

ACC

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87/PAT.

POLITICAL MATTERS

SEPT. 1944

HEADQUARTERS
ALLIED CONTROL COMMISSION
R.C. & M.G. SECTION
PATRIOTS BRANCH
APO 394

Subject : Report on Istria. Ref. 87/PAT

To : Comdt., CSDIC, C.M.F. 29 Sep 44.

Ref. CSDIC/CMF/SIM/CD 17 of 17 Sep.

I have read the above report
with interest and should be grateful
if, in future, these could be sent me
in duplicate.

CDH

C. D. Mc CARTHY,
Colonel,
Patriots Branch,
R.C. & M.G. Section.

1 3 4 8

~~CONFIDENTIAL AND SECRET~~

22 September 1944

TO: Patriots Branch
Copies to: Brigadier Lush
Interior Sub-Commission

FROM: Political Section

1. I attach a copy of Patriot Branch Memorandum ACC/507/PAT of the 18 Sep 44 which reached me this morning on the subject of "Fascist Personalities."
2. At the risk of laying myself open to the accusation of suffering from a persecution complex, I must inquire what is the purpose of this list of Fascists? It is stated that it is forwarded for information, but have we checked any of this information from Dr. Bassani? It is, after all, a very easy accusation to make and not at all easy to prove that someone was a member of the OVRA or was a spy. If the Political Section in ACC wants elucidation on such points, surely AMG Officers in the Field will need it all the more. At least I presume that the object of forwarding this information to them is that they should be in a position to take some action.
3. And I must ask, is it the duty of the Patriot Branch to collect and disseminate this sort of information?

Why? Everyone knows it isn't.

Harold Caccia.

H. A. CACCIA

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DECLASSIFIED

E.O. 11652, Sec. 3(E) and 5(D) or (F)

By *[Signature]* Date *3/15/78*
By *[Signature]* Date *8/23/78*

22 SEP Recd

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CONFIDENTIAL

CSDIC/CME/SIM/CD 17

Copy No:- 38

CSDIC CME

SEEN.	INITIALS	REMARKS
Col. Mc GINHY		
Maj. MAGUIRE		
Maj. DRAGE		
Capt. SALVADORE		
Col. FAVRE		
C. C.		

This report contains information on the political situation in ISTRIA.

Translation of extracts from detailed interrogation by SIM/CSDIC of an Italian Officer,

Source No 291 SIM Ref 19 CD

A. PREAMBLE

Source 291 is an officer in the CC.RR with NO political prejudices and able to express himself in a lucid manner. He was in command of the Carabinieri at ABBAZIA from Oct 43 to 30 May 44. He was arrested for refusing to join the GNR and placed on the retired list. He seems to be reliable. Information of a military nature obtained from him will be found in Report No CSDIC/CME/SIM/LB 54.

B. POLITICAL SITUATION IN VENEZIA GIULIA IN GENERAL AND IN ISTRIA IN PARTICULAR.

1. Events after the Armistice.

As soon as the Italian troops evacuated the region after the Armistice, bands of Slav Partisans occupied almost all the inhabited centres of ISTRIA and at once launched a campaign of pro-Croat propaganda which was definitely Communist and anti-Italian in tone. When the Germans arrived shortly afterwards, their energetic mopping-up operations soon brought about the disbandment of the Partisans, most of whom returned to their homes.

At FIUME a very complicated political situation arose between the Italians, Germans, Ustashe and Partisans. The Italians were bewildered and aggrieved by the collapse of ITALY and feared reprisals from the Croats, all the more so because any attempt to promote pro-Italian feeling was misinterpreted as an attempt to restore Fascism. At SUSAK, for instance, which was occupied by Ustashi forces under Col ROSCH, the presence of Fascist militiamen was NOT tolerated, though the Carabinieri were regarded with a certain respect and liking, as being non-political and guarantors of the maintenance of order.

2. German Political and Military Policy

a) From Sep to Nov 43

As the Germans were afraid of the Partisans, they at once adopted a policy which was definitely pro-Croat and anti-Italian. The main

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2. German Political and Military Policy

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As the Germans were afraid of the Partisans, they at once adopted a policy which was definitely pro-Croat and anti-Italian. The main points in this policy were as follows:

- i) The introduction of the Croat language in public offices.
- ii) The dismissal of many Italian officials and their replacement by Slav elements, most of whom were Partisans and therefore obstructed the German plans.
- iii) The use of the Croat language in all religious functions.

