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ACC

10000/132/139

376.1

1301

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376.1

CORSICA

Oct. 1944 - Mar. 1945

TREATMENT OF ITALIAN TROOPS ON THE
ISLAND OF CORSICA

SEE FILE

376.0

FRANCO-ITALIAN COMPLAINTS

376.1

4690

TRIAL OF ITALIAN SERVICEMEN IN
CORSICA BY FRENCH COURTS

SEE FILE

3760

FRANCO-ITALIAN COMPLAINTS

376.1/585

Major A. J. STEWART

ROOM 10, 3rd Floor

ROUTING SLIP

6 Ma
(De to)

☒ CHIEF COMMISSIONER
☒ DEPUTY CHIEF
☒ CIVIL AFFAIRS SECTION
☒ ECONOMIC SECTION
☐ AIR SUB-COMMISSION
☐ COMMUNICATIONS SUB-COMMISSION
☐ DISPLACED PERSONS AND
☐ REPATRIATION SUB-COMMISSION
☐ FINANCE SUB-COMMISSION
☐ ITALIAN R. of A. SUB-COMMISSION
☐ LAND FORCES SUB-COM. (L.F.)
☐ MARINE SUB-COMMISSION
☐ NAVY SUB-COMMISSION
☐ PUBLIC SAFETY SUB-COMMISSION
☐ SHIPPING SUB-COMMISSION
☐ LIAISON DIVISION
☐ OTHER SECURITY MISSIONS

FOR Appropriate Action

☒ Info and Retention/Return
☒ Approval and Return
☒ Consent and Return

See Mr. SCHOTT'S/ROBINSON'S/
 GILFORD'S Remarks

REMARKS:

Capt. A. Bud. Move by U.S. prison.
 2/ HARRIS on. Government will
 the ops in connection. they should
 be informed R.R. Capps

COPY

MINISTERO DEGLI AFFARI ESTERI

NO. 6/660/281

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ALLIED COMMISSION

SUBJECT: Italian soldiers in Corsica of Slav Origin.

Information has reached the Ministry for Foreign Affairs that recently the American Command in Corsica have commissioned as officers some men chosen amongst the Italians of Slav origin and have appointed them to command the Italian detachments to which they formerly belonged. These "officers" have imposed the use of the Croat language, ill-treating the soldiers who cannot speak it.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs begs to inform the Allied Commission of this state of affairs in order that they may make all the appropriate steps to obviate to it.

Rome, March 2th 1945

4689

376-1

2/8/1

Ministero degli Affari Esteri

9/660/281

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ALLIED COMMISSION

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The Ministry for Foreign Affairs beg to inform the Allied Commission of this state of affairs in order that they may make all the appropriate steps to obviate to it.

Rome, March 24th, 1945



376-1

4088

Sent 6.3.45

Ref: F/376.1/385

14 December 1944

Dear Doctor Prunas:

In a letter of the 4th October, No. 12/02130/7, 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. Ponsini'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,

HARRY W. STONE
Commodore, USNR
Chief Commissioner

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

cc. Political Section —
C of S
cc. A. J. L.

4687

376.1/385

6 December 1944

Ref #376.1/385

SUBJECT: Complaints from Corsica.

TO : Chief of Staff.

1. You will see that in the letter of November the 25th G-5 Section informed us that they had brought the complaint of the Italian Government regarding the treatment of Italian troops in Corsica to the attention of the Provisional Government of France through diplomatic channels. If you agree, I think that we might inform the Ministry of Foreign Affairs accordingly in a letter from the Chief Commissioner to Marchese Visconti Venosta.

H. L. A. Hopkins

Acting Vice-President,
Political Section.

Encl.
POLITICAL SEC.

I agree.

2
WV (7/11)

I suggest in future that the approach on matters in Corsica might be handled ~~that~~ by the Italian Govt through the protective power (if any.)

Cor S.
8 Dec 44
X- 343

3
I am afraid we
isn't one!

WV (7/11)

14 *15 Dec 10⁰⁰* 14 December 1944

To : Chief Commissioner (through Chief of Staff)

4626

From: Political Section

Forwarded for approval and signature please.

H. L. A. Hopkins
H.L. A. HOPKINS
Acting Vice President, Political

1309

HEADQUARTERS ALLIED COMMISSION

APO 394

Office of the Chief of Staff

AK

Ext: 300.

Ref: 8260/7/COS

4 December 1944

SUBJECT: Complaints from CORSICA.

TO : Political Section.

1. I forward to you the duplicate of a letter written by The Minister for Foreign Affairs, N. 12/02180/7 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.

P. W. Shipp Lt Col
for
Brigadier,
Chief of Staff.

Encl.

Copy to: SM to CC.

4685

*Duplicato
E. di...*
ROUGH TRANSLATION

Rome, October 4th, 1944

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

Dear Admiral,

President Bonomi, with letter dated 7th August, N.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 greivous ill-treatment systematicallt 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.

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

12/4

2)-

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 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

4623

SECRET

ALLIED FORCE HEADQUARTERS
G-5 Section
APO 512

GMS/AMB/as

G-5: OLA.13-7

25 November 1944

SUBJECT: French Military Administration in MTO.

