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NORTHERN SITUATION REPORTS
MAY 1945

FROM: AIR FORCE COMMISSION,
ALLIED COMMISSION, NORM.

TO: HEADQUARTERS, M.A.A.F. C.M.F. (A.I.M.S.)
COPY: CHIEF COMMISSION, M.O. A.C.
COPY: M.M.I.A.

DATE: 2ND MAY, 1945.

REF: AFM/10/10.

SECRET.

SITUATION IN MODERN ITALY AS IT APPEARS THE ITALIAN
AIR FORCE.

On the 22nd May the Chief of Air Staff in the Italian Air Ministry (GENERAL M. ALBERTO CASATI) came to see me at his own request. As a result of the conversation we had, the following report is submitted for information and action.

2. The situation in PAVIA and TURIN is satisfactory ("reasons given").
3. GENERAL CASATI, who has been unemployed since his repatriation as prisoner of war in RUSSIA, is being sent to PAVIA in charge of the Italian Air Force in S.A.T. II. He is not an ideal man for the job, but he is the best that the Italian Air Ministry can produce at the moment, and will probably be relieved as soon as another more suitable General is available (probably from the North.)
4. At TURIN there is an Ex Italian Air Force GENERAL BRAGO who is said to be a good officer and has been playing a leading part with the Partisans in that district. He is prepared to comply with directives from the Italian Air Ministry, although he is having some difficulty with GENERAL TRAMONTI who is the Senior Italian Army Officer there, and who appears to be rather too big for his boots.
5. The situation at MILAN is, however, not so good, but it is expected that the difficulties will be overcome. There is a tendency at MILAN for the Ex Partisan Italian Air Force Officers to attempt to form their own Northern Italian Non-Communist Air Force which is facilitated as there is, as yet, no machinery to re-engage Ex Officers and other ranks who either never joined the Republican Air Force or who have since been in Partisan formations. It is, therefore, important that these personnel shall be taken into the Regia Aeronautica expeditiously; it is recommended that the Italian Air Ministry be authorised to re-engage these people and to re-adjust their total 'ceiling' numerical strength as nearly simultaneously as practicable by disbanding an equivalent number of

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5. GENERAL CASAROLI, who has been unemployed since his repatriation as prisoner of war in 1945, is being sent to ROMA in charge of the Italian Air Force in S.A.M. II. He is not an ideal man for the job, but he is the best that the Italian Air Ministry can produce at the moment, and will probably be relieved as soon as another more suitable General is available (probably from the North.)

6. At MILAN there is an Ex Italian Air Force GENERAL BRAGO who is said to be a good officer and has been playing a leading part with the Partisans in that district. He is prepared to comply with directives from the Italian Air Ministry, although he is having some difficulty with GENERAL GRAMSCI who is the Senior Italian Army Officer there, and who appears to be rather too big for his boots.

7. The situation at MILAN is, however, not so good, but it is expected that the difficulties will be overcome. There is a tendency at MILAN for the Ex Partisan Italian Air Force Officers to attempt to force their own Northern Italian Non-Communist Air Force which is facilitated as there is, as yet, no machinery to re-engage Ex Officers and other ranks who either never joined the Republican Air Force or who have since been in Partisan formations. It is, therefore, important that these personnel shall be taken into the Regia Aeronautica expeditiously; it is recommended that the Italian Air Ministry be authorized to re-engage these people and to re-adjust their total 'ceiling' numerical strength as nearly simultaneously as practicable by dismissing an equivalent number of personnel in the South. It is necessary to obtain the services of these Partisans within the I.A.F. as soon as possible in order that material can be more easily found and thereafter safeguarded against theft or hiding.

8. The danger of the formation of a separate Air Force in the North is accentuated because the Government in ROMA is not yet recognized by the C.L.N.'s of the North, and as the Partisan Officers in the North take their instructions from the C.L.N.'s, they are, in MILAN, refusing to take directions from ROMA: in other words the C.A.S. has no authority in the MILAN area - for example, to appoint Senior Officers which would, under the terms of the Armistice, have to be approved by this Sub-Commission.

9. GENERAL RUFFI, who is reputed to be a good officer, has gone from ROMA to MILAN to take charge of the I.A.F. parties in North West Italy (SW I.) I gather that he is finding that he has temporarily to side with the Senior Partisan Ex I.A.F. officers, in order to gain their confidence with a view to bettering the position vis-à-vis the Air Ministry in ROMA. It seems that some of the Partisans in MILAN are, in fact, not Patriots but self-seekers, and the worst offender is said to be General SACCHI who was on the Reserve of Officers List, together with General SALA who is, however, said to be an honest Patriot. A third officer came into the story, namely General MATHI who is the most senior and is reputed to be a good officer. It is the intention of General ALBERTI to get rid of Colonel SACCHI as soon as possible.

