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REPORTS ON ELBA

SEPT. 1944

For Maj. Magnus.

Sent by Miss Chapman

NAME	INITIALS
GUNN,	
Coleman, Henry	
MALMISTAD	
ANDERSON	
WILLIAMSON	
SALLAVE	
C. C.	

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111Report on Visit to ELBA - 7-10 SEP 44

11 SEPT. 1944

Major F.E. GILBERT, 5 Innis D.G. of the Information Division  
A.C.C. visited ELBA 7-10 SEP 44 and submits the following report.

PATRIOTS:

1.A

(i) So called Patriots in ELBA constitute a small party under the leadership of a Committee called the National Committee of Liberation.

(ii) This Committee has 20 odd members including 8 leaders, is communist in outlook, and has 200/300 lukewarm supporters.

(iii) Small meetings have been held at street corners when odd fascists have been beaten up. Necessary action was taken and the meetings dispersed.

(iv) (a) Recently a meeting was called in an endeavour to claim the workers right to take over the iron ore mines.

(b) Immediately on hearing that a clandestine meeting relating to this meeting had taken place, the S.C.A.C. ordered the three Sindacos, who had attended this preliminary meeting, to report to him.

(c) One Sindaco failed to report, was sent for and brought in, by French troops, under arrest.

(d) The 3 Sindacos were then arraigned before the S.C.A.C., sitting with his full complement of C.A.C.'s, and each Sindaco was given an envelope enclosing a copy of Proclamation No 3 with the paragraph relating to the "holding of meetings" under lined in red, together with an appropriate covering letter.

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(e) These Sindacos were then ordered to sign a declaration stating that they had had their attention drawn to the above mentioned paragraph and that they fully understood its implication so far as their personal responsibility was concerned.

(f) The Sindacos wished discussion and made an attempt to offer excuse but the S.C.A.O. maintained a strong front saying that simple fulfillment of the proclamation was all that was necessary.

(g) To ensure that the Sindacos were in a position to enforce authority troops were sent to parade the rendez-vous of the proposed meeting. A number of people had congregated in the village square but the meeting had been cancelled. At a later hour, when the S.C.A.O. went himself to collect his C.A.O. who had gone there as observer, he was greeted with cheers and shouts of acclamation.

1.B

OBSERVATIONS

Patriots

(a) It would seem, very definitely, that official support for the Patriots in ELBA is a somewhat delicate question, although there are some, ready to fight anywhere.

Political

(b) A pointer to the immediate political situation can perhaps be found in the following:-

(i) On the one hand there are all the unemployed industrial workers who are confessedly communist in outlook.

(ii) On the other hand there is the conservative agricultural community, part of which is undoubtedly fascist and a great part of which, in the past, paid lip service to fascism.

(iii) Whatever may have been the political status of the latter (ii) they are all attacked as fascists by the former (i).

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(c) I am convinced, that as soon as AMG leaves ELBA, active communism, under the leadership of the National Committee of Liberation will, immediately endeavour to assume power.

(d) From information obtained locally it is deduced that of the island's population, the Communists and Fascists are about of equal number. If this assumption is correct, it would appear that a small body, with authority, should be able to maintain the balance.

A.M.G.

(e) During my brief visit to the island I have been increasingly impressed with the efficiency with which Military Government has been implemented in the island and I have no hesitation in stating that the report by the S.C.A.O. at the recent monthly conferences and such other information as is available at HQ ACC does scant justice to his efforts or those of the other officers concerned.

Not only is the liaison with the French Military Garrison on a most friendly and co-operative basis but it is also obvious that a firm understanding exists with the islanders of whatever political persuasion.

Garrison

(f) It is understood that the S.C.A.O. has put forward a recommendation that 100 Garrison Troops be sent when the hand-over takes place.

(g) Since discussing the foregoing (para f.) with the S.C.A.O. agreement has been arrived at that, to maintain law and order efficiently, it is essential to divide the island into 3 areas (viz, at MARCIANA MARINA, PORTOFERRAIO, and RIO MARINA - Total 3 officers 150 men). Allied troops being unavailable, it is recommended that good Italian troops be sent to the island.

2.

Italian personnel available for service.

(1) It seems there is a number of italians available for service. These are divided into 3 categories:-

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(a) 1400 Italian nationals of service age who evaded service for one reason or another and who are resident in ELBA.

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(b) 400 in a similar category to (a) but who are resident on the mainland.

(c) 250 who carried arms under German pressure and who deserted on the arrival of the Allies. In this category there are 12/20 individuals whose loyalty is in doubt.

(ii) The personnel mentioned in (a) (b) (c) above is not included in the official recorded island population and consequently a problem arises in regard to their welfare.

(iii) Most of these Italians have been issued with Ration cards but cannot buy AMG rations. Some time ago they were supported by the inhabitants, but now, in view of the reduced ration, steps are being taken to see that all are in possession of Ration cards and also to grant relief at the rate of 4 Lire per diem (Present AMG ration costs only 2 Lire per diem - SLBA scale of relief is 8 Lire for the head of a family, 4 for others).

#### OBSERVATION.

The foregoing would appear a simple and satisfactory solution to the problem for the moment.

3.

#### CIVILIAN RELIEF

(i) In regard to civilian relief a decree had been issued and a scheme is in force in the 8 Communes.

(ii) In each commune a committee of 4 is formed comprised of the Doctor, Curé, a workman and a woman.

(iii) These committees scrutinise and agree the lists of persons requiring relief.

(iv) These committees are, in turn, responsible to a central finance committee which is comprised of the 8 Sindacos who are not permitted to serve on the relief committees.

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1E

4. Communications.

The question of communications has been enquired into and is being taken up with the various HQs concerned.



F.E. GILLETT  
Major,  
5 Innis D.G.

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