TO : Headquarters, Allied Commission,
(Attn: Political Section),
APO 394.

1. Under date of 7 October 1944 (Ref. 820) you wrote this Headquarters respecting the release of Italian prison guards who were abducted from the Island of Pianosa and imprisoned in Corsica as prisoners of war.

2. Under date of 24 October 1944 (Ref. 376.1) you brought to the attention of this Headquarters the complaint of the Italian Government respecting the treatment of Italian soldiers captured at Elba, who had been taken to Corsica where they were not treated in accordance with the provisions of the Geneva Convention.

3. Each of the above matters is being brought to the attention of the Provisional Government of France through diplomatic channels.

CHARLES M. SPOFFORD
Brigadier General, G.S.C.
Assistant Chief of Staff, G-5

4612

SECRET

*Political Section Files*HEADQUARTERS ALLIED CONTROL COMMISSION
POLITICAL SECTION

#376

24 Aug 44

TO: Acting Chief Commissioner

SUBJECT: Jurisdictional Position of Italian Troops in
French Territory.

This appears to be a case for decision by higher authority and to involve an investigation by Allied authorities on the spot as a continuation of incidents such as those indicated is detrimental to the war effort. At any rate, an attempt at an agreement as to jurisdiction should be made. Preferably as indicated by Colonel Wilmer. Such an agreement between the U.S. and France worked excellently at Oran. Both sides also had a verbal agreement to permit an observer of one of the sides to attend court sessions of the other where nationals of the two countries were involved.

As a matter of possible interest, the senior American Army Commander in Corsica, Brigadier General Ratti, has reported that the conduct of the Italian troops under his authority, mostly Yugoslavs by origin, has been excellent.

WILLIAM W. SCROTT

376/385

4681

This appears to be a case for decision by highest authority and to involve an investigation by Allied authorities on the spot as a continuation of incidents such as those indicated is detrimental to the war effort. At any rate, an attempt at an agreement as to jurisdiction should be made, preferably as indicated by Colonel Wilmer. Such an agreement between the U.S. and France worked excellently at Oran. Both sides also had a verbal agreement to permit an observer of one sides to attend court sessions of the other where nationals of the two countries were involved.

As a matter of possible interest, the senior American Army commander in Corsica, Brigadier General Battle, has reported that the ^{commander of the} Italian Troops under his authority, mostly Yugoslavs by origin, has been excellent.

*Acting CC to see**HC*
*WJ*Subject:- Italian troops in CORSICA*How Italian speaking?*MILITARY MISSION ITALIAN ARMY
R O M ESD/14/1
20 Sep 44A.F.H.Q.

In continuation of my SD/11/1 dated 29 Aug. forwarded to you through H.Q., A.A.I.

1. I attach a translation of a letter 300491/CA dated 7 Sep, which I have received from the Ministry of War.
2. I do not know how true the statement is. But, if it is correct, I deprecate the action taken, which is illegal under Italian Military Law by which the Italian Army is governed.
3. I agree with para 4 of General OXILIA'S remarks.

*L. Browning*Major General.
M.H.I.A.

LB/cc

(Copy to Political Section, ACO) ✓

376.1/1955

4673

TRANSLATION

SUBJECT:- Forming up of Group of Non-Italian Speaking Personnel in CORSIKA

Ministry of War

Ref 300491/C.A.

7 Sep 44

WITA

1. With letter 12913/C.A. of the 26 Aug 44 we put to WITA the problem of the command and org of Non-Italian speaking coys in CORSIKA, until now solved with excellent results by American officers and NCO's after Italian officers were withdrawn from the island.

2. We have just been informed that the Allied Command in CORSIKA has started a course to select from the military personnel of the coys, men suitable to be promoted to the rank of officers of the Italian Army; the programme and instructors of the course being American.

3. The Italian Command in CORSIKA points out that such promotion would be legally valueless since it would not be in accordance with Italian Military Law regarding granting of commissions now in force. Further the Allied Command has stated that the course is to be considered purely as a temporary and experimental measure.

4. I am very pleased to receive such an assurance, but at the same time I would point out that :-

(a) The eventual promotion to officers of OR's, ordered on the initiative of the Allied Command at CORSIKA, though it might be admitted "di facto" could not be "de jure" accepted by the Italian Government. This lack of official recognition could entail discontent of those military who considered that to all intents and purposes they had attained the rank of officers. This discontent would no doubt have lasting effect among the masses of non-Italian speaking Italian Military.

(b) Placing these Coys under non-Italian speaking officers dressed as such would draw upon such officers the hostility of the local inhabitants, giving the rise to the unpleasant incidents which led to the withdrawal of Italian officers.

5. For all the above reasons I feel I should renew my request and beg you to kindly reconsider the proposal contained in my letter referred to above suggesting that these Coys continue to have a cadre of Allied officers or NCO's.

4608

signed

OXILLA (Gen)

1317

PROMOTING YUGOSLAV PERSONNEL
TO OFFICER STATUS IN ITALIAN
ARMY IN CORRESP

RESTRICTED

SUBJECT: Italian Troops in CORSICA

MILITARY MISSION ITALIAN ARMY
R O M E
File No. SD/14/1
24 Oct 44

TO : POLITICAL SECTION ACC

In continuation of this HQ letter SD/14/1 dated
20 Sept 44.