Continue

8. The correct solution to this problem at Milan is for the C.I.'s of the North to recognize the Government in Rome. It is believed that this matter is not acute in the Italian Army because GENERAL GARDINO is in command and is willing to comply with instructions from Allied Authorities, whereas the C.I.'s seem to be reluctant to do so. It may be necessary for the Allied Authorities at a high level to force the hands of the C.I.'s in this matter, but it appears preferable that the matter be settled by the Italian themselves; GENERAL ALBERTI can in willing to examine, or to see, his friend GENERAL GARDINO and to explain to him that it is his job to organize the Italian Air Force, which he would do without prejudice to politics, e.g. the status of the Ministry vis-a-vis the Republic; the mere Regia Aeronautica itself implies a Monarchist Regime but could be altered if and when required. It may not, however, be policy for GENERAL ALBERTI himself to go North as there is a danger of compromising his position. This is not intended to imply that he would be personally embarrassed, in view of his non-collective post and his service record, but he might find the position embarrassing vis-a-vis the C.I.'s who might well question his authority. On balance it would seem that it would be better for GENERAL ALBERTI to work out the solution himself; rather than for the Allied Authorities to intervene. I recommend that the first alternative be effected, though it may be advisable for some action with the C.I.'s to be taken by the Allied Government in Rome.

9. Dr. Benvenuto Air Force personnel present something of a problem as it seems that they are talking about making what the I.A.F. is going to do with them, and most of them hold partisan identity cards. Those who are not partisans, the Italian Air Ministry intends to dismiss, but a policy ruling will have to be given by this Sub-Committee as regards those who hold partisan identity cards; your advice in this regard is sought.

10. The factories in the North present another problem and it is the Italian Air Ministry's wish to pay the firms which were non-fascist in order to keep them going and to keep the workers from such distracting conditions as would lead them to give trouble; at present it is believed that these firms are living on Bank credits. As far as is known to the C.I.'s, this matter has not been brought to the notice of the Allied Commission by the Italian Government in Rome.

L. P. Thodi

L. P. BROOKS,
AIR VICE-MARSHAL 1798
AIR OFFICER COMMANDING

3. Re Republican Air Force personnel present something of a problem as it seems that they are waiting about asking what the I.A.F. is going to do with them, and most of them hold partisan identity cards. Those who are not partisans, the Italian Air Ministry intends to discuss, but a policy ruling will have to be given by this Sub-Commission as regards those who held partisan identity cards; your advice in this respect is sought.

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L. P. Rudi.

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AIR VICE-MARSHAL 1798
AIR OFFICER COMMANDING.

9. Within and around R.A.A. - Exile
 in those who joined R.A.A. & were joined Partisans - Denies
 the 57th who " " but later joined Partisans, & held Partisan identity cards.

FROM: AIR FORCE SUB-COMMISSION,
ALLIED COMMISSION, ROME.

TO: H.Q. R.A.A.F. C.M.F.
(FOR ATTENTION C.I.O. AND A.L.S.)

DATE: 21ST MAY, 1945.

REF: AFSC/IVL/40.

The attached report by the Senior Intelligence Officer at this H.Q. (WING COMMANDER FRANCE) is forwarded for information. I consider that in the time at his disposal he did well.

2. There may, however, be some criticism of him having authorized factories in MILAN and TURIN to carry on work, but you will see that action has been taken with the Industries Sub-Commission on this decision which he was obliged to take one way or the other at the time - para 8 of the attached report refers. It is hoped that the aircraft factories SAVOIA MARCHETTI and AERITALIA will be permitted to complete all aircraft under construction, and to continue indefinitely to produce spare parts for aircraft now being used in the Italian Air Force, especially those land and seaplanes engaged on courier transport flights.

3. In order to provide a backing for the Italian Air Force Courier Services, it is requested that your authority (C.M.F. or) may be given to this H.Q. to allow this Sub-Commission to give authority for the collection of completed aircraft, and those about to be completed at MILAN and TURIN, as soon as they are released by R.I.V's. Similar authority is also requested for the release of spare parts for aircraft as and when required by the Italian Air Force. As soon as this authority, and that of R.I.V's has been obtained, it is proposed to allow the Italian Air Force to fly the aircraft and spares to aerodromes mostly around ROME.

