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R-16

Atrocities

June - Oct. 1944

Public Relations

R16

JF
RWS/ab

Ref : 3611/20/COG

23 October 1944

Dear General Clark:

You may perhaps have seen the attached article. Enquiries made as a result of it show that, while it may be true that all Moroccan troops have left Italy, there is still in this country a considerable number of Algerian troops. This distinction may however be without a difference in the Italian mind. It is a fact that the behaviour of the troops has improved, reports of incidents having dropped from about 30 to about 6 per month; nevertheless, there can be no doubt that the recollection of past behaviour remains vivid, and the presence of these troops in Italy is a constant source of rumor and apprehension.

This is borne out by a letter of 18 October from the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, stating that the inhabitants of Palombara Sabina are preparing to leave their homes on account of a false rumor that Moroccan troops are to have a rest camp there.

It would seem that, however improved may now be the behaviour of such troops, their final removal from Italy, if military necessity permits, is the only method of stopping the apprehensions and rumors which their continual presence undoubtedly creates.

Is there any possibility of this being done?

Yours sincerely,

ELBERT W. STONE
Commodore, USNR
Acting Chief Commissioner

Lieutenant General J. G. W. Clark, CB., MC.
Chief Administrative Officer,
Allied Mores Headquarters.

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c.c. Public Relation Branch

TRANSLATION OF AN ARTICLE IN THE OBSERVATEUR ROMAIN 4 OCT 44URGENT MEASURES NEEDED:

The Moroccan troops who came into Italy with the Allies did not leave as many may think - with the majority of the French units when the latter were transferred from this front. The Moroccans are still encamped in some parts of the provinces of Rome, Littoria, Naples, Salerno and Trapani. In these places they still make noise, as the phrase goes, by their acts of violence which have always left deep traces wherever they have passed, like the blast of a trumpet.

It is easy to imagine the harmful consequences and the state of mind of the villagers who must undergo these acts of violence or remain in permanent terror of them.

In fact we have repeated and impressive evidence of such acts; violence against people, especially women and children, against property, against public safety. Such acts have preserved their usual characteristics to which is added the admitted incapacity of their commanders to forestall or repress them. In some cases those who have been threatened have been offered means of avoiding to defend themselves. But aside from the superior number and impetus of these violent men and this further motive for exasperating and provoking even crueler reprisals, the very fact that villages and regions have thus receded to the state of pure anarchy calls for measures urgent not only on the ground of civilisation and humanity but for the principle of authority and the prestige in particular of the occupying authority.

It is high time that such a state of affairs should come to an end. It is an absurd situation both because it is such contrast with the principles and ends for which the Allies are fighting the war and because there is now no reason either military or political for maintaining in a country other than their own a body of troops undisciplined and intractable to discipline and hence serving no purpose whatsoever.

It is impossible that repeated authoritative request to put an end to the situation should be ignored. It is recognised as a public disaster even by those who have not yet been able to find a way to put an end to it, or at any rate to act with the urgent and necessary dispatch.

As the other French troops have gone on to other fronts or to other garrisons there must surely be no lack of means to insure that the Moroccan units follow those with whom they have come and to whom they are subordinate, as their native country is. Their repatriation could certainly be arranged if it is feared that the same things might occur elsewhere even in France - as have occurred all too often in Italy.

It is a question of the most clear-cut justice.

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R16

DRAFT OF SUGGESTED LETTER TO GENERAL
CLARK REGARDING ARTICLE IN THE
'OSSERVATORE ROMANO' ON THE SUBJECT
OF MOROCCAN TROOPS IN ITALY.

You may perhaps have seen the attached article. Enquiries made as a result of it show that, while it may be true that all Moroccan Troops have left Italy, there are still in this country a considerable number of Algerian Troops. This distinction may be without a difference in the Italian mind. No doubt the behaviour of the troops has improved, complaints having dropped from about 30 to about 6 per month; nevertheless there can be no doubt that the recollection of past behaviour remains vivid, and the presence of these troops in Italy is a constant source of rumour and apprehension.

