose.

(b) In spite of attempts to incite revolutionary feelings made by left wing parties, the mass of people is apathetic. They want the means to live in peace. Disciplinary action has been threatened by the communist party against members who absent themselves from strikes and demonstrations. The tendency is towards calmness and disinterest, therefore the outlook for public order is reasonably good unless the ambition of revolutionary leaders drives them to provoke serious disorder in the hope of profiting from it.

(c) Right wing parties are increasingly bold. In ALESSANDRIA province the liberals have dared to withdraw from the CLM. Certain attempts by left wing parties to create a "fascist plot" bogey have been openly discredited. The dismissal of the communist Vice Mayor of TURIN by the Provincial Commissioner has opened people's eyes to his share in these activities.

2. ECONOMIC

(a) Wage agreements whereby industrialists pay all their employees, whether working or not, and cost of living bonuses, have contributed greatly to avoidance of civil disturbances. FIAT are working slowly. There is no discipline in the workers. The shop stewards are afraid of the workers, who will rebounce them as 'fascist reactionaries' if they try to get rid of them. That means they might lose their party membership and jobs, and being unable to find work without a membership card they may be unable to provide for their families. Economic pressure is widely applied for political ends.

(b) As further supplies of raw materials, coal and fuel become available the narrow margin between present living on resources and economic safety will widen. For example, a proportion of

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- (b) As further supplies of raw materials, coal and fuel become available the narrow margin between present living on resources and economic safety will widen. For example, a proportion of the cars built by FIAT have to go into stock because there are not sufficient tyres. This, together with heavy pay rolls, is a big financial burden on the industrialists. If the industrialists can continue to finance production until it is possible to sell these cars we can hope to avoid economic distress and attendant public disorder.

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- (c) Commercial and salaried employees are in difficulties due to the cost of living having soared out of proportion to the increases in wages. Scarcity of supplies and inadequacy of transport are the causes of high prices. Public opinion is incensed about the failure of the authorities to build up stocks of fuel. The winter will certainly be very hard, and people will be cold and hard pressed to find adequate rations. It is possible that these conditions may give rise to demonstrations, in which case the extreme left parties will try to ferment revolutionary ideas.

3. PUBLIC SECURITY

- (a) Widespread and energetic action has resulted in the seizure of large stocks of hidden arms. It is probable that few large dumps are left, as the general belief is that arms have been distributed to prevent the dumps being discovered and seized. There are many reports of movement of arms. In this connection it is rumoured that the aid posts for Italians in transit, established by the "National Solidarity Organisation" at MONCEMISIO and MONGINEVRO, are engaged in bringing arms from FRANCE into ITALY.

- (b) The VAL d'OSSOLA is reported to be an area where an armed uprising might begin. There were certainly many arms dumps in the area. Particularly good work has been done by II Bn 22 Regt, under command Major BONGIOVANNI, in raiding dumps, supporting carabinieri, carrying out night patrols, with the result that public confidence has increased. It would certainly not be so easy for armed bands to organise themselves in this area as was feared two months ago.

- (c) The numerous press reports of robbery and banditry give rise to uneasiness in the population. When it is considered that many "epurated" fascists can no longer find work it appears possible that some may be driven to desperate measures to support their families. In fact it is a mystery how many people manage to live.

- (d) The danger of public disorder still exists, both for political and economic reasons, but the outlook is more encouraging now than in recent months. The severity of the winter is the most urgent unknown factor.

4. MORALE OF TROOPS

- (a) Officers. The future reduction of the army and uncertainty about setting appointments is causing uneasiness. Officers should be given some assurance as to their futures as soon as possible.
- (b) There is a rumour that W.C.F. 1 Jan officers will not draw military rations, but will have to live on civilian rations, receiving an allowance. The inadequacy of the civilian ration scale and the high cost of living make this rumour alarming.

- (c) The cost of living and of rooms for their families, is a

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- (c) The cost of living and of rooms for their families, is a constant pre-occupation to the officers. The entirely inadequate pay and allowances, less than labourers earn in many cases, make talk of a rebirth of the army seem a hollow mockery to many. In spite of this, there is a general keenness and will to work, which probably springs from a resolve to stick out the present situation as stoically as possible.