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iv) The opening of Croat schools. These, however, were unable to function, because the Partisans, while they would NOT allow Italian schools to be opened in areas under their control, were averse to allowing Croat schools to be opened under German patronage, as they did NOT wish the local population to have any grounds for gratitude towards the Germans.

v) The suppression of the Italian language in certain areas, even in public notices, which were published in Croat, even in areas such as LAURANA where the majority of the inhabitants were unable to read Croat.

vi) An attempt to organise local militia for the maintenance of public order. The militiamen thus enrolled wore German uniforms with an armband bearing the Croat arms. This attempt was a failure, because neither the Italian nor the Slav elements of the population showed any enthusiasm for the new militia.

vii) The abolition of Italian names of streets etc and their replacement by Croat names. This actually occurred in VAL S. MARINA (J 2027), but Source does NOT know whether it was enforced throughout ISTRIA.

viii) The return of the island of VEGLIA (KRL) to CROATIA and the spreading of rumours to the effect that the whole of the ADRIATIC zone, including the area round FIUME and the coastal belt WEST and SW of the town would be ceded to PAVELIC as a reward for his fidelity in remaining in the war on the German side.

ix) The publication of posters in Croat assuring the Istrians that they would be granted more political freedom. One of these posters ended with the words: "The oppression to which you have been subjected by those who dominated you in the past will come to an end." This allusion to the previous Italian administration of ISTRIA shows clearly how little regard the Germans had for the Fascist Government.

b) From Dec 43 to Mar 44

During this period, the Germans, either because they feared a revival of the Partisan movement, or else because they realised that they had gone too far and were alienating the sympathies of the Italian elements, toned down their pro-Croat policy, giving assurances to the Italians and at the same time making promises for the future to the Croats.

Simultaneously they encouraged a pro-Austrian tendency, the real object of which was to foster pro-German feelings, by appointing many Austrians, and especially officers, as heads of the civil and military administration. Thus at FIUME the OC garrison was an Austrian major, and his 2 i/c was another Austrian, Capt DESLER, a very popular man whose wife was a Triestina. In place of the Prefect, Senator GIGANTE, a man of lofty Italian sentiments, the Germans appointed a Dalmatian magistrate named SPALATIN, a man who had never joined the Fascist Party, but who appeared to be more pro-Italian than pro-Slav. He, however, was NOT in a position to do much, as the Germans also appointed a

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The Gauleiter of TRIESTE, RAINER, another Austrian, was the chief exponent of this conciliatory policy. It is a significant fact that a Fascist named CIS, who despite his shady character had done much to keep Italian sentiment in FIUME alive, was dismissed for that very reason.

About the end of Dec 43 or beg Jan 44, the Provinces of FIUME, POLA, TRIESTE, GORIZIA and UDINE were united to form the so-called "ADRIATISCHES KUESTENLAND." The Republican Fascist Government was deprived of all control over this territory, which was administered by RAINER, whose moderating influence served to conceal the real aims of the Germans with regard to the future of the region.

In Feb and Mar the pro-Austrian movement aroused a certain amount of suspicion at the German High Command, which replaced a number of Austrian officers. At the same time there was a revival of the Partisan movement.

c) From Apr to May 44

In Apr the Partisans were in almost complete control of several parts of VENETIA GIULIA, especially the mountain districts. The FIUME-TRIESTE rly was sabotaged almost daily and the rd between the two towns became so dangerous that only MT convoys escorted by armoured cars or tanks could use it. Detachments of Partisans began to infiltrate from across the frontier and a rumor began circulating that in May there would be large-scale Partisan operations against the German garrisons, especially against those along the coast, with a view to expelling the Germans from the whole region. Rumours of an Allied landing were also circulating among both Partisans and civilians.

This state of affairs caused the German military authorities considerable worry and they issued strict orders to their troops to be implacable in actions against the Partisans, who would constitute a grave danger to the German troops in the event of an Allied landing.

About the end of Apr a large-scale mopping-up operation was carried out by the SS and a few militia units. This resulted in the complete disbandment of the Partisans, some of whom crossed the frontier, while others returned to their homes. The civilian population of ISTRIA was disillusioned by this failure of the Croat Partisans and felt that they were once more at the mercy of the Germans.

About the end of May strong contingents of Partisans from SLOVENIA recrossed the frontier and attempted to re-establish the Slav Front in ISTRIA, this time with a more moderate programme. They now refrained from ambushing Germans in the neighbourhood of inhabited localities, in order to avoid reprisals against the population. There was a political motive to this limitation of Partisan activities, viz that they wished to avoid alienating the sympathies of the population, who had been terrified by the German reprisals during the mopping-up operations. At the same time the Partisans resumed the practice of sending postcards calling upon men to join the Partisans, but the Istrians showed little desire to obey these orders. Acts of sabotage became more and more frequent.