4. As regards appendix "A", I am in favour of the recommendations made in para 67 being authorized, and if your Headquarters has no objection, I propose to take up the matter with the Industries Sub-Commission with a view to authorizing the Italian Air Ministry to take the necessary action.

5. Your attention is invited to para 5, sub para 1 of appendix "A" in which mention is made of an SM.95 Civil version aircraft which might be of interest to R.A.F. through British Air Ministry. Your instructions as to

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for signature

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has been taken into account. In any case, the other at the time of the report referred to. It is hoped that the aircraft factories SAVOIA, MAGGIORI and AERONAVIA will be permitted to complete all aircraft under construction, and to continue indefinitely to produce spare parts for aircraft now being used in the Italian Air Force, especially those land and seaplanes engaged on courier transport flights.

3. In order to provide a leading for the Italian Air Force Courier Services, it is requested that your authority (C.M.S.O.) may be given to this E.O. to allow this Sub-Commission to give authority for the collection of completed aircraft, and those about to be completed at MILAN and TURIN, as soon as they are released by F.I.U.'s. Similar authority is also requested for the release of spare parts for aircraft as and when required by the Italian Air Force. As soon as this authority, and that of F.I.U.'s has been obtained, it is proposed to allow the Italian Air Force to fly the aircraft and spares to aerodromes mostly around ROME.

4. As regards appendix "A", I am in favour of the recommendations made in para 6B being authorised, and if your Headquarters has no objection, I propose to take up the matter with the Industries Sub-Commission with a view to authorising the Italian Air Ministry to take the necessary action.

5. Your attention is invited to para 5, sub para 1 of appendix "A" in which mention is made of an SM.95 Civil version aircraft which might be of interest to R.A.F. through British Air Ministry. Your instructions as to what should be done with this aircraft are requested.

6. For your information Italian Air Force detachments have now left for MILAN, TURIN, PAVIA, GENOA and NOVARA, armed with the new directive which you approved on the 15th May.

MA

I.E. BODIE,
AIR VICE-MARSHAL,
AIR OFFICER COMMANDING.

16 - written instructions - Report

MEMORANDUM FOR AIR VICE-MARSHAL I.E. BRODIE.

VISIT TO NORTHERN ITALY - MAY 1ST - 14TH, 1945.

POLITICAL.

1. The whole of Northern Italy, up to the time I left, was still under the effective civil and military control of the Committee of National Liberation, which is commanded by GENERAL CADORNA, who has his Headquarters in MILAN. On the whole the Partisan formations are unwilling to accept orders from Italian representatives from the South, and publicly slander the Government of ROME. So far they have behaved correctly towards AM, which is slowly installing itself in the NORTH. At C.L.N. Headquarters there is a number of Russian Officers, but no British or American Military personnel. Nevertheless, the only request I made to GENERAL CADORNA'S Chief of Staff was promptly and effectively carried out. (See para 5.)

2. It is the intention of the Allied Command to disarm the Partisans as soon as possible. This has in fact begun at GENOA, and is continuing there without a hitch. In the MILAN area, a number of Partisan bands have left the city and have withdrawn to the mountains where they were previously operating. After the execution of the Fascist leaders, members of the Black Brigade and recognised members of the S.S., the executions were suspended; but people who had served with the Republican forces were arrested and sent to prison if they were unwise enough to report to the Partisans.

3. MILAN is, as always, predominantly Communist in feeling, and leans towards a Republic. MUJIN on the other hand favours Umberto (Prince of Piedmont,) and pro-monarchist slogans are to be seen on the walls. VENICE is also a Communist stronghold, but RADUA is more moderate in all respects.

GENERAL.

ORGANISATION AT MILAN.

4. On arrival in MILAN it was found that GENERAL SALA, late of the I.A.F., and a prominent member of the C.L.N., had installed himself in the old I.A.F. flat 5.

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GENERAL.

ORGANISATION AT MILAN.

4. On arrival in MILAN it was found that GENERAL SALA, late of the I.A.F., and a prominent member of the C.L.N., had installed himself in the old I.A.F. 1st Z.A.T. H.Q. in the PIAZZA ITALO BAIRO, and with a small staff of I.A.F. officers ¹⁷⁹⁹⁸ also members of the C.L.N., had taken over responsibility for the various I.A.F. airfields, stores and buildings in the area. SALA is not a strong character, and appeared relieved when he heard that GENERAL RIFFI was coming up from ROME to take over Command. He affirmed his intention to place himself unreservedly at the disposition of RIFFI, which he subsequently did on the latter's arrival, and which act considerably eased the situation for RIFFI vis-à-vis the C.L.N.