...../S

- (d) Other ranks. Morale varies between units. Much depends on the officers. One unit has stoves in its barracks rooms, produced by the enterprise of the comd. In another unit, when I asked what they were doing about heating for the winter, the comd explained to me that in the Italian army they never provided heating in barracks rooms. They provided heating only in the canteen. The canteen I saw would hold about 30 to 40 men, and there was no indication of where the remaining 700 could pass an evening in reasonable comfort.
- (e) Living conditions and food are what matter to the troops. Generally, a considerable effort is being made to repair barracks. But so many of them are in poor condition that life in the enormous bare barracks rooms must be rather grim. Glass is a major need.
- (f) I consider morale to be fairly good, and in some units good. ✓
- (g) In relations with the civil population, the Cremona soldier has got over his inferiority complex. He is contemptful of left wing scoundrels. He is inclined to be cocky. But in isolated instances he is subject to insults (BADOGLIO is a favourite term of abuse), and to propaganda and bribes. The offer of a dance, or a warm canteen with cheap drinks and snacks, provided by the local communist party, is a form of bribery much practiced. Men have reported the incitement to disobedience and the condemnation of the officers that come out of these "friendly" canteen discussions. The parties of the left have given cash bribes to soldiers to stir up discontent in their units. In spite of this the Cremona troops are, on the whole, conducting themselves well. The officers' immediate worry is less a shortage of clothing and a drop in rations should cause open discontent.
- (h) The morale of the Territorial regt is not so high. There is a feeling of inferiority to the civilian population who rather tend to treat these shabby, grey-green clad troops as outcasts. ✓
- Territorial officers consider that the older classes are most affected by the left wing anti-military propaganda. They report that good quantities of JUGOSLAV cigarettes (IBAR and MORAVA make) are given away free in party canteens. In Cremona div it is the younger classes who have shown signs of being influenced by this propaganda.
- (i) A regulation requiring Corporal-Majors to be posted to another unit on promotion to Sergeant is regretted by officers. ✓
- The result is that a good corporal-major may remain with his unit rather than break with his friends and his officers. I consider this matter could be left to the discretion of the comd concerned. A bn comd told me that if some of his corporal-majors could be promoted within the bn, even changing coys, they would volunteer to defer their release for they are fond and proud of their unit, and the increase in pay would make continuation in the service an attractive proposition. It seems to me that the army needs these men at the present time.

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- (j) Attached at Appr A is a translation of a newspaper article opposing the imminent call up. It appeared in the left wing Socialist paper "SVEPRN AVARTI". It is interesting that this is the only article which has appeared. That suggests that this political move of left wing parties is not representative of public opinion. Attempts to stir up discontent over this

/to sheet 4 ...

matter are really having little success. Anonymous letters have been sent to Military HQs, opposing the call up, but so far there are no grounds for expecting serious trouble. The suggestion made in the article to take volunteers in place of conscripts is a political move to get left wing cells in the army, rather than a call-up of men of mixed political views. The trouble experienced by Granone Div last spring when a large number of "volunteers" were received, men who wore red scarves and who refused to wear the army star, indicated just that harm these cells can do.

- 5 CG PR. Morale is improving, and pride in the service is returning. They suffer from a shortage of clothing, shoes and transport, and because there is still considerable work to be done on barracks. All these things are being tackled, and I hear that the Div HQ at Milan is about to release additional transport. I have not seen the CG PR on training.

6 French Frontier

- (a) We have been informed that the ban on Italian troops approaching within 15 miles of the frontier is not yet lifted. The notification that this ban would be lifted on 1 Dec 45 has been cancelled. Meanwhile preparations for the withdrawal of British troops continue. The AOSTA valley will be empty in two or three weeks time. The British regt at SAN REMO - BORDIGNERA is disbanding in situ about mid-Jan.
- (b) Cmdr 7 ACRA has urged that Italian troops be not sent up to the frontier as soon as the ban is lifted, but that preparations be made to occupy barracks nearer the frontier in March when the snow may begin to melt. The situation at TENDA N 5320 is particularly delicate. The population is very excitable. Troops should not be sent nearer than CUNEO.
- (c) Both General PRALOMIO and General FRATTINI accept that troops should be kept away from the frontier to avoid exciting the FRANCHI, and to avoid incidents. Carabinieri will have the task of supporting and re-enforcing customs guards. The proposal is that barracks at AOSTA, SUSAS, CUNEO be prepared for occupation in the next three months. On the coast, Gen FRATTINI proposes to put one or two coys in SAN REMO and two or three bns at IMPERIA. I consider it desirable that one coy be in SAN REMO in the first fortnight of Jan, that is before the British leave.
- (d) Gen FRATTINI would also like to put a coy in ¹⁹³ ~~IMPERIA~~ ¹⁹³ ~~IMPERIA~~. It seems unnecessary to have anything more than a military base at CUNEO, and the area GIATIGLIONE N 5454 is disputed territory, claimed by the FRANCHI.
- (e) Both Generals want a directive from the Ministry of War, and Gen PRALOMIO has already written for one. I would be grateful if you would discuss this question, and inform me of the policy to be followed with regard to the frontier. May I request that as much liberty of action as possible be left to Territorial Comds, as the cold weather and condition of barracks have an important bearing on the placing and movement of units.