3. Situation in Jun 44

On the whole, German troops were NOT numerous and found it difficult to contain the Partisan movement which compelled them to remain in the

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3. Situation in Jun 44

On the whole, German troops were NOT numerous and found it difficult to contain the Partisan movement which compelled them to remain in the garrisoned towns, from which they could only emerge with due precautions. The Partisans, however, have orders to attack only when they can be certain of success and to avoid losses as much as possible. Source was told this by a Partisan leader and it was confirmed by a captured document.

Among the old patriots of VENEZIA GIULIA there was deep resentment at the way they had been abandoned after the Armistice and left at the mercy of the Slav Partisans.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L

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The local population was afraid to express any pro-Italian sentiments, which nevertheless still exist in a latent form and would be even stronger if it were not for the memory of the misdeeds of the Fascist regime.

At TRIESTE there are three currents, one pro-Austrian, one pro-Slav and one pro-Italian. The last-named has a strong following among the inhabitants, but they are cautious in expressing their feelings, chiefly because the leading exponents of the pro-Italian movement are Fascists, who are now discredited, and because the anti-Fascists are NOT in a position to take any political action. It is thus difficult to distinguish between pro-Italianism and pro-Fascism.

In TRIESTE there is also a species of Cetnik HQ under JEVDELIC, who founded the movement before the Armistice, with the approval of staff officers of the Italian 2 Army. In Jun '44 JEVDELIC was living in the Pensione MIRIAM at TRIESTE. In Apr he visited ABBAZIA, where a similar Cetnik movement existed. This movement, although anti-Partisan and anti-Communist, may be assumed to have Slav Irredentist tendencies as regards the future of VENEZIA GIULIA.

According to Partisan propaganda, the whole of VENEZIA GIULIA as far as the ISONZO belongs to YUGOSLAVIA (the extremists even say as far as the TAGLIAMENTO). In May, at FIUME, leaflets were distributed which, while inciting the population against the Nazis and Fascists, warned them against sympathizing with the supporters of BADOGLIO, who, though they were NOT necessarily anti-Partisan, nevertheless were attempting to assert that ISTRIA was Italian.

It is the general impression in VENEZIA GIULIA that it is the aim of the Partisans to confront the United Nations, at the moment of GERMANY's collapse, with a fait accompli, by previously occupying the entire region, and that at the same time they wish to incite the Slav population to a clamorous demand for annexation to YUGOSLAVIA, while forcibly preventing the Italian elements from voicing their desires.

C. S. D. I. C.
C. M. F.

17 Sep 44.

[Signature]
(R. P. F. EDWARDS).

Lt. Col.,

Comdt., CSDIC, CMF.

Re CSDIC/CF/SIM/CD -

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Att. to

Major Magnus
Col. McCarthy

7/6/44

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It appears that the Italian Ministry of War is taking steps towards the establishment of a Committee which should deal with question arising from the Patriot problem.

The idea being put forward is that the Italian Government should entrust the administration of Patriots in liberated territory to a Commission including Gen. OXILIA, Military Under-Secretary of State at the Ministry of War, Mr. PALERMO, Civilian Under-Secretary of State at the same Ministry and a representative of the COMANDO SUPREMO-SIM.

The probable background of this movement is the following:

According to a decision taken on July 3rd, A.C.C. Patriots Branch deals with the Patriots through the COMANDO BANDE (Italian Army) and the GIUSTA MILITARE (C.L.M.). The head of the Command Bande is Lt. Col. BERNABO' and the chairman of the GIUSTA MILITARE happens to be Dr. BAUER. It appears that the Comando Supremo has little sympathy for the Commando Bande and that the Communist Party has even less sympathy for Dr. BAUER.

The result of this lack of sympathy is a combination between General OXILIA (COMANDO SUPREMO) and Mr. Palermo (Communist Party) against Assrs. Bernabo' and Bauer.

The conflict between Comando Supremo and the Communist Party on one hand and the Comando Bande and Mr. Bauer on the other hand is only one example of the attempts being made at present by different groups to obtain control over the Patriots both in Liberated and in Occupied territory

M.S.

Dr. BAUER, as chairman of the Military Junta of the C.L.N., has asked the "risi parties" to send names for Patriot Representatives. The Communist Party appears to be unwilling to send anyone.

M.S.