INTELLIGENCE ACTION.

5. The first action taken on arrival in MILAN was to lock the safes of the Personnel Directorate and the Commissariat Directorate, and to close 2 of the 3 staircases in the building, and to post guards to ensure that no material was removed from the premises. Next, action was taken through the Chief of Staff to GENERAL CADORNA to have an order broadcast to the Partisans ordering them to safeguard all I.A.F. property, and to prevent it from falling into unauthorized hands. (This order was subsequently repeated in some of the local papers.

6. Contact was then made with S Force and with No. 1 F.I.U. It was found that S Force in MILAN consisted of only a British Major (HISSE) and an American Captain (FLEMING,) and was not - as had previously been the case - in control of forward Intelligence agencies. Its functions, in fact, appeared indeterminate. The F.I.U.

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was going at full tilt on its priority targets, and which I.A.F. records and documents did not appear to be placed very high on the list. Wing Commander SHILLING gave me information concerning the condition of some of the factories he had visited which he considered might be of interest to the I.A.F. and this information (which is appearing in the F.I.D. reports) was passed on. In turn I gave C.S.D.I.C. information concerning some Republican Air Force personnel whom GENERAL SALA'S contacts had located in MILAN and who will be eventually rounded up, (including the C.O. of the Gruppo Buscaglia), but C.S.D.I.C. did not appear to be particularly anxious to interrogate them as yet. The matter was discussed with C.S.D.I.C. H.Q. on my return to Rome, and the position is that when the far more important German prisoners have been disposed of, C.S.D.I.C. will turn their attention to the Italian personnel, who in the meanwhile it is proposed shall be concentrated and guarded by the three respective branches of the Italian armed forces.

MATERIAL.

7. Almost all the industries in LOMBARDY are working, but both their personnel and working hours have been reduced during the last three months due to acute shortages of raw materials. The Partisans have taken prisoner almost the whole of the Torpedo Bomber Gruppo at VARESE, together with their aircraft (about 47 SM.79's) in a flyable condition. The G.I.M. has also seized cash amounting to 42 millions for which there is a receipt, but which it will be difficult to recover.

8. At the S.I.A.I. (Savoia Marchetti) factory at VERGINE near SESTO CALENDE were a number of aircraft in an advanced state of completion (see Appendix "A" for full details.) Of these, 2 SM.79's needed but 15 days work, and 6 SM.22's required about 6 weeks to 2 months work, to complete. It was decided that in the interests of public safety at such a potentially politically dangerous time, and in view of the probable need for transport aircraft in the I.A.F. at a later date, such work as was necessary to complete these aircraft should continue. Verbal authority to this effect was therefore given, and the matter is now up before the Industries Sub-Commission for ratification. The same action was taken in the case of 12 SM.12's at the AERITALIA factory at TURIN.

MILAN OFFICE.

9. P/O REID has been installed in the Italian Air Force H.Q. in MILAN and is in temporary charge until the arrival in MILAN of SQUADRON LEADER DIAMANT, who will be in charge of Intelligence in the areas of Nos. 1 and 2 Z.A.F.'s. The address of these Officers will be :

AIR FORCES SUB-COMMISSION LIAISON OFFICE,
C/O, H.Q. 59 AFPA,
C.M.F.

When the telephone is available, the number of the office is MILAN 24573. Major CHAMBERLAIN's sister has been engaged as bilingual shorthand typist - the first for

17 SM.79's) in a flyable condition. The C.L.M. has also seized cash amounting to 12 millions for which there is a receipt, but which it will be difficult to recover.

8. At the S.I.A.I. (Savoia Marchetti) factory at VERGATE near SESTO CALENDE were a number of aircraft in an advanced state of completion (see Appendix "A" for full details.) Of these, 2 SM.79's needed but 15 days work, and 6 SM.82's required about 6 weeks to 2 months work, to complete. It was decided that in the interests of public safety at such a potentially politically dangerous time, and in view of the probable need for transport aircraft in the I.A.F. at a later date, such work was necessary to complete these aircraft should continue. Verbal authority to this effect was therefore given, and the matter is now up before the Industries Sub-Commission for ratification. The same action was taken in the case of 12 G.12's at the ALITALIA factory at TURIN.

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AIR FORCES SUB-COMMISSION LIAISON OFFICE,
C/O, H.Q. 59 AREA,
C.M.F.