1. Herewith for your information copy of AFHQ's reply
to the above letter together with copy of MMIA letter SD/14/1
of 23 Oct forwarding AFHQ's decision to the Italian War Ministry.

A. M. I. A.
Major General
M. M. I. A.

Enclosures:- Copy of AFHQ letter AG 091.711/111
GCT - 0 of 19 Oct 44

NORBASE letter AG 091.713
ENGCT of 10 Oct 44

MMIA letter SD/14/1 of 23 Oct 44

SUBJECT: Italy troops in CORSICA.

RESTRICTED

MILITARY MISSION
ITALIAN ARMY
R O M E
SD/14/1
23 Oct 44

War Ministry.

Ref your 300491/CA of 7 Sep 44.

1. Attached for your information, is copy of NORTHERN BASE SECTION (CORSICA) letter AG 091.173 (BNGCT) dated 10 Oct 44, from which it will be seen that there is no intention to promote any of these YUGO-SLAV personnel to the rank of officers of the ITALIAN army.
2. In view of the lack of American officers for the purpose of supervising the 5,000 YUGO-SLAV troops in question, it is considered by Allied Force H.Q. that the measure adopted is the most expedient one possible in Allied interest, and is approved by the above H.Q.

/s/ L. Browning
Major General
M M I A

CONFIDENTIAL

RHP/awt

ALLIED FORCE HEADQUARTERS
APO 512

AG 091.711/111 GGT-0

19 October 1944

SUBJECT: Italian Troops in CORSICA.

TO : Commander, Military Mission Italian Army.
FOR: Army Sub-Commission.

1. Reference is made to your SD/14/1 dated 20 September 1944.
2. Attached is copy of WORDS indorsement, AG 091.713 (BNGCT) dated 10 October 1944, from which it will be seen that there is no intention to promote any of these Yugo-Slav personnel to the rank of officers of the Italian Army.
3. In view of the lack of adequate numbers of American officers for the purpose of supervising the 5,000 Yugo-Slav troops in question, it is considered that the measure adopted was the most expedient one possible in the Allied interest, and has the approval of this headquarters.

By command of General WILSON:

R. H. FROES,
Captain, AGD,
Asst Adjutant General.1 Incl
1st Ind, HQ WORDS
AG 091.713 (BNGCT)
dtd 10 October 1944

CONFIDENTIAL

4676

CONFIDENTIAL
COPY

AG 091.713 (BK .F) 1st Ind
HEADQUARTERS, NORTHERN BASE SECTION, APO 386, United States Army.
10 October 1944.

TO: Allied Force Headquarters, APO 512, United States Army.

1. The lack of an adequate number of American officers to supervise the 5,000 Slav troops in question, after departure of the Italian officers, made it necessary to select and train from Slav ranks, personnel qualified to handle administration and supply.

2. Twenty-seven (27) successful candidates were promoted to Acting Officers. Insignia of rank consists of metal "3" on patch of red cloth. Their uniform in other respects is the regulation U.S. Army uniform. They are being paid at the same rate as first sergeants.

3. a. The following clause was made a part of each appointment letter:

"It is to be understood that this appointment is temporary and subject to revocation by appointing authority at any time."

b. An additional memorandum as follows was sent to each acting Slav officer:

"You must understand that this appointment does not effect your permanent rank in the Italian Army. This appointment is temporary and made to fill the needs of the United States Army only. This appointment will not effect in any way any pay, allowances, or bonuses based on rank, being paid or to be paid by the Italian Government."

4. No promotions have been made which in any way obligate the Italian Government. Results have been highly satisfactory; all Slav troops in Corsica have cordial relations with the local inhabitants, and no incidents of importance have occurred or are likely to occur.

For the Commanding Officer:

/s/ C. M. Christie,
C. M. CHRISTIE,
Major, A.G.D.,
Adjutant General.

46.3

SECRET ⁸²⁵⁹/_{COS}COS. ~~34~~

607

HM 36

AO 091.711/000 D-0 1st Ind /gen
 HEADQUARTERS NATOUSA, APO 554, 10 October 1944.

TO: Commanding General, Communications Zone, NATOUSA, APO 780. 16 OCT Recd

1. It has been decided that the Italian Military Personnel (Yugoslavs) now employed in Corsica will be shipped to Southern France as rapidly as the demand on their services by MORBS will permit.

2. Since both MORBS and the base sections in Southern France are under your control, it is desired that you take such action as may be necessary to arrange for the shipment of this personnel at such times as you consider feasible. Notify this headquarters and all agencies concerned when shipments are effected.

By command of Lieutenant General [Signature]:



HEADQUARTERS
 16 OCT 1944
 A. C. C.

A. B. King
 A. B. KING,
 Major, AGC,

Asst Adjutant General.

Copy to:
 Commander, MIA
 Deputy President, AGC
 Cinc, AAI
 CG, 6th Army Group

Deputy President, AGC

4674

SECRET

1323

2