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- (d) Gen FRATTINI would also like to put a coy in ~~MINABE~~ ¹⁹³ ~~MINABE~~. It seems unnecessary to have anything more than a military base at CUREO, and the area CIASIGLIONE N 5434 is disputed territory, claimed by the FRATON.
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Discipline

- (a) One military tribunal has to serve Turin and Genoa territories. While I am informed that there is no delay in dealing with any serious crime which may occur, there is a vast arrears of work through the number of desertion cases to be tried. These deal with events on 8 Sep 45. At the present rate of progress it may take years to finish them.

/to sheet 5 ...

- 5 -

Rumours of an amnesty are current, but nothing definite is known. As things are at present it seems desirable for Genoa to have its own Military Tribunal.

(b) The Territorial Comd has received a number of application for suspension of sentence from men who have served some months imprisonment. Some of these, where the men had previously clean conduct sheets, he has approved. These men may have their sentences cancelled after a period of good service in the ranks.

(c) The inadequacy of prison accommodation has caused an unpleasant situation in Genoa, where convicted men have been left in charge of their units. This is bad for discipline. In Turin a military prison for 300 men is nearly ready; it can probably open in two weeks time if the Ministry of War send the staff which has been asked for. Trained prison guards are needed for this service. Will you kindly check with the Ministry that these men are being provided, as I would like to back up Territorial HQ in their efforts to get the prison open.

Field
2 Dec 43

W. Slater

Lt Col
General Staff

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Appx "A" 18 62/4 del 28.

No 173

Thursday 15 November 1945

C O P YSENTE AMANTIDO NOT CALL UP THE YOUTHS OF THE 1934-35 CLASSES

The calling up of the classes 1934-1935 has caused a certain uneasiness amongst the young men and their families.

Although the Ministry of War has tried to attenuate this news it has not succeeded.

It is quite right that the older classes should be released but it is not understood why the classes 1934-35 should be compulsory called up to substitute the classes released.

This affects the young men who for over two years have lived in the mountains with the partisans or have just returned from prisoner of war camps in Germany. Most of these men after a hard struggle to find a job must now give it up, although as the Ministry of War says, only for a short period.

This is unjust and injures the national economy.

Most of these men have got to support large families and their leaving their home, especially with the coming winter, entails poverty and misery.

We quite agree that the older classes should be released, but now is the Ministry of War going to replace them? By recruiting the volunteers and making a careful selection also from a political point of view in order to avoid what happened in Germany during the Weimar Republic when the volunteers that joined the Army had a spirit of revenge, thus forming the basis of the future German reactionary Army from which the world has suffered so much.

The last two years have proved that there is no necessity of long periods of training to be given to the soldiers, so much less so during peacetime.

If the call for volunteers is not satisfactory, it is advisable to call up the classes which have not as yet been called up, such as the 1936 class.

Finally if this is neither satisfactory the 1934-35 classes should be called up, but affecting only those who are not really essential to the family.

If this policy is followed carefully thousands of families and youths will be better off.

The Defence Commission of the Consulta, to which several of our comrades belong, the majority of whom are men fit to face these problems, will no doubt take this matter up and give it a satisfactory issue.

The Ministry of War says that the calling up does not depend on us but on the Allies, but this does not prevent the Consulta from expressing its opinion in this respect.

For the same reasons this call up has already been carried out in SARDINIA, PUGLIA, LUCANIA and MOLISE, therefore, for reasons of equality, the same classes should be called up in other regions of ITALY. The situation was different at other times and did not entail men who had lived for over two years with the partisans or who had just

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This is unjust and injures the national economy. Most of these men have got to support large families and their leaving their home, especially with the coming winter, entails poverty and misery.

We quite agree that the older classes should be released, but how is the Ministry of War going to replace them? By recruiting the volunteers and making a careful selection also from a political point of view in order to avoid what happened in Germany during the Weimar Republic when the volunteers that joined the Army had a spirit of revenge, thus forming the basis of the future German peccationary Army from which the world has suffered so much.

The last two wars have proved that there is no necessity of long periods of training to be given to the soldiers, so much less so during peacetime.

If the call for volunteers is not satisfactory, it is advisable to call up the classes which have not as yet been called up, such as the 1926 class.

Finally if this is neither satisfactory the 1924-5 classes should be called up, but affecting only those who are not really essential to the family.

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We note with pleasure the recent declaration of the Ministry of War stating that a careful selection will be made, whereby the effective number of men called up will be quite limited.

Men are not born to have to spend all their life in the Army but to work and gain a position in life to support their families.

This must be remembered and emphasised once and for all. This is what is felt by everyone and our party must be the first, as it has always been to support this programme.

Due to the number of letters I have received with reference to this subject I will be writing again on the same theme.

A. BUGGIO

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