When the telephone is available, the number of the office is MILAN 24573. MAJOR CRASSETTI'S sister has been engaged as bilingual shorthand typist - ^{after her} of her pay etc. is now in the hands of P/Lt. WHITE. An I.A.F. car and driver have been placed at the disposal of P/O REID, and a second one for visiting Staff Officers should be available by now. Accommodation for visiting Officers of A.F.S.C. can now be arranged by P/O REID in an American Mess., where he now lives. The P.O.L. situation, acute at the time of my visit, is now apparently improving.

ORGANISATION AT TURIN.

10. The regional C.L.M. is Commanded by an ex I.A.F. General, DRAGO, who was dropped in the area a year ago by No.1 Special Force. DRAGO was contacted and asserted his desire to put himself at the complete disposal of General BIFFI in MILAN. (BIFFI is at any rate temporarily the General Officer Commanding the I.A.F. in the whole of North Italy, and not merely in the 1st Z.A.T. area.) The situation in TURIN vis-à-vis the C.L.M. is, therefore, good. The provisional offices of the I.A.F. in TURIN have been arranged at the H.Q. of the AVIOLINEA Freight Office.

MATERIAL AT TURIN (See also para 8.)

11. In the shops at Aeritalia some DB.605 engines were found, also some miscellaneous spare parts for various engines. On the whole the industrial installations in Piedmont are serviceable and capable of taking up considerable activity again.

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PADUA. (H.Q. OF 2ND I.A.F.)

12. The old H.Q. building at PADUA has been taken on by the I.A.F. by arrangement with 8 Forces, who are operating in full control at PADUA. The area has suffered little damage, but no important industries are located in this region.

MATERIAL AT PADUA.

13. A great deal of material has been discovered in PADUA, and much more is known to have been hidden or dispersed by the Partisans, recovery of which is likely to be more effective the quicker action is taken. On the financial side, over 13 million lire were found in various safes, while various funds which belonged to the Republican Air Force were frozen in the banks in PADUA and district. A large number of documents concerning I.A.F. personnel were also found, and are now under lock and key in the possession of I.A.F. Intelligence Officers on the spot. Among the material found, the following were included:- a large number of typewriters and calculating machines; 7 radio receivers; many motor vehicles and a large store of spare parts; large quantities of clothing; about 100 outer covers for Fiat 626 and other M/T vehicles, and much other miscellaneous material. It is stressed that this material is at present dispersed, and it is important that the I.A.F. salvage parties should get to PADUA as soon as possible in order to concentrate it for release through the F.I.U.

PERSONNEL AT PADUA.

14. In general, most of the members of the I.A.F. in this area had been compromised with the Republic, and arrests have already been ordered in conjunction with the Allied authorities. The latter appear to have good relations with the Partisans in this area, which should help in persuading the Partisans to give up the material they have hidden or dispersed.

BASSANO DEL GRAPPA.

15. In this town was the despatch office of all the departments of the former Air Ministry, and very large quantities of documents, chiefly of an administrative nature, are in existence, but are dispersed in different localities. One of the largest of these, the Bishops College, has been requisitioned by the Allies for use as a hospital, and the archives it contained are being transferred to the vaults of the VILLA JONCK where previously the Central Accounts Office was located, and which at present contains many other documents concerning the Commissariat and division section, together with an amount of material belonging to the Casa del'Aviatore. All the material at the VILLA JONCK has been put in charge of COL. VECCHIO, under the direction of the Allied Authorities. All the silver belonging to the Casa dell'Aviatore has been frozen at the Casa di Risparmio in Bassano del Grappa by the Allied Command, together with some strong boxes and a bank book containing a credit for 7 million lire made out to the U.S. of the Republican Air Force. Other funds belonging to the Republican Air Force have also been frozen, while the Allied have deposited in the VENICE bank nearly 2½ million lire, taken from the C.I.N. and 4

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SERVICEABLE ITALIAN AIRCRAFT.

16. A certain number of serviceable Italian aircraft are still in existence on some airfields in Northern Italy, and have been flown over the areas of MILAN and PAVIA, probably by PARTISANS. In order to put a stop to this practice, which may lead to unauthorized flights between North Italy and the South, M.A.A.F. were contacted through M.A.T.A.F. and arrangements were made whereby all unauthorized flights by Italian aircraft in Northern Italy should be forbidden on pain of the aircraft being shot down. The necessary warning order and supplementary instructions are being issued by COL. STAMFORD of Operations, M.A.A.F. A copy of these will be forwarded to this Sub-Commission in due course.

Air Forces Sub-Commission,
Allied Commission, Rome.

T.C.N. FRANCES, W/COR,
C.I.O.