This is borne out by a letter of Oct. 18 from the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, stating that the inhabitants of Palombara Sabina are preparing to leave their homes on account of a rumour that Moroccan troops are to have a rest camp there.

It would seem that, however good the behaviour of such troops may now be, their final removal from Italy, if military necessity permits, is the only method of stopping the apprehensions and rumours which their continual presence undoubtedly creates.

PUBLIC RELATIONS BRANCH
ALLIED CONTROL COMMISSION

~~SECRET~~

PRB/R19

11 August 1944.

Subject: Report on Via Tasso.

To: Executive Commissioner.

The Acting Chief Commissioner asked us in the early days here to prepare a report on Via Tasso. Leasacos took this over and you may like to see the result so far. Like all such documents it is not quite satisfactory: but an immense amount of trouble in the way of interrogation and contacts with all the various intelligence services has gone into the making of it and the facts, such as they are, are authentic.

Lionel Fielden
LIONEL FIELDEN,

Major,
Public Relations Director.

Thank you.

MM/18

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PUBLIC RELATIONS BRANCH
ALLIED CONTROL COMMISSION

~~SECRET~~

PRB/R19.

11 August 1944.

Subject: Report on Via Tasso.

To: Acting Chief Commissioner.

You will remember that you asked for a report on via Tasso. The matter has not been an easy one to handle. Major Leacacos, who has prepared the report attached, has contacted SCI, CSDIC, SIM, G-2, Security, AFHQ Advanced Intelligence etc and has interrogated a very large number of former via Tasso victims, as well as the personnel of the Regina Coeli. The report is therefore very carefully checked and the facts are authenticated by personal testimony and corroborative documents. It can of course be written or rewritten in various ways, but I should like to have your comments on it as it is.

Lionel Fielden
LIONEL FIELDEN,
Major,
Public Relations Director.

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Photos of Torture instruments?

PUBLIC RELATIONS BRANCH
ALLIED CONTROL COMMISSION

TOP SECRET

PRB/R19.

18 July 1944.

Subject: Atrocities.

To: Lieut-Commander C.L. Molineaux, USNR, 59, Via Cecilia, Room 32.

1. This note is in confirmation of our conversation in your office and with Captain Young of SOI.
2. We are looking for any documentation that may be reproduced concerning the atrocities or brutalities inflicted by the Germans in Via Tasso on their victims. It is a story ordered by General Wilson of Algiers through Captain Stone, USNR, Acting Chief Commissioner of the Allied Control Commission.
3. The specific document, a picture of which we would like, concerns a ledger page found in the German Embassy when we examined it and which showed amounts of money confiscated from Jews etc.
4. If we could get hold of this photograph, it would be of great value in the propaganda story the ACC will officially release after proper vetting by the interested G-2 agencies.

For the Director.

(Sov)
JOHN P. LEACACOS,
Major, AUS,
Public Relations Officer.

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ADVANCED HEADQUARTERS
ALLIED CONTROL COMMISSION
PUBLIC RELATIONS BRANCH

FRB/R19

7 July 1944

Subject: "Goum trouble".

To: Acting Chief Commissioner.

As you will see from the digests of the Rome press the Italian papers have recently been skying the Goum business and asking for the intervention of the ACC. Naturally Allied correspondents are taking this up, and I am being pressed for details. Is it possible for ACC to make a formal protest to AAI, or has this already been done? With the present publicity the matter will certainly provoke parliamentary questions before long.

Of course we
have protested to
the top, several times.

Lionel Fielden
LIONEL FIELDEN,
Major,
Public Relations Director.

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PUBLIC RELATIONS BRANCH
ALLIED CONTROL COMMISSION

PRB/R19.

26 June 1944.

Subject: Atrocities.

To: Colonel A.E. Young.

Captain Stone has informed me that General Wilson wishes us to collect all available information on alleged atrocities committed in Via Tasso. Will you help me in this by getting from G-2 and OSDIC all relevant documents? I should be grateful if you would also send me any information on the subject which may come your way.

(sgd)

LIONEL FIELDEN,
Major,
Public Relations Director.

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