MEMORANDUM FOR AIR VICE-MARSHAL I.E. MCODIE.

APPENDIX "A".

1. The S.I.A.I. (Scoplane Works "Società Italiana Aeroplani Idrovoluti") is one of the oldest Italian constructing firms. The firm started in a small plant at ST. ANNA on the extreme South end of LARAGLIONE. It expanded progressively and in 1940 managed to become an organisation of notable importance. It had three plants:-

- a. ST. ANNA, construction of seaplanes, and wooden wings for land planes.
- b. SESTO CALENDE - Mechanics and metallic construction.
- c. VERGLATE - Construction, assembling and testing. Light alloys Foundry.

In 1943 the Firm employed about 10,000 workers and produced approx 30 a/c a month.

2. After the beginning of the war the firm set up small shadow plants in various localities but kept the above three places as the principal centres of the organisation. Thus the following workshops were established: BONGOMMERO, precision work - 1,200 workers. IMERA - Cast Iron Foundry - 600 workers. and other less important at: OMEDA - IECNATE - GROPPINA - QUARTO STURME, etc.

3. The end of hostilities found these organisations almost intact. In fact, apart from the ST. ANNA plant at least 75% of which has been destroyed by bombing, (the bombing being probably due to the fact that this plant was situated very near to a motor-boat flotilla), the other shops have suffered very little damage. At Sesto Calende two Depots in the Works were destroyed by a fire, probably due to sabotage. The electric power is available. There is a sufficient amount of spares to finish the work in hand and for a brief period of activity.

4. Between the 8th September 1943 and the complete liberation of Italian territory, the Company carried on its work on a reduced scale, according to instructions received on 15.3.44 in letter ref 1154/C from Military Zone Command of VALSESIA, which was in charge of the Partisans. The instructions were not to manufacture arms but to work according to the rules of occupation so as not to create unemployment.

The company handed over to Germany a total number of 299 SM.82 a/c including pre-armistice orders. On the 25th September 1944, Germany gave instructions to suspend the production of SM.82 a/c, and at that moment a series of 85 a/c were being assembled.

The completed a/c were dismantled and the material was sent to Germany. As mentioned above and explained hereunder, part of the material was retained.

Recently the firm was manufacturing:

- a. Jets (details not known) manufactured in accordance with German blue-prints.

precision work - 1,200 workers. LATERA - Cast iron foundry - 600 workers. And other less important at: ONEDA - INGHATE - GROPPINA - QUATRO SERATE, etc.

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The completed a/c were dismantled and the material was sent to Germany. As mentioned above and explained hereunder, part of the material was retained.

Recently the firm was manufacturing:

- a. Jigs (details not known) manufactured in accordance with **1793** blue-prints.
- b. bridge components.
- c. motor-boats with explosive bows - single seater with Alfa 2,500 cm3 engine (The firm has approx 100 of these)
- d. One torpedo carrying motor-boat with two Alfa 2500 cm3 engines.
(The Company has a number of these in various state of construction as above.)
- e. Bicycles.

The Company at present employs about 3,000 workers. The remainder of the personnel is at home. We must do our utmost to find work for these, otherwise it is feared that grave discontent and consequent disorder will arise.

5. The firm has at present in the Assembly Workshop at VARESE:

- a. 13 S.M. 79 a/c of which: 7 are ready and have been tested - 3 ready awaiting testing - 1 ready for engine test - 2 which can be completed in 15 days.
- b. 6 S.M. 82 a/c which can be completed in 2 months.
- c. 1 S.M. 75 a/c which can be completed in 2 months.
- d. 1 S.M. 84 ter. a/c with Piaggio XIX 2 engines which can be modified for civilian use, although this might not be very advisable in view of the fact that very little experience has been attained on this type of engine.

-2-

- e. S.M. 94 a/c description of which is attached.
- f. 1 S.M. 92 a/c description of which is attached and which was badly damaged by machine-gun fire.
- g. 1 S.M. 93 a/c description of which is attached and which was also badly damaged by strafing.
- h. 1 S.M. 95 a/c description of which is attached, and which is ready after having been modified. This is the second a/c of this type which has been constructed. The first one was flown to Germany.
- i. 1 S.M. 95 (civil version) description of which is attached herewith and which can be completed within 2 months time. I strongly recommend that this a/c be immediately completed. I think that it might be of interest even to British Civil Aviation, which appears as far as I know not to be at present in possession of modern civil a/c of this description. When and if requested the firm could supply the first a/c in mass production, in a period less than six months.

It must be noted that the S.M. 95 A/c is fitted with Alfa 123 engines which derive from the Alfa 126 engine, this being a replica of the British Pegasus engine. These engines (Alfa 123) have a low rated altitude (1600 metres). If we fit the S.M. 95 a/c with more modern Bristol engines (two stages supercharged) its performances which are already remarkable could be greatly improved. The S.M. 95 a/c can carry a very high load. Its military version which, as already explained, was flown to Germany, had been designed to carry out demonstrative operations over the U.S.A. It could only have carried a very limited load of bombs to have been able to carry out the return journey.

6A. The S.I.A.I. firm, like every other firm, must be reactivated, otherwise no one could possibly avoid serious social repercussions due to the resulting unemployment. It is impossible to expect tens of thousands of unemployed workers to keep quiet, when only by working can they earn enough for their very meagre existence.

It will take some time before the transformation from war to peace time production is organized; before the unavoidable reduction of the personnel employed on war time basis is effected; before the reopening of International trade take places; and before the first imports of raw material which we most urgently need can be expected.

6B. In order to relieve the situation during this period it is suggested that the Air Ministry be immediately authorised to:-

- a. withdraw the a/c already completed and pay for them immediately.
- b. complete the a/c already mentioned and which are partly constructed.
- c. modify to passenger a/c all the war planes at present being used with provisional and rudimentary accommodations.
- d. have complete overhaul made of the above mentioned a/c, which since

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- d. have complete overhaul made of the above mentioned a/c, which since the Armistice have been not too well maintained.

1792

The management of the firm is in the hands of the following:

GENERAL MANAGER.	MR. MARCHETTI.
TECHNICAL "	" DE ALBROSI
COMMERCIAL "	" SCHIATTI
ASSIST COMM. MANAGER.	MR. CANIVALLI.

It is likely that some changes will take place in the management. In fact, just before I left Milan, I was told that MR. MARCHETTI, who had been so far unopposed by Partisans and by the people court's, will be asked by the latter to justify himself and to give explanations of his conduct during the war. And it must be noted that according to what he told me, MARCHETTI gave the Partisans considerable financial help.

(SGD) J. BERTIA.
COL. A.A.R.N.

11th May, 1945.

2. After the beginning of the war the plants in various localities but kept the above three places as the principal centres of the organisation. Thus the following Workshops were established: Borgomanero, precision work - 1,200 workers. Intra - Cast iron Foundry 600 workers. And other less important at: Oneda - Legnate - Groppina - Quattro Strade, etc.

3. The end of hostilities found these organisations almost intact. In fact, apart from the St. Anna Plant at least 75% of which has been destroyed by bombing, (the bombing being probably due to the fact that this plant was situated very near to a motor-boat flotilla), the other shops have suffered very little damage. At Sesto Calende two Depots in the Works were destroyed by a fire, probably due to sabotage. The electric power is available. There is a sufficient amount of spares to finish the work in hand and for a brief period of activity.

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- 2 -

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It must be noted that the S.M. 95 A/C is fitted with Alfa 128 engines which derive from the Alfa 126 engine, this being a replica of the British Pegasus engine. These engines (Alfa 128) have a low (1,600 metres). If we fit the S.M. 95 A/C with ~~improvements~~

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- d. have complete overhaul made of the above mentioned A/C, which since the Armistice have been not too well maintained.

7. The management of the Firm is in the hands of the following:-

General Manager - Eng. MARCHETTI
 Technical " " DE AMBROSI
 Commercial " " SCHIATTI
 Assist. Comm " Dr. CANEVALLI

It is likely that some changes will take place in the management? In fact, just before I left Milan, I was told that Mr. Marchetti, who had been so far unmolested by partisans and by the people court's, will be asked by the latter to justify himself and to give explanations of his conduct during the war. And it must be noted that according to what he told me, Marchetti gave the partisans considerable financial help.

COL. A.A.R.N. G. BRENTA.

Commercial " " SCHIATTI
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11th May 1945

A. A. R. N. G. Brenta

COL. A.A.R.N. G. BRENTA.

1789

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 BIFFI
 INTERVIEW WITH A.O.C. I.A.F. IN NORTHERN ITALY.

1. Generale di D.A. GIUSEPPE BIFFI came to see A.O.C. A.F.S.C. on 30th May 1945 by appointment to discuss conditions in the North of Italy.
2. Generale BIFFI began by saying that the situation, vis-a-vis the Partisans in the North have eased considerably. When he first arrived in MILAN the Partisans were in sole control, and service personnel from the South were regarded as interlopers, and their orders carried no weight. However, by establishing good personnel relations with GENERALS CADORNA and SALA, and by explaining the general situation to them to their satisfaction, he gradually prevailed upon them to accept his (and therefore ROME's) authority. Orders were thus issued to ex-I.A.F. personnel by GENERAL BIFFI through the Partisans, and were accordingly obeyed.
3. Generale BIFFI explained that one of the main difficulties of the whole position in the beginning lay in the fact that he represented the Regia (Royal) Aeronautica, which in the North smacked too much of the House of Savoy, and therefore of fascism, which the Northerners maintained the Monarchy supported - and because of the delicacy of the situation he had to go very slowly. His uniform, bearing the Royal crown, he put aside in favour of civilian dress; the number plates of the cars, which had previously read "R.A." he changed for "A.I." (Aeronautica Italia) in order not to offend the susceptibilities of the highly inflamed anti-monarchist Partisans. Gradually, however, he felt the position easing, and as political tension relaxed, so he once again donned his uniform, and ordered his subordinate officers to do likewise; and he furthermore replaced the "R.A." number plates on the cars.
4. In his early days in MILAN, he was constantly surrounded by about a dozen

the Partisans, and were accordingly obeyed.

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4. In his early days in MILAN, he was constantly surrounded by about a dozen Partisan officers whom he could not persuade to keep out of his office, and who, by their constant comings and goings and everlasting explanations, requests and questions, gave him no peace or time to get down to the serious job of organising the central command, which he had been sent up to do. Gradually, however, through GENERAL SALA and COLONEL SACCHI, he managed to persuade the other Partisan officers to leave him in peace, and something approaching normal working conditions was eventually established.
5. At this stage, General BIFFI only had one I.A.F. Officer from the South (Major GRASSETTI) apart from the 3 Ufficio "I" Officers, and his first preoccupation was to set up a small body of staff officers whom he could trust to serve him (and ROE) faithfully in helping him to organise his central command. For this purpose, the

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Ufficio "I" Officers turned themselves into a small evening commission to make enquiries into the more recent activities of the ex-I.A.F. Partisan Officers who offered themselves to GENERAL BIFFI. These were sorted out, and the "bad hats" were either handed over to the Allies, imprisoned, or sent home according to their degree of collaboration with the Germans, whilst the best available of the remainder were co-opted onto BIFFI'S staff on a temporary basis, to remain there until they are properly discriminated by the Official screening body which will be set up in the North in due course.

6. GENERAL BIFFI paid tribute to the tact, understanding and support he had received from the A.F.S.C. Officers in MILAN, and said he felt confident now that the I.A.F. in the North would obey his orders. He had "retired" GENERAL SALA, whose usefulness was now at an end, but was keeping on COLONEL SACCHI for a little longer. With the disarming of the Partisans (due to be complete within 24 hours at the time of the interview,) and the imminent transfer of GENERAL CADORTA to ROME as C.G.S. of the Italian Army, GENERAL BIFFI felt that the Partisans' teeth were drawn. He also instanced the arrest of NETTI by the Allies as a considerable factor in the minds of all the Northerners, it having sharply reminded them that control of the North was definitely in Allied hands, which in turn had added prestige to Rome's - and therefore to his - position. GENERAL VARASS - his opposite number in the Italian Army - felt the same way. BIFFI stated that if only the ROME Government could resolve its difficulties with the political parties of the North, everything henceforth would be plain sailing.

7. BIFFI stated that he felt sure of his authority within the 4.78 head-
that this necessarily decreased in direct ratio to the distance away

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7. BIFFI stated that he felt sure of his authority within the 4.78 Headquarters, but that this necessarily decreased in direct ratio to the distance away of his remoter dependencies. He was satisfied that these units were working to the Allied directive, but expressed a desire to be able to visit them more easily - in order to keep a firmer hand on them. A.C.C. A.F.S.C. therefore agreed to his request to have a Caproni 314 or CZ.1007 assigned to him from the South, but pointed out that the supply of petrol was going to be a severe limiting factor to its use. BIFFI said he understood, but was willing to accept the limitation.

8. A.O.C. A.F.S.C. told BIFFI that in view of the happier relationship between the I.A.F. and the Partisans now existing, he (BIFFI) should be put into temporary Command of the I.A.F. in all North Italy, with jurisdiction over both I and II ZAT's, and should be given the title of "Comando Generale dell'Aeronautica nelle Italia Settentrionale". If advisable, the word "Regia" could be introduced at a later date.

This appointment has now been confirmed with the Italian C.A.